



An Assessment of Knowledge Level & Attitude Towards Organ Donation Among Students and the Role of Media in Awareness

Verma D. K.¹, Geeta Rani²

¹Head & Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Mewar University, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan, India.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Mass & Media Communication, Mewar University, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan, India.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0524.1102>

ABSTRACT:

A social study was conducted to assess the Knowledge level, attitude and status of media awareness regarding organ donation among the students of Mewar University, Chittorgarh (Rajasthan). Organ donation is very important for society and is a life-saving treatment option for patients with end-organ damage. India is struggling with an acute shortage of organs. There is a wide gap between the need for and availability of organs. There are various myths and fears associated with organ donation, too. According to a survey in India, it is found that every year, 5 lakh people die because of the non-availability of organs. Organ transplantation has been a very important achievement of modern medical science [1]. Low awareness towards Organ donation and transplantation may be cause of low organ donation rates, so it is necessary to analyze the level of awareness towards organ donation among the students. The media play a crucial role in raising awareness about organ donation through print media, television and social media. These are effective platforms for spreading the message and encouraging people to register as donors. Increased media coverage can contribute to higher donation rates and ultimately save lives.

Since students can be a very active catalyst in spreading awareness, it is crucial to know how aware they are of OD. To analyze this, a pre-structured and pre-tested questionnaire through a Google form was used to conduct the study among the 224 students (male -137 & female -87) of Mewar University between the age group of 18-32 years.

This study reveals the low level of awareness in the media (internet, TV, radio, news papers, magazines, friends and relatives etc.). Most of the students had the fear that their organs will not go to those who needed them the most and also believed that family consent was still necessary for a registered brain-dead person to donate organs. 65% of the students think that more information about organ donation can support them in owning a donor card and another 75% believe that awareness about organ donation should be part of education in schools and colleges.

Key Words: Organ donation, media, awareness, knowledge level, attitude, students

Introduction:

Organ transplantation is the process of replacing diseased organs, parts of organs, or tissues with healthy organs or tissues. Approximately 25 different types of organs and tissues can be transplanted, such as the heart, kidney, liver, pancreas, cornea, bone marrow, blood, skin, and ligaments [2].

Organ transplantation is recognized as one of the most gripping medical advances of the century, as it provides a way of giving the gift of life to patients who need it. But there is a huge shortage of organs in India, and patients die while on the waiting list as they do not get an organ on time [3]. The rate of organ donation in India is 0.01 per million. In comparison to other countries like Croatia's, the percentage is 36.5 per million, followed by Spain's 35.3, Portugal's 34, Belgium's 33.6, and the US's 32 per million [4]. The situation of transplantation rates: annually, 175555 kidney patients, 50000 heart patients, 50000 liver patients and 1 lakh corneal blind patients await transplant but only 5000, 30, 700 and 25000 donors are available, respectively [1].

The importance of organ donation was also highlighted by the **Prime Minister** in his "Man Ki Baat" radio program in the months of October and November 2015.

It is estimated that 1.5 lakh brain deaths occur due to road traffic accidents (RTA) and if even 20% of them were to donate, then all the requirements for organ transplantation in India would be fulfilled [5]. Lack of awareness may be the reason for such low organ donation rates in India. Religious beliefs may also be a reason why families do not agree to deceased organ donation in India. A lack of awareness and scant insight into the subject do have an impact on organ donation (Srivastava & Mani, 2018) [6]. A Study conducted by Spencer M, shows wide knowledge and attitude gaps towards organ donation among the general community, worsened by religious attitudes and superstitious beliefs, which is generating fear and mistrust about organ donation [7].

Objectives:

- (1) To assess the knowledge and attitude regarding organ donation amongst students of Mewar University.
- (2) To assess the media awareness of the students towards organ donation.

Materials and Research Methods:

The design of the study is descriptive and the method is a survey. A cross-sectional, pre-structured and pre-tested questionnaire through Google form was used to conduct the study amongst the 224 students (137 male & 87 female) between the age group of 18-32 years at Mewar University, Chittorgarh Rajasthan, to assess the knowledge, attitude, and media awareness towards organ donation.

