

BASICS about the RED CROSS



 **Indian Red Cross Society**

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Foreword



This edition of the 'Basics about the Red Cross' has been revised keeping in mind the renewed interest of people across the country in the Red Cross Movement. This Movement started 150 years ago through the untiring efforts of one man who was tremendously moved by the misery of hapless soldiers injured in the Battle of Solferino in 1859. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is now present in 189 countries across the world providing humanitarian services through voluntary action.

The book tries to visit the different facets of this unique Movement, beginning from the origin of the Movement. It deals with the seven Fundamental Principles, its mandate, emblems of the organization – their importance and misuse, the various components and particularly the Indian Red Cross Society and the International Humanitarian Law propounded by it. The book also focuses on the key programmes that are being implemented by the Indian Red Cross Society.

The Indian Red Cross Society, National Headquarters (IRCS, NHQ) is at the centre of all Red Cross activities in India. This publication helps the reader to get an insight into the workings of one of the largest statutory humanitarian organizations in the world. The core activities, which include disaster management, health & care in the community and upholding & promotion of humanitarian values have been described in some details. The publication covers the areas and activities in line with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Strategy 2020.

A section has been inserted about volunteering for the Indian Red Cross Society, which readers will find interesting. I am sure that this revised and upgraded publication will be useful and would serve as an important tool in learning about the Red Cross.

Suggestions, comments and ideas on the contents of the book would be welcome.

Happy reading.

December 2014

Dr. S.P. Agarwal

New Delhi

1. Idea of the Red Cross Movement



When the sun came up on the 25th of June 1859, it revealed one of the most dreadful sights imaginable. Bodies of men and horses covered the battlefield; corpses were strewn over roads, ditches, ravines, thickets and fields; the approaches of Solferino were literally thick with the dead. The fields were destroyed with wheat and corn lying flat on the ground, fences broken, orchards ruined; and there were pools of blood everywhere. Villages were deserted and bore the scars left by musket shots, bombs, rockets, grenades and shells. Houses were riddled with holes, shattered and ruined.

The number of convoys of wounded increased to such proportions that the local authorities, the townspeople, and the troops left in Castiglione, were absolutely incapable of dealing with all the suffering. Scenes as tragic as those of the day before, though of a very different sort, began to take place. There was water and food, but even so, men died of hunger and thirst; there was plenty of lint, but there were not enough hands to dress wounds; most of the army doctors had to go on to Cavriana, there was a shortage of medical orderlies, and at this critical time no help was available. Somehow or other a volunteer service had to be organised; but this was very difficult amid such disorder.

Although every house had become an infirmary, and each household had plenty to do in taking care of the wounded soldiers within its doors, I succeeded, by next morning, in getting together a certain number of women who helped as best as they could with the efforts made to aid the wounded.

Before long a group of volunteer helpers was formed. The Lombard women went first to those who cried the loudest not always the worst cases. I sought to organise as best as I could to offer relief in the quarters where it seemed to be most lacking.

Would it not be possible, in time of peace and quiet, to form relief societies for the purpose of providing care to the wounded in wartime by zealous, devoted and thoroughly qualified volunteers?

Societies of this kind once formed and their permanent existence assured, would naturally remain inactive in peacetime. But they would be always organised and ready for the possibility of war. They would have to secure the goodwill of the authorities of the countries in which they had been formed, and also, in case of war, to solicit from the rulers of the belligerent states authorisation and if an international relief society had existed at the time of Solferino, and if there had been volunteer helpers at Castiglione on June 24, 25 and 26, or at Brescia at about the same time, as well as at Mantua or Verona, what endless good they could have done!

- Extracts from "A Memory of Solferino" – Henry Dunant, 1862

2. Foundation of the Red Cross Movement



Europe experienced a war in 1859 between Sardinia allied to France against Austria. By chance, the Swiss businessman Henry Dunant who had gone to see the French Emperor found himself confronted with the suffering of thousands of wounded and dying soldiers on the battlefield of Solferino nearby Castiglione della Pieve.

When the town filled with casualties and the army medical services available at that point proved to be inadequate, it was natural for Dunant to try to help relieve the pain and suffering of the wounded. By temperament, tradition, and training, he could do no less. He mobilised the local citizens of the small village who joined him to give basic assistance to the victims.

This experience completely changed the course of his life. After the battle of Solferino, haunted by the memories of the suffering of the victims of the war, Dunant wrote a book called "*A memory of Solferino*" and published it in 1862. Its effect was astonishing. In an incredibly

short period of time it was being read and discussed from one end of Europe to the other. Dunant's vivid and graphic descriptions of the killings and brutality of armed conflict shocked readers. They were touched also by his account of the plight of the wounded and of the noble but pitifully inadequate efforts that he and his little band of helpers had made to aid the sufferers.

From that time onward, Dunant's business activities and other interests became secondary as he sought to find a way in which such suffering could somehow be prevented, or at least ameliorated, in future wars. The publication of 'A Memory of Solferino' marked the beginning of a brief period in which Dunant reached the pinnacle of his career. Dunant travelled to many of the capitals of countries in Europe. All doors were open to him, and he was able to talk directly to many influential persons. Royalty and commoners alike listened respectfully to Dunant as he explained his proposals. He made two main proposals in the book.

Henry Dunant's two main proposals:

The **first** called for the establishment of relief committees whose members should be trained in peacetime to render relief and medical assistance to victims of wars. His proposal that societies of trained volunteers be organised in all countries for the purpose of helping to care for wounded combatants in times of war was enthusiastically endorsed by many persons. This proposal led to the birth of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1863 and subsequently, National Societies.

The **second** proposal was to establish rules that would alleviate the suffering of the victims of armed conflict. The concept of an international treaty among nations to assure more humane care of the wounded aroused considerable interest. The first Diplomatic Conference was held in 1864 and the first Geneva Convention was adopted, which led to the birth of modern international humanitarian law. During this conference a neutral sign to identify the medical relief teams and the army medical services was adopted, which was a Red Cross on a white ground, the reverse of the Swiss flag, to honour the country in which the Red Cross was founded.

3. A Global Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) is composed of the National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Together, the three components of the Movement are guided by the seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality. All Red Cross and Red Crescent activities have one objective - to help those who suffer without discrimination and thus contribute to promotion of peace in the world.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Established in 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is the founding body of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It is the promoter and custodian of International Humanitarian Law and the guardian of the Fundamental Principles. The ICRC is an impartial, neutral and independent organisation. Its exclusive humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of the victims of war and internal violence and to provide them assistance. It directs and co-ordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Founded in 1919, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is a federation of all National Societies recognised by the Movement. The International Federation comprises of 189 member Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, a Secretariat in Geneva and more than 60 delegations strategically located to support activities around the world. There are more Societies in formation. The Red Crescent is used in place of the Red Cross in many Islamic countries. The Federation inspires, encourages, facilitates and promotes at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by the member Societies with a view to prevent and alleviate human suffering and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of world peace.

The mission of the International Federation is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It directs and co-ordinates international assistance to victims of disasters and to people affected by health emergencies and displacement. It acts as the official representative of the National Societies in the international field. It promotes co-operation between National Societies and works to strengthen their capacity to carry out disaster preparedness and response, health and social programs, and to promote humanitarian values.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

National Societies are national voluntary organisations acting as auxiliaries to the public authorities of their own countries in the humanitarian field. Together, 97 million volunteers and 300,000 employees in the 189 National Societies all over the world assist some 233 million beneficiaries each year.

There are, however, a number of broad core areas where most National Societies have developed expertise and also where the need for Red Cross/Red Crescent action will increase in all regions during the coming years.

