

SAMARTH
ANNUAL REPORT
2007-2008

List of Members

2007-2008

Governing Body Members

Dr. L. Jeyaseelan – President

Dr. Shuba Kumar – Secretary

Dr.. Rani Mohanraj – Treasurer

Dr. Saradha Suresh

Mr. Veerapandian Ms. Aarthi Kandasamy

Ms. Premalatha

Ms. C.D. Nandini

Advisory Body

Dr. B.W.C. Sathiasekaran

Dr. R. Thara

Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar

Dr. Lisa Manhart

AUDITORS :

K. Kishore & Co

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Arasu & Arunachalam

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

BANKERS :

CANARA BANK , Kasturba Nagar, Chennai -600020

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Samarth has now completed one year of its existence. All formalities concerning the registration of Samarth, opening of a bank account and finalising a Chartered Accountant to carry out a yearly audit of our accounts have been completed. We have applied for and got a PAN as well as TAN number for Samarth. In an effort to bring about greater visibility to the organization, a web site (www.samarthngo.org) has been developed which highlights the various activities carried out by the organization

This year we are proud to be one of the partners for an important collaborative study, involving the University of Washington, USA and the Biostatistics Resource and Training Centre at CMC-Vellore, on assessing the effect of stigma on mental health and access to care of HIV positive persons in Chennai. We hope that this will be the first of many more to come. We had the pleasure of welcoming Dr. Lisa Manhart to our office. During her visit we completed the analysis for the HIV-Stigma study and set in motion our plans to write up a proposal for submission to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the USA for a larger grant.

We were also identified by the International Training and Education Centre for HIV/AIDS (I-TECH), which is currently working at the Government Hospital for Thoracic Medicine (GHTM) at, Tambaram, Chennai to undertake an evaluation of the one year HIV-Fellowship programme. Our social science training programmes have also been gaining greater recognition, evident, by the increase in the number of participants to our training programmes. Dr. Rani Mohanraj successfully completed her 3 months stint under the Fogarty Fellowship Programme at the University of Washington, Seattle, USA. She undertook the course on Epidemiology and Biostatistics from September to December 2007.

We will continue to work to strengthen our knowledge base and our capabilities so that we deliver good quality research and become better teachers

ABOUT SAMARTH

We are a group of epidemiologists, social scientists, psychologists and biostatisticians who share a common vision in advocating for health research. We have extensive research experience in using both qualitative and quantitative methods in several national and international multicentric health projects. These have ranged from projects on domestic violence, adolescent mental health, community mental health to, care and support programmes for HIV positive persons.

Samarth was set up in January 2007 and registered as a society under the Tamilnadu Societies Registration Act, 1956 on 24th May 2007, Samarth has been involved in conducting various research projects and social science training programmes.

Our Objectives are

- Conducting research to inform policy
- Promoting healthy behaviour through counselling and community education
- Building capacity in epidemiology, social science and biostatistics
- Building partnerships with government and private sectors in health promotion

Our Mission Statement

Samarth is committed to creating healthier lives of communities through credible research and sustainable interventions.

FOUNDING MEMBERS

L. Jeyaseelan has a doctorate in Biostatistics and is currently the Professor and Head of the department of Biostatistics at Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. He was trained in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Newcastle, Australia under the INCLEN (International Clinical Epidemiology Network). He has established a Biostatistics Research and Training Center (BRTC) and a Clinical Data Management Centre (CDMC) at CMC for high quality data analyses and management. In addition, to being the honorary president of Samarth he also provides his expertise as a Biostatistician for Samarth's research projects.

Shuba Kumar is a Social Scientist and holds a doctorate in Medical and Social Psychiatry. She received her training in Social Science and Epidemiology from the University of Newcastle, Australia under the INCLEN (International Clinical Epidemiology Network) programme. She has been a lead investigator on research projects on women's reproductive health, domestic violence, mental health and HIV care and support programmes. She is also the sitting member of ethical committees in institutions such as Christian Medical College- Vellore, Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Indian Institute of Technology and the Tuberculosis Research Foundation.

