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## **1. Indian Red Cross Society and COVID-19**

**Prelims Level: Miscellaneous**

**Mains Level: GS-III Disaster and Disaster Management**

**Context:**

- Recently, President Ramnath Kovind exhorted the collective strength of the society and urged Governors, LGs and Administrators to mobilise volunteers of Indian Red Cross society, voluntary and religious organisations to contain the menace of COVID 19 at the Earliest.

### **COVID-19 and Indian Red Cross Society:**

- The President of India stressed the role of the Red Cross, civil society/voluntary organisations in complementing the efforts of the Union and State governments to contain the spread of the Novel Coronavirus, especially with the lockdown and other challenges emerging from the evolving situation.
- In general, the Indian Red Cross's programmes are grouped into four Main Core Areas:
  - ✓ Promoting humanitarian principles and values;
  - ✓ Disaster response;
  - ✓ Disaster preparedness; and
  - ✓ Health and Care in the Community.
- Indian Red Cross Society is currently, used to create awareness among the masses on COVID-19 and educate them about social distancing
- In Karnataka, around 8000 Indian Red Cross volunteers are involved in the awareness creation activities.
- Also, the Red Cross has been helping to supply food packets in Chandigarh to the people in need.
- The health care expertise of Indian Red Cross Society is used to make efficient delivery of such services to the society.
- Red Cross Ambulance services are used widely by the District authorities to support other measures.

### **Indian Red Cross Society:**

- The Indian Red Cross is a voluntary humanitarian organization providing relief in times of disasters/emergencies and promotes health & care of the vulnerable people and communities.

- It is a leading member of the largest independent humanitarian organization in the world, the International Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement.
- Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) was established in 1920 under the Indian Red Cross Society Act and incorporated under Parliament Act XV of 1920. The act was last amended in 1992 and rules were formed in 1994.
- The **President of India** serves as the President and Union Health Minister serves as the Chairman of the Society.
- The Vice Chairman is elected by the members of the Managing Body.
- The National Managing Body consists of 18 members.
- The Chairman and 6 members are nominated by the President. The remaining 12 are elected by the state and union territory branches through an electoral college.
- The IRCS adopted RED CROSS as its emblem.

#### **History of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:**

- Jean Henry Dunant, a young Swiss businessman, was deeply influenced by the condition of the wounded soldiers he witnessed in the battlefield during the Franco - Austrian war(1859).
- During the war, he arranged relief services with the help of the local community.
- In his book 'Memory of Solferino', he suggested that a neutral organization be established to aid the wounded soldiers in times of war.
- An international conference was convened in Geneva to consider the suggestions of Henry Dunant and thus the Red Cross Movement was established by Geneva Convention of 1864.
- The name and the emblem of the movement are derived from the reversal of the Swiss national flag, to honor the country in which the Red Cross was found.
- In the Russo-Turkish war the Ottoman empire used a Red Crescent in place of the Red Cross.
- Egypt too opted for the Red Crescent while Persia chose a Red Lion on a white background.
- These symbols were written and accepted into the 1929 Geneva Conventions.
- During the General Assembly and the council of Delegates in November 2005 at Geneva, Red Crystal was adopted as another emblem for the Red Cross Red Crescent movement.