These four core areas are:

- Promotion of the Movement's Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values
- Disaster response
- Disaster preparedness
- Health and care in the community

National Society programmes and services address both immediate and long-term needs and include:

- Emergency shelter, food and medicine
- Water and sanitation
- Restoring family contact for disaster victims
- Disaster preparedness
- Community-based health and care
- First aid training and activities
- Control and prevention of diseases
- HIV/AIDS prevention
- Blood donor recruitment, collection and supply
- Youth and volunteer activities

4.The Emblems

The Red Cross or Red Crescent emblem can be used by those who belong to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the Army Medical Services of the country. They are involved in humanitarian work mainly in times of armed conflicts and natural disasters. At present, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement use the Red Cross, the Red Crescent and the Red Crystal as emblems. The Geneva Conventions define the use of these protective symbols in times of war. When the first Convention was adopted in 1864, it was clear that a symbol would be needed to provide safety to the Red Cross workers when they are working in the field and also to give protection to Red Cross establishments, equipments and relief supplies. The symbols protect individuals who do not take part in hostilities such as civilians, the wounded and sick, and objects such as hospitals or vehicles in war zones.

The original choice was the reversed flag of Switzerland. This was chosen due to its neutrality as well as to honour the host country. Later it became clear that the Red Cross emblem caused discomfort to some countries. In 1929, the Red Crescent and Red Lion & the Sun were formally adopted as protective emblems. Since then Red Crescent is being used by many Islamic countries. In the year 2006 another emblem, i.e. Red Crystal, has been adopted as an emblem for the movement. At present only Israel is using this emblem.

The emblems, apart from being used for protective purposes on the battlefield, are also used as indicative symbols for all the work of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world

Large protective emblem

In times of conflict, the emblem constitutes the visible sign of protection conferred by the Geneva Conventions to medical personnel as well as to their medical units and means of transportation. When used as a protective device, the emblem must arouse a reflex of restraint and respect among those involved in the fighting. It must therefore be of large dimensions.

Small indicative emblem

The emblem shows, mainly in peace time, that a person or an object belongs to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It is therefore of small dimensions and identifies Red Cross buildings, vehicles, materials, staff and volunteers.

History of the Emblems

1863-1864: The choice of the Red Cross

The International Conference, which met in Geneva in 1863, recommended the establishment of National Red Cross Societies and adopted ten resolutions and four recommendations. One of those resolutions proposed that voluntary medical personnel attached to armies should wear, as a uniform distinctive sign, in all countries, a white armband with a red cross. The Conference also recommended that a uniform distinctive sign should be recognised for the Medical Corps of all armies. The following year representatives from the states agreed that hospitals, ambulances and evacuation parties on the battlefield should use a flag bearing a red cross on a white ground, and personnel enjoying neutrality should use an armband with the same design.

1876: The first use of the Red Crescent

During the conflict between Russia and Turkey, Turkey decided not to use the Red Cross emblem, which was considered as having religious connotations. Instead, they used the Red Crescent.

1929: The authorisation for the use of the Red Crescent and the Red Lion-and-sun

The 1929 Geneva Convention authorised, in addition to the Red Cross, the use of the Red Crescent or the Red Lion-and-Sun on a white background. A number of Islamic countries used the Red Crescent while Persia (Iran) used the Red Lion-and-Sun as its emblem.

1949: The confirmation of the existing emblems

The Diplomatic Conference, which adopted the 1949 Geneva Conventions, decided to maintain recognition of the three recognised emblems only. New requests for the recognition of other emblems were not accepted.

1965: The first Regulations on the use of the emblem by National Societies

Regulations on the use of the emblem by National Societies were established by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross; based on the Geneva Conventions, they provide additional details on how National Societies can use the emblem. The Regulations were revised in 1991.

1980: Iran adopts the Red Crescent

Iran announced that they had adopted the Red Crescent as their distinctive sign instead of the Red Lion and Sun.

2006: An additional emblem: Red Crystal

The diplomatic conference held in Switzerland in December 2005 ratified Additional Protocol III to the Geneva Conventions, which adopted an additional emblem to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, known as the Red Crystal. It was adopted during the International Conference held in Geneva in June 2006.

The new emblem will have equal status as the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems. It will provide a comprehensive and lasting solution to the emblem question raised by some countries – as it is free from any religious, political or other connotations. The Red Crystal will appear as a red frame in the shape of a square on edge, on a white background.



Using the Emblems



Correct Symbols

Who can use the emblem in India?

- Indian Red Cross Society
- The Armed forces medical services, their personnel, units, installations and means of transport
- The International Committee of the Red Cross
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- Indian Red Cross First Aid Centres that offer totally free medical assistance and are authorised by the national society
- Partner National Societies having their representative offices in India.

Misuse of the Emblem

Any one country can adopt one emblem and to use any other is also a misuse, India has adopted the Red Cross and can only use this emblem.

Use of the Red Cross or Red Crescent emblem by unauthorised bodies or persons (commercial firms, non governmental organisations, individuals, private physicians, pharmacists and so forth);

Use of the emblem by people entitled to do so but who display it for purposes that are not consistent with the Movement's Fundamental Principles (e.g, someone authorised to display the emblem but who does so in order to cross borders more easily when off duty).

Why respect the Emblem?

Misuse of the emblem will diminish its protective value and therefore destroy the delicate mechanism established by International Humanitarian Law to ensure much needed humanitarian assistance to the victims of war and internal disturbance.

Misuse of the emblem will also diminish the credibility of the Fundamental Principles and therefore seriously hurt the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



5. The Seven Fundamental Principles



The Fundamental Principles are the central point of all Red Cross and Red Crescent thinking and policies. Therefore, the seven fundamental principles can and should be used to decide which action should be taken by components of the Movement at any level.

Henry Dunant wrote "A Memory of Solferino" based on the battle of Solferino in 1862. In this book, he

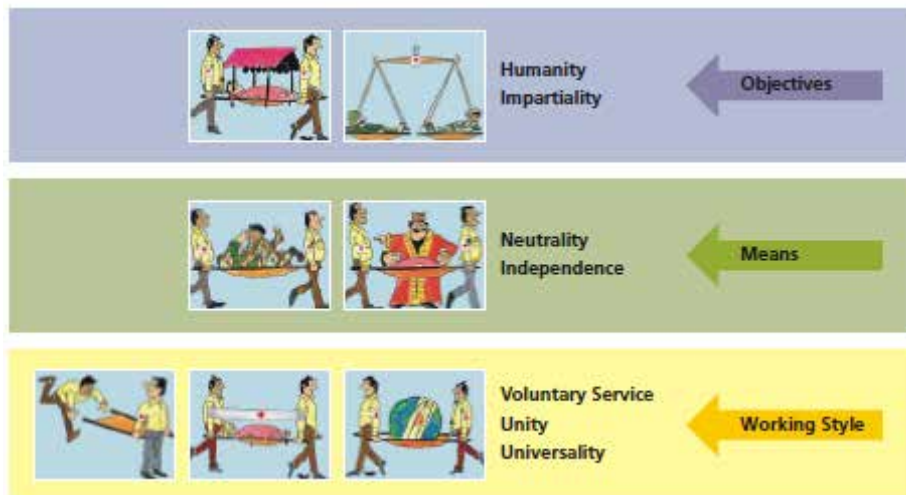
described the battle and the wounded of the *Chiesa Maggiore*, concluding with a question: *"Would it not be possible, in time of peace and quiet, to form relief societies for the purpose of having care given to the wounded in wartime by zealous, devoted and thoroughly qualified volunteers?"*

It was this question that led to the founding of the Red Cross. He also asked the military authorities of various countries whether they could formulate "(...) some international principle, sanctioned by a convention and inviolate in character, which, once agreed upon and ratified, might constitute the basis for societies for the relief of the wounded in the different European countries?" This question was the basis for the Geneva Conventions.

In 1869, the committee was given an assignment to spread the knowledge of Henry Dunant's principles. In 1921, three Principles were approved formally for the practical Red Cross work: impartiality, self-dependency and universality. In 1955, Jean Pictet wrote the book "Principles of Red Cross". Considering this book as basis, in 1965, the present official basic principles of Red Cross were considered at the International Red Cross Conference in Vienna. In 1986, the Conference decided to include them in the Preamble of the Statutes of the Movement. It recalls that every component of the Movement is bound by the fundamental principles.

It is the combination of objective, means and ways of working that give the Red Cross its unique role globally, in every individual National Society and in every branch. The Fundamental Principles are constructed like a toolbox. If one learns to handle them, they help in getting results when working for the Red Cross.