Rani Mohanraj completed her doctorate in Psychology from the University of Madras and was trained under the Fogarty Fellowship Programme in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Washington, USA. She has been involved in research studies on mental health concerns, specifically depression in primary care and school mental health. She has also worked with HIV affected children and has consulted on the development of tools for counsellors in HIV care.

Saradha Suresh is an Associate Professor of Paediatrics and currently the Deputy Superintendent of Institute of Child Health (ICH), Chennai. She underwent training in Clinical Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Health Economics at the University of Pennsylvania, USA under the INCLEN programme. She has been the lead researcher on several neonatal and child health projects. She serves as a technical consultant on the research projects undertaken by Samarth

Veerapandian was trained in Psychology from the President College, Chennai and completed M.Phil from University of Madras. He is a visiting faculty member in Psychology at various educational institutions. His expertise lies in training and teaching and he has been involved in research studies on mental health concerns of adolescents and people living with HIV.

C.D. Nandini is a post graduate in Nutrition and joined as a research assistant on the project on stigma and discrimination among HIV positive persons. She is well trained in qualitative research methods and her skills lie in conducting in-depth interviews.

Aarthi Kandasamy holds a post graduate degree in Psychology from the Women's Christian College, Chennai. She joined Samarth as a research assistant for a research project that aimed to study stigma and discrimination among HIV positive persons. Her exposure to research from this project strengthened her desire to pursue her career in research. She has gained experience in data collection methods and in qualitative research techniques

Premalatha is a post graduate in Sociology and is a life member of Samarth. She has vast experience in data entry and data management and does all data entry for research projects of Samarth.

SAMARTH RESEARCH AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

RESEARCH

The various research activities carried out in the year 2007-08 are presented below:

(i). Collaborative project between Samarth, BRTC-Christian Medical College, Vellore and the University of Washington on, “Effect of Stigma on HIV Care-Seeking Behaviours and Mental Health in Tamil Nadu, India. Funded by the Puget Sound Partners Grant, USA (October 2007 – September 2008).

This study investigated the relationship between HIV-associated stigma and depression in Tamilnadu among HIV-positive persons affiliated with support networks from October 2007-July 2008. We measured stigma with the 40-item Berger HIV Stigma Scale and depression with the Major Depression Inventory (MDI) .The Berger HIV Stigma Scale measures 4 dimensions of HIV-associated stigma: personalized stigma, disclosure, negative self-image, and perceived public attitude. The MDI contains 10 items measuring the severity of depressive states and can be scored using DSM-IV criteria. Scales were translated into Tamil, back-translated to check for accuracy, and standardized to the Indian context in validity and reliability studies. We assessed adherence using the 4-item brief ACTG adherence measure and a 30-day visual analogue scale, and developed measures of health care-seeking and risk behaviour.

We administered the Berger stigma scale and the MDI to 50 individuals (25 men and 25 women), re-administered it to the same individuals after 12-14 days, and calculated test-retest reliability using an intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC). Overall, the test-retest reliability of the total stigma scale was high (ICC=0.88; 95% CI 0.8-0.9), and was above 0.8 for all sub-domains except disclosure concerns (ICC=0.6), suggesting good reliability. The ICC for the test-retest assessment of the MDI was 0.7 (95% CI 0.5-0.8), suggesting moderate reliability. Internal consistency was high for both scales, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.89 for the stigma scale, and 0.86 for the MDI depression measure. Data is currently underway. The study is expected to be completed on September 2008

(ii) Evaluation of the HIV Fellowship Programme at the Government Hospital for Thoracic Medicine (GHTM), Tambaram, Chennai. (2007- 2008)

The project to evaluate the 1 year HIV Fellowship programme ongoing at the GHTM hospital in Tambaram was contracted out to Samarth by the International Training and Education Centre for HIV /AIDS (I-TECH). I-TECH have been involved in developing the curriculum for the programme and conducting it at GHTM, Tambaram. The goals of the Fellowship program are: 1) To produce physicians trained in HIV/AIDS medicine who will move into positions of direct patient contact and care, 2) To develop individuals who will become leaders in the field of HIV/AIDS care, prevention, research and program management and 3) To reduce the burden on existing medical doctors at GHTM. The programme makes use of a wide range of approaches namely, class room lectures, role plays, interactive discussions, field activities and one-to-one trainee-driven clinical mentoring in imparting the training. Through these activities Fellows are expected to gain skills that will enable them to provide a wide range of HIV-related, high quality health care services. The programme is now into its fourth year, with three successive batches of Fellows having successfully completed the one year programme. With each year, changes have been brought into both the format and content of the programme following feedback received from the Fellows and inputs provided by the experts and mentors involved in the conduct of the course.