Results:

Table 1 shows that out of 224 respondents studying in the University, the majority are between the age groups of 18-23 years old: 175 (78.2%), 61.2% are male & 38.8% are female, who will be the pillars of the country in the future. Nearly half (58%) of the respondents belong to rural areas and are of poor economic status.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables of the students: n=224

Sl. No.	Demographic details:	Frequency	Percentage
		(f)	(%)
1	Age in Years:		
	a. 18-20	81	36.2
	b. 21-23	94	42
	c. 24-26	29	12.9
	d. 27-30	11	4.9
2	Gender:		
	a. Male	137	61.2
	b. Female	87	38.8
3	Religion:		
	a. Hindu	176	78.6
	b. Muslim	42	18.8
4	Marital status:		
	a. Married	198	88.4
	b. Single	26	11.6
5	Residence:		
	a. Urban	65	29
	b. Rural	131	58.5
6	Monthly income of family in rupees:		
	a. <10,000	82	36.6

b. 10,001-20,000	48	21.4
c. 20,001-30,000	35	15.6
d. 30,001- 40000	18	08
e. >40000	41	18.3

Table 2 reveals that 62.5% of respondents know that all the organs can be brought out of a deceased (brain-dead) donor and successfully used for transplantation but the rest 37.5% don't know which organs can be taken out of a brain-dead donor. Most of the respondents nearby 74% don't know where to obtain the organ donation card. Out of the 224 respondents, 55% of them want to receive the donor card.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of the knowledge level of the students: n=224

Sl. No.	Knowledge level:	Frequency	Percentage
		f	%
1	Do you know where to obtain Organ Donation cards?		
	a. Yes	60	26.8
	b. No	164	73.9
2	Which of the following organs can be procured from a deceased (brain dead) donor and successfully used for transplantation?		
	a. Kidney	21	9.4
	b. Liver	5	2.2
	c. Heart	14	6.3
	d. Lungs	3	1.3
	e. Eyes	28	12.5
	f. Heart valves	1	0.4
	g. Bones	2	0.9
	h. Skin	10	4.5
	i. All of them	140	62.5
3	Would you be interested in receiving such a Donor Card?		
	a. Yes	123	54.9
	b. No	101	45.1

Table 3 shows that out of 224 respondents nearby, 60% believed that if a deceased (brain-dead) patient is registered as an organ donor but family consent is still necessary for organ donation. Out of total, 50.4% of the respondents have fear that the body of a person will be disfigured if an organ is brought out of the body and another 60% fear that their donated organs will not go to those who need them the most. The feeling of the 52.7% respondents is that their family may not support their decision to donate the organs, while out of the total 32.6% are not in favor of the organ donation & tissues act. Nearby 65% of the total respondents think that if they receive more information towards OD, it will support them in owning the donor card and 77.2% agree with the requirement of OD educational programs in schools & colleges.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of the attitude of the students: n=224

Sl. No.	Attitude towards Organ Donation	Frequency	Percentage	
1	In the event that the deceased patient is registered organ donor, is family consent still necessary for organ donation?		f	%
	a. Yes	134	59.8	

	b. No	90	40.2
2	Do you fear that your organs will not go to those who need them the most?		
	a. Yes	133	59.4
	b. No	91	40.6
3	Do you have fear the body of a person will be disfigured, if organs brought out?		
	a. Yes	113	50.4
	b. No	111	49.6
4	Do you feel your family may not support your decision to donate your organs?		
	a. Yes	118	52.7
	b. No	106	47.3
5	Do you think, if you receive more information towards organ donation it will support you for owning a donor card.		
	a. Yes	145	64.7
	b. No	79	35.3
6	Are you in the favor of organ donation & tissues Act?		
	a. Yes	151	67.4
	b. No	73	32.6
7	Do you think an organ donation and transplantation educational programme is required for students in the schools and colleges?		
	a. Yes	173	77.2
	b. No	51	22.8

Table 4 reveals that out of total, approximately 60% of the respondents are aware through media (internet, TV, radio, news papers, magazines, etc.), followed by 17% of hospital awareness Programs, 14% of teaching curriculum and 8% of friends, relatives and family members.