Objectives



Even though Henry Dunant is considered as a pioneer in the field of humanity, concern for fellow beings is expressed in all major religions and cultures. Humanity forms the basis for the Red Cross and it is a driving force for the organisation. Ever since its formation, work in war zones has been one of the most important tasks of the Red Cross. The movement was formed around preparations for and in battle and conflict, but it has gradually taken up humanitarian assignments in peace time also. The Red Cross works today both in times of war and peace.

The humanitarian principle is divided into the following four parts:

- **Prevent and alleviate human suffering**

Prevention of sufferings is the most important task of the Red Cross. The movement has a unique preparedness and competence to take measures immediately, irrespective of the cause of suffering whether it is war, natural disaster, shortage of water, food or anything else.

Red Cross workers prepare themselves for the tasks that can arise in a war or a disaster situation all over the world. An extensive dissemination of international humanitarian law and human rights are important to prevent and alleviate human sufferings.

- **Protect life and health**

To save life is an important task for the Red Cross through relief and protection activities. For example, work for asylum seekers and refugees. The national societies work to prevent diseases, improve public health and increased social security in the community.

- **Create respect for human dignity**

The Red Cross demands respect and freedom for every human being. The demand shall be fulfilled in all situations and is found in the Geneva Conventions and human rights

law. It explicitly states that every individual shall be protected against injustice and should be treated humanely. One should work towards the goal of ensuring that human dignity is not violated.

- **Promote peace**

The wording “to prevent and alleviate human suffering” naturally follows the dictum work for peace. Political unrest, which in turn might lead to conflicts, starvation and refugee influx can be caused by environmental destruction and natural disasters. The Red Cross works with the community on disaster prevention, in the affected area thus maintaining the balance in nature where man has disturbed it.

Humanity

“The International Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavors, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.”



Impartiality

“It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.”



The principle contains two main parts - non-discrimination and proportionality. The RCRC is against all types of discrimination. The deciding factor is the need for help. RCRC highlights the requirement of help and seeks to assist without being limited by how and why the requirement has come up. It also means that the movement in different contexts seeks to fight against discrimination in various forms, for example by opinion formation.

The Geneva Conventions mention that a priority in treating the patients may only arise if it is a question of medical emergency. The degree of suffering is also a deciding factor.

According to the principles of humanity and non-discrimination, all people must get complete and immediate help. In most emergencies it is impossible. In such cases, Red Cross should help those who need the help most. The most acute sufferer should be given priority. If two people are suffering equally, the help should be equally distributed. The contribution of RCRC shall also be proportionate to the requirements of each.

The principle of impartiality puts high demands on each individual RCRC worker, Impartiality in its true sense requires that subjective distinctions be set aside. To illustrate the difference between the two notions: a person who refuses to provide its services to a specific group of people, because of their ethnic origin, fails to observe the rule of non-discrimination; and one who, in the exercise of his functions, favours a friend by giving him better treatment than that given to others, contravenes the principle of impartiality. Therefore, staff and volunteers should be trained to ensure that correct behaviour becomes almost a reflex.

CHRONOLOGY OF NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AWARDS FOR THE RED CROSS

- 1901 - Henry Dunant, founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross
- 1917 - International Committee of the Red Cross
- 1944 - International Committee of the Red Cross
- 1963 - International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)

Means

Neutrality

“In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.”



Like impartiality, neutrality is an absolute condition for RCRC work. This conduct gives and maintains faith for the organisation all over the world. The principle of neutrality is a means, to reach, deal with and associate with all the regimes. This implies that the RCRC must refrain from taking sides for or against any party in a conflict. The movement can pronounce itself generally against torture, racism, nuclear weapons or crime against the human rights. The RCRC has in the past publicly protested when the Geneva Conventions was not applied correctly by a state. One example is the ICRC's strong criticism for the wrong doings against people during the Bosnian war in 1993.

The RCRC must keep away from taking sides in political, religious or ideological conflicts. This sometimes leads to criticisms of the organization. However, it is the neutrality and impartiality, which give the RCRC respect so that it can perform in situations where no other organisation can.

The RCRC can articulate itself against torture, racism and nuclear weapons but does not take a stand in religious or ideological questions

Independence

“The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliary in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.”



As an organisation, the RCRC takes its own decisions and decides its own deeds and declarations. This independence is a guarantee for neutrality, like the principle of unity as an important presumption for the RCRC to be able to act independently.

It is important to maintain independence in relation to the respective country's regime. Independence does not mean isolation. The RCRC can cooperate with institutions, authorities and other organisations under the presumption that they respect the Red Cross for following its fundamental principles. When the RCRC activity affects the regions where authorities or other organisations have important tasks, it is obvious to provide cooperation and consultation.

It is also obvious that independence does not mean that individual members or branches have the right to run the organisation in the name of the RCRC against common objectives and decisions. The RCRC follows the laws of the country, but no authorities may have an effect on the organisation so that it deviates from its own line of action. When donors assist disaster-affected people via the RCRC, it must be done as per the conditions of the RCRC. The donor cannot impose conditions of how the assistance should be provided that are against the principles of the organisation.

Working style

Voluntary service

“It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain”



All people will be in need of help some time and all have something to give. Every contribution is meaningful, no matter how small it is. That the receiver gets the right assistance is important.

Volunteerism is applicable both for giving and receiving help. To help voluntarily does not mean that one abandons the quality of help. It is often necessary to have fundamental education so that one could give right help and protection in difficult situations.

Selfless help means that the RCRC does not have any personal interests to satisfy. The organisation's interests coincide with the people whom it assists. A RCRC worker must respect that someone does not wish to take assistance, even if one is convinced that it is required. When one takes up a task, it means that it has to be done in accordance with the principles of the organisation. It is also voluntary to become a member of the RCRC. The employed staff within the RCRC shall create opportunities and increase possibilities for voluntary contributions.

Unity

“There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.”

One of the demands when recognising a national RCRC society is that it has to be only one in its country and that it has a uniform management that works in accordance with

the Fundamental Principles of RCRC. This is a condition for the organisation to be able to run a consequent line in many times during difficult and controversial situations.

The national society shall be open for all, but the condition is that one shall stand up for the fundamental principles. The RCRC needs to involve people with different backgrounds, knowledge and ideas. Humanity unites different contributions from all people without any discrimination of any type.

A national society must cover the entire country. Hence, the RCRC can reach many different people with the right assistance where it is necessary. The symbols for unity are the Red Cross or the Red Crescent.

Universality

“The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.”



The foremost task of the national society is to work within its own country. However, all the national societies have a joint responsibility towards each other. This means a commitment to assist and a right to get assistance themselves. When a national society cannot manage the situation itself, for example after a natural disaster in the country, it asks for help from other national societies through an appeal via Geneva. Irrespective of the fact that they are big or small, national societies belong to the Movement.

6. International Humanitarian Law

International Humanitarian Law is a set of rules which seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare. International Humanitarian Law is also known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict. International Humanitarian Law is part of international law, which is the body of rules governing relations between States. International law is contained in agreements between States treaties or conventions, in customary rules, which consist of State practice considered by them as legally binding, and in general principles.

International Humanitarian Law applies to armed conflicts. It does not regulate whether a State may actually use force; this is governed by an important, but distinct, part of international law set out in the United Nations Charter.

Where did International Humanitarian Law originate?

International humanitarian law is rooted in the rules of ancient civilizations and religions. Warfare has always been subject to certain principles and customs. Universal codification of international humanitarian law began in the nineteenth century. Since then, States have agreed to a series of practical rules, based on the bitter experience of modern warfare. These rules strike a careful balance between humanitarian concerns and the military requirements of States.

As the international community has grown, an increasing number of States have contributed to the development of those rules. International humanitarian law forms today a universal body of law.

Where is International Humanitarian Law to be found?

A major part of International Humanitarian Law is contained in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Every State in the world has now agreed to be bound by them. The Conventions have been developed and supplemented by two further agreements: the Additional Protocols of 1977, relating to the protection of victims and the regulation of methods and means of conducting both international and non-international armed conflicts.

