



YOUTH RED CROSS UNIT FOR OVERALL STUDENT DEVELOPMENT - A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGES UNDER MANGALORE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract:

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) was established in 1920 under the Indian Red Cross Society Act which works as an auxiliary to the state to carry out humanitarian activities. It also provides a range of services, including Disaster relief, Health and Social Welfare Programmers in the country. Youth Red Cross is the most important constituent of its mother organization, IRCS. It was in December, 2011 that the State Government directed all Colleges and Technical Education Institutes to open Youth Red Cross (YRC) units in their colleges. This group movement initiated with the aim of helping students to take care their own health and that of others, helping them to understand and accept civic responsibility, help in maintaining spirit of friendliness and helpfulness with others and dissemination of Red Cross Movement with a view to understand the real implications and effects of Red Cross activities on student community. At present YRC unit in colleges under Mangalore University involves in extra-curricular activities like National Cadet Corps (NCC) & National Service Scheme (NSS) etc. This paper focus on Red Cross Unit of Mangalore University where it is in its nascent stage. The study provides an insight on identifying possible ways and means of fulfilling the objective of YRC in its true sense by way of organizing various activities by involving students with clear-cut distinction from other Extra Curricular and Co curricular or Forum activities. It also suggests a Participation Stimulus Model (PSM) based on action plans implementable at colleges for ensuring active participation from the student's community.

Index Terms: Red Cross, Youth Red Cross, Mangalore University, College, Extra Curricular & Co Curricular Activities

Introduction:

Red Cross Society:

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) was established in 1920 under the Indian Red Cross Society Act and incorporated under the Parliament Act XV of 1920 (as Amended by Act No. 22 of 1956 and the Adaptation of Laws (No 4) order of 1957 and the Act No. 14 of 1992). It is a member of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and is recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross. In accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, namely: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, Universality. The Indian Red Cross Society acts as an auxiliary to the state in the carrying out of humanitarian activities. It also provides a range of services, including disaster relief, health and social welfare programmes in the country. During wartime, the society works as auxiliary to the armed forces medical services and also assists the affected civilian as per the Geneva conventions.

Mission of Indian Red Cross Society:

The Indian Red Cross Society aims to inspire, encourage and initiate at all times, all forms of humanitarian activities so that human suffering can be minimized, alleviated and even prevented, thus contribute to creating a more congenial climate for peace.

- ✓ **Humanity:** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent 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 endeavors to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **Independence:** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries 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
- ✓ **Voluntary Service:** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **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.

Youth Red Cross (YRC):

The involvement and contribution of young people to the work of the Red Cross has an interesting history. This genesis of their engagement originated in the province of Quebec, Canada in 1914, when school children first participated in the humanitarian work of the Red Cross work by making bandages, dressings and other comforts for soldiers. The idea soon spread to other Canadian provinces. By 1915, this idea had spread to Europe while in the United States, eleven million school children were engaged in similar activities. During World War I, several countries encouraged young people to assist in Red Cross work. By 1918, formal youth sections were organized in Australia, Canada, Italy and the United States. The creation of League of Red Cross (now International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) in 1919 increased the emphasis on peacetime activities of the Red Cross through the establishment of a coordinating body for National Societies, which to a great extent helped in the expansion of youth programmes throughout the world. By 1921, youth sections had been created in a further eight countries: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia. The following year France, Japan, Romania and Sweden also established similar youth sections, bringing the total to at least 16 countries. In 1922, the youth programme of the Red Cross was officially recognized and supported by Resolution No. XVIII adopted by the General Council of League of Red Cross Societies. Expansion of Red Cross youth programmes to young people outside the schools or other than those attending educational institution were embodied in one of the General Councils resolutions XIX. By 1935, 51 countries had sections focused on young people, with total membership of 15 million with a 3

point programme bringing the motto "I serve". Today, about 100 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have sections dedicated to engaging young people and statistics show that as much as half of all Red Cross & Red Crescent volunteers in the world are young people.

The Indian Red Cross Society first engaged young people in its work in 1925, with the first unit being set up in Punjab in 1926, soon followed by similar units in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Mumbai, and Uttar Pradesh. According to the International Labour Organization report, about 40 percent of the Indian total population is in the age group of 13-35 years. The Red Cross, through its junior and youth programmes, plays an important role in channeling and guiding this young energy in the cause of humanitarian action. Where active, junior and youth Red Cross groups offer branches a formidable strength both in times of emergency and times of preparedness. Ample opportunity must be given to young people for them to feel empowered to take humanitarian action, offering their strengths, energy ideas and innovation to our Movement and to their communities. Junior and youth Red Cross programmes are an integral part of the strategic approach taken by the Indian Red Cross Society.

