
ORIGIN OF RED CROSS EMBLEM ITS USE AND MISUSE

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ABSTRACT:

International Red Cross movement was initiated by Geneva Convention of 1864 to aid wounded soldiers. The emblem of the movement was derived from colour reversal of Swiss National Flag to honour the country in which Red Cross society was originated. Red Cross emblem was introduced during war for rescue workers who needed safe passage in war zone. Soon it became popular and whether its popularity is a boon or bane needs to be analyzed. But later Doctors, health workers, paramedical personnel, chemist etc started using unofficially. Unauthorized use of Red Cross emblem is punishable offence in India u/s 12 r/w section 13 under chapter IV of Geneva Convention Law. Misuse of this emblem can be prevented primarily by educating all the concerned by advertising in print and electronic media periodically.

From ages, Doctors are identified by Red Cross emblem, hence one can evolve an acceptable emblem and get it registered for official use for doctors and popularize it. Now it's a must situation wherein MCI should take steps to come out with a registered emblem. That can be universally used by doctors in India and which should be as impressive and appealing as Red Cross emblem.

KEY WORDS: Red Cross Society, Red Cross, Emblems, misuse of emblems.

INTRODUCTION:

Historical back ground:

Sir Henry Dunant, Swiss businessman was upset and moved by the condition of wounded soldiers in the war between France and Austria in Solferino in 1859. He worked with local communities and provided services to wounded soldiers; he wrote a book called Memory of Solferino in 1863 suggesting for a neutral body to be established to help wounded soldiers at the time of war. His suggestions were considered in Geneva Convention of 1863-64. International Red Cross movement was established in 1864 and Red Cross emblem was approved which was derived from colour reversal of Swiss National Flag.

During First World War (1914), there was no organization for relief services in India except for St Johns Ambulances and joint committee of British Red Cross society. After First World War, Indian Red Cross society Bill was introduced on 3rd march 1920 by Sir Claude Hill in Indian Legislative Council and was passed on 17th March as Act XV of 1920. It got Governor General's assent on 20th march 1920.

Emblems of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:-

I) RECOGNISED EMBLEMS

a) Red Cross

Red Cross emblem was officially approved in Geneva in 1863-64; the emblem was endorsed by the 16 signatories of the Geneva Convention on International Humanitarian Law.

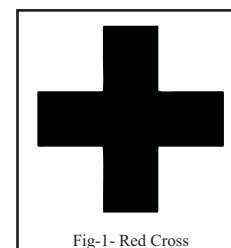


Fig-1- Red Cross

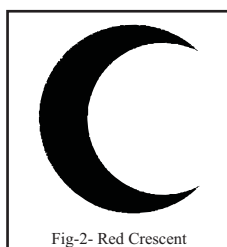
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The Red Cross flag should not be confused with the St George cross which is the National flag of England, Barcelona, and several other places. In order to avoid this confusion the protected Red Cross symbol is also called as the "Greek Red Cross". The Red Cross of the St George cross extends to the edge of the flag, whereas the Red Cross on the Red Cross flag does not. The Red Cross was originally intended to be a reverse image of the flag of Switzerland. Red Cross is most popular emblem till date. It is popular among medical, paramedical fraternity and all sections of public. This is the cause for its rampant misuse. Fig-1

b) Red Crescent

Red Crescent emblem was first used by International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) volunteers during the armed conflict between Russia and Turkey (1877–1878). The symbol was officially adopted in 1929, and so far 25 Islamic Countries are using it. Earlier, only the Red Cross was used as an emblem of the Geneva Convention, but because it reminded Muslims of their crusaders, most of the Muslim nations objected to this, and as a result an additional emblem was provided.



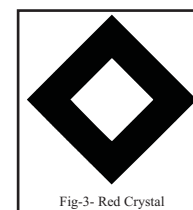
Though the crescent is traditionally associated with Islam, the Red Crescent is a color reversal of the Ottoman flag, which was later adopted into the modern Turkey flag. The Turkey flag has white colored crescent at an end and star at the centre over a red back

ground but Red Crescent is reversal of color combination with crescent moved to centre and devoid of star over white back ground. Fig-2

c) Red Crystal (Protocol III)

In 2005, due to growing pressure to accommodate Magen David Adom as a full member of the Red Cross & Red Crescent movement, a new emblem was adopted by an amendment of the Geneva Convention known

as Protocol III. The new emblem was designed for easy recognition and to make it more universally acceptable throughout different cultures, devoid of religious connotation contrasting the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which are often associated with Christianity and Islam, respectively. No Country or national society is obliged to change their emblems. But all are required to respect Red Crystal in the same manner as the other emblems.

