

" अवयवदान - एक महाचलन "

- (Organ Donation - A mass Movement)

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"Eyes which guided us, when we were alive can still guide someone after our life!"
 The main aim of this article is to create awareness, so that it will motivate as well as inspire the reader to pledge his/her organs & through whom more awareness about Organ Donation will spread in our Country.

To start with, first of all we need to know what actually Organ Donation means? According to Google - It is the process when a person allows an organ of their own to be removed & transplanted to another person. But, according to me it is a Noble job done by an individual in order to show "Humanity".

In 2013, there were only 313 donors across India. 2014 saw 411 donors and 2017 had 905 cadaver organ donors. So over the years, the number of deceased donors has witnessed threefold increase. But still given the demand and size of population, India remains a country with one of the lowest organ donation rates in the world.

Now the question arise that why should we donate organs?
 I would like to answer this question in two aspects - Necessity & Religious aspect.
 Now what do I mean by Necessity? Transplantation, as we can transplant only if we get donation. India's first organ transplant was conducted in 1970's (it was a kidney transplant). The number of transplant done annually has been increased gradually. Around 5000 kidneys, 1000 livers & 50 Hearts are transplanted in India. Here, there is poor Organ Donation rate - 0.26 per million. With 1 per million donation rate, India would have 1100 organ donors, which means 2200 kidneys, eyes, 1100 livers, Pancreas & Hearts, which are enough to take care of almost all demands for organs in India.
 There is huge shortage of organs and it is not that there aren't enough organs to transplant as nearly every person who dies is a potential donor. I would like to add a survey here taken by TOI, which says that there is a huge gap between patients who needs transplant & organs available. In India, around 1.8 lakh individuals suffer from renal failure, however renal transplant done is around 8000 only. 2 lakh patients die of liver failure annually, 10-15% of which can be saved by liver transplant.



Similarly, 50,000 persons suffer from heart failure annually but only 10-15 heart transplants are performed.

Second aspect according to me is religious believes. India is a country known for its cultural & religious diversity. We here believe in "Dann" (charity) & "Moksha" (salvation), that "Charity leads us to salvation".

Now, as we have come across various facts & figures and have understood the reality & importance of organ donation, lets see that who all can donate organs & what are criterias which should be followed in order to donate organs in India ?

Here we consider 3 types of donors - live donors, when a living person decides to donate his organ(s). Living donors are usually family members or close friend of the one who is in need. Brain death donors, when organ from brain-dead person is transplanted into living recipient. This initially requires the permission of family of donor.

Criterias in India - firstly, it is important to know that "organ donor card" is not a legal document. It is only an expression of a person's willingness to be a donor. In India, what is more important at time of organ donation is the consent of donor's family. According to "Transplantation of Human Organs" Act, living donor must be over 18 years of age & are limited to donate organs only to their immediate blood relatives or in some special cases out of affection and attachment to recipient.

Then comes the most important question, Why India lacks in Organ Donation? There are various reasons behind this, but the major being "Lack of Awareness". This is the reason behind every major issue in India. People here are least aware of the schemes & policies regarding organ donation. Second most important reason is "Superstitions", several studies & surveys including those conducted by TOI, have shown that people believe in myths like - donating organs may impact their next birth. Around 30% of urban population believes that organ donor's won't receive any life-saving treatment. Around 20% think that their body will be mutilated; Another most common reason is "Lack of family consent", there are many such cases where the donor was willing to donate his organs but after his death family didn't allow so. There are many more reasons which we often underestimate like "Lack of trust between patient & Doctor".



"Lack of Education", "Scarcity of Technology" & sometimes "lack of Infrastructure". Lack of or negligible brain-death declaration was identified as one of the major reason for delay or lack of organ donation. "Organ Wasting" in India due to prevalence of myths surrounding brain death is also one reason. The situation of organ wastage is more severe in case of heart, due to issues such as cost & unavailability of expertise.

