

Shri M.K.Rekhi, Managing Director & CEO of **SBI Foundation** sharing his thoughts on why it is imperative to raise awareness about Organ Donation at TOI Organ Donation Awareness Drive in Mumbai.

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'India Inc should lead the way for organ donation'

Industry Experts Meet At Round Table To Discuss Awareness Drive


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Mumbai: India could consider the organ donation model followed by Spain, an "opt-out" system, as well as putting in place some measures like seeking consent while issuing driving licences or voter cards. Besides, companies need to adopt organ donation awareness as corporate social responsibility. These were some of the points discussed at a round table of industry experts on organ donation organized by TOI in association with Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital on Friday.

In Spain, citizens are automatically registered for organ donation unless they choose to state otherwise, also called the 'opt-out' system.

Over 1.5 lakh kidney donations are required a year in the country. Only 5,000 patients are able to get a kidney every year, while the rest languish on the waiting list. Spain does not even take consent for removing organs from the deceased. Here, we need to take permissions and hence, there are not many organ donors. Maharashtra is number 2 in organ transplants after Tamil Nadu. Counselling and advertising is required for promoting organ donation, and awareness for busting myths. Nagpur alone has 1,000 brain-dead people every year, but very few end up as donors as their families do not give consent," said state minister for medical education Girish Mahajan during the event that brought together CXOs and CSR heads of several organizations. In certain states like Tamil Nadu, motorists are given an option of pledging organs through a form provided with driving licences.

Most corporates do not take up the cause because the benefits are not tangible, according to Jaya Jairam, project manager of NGO Mohan Foundation. "States like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu are robust in promoting the issue while others are completely detached. Out of 160 government medical colleges in India, only a handful have the infrastructure and capability for a transplant.



THE TALKING POINT: State minister for medical education Girish Mahajan is all ears as industry experts speak at the event

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Hence, most transplants happen at expensive private hospitals which makes this an unaffordable exercise for the middle class," he said. Liver transplants cost around Rs 25-30 lakh, while kidney transplants upwards of Rs 10 lakh. Though the insurance coverage is gradually picking up, the cost of rehabilitation is not covered.


But, most business heads felt, corporates can do a lot in pushing the agenda, with the top management leading in order to cascade the message down to all the employees. A case in point is SBI, where its chairman is promoting the

cause among the company's huge 2.7 lakh employee base. An NGO is sensitizing employees about organ donation sign-ups at the company, while an organ recipient was taken on a road trip from Mumbai to London, across 16 nations to spread the message. Organ donation is now part of their CSR, said Mahendra Kumar Rekhi, managing director & CEO, SBI Foundation

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Industry experts meet at Times of India's Roundtable to discuss the Organ Donation Awareness Drive in Mumbai.