

## Indian Red Cross Society

### State /UT branches Leadership Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2021

A virtual State/UT branch Leadership meeting was held on 16th Dec, 2021, at 11 am. The meeting was chaired by Sh. R.K. Jain, Secretary General. IRCS, NHQ. Secretaries/ Chairman of IRCS State & Union Territory branches participated in the meeting.

List of participants is annexed.

The Secretary General, IRCS thanked everyone for attending this meeting. He presented a brief on the status of the meetings held earlier. He shared the important decisions taken in those meetings, the focus areas of IRCS, NHQ and actions taken and initiated on them.

Sh. R.K Jain in his address appreciated the work being done by the branches during the Covid-19 pandemic. He said that the pandemic has thrown up many challenges & changed the way of working for all. Hence almost all the meetings thereafter were held in virtual mode. He added that all possible support has been extended during the covid by NHQ to the State/UT branches. NHQ also gave working advances, relief materials and other needed support throughout these tough times.

Video conferencing facility. It would be set up in all the State/UT branches. Most of them are being supported by IFRC & some of them from ICRC. NHQ have tried to bring harmony in the specifications of the video conferencing facility. SG requested all the branches to ensure that these VCs are installed properly & are functional for compatibility so that they could use it without any technical glitches in future.

Vehicles: SG said that the branches are aware that IFRC is procuring large no. of vehicles which include ambulances, blood collection vans, mobile testing & medical vans. The final locations for allotment has been discussed with the branches. Final decision is yet to be taken. The selection shall also be on the basis of financial stability of the branch for the operation and maintenance of the vehicles.

Blood Centres: NHQ made a provision for sufficient equipments for blood centres. SG informed that there are about 15—20 new blood centres which will be set up soon and existing blood centres will also get equipments. He added that if any of the branch do not have a blood centre at their state capital but they wish to have it, NHQ will support them in terms of equipments. Building & other civil work must be managed by the branches themselves.

Livelihood projects: He said that states such as J&K, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, A.P & Haryana had sent their proposals. SG appreciated the proposal sent by J&K. He suggested others to follow the same. Further he added that NHQ would like to upgrade the skills of the candidates from affected vulnerable communities at govt. run training centres. After successful completion of the training if there is some support required to be given to procure tool kits etc. that may also be provided by NHQ to the candidates. Branches should be transparent while choosing the candidates hence, they should put up the list of the candidates on their respective websites for atleast 15 days.

Kerala Project: SG informed that NHQ has also agreed for one of the projects from Kerala i.e., Centralised monitoring of health parameters of the patients. There is a mobile wearable device that state branch will procure and give to needy people which will capture their vital parameters and those will be monitored in a control room. This is a pilot project and if it becomes successful it can be replicated in other districts /states depending upon the need & proactiveness of the branches.

**Initiatives by NHQ:**

1. NHQ is going in for online conduct of first aid examination. It will also help the state branches to strengthen their financial base. NHQ have appointed a management consultant and they are preparing a tender. In the next few months a bidder will be finalised who will organise online first aid examination. This project is currently taken up on pilot basis in Haryana, Delhi & Punjab. Based on the validation of the system during pilot phase, NHQ will roll out to all the State/UT branches in 2022. SG added that he would like all the Red Cross branches to undertake first aid trainings as by doing so they will add to their income.
2. NHQ is planning to preposition certain relief materials not only in NHQ warehouses but also in some identified branches, that are prone to disasters and are having their own warehouses. The only condition is that once NHQ prepositioned the stocks, the ownership of stock remains with the NHQ and not with the State/UT branches. Branches can not use these relief materials without the consent of NHQ. Branches will only be custodians.
3. SG raised on one of the major concerns i.e., Transparency. Earlier NHQ used to put up monthly expenditure on the website. But now NHQ is not only putting monthly expenditure but also the details of the entire money that comes in and goes out to the State/UT branches. NHQ is also planning to put up the details of the relief materials that are being received by the NHQ and where they are being issued. SG focused on maintaining the transparency while keeping in mind what information should be disseminated in the public domain and what information needs to be shared with the State/UT branches.
4. NHQ is working to amend the Branch Rules which have been already discussed in the NMB. Amendment of the uniform rules will surely resolve the queries and problems of the State/UT branches to a large extent.
5. NHQ disposed off the old materials & records which were no longer in use & were occupying the space unnecessarily.
6. NHQ has been moving towards paperless regime. Most of the files are now being dealt electronically.
7. Recently NHQ has installed solar panel system on the roof top of its building which is under testing, to save power bill expenses of more than one lac rupees per month. SG encouraged State/UT branches to install the solar panels, which may be partly supported by NHQ.
8. NHQ has gone for rainwater harvesting system.
9. SG also informed about the Early Flood Warning Project funded by Google through IFRC which is being implemented in Assam & Bihar. He said that if the project is successful there is a possibility of upscaling of the project and implement in other states as well.

