

Society for Community Health Awareness Research and Action

Annual Report 1993-1994

256, 5th main, I block Koramangala
Bangalore

1. Introduction

This is the third Annual Report of the 'Society for Community Health Awareness, Research and Action' registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act on 16th April 1991. It covers the period 1st April 1993 to 31st March 1994.

The Community Health Cell (CHC) is the functional unit of the Society, governed by an Executive committee which met frequently during the year.

The CHC continued its activities during 1993-94 towards its Goals which in brief are:

- to create awareness,
- promote community health action
- evolve educational strategies,
- undertake research,
- dialogue with planners, and
- develop documentation/ library

In Community Health and Development, through peoples groups, voluntary agencies and the Government.

In all these interactions, CHC has functioned as a resource group, promoting and facilitating: the

- enabling dimension in Health Care;
- socio-epidemiological approach in planning; and
- participatory ethos in management

Translated into practice, it has meant support to groups particularly with

- a) a focus on the poor and marginalized – dalits / landless labour / slum dwellers and those at the fringes of development.
- b) empowering of women with knowledge and skills
- c) focus on local health resources both traditional / indigeneous and modern / current
- d) highlighting relationships between development and health – eg., Environment / Income and Occupation / Nutrition / Social and communal harmony / and recognizing the diseases associated with development processes.

- towards making peoples quest for Community Health a sustainable effort.

* see Newsletter of December 1993 for further details

2. Staff and Organisation

Dr. Ravi Narayan handed over the responsibility of Secretary / Co-ordinator to Dr.Shirdi Prasad Tekur in July 1993, following last year's ADBM, and continued as Member Incharge – Library. The other staff members continued as before, with the following changes listed below:

- Dr. C.M.Francis joined as part-time consultant from May 1993
- Smt. Nalini Gururaj joined as Library Officer from November 1993
- Sri.H.N.Vishwanathan joined as Secretarial Assistant from December 1993
- Dr.Aravind Kasturi and Dr.Madhav Ram were with CHC for 6 weeks during May-June 1993 as Research Associates.
- Sir. Sowmya Kumar was the CHC between September 1993 to February 1994 as Research and Documentation Assistant.
- Sri.M.S.Nagarajan – Documentation Assistant left for Papua – New Guinea, in October 1993.
- Sri. M.Kumar shifted to a flexi-time status from December 1993 and continued to help in accounts and management matters.

3. Activities

The activities of CHC are listed under headings given in the aims and objectives of the Society.

a) Creating Awareness in Community Health

- i) The CHC – initiated Community Health Forum met during the year on the following issues:
 - 2nd June 1993 - with C.A.N.E. on Effects of Radiation on Health
 - 1st October 1993 - with Medha Patkar on the 'Narmada issue'
 - 1st October 1993 - with Oxfam and SCI to initiate relief action from Bangalore citizens for the Marathwada Earthquake.
 - 4th March 1994 - with Volags involved with Medical / Health Work in Bangalore Slums on Health of the Urban Poor.
- ii) CHC has been availing opportunities with other Volags as a technical resource group. These are

- With Shanta Jeevan Jyothi helping them in an allotted geographical area which includes Austin Town, Ashok Nagar, Jog Palya, Shanti Nagar, Koramangala, Wilson Garden and Jayanagar consisting a population of approximately 4.3 lakhs to carry out a Leprosy Control Programme using the Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) approach as per the recommendations of the special working group set up by the Government of India in 1992, who recommended a revised strategy based on MDT aimed at reduction of the quantum and source of infection and hopefully breaking the “Chain of Transmission”. The Government provides the drugs, and the agency raises foreign and local funds to pay salaries to staff. Programme is supervised and monitored by the State Leprosy Officer. The main beneficiaries are the slum population, since they have been more easily motivated to co-operate and there is a monetary incentives by the Government for every supervised dose taken and at the end of six months of completed treatment by a patient.
- With DAF-K in their ‘Olle Hanson’s Day’ event of public education on India’s new economic policy and implications for Medicine and the consumer, and in their ‘Rational Drug Usage’ program at Tumkur.
- With Federacio Esperanto de Bharato in promoting ‘Esperanto’ the Universal Second language towards universal peace at their bi-annual free classes (May 1993 to December 1993) and awareness programs with APS School (1994) and Rotary Club North (1994).
- With the Karnataka Homeopathic Medical College during their ‘Hahnemann’s Day’ celebrations (10th April 1993) and All India Homeopathic Conference ()
- With CHAI at their Regional meetings
 - a) NECHA (North Eastern Community Health Association) in Shillong (24-05-1993) and
 - b) Catholic Health Association of Bihar (CHABI) in Patna.
- And CHAI’s Golden Jubilee Planning meetings with Allied Health Professionals (30-06-93)
- CHAI’s Community Health Trainers meeting (04-06-93 to 06-06-93)

