

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5657  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 7<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2017**

**EYE DONATION**

**5657. SHRI M.I. SHANAVAS:  
SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that over 50 per cent of the donated eyes go waste;
- (b) if so, the response of the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether there are any programmes in the Ministry which aims at encouraging eye donation in the country;
- (d) if so, the complete details thereof including steps taken to bring about awareness;
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (f) type of efforts taken by the Government hospitals across the country in the last three years to see that eye donations are successfully utilised?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND  
FAMILY WELFARE  
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)**

(a) & (b): As per the reports furnished by States/ UTs, less than 50 per cent donated eyes collected under the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare are utilized for corneal transplantation.

This is mainly because, all the donated eyes are not found suitable for corneal transplantation due to various medical reasons, like poor quality of collected corneas due to reasons like, age of donor, pre-existing degeneration/diseases etc. Prior to transplantation, the collected corneas are assessed by transplant surgeons for its suitability for optical keratoplasty by using Specular Microscope.

However, corneas not suitable or fit for optical keratoplasty are utilized either for therapeutic keratoplasty or for training and research purpose.

No report about intentional non-use/wastage of donated eyes in Government eye banks/hospitals across the country has been received.

(c) to (e): Information, Education and Communication (IEC) is an on-going activity under NPCB to create awareness about eye health including promotion of eye donation to restore vision of corneal blind in the country. The major steps to promote eye donation are:

- Educating people about early donation so that eye tissues can be harvested within 4-6 hours of death of donor and also follow other general precautions like covering eyes of deceased person, switching off the fans etc.;
- Nation-wide campaign during annual event – Eye Donation Fortnight from 25<sup>th</sup> August to 8<sup>th</sup> September – to promote eye donation;
- Honouring donor families in the annual functions organized by major eye banks during Eye Donation Fortnight;
- Continuation of dedicated phone line 1919 (BSNL & MTNL users) automatically linked with the area eye banks in metro cities and new 24x7 toll free No. 1800-11-4770 for organ donation including eye donation;
- Promotion of eye donation through print and electronic media and a weekly radio programme - “Ankehn Hain Anmol” - aired on FM Gold.

(f): Major Steps taken to strengthen eye banking at Government hospitals/Medical Colleges are as under:

- Strengthening of Eye Banks located at Medical Colleges by providing essential ophthalmic equipments;
- Collection of eyes by Eye Banks from willing donors after death and also from those patients who die in hospitals through “Hospital Corneal Retrieval Programme” for timely transplantation of corneas;
- Appointment of Eye Donation Counsellors in the identified Eye Banks of Medical Colleges/Tertiary care Hospitals to promote eye donation and timely collection of donated eyes;
- Free supply of preservation and storage medium for donated eyes to Government eye banks all over the country to improve utilization of donated eyes;
- Provision for in-service training of eye surgeons in eye banking for skill development.