

# **SAMARTH ANNUAL REPORT**

**2009-2010**

# **List Of Members**

**2009-2010**

## **Governing Body Members**

Dr. L. Jeyaseelan – President

Dr. Shuba Kumar – Secretary

Dr. Rani Mohanraj – Treasurer

Dr. Saradha Suresh

Mr. Veerapandian

Ms. C.D. Nandini

Ms. Aarthi Kandasamy

Ms. Premalatha

Dr. Keerthi Prem

Ms. Sylvia Jeyakumar

Ms. K.V.Sripriya

## **Advisory Body**

Dr.B.W.C. Sathiasekaran

Dr.R.Thara

Dr.Lakshmi Vijayakumar

Dr. Lisa Manhart

**Auditors** : Arasu and Arunachalam

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

**BANKERS** : CANARA BANK , St.Mary's Road, Chennai

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Samarth has now completed three years. The completion of three years is particularly significant because it signifies our ability to survive as a research and training body and highlights the fact that we are fulfilling a very important need, namely, provision of training in social science research and undertaking research incorporating social science perspectives. What has also been very heartening is the fact that with the visibility afforded through the regular conduct of the training programmes at CMC-Vellore and through participation in collaborative research projects, Samarth is gradually gaining in recognition. I hope that in time Samarth will gain wider recognition as a research body and fully live up to its name.

We undertook a variety of research and training activities during this period. In the field of research a collaborative study between Sneha, Samarth and the BRTC at CMC-Vellore on assessing the acceptability and effectiveness of a central pesticide storage facility in preventing suicides commenced in April 2009. This two year project is slated to be completed in March 2011. At about the same time we also entered into a collaboration with the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF) to undertake a small qualitative study on understanding people's perceptions and awareness about brown rice. This study is part of a larger project that MDRF is working on in collaboration with the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) USA. Another exciting project that is slated to commence sometime towards the end of 2010 is in collaboration with the University of Washington and two medical colleges in Karnataka. In this study we propose to obtain preliminary data on the potential efficacy of the Follow-up Counselling toolkit so that, ultimately HIV positive persons in India can better utilize treatment and enjoy better health outcomes. Our training activities have also gained momentum with more and more participants coming for the short course workshops we are conducting at CMC-Vellore. In addition, Samarth members have been called to provide training in qualitative research and analysis to institutes like Sangath in Goa, NARI in Pune and Sankara Nethralaya in Chennai. Our social science training activities are thus beginning to fulfil a real need in this area and shortly we will be planning more such workshops some of which will focus specifically on qualitative analysis.

## **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

# **SAMARTH RESEARCH AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

## RESEARCH

### **i) Pilot Study To Assess The Acceptability and Effectiveness Of Central Storage Of Pesticides In Preventing Suicides : Community Controlled Trial**

This is a collaborative project between Samarth, Sneha, the BRTC at CMC-Vellore, the VHS – Chennai and the WHO. The study aims to i) assess the acceptability and costs of a central pesticide storage facility as a programmatic intervention to reduce pesticide related suicide and attempted suicide in selected villages in Tamilnadu state, ii) evaluate the quality of community cohesion and its association with attempted and completed suicides and, iii) set up a surveillance system to record and document all deaths and attempted suicides in the selected villages. The project is a two year study, is funded by WHO and commenced in April 2009. Tasks completed under this project over this year included site visits to the selected field areas in Cuddalore district with the aim of meeting various categories of government officials to obtain current data on the villages. The field team also sought to apprise the concerned government officials, namely, the Collector and Medical Officer of Cuddalore District as well as various Taluk level officials, of the purpose of the study so as to gain their support and cooperation. The specific villages selected for study were Kandamangalam and Kurungudi which were the intervention sites and Karunagaranallur and Pazhanjanallur which constituted the control sites.

Another important activity that was completed during this period was the finalization of the different questionnaires proposed to be used in the study. These were i) demographic survey questionnaire which we developed and which had the following broad domains, namely, participant details, farming practices, debts, current pesticide usage and storage, knowledge about health risk of using pesticide, attitudes towards central storage system and suicidal behaviour in the family ii) Neighbourhood Cohesion questionnaire developed by Wilkinson (2007) which looks at the quality of community relationships and interactions iii) Verbal Autopsy Interview that will be done on all those families who reported a death within the last two years and the iv) Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Beck's Suicidal Intent Scale (BSI) which will be administered on all those persons who attempted suicide within the last two weeks. All instruments were translated into Tamil. While both the BDI and the BSI have already been standardized, the Neighbourhood Cohesion Questionnaire needs to be standardized. This process will commence as on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Assessment of validity was done by giving the questionnaire to a few experts whose feedback will provide information on its relevance and comprehensiveness.

