

THE BOMBAY CORNEAL GRAFTING ACT, 1957

[Text as on 29th February 2024]

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BOMBAY ACT No. XXXIII OF 1957¹

[THE BOMBAY CORNEAL GRAFTING ACT, 1957.]

[This Act received assent of the Governor on the 3rd September 1957; assent first published in the *Maharashtra Government Gazette*, Part IV, on the 4th September 1957.]

An Act to make provisions with respect to the use of deceased persons for the therapeutic purposes.

WHEREAS it is expedient to make provision with respect to the use of eyes of deceased persons for therapeutic purposes; It is hereby enacted in the Eighth Year of the Republic of India as follows :—

1. Short title, extent and commencement.— (1) This Act may be called the Bombay Corneal Grafting Act, 1957.

(2) It extends to the whole of the State of Bombay.

(3) It shall come into force on such date² and in such area or areas as the State Government may, by notification in the *Official Gazette*, specify in this behalf.

2. Definitions.— In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

(a) “approved institution” means a hospital or a medical or teaching institution for therapeutic purposes approved by the State Government for the purposes of this Act;

(b) “near relative” means any of the following relatives of the deceased, namely, a wife, husband, parent, son, daughter, brother and sister and includes any other person who is related to the deceased (a) by lineal or collateral consanguinity within three degrees in lineal relationship, and six degrees in collateral relationship, or (b) by marriage either with the deceased or with any relative specifically mentioned in this clause or with any other relative within aforesaid degrees.

Explanation.— The expressions “Lineal and Collateral consanguinity” shall have the meanings assigned to them in the Indian Succession Act, 1925 (XXXIX of 1925).

(c) “registered medical practitioner” means a practitioner practising any system of medicine and recognised as a registered medical practitioner under any law for the time being in force in India.

3. Removal of eye of deceased person.— (1) If any person either in writing at any time, or orally in the presence of two or more witnesses during his last illness, has expressed a request that his eyes be used for therapeutic purposes after his death, the person lawfully in possession of his body after his death may, unless he has reason to believe that the request was subsequently withdrawn, authorise the removal of the eyes from the body for those purposes.

(2) Without prejudice to the provisions of sub-section (1), the person lawfully in possession of the body of a deceased person may authorise the removal of the eyes from the body for the purposes aforesaid unless that person has reason to believe—

(a) that the deceased had expressed an objection to his eyes being so dealt with after his death, and had not withdrawn such objection ; or

(b) that a near relative of the deceased objects to the deceased’s eyes being so dealt with.

(3) An authority given under the provisions of this section in respect of any deceased person shall be sufficient warrant for the removal of the eyes from the body and their use for the purposes aforesaid; but no such removal shall be effected except by a registered medical practitioner working in an approved institution who has satisfied himself by a personal examination of the body that life is extinct.

4. Authority when not to be given.— The authority for the removal of the eyes shall not be given under section 3 if the person empowered to give such authority has reason to believe that an

¹ For Statement of Objects and Reason, see *Bombay Government Gazette*, 1957, Part V, page 142.

² 10th August 1960 vide G.N.U.D & P.H.D. Notification No. BAA. 1059/37013-G dt. 30-7-1960.

inquest may be required to be held on the body in accordance with the provisions of any law for the time in being in force in that behalf.

5. No authority for removal of eyes when body is entrusted to a person by another only, for cremation, etc.— No authority for the removal of eyes shall be given under section 3 in respect of the body of a deceased person by a person entrusted by another person with the body of a deceased person for the purpose only of its interment or cremation.

6. Authority to remove eyes, when body is lying in approved institution.— In the case of a body lying in an approved institution any authority for removal of eyes under this Act may be given on behalf of the person having the control or management of the approved institution by any officer or person designated in that behalf by the first mentioned person.

7. Saving.— (1) Nothing in the foregoing provisions of this Act shall be construed as rendering unlawful any dealing with the body or any part thereof, of a deceased person which would have been lawful if this Act had not been passed.

(2) Any authority for the removal of eyes given in accordance with the provisions of this Act shall not be deemed to be contravention of the provisions of section 297 of the India Penal Code (XLV of 1860).

8. Amendment of Bom. XI of 1949.— In the Bombay Anatomy Act, 1949 (Bom. XI of 1949)—

(a) in the long title and preamble after the words “teaching institutions” the words “for therapeutic purposes or” shall be inserted ;

(b) in section 2, in clause (1), for the words “to carry on anatomical examination and dissection” the words “for all or any of the purposes of this Act ;” shall be substituted ;

(c) in section 5, in sub-section (1) after the words “approved institutions” words “for any therapeutic purpose or” shall be inserted.