Other agreements prohibit the use of certain weapons and military tactics and protect certain categories of people and goods. These agreements include:

- the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, plus its two protocols;
- the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention;
- the 1980 Convention on prohibitions of use of certain conventional weapons and its four protocols;
- the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention;
- the 1997 Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines;

- the 2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Many provisions of International Humanitarian Law are now accepted as customary law that is, as general rules by which all States are bound, regardless of their participation in specific international treaties.

When does International Humanitarian Law apply?

International Humanitarian Law applies only to armed conflict; it does not cover internal tensions or disturbances such as isolated acts of violence. The law applies only when a conflict has begun, and then equally to all sides, regardless of who started the fighting.

International Humanitarian Law distinguishes between international and non-international armed conflict. International armed conflicts are those in which at least two States are involved. They are subject to a wide range of rules, including those set out in the four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I.

Non-international armed conflicts are those restricted to the territory of a single State, involving either regular armed forces fighting groups of armed dissidents, or armed groups fighting each other. A more limited range of rules apply to internal armed conflicts and are laid down in Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions as well as in Additional Protocol II.

It is important to differentiate between International Humanitarian Law and human rights law. While some of their rules are similar, these two bodies of International law have developed separately and are contained in different treaties. In particular, human rights law unlike International Humanitarian Law applies in peacetime, and many of its provisions may be suspended during an armed conflict.

What does International Humanitarian Law cover?

International Humanitarian Law covers two areas:

- protection of those who are not, or no longer, taking part in fighting;
- restrictions on the means of warfare, in particular weapons, and the methods of warfare, such as military tactics.



What is Protection?

International Humanitarian Law protects those who do not take part in the fighting, such as civilians and medical and religious military personnel. It also protects those who have ceased to take part, such as wounded, shipwrecked and sick combatants, and prisoners of war.

These categories of person are entitled to respect for their lives and for their physical and mental integrity. They also enjoy legal guarantees. They must be protected and treated humanely in all circumstances, with no adverse distinction.

More specifically: it is forbidden to kill or wound an enemy who surrenders or is unable to fight; the sick and wounded must be collected and cared for by the party in whose territory they find themselves. Medical personnel, supplies, hospitals and ambulances must all be protected.

There are also detailed rules governing the conditions of detention for prisoners of war and the way in which civilians are to be treated when under the authority of an enemy power. This includes the provision of food, shelter and medical care, and the right to exchange messages with their families.

The law sets out a number of clearly recognizable symbols which can be used to identify protected people, places and objects. The main emblems are the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, the Red Crystal and the symbols identifying cultural property and civil defence facilities.

What restrictions are there on weapons and tactics?

International Humanitarian Law limits all means and methods of warfare which:

- fail to distinguish between the combatants and civilians and military objects and civilian properties.
- cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering;
- cause severe or long-term damage to the environment.

International Humanitarian Law has, therefore, banned the use of many weapons, including exploding bullets, chemical and biological weapons, blinding laser weapons and anti-personnel mines.

Is International Humanitarian Law actually complied with?

Sadly, there are frequent examples of violations of International Humanitarian Law. Increasingly, the victims of war are civilians. However, overall International Humanitarian Law has made a significant difference in protecting civilians, prisoners, the sick and the wounded, and in restricting the use of barbaric weapons.

Given that this body of law applies during times of extreme violence, implementing the law will always be a matter of great difficulty. That said, striving for effective implementation and compliance remains as urgent as ever.

The work of National Societies in respect of international humanitarian law relates to the role they may play in case of armed conflicts, as well as to their relationship with States and their participation in the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, where a number of issues related to International Humanitarian Law are usually addressed. In relation to International Humanitarian Law, the role of the Federation is in the field of representation of member Societies in the international field.

Basic rules of International Humanitarian Law



- Persons who do not or can no longer take part in the hostilities are entitled to respect for their life and for their physical and mental integrity. Such persons must in all circumstances be protected and treated with humanity, without any unfavourable distinction whatever.
- It is forbidden to kill or injure an adversary who surrenders or who can no longer take part in the fighting.
- The wounded and sick must be collected and cared for by the party to the conflict that has them in its power. Medical personnel and medical establishments, transports and equipment must be spared. The Red Cross or Red Crescent on a white background is the sign protecting such persons and objects and must be respected.
- Captured combatants and civilians who find themselves under the authority of the adverse party are entitled to respect for their life, their dignity, their personal rights and their political, religious and other convictions. They must be protected against all acts of violence or reprisal.
- They are entitled to exchange news with their families and receive aid.
- Everyone must enjoy basic judicial guarantees and no one may be held responsible for an act he has not committed. No one may be subjected to physical or mental torture or to cruel or degrading treatment, corporal punishment or other treatment.
- Neither the parties to the conflict nor members of their armed forces have an unlimited right to choose methods and means of warfare. It is forbidden to use weapons or methods of warfare that are likely to cause unnecessary losses or excessive suffering.
- The parties to a conflict must at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants in order to spare the civilian population and civilian property. Neither the civilian population as whole nor individual civilians may be attacked. Attacks may be made solely against military objectives.

N.B.: These rules, drawn up by the ICRC summarise the essence of International Humanitarian Law. They do not have the authority of a legal instrument and in no way seek to replace the treaties in force. They were drafted with a view to facilitate the promotion of IHL.

Role and mission of ICRC

The ICRC's mission is to protect and assist the civilian and military victims of armed conflicts and internal disturbances on a strictly neutral and impartial basis. Its tasks include:

- visits to prisoners of war and civilian detainees;
- search for missing persons;
- transmission of messages between family members separated by conflict;
- reunification of dispersed families;
- provision of food, water and medical assistance to civilians without access to these basic necessities;
- spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law;
- monitoring compliance with that law;
- drawing attention to violations and contributing to the development of International Humanitarian Law.

7. Re-establishing Family Links



Families split up, children left alone, parents whose fate is unknown – these are some of the consequences of natural disasters, migrations, armed conflicts and other situations of humanitarian need. Not knowing what happened to family members is perhaps the bitterest anguish.

Ever since its origin, the RCRC has placed this mental suffering at the centre of its concerns. Resolution XVI of the 25th International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent recognizes the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's responsibility in helping to re-establish or maintain contact between members of families separated as a consequence of armed conflict, tensions or natural disasters.

All persons (...) shall be enabled to give news of a strictly personal nature to members of their families, wherever they may be, and to receive news from them

(Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Article 25)

The main strength of The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, particularly relevant to its task of tracing relatives and restoring family links, is that it consists of a single worldwide network. It can apply the same principles and working methods in every country where needs arise – regardless of the legal status of those concerned (refugees, IDPs, local communities, prisoners of war, civilian internees, asylum seekers, etc.).

National Societies have long-term commitment to pursue their action as long as needs exist, a period which may extend well beyond the end of a conflict or a natural disaster. Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Family News Service (FNS) is an important part of the international network and together with all the National Societies, IRCS plays an important role in helping to re-establish or maintain contact between separated family members.

8. Birth of the Indian Red Cross Society

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, no Red Cross organisation existed in India. The St. John Ambulance Association carried out Red Cross work in addition to its normal activities until August 1916. At that time, the Indian Branch of the Joint War Committee was established on the model of the Joint War Committee in England, being a combination of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

The combined associations had no funds and relied on money collected by the St. John Ambulance Association and on a grant made by the Joint Committee in England. The administrative importance of the Indian Branch of the Joint War Committee was duly recognised in 1917.

A bill to constitute the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) , independent of the British Red Cross, was introduced in the Indian Legislative Council on 3 March 1920 by Sir Claud Hill, member of the Viceroy's Executive Council who was also Chairman of the Joint War Committee in India. The Bill was passed on 17 March 1920 and became Act XV of 1920 with the assent of the Governor General on 20 March 1920. On 7 June 1920, fifty members were formally nominated to constitute the Indian Red Cross Society and the first managing body was elected from amongst them with Sir Malcolm Haily as Chairman.

