

## **List of Members : 2019-2020**

### **Governing Body**

- Dr. Saradha Suresh : Honorary President, Former Director, Institute of Child Health (ICH), Chennai.
- Dr. Rani Mohanraj : Secretary, Psychologist, Samarth, Chennai.
- Dr. Shuba Kumar : Treasurer, Social Scientist, Samarth, Chennai.
- Dr. L. Jeyaseelan : Prof. of Biostatistics, Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health (MBRU), Dubai.
- Dr. R. Thara : Vice Chairman, Research, Shizophrenia Research Foundation, (SCARF), Chennai.
- Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar : Psychiatrist, Founder Member Sneha, Chennai.
- Dr. Krishnakumar : Rtd. Principal, Elite School of Optometry, Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai.
- Dr. Suresh Kumar : Consultant Psychiatrist, Chennai.

### **Members**

- Ms. K.V. Sripriya : Nutritionist, Research Coordinator, Samarth, Chennai.
- Ms. Aarthi Kandasamy : Psychologist, Coimbatore.
- Ms. Basilea Watson : Technical Assistant (Research), National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT), Chennai.
- Dr. B.R Desikachari : Senior Public Health Consultant, Chennai.
- Dr. Keerthi Prabhu : Clinical Psychologist, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai.
- Ms. C.D. Nandini : Nutritionist, Chennai.
- Ms. Prasiddha Rama Rao : Health Educationist.
- Ms. Premalatha : Data Manager, Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), Chennai.
- Ms. Rama Murali : Public Health Consultant, USA
- Ms. Sylvia Jeyakumar : Biostatistician and Proprietor of Statshub, Chennai.
- Mr. Veerapandian : Assistant Professor, the Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health (BALM), Chennai.

**Advisory Body**

Dr. Lisa Manhart : Associate Prof. Epidemiology, Adjunct  
Associate Prof. Global Health, University of Washington,  
Center for AIDS & STD, Seattle, USA

Dr. Usha Ramakrishnan : Associate Professor, Hubert Department of Global Health,  
Emory University – USA

**Scientific Review Committee Members**

Dr. R. Thara : Chairperson, Research, Schizophrenia Research Foundation,  
(SCARF), Chennai

Dr. Shaheed Jawahar : Former Scientist “G” National Institute For Research in Tuberculosis  
(NIRT), Chennai

Dr. L. Jeyaseelan : Prof. of Biostatistics, Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine  
and Health (MBRU), Dubai

**Auditors** : Parameswaran & Associates Chartered Accountants.

**Accounts Officer** : Mr.J.S.Dinesh,B.S.Associates, Chennai.

**Bankers** : Canara Bank, St. Mary's Road, Chennai.

## SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Dear All,

Greetings from Samarth !

The year 2019-20 went off quietly with only a couple of small projects. We had a new collaborator this year. We were surprised to receive a mail from a Assistant Professor at the department of Global Health, Heidelberg University to assist his team for a study on hypertension to be carried out in Chennai. We were happy to know that he was impressed with our work by reading on our website and wanted Samarth to carry out the qualitative interviews for the study.. It was an interesting study and the research team at Chennai along with the team from Heidelberg visited the different zones in Chennai to recruit participants for the interviews. The study is completed and the analysis is ongoing by the team at Heidelberg University. We look forward to the study findings and participating in manuscript writing for journals.

The other collaborative study was with Psychiatrist who was interested to explore and understand perceptions of different stakeholders on Autism Spectrum disorders (ASD) and their challenges in identification, diagnosis and barriers to early intervention. We are in the process of carrying out interviews and focus group discussions with parents and different categories of health care providers.

We find that Samarth is being approached by scientists and researchers with different specialties. Hypertension and ASD are new areas for us at Samarth! However, our skills are in methods of quantitative and qualitative research and we so we are always open and excited to learn and expand our knowledge. We are glad that we could be involved in such new areas of research topics.

One of the disappointing news we received this year was that our proposal on intervention for depression among pregnant women which we submitted to National Institute of Health (NIH) was not funded. We have now revised the proposal and submitted to UKRI-MRC (United Kingdom Research and Innovation – Medical Research Council). We are keeping our fingers crossed!