Who are Youth & Junior Volunteers?

In the context of the Indian Red Cross Society, the terms "junior" and "youth" include those aged between 5 and 30 years old. Students up to 12 standards or below 18 years of age may join the Junior Red Cross. Students in colleges and those aged 18 to 30 years of age may join the Youth Red Cross.

Junior & Youth Red Cross Society:

The Youth Red Cross is a group activity organized within a college and the teacher is the recognized leader and called programme officer of the group. Indian Red Cross Society youth groups should be established at colleges, universities and community levels targeting age group 18-30 years. The Junior Red Cross is a group activity organized within the school and the teacher is the recognized leader and called counselor of the group. Indian Red Cross Junior groups shall be established targeting age group 14-17 year students studying at schools.

Red Cross Activities in College Level:

- ✓ Organize games/mock drills /exhibitions/lectures/demonstration on health & hygiene, disaster (man made, natural, road safety, climate change) in school it can be supplement to the curriculum.
- ✓ Organize health camps (the CDMO and doctors in the locality should be consulted in this regard).
- ✓ Organize cultural programmes.
- ✓ Observation of important days.
- ✓ Facilitate junior or youth volunteers to carry out community outreach activities.
- ✓ Organize demonstration of fire fighting in consultation with the fire station closest to the school or college.
- ✓ Help develop a disaster plan for the classroom or school/college.
- ✓ Nomination of delegates for and organize inter-state and international programmes such as camps/workshops/seminars.
- ✓ Take emergency relief measures to the victims of natural disaster such as flood, fire, drought, cyclone, earthquake, epidemic, manmade disaster such as accidents etc. Within reach of the school/college on priority basis with available funds and intimate the local authorities about it immediately and district HQ soon. Such operations must be conducted under the direct supervision of the JRC/YRC counsellor/programme officer.

- ✓ Visit anganvaadi, orphanage, school for the blind, institutions for the physically handicapped with gifts.
- ✓ Help the Junior/Youth for fund raising activities for Red Cross.
- ✓ Organise short duration (one day, two day) special service programmes/camps during local fairs and festivals.
- ✓ Make their own short term projects for the community such as: (i) Literacy campaign (ii) Health & Hygiene (iii) Stigma & discrimination
- ✓ Issue certificates along with award to the best students who actively participate in the Red Cross Activities (Yearly)- school and college level such as: (i) Best peer educator (ii) Best Youth Volunteer award (iii) Maintain the records of membership funds

What is Expected from Volunteers?

- ✓ Distribute Red Cross information at school and local community events.
- ✓ Write stories about your activities in your school or community newspaper.
- ✓ Host a blood drive at your school/college and recruit donors, arrange appointments, act as an escort, and serve refreshments.
- ✓ Learn about the disasters that could occur in our community.
- ✓ Promote disaster preparedness to other students and your community by creating flyers, posters, or putting on plays, puppet shows.
- ✓ Display Red Cross activities and materials on a bulletin board or in a display case at your school/college.
- ✓ Donate two hours each month for the Red Cross activities such as:
 - Awareness on road safety
 - Climate change
 - Awareness on HIV and AIDS
 - Be safe programme (Hand washing)

What Happens Practically?

States indirectly through Universities is administering the YRC activities at colleges. Colleges are directed to have all students as Red Cross volunteers (sort of compulsion) & asks to collect one-time membership fee of Rs. 50/- from them and state government asks colleges to send of 30% collected membership fee to them. [Annually]. No fixed guidelines or directives available for colleges regarding how to function. However the district forum of Red Cross is always been co-operative and helpful in all endeavors initiated by Mangalore University. Many colleges have NSS & Red Cross as one and same [Which actually is not a right way]. In such a situation the effectiveness of the YRC units itself seems to be doubtful. Hence the followings "Participation Stimulus Model" are suggested as possible solution for it;

Participation Stimulus Model [PSM]:

Jacquelynne S. Eccles of University of Michigan and Bonnie L. Barber of University of Arizona have explored the link between involvement of youth in prosocial, team sports, performing arts, and academic clubs activities and their indicators of positive and negative development in their research study titled "Student Council, Volunteering, Basketball, or Marching Band- What Kind of Extracurricular Involvement Matters?". They have found that involvement in prosocial activities was linked to positive educational trajectories and low rates of involvement in risky behaviors. In contrast, participation in team sports was linked to positive educational trajectories and to high rates of involvement in one risky behavior. Considering the significance of prosocial activities in academic life, this model has been suggested. PSM is an attempt to bring an action plan based comprehensive framework which can be implemented as a

part of curriculum under EC CC activities in colleges under Mangalore universities. The PSM suggests change in four major aspects related to YRC activities in colleges. They are;

