

Society for Community Health Awareness Research and Action

Annual Report 1991-1992

256, 5th main, I block Koramangala
Bangalore

Introduction

The Society for Community Health Awareness, Research and Action was established in early 1991 and became a registered Society under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act on 16th April 1991.

The Society grew out of a 6 year study-reflection-action experiment by a group of resource persons in community health who moved beyond the Community Medicine Department of St. John's Medical College, Bangalore in December 1983 to support and facilitate community health action at the grassroots particularly in Karnataka

The experimental phase of the project was supported by the Centre for Non Formal and Continuing Education, Ashirvad, Bangalore – 560 001 from 1984 till 1990.

1. Aims and Objectives of the Society

The aims and objectives of the Society as stated in the Memorandum of registration are :

- a) To create an awareness in the principles and practice of community health among all people involved and interested in health and related sectors.
- b) To undertake research in Community Health Policy issues particularly:
 - Community health care systems
 - Health human power training strategies
 - Health and development interactions
 - Medical pluralism and integration of medical systems.
- c) To evolve educational strategies that will enhance the knowledge, skill and attitudes of people involved in Community Health and Development.
- d) To dialogue with health planners, decision makers and administrators to enable the formulation and implementation of community oriented health policies.
- e) To promote and support community health action through voluntary as well as governmental initiative.
- f) To build a library and documentation centre in community health to support our work.

2. Staff and Organisation

The Society is governed by an Executive Committee and the Community Health Cell is the functional unit of the society.

Dr. Ravi Narayan was appointed s Secretary / Coordinator of the Society (CHC) and the professional core group of the Cell included Dr. Shirdi Prasad Tekur, Member In charge – Training and Advisory Service and Dr. Thelma Narayan, Member In-charge – Research and Evaluation.

During the year 1991-92 the CHC team grew, to include seven more team members – M. Kumar (Office Manager), Johney Jacob (Research Officer), Tomy Philip (Research Assistant), V.N. Nagaraja Rao (Secretarial Assistant), Xavier Anthony (Secretary – Research Project), S. John (Library Assistant) and C. James (Office Assistant).

3. Activities

During the year 1991-92, (the first in the context of the newly registered Society) the CCH initiated many activities in the context of above aims and objectives.

a) Creating Awareness in Community Health

- CHC initiated a forum of Community Health – with monthly meetings around various community health related issues. The forum in 1991 discussed the following areas:
Mother and Child Health (April); Urban Health Problems and Perspectives (May); Bangladesh Cyclone Disaster – a first hand assessment (June); Experience of Bangladesh Cyclone Relief Work (July); Community Mental Health and People's Participation – a distinct programme (August); Care of the Disabled (September); Injectable Contraceptives (October); The Uttarkashi Earthquake – How do we respond (November); Review of Bangalore Citizen's response to Uttarkashi Earthquake (December 91 / January 92); Review of C.H. Forum meetings (February – March 1992).
- The meeting on Bangladesh led to the facilitation of a team from Bangalore (of a 10 members) led by Dr. Shirdi Prasad Tekur of CHC who visited Bangladesh after the cyclone disaster and worked in three areas in solidarity from 26th May to 26th June 1991 with local NGOs. The meeting on Uttarkashi earthquake led to some supportive action from groups in Bangalore. Relief materials collected locally were sent to projects in the affected area through OXFAM.
- 'Community Health in Urban Slums' and 'Disaster Relief and Preparedness' emerged as the key issues in which forum members evinced interest for greater collective action even in the future.
- RN presented a historical overview of Community Health in India at a National Consultation on Community Health organized by a newly emerging forum at Secunderabad (May 1991).
- RN presented an overview of Community Health at a Media workshop organized at Navinta, New Delhi by Rajasthan –UP Catholic Hospital Association and CHAI – Secunderabad.
- CHC facilitated sessions on Community Health, and planning at Staff Development Workshops organized by the Community Health Department of CHAI-Secunderabad in Bangalore in August 1991 and January 1992.

