India performs 2nd highest number of organ transplants globally, next only to US: Health Min

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New Delhi: Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) presided over the 10th Indian Organ Donation Day. He said, “India performs the second largest number of transplants in the world, next only to the US as per data available on the Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation.”

Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Union Minister of State (HFW) and C Vijayabaskar, Health Minister, Tamil Nadu were present at a grand function at Vigyan Bhawan today, organised by the National Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO).

The Health Ministers felicitated and recognised the noble act of organ donation of several families of donors. “You have inspired and motivated all of us through your act of strength and humanity in your saddest moments of life, and we salute all those bravehearts for being a source of life for the needy”, Vardhan said as he honoured many donor families.

Vardhan said that despite the achievement of being second to the US in the number of transplants, a huge gap still exists between those requiring transplants and the actual number of organs available for transplant from deceased donors.

“India has a dismal 0.65 per million population (PMP) Organ Donation Rate and we need to improve this,” he informed. We need to create and enhance awareness about organ donation on a monumental scale, such that it becomes a Jan Andolan and people voluntarily pledge to donate their organs, he stated. He also stated that public representatives and public functionaries need to become torchbearers and ambassadors of this movement to not only spread awareness but also dispel myths and apprehensions in the communities regarding organ donation.

Vardhan urged Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), non-state stakeholders, community and religious leaders and opinion influencers within communities to become ambassadors of organ donation and enthuse and inspire people regarding this noble act.

“Let Medical Colleges take a lead in this movement. Let us have national and regional events where we create massive awareness drives for organ donation,” he stated.
He added that we need to institutionalise our best practices to create credibility in the system to inspire confidence in the people and that there is a need for simplification of processes for transparent harvesting and transplantation of organs.

Ashwini Choubey addressed the gathering by saying that organ donation is the biggest act of humanity and kindness. Urging people to come forward for organ donation, he said that while the body is mortal, the soul is immortal and through the selfless act of organ donation, we can continue to live through the recipients of the donated organs. He stated that organ donation is ‘maha daan and maha kalyan’.

Donor families, best-performing states, best-performing hospitals, best-performing transplant coordinators and states that have shown excellent performance in uploading maximum data in the national registry were felicitated and awarded at the event by the dignitaries.

Vardhan and Choubey also administered the Organ Donation Pledge to the people present at the event.

Government of India has set up the National Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) as a mandate of the Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act 2011, for carrying out the activities for the promotion of organ donation from deceased persons, putting systems in place for organ donation and transplantation and training the needed manpower.

NOTTO is performing the functions of the National Human Organs & Tissues Removal and Storage Network as specified by the Act. Networking among hospitals and tissue banks is set up through NOTTO at the national level, Regional Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization (ROTTO) at the regional level and State Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization (SOTTO) at State level for procurement and sharing of organs obtained from the deceased donors and allocation of procured organs. The networking of the transplant and/or retrieval hospitals has been done to ensure that no donated organ goes to waste.

Also present at the event were Arun Panda, Secretary Health; Arun Singhal, Special Secretary, MoHFW; Sanjay Tyagi, Directorate General Of Health Services (DGHS); representatives of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), state governments, various hospitals, medical colleges, schools, SOTTO, ROTTO, and members from Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and Border Security Force (BSF).