The IRCS, which had just come into being, occupied the same position as that of the British Red Cross Society in the International League of Red Cross Societies (the Federation). It was considered advisable for the Joint War Committee, which had the backing of all shades of responsible Indian opinion, to establish an independent Indian Red Cross Society, with branches in every province, and with functions expanding beyond war work in co -operation with the work of the St. John Ambulance Association and Brigade.

Thus, the IRCS was established in 1920 through an Act of the Parliament recognized by the Movement in 1929, mandated to support war victims and to alleviate human suffering especially health related, through community mobilization.

After the Orissa Cyclone 05B of 1999 had razed Khurantutah village to the ground, Basanti Naik got to the Red Cross shelter just in time to give birth to her son. So she and her husband Khirod decided to name him "Red Cross".



The shelter at The IRCS multipurpose cyclone shelter committee at Gokharkuda & Khurantuha was adjudged as the best Shelter Maintenance and Management Committee at a state level exhibition on the occasion of observance of the state Disaster Preparedness Day in Odisha on the 29th of October, 2013. This shelter is one of the 75 ODMP shelters in which more than 100 thousand people were given a roof during the Cyclone Phailin evacuation operations

9. Indian Red Cross Society

Indian Red Cross Society presently has 29 states, 7 union territories (total 36 state / UT branches) including the National Capital Region of Delhi. At the grass root level it has more than 700 district and sub-district branches.

Governance

The Hon'ble President of India is the President of the IRCS and the Hon'ble Minister of Health and Family Welfare is the Chairman who is nominated by the Hon'ble President. The Secretary General is the Chief Executive of the Society. The National Managing Body of the IRCS is responsible for governance and supervises the functions of the Society which include:

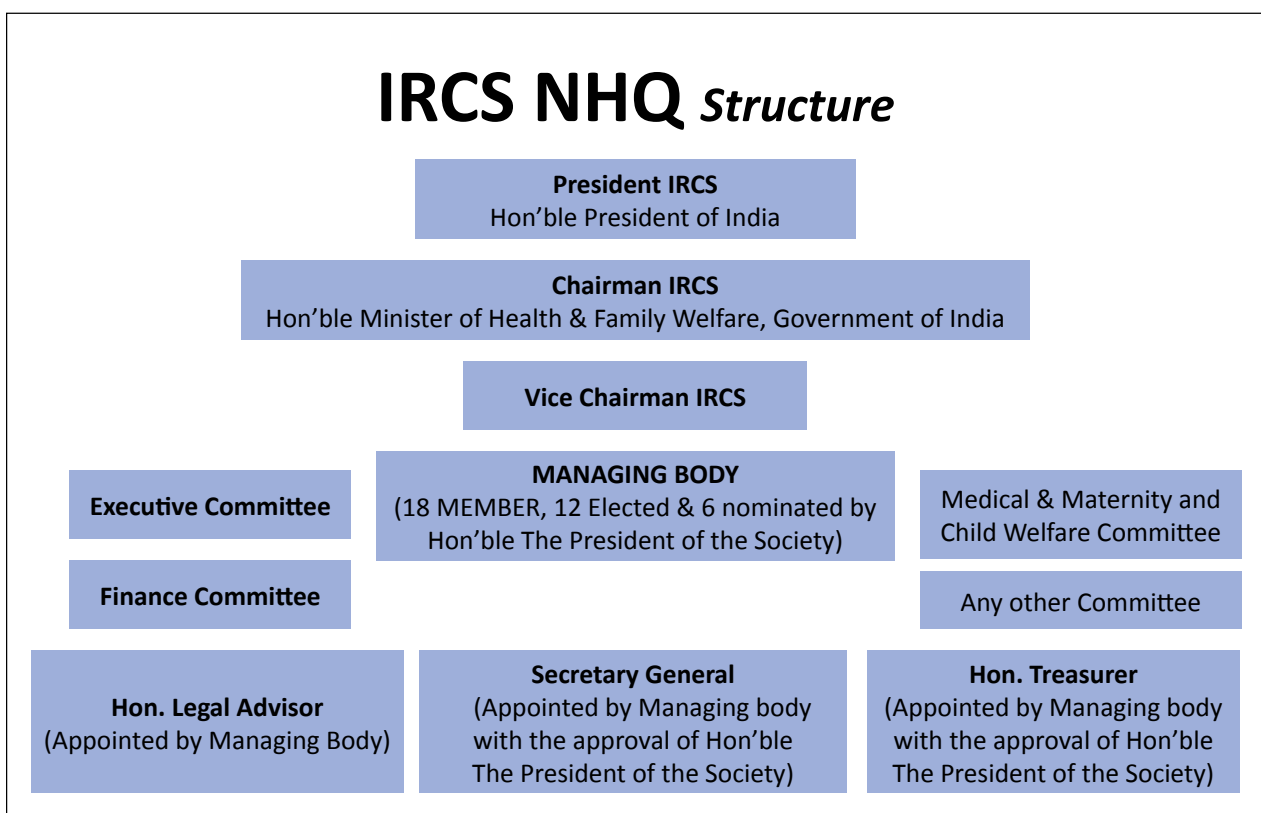
- Delivering emergency relief during natural and man-made disasters
- Working together with communities in psychosocial rehabilitation
- Training communities in disaster preparedness
- Ensuring availability of water and providing sanitation services
- Providing first aid training
- Protecting civilian life by disseminating Geneva Conventions
- Providing services for serving and ex-soldiers
- Reuniting families separated by disaster and conflicts
- Conducting awareness programmes for HIV/AIDS
- Delivering community welfare programmes
- Promoting voluntary blood donation to provide safe blood
- Junior and Youth Red Cross



The Governors, Lt. Governors/Administrators are the President of the State / Union Territory (UT) branches and the District Magistrate the President of the district branches of the Society.

The conduct of the state and district branches is as per the Uniform Rules for the State and District Branches. The IRCS follows the federal structure where state and UT branches are independent administrative and financial entities. However the state branches exercise control over the district branches.

The National Headquarters of the Indian Red Cross Society is situated in New Delhi at 1, Red Cross Road, New Delhi 110001. The premises house the Disaster management Centre and the offices of the Partner National Societies.



10. Introduction to the Programmes of the IRCS

The diversity of the activities within the IRCS reflects how much vulnerability varies from one place to another. Some broad areas are common with other National Societies. The core areas are “common denominators” where individual National Societies can make the most of being part of the International Federation; they provide opportunities to work together and learn from each other.

The core areas constitute the backbone on which the National Societies build their collective expertise and reputation.

The core areas are:

- Promotion of the Movement’s Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values
- Disaster response and disaster preparedness; and
- Health and care in the community

A strong presence and a volunteer network in India enables the Indian Red Cross to work with local communities defining needs and developing solutions from within and thus building capacities and reducing vulnerabilities. A strong capacity to influence decision-makers emerges from the mandate, the services delivered and the recognition that the Red Cross enjoys, allowing it to mobilize support for humanitarian objectives in a way that others cannot.

The IRCS contributes through its actions to different aspects of the basic human rights. However, rights also mean responsibilities. The Fundamental Principles emphasize the responsibility of the individual in assisting others. Volunteering is a manifestation of that responsibility. Through its distinctive way of working, the Red Cross makes a contribution that goes beyond its direct service delivery and advocacy. With volunteers who are part of the community, it provides a ‘space’ where people can come together to achieve solutions to community problems. This can lead to a richer social fabric and has a direct effect on building civil society and community development.

• **Promoting Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values**

Red Cross promotes the Humanitarian Values, which encourage respect for other human beings and a willingness to work together to find solutions to problems. From the seven Fundamental Principles, the Movement aims to influence the behaviour of all the people.



Several examples of violence around the world have demonstrated how vulnerable the principle of humanity is. These incidents as well as other examples of intolerance such as racism, female genital mutilation in certain African countries, stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis worldwide and incidents of communal and ethnic violence in different parts of the world illustrate the constant threat to the values of the Red Cross. The Red Cross champions the cause of the individual and vulnerable communities, to encourage respect for other human beings and a willingness to work together to find solutions to community problems.