Membership: Instead of whole students community getting membership, selecting bunch of volunteer who are really interested.[like NSS model] and they have to be a part of all trainings and other exposure of YRC so that they become officially trained pupil who are capable enough to handle any such real life situations

Training: The main motto behind Red Cross training is to “*train the volunteers during the peace time to help during war time*”. Hence it is suggested to have rigorous training activities for the student volunteers in order to equip them to be a part of disaster response team which actually rush to the needy sites [who are under IRCS unit.]

Evaluation: It is not enough if someone undergoes some basic lecture sessions. Arranging for test & examinations of volunteers to evaluate their level of understanding and ability to contribute being a member of disaster response team should also be made. For which real time situations or simulation test can also be considered. This requires deliberations from the college & university as well so that all aspects including financial and other factors are decided upon.

Motivation: For promoting students to actively take part in all these followings can also be tries;

- ✓ **Additional Marks** – Giving extra marks to students based on relevant criteria for the participation and works undertaken by them which can persuade students and can facilitate active participation. For this if needed NSS formats can also be referred to form a base.
- ✓ **Attendance Support** – Attendance being a highly persuasive element in students’ academic life, giving necessary attendance for outside events participation will also ensure active participation in such extracurricular activities.
- ✓ **Compulsory Camps** – Students especially in college level don’t like class room lecture sessions much and practical outside the class sessions are more interesting for them. In this regard every year if special camps are conducted to impart practical training in different fields by experts would be more effective and students will also love to be a part of it. The areas of training may include
 - Disaster response related awareness and Training- From experts in the field.
 - Road Safety related awareness and training with the help of Traffic police department or other experts in the field
 - Organize demonstration of fire fighting [with participation of fire station people]
 - Organize health camps collaborating with hospitals/ physicians to bring Health & Hygiene related awareness and training
 - Training youth in community outreach activities – can have collaboration of NGOs
 - Visits anganvaadi, orphanage, school for the blind, institutions for the physically handicapped
- ✓ **University & Colleges Appreciations** - University & colleges should also encourage and recognizing appropriately the volunteers via certificates & awards for their engagement in forum.

- ✓ **Hospital Collaboration:** Colleges can have necessary tie up with hospitals for enabling practical exposure for volunteers. In this line, it can also be made mandatory for students to spend a prescribed number of hours per semester in hospital.

Advantages of Participation Stimulus Model (PSM):

Inclusion PSM is expected to help the *students* in following ways-

- ✓ Promotes team building among students and Helps in maintaining spirit of friendliness and helpfulness with others
- ✓ Helps them to understand and accept civic responsibility and lead & help people in needy times
- ✓ Increases tolerance level of students which is not an easy thing to achieve.
- ✓ Opportunity to really visit various places during needy times of disaster
- ✓ Expansion of knowledge horizon due to training in various fields

Participation Stimulus Model (PSM) is advantageous for the college and University in following ways as well-

- ✓ Active partnership in social development
- ✓ Nurturing responsible citizenship
- ✓ Permanent Recognition - due to built up trainees and their disaster response activities whenever it happens

Analysis of the Participation Stimulus Model (PSM):

The Model is Analyzed by using Strength Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis as under Strengths:

By implementing PSM it is possible to have able & trained student's community who can be really helpful to the society during needy time which will in turn also strengthen the parent team [IRCS]. Moreover all activities suggested are cost effective due to the very nature of IRCS construct of service mindedness. Many resource persons are expressing their willingness to provide free training just because it's a humanitarian activity. Hence easy access to the trainers & easy access to the training places adds on to the merits of the Model. Above all the trainings imparted will not be much complicated training as basics are thought normally.

Weakness:

The model has also got some weakness, i.e., to have committed student volunteers who can really imbibe true spirit of humanity especially present generation is a great concern. Also class or pedagogical clash or conflicts of interests between academic and extra or co curricular requirement can pull back the student interests in joining such humanitarian activities.

