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Chennai Corporation drive to allay Rubella vaccine fear among parents



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CHENNAI: [Greater Chennai Corporation](#) launched a special drive on Wednesday to get the consent of [parents](#) to administer the measles-rubella vaccine to their children studying in corporation

[schools](#)

. This comes a day after health minister

[C Vijaya Bhaskar](#)

said the government would make the

[vaccination mandatory](#)

if parents continued to resist the drive.

Zone-wise teams have been formed in Chennai with health and education officials to talk to parents in schools. "We vaccinated 9,000 of our students today," said corporation deputy commissioner for education M Govinda Rao. "All parents are not on board yet, they had a lot of questions and were worried because they were misinformed." About 40% of corporation school children have been given the vaccine. On Wednesday, through Parent-Teacher Association and school heads, parents were brought to school for an interaction.

Private schools in the city have been conducting vaccination camps. Many schools, despite government instruction to make the vaccine mandatory, issued 'willingness forms' asking parental consent. At Shree Nikethan Group of schools, about 60 anxious parents showed up on campus to see if the vaccination went on smoothly. This, says correspondent P Vishnucharan, comes from a lack of knowledge about rubella and safe vaccination procedures. "Parents are reading up things on the internet, from conflicting sources. The health department could have instead issued posters and flyers with information on the condition, and the vaccination to allay these apprehensions," he said. Although 90% of parents are okay with the vaccine, the rest are anxious, he said. **Latest**

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"My daughter's school has not yet made any announcements of a vaccine camp," said a parent at a popular school in Nungambakkam. "If they do, I'm not keen on getting it done without speaking to our family paediatrician first."

The state had planned to give the vaccine to more than 1.8 crore children between the age of nine months and 15 years in schools and health centres by the end of February. On Tuesday, officials said only 85 lakh children were given the vaccine. The drive has now been extended by another fortnight. Rubella, or German measles, is a contagious viral infection that causes a distinctive red rash. When a pregnant woman gets the infection, it can cause congenital rubella syndrome in the baby, disrupting development and causing serious birth defects such as heart abnormalities, deafness, and brain damage.