The IFRC and the ICRC along with National Societies have a consistent and inspirational approach to promoting humanitarian values and the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

At Red Cross we believe that the youth are agents of behavioural change. Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC) is the IFRC's flagship initiative on the promotion of social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace. Created in 2008 by, for and with youth from the Red Cross Red Crescent worldwide, it empowers individuals to actively participate in exploring creative solutions to address humanitarian challenges like discrimination, exclusion and violence.

YABC is about changing minds through ethical leadership or role-modelling the culture of non-violence and peace we want to see in the world. With this objective, YABC helps individuals develop and strengthen humanitarian values and personal skills that enable them to translate inner change of mind-sets and attitudes into behavioural change. The aim is to influence the behaviour of the people we work with, through a better understanding of humanitarian values. The three main target groups are those working within Red Cross, public and private authorities, and members of the communities where we work.

The main priorities are:

- **Developing a better understanding internally**

New initiatives are being taken to ensure that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers and staff understand and act on the basis of the Fundamental Principles in their work with vulnerable people in times of peace, disaster or armed conflict. Training includes: the legal and ideological basis of the Red Cross Red Crescent, decision-making processes, mandates, as well as communications and relations with others.

- **Influencing behaviour in the community**

The Red Cross promotes humanitarian values at the grassroots level that include:

- Protection of life, health and human dignity
- Respect for human being
- Non-discrimination based on nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class or political opinions
- Mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peace among all people and,
- Volunteer service

Other organisations have different forms of power. The military have the power of the gun, media magnates have the power of the written word and of images beamed around the world in seconds, religious institutions have the power of belief, parliaments have the power of politics, corporations and financial institutions have the power of money.

The Red Cross has the power of people, or in other words the power of humanity. Ultimately, it is people that matter - only people can make a difference in our shared future. The unique ability of the Red Cross to mobilize the power of humanity really does make a difference to attitudes at the community level.



Weapons are dangerous, but ultimately only the people behind the weapons cause the damage. Our ability as an organisation is to reach out across borders and divides, and work to create a climate in which people are more willing to resolve differences through discussion rather than resolving their differences through violence.

Individuals of all religions share a common belief and compassion for the humanity. Our strength is to motivate and train people to work within the Red Cross in their local communities so they can assist vulnerable people, irrespective of caste, creed, race or religious beliefs. Our visibility is dependent not only on being in the right place at the right time to assist those in need, but also on a wider understanding of the nature of our organisation. The humanitarian message depends on volunteers and staff being professional and passionate about their work and for promoting their activities.

The IRCS promotes Humanitarian Values (HV) among staff, volunteers, members and youth by organizing trainings on HV and disseminating it alongwith other programmes.

- **Disaster Management**



A disaster is defined as 'serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.' India is a highly disaster prone country, regularly facing the affects of floods, cyclones, drought, epidemics and civil disorder.

SOME MAJOR DISASTERS IN INDIA

Sl. No.	Name of Event	Year	State & Area	Fatalities
1.	Cyclone Phailin	2013	Odisha & Andhra Pradesh	45 deaths
2.	Uttarakhand Flash Floods	2013	The 4 districts that were worst affected were Rudraprayag Chamoli, Uttarkashi and Pithoragarh. Uttarakhand	556 deaths in addition to a number of persons injured and missing
3.	Assam Floods	2012	Kamrup (R), Dhemaji, Majuli, Dhubri, Nalbari and Goalpara districts.	A large number of people were displaced and around 133 people lost their lives. Approximately fourteen lakh people were rendered homeless.
4.	Sikkim Earthquake	2011	North Eastern India with epicenter near Nepal Border and Sikkim	-----
5.	Cloudburst	2010	Leh, Ladakh in J&K	-----
6.	Drought	2009	252 Districts in 10 States	-----
7.	Floods	2009	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Kerala, Delhi, Maharashtra	300 deaths
8.	Kosi Floods	2008	North Bihar	527 deaths, 19,323 livestock perished, 2,23,000 houses damaged, 3.3 million persons affected
9.	Cyclone Nisha	2008	Tamil Nadu	204 deaths

10.	Maharashtra Floods	2005	Maharashtra State	1094 deaths 167 injured 54 missing
11.	Kashmir Earthquake	2005	Mostly Pakistan, Partially Kashmir	1400 deaths in Kashmir (86,000 deaths in total)
12.	Tsunami	2004	Coastline of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry and Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India	10,749 deaths 5,640 persons missing 2.79 million people affected 11,827 hectares of crops damaged 300,000 fisher folk lost their livelihood
13.	Gujarat Earthquake	2001	Rapar, Bhuj, Bhachau, Anjar, Ahmedabad and Surat in Gujarat State	13,805 deaths 6.3 million people affected
14.	Orissa Super Cyclone	1999	Orissa	Over 10,000 deaths

More than 50 million people are annually affected to varying degrees by disasters and approximately 42 million people are considered internally displaced due to disasters and conflict in the country. The vulnerability to disasters is aggravated by social, cultural, economic, institutional and political factors.

The disaster response experience of Indian Red Cross Society dates back to the 1934 Bihar Earthquake. Subsequently, Indian Red Cross has been at the forefront of all disaster responses, following the three “Rs” of Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation. Bringing emergency relief to victims of disasters and refugees has been a key activity of the Indian Red Cross for more than 60 years. The emergency phase of a relief operation aims to provide lifesaving



assistance. Shelter, water, food and basic health care are the immediate needs along with a sense of humanity and a sign that someone cares. Subsequently the needs include reconstruction and rehabilitation. Operations involving reconstruction and rehabilitation can continue for several years, particularly in the case of refugees and victims of socio-economic collapse. The Indian Red Cross actively assists disaster victims in co-operation with the public authorities. In principle, Indian Red Cross help is of an auxiliary nature and is

given primarily in the emergency and reconstruction phase. If circumstances require, and if the Indian Red Cross is assured of the necessary resources and means, it may undertake longer-term disaster assistance programmes. Such programmes should be designed to reduce vulnerability to disasters, and prepare for possible disasters in future.

Disaster preparedness is an important task for the Indian Red Cross in order to prepare for and reduce the effects of disasters. That is, to predict and where possible prevent them, mitigate their impact on vulnerable populations, and respond to and effectively cope with their consequences.

Disaster management initiatives of IRCS comprise of a range of activities including the building of cyclone shelters in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Orissa, and six regional warehouses in strategic locations around the country. A central training institute has also been established at Bahadurgarh where volunteers for the National disaster response team are imparted trainings.

IRCS Disaster Response Tools

Disaster Management Center



The Disaster Management Center (DMC), housed in the premises of the IRCS headquarters is the central hub of major disaster management operations of IRCS. It has a fully equipped operations room with all necessary facilities related to tracking of tropical depression/cyclone, relevant communications as well as library/ knowledge center. The DMC is being regularly utilized for conducting workshops/ trainings and DM team meetings. It also has a library/ knowledge management center, a dormitory and media room.

As part of Capacity Building of human resource, the IRCS has been conducting a one year part time PG Diploma Course in Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation affiliated to the Guru Gobind Singh IP University, New Delhi since 2006. The centre has trained more than 300 disaster managers who belong to organisations that are at the forefront of any

disaster response both in the Government and the Non-Government sectors. It has attracted officers from the defence, health, judiciary, NGO etc.

Regional Warehouses and Disaster Preparedness Stock



Indian Red Cross Society, National Headquarters has six regional disaster relief warehouses set up at strategic locations at Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Guwahati, Ahmedabad and Bahadurgarh (Haryana). These warehouses are equipped with necessary relief material, water & sanitation equipments, boats and a fleet of transport vehicles. Emergency stocks of non-food items are maintained in the regional warehouses like tents, shelter items, family packs etc.

These family packs consist of nine standard items which includes tarpaulin sheet, kitchen set, bucket, saris, dhotis, mosquito net, cotton blanket, bed sheet and towel. Other items apart from these have also been kept at all the regional warehouses. This along with high disaster vulnerability of the country makes for the pre-positioning of stock an absolute necessity.