In the interest of further strengthening the programme and obtaining insights into potential gaps or problems that may exist, I-TECH had contracted out the evaluation of the Fellowship programme to Samarth. The specific objectives of this evaluation were to-

1. Understand perceptions of Batch 3 Fellows in terms of:
 - their academic and career expectations from the HIV Fellowship programme
 - their perceptions on the course content
 - their perceptions on the method of evaluation
 - their knowledge and capacity gained in clinical care including laboratory and infection control, management and leadership, epidemiology and research, public health and training and presentation
 - their suggestions on how to further improve and expand the scope of the Fellowship programme
2. Understand perceptions of GHTM and I-TECH mentors on

- influence of the Fellowship programme on GHTM's care and support and academic activities
- changes made to the conduct and design of the Fellowship Programme
- barriers or problem areas that need to be resolved
- suggestions on how to further improve and expand the scope of the Fellowship programme

Using qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews, interviews were held with each of the Fellows as well as the GHTM and I-TECH mentors. Some key issues that emerged following the evaluation were that the Fellowship course which has completed three years has brought in some changes to its course curriculum which is constantly being expanded and modified in keeping with current trends in the treatment and diagnosis of HIV. These are important aspects of the course as it enhances its relevance and value. As with any course of this nature, there continue to be challenges, key of which are its recognition, possible accreditation, and continued sustainability. Other issues concerning mentoring, evaluation of the Fellows and identification of suitable faculties' for specialties also need to be addressed. Despite all these issues, the fact remains that the course has several unique elements. With continued inputs from such types of evaluations the Fellowship course has great potential for further improvements and expansion.

SOCIAL SCIENCE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Members of Samarth have been involved in running workshops on Social Science Research. Health social science is an area of research and practice that has evolved rapidly since the late 1980s. The gradual recognition of the fact that the social and behavioural sciences together with the physical, biological and health sciences are essential for unraveling the complexity of human health, has led to the acceptance of health social science as integral to understanding and solving health problems. In addition, insights from fields as diverse as biology, psychology, ecology, physics and climatology may be needed to complement the perspective of health social science. Ironically, despite the widespread recognition of the significant role played by social, behavioural and economic dimensions to health problems, the role of health social scientists in studying and solving these problems has been minimal. There is therefore a

tremendous need to both educate and train individuals on the relevance and techniques of social science perspectives, concepts and methods in order to broaden their understanding of health. Equally important is the need to encourage health professionals to consider the social and cultural determinants of health, thereby enhancing its acceptability. Therefore the objectives behind these workshops are to:

- i) To gain an understanding of the role of social science in health research
- ii) To provide expertise and guidance in qualitative research methods and analyses
- iii) To provide expertise in questionnaire development and standardization

(Photograph -1)

The different workshops that were held during this period are listed below:

- Training in Instrument Development- 26th - 28th July 2007 BRTC-CMC, Vellore
- Social Science and Qualitative Research- 28th Nov – 1st December 2007
- One day workshop on Qualitative Research at JIPMER, Pondicherry- 28th January 2008

(Photo -2)

MEETINGS, TRAINING PROGRAMMES, VISITS

Dr. Rani Mohanaraj was selected for the 3 months Fogarty Fellowship Programme at the University of Washington, Seattle, USA. She undertook the course of Epidemiology and Biostatistics from September to December 2007.

Dr. Lisa Manhart, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, University of Washington visited Samarth in October 2007. She met with the Samarth team to discuss the plan for the conduct of the study and assist in the training of the field team.