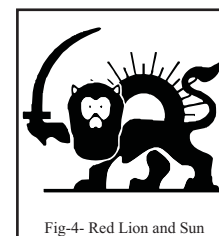


The Societies are permitted to use Red Crystal only at the side of a regular Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems. They are not permitted to use it all alone, but as an exception Magen David Adom, Israel National First aid Society has special permission to use it alone as its emblem. Fig-3

II) RECOGNISED EMBLEM BUT IN DISUSE

The Red Lion and Sun

The Red Lion and Sun Society of Iran was established in 1922 and recognized by Red Cross Society in 1923 as a counter example to the crescent and cross used by two of Iran's rivals, the Ottoman and the Russian empires. The new Islamic Republic of Iran replaced Shah Regime in the year 1980 which led to replacement of Red Lion and Sun with the Red Crescent to be consistent with most other Muslim nations. Though the Red Lion and Sun is in disuse now, Iran has the exclusive privilege to use it again in future. The Geneva Convention continues to recognize it as an official emblem confirmed by protocol III amendment¹. Fig-4



III) UNRECOGNISED EMBLEMS

Many countries had proposed various

symbols but were rejected by Red Cross Society as it can create regionalism, following are few of them².



Fig -5- Red Cross Society advertisement badge

- a) The Red Star of David (Magen David Adom)
 - b) Mehrab-e-Ahmar (Afghanistan) - Archway design
 - c) Red Lamb (Republic of the Congo (Léopoldville))
 - d) Red Wheel (India) - Hindu swastika.
 - e) Hakuai Sha (Japan), based on the Japanese flag
 - f) Red Cedar (Lebanon)
 - g) Red Rhinoceros (Sudan)
 - h) Red Palm (Syria)
- Sapa Unalom Daeng (Thailand)

DISCUSSION:

The scope of emblems and their use have been clearly mentioned by the Red Cross Society. As specified by the Geneva Convention, only four recognized emblems are to be used to denote the following:

- 1) Facilities for the care of injured and sick armed forces members;
- 2) Armed forces medical personnel and equipment;
- 3) Military chaplains;
- 4) International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the 185 national Red Cross and Red Crescent

societies.

The cases of misuse are reported sporadically from all over the world. Unfortunately, the misuse of the Red Cross emblem is widespread by all sections of medical fraternity from doctors (Allopathy, Homeopathy & Indian system of medicine) to paramedical personnel especially in India. The misuse is rampant among all kinds of medical personnel, from pseudo doctors to super specialists. It is often used as a general symbol to indicate first aid, medical supplies and civilian medical services. The symbol is indiscriminately used over hospitals, buildings and vehicles. Misuses appear in movies on television, and in computer software and games. Service companies, such as those for car repair or lawn maintenance, claim themselves as service "doctors" and incorporate Red Cross symbols to promote themselves¹.

International protection of images:-

The protected status of these images was established in the First Geneva Convention which is stated in Article 44.

The emblem of the red cross on a white ground and the words "Red Cross" or "Geneva Cross" may not be employed, either in time of peace or in time of war, except to indicate or to protect the medical units and establishments, the personnel and material protected by the present Convention and other Conventions dealing with similar matters. The same shall apply to the emblems mentioned in Article 38, second paragraph, in respect of the countries which use them. The National Red Cross Societies and other societies designated in Article 26 shall have the right to use the distinctive emblem conferring the protection of the Convention only within the framework of the present paragraph. Furthermore, National Red Cross Societies may, in time of peace, in accordance with their rational legislation, make use of the name and emblem of the Red Cross for their other activities which are in conformity with the principles laid down by

the International Red Cross Conferences. When those activities are carried out in time of war, the conditions for the use of the emblem shall be such that it cannot be considered as conferring the protection of the Convention; the emblem shall be comparatively small in size and may not be placed on armlets or on the roofs of buildings¹.

CONCLUSION:

Geneva Convention Act became Law in 1960 in India, misuse of the Red Cross emblem is punishable offence under section 12 r/w section 13 of chapter IV of Geneva Convention law, punishment being Rs 500/- fine or forfeiture of the property on which emblem is displayed³.



The need of hour is to educate doctors, paramedical personnel and chemists about importance of Red Cross emblem and not to misuse it. The Red Cross society must periodically highlight about who can use it in print and electronic media. The evil is deep rooted and awareness campaign alone shall not put an end. It requires stringent Law and enhanced punishments. Thus to curb this menace, it is essential to enhance punishment for the misuse in the form of imprisonment, enhancement of fine. Above all Medical Council of India and Indian Medical Association should take steps to evolve and register an acceptable emblem for doctors which can be as appealing as Red Cross emblem and popularize it. The registered professional bodies of different specialties must supply it free of cost to its members.

In an attempt towards public awareness, the Red Cross society has released post card size badge. It is very informative and self explanatory⁴. Fig-5.

The Red Cross emblem has gained lot of recognition among all sections of society. The medical fraternity claims that emblem helps in as an identification tool of an individual and profession. Hence an attempt has been made to encash on this popularity of Red Cross emblem by evolving an alternative medical emblem, keeping Red Cross at the back ground we suggest few prototype logos which can be considered for official use by medical fraternity after approval from respective apex bodies (MCI, DCI etc). Fig-6 & 7.

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*If someone feels that they had never
made a mistake in their life,
then it means they had never tried
a new thing in their life.*

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