First Medical Responders (FMR)



The Indian Red Cross Society draws its strength from its volunteers. As part of the Capacity Building effort a cadre of First Medical Responders has been created, from volunteers belonging to the community, in selected districts of 18 most disaster prone states. These FMRs respond to provide assistance to the local community at times of disaster. The programme is being implemented by the HQ through the state branches since 2012. These FMRs are trained in First Aid, public

health in emergencies, psychosocial support, search and rescue and other such aspects that may need to be tackled in the event of any disaster.

FMR training was launched in the year 2011, in the state of Uttarakhand as a pilot project. More than 150 trainers and 4000 FMRs have been created in Uttarakhand and they gave valuable service in the four Flash Flood affected districts in Uttarakhand and also to the communities that were cut off due to loss of communications. The FMRs have also proved valuable during the Cyclone Phialin disaster in Odisha and the flash flood in Jammu and Kashmir.

National Disaster Response Team (NDRT)

The National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) consists of trained members and specialists in different sectors of emergency response. The idea behind NDRT is to have a specialized team of people from various sectors such as relief, health, logistics and reporting for immediate deployment in case of emergencies. Members have been selected from different parts of the country. In the event of a disaster, specific roles of the team includes needs assessment, reporting, liaising with other local actors, addressing the logistics, and providing response operation implementation support. The NDRT members are deployed as per the requirements for the particular disaster.

Apart from NDRT, on similar model State Disaster Response Teams (SDRTs) as well as the District Disaster Response Team (DDRT) have been formed by the state branches for immediate response at ground level.

National Disaster WatSanResponse Team (NDWRT)



These volunteers have been provided specialised training so that they are able to deploy Water Purification Units (WPU) during emergency operation so that clean drinking water of WHO standards can be provided to disaster victims. The team members also provide for setting up the Sanitation infrastructure like toilets in disaster areas and educate people on

sanitation and hygiene promotion so that outbreaks of food and water borne diseases can be prevented.

Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT)

Members of the NDRT and NDWRT are further trained to be included in the RDRT. The trainings are delivered by experts from the IFRC and these RDRT members can be deployed

in case of disasters occurring in the South Asia region. Their primary concern is with the regional level need assessment and coordination of relief activities after any disaster. India has a representation of 15 RDRT members.

Disaster Management and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes

The IRCS has Disaster Management as one of its core programmes. In line with the Strategic Development Plan of the IRCS.

Emergency Response Unit

An Emergency Response Unit (ERU) is a standardized package of trained personnel and modules of equipment, ready to be deployed at short notice. They are designed to provide an essential, basic and standardized service platform for use in any part of the world. The units are fully self-sufficient for one month and can be deployed for up to four months. There are several types of ERU which include Logistics, Relief, Health, Water & Sanitation and Telecommunications.

Types of ERU developed by the IRCS

Mobile Disaster Unit (MDU)

Mobile disaster unit contains office tents, sleeping tents, communication & office equipments and personal survival kit. The purpose of Mobile Disaster Unit (MDU) at any given point of time is to support a team (up to eight people for one week) without replenishment in an environment where there is no electricity, clean water, telecommunications and accommodation. The IRCS has three such units pre-positioned in strategically located warehouses in different regions of the country.

Water and Sanitation Unit (WATSAN)



Emergency water treatment units, popularly known as WatSan Units are one of the major assets of IRCS. These water treatment units can fulfil the emergency water needs of 20,000 people per day, in line with Sphere Standards.

Disaster Health Response Unit

Disaster Health Response Unit is a basic health care unit that can provide primary health care to 10000-15000 population. The unit consists of telecom, electricity, basic water and sanitation and pharmacy compartments. It can be operated for

a time frame of minimum one to three months, with the available equipments and materials without replenishment. Human resources of unit are technicians, doctors, nurses and logisticians. This unit is useful in emergencies where all the health facilities are destroyed and

only basic health care is provided. For further management and surgeries the patients have to be taken to the nearest hospital.

Field Warehousing Unit

Temporary Warehouse Structures (popularly known as RUBB HALLS) have the proven solution to on-site, short or long-term storage during disasters. During emergencies it helps to eliminate the cost, logistical problems of product transportation, and security at an off-site storage location.

- **Health and care in the community**



Promotion of health in the community is a core programme of the Indian Red Cross Society. The Indian Red Cross works as auxiliary to the government and has supported it in the implementation of its various programmes. Over the years, India has made considerable improvement in its health system which has resulted in impressive gains in key health indicators. For instance, life expectancy, antenatal care and child immunization have increased. Also, maternal mortality ratio, child mortality rate and malnutrition rates have reduced. In spite of remarkable progress, India still faces serious challenges. The above indicators are still on the higher side and need further work to achieve the Millennium Development goals 4, 5 and 6. India has a massive problem of open defecation. The World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimate that there are more than 620 million people practising open defecation in the country, or in other words half the population.

Indian Red Cross Society through its branches and especially during disasters focuses on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (WASH) issues as one of the important programmes. IRCS is the recognised leader in the installation of Water Purification Units (WPU) during disasters while the National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) members educate the vulnerable people regarding hand washing techniques and also help in erecting toilets while educating them about the importance of environmental sanitation, thus helping to reduce the spread of water borne diseases.

The IRCS participates in the government's health programmes as auxiliaries. The TB project is aimed at the patients who stop taking DOTS treatment and thus become prone to develop the Multi drug resistant TB strain. These patients are brought back to treatment by the IRCS volunteers till the patients complete their treatment. These volunteers also spread awareness about the disease amongst the family members as well as in the community thereby attempting to reduce stigma and discrimination against its sufferers. IRCS has been active participants in the Polio eradication programme and has significantly contributed to India being declared Polio free in March 2014.

IRCS has implemented several programmes aimed at advocacy about HIV as well as reducing stigma and discrimination in several states. Red Cross has worked for prevention and control of Swine Flu (H1N1) and Bird Flu (H5N1) in West Bengal, Tripura and Manipur, Measles in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh etc.

The objective of health programmes is also to increase the capacities of state branches as well as of the national headquarters in implementation of these programmes and thereby help to intervene for improving the health of vulnerable people and communities. IRCS has identified the following four actions to achieve the objectives of health programmes:

- Develop health policy, strategy, plans and protocols and design and develop health and care programmes
- Strengthen prevention-focused volunteer based community health care
- Enhance the IRCS emergency health response capacity
- Help and support the vulnerable to handle epidemic and respond to public health crises.

To implement the above actions, specific interventions in health programmes address public health in emergencies, blood safety, polio, tuberculosis, nursing, first aid and maternal and child welfare. These interventions result in reducing the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. The health programmes complement Government of India's national programme and UN millennium development goals.



The objective of Community based health and care (CBHC) is to reduce the number of deaths and illnesses and the impact of diseases and public health emergencies. The CBHC core programme area includes the following:

- Strengthen volunteer-based, prevention focussed community health care
- Provide primary health care in areas that are poorly served.
- Support projects with specific targets such as TB, polio, measles, malaria, promotion of healthy lifestyle, home care, road safety, etc.
- Enhance capacity for provision of public health in emergencies
- Identify clear role for IRCS as auxiliary to government programmes
- Further develop capacities by imparting trainings in public health in emergencies, psychosocial first aid, and first aid training

The IRCS runs the Red Cross Home for Disabled ex-servicemen in Bangalore. This home renders service to the permanently disabled and incapacitated soldiers of the Indian armed forces. Besides medical care, this home also provides homely comforts to the inmates.

Maternity and Child Welfare schemes of National Headquarters were started in 1954 in Uttarakhand to extend Maternal and Child Development activities for the Weaker Sections of the Community. The welfare activities are being continued through hospitals, sub centers and Bal Vikas Kendras.

IRCS provides services for sick and wounded men of the defence forces. Trained IRCS Lady Welfare Officers run welfare services for these people in military Hospitals.



The officers run and maintain amenity stores and libraries as well as diversionary therapy programmes such as teaching handicrafts to convalescing patients, encouraging ailing soldiers to participate in recreational activities and to give psychological support for their disability and sickness.

