

**11. Extract from Blood of the professionals A Report on the Exploitation of Professional Blood Donors by the Blood Banking System in India
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How the Poor are Trapped?

Hundreds of thousands of young people living in small towns or villages, in an inner revolt to break loose from it, get to the cosmopolitan cities or industrial townships.

It is seldom that these people get employment of their choice or suitability. Once their money is exhausted, it becomes difficult for them to persist without food for long.

It is the agents who are alert in these areas who get to hook these people by playing on their sentiments. It is suggested to these simple folks by the agents that either a small child or a pregnant woman is on death bed and if he could give a little amount of blood to save the patient, he can get some money as reward. The agents make it convenient to suggest that such a deed may fetch him luck to get him into suitable employment. In the meantime he can come out of the immediate crisis, further argues the tout. It is rarely that the agent fails with such a tactical motivation. They escort such persons at odd times and get them to be bled, when the other donors are preferably not around, the new donor is bled for two bottles at a time and payment is made for a single unit; or payment is given less than the announced amount.

Unfortunately, with the cash of Rs.80.00 (which is the prevailing rate) he can barely keep himself afloat for more than a few days. He is again penniless. Sooner or later he returns to the Blood Bank to try his luck again. It is now that he learns of the timings and of the procedures. If he is lucky to be in time, he is bled or else he has to return back later. For as many as 3-4 times in the beginning he gets qualified continuously after which he is rejected to join the group of chronic professional blood donors.

Thus coming in contact with professional blood donors he is perplexed when he learns that people have been at it for 10-38 years and are living by these means. Some are married and care for their families with this money. The fear of giving blood disappears and he treads slowly into the profession with the absorbed knowledge of self medication and the spirit of excitement.

The commercial blood banks today control more than 80% of the blood and blood product requirements of the country. The blood is sold by them as essential life saving drug and therefore its price has not been allowed to be controlled.

Professional Blood Donors - Who Encourages them?

"The Commercial Blood Banks are a big racket and it (racket) exists because the medical profession is totally indifferent about the quality of blood being transfused. Who is patronising the commercial blood banks? Doctors are still directing patients to these blood banks. If only doctors could take a stand on this, commercial blood banks would close down."

Many State Government Blood Banks in Delhi depend on outside sources (commercial) as their in-house-banks do not collect enough due to non insistence on relatives to donate. For example Safdarjung Hospital has a total requirement of 17,500 units per year; replacement donors number 4250; from Indian Red Cross Society 2,250 units are obtained and from Commercial sources 11,000 units are needed every year.

Is it not true that the State is aiding and abetting Professional Blood Donation? Voluntary movement could catch on as it did in Chandigarh which collects all the blood it needs from voluntary blood donations.

Another factor responsible for encouraging commercial blood donors is the mushrooming of private hospitals/nursing homes all over the country. Hospitals like Jaslok and Beach Candy in Bombay depend mostly on blood supplied by Commercial Blood Donors.