Dr. Shuba Kumar was invited to a course development meeting on “Applied Social Science Research for Product Development” at the Thammasat University, Bangkok in December 2007. This was under the auspices of the World Health Organization- Tropical Disease Research (TDR)

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

AUDIT REPORT

We have examined the balance sheet of M/s Samarth, Chennai as on 31st March 2008 and the profit and loss account for the year ended on that date which are in agreement with the books of account maintained by the said trust or institution.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of the audit. In our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the head office and the branches of the above-named trust/institution by us so far as appears from our examination of the books, and proper returns adequate for the purposes of audit have been received from branches not visited by us, subject to the comments given below::

In our opinion and to the best of our information, and according to information given to us the said accounts give a true and fair view: -

- i. In the case of the balance sheet of the state of affairs of the above-named institution as on 31st March 2008 and
- ii In the case of the profit and loss account, of the profit or loss of its accounting year ending on 31st March 2008

The prescribed particulars are annexed hereto.

**For K. Kishore & Co.,
Chartered Accountants**

Sd/-

(K. Kishore)

Proprietor

Membership No. : 18761

**No. 7D, EGA Trade Center,
7th Floor, 318, Poonamalle High
Road, Kilpauk,
Chennai – 600 010**

Place: - Chennai

Date: - 10/11/2008

Samarth

No. 13A (Old No. 11), 4th Cross Street, Indira Nagar, Adyar, Chennai - 600020

Receipts and Payment for the period 01/04/2007 to 31/03/2008

Receipts	Amount	Payments	Amount
To Opening - Cash	7450.00	By APAC Project Expenses	38894.00
- Bank	0.00	By Computer Maintenance	5775.00
To CMC - Vellore	695250.00	By EB Charges	505.00
To Bank Interest	1843.00	By General Expenses	1450.00
To Corpus Donations Received	83000.00	By Printing & Stationery	84.00
		By Rent	45000.00
		By Repairs & Maintenance	2336.00
		By Stigma Project Expenses	576554.00
		By Telephone	12890.00
		By Telephone Deposit	1500.00
		By Travelling Expenses	8630.00
		By Closing - Cash	4832.00
		- Bank	89093.00
	<u>787543.00</u>		<u>787543.00</u>

For K. Kishore & Co.,

Chartered Accountants

Sd/-

K. Kishore

Proprietor

Sd/-

Secretary

Shuba Kumar

Sd/-

Treasurer

Rani Mohanraj

Samarth

No. 13A (Old No. 11), 4th Cross Street, Indira Nagar, Adyar, Chennai - 600020

Income and Expenditure Account for the period ended 31.03.2008

Expenses	Amount	Income	Amount
To Audit Fees	5000.00	By Project Receipts	90401.00
To EB Charges	505.00	By Bank Interest	1843.00
To General Expenses	1450.00		
To Printing & Stationary	84.00		
	54000.0		
To Rent Expenses	0		
To Repairs & Maintenance	8355.00		
	12890.0		
To Telephone Expenses	0		
To Travelling Expenses	8630.00		
To Excess of Income Over Expenses	1330.00		
	92244.0		
	0		92244.00

For K. Kishore & Co.,
Chartered Accountants

Sd/-

K. Kishore

Proprietor

Membership No. 18761

Sd/-

Secretary

Shuba Kumar

Sd/-

Treasurer

Rani Mohanraj

Samarth

No. 13A (Old No. 11), 4th Cross Street, Indira Nagar, Adyar, Chennai - 600020

Balance Sheet as at 31.03.2008

Liabilities	Amount	Assets	Amount
General Fund:		Current Assets:	
Balance B/D	7450.00	Telephone Deposit	1500.00
Add: Corpus Donations	83000.00	CMC Vellore	61661.00
Add: Excess of Income Over Expenses	1330.00	APAC	38894.00
Balance C/F	91780.00	Canara Bank Account Balance	89093.00
		Cash in Hand	4832.00
Dr. Jeyaseelan	90000.00		
Audit Fees Payable	5000.00		
Outstanding Expenses	9200.00		
	195980.00		195980.00

For K. Kishore & Co.,

Chartered Accountants

Sd/-

K. Kishore

Proprietor

Membership No. 18761

Sd/-

Secretary

Shuba Kumar

Sd/-

Treasurer

Rani Mohanraj