The Indian Red Cross is a pioneer in the field of blood services and runs one of the largest voluntary blood banks in India since 1962. IRCS

regularly conducts motivational campaigns to organize Voluntary Blood Donation Camps. It has 166 blood banks all over the country under different states and district branches. The Indian Red Cross blood banks contribute to more than 10% of the total blood collection in the country.



Most transfusions save lives, but they can also put a patient at risk if an infectious disease contaminates blood. Maintaining a safe blood supply, therefore, is in the interest of Indian Red Cross. Safe blood may generally be described as having no traces of viruses, parasites, drugs, alcohol, chemical substances or other factors that may harm the recipient. The IRCS blood bank at its National Headquarters in New Delhi is a model Blood Bank declared by the NACO. It has been accredited by the Bureau of Indian Standards with ISO Certification 9001:2008 for quality management service in the blood bank, as well as

by the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals (NABH) and laboratories (NABL).

The Indian Red Cross Society through its state and district branches has provided medical relief on a large scale during several disasters like for the refugees from Bangladesh (1971 – 1974), Latur Earthquake (1993), Orissa Super Cyclone (1999), Earth Quake in Gujarat (2001),etc.

The IRCS is involved since 2002 in training staff, government officials and volunteers on public health emergencies preparedness and response activities through regular workshops at national, state and district levels and by deploying trained personnel at the time of health emergencies. The One year PG diploma in Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation conducted by the Indian Red Cross Society trains government and non-government officers in its endeavour towards capacity building of trained Human Resource. The First Medical Responders (FMR) will also provide assistance in times of health emergencies. These FMRs assist the Disaster Response Team members during times of disaster to spread the message of proper sanitation, hygiene promotion as well as provide clean drinking water to the affected victims so that diseases may not spread.



The Indian Red Cross branches are also involved in carrying out different kinds of health activities e.g. ambulance services, family planning centres, artificial limb workshops, eye donation and dental services. The activities carried out are based on the local needs and local technical expertise.

Volunteering



Backbone of Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement

From the beginning of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, voluntary action has been at its heart. On the battlefield of Solferino 1859, Henry Dunant carried out a task of organising village women and others to assist wounded soldiers. From 1863, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement spread from country to country as local people came together, founded a society, elected a volunteer governing board and started to recruit volunteers.

Today, as much as ever, volunteers are the backbone of all Red Cross/Red Crescent activities, helping National Societies run successful programmes and assisting millions of vulnerable people in need. Almost all of the Movement's volunteers provide services to meet the local needs and work within their own countries. In one country for example, young volunteers help elderly people to use mobile phones, which can be an essential tool during emergency. In another they may help underprivileged children in their daily lessons. They also provide first aid, comfort and support to those affected by disasters,

As a part of the largest movement in the world, the Indian Red Cross Society depends on its volunteers to accomplish the organisation's mission, providing relief to victims of disasters, health and care in communities and helping prepare and respond to emergencies.

Volunteering in IRCS is an activity that is:

- Motivated by the free will of the person and not by desire for material or financial gain
- Intended to benefit vulnerable people and their communities in accordance with the Fundamental Principles
- Organised by recognised representatives of the Indian Red Cross



Volunteers serve at all levels in Indian Red Cross Society. To prepare volunteers to participate in its vital mission, the Indian Red Cross Society provides training to them according to the need of the activity they are volunteering for working under a volunteer group leader, volunteers are usually assigned a specific task. This could be fund-raising, first-aid, relief distributions, disaster preparedness etc. depending on the needs of the community. There are different tasks taken on by local groups all over the country.

At the leadership level, volunteers also play a key role. Volunteers, who are members of governing boards are responsible for the work and conduct of the organisation, attend assemblies, and decide on major policies and future work. They can be board members at the local, district, state, or national level, and can be elected to committees.

A volunteer of IRCS is expected to:

- Act in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and promote their dissemination
- Respect the regulations on the use of the emblem and prevent misuse

- Strive and work for the highest standards of quality
- Behave in accordance with the code of conduct for volunteers
- Be available in an emergency to render services according to one's skills and abilities
- Respond to the needs of beneficiaries and strengthen their capacity for self-help and active volunteering
- Respect the confidentiality of those assisted, and
- Fulfil duties without discrimination of nationality, race, sex, political views or religious belief

A volunteer must not:

- Commit resources of the Red Cross without prior mandate
- Misuse the Red Cross position for personal advantage
- Take advantage of the volunteer status to perform private transactions or sales from which profit can be derived for personal use or for a third party

A volunteer is entitled to:

- Become a member of the Red Cross as defined by the constitution
- Have appropriate training or personal development to be able to undertake the agreed role or tasks
- Have appropriate equipment provided to be able to undertake the agreed role or tasks
- Accept or refuse any tasks or role in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Fundamentals of Voluntary Service

**All of the above originate from the Federation Volunteering policy, decision 15 - 12th session of the General assembly 1999.*

Junior and Youth Red Cross

The Indian Red Cross Society has millions of junior Red Cross Members in schools of several states. The Society also has Youth Red Cross branches in colleges in several states. These Red Crossers are sensitised about the Red Cross Movement and during their academic years participate in Red Cross activities designed for them by the district and state Red Cross branches. After completion of their studies they usually continue to remain active as community volunteers of the Red Cross and participate in community work and programmes of the Red Cross.

In 1925, the Indian Red Cross Society established the Junior Red Cross, with the first unit being set up in Punjab in 1926. Subsequently, Junior Red Cross units were set up in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Mumbai.



Junior Red Cross units are set mostly in schools and colleges. A teacher is chosen to act as a leader and an adviser, who is also responsible for organizing Red Cross activities. Under the guidance of the leader, young people are trained and encouraged to manage the affairs of the group, electing their own office bearers and deciding what activities to undertake. The Junior Red Cross and the Youth Red Cross, which consists of members in the 5 to 30 year-old age group, focuses on social welfare activities, HIV/AIDS awareness, accident prevention and first aid, environmental projects, disaster preparedness and response, promoting Red Cross principles and values, promoting international friendship and understanding and youth-exchange programmes.

Amongst the main activities of the Junior and Youth Red Cross members are First Aid trainings, community work in slums and amongst the under privileged of the society, promotion of voluntary blood donation as well as being voluntary donors themselves.

Trainings

These are imparted as part of the Capacity Building effort of the IRCS. The Society endeavours to build the capacity both for people to be prepared to respond to disaster situations as well as to provide the vulnerable a means of livelihood as post disaster rehabilitation as well as for day to day sustenance.

The Indian Red Cross Society has been conducting a one year part time PG Diploma Course in Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation affiliated to the Guru Gobind Singh IP University, New Delhi since 2006. The centre has trained more than 300 disaster managers who belong to organisations that are at the fore front of any disaster response both in the Government and the Non-Government sectors. It has attracted officers from the defence, health, judiciary, NGO etc.

Trainings of National, State and District Disaster Response Team members is conducted regularly by the National Headquarters as well as state branches to keep these volunteers abreast of the latest in disaster management.

Training of trainers of the FMRs is also conducted at national and state levels. This combined with the refresher trainings of FMRs ensures a well-trained volunteer force who can help the community to be prepared for disasters as well as respond to it.

As part of health promotion the Indian Red Cross Society conducts a 50 hour certificate course on health promotion through Yoga and Ayurveda at the National Headquarters in New Delhi. The 14th batch is presently underway. The participants are sensitised to the ancient Indian science of Ayurveda and how they can adapt it in their daily lifestyle to bring about positive change in their health. Further, they are also trained by expert Yoga trainers in this science to achieve physical and mental well-being.

Vocational training to the vulnerable women in tailoring and stitching is imparted in the training centres in Kolkata, Bahadurgarh and Arakonnam near Chennai. The Indian Red Cross in its different branches conduct trainings in Home Nursing, draughtsman course etc.

The IRCS also provides statutory trainings, upto the standards of St John Association, in First aid to professionals. First aid trainings are also imparted to students and junior Red Cross members to make them aware about it as also to enable them to be able to respond in times of need.





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