### **ii) Focus Group Discussions to Understand the Acceptability of Brown Rice as a Substitute to White Rice**

This study was sub-contracted to Samarth by the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF). The MDRF in collaboration with the Harvard School of Public Health are working on a larger intervention trial on studying the effects of brown rice viz-a-viz white rice as a substitute rice staple. Before submitting the application for funding, Samarth was contracted to conduct and analyze a few focus group discussions (FGD) with slum and non-slum residents in Chennai to better understand people's perceptions on brown rice as a substitute rice staple. The data generated from the FGDs would provide initial evidence that would aid in the writing of the intervention trial. This was a four month study that commenced in April 2009. A total of eight focus group

discussions were conducted with overweight and non-overweight men and women living in slum and non-slum areas in the city of Chennai. A focus group guide was developed which included themes such as participants perceptions on dietary preferences of people in general in the community, influence of various factors like culture, religion, economic status, health etc on determining dietary habits, people's perceptions on "healthy foods" and how they view them, decision making in the family regarding. All participants had to taste three varieties of rice subject to different degrees of milling, and then provide their opinions on which they preferred and why. The 3 varieties of rice were:

Raw rice:	0% polish, 2% polish, 4% polish
Parboiled rice:	0% polish, 2% polish, 4% polish
Red rice:	0% polish, 2% polish, 4% polish

Following completion of all the FGDs the data were transcribed verbatim and textual analysis of data was carried out. Each transcript was read through carefully after which each one was coded. The process of coding eventually aided in developing key categories from which finally emerged four themes of analysis, namely 1). Culture and Dietary Practices, 2) Factors Influencing Rice Preference, 3) Awareness and Perceptions on Brown rice and 4) Barriers to and Factors Influencing Acceptance of Brown Rice. The final report was prepared and submitted to MDRF and Harvard after which we completed a paper that has been submitted to the Journal of American Dietetics Association (JADA) for consideration for publication. The result is awaited.

### **iii). Toward Availability of an Effective Mental Health Intervention for People with HIV in India"**

Another collaborative project with the University of Washington proposes to obtain preliminary data on the potential efficacy of a Follow-up Counselling toolkit so that, ultimately HIV positive persons in India can better utilize treatment and enjoy better health outcomes. This project was awarded to Deepa Rao from the Department of Global Health, University of Washington (UW) under the New Investigator Award (NIA) from the UW/FHCRC Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) Developmental Core.

The specific aims of this project are to 1) conduct formative research and adapt the 'Living Positively' program in Karnataka State, India and 2) implement a test of the 'Living Positively' intervention in Karnataka state to obtain preliminary effect sizes to power a future, multisite randomized clinical trial. It is expected that the pilot study will yield constructive information and effect sizes to help power a large multisite trial of the intervention. After obtaining results, it is proposed to submit an NIH R01 proposal to fund a full scale randomized controlled trial of the intervention to take place in sites across southern India. Other collaborative partners are Arogyaan in Chennai, an NGO who will be responsible for applying for FCRA permission, the KIMS and RMCH medical college and hospitals in Bangalore which are the two study sites where data collection will be carried out. The proposal has been submitted to ICMR and we are currently awaiting their clearance.

### **iv) Integrating Depression Screening into HIV Care in Southern India**

This study is a collaboration between Samarth, the BRTC at CMC-Vellore and the University of Washington and proposes to understand how best to integrate a screening for depression into HIV care settings. The proposal which was submitted to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) USA, as an R21 grant, has since been approved by NIH. Samarth had submitted the proposal to ICMR for clearance in October 2009 following which comments were received from ICMR/NACO in early February 2010. Subsequently, a response to the queries raised by ICMR/NACO was furnished by end February 2010. The response from ICMR/NACO is awaited. Following ICMR/NACO approval the proposal will be sent for approval by the Health Ministry Screening Committee (HMSC). It is only after receipt of all these clearances will we be able to commence the study. Other local clearances from the Tamilnadu State Government have already been obtained.

#### **v). Informed Consent in the Medical Setting**

With a view to developing a consent process that would be relevant and meaningful to the Indian scenario, Samarth in collaboration with CMC are currently carrying out a small qualitative study in the surgery department at CMC hospital. The study involves doing in-depth interviews with patients following their surgery with doctors to ascertain how this process is perceived by patients and health care professionals, understanding constraints to and strategies to obtaining informed consent that are relevant and meaningful in a hospital setting. A total of 12 interviews with patients and 3 with doctors has been completed. As per the protocol 8 more interviews remain to be done with patients and 7 more with doctors. All interviews are being recorded and then transcribed verbatim. These transcribed interviews will then be taken up for qualitative analyses.