This year we also made a major decision to disband our institutional review board (IRB). The reason for this due to ICMR's new guidelines that requires review board's of institutions' to meet mandatorily every 3 months. Samarth is a small organization with not more than four or five research studies in a year and it was not possible for us to schedule meetings every three months. So we made the hard decision of disbanding Samarth's IRB. We also entered a memorandum of agreement with Schizophrenia Research Foundation who have kindly consented to review our research proposals in their IRB. I thank Dr. Padmavathy, Director, SCARF for this kind gesture. My profound appreciation for all the distinguished members who served on our IRB and thank them for their valued contribution while they served on the board.

Our yearly workshops are well received and we find that the number of individuals who want to register is increasing every year. The department of Social work, University of Texas wants to have training on research methods every year from now on and we carried out the training for the second batch of students this year.

Thanks to all our governing body & advisory board members and our auditors for your continued support and guidance.

Looking forward to the next year !

## **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. Members of Samarth have been involved in conducting various research projects and social science training programmes.

## **OUR OBJECTIVES**

- ⦿ Conducting research to inform policy
- ⦿ 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

# **RESEARCH AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

## **ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS**

### **1. Beliefs and norms around hypertension and aging in Chennai, India (July 2019 to December 2019)**

Dr. Nikkil Sudharsanan Ph.D, MPH, Asst. Prof. Global Health, Heidelberg University Germany, contacted Samarth to assist with a study that aimed to understand the beliefs and norms around hypertension in Chennai city. While the morbidity and mortality risks of non communicable diseases (NCD) like Hypertension, can be reduced substantially through careful disease management, India has very large gaps in successful disease management. Theories from behavioural science offer several potential reasons for why levels of disease management are so low; however, a dearth of research examining which behavioural-scientific explanations for NCD decision making are relevant in a context like India, may potentially explain why levels of disease management are so low even among individuals with access to and the ability to pay for care. The primary aim of this study is to better understand NCD-related decision making among middle-class adults in Chennai, India, focusing on hypertension in particular. This mixed methods study is funded by the Heidelberg Institute of Global Health, Germany. The qualitative component of the study which involves conducting interviews with a sample of participants is being undertaken by Samarth in select areas in the city of Chennai. A total of 50 interviews are planned to be carried out. Samarth will be responsible for carrying out the qualitative interviews, transcribing and translating those in Tamil into English and submitting these to Dr. Nikhil's team

### **2. Barriers to Early Identification of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) (September 2019 to August 2020)**

In collaboration with Dr. Kannan, a consultant psychiatrist in Chennai, a small qualitative study is being undertaken by Samarth to understand the perspectives of paediatricians, psychiatrists, parents and therapists (occupational therapist and speech & language therapist) on barriers to early identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This condition is characterized by poor social communication, repetitive behaviour or stereotypes and sensory issues. It occurs in all racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups but more frequently in boys (4:1) than girls. Over the last few decades there has been an enormous increase in the prevalence of autism. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) data shows that 1 in 59 children may be suffering from ASD (CDC 2016). Untreated it causes severe impairment in the child leading to enormous burden to the families of these children. A consensus statement from the Indian Academy of Paediatrics has recommended that intervention should begin as early as possible. The study also seeks to obtain perceptions from paediatricians, parents and therapists on potential strategies to overcome these barriers. Using a combination of Focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs), we are in the process of collecting data from health care providers (HCPs) like paediatricians, psychiatrists and therapists involved in the care of children with autism and from parents of children who have been diagnosed with autism. This one year study will be carried out in Chennai.

## **PROJECT IN PIPELINE**

- 1. Intervening with Pregnant Women in Depression in South India. A Collaborative Project with Dr. Deepa Rao, Department of Global Health & Department of Psychiatry, University of Washington, USA. Submitted to NIH as an R01-Submission deadline October 2019**

Suicide rates among Indian women are amongst the highest in the world and depressive symptoms have been linked to high rates of preterm births in India. Despite clear linkages between maternal depressive symptoms and negative consequences for birth outcomes, no published studies have examined the effectiveness of intervening on depressive symptoms experienced by pregnant women in India. The proposed intervention targets pregnant women in South India who have mild to moderate depressive symptoms and combines Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Interpersonal Counseling (IPC: a brief form of Interpersonal Therapy), using materials already adapted for the Indian context. We aim to determine the effectiveness of the combined intervention and identify mechanisms involved in reducing maternal depression in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, India. We will also train research staff and junior investigators in conducting mental health intervention research through intensive mentorship of pilot projects and coursework. Our project will benefit from our long-standing collaborations with investigators in India and the United States. We expect that this study will demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention in reducing rates of depressive symptoms in pregnant women and an improved understanding of mechanisms involved in achieving these outcomes. Furthermore, we will gather information on the intervention's impact on 12-month maternal depression, birth outcomes, and growth indicators. This proposal had been submitted as an RO1 grant to NIH but unfortunately was not funded, We therefore revised it based on comments received and submitted it in response to a call for application received from UKRI-MRC (United Kingdom Research and Innovation – Medical Research Council). The results will be known in October 2020.