- A session on community health was facilitated by RN for students of the Diploma in Community Health Management at RUHSA – Vellore as well as the Alumni Association of DCHM students at their annual General Body Meeting and get together in 1991.
- A session on 'Community Health Management and Team Development' was facilitated by RN for the staff training programme of Richmond Fellowship, Bangalore.

b) To evolve educational strategies in Community Health and Development

- The Community Health and Development course for Scholastics of Jyothisadan was continued. The senior batch went for a month's rural camp at Karumaviam, Wynad District, Kerala and later completed the second phase of the course in September 1991. The junior batch underwent the first phase of the course.
- CHC inputs into training / learning courses of other voluntary agencies focused on middle-level workers included :

Course	Agency	CHC Input
1. Social Analysis	ISI, Bangalore	Health Situation in India and Community Health
2. Health Care Administration	St. John's Medical College	Rational Drug Therapy
3. Community Health Workers	St. John's Medical College	Acupressure / Homeopathy
4. Theology	E.C.C. Whitefield	Community Health
5. Nursing Students	St. Martha's Hospital	Population and Family Planning
6. Community Health Workers	AYUSHYA, Changanacherry	Integrated Approach to health (drugless therapy).

- CHC inputs into training programmes of other agencies for grass root level workers included :

Workers	Agency	CHC Input
1. Health Workers	MYRADA – Dharmapuri	Community / Health Planning with the community
2. Health Animators	-do-	Community health initiatives
3. Traditional Birth Attendants	-do-	Traditional systems and Community Health Care
4. Health Workers	V.H.A.K.	Traditional Systems / Acupressure
5. Development Workers / Animators	Women's Voice	Community Health
6. Theology students	Dharmaram College	Community Health in Villages and slums.

- CHC organized a dialogue of Trainers in Community Health and Development in the voluntary sector to review the draft National

Educational Policy for Health Sciences and evolved a statement of shared concern and collectivity – highlighting common policy directions.

- SPT organized a short preliminary course in Acupressure for a group of visually handicapped health workers in coordination with the Association of the Physically Handicapped, Bangalore.
- SPT organized a series of lectures on Alternative Systems of Medicine for under-graduates in St. John's Medical College as part of Community Health Training in the third semester – probably being among the first experiment of its kind in a medical college in the country.
- RN addressed participants on 'Issues in Health Care' at the 'National Institute of Advanced Studies' – Bangalore, as part of their 'National Course on Integrated Learning'.

c) To Undertake Research and Evaluation in Community Health

- CHC staff were seconded to and facilitated the project on Strategies for Social Relevance and Community Orientation in Medical Education sponsored by CMAI, New Delhi and CHAI, Secunderabad. The project used a multipronged methodology to study and document Indian experience including
 - i) exhortations from Expert Committees;
 - ii) innovations by medical colleges;
 - iii) feedback from graduates with peripheral health care experience;
 - iv) innovations in Community Health and Development training in the voluntary sector.
- CHC staff were seconded to and facilitated the CHAI Jubilee Evaluation Study which had the main aim of reflection on the past and present of CHAI and explore possible roles the association could play in the future. The project included a historical review, departmental and financial reviews, collection of feedback from members through questionnaires and interviews and using the Delphi method to explore future roles.
- SPT facilitated a study evaluation of Child Survival Projects undertaken by CMAI.
- TN participated in an evaluation exercise on behalf of CMAI on Community Based Health Programmes in Philippines.

d) Dialogue with Health planners and decision makers

- RN represented VHAI and Indian NGO's at a World Bank – EDI sponsored workshop in October 1991 at Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on the theme of Government – NGO Collaboration in MCH and Family Planning. He was a member of a team of 8 persons representing government and NGOs in India. The workshop was attended by delegations from Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- RN has involved in some follow-up dialogue in connection with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (GOI) proposal to set up the VAFAH Trust (Voluntary Action for Health and Family Welfare).
- RN and TN participated in two meetings organized by the CBCI Commission on Health to evolve a document on Policy Guidelines for church related health institutions and services in the 1990s.

e) Promoting and Supporting community health action, discussions, meetings and workshops on community health and related issues

