

85pc people seek quack remedies for low cost

Reveals survey

BSS, Dhaka

The high costs have been preventing villagers to seek treatment from qualified doctors, specially from those physicians who hold degree of the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Science (MBBS), says a survey of a leading health research organisation.

The survey says perceived costs of treatment from qualified doctors and a person's ability to bear it usually influence health seeking behaviour of patients in rural areas.

The Behavioural and Social Sciences Division of International Center for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) conducted the survey under four-year action research project with supports from Department for International Development of the United Kingdom.

The survey was conducted over 1,000 households in Chakaria, Cox's Bazar.

It finds only one out of seven rural people go to an MBBS doctor after illnesses. It says that the rural people would only prefer

to consult an MBBS doctor during their serious illness.

The survey says over 85 per cent people, who need treatment, do prefer to go quacks for low cost, a choice often blamed for poor quality service and wrong treatments that might even lead to drug resistance and other complications.

It says a combination of multiple factors that include higher fees, medicine prices, diagnostic tests and transportation costs to reach an MBBS have been deterring people to go less to such qualified doctors.

On the other hand, the village doctors who include semi-educated trained and untrained doctors, drug sellers and health assistants of qualified doctors do charge little or no money from patients as fees.

The village doctors, who are perceived as cheaper options, are easily accessible and they seldom suggests diagnostic tests, while provide medicine as per the desire and economic ability of the patients, the conditions that allure people to rush to village doctors than MBBS, the survey reveals.

The survey's one of key investigators Dr

Mohammad Iqbal told the news agency that the main objectives of the study were to reduce harms caused by the quacks, specially allopathic village doctors, who occupy most of rural health systems in Bangladesh.

It shows that the respondents of the study spent highest amount of money for the healthcare from MBBS doctors. It says nearly 53 percent of the total amount spent by the study people to different health care providers was spent to MBBS doctors.

A few people prefer treatment from qualified doctors not only because of direct cost that include fees and diagnostic tests but also loss of workdays. Treatment from MBBS caused 1.5 times more loss of workdays than care from village doctors, paramedics, traditional and religious healers and others, it says.

The survey says the people who have visited MBBS had an average monthly direct expenditure of Tk 450, a benchmark that represents highest level of expenses for a poor person having an income of Tk 4,500 per month.



PHOTO: STAR

Around 10 mounds of adulterated spices, including ground chilli and turmeric, have been seized in a drive at a spice-grinding mill at Bakalia in the port city of Chittagong yesterday. Assistant Commissioner Shahnewaz Khaled who led the drive said inedible and rotten chilli, husk and dyes have been used in the spices.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at an Iftar party organised by Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and Dhaka Union of Journalists at the National Press Club auditorium in the city yesterday.

Experts for monorail in Dhaka to reduce cost

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign transport experts prefer construction of monorail instead of underground metro rail for Dhaka city as the subways will be less feasible and will cost one billion dollar more than the sky-trains.

They said approximately 2.6 billion US dollar will be required to build the country's underground metro railway but will cost one billion dollar less to build monorails high over the ground.

This was estimated by the urban transportation expert team of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), involving in conducting the feasibility study of setting up the first metro rail line aiming at reducing the huge tailback on the road of capital Dhaka.

Senior Programme Manager of JICA Suman Das Gupta said as per JICA's Master plan of Dhaka Urban Transport system, conducted from April 2009 to March 2010, three metro lines should be built in Dhaka by 2025 including other two Gabtali to Saydabad and circular line via Gulshan-Badda-Dhanmondi.

"We have chosen the Uttara-Saydabad link as the first metro line from considering the expected demand and

impact of ending road traffic congestion," he said.

As per the master plan, the passenger demand of the proposed first line, Uttara to Saydabad, is nearly 47 lakh passengers per km which reduces the traffic volume in a rate of 17,88,000 vehicle trips per km.

JICA is conducting the feasibility study at a cost of one million US dollar under its technical cooperation scheme to Bangladesh, Gupta said.

"The underground route will cost more as we have to make it firmly waterproof considering acute water-logging problems of Dhaka city security concern is another risk factor for the underground system in Dhaka," Senior Transport Adviser of JICA Tamaoki Watanabe told the news agency yesterday.