2. Strengthening Family Relationships in India: A Community Based Intervention for Men.” NIH R21 This study was not approved for funding

## **SOCIAL SCIENCE TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

Social Science training Programmes organized by Samarth and those for which Samarth faculty have been invited to as resource persons during the period 2019 – 2020 are listed below:

1. Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis workshop 9<sup>th</sup> –11<sup>th</sup> May 2019, conducted by Samarth in collaboration with SCARF (Schizophrenia Research Foundation)
2. Workshop On Monitoring and Evaluation, 23<sup>rd</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> May 2019 United way Mumbai
3. Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis workshop 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> August, conducted by Samarth in collaboration with SCARF (Schizophrenia Research Foundation)



4. Half day Workshop on Samarth's Research experiences - Social Work students from the University of Houston, USA. Research Methods for UG Social Work students from the University of Houston, USA on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Kumar S, Kumar G, Velu S, Pardhan S, Sivaprasad S, Ruamviboonsuk P and Raman R. Patient and provider perspectives on barriers to screening for diabetic retinopathy: an exploratory study from southern India. *BMJ Open* 2020;10:e037277. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2020-037277

## **Profile of FOUNDER MEMBERS**

L. Jeyaseelan has a doctorate in Biostatistics. He served as Professor at Department of Biostatistics at Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore and following retirement has taken up the position of Prof. of Biostatistics at the Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health (MBRU) in Dubai. He was trained in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Newcastle, Australia under the INCLIN (International Clinical Epidemiology Network). He had established the Biostatistics Research and Training Centre (BRTC) and a Clinical Data Management Centre (CDMC) at CMC, Vellore for high quality data analyses and management.

Shuba Kumar is a Social Scientist and holds a doctorate in Medical and Social Psychiatry from the Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University, Chennai. She received her training in Social Science and Epidemiology from the University of Newcastle, Australia under the INCLIN (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, the National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT), and the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF).

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



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L. Jeyaseelan has a doctorate in Biostatistics. He served as Professor at Department of Biostatistics at Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore and following retirement has taken up the position of Prof. of Biostatistics at the Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health (MBRU) in Dubai. He was trained in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Newcastle, Australia under the INCLIN (International Clinical Epidemiology Network). He had established the Biostatistics Research and Training Centre (BRTC) and a Clinical Data Management Centre (CDMC) at CMC, Vellore for high quality data analyses and management.

Shuba Kumar is a Social Scientist and holds a doctorate in Medical and Social Psychiatry from the Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University, Chennai. She received her training in Social Science and Epidemiology from the University of Newcastle, Australia under the INCLIN (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, the National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT), and the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF).

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. She is also the sitting member of ethical committee in Voluntary Health Services (VHS), Adyar, Chennai.

Saradha Suresh is the Former 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 INCLIN programme. She has been the lead researcher on several neonatal and child health projects. She is currently Honorary President of Samarth.

Veerapandian was trained in Psychology from the Presidency College, Chennai and completed M.Phil from University of Madras. He is a visiting faculty in Psychology at various educational institutions. He is Associate Professor, The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health (BALM), Chennai

# **FINANCIAL STATEMENT**



**PARAMESWARAN & ASSOCIATES**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

**FORM NO. 10B**

[See rule 17B]

**Audit report under section 12A(b) of the Income-tax Act, 1961, in the case of charitable or religious trusts or institutions**

We have examined the balance sheet of **SAMARTH** [name of the trust or institution] PAN **AAGTS9955G** as at **31/03/2020** 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 visited 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 trust as at **31/03/2020**
- (ii) the case of the profit and loss account, of the profit or loss of its accounting year ending on **31/03/2020**

The prescribed particulars are annexed hereto.