#### **RESEARCH PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE**

The following projects are currently in the pipeline:

##### **Diabetes Community Lifestyle Improvement Program (D-CLIP),**

The Madras Diabetes Research Foundation and the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University are working to prevent diabetes in Chennai. The D-CLIP study funded by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) through the BRiDGES grant, which is supported by an educational grant from Eli Lilly and Company is a randomized trial testing a culturally specific, community-based lifestyle intervention for the prevention of type 2 diabetes in men and women living in Chennai, India. Study participants will be randomized to receive either standard advice from a dietician and a doctor or enrolled into a series of lessons of improving their lifestyle to prevent diabetes. Classes will meet weekly for six months, after which all study participants will be followed for at least a year to determine which program is most effective for weight loss and diabetes prevention. Qualitative research including focus group discussions, will be used to assess the acceptability of the lifestyle program to the study participants. The conduct of the FGDs has been sub-contracted to Samarth. The project is slated to begin in June 2010

## SOCIAL SCIENCE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Social Science training Programmes organized by Samarth and those for which Samarth faculty had been invited to as resource persons are listed below:

1. Orientation Workshop on Qualitative Research for NACO participants- 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009. Organized by the BRTC, CMC-Vellore.
2. Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis and Instrument Development- 18<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2009, BRTC, Vellore. Organized by Samarth
3. Workshop on Qualitative Research Methods Venue: Sangath, Goa - 22-24<sup>th</sup> June, 2009. Organized by Sangath, Goa.



4. Workshop on social science research conducted at the Stem Cell Research Center, CMC, Vellore. Dates: 27<sup>th</sup>- 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2009. Organized by Samarth
5. Seminar on Qualitative Research organized by NACO for M & E officers -Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> 2009. Organized by NACO
6. Samarth, IndiaCLEN & CERTC Collaborative Workshop On Qualitative Research.-6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> August 2009. Organized by CERTC-Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram.
7. Qualitative Research Workshop- 24<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Organized by SAATHI Data analysis and report writing workshop for Achieving MDG5 Governance of Health System in Ethiopia- 18<sup>th</sup> January to 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010. Organized by INCLEN, Delhi.
8. One day Workshop on Qualitative Research for students of Optometry in Sankara Nethralaya – 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010- Organized by Sankara Nethralaya
9. One day Workshop on Questionnaire Design for students of Optometry in Sankara Nethralaya – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2010. Organized by Sankara Nethralaya

10. Workshop on Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis- 29<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. Organized by NARI, Pune .



## **FOUNDER 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 INCLLEN (International Clinical Epidemiology Network). He has established a Biostatistics Research and Training Centre (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 INCLLEN (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 the Director of the Institute of Child Health (ICH), Chennai. She underwent training in Clinical Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Health Economics at the University of Pennsylvania, USA under the INCLLEN 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 in Psychology at various educational institutions

**Keerthi Prem** has a doctorate in Psychology from the University of Madras. She is currently working as a clinical Psychologist at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai. She joined as a life member of Samarth in 2008. She participates as a faculty in workshops conducted on research methods for college students

**C.D. Nandini** has a post graduate degree 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 lies in conducting in-depth interviews.

**Aarthy 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** has a post graduate degree in Sociology and is a life member of Samarth. Her expertise lies in data entry and data management and she does all the data entry for research projects of Samarth.

**Keerthi Prabhu** has a doctorate in Psychology from the University of Madras. She is currently working as a clinical Psychologist at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai. She joined as a life member of Samarth in 2008. She participates as a faculty in workshops conducted on research methodology for college students.

**Sylvia Jeyakumar** has a post graduate degree in Biostatistics from Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. Her training and work experience at the Biostatics Resource and Training Centre (BRTC), CMC have honed her skills in statistical methods. She provides statistical consultations for research projects at Samarth.

**K.V Sripriya** has a post graduate degree in Nutrition and has worked as a research assistant in many research projects with founding members of Samarth. She is skilled in qualitative data collection methods and is involved in all research and training activities of Samarth. 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.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### **Audit Report of Samarth**

We have examined the balance sheet of M/s **Samarth**, New No.100, Warren Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 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 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 and
- ii In the case of the profit and loss account, of the profit or loss of its accounting year ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010

The prescribed particulars are annexed hereto.