Everyone has a tendency to take out faults in one or the other thing but as it is rightly said that, if you are complaining about something give a solution for it first. So here are some of my solutions for the cases I mentioned earlier –

- * The main reason behind slow take-off of organ donation is lack of awareness so, awareness should be increased at all levels - Community-based awareness, Patient/Public-based & Government-initiated awareness.
 - more non-government organisations should take significant steps to spread it.
 - * Strong need for development of centralized organ-sharing network among hospitals for better co-ordination, timely utilisation & avoiding organ wastage.
 - * In addition to these efforts another important area of focus is addressing religious & superstitious beliefs about organ donation. Notably, no religious law prohibits their followers from donating their organs. In 2012, the MOHAN foundation organised "one of its kind" multi-religious conference titled "Sant Sangama" where religious leaders unanimously endorsed organ donation as most supreme form of gift.
 - * The state or national authorities should support research projects exploring major factors influencing organ donation among general population.
 - * More Organ Donation awareness can be spread through social media & celebrity involvement. Every year on "National Organ Donation Day", November 27th, a walkathon is organised across different cities in India to raise awareness, bust myths & encourage people to become organ donors. Over the years, the campaign has gathered support from celebrities like late Irrfan Khan, Swara Bhaskar, Gul Panag & former Indian hockey captain Sandeep Singh.
- "Your one kidney can do the work of two for someone with none of them"

The solutions I mentioned is a two-way process where both Government & Public have to come together. So lets see the role of both.

What Government can do ?

- * I would like to mention the example of "Spain Model", Spain being the largest organ donor. Working on the principle of "Presumed Consent", the spanish model considers all citizen as potential donor, unless they specifically choose to opt-out. But since the awareness about organ donation in the country is high, the refusal rates are low.
- * India can also follow this by launching a full fledged mission, similar to "Swatch Bharat Abhiyan" to increase awareness about organ donation.
- * Incentives should be provided to the donor for motivation as well as supporting finance.
- * State laws should have the provision to provide state employees with paid leave if they volunteer to be live donor.
- * Private players can be brought up for example, in USA "Facebook" allowed users to add "Donor Status" to their profiles, which lead to spike in registration.
- * Registration process should be simple & handy.
- * Selling of organs is a punishable offence, still it is practised. So strict implementation of laws are required. Economic empowerment is the key, as people from poor sectors donate organs only to get money.
- * Also transplantation should be done keeping in view the need of patient not greed of money.
- * During Election campaign, the candidate gets chance to reach & interact with many peoples. So why not these public representatives after electing again visit these people from his constituency & spread awareness about many such issues.
- * Organ donation camps should be organised in rural areas on various public festivals like Independence day, Republic day & during mass meetings like Lok Sabha & school gatherings so that we'll be able to reach maximum mob.

What we as citizens can do ?

The last decade has generated a wide generation gap, as a result it is quite difficult to spread awareness among the old class of society. Thus the youth should be targetted

- * According to me why not all medical students for a day in a week or a month

visit all nearby schools & colleges in order to acknowledge them with organ donation this will also help them get socialise.

- * In schools and colleges we are awarded with 5-10 grace marks for participating in activities like sports, NCC, NSS, same should be applied if registered as a organ donor.
- * Social recognition should be given to donor to motivate others.

I would like to acknowledge you all about the Act passed by government in 1994 - "Transplantation of Human Organs" Act. It defines about the regulation of removal of human organs & its storage. It also arrived at the regulation of transplantation of human organs for therapeutic purpose & for prevention of commercial dealings of organs. The main provisions of this act -

1. Brain death identified as a form of death process & criteria for brain death certification is defined under this act.
2. Allows transplantation of human organs & tissues from living donors and cadavers.
3. Government shall maintain the registry of donors and recipients of organ.

Keeping all these points in consideration, I would like to conclude my essay with some of my views & opinions. According to me, the person who is lacking an eye is not blind, but blind are those who are not willing to donate their eyes to them.

I would suggest that, "if you don't make it to the finish line, donate your organs".

Be healthy so that your organs can work for someone after your departure.

"Nothing is impossible if done with appropriate knowledge & Noble intentions !!!"

Finally, I want to Salute the ones who "recycled" their life by being an organ donor.