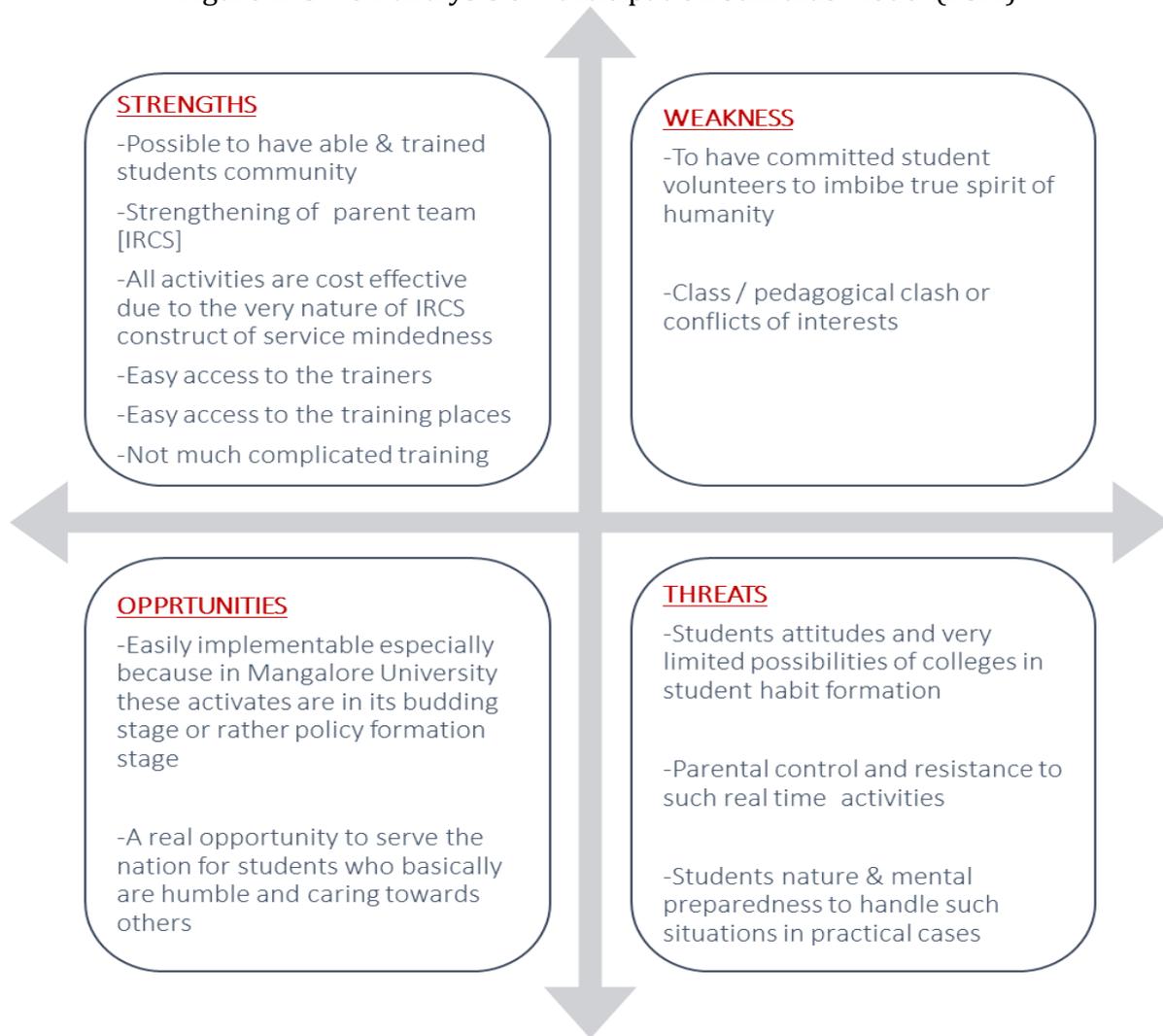
Opportunities:

As far as the opportunities are concerned, all the suggested action plan are easily implementable, specially because in Mangalore University these activates are in its budding stage or rather policy formation stage and it also provides a real opportunity to students to serve the nation as students basically are humble and caring towards others.

Threats:

The Model has few threats due to Students' attitudes and very limited possibilities as far as colleges are concerned in student's habit formation. Apart from this, parental control and resistance to such real time activities. Along with this one more threat is the nature of few students & their mental preparedness to handle such situations in practical cases especially wounded people and providing care to them during disaster and dealing with blood can make students upset very quickly.

Figure 2: SWOT analysis of Participation Stimulus Model (PSM)



Conclusion:

Youth Red Cross activities have immense potential in student’s habit formation. Given such significance and also by considering the case of colleges under Mangalore University where the YRC activates is in its budding stage or rather policy formation stage the suggested Participation Stimulus Model which is a complete action plan based model will surely help as a basic guidelines to carry forward the YRC activity at college level in a best possible way as it facilitates objective attainment of YRC in its true sense and also caters for the overall students development.

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