Table 4: Frequency and percentage distribution of media of awareness among the students: n=224

Sl. No.	Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
		(f)	(%)
1	From where did you receive the information towards brain death?		
	a. Media- TV/News paper/ Magazines	55	24.6
	b. Internet	80	35.7
	c. Hospital awareness Programme / health exhibition	39	17.4
	d. Friends / Relatives / Family members	18	8
	e. Teaching Curriculum	32	14.3
2	Have you ever seen any poster regarding organ donation and /or transplantation?		
	a. Yes	158	58.9
	b. No	92	41.1

Discussion:

In the study, it was seen that most of the respondents are in the age group of 18-23 years, belong to rural areas and from low economic background. The level of knowledge does not seem satisfactory; some of the myths and unawareness are in the minds of respondents. There is a need to wash their brain towards OD. Many of the similar studies show that lack of awareness may be one of the reasons for such low organ donation rates in India. There is not any structured and focused awareness to help people understand what, why or how to donate organ. While some of the NGO's are making efforts, it is the drops in the ocean. Many people don't know where to go, even if they are aware and willing. Why families do not agree to deceased organ donation in India superstitions such as we will get a new birth with the same organ missing if we donate the organ in this birth [8]. Many studies report that most family members refuse to grant permission for registration to donate organs. Families do not accept the manipulation of the body of a relative to remove organs or OD due to social, religious and cultural issues [9].

In the present study fear is seen in the respondents, like that their bodies will be disfigured, donated organs will not go to those who need them the most and they feel that their family will not support them to donate the organs; rather, 32.6% are not in favor of the Organ donation and tissue act. The respondent's opinion is that they want to receive more information about organ donation and awareness programs about organ donation should be included in the curriculum activities as well. Many of the awareness programs are being organized for OD. The study undertaken also brought forward use of mass media as an effective tool in the planning of Information, Education & Communication (IEC) campaigns as the majority of the study participants had received information on the topic from mass media communication channels. Media can play an effective role in promoting organ donation through various means Public awareness campaigns, Personal stories, Interviews and Features, Social media, Documentaries and film, Live events, Collaboration with influencers, Regular updates, Editorial Support. More than 1,500 students of Shivaji College, Delhi University, organized an awareness program about the importance of organs [10]. Western College Mumbai also set an example for the students by donating their organs [11]. Similarly, structured educational programs should be organized to enhance knowledge, improve attitudes and increase willingness regarding organ donation among students as well as the general public.

Conclusion:

Lack of awareness, superstitions & misconceptions and Lack of family consent are found in the study. This paper recommends that education regarding organ donation should be conducted in schools, colleges and universities because students are the most effective agents in spreading information. Such psycho-social, religious and cultural factors and their attitudes should be investigated carefully.

References:

- 1) We Need a National Organ Donation and Transplantation Program. The Times of India, August 19, 2015.
- 2) Sindhu A., Ramakrishnan T. S., Khera A., Singh G. A study to assess the knowledge of medical students regarding organ donation in a selected college of Western Maharashtra. *Med J DY Patil Univ* 2017;10: 349-53
- 3) Devi, K., Leondra, L., Poovitha, R. Knowledge, attitude and practice of organ donation in urban areas of Puducherry – A Community based study. *Int J Public health Res.* 2018;5(2): 82-91.
- 4) Times view, India's rate of organ donation compares poorly with other countries. *Times India (Online Edition)* 2013.
- 5) Mukharya P. How to Give Life After Death. *The Hindu.* 5 June; 2014.
- 6) Srivastava, A., & Mani, A. (2018). Deceased organ donation and transplantation in India: Promises and challenges. *Neurology Society of India*, 66 (2), 316-322. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0028-3886.227259>
- 7) Spencer M. The barriers to organ and tissue donation in palliative care. *End Life J.* 2012;2:1–11.
- 8) Singh P, Kumar A, Sharma RK. Factors influencing refusal by relatives of brain-dead patients to give consent for organ donation: Experience at a transplant centre. *J Indian Med Assoc* 2004;102:630, 632, 643.
- 9) Moraes EL, Massarollo MC. Reasons for the family members' refusal to donate organ and tissue for transplant. *Acta Paul Enferm* 2009;22:131-5.
- 10) Times News Network, 1,500 walk to collect organ woes. *Times of India (print edition).* Sep 5, 2013.
- 11) Munshi, Sameera Kapoor, TNN, Organ donation, a cause taken seriously by group of BMS students. *Times of India (online edition).* Aug 29, 2013