- SPT made an input on 'Health of the Girl Child' in a workshop organized by Madhyam, Bangalore, on the theme Media and the Girl Child..
- CHC participated in the planning of a colloquium at St. John's Medical College under the auspices of the Department of Community Health. This brought together practitioners, academics, researchers and others in and around Bangalore from the fields of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, Homeopathy and Tibetan medicine. It was a first meeting of participants from diverse streams / systems of health care and a dynamic exchange of ideas and views took place.
- SPT continues on the Executive Committee of Drug Action Forum – Karnataka and actively participated in all its activities and meetings.
- Posters highlighting the need for Rational Drug Therapy were prepared by CHC for DAF-K's annual people's contact meeting.
- SPT was a resource person at the Rational Drug Therapy workshop organized by Voluntary Health Association of Karnataka at St. John's Medical College.
- SPT also participated on women and Drugs at a seminar organized by CREST, Bangalore, on Women and Health.
- SPT also participated in a seminar on Environmental Health in slums organized by the Joint Women's Programme.
- CHC sent suggestions for the 'Clean Bangalore' campaign plan.
- SPT took a session on Pesticides and Health at a workshop for farmers and activists on Alternatives in Agriculture organized by Institute for Cultural Research and Action, Bangalore.
- TN contributed an article entitled Dateline Disaster – Communicating Bhopal to a Madhyam report on Health for All : Role of the Media.
- A CHC member helped a VHAI researcher, analyse and reflect on findings of a survey of members of VHAK, eliciting their views on VHAK and expectations for the 1990s.
- TN participated in the first Sister Doctors meeting organized by CHAI, Secunderabad, in November 1991. A background paper by her entitled 'The Medical Apostolate of the Catholic Church in India – the role of Sister Doctors' was circulated.
- SPT participated in the planning of the national workshop on 'Mental Health' organized by the Centre for Health Care Research & Education, Kerala.
- A session was organized on 'Community Health Concepts' for field workers of Maruthi Seva Nagar and Viveknagar Slums.
- SPT has participated in meetings exploring the evolution of a slum health programme as an extension project of the Deena Seva Sangha School at Seshadripuram.
- The Association of Physically Handicapped team had a brainstorming session with CHC on re-looking at the dynamics of their urban slum extension programmes.
- A CHC (ex team member) Mani Kalliath completed the report of his interactive action-research project undertaken in the first half of 1990 on

the theme of 'Factors affecting the health of Slum Dwellers of Bangalore and the health care facilities to them'.

- SPT participated in a workshop on Community participation strategy – IPP VIII, organized by Bangalore City Corporation for their World Bank sponsored urban development programme.
- Mani also participated in the VI Annual Meeting of the Karnataka Association of Community Health held at St. John's Medical College, Bangalore on the theme.
- SPT made a presentation on the 'Role of Voluntary Agencies in Disaster Relief' at a WHO sponsored seminar at JIPMER, Pondicherry, on the theme of 'Training core faculty for Disaster Preparedness'. JIPMER is to become a nodal centre for disaster management in South India.
- SPT spoke on 'Disaster Response – Role of Voluntary Agencies' at the Indian Society of Health Administrators (ISHA) sponsored workshop for District Health Officers of the Southern States.
- The team was invited to share their experiences by the Karnataka Association of Community Health (JACH) at Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences, Bangalore.

f) Solidarity Linkages

- RN continued on the Consultative Committee on Rural Development of the Government of Karnataka as well as the Education Council of Voluntary Health Association of India. The latter Council supports the Diploma course in Community Health Management course organized by Rural Unit for Health and Social Affairs – Kavanur and CMC-Vellore.
- TN continue on the governing body of International Nurses Service Agency which organizes two ten week courses in Community Health and Development at Bangalore.
- RN and TN attended the key mfc meeting on 'Revitalization of mfc' held in Sevagram, Wardha, in September 1990.
- SPT continues on the executive committee of Drug Action Forum – Karnataka and recently was also invited to be on the Health Sub-Committee of the Karnataka Rajya Vigyan parishat.
- RN has been invited to be member of an Expert Committee to advise St. Martha's Hospital, Bangalore, on the re-organisation of their Community Health Department.
- TN also participated in a brainstorming on planning an evaluation strategy of the Community Health activity and thrusts of CMAI in the 1980s.
- CHC has been sharing its perspectives on Community Health and its concerns about distortions in Primary Health Care in the growing context of International Public Health with
 - i) visitors from international funding agencies and academic institutions abroad;
 - ii) through regular correspondence and 'mailing' of relevant materials to key centres abroad.
- SPT participated in the briefing of a governmental team from Cambodia (organized by OXFAM) studying the role of NGOs in Health and Development in India.