**For Arasu and Arunachalam  
Chartered Accountants**

**(B. Kandaswami Aravind)  
Partner**

**Membership No. : 206691**

**Place: - Chennai  
Date: - 10/07/2010**

**Flat No.3, Karpagam Flats, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor,  
New No. 55/Old No. 28, 1<sup>st</sup> Main Road,  
R.A. Puram, Chennai – 600 028**

**Samarth**  
**New No.100, Warren Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004**

**Balance Sheet as on 31.03.2010**

<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>Amount Rs.</b>	<b>Assets</b>	<b>Amount Rs.</b>
<b>General Fund:</b>		<b>Current Assets:</b>	
Balance B/D	112153.68	Telephone Deposit	1500.00
Add: Excess of Income Over Expenses	19859.30	Dr. Subha Kumar - TDS	5356.00
Balance C/F	<b>132012.98</b>	Informed Concert Project	17865.50
		Canara Bank FCRA	1000.00
Salary Payable	62000.00	Canara Bank Savings A/c	170401.33
Audit Fees Payable	5000.00	Cash in Hand	2890.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>199012.98</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>199012.98</b>

For Arasu & Arunachalam

Chartered Accountants

Sd/-

B. Kandaswami Aravind

Partner

Place: Chennai

Date: 09/07/2010

Sd/-

Shuba Kumar

Secretary

Sd/-

Rani Mohanraj

Treasurer

**Samarth**

**New No.100, Warren Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004**

**Income and Expenditure Accounts for the period ended 31.03.2010**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Amount Rs.</b>	<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Amount Rs.</b>
To Audit Fess	5000.00	By Bank Interest	8815.00
To Bank Charges	195.00	By Brown Rice Project	127580.00
To Consultancy Fees	700.00	By I Tech Project	241778.00
To Electricity Charges	4500.00	By Informed Consent Project	67865.50
To Food & Accommodation	30053.00	By Life Membership Fees	2000.00
To General Expenses	1685.50	By Pesticide Project	801012.00
To Patient Expense	10500.00	By Social Science Workshop	269124.90
To Standardization of Study Instruments	7700.00	By Voluntary Contribution Received	34000.00
To Post & Telegrams	2503.75		
To Printing & Stationery	33526.50		
To Repair & Maintenance	18500.00		
To Salary	1248245.00		
To Social Science Workshop Expense	44533.85		
To Stores & Materials	5961.00		
To Tea and Snacks	1906.00		
To Telephone Charges	24419.00		
To Travel Expenses	83987.50		
To Web Updating Charges	8400.00		
To Excess of Income Over Expenses	<b>19859.30</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1552175.40</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1552175.40</b>

For Arasu & Arunachalam

Chartered Accountants

Sd/-

B. Kandaswami Aravind

Partner

Place: Chennai

Date: 09/07/2010

Sd/-

Shuba Kumar

Secretary

Sd/-

Rani Mohanraj

Treasurer

**Samarth**

**New No.100, Warren Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004**

**Receipts and Payment Accounts for the period ended 31.03.2010**

Receipts	Amount Rs.	Payments	Amount Rs.
<b><u>Opening Cash and Bank Balance</u></b>		By Audit Fees	3000.00
To Cash	<b>8973.25</b>	By Bank Charges	195.00
To Bank	<b>156805.33</b>	By Participant Cost	18200.00
To Bank Interest	8815.00	By Consultant Fees	700.00
To Brown Rice Project Receipt	127580.00	By Dr. Shuba Kumar TDS	5356.00
To I Tech Project Receipts	241778.00	By Electricity Charges	4500.00
To Informed Consent Project Receipt	50000.00	By Food & Accommodation	30053.00
To Life Membership Fees	2000.00	By General Expenses	1685.50
To Pesticide Projects Receipts	801012.00	By Post & Telegrams	2503.75
To Social Science Workshop Receipts	217000.00	By Printing & Stationery	33526.50
To Voluntary Contribution Received	34000.00	By Repair & Maintenance	18500.00
		By Salary	1186245.00
		By Social Science Workshop Expense	44533.85
		By Social Science Workshop Material	5934.00
		By Stores & Materials	27.00
		By Tea and Snacks	1906.00
		By Telephone Charges	24419.00
		By Travel Expenses	83987.50
		By Web Updating Charges	8400.00
		<b><u>Closing Cash and Bank Balance</u></b>	
		By Cash	<b>2890.15</b>
		By Bank - Canara Bank Savings	<b>170401.33</b>
		By Bank - Canara Bank FCRA	<b>1000.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1647963.58</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1647963.58</b>

For Arasu & Arunachalam

Chartered Accountants

Sd/-

B. Kandaswami Aravind

Partner

M No. 206691

Place: Chennai

Date: 09/07/2010

Sd/-

Shuba Kumar

Secretary

Sd/-

Rani Mohanraj

Treasurer