

Organ Donation in Uttarakhand

The Impact of Public Awareness: Transforming Organ Donation in Uttarakhand

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Organ donation has the power to save numerous lives, yet it continues to be a sensitive and often misunderstood issue in India. Cultural traditions, religious considerations, and misinformation have historically contributed to low donation rates, particularly in certain states where the initiative has not been systematically adopted. Uttarakhand, for example, recorded almost no organ donations in the past; however, a significant shift is now taking place, driven by ongoing awareness campaigns led by the MOHAN Foundation along with AIIMS Rishikesh, and other regional organizations.

MOHAN Foundation entered into an MOU with AIIMS Rishikesh and started its intervention in Uttarakhand in January 2024. Since then, it has actively conducted awareness programs across Uttarakhand, educating approximately 4,000 people about organ donation. These efforts have started yielding positive results.

AIIMS Rishikesh made history by recording Uttarakhand's first-ever deceased organ donation on August 01, 2024 a groundbreaking and deeply inspiring moment that marks a pivotal turning point for the region.

One profoundly moving case involved the donation of a two-day-old neonate for whole-body donation, marking Uttarakhand's first-ever neonatal donation. In this instance, the family reached out to the MOHAN Foundation representative in Rishikesh and made the decision without hesitation. On a separate occasion, another neonatal donation took place, this time involving a six-day-old baby. Again, the family themselves contacted the MOHAN Foundation representative in Rishikesh, demonstrating a similar selfless commitment.



Mr. Sanchit Arora, Project Leader, MOHAN Foundation (deputed to AIIMS, Rishikesh) at the awareness program

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These two instances send a powerful message: when people are properly informed, they are willing to step forward for organ donation. However, spreading awareness at the grassroots level continues to be a significant challenge.

The impact of public awareness is visible beyond these recorded donations. MOHAN Foundation has been receiving direct calls from individuals inquiring about organ donation & whole-body donation registration process. This shift indicates that more people are becoming open to the idea of donation when given the right information.

One recent case further demonstrates this change. Late one night, a family from a hospital in Dehradun contacted MOHAN Foundation, expressing their desire to donate the organs of their loved one. While they were unsure of the patient's brain-death status, their willingness to donate was a significant step forward. Unfortunately, due to the unavailability of a neurologist at night, the confirmation could not be made, and the patient suffered a cardiac arrest before the donation could proceed.

Though the donation did not happen, the family's initiative underscores the growing impact of public awareness. Uttarakhand, once hesitant about organ donation, is now seeing a shift in public perception. However, challenges remain, especially in ensuring required infrastructure and coordination.

With continued awareness campaigns and stronger medical support, Uttarakhand is on the path to embracing organ donation. This progress marks just the beginning, and as more people become informed, the state has the potential to become a leader in life-saving organ donations.