- SPT also shared perspectives in an international training programme organized by South Asian Rural Reconstruction Agency and with a group of Canadian Volunteers on an exchange programme with SCI-Bangalore.
- CHC was visited by a team from Rural Missionaries of Philippines a group extensively involved in Community based health Programmes. RN also facilitated an evaluation session of the Indo-Philippino Exchange Programme organized by CHAI, Secunderabad, from 1987 to 1990.
- Dr. Venkat Narayan, Senior Lecturer in Community Medicine at Aberdeen University, Scotland, had a 6 week research associate attachment to CHC to make a study of the epidemiological research being undertaken by key government / non governmental institutions in South India and explore the differences between the Indian and UK Public health research experiences. During his link to CHC he spoke to staff and postgraduates and CH professionals in many institutions which included
 - i) St. John's Medical College, Bangalore;
 - ii) Bangalore Medical College
 - iii) St. Martha's Hospital, Bangalore
 - iv) Karnataka Association of Community Health
 - v) NIMHANS
 - vi) VHS-Adyar, Madras and
 - vii) Christian Medical College – Vellore.
- Sr. Roselyn of Women's Development Unit of CARITAS – Nepal spent a 10 day study tour in November 1991, facilitated by CHC on the theme of 'Community Health and Women's Development'. She visited various projects and interested with many resource persons during this study-tour.
- A team from Misereor, Germany and IGSSS visited CHC in September 1991 to discuss Community Health perspectives. Mr. Martin Long of AHRTAG, London visited CHC in November 1991 to review AHRTAG 's appropriate technology newsletters and initiatives.

g) Introduction Sound Management Foundation

During this first year, the Society decided that through discussions with staff and executive committee sound participatory, non-hierarchical and relevant management practice and policy would be evolved in keeping with the Society's overall commitment to community health, healthy team and social justice.

- A Salary Policy based on principles of equity and accountability was evolved which included basic pay with increments, incentive allowance for nature of duty, additional duties, variable dearness allowance, house rent allowance and conveyance allowance for different categories of staff.
- Additional benefits included travel reimbursement, gratuity, medical benefits, loan facility were also introduced.
- Policies were also drawn up for leave, (Casual, Sick, Earned), maternity benefit, deputation and consultancies.
- Job responsibilities were clarified, at the same time enhancing the group / team responsibilities and collective traditions of the experimental phase.

- The organizational structure was modified from an orthodox hierarchical structure to an alternative matrix framework.
- Through regular weekly staff meetings and occasional 'quality circle meetings' the team participated in evolving the work ethos and framework of CHC and its functions.
- An end of the year Staff Development Workshop was held at which various group dynamics and other methodologies were used to enhance team work and team cohesion as well as seek feedback on CHC's functioning and the evolving policies.
- Executive Committee meetings were held on 8th May, 29th July, 15th November and 20th January (1992) and General Body meeting (post registration) was held on 29th January, 1992 (mid course review).
- FCRA registration was obtained
 - i) first pre grant permission by 16th January, 1992 and
 - ii) permanent registration by 27th April 1992.

h) Miscellaneous

- Prof. V. Benjamin, Prof. S.V. Rama Rao and Dr. George Joseph – retired Professors of Community Medicine of Christian Medical College, Vellore, St. John's Medical College, Bangalore and All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi were made honorary members of the association in recognition for their long years of effort in promoting community health as well as their encouragement and support to the project in its experimental phase.
- Prof. V. Benjamin has now also accepted to be part-time consultant to the Cell in the next year and help with Training and Advisory Services.
- As usual CHC had numerous visits by associates, friends and various individuals seeking support in community health action in their individual or group plans. Many requests also come in by mail so the information and advisory service was active as usual.
- The students of DCHM Course of Rural Unit for Health and Social Affairs, CMC-Vellore visited CHC as part of their study tour and got an orientation to our initiatives and perspectives.
- SPT attended the National Convention of Hospitals and Nursing Homes at Secunderabad in February 1991 and spoke on Rational Drug Therapy and Rational Drug Policy issues.
- SPT & TN attended the 4th meeting of the Network of Christian Medical Colleges on the theme 'Ethics curriculum in Medical Education' in February 1992.
- TN took a session on 'Community Approaches' at the Annual Review Meeting of Sisters of JMJ at St. Philomena's Hospital, Bangalore in March 1992.
- SPT along with Prof. V. Benjamin (CMAI) and Dr. G. Gururaj (NIMHANS) visited Reaching the Unreached Trust in Batigundu, Madurai District, to evaluate its activities.
- The Library and Documentation Unit continue to get many new acquisitions and because of the new areas of research eg., Medical Education, Community Health and Development Training, Urban Primary Health Care newer areas of resource materials were collected.