Tamaoki said there is common concept that the government needs to acquire lots of land for building the over ground metro link but only some land in Gulistan area will be needed to acquire for setting up the over the ground railway track.

He said JICA is now finalizing the feasibility study of the proposed metro line from Uttara to Sydabad via Pallabi, Farmgate and Shahbagh which will be handed over to the government by next

February," He said Japan government would actively consider to provide concession loan with 0.01 percent interest with 40 years of repay period, if the Bangladesh government request for it after getting the feasibility study.

"I think the financial assistant won't be a problem for Bangladesh to setting up the metro line as presently Japan government is providing such support in setting up metro railways in Vietnam and Indonesia," he said.

According to the feasibility study, it would take about five years to build the proposed 22 km first metro line in the city that requires 25 MW power to run.

The carriages will ply over single line at 40km per hour speed with every four minutes intervals accommodating 64,000 passengers at a time at both directions touching 16 stations.

The feasibility study team is also working to project the fare of the metro line, he said, adding we will propose such fare that won't be higher than the existing bus ticket. He said Bangladesh government needed to provide huge subsidy to make the fare tolerable for the common people. "It's a common practice all over the world to provide subsidy in metro lines like Delhi, Kolkata, Bangkok even Tokyo metro railways," he said.

5th population census in March next year

Says minister

UNB, Dhaka

Planning Minister AK Khandker said next population and housing census will be held across the country from March 15-19 next year.

"The date for census has been fixed as March 15-19, 2011 and will be placed before the cabinet for its approval," he said. The minister was presiding over the 15th extraordinary meeting of the National Statistics Council (NSC) at the conference room of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) on Thursday.

The next census will be the 5th in the country after the last census held in 2001. The population census is held every ten years. The process will be implemented through digital method to ensure more accuracy.

Speaking on the occasion, Planning Minister AK Khandker said that although there were some errors in the previous censuses, work has been going on since last year to present an accurate census this time.

He also informed that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has decided in principle to make the BBS as Informatics and Statistics Division.

AK Khandker also informed that steps would be taken to publish the preliminary report of the census within three months and the final report within 12 months.

Prime minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashiur Rahman emphasised incorporating two questions - slum household and sources of energy - in the questionnaire of the census as well as publishing the employment monitoring survey and welfare monitoring survey.

He also emphasised improving the quality of census.

Referring to Planning Division Secretary M

Habibullah Majumder's comment on incorporating the question of disability in the census questionnaire, Mashiur Rahman said commitment from the government and the Centre is not the same thing.

Executive Director Mustafizur Rahman stressed the need for updating the base year for calculation of GDP as the country's GDP structure has changed over the period. He added that newer sectors are coming into the coun-

try's economy. "If the parameters are not fixed, it would be difficult to change the base year," he said.

Statistics Division Secretary Riti Ibrahim said they would formulate a five-year work plan for developing the division and submit it to the finance ministry.

General Economic Division (GED) member of the Planning Commission Shamsul Alam demanded review of the base year to get correct estimate of GDP while former secretary Waliul Islam urged to make the base year 2010-11.

According to recommendations of the NSC, the number of questions was fixed at 25, discarding questions on slum household, mobile connection, sources of energy and the main income source of the household. Of the 25 questions, 11 are household related and 14 on the individual.

The meeting was informed that some Tk 8 crore would be needed to conduct 25 surveys to update the GDP base year.

The NSC meeting also reviewed the development of activities regarding the Housing and Population Census, 2011 as well as the development of the decisions of the 14th extraordinary meeting of NSC.

Earlier, the four population and housing censuses were held in 1974, 1981, 1991 and 2001.

Shamsul Alam, member of General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission, economist Wahiduddin Mahmud, BBS Director General Md Shahjahan Ali Mollah, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) Research Director KAS Murshid, Dr Rafiqul Huda Chowdhury, former secretary Waliul Islam, and Bangladesh Statistics Council President Nurul Islam were, among others, present.



PHOTO: STAR

Detective Branch (DB) of police recovered a 20-kg touchstone statue of Radha-Krishna worth about Tk 2 crore from Gaganpur village in Biral upazila yesterday. Two people were also arrested in this connection.

The Daily Star Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

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Kalim A. L. Khan (1977-2009)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

On this day he left us all. May ALLAH grant him peace and place him in the heavens for eternity. We seek blessings from all for his eternal peace.

-All family members