10. Secretary General talked about few issues with the State branches which need to be resolved early. There are huge amount of advances with the State/UT branches that are not being reconciled and are pending for years. About 15+ crores INR is pending with different branches. NHQ has decided that fresh releases will be issued only after the earlier advances are adjusted. He added that details of the advances shall be shared with the branches shortly.
11. SG pointed that NHQ have decided that they will not release the next slot of relief materials to the State/UT branches unless they submit their utilization certificate of the previous slot and provide the list of beneficiaries to the NHQ.
12. State/UT branches were requested to use their own PAN & TAN numbers.
13. SG requested State/UT branches not to deal directly with the donors from abroad. FCRA account will be only in the name of headquarters. If there is any grant to be received from abroad, it can only be through NHQ.

**The branches presented a brief on their activities initiatives and came up with suggestions on:**

Utilisation of relief material and working advances, Status/update on the Covid situation, beneficiary selection & providing list of beneficiaries for the items provide by the NHQ, status of video conferencing facility equipment -supply & installation. Almost all the branches wanted details of pending advances, as they were not aware of such pendency. Many of them also expressed their inability to reconcile, as advances pertain to old period, when they were not there. However, they all agreed with the need to reconcile all pending advances.

**Concluding Remarks:**

1. All the previous pending amount needs to be reconciled. SG suggested to do this in three different time periods namely; prior to 2012, between 2012-2017 & 2017 to 2021. NHQ will not release any further funds unless previous expenditures are reconciled properly. It was suggested that funds released during last four years from 2017-21 be adjusted immediately.
2. Secretary General emphasised that branches should make efforts to raise resources. He encouraged the State/UT branches to come up with some innovative proposals through which they can generate revenue which will further strengthen the branch in its functioning. He pointed out that NHQ supported Uttarakhand for the construction of warehouses, only on the condition that atleast 50% of the area must be rented out.
3. SG appreciated the point raised by Punjab regarding detailed procedure for election in the Rules. He said that the point is relevant and needs to be looked into. But he added that everything cannot be specified in rules as it may take away the flexibility. It was informed that for conducting the elections properly proposal for appointment of an officer responsible for it has already been proposed in the Rules.

4. Covid advance should only be used for covid purposes. If any of the branches are not able to utilize it, they should return it rather than using it for some other purpose.
5. On the issues with the State govt, as pointed out by some of the branches, SG advised the State/UT leadership to have a cordial relationship with the state govt.
6. SG informed that GST is to be charged on account of membership enrolment by the branches in the country. This needs to be done by the branches as NHQ is depositing it on their behalf. It would now be recovered from the branches.
7. Branches were requested to get accounts audited regularly & properly.
8. NHQ may issue a guideline to all State/UT branches on audit of their accounts.
9. SG emphasised that while implementation of any new project substantial part of the expenditure for the project should go to the beneficiaries. He said that capacity building of the current staff is needed to make them efficient for handling any new project.
10. It was announced that such meetings will be held periodically.

### **Suggestions**

1. It was suggested by Shri Homi R. Khusrokhhan, Member, National Managing Body & Vice Chairman, IRCS, Maharashtra State Branch to start the donor's data bank.
2. To prepare for the third wave of Covid the branches were requested to work in coordination with the Govt. on the vaccination programs, awareness generation campaigns along with dissemination of Covid appropriate behaviour.

The meeting ended with thanks to chair.

List of Participants (State/UT branches)

1. Assam
2. Arunachal Pradesh
3. Andhra Pradesh
4. Bihar
5. Delhi
6. Gujarat
7. Himachal Pradesh
8. Haryana
9. Jammu & Kashmir
10. Kerala
11. Karnataka
12. Manipur
13. Maharashtra
14. Madhya Pradesh
15. Meghalaya
16. Nagaland
17. Odisha
18. Punjab
19. Rajasthan
20. Tripura
21. Tamil Nadu
22. Telangana
23. Uttarakhand
24. Uttar Pradesh
25. West Bengal