i) Publications

- Primary Health Care System Development – CMAI Journal, Vol.VI No. (Ravi Narayan)
- Girl Child – Survival and health – Madhyam report on Media and the Girl Child – Strategies to effect change (Shirdi Prasad Tekur)
- Alternative Health Care Systems – another point of view MDHAYM issue on Health for All – Role of the media (Shirdi Prasad Tekur).
- Acupuncture, Acupressure and related drugless therapies – Health Action, Vol.4, No.3, March 1991 (Shirdi Prasad Tekur)
- The Philosophy of Homeopathy, Health Action, Vol.4, No.3, March 1991 (Shirdi Prasad Tekur)
- Rational Therapeutics – Physicians Update, Vol.3, No.4, December 1991 (Shirdi Prasad Tekur)
- Injectable Contraceptives – Physicians Update, Vol.3, No.3, October-November 1991 (Shirdi Prasad Tekur)
- Towards Greater Social Relevance – Keynote address to Network of Christian Medical Colleges, in India, CMJI Journal, Vol. VI, No.2, April-June 1991 (Ravi Narayan)
- Training of Doctors for India – cover story of Health Action, Vol. IV, No.6, June 1991 (Thelma Narayan)
- Education Policy for Health Sciences – A Statement of Shared Concern and Evolving Collectivity – Community Health Trainers Dialogue, October 1991 (Collective statement and proceedings).
- Rebuilding the Foundations : Re-Examining Pre-clinical Medical Education – late Dr. H.J. Mehta Oration – 1991 at St. John's Medical College Alumni Association Jubilee – December 1991 (Ravi Narayan)
- Strategies for Greater Community Orientation and Social Relevance in Medical Education – Building on the Indian Experience – A Preliminary communication at IAAME XXXII Annual Conference, Bombay, January 1992 (Ravi Narayan, Thelma Narayan, Shirdi Prasad Tekur).
- Curriculum Change : Building on Graduate Doctor Feedback of Peripheral Health Care Experience – An exploratory survey – A preliminary communication at IAAME XXXII Annual Conference, Bombay, January 1992 (Thelma Narayan, Ravi Narayan).
- Medical Education in the 1990s – Towards Greater Participation and Value Orientation – LINK newsletter of ACHAN, November 1991 issue (to be published) (Ravi Narayan).
- Dateline Disaster – Communicating Bhopal – MADHYAM issues on Health for All – Role of the Media (Thelma Narayan)
- The Relevance of Quality Circles in Development work, Action Aid Disability News, Vol. 2, No.1, 1991 (Shirdi Prasad Tekur).

j) Staff Development

- M. Kumar, Office Manager, attending CHAI sponsored course in Secunderabad on Management of Human Resource in December 1991.

k) The Plans Ahead – 1992 and beyond

- A publication bringing out the key issues and perspectives and processes which were part of the experimental phase is also being organized. It will be entitled Community Health : The Search for an Alternative Process.
- The informal information, advisory, training, research and evaluation dimensions of CHC support to voluntary action in South India will continue and steps will also be taken to professionalise our library and documentation centre.
- The Jyothisadan Course will continue and an evaluation of previous batches will also be undertaken.
- Many more training requests have come in and these are being processed.
- CHC will initiate more focused grassroot training interaction with (i) Manush, Chintamani and (ii) Myrada, Dharmapuri Project.
- The next Community Health Trainers Dialogue is tentatively scheduled for November – December 1992 or later on the theme of “Training Methodologies”.
- An interactive research study exploring / analyzing existing realities and possibilities and problems in the area of Government-NGO collaboration in Health and Family Welfare is being explored.
- Completion of Project : In June 1992 the Medical Education Project will come to a close with the development of a Faculty Resource Manual on Strategies for Social Relevance and Community Orientation in Medical Education – built on the Indian experience, which will be discussed at a Medical Educators Meeting in the same month.
- In October-November 1992, the CHAI Jubilee Project report will be finalized and presented at the Annual Convention in Guntur (Andhra Pradesh) to flag off the Jubilee year. During this year in addition to the Jubilee celebrations CHAI and its members will discuss the report and reflect on the findings and issues identified while planning the thrusts and directions for the 1990's.

CONCLUSION

The first year of the Society has seen and consolidation of all the activities and thrusts which were part of the experimental project phase and the gradual evolution of research initiatives that symbolize the newer focus and additional dimensions of the Society's functions. This first year was also focused on consolidating the organisational and support framework of the Society as well as evolving a sustainable participatory management ethos. The year was therefore a significant 'foundation' year for the Society.

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(RN – Dr. Ravi Narayan, TN – Dr. Thelma Narayan, SPT – Dr. Shirdi Prasad Tekur)