for **PARAMESWARAN AND ASSOCIATES**  
Chartered Accountants

  
(V PARAMESWARAN)  
PARTNER

M. No. : 024939  
FRN : 0013255S  
UDIN : 20024939AAAACM4771



Date : 28/12/2020  
Place : Chennai

**"KAMALALAYA"**

E -7, III Floor, Gemini Parsn Apartments, Cathedral Garden Road, Chennai - 600 006.  
Phone : 4302 4545, 2826 3636, E-mail : cavparam@gmail.com

**SAMARTH**  
NO 100, WARREN ROAD, MYLAPORE, CHENNAI - 600 004

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2020**

Income	Amount	Expenditure	Amount
To Project Expenses	4,42,184.00	By Project Income	6,70,944.92
To Bank charges	3,709.00	By Interest Received	69,094.86
To Postage & Courier	407.30	By Excess of Expenditure Over Income	6,22,607.15
To Electricity Charges	23,544.00		
To Printing & Stationery	10,982.00		
To Rent	5,000.00		
To Repairs & Office Maintenance	31,770.00		
To Salary & Wages	7,10,550.00		
To Telephone Charges	52,030.95		
To Travelling Expenses	5,095.00		
To General Expenses	15,806.50		
To Audit Fees	23,600.00		
To Depreciation	37,968.18		
	<b>13,62,646.93</b>		<b>13,62,646.93</b>

Place: Chennai  
Date : 28/12/2020

  
(Rani Mohanraj)  
Secretary

*Vide our report of even date,  
For Parameswaran & Associates  
Chartered Accountants  
Firm Regn. No. 013255 S*

  
(V Parameswaran)  
Partner  
M.No. 24939

**SAMARTH**  
NO 100, WARREN ROAD, MYLAPORE, CHENNAI - 600 004

**BALANCE SHEET AS ON 31ST MARCH 2020**

Liabilities	Amount	Assets	Amount
Capital Account	8,89,948.12	Fixed Asset	1,65,110.44
Outstanding Expenses	24,450.00	Deposits	4,40,361.63
		Cash & Bank Balance	3,08,926.05
	<b>9,14,398.12</b>		<b>9,14,398.12</b>

Place: Chennai

Date : 28/12/2020

  
(Rani Mohanraj)  
Secretary

*Vide our report of even date,  
For Parameswaran & Associates  
Chartered Accountants  
Firm Regn. No. 013255 S*

  
(V Parameswaran)  
Partner  
M.No. 24939

<b>Schedules</b>		
<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Capital Account</b>		
Opening Balance		15,12,555.27
Excess of Expenditure over Income	6,22,607.15	
Closing Balance	8,89,948.12	
	<b>15,12,555.27</b>	<b>15,12,555.27</b>
<b>Outstanding Expenses</b>		
TDS Payable		850.00
Audit Fees Payable		23,600.00
		<b>24,450.00</b>
<b>Project Funds</b>		
BMS - Balance	5,77,562.92	
Add: Receipts	9,235.00	
Less: Utilization	5,86,797.92	-
Pneumonia Project Fund	52,064.00	
Add: Receipts	-	
Less: Utilization	52,064.00	-
		-
<b>Deposits</b>		
Telephone Deposits		1,500.00
Fixed Deposit		3,30,962.63
TDS Receivable		82,899.00
Salary Advance		25,000.00
		<b>4,40,361.63</b>
<b>Cash &amp; Bank Balance</b>		
Cash - BMS		1,742.64
Cash -Samarth		3,754.36
Canara Bank-7996		2,88,266.99
Canara Bank - FCRA		3,577.00
Canara Bank - Debit Card		11,585.06
		<b>3,08,926.05</b>

**FIXED ASSETS**

PARTICULARS	W.D V as on 01.04.2019	Additions		Deletions	Total	Depreciation		W D V as on 31.03.2020
		Before Sep	After Sep.			Rate	Amount	
<b>10%</b> Furniture	1,00,630.99	-	-	-	1,00,630.99	10%	10,063.10	90,567.89
<b>40%</b> Computer	50,151.71	-	-	-	50,151.71	40%	20,060.68	30,091.03
<b>15%</b> Inverter	22,698.18	-	-	-	22,698.18	15%	3,404.73	19,293.45
Air conditioner	24,377.69	-	-	-	24,377.69	15%	3,656.65	20,721.04
Office Equipment	5,220.05	-	-	-	5,220.05	15%	783.02	4,437.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,03,078.62</b>	-	-	-	<b>2,03,078.62</b>		<b>37,968.18</b>	<b>1,65,110.44</b>