



Blood Shortage Due to Lockdown

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Why in News

Due to **Covid-19 lockdown** hospitals across India are **facing acute shortage of blood** and have started contacting individual blood donors to meet the demand.

Key Points

- Hospitals are calling listed donors and those with rare blood groups to come in and donate.
- The **Indian Red Cross Society Blood Bank** has also noted that there is a drop in blood collection. The crisis is such that there is a shortage of the most **commonly seen B-positive blood group**.
- According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)** recommendation, **blood requirement of 1% of a country's population** be used as an estimate of its **blood needs**.

By this measure, **India was short of 1.9 million units of blood** as per data presented to the Lok Sabha **in 2018**.
- **Worst Hit Due to Blood Shortage:**
 - Patients requiring **dialysis, having blood disorders, and pregnant women** are the worst hit due to blood shortage.
 - Patients from **small cities and villages** are also the worst hit.
- **Thalassemics Fearful**

Thalassemia patients need repeated blood transfusions to survive. Many thalassemics take blood for their transfusions from the Indian Red Cross Society Blood Bank, whose camps are being cancelled.
- According to the **National Blood Transfusion Council**, there are 2,023 blood banks in India, which receive 78% of their blood supply from voluntary donors.

Issues Involved

- Due to lockdown **blood banks collection camps are cancelled.**
- **Donors are hesitant to travel** to hospitals to donate blood amid strict lockdown.
Also, **donor passes had not been made** by some hospitals, which is adding to the problem.
- **Transportation almost closed** due to lockdown.

Government Initiative

- The **Health Ministry** has asked hospitals to start working on **ensuring sufficient stock of blood for transfusion** by promoting voluntary blood donors and utilising various services like mobile blood collection vans with the help of the Indian Red Cross Society.
- It has asked the Indian Red Cross Society to **send mobile blood collection vans to the premises of regular blood donors** to facilitate them for blood donation.

Thalassemia

- It is a **blood disorder passed down through families (inherited)** in which the body makes an **abnormal form or inadequate amount of hemoglobin.**
- Thalassemia is caused by mutations in the gene that make hemoglobin.
- The disorder results in large numbers of red blood cells being destroyed, which leads to **anemia.**
- Hemoglobin is the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen.

Indian Red Cross Society

- Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) was established in 1920 under the **Indian Red Cross Society Act.**
- The **President of India is the President** and the **Union Health Minister is the Chairman of the 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.
- The **Mission** of the Indian Red Cross is to inspire, encourage and initiate at all times all forms of humanitarian activities so that human suffering can be minimized and even prevented and thus contribute to creating more congenial climate for peace.
- It is a leading member of the largest independent humanitarian organization in the world, the **International Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement.**
- The movement has three main components,
 - International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC),
 - 192 National Societies and International Federation of Red Cross
 - Red Crescent Societies.

National Blood Transfusion Council

- The National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC) was constituted in **1996 under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**
- **Objective:** To **promote voluntary blood donation, ensure safe blood transfusion, provide infrastructure** to blood centres, **develop human resources** and **formulate and implement the Blood Policy.**
- NBTC is the **apex body** in relation to all matters pertaining to **operation of blood centres.**
- The NBTC is the central body that coordinates the State Blood Transfusion Councils (SBTCs) and also ensures involvement of other Ministries and other health programmes for various activities related to **Blood Transfusion Services (BTS).**

Source:TH