b) Promoting Community Health Action

Community Health Action was promoted during the year in CHC’s efforts at networking and in its inputs in training programs of voluntary agencies.

NETWORKING

CHC participated in meetings / workshops organized by other Volags

- at Madurai in ‘Street Children and Child Labour’ workshop for NGOs of South India.
- At Wardha-Maharashtra, in the ‘Women’s Health’ meetings organized by medico friend circle.

- At Bhopal in the 'International Medical Commission' for the Gas affected victims.
- At Bangalore in the Drug Action Forum meetings – two members of CHC are on the Executive Committee of DAF-Karnataka.
- At Madhyam Communications – Women's Health Forum meetings.
- At Bangalore, with David Werner on 'rehabilitation by voluntary agencies in India, organized by Action Aid and Association of Physically Handicapped.
- At Pondicherry, in the 'Medicine, Media and Consumer' workshop organised by EQUIP-IOCU (Educators for Quality Update of Indian Physicians and International Organisation of Consumer Unions).
- At Wardha, with mfc's annual meeting on 'Women and Health'
- A submission to International Medical Commission on Bhopal in December 1993 / January 1994.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

A relief response was initiated for the Marathawada Earthquake disaster in October 1993 with SCI, Oxfam and CHC again in partnership with many other agencies and centres. This time 'volunteers' from Bangalore worked for periods of time as required during the immediate and short term rehabilitation phases. They included Doctors, Nurses, Students, and Social Workers and experts in specific areas of disaster management from many centres including St.John's Medical College and St. Martha's Hospital. Two volunteers from CHC joined the teams while the rest of the team took part in the Bangalore based supportive action.

c) EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

CHC has been involved in training efforts for other Voluntary agencies in Community Health and Development. The principal interactions during 1993-94 have been listed below.

d) RESEARCH

CHC's two major Research Projects have reached completion.

Project – I (1992-1993)

TOWARDS SOCIAL RELEVANCE AND COMMUNITY ORIENTATION IN MEDICAL EDUCATION: BUILDING ON THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE

- The Publications that are emerging from the review and analysis highlight:

- expert recommendations in Medical Education,
 - innovations by some medical colleges,
 - feedback from medical graduates with work experience
 - in peripheral, rural health care,
 - contributions of the alternative training sector, and
 - key publications that could be a stimulus for change.
- The study also identified factors promoting change along with obstacles and barriers to change.

Project – II (1992 – 1993)

CATHOLIC HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA GOLDEN JUBILEE EVALUATION STUDY

- A discussion document '**Seeking the Signs of the Times**' (released at the beginning of the Jubilee in October 1992) highlighted key findings which formed the focus of discussion at 11 regional meetings and 9 professional groups meetings during the Jubilee year – 1993.
- '**The Golden Harvest**' – New Horizons, abridged and rewritten by Augustine Veliath from the six study reports was released in November 1993 at the Fiftieth AGBM and Convention of CHAI.
- An Action Plan, "towards life in all its fullness" edited by Dr. C.M.Francis, outlines priorities, policies and strategies of CHAI, based on study findings.

Other CHC involvement in research was in :

i) Student Research Facilitation

- Dr. Madhukar Pai (Indian Institute of Science) – on Hospital Waste Desposal.
 - Ms. Arpitha Kumar (Friends World College) on Health Services in India – an experience.
- ii) VHAK's – State of Karnataka's Health Report for which CHC is involved in two chapters
- Health Systems and Services and
 - Health Human Resource Training.

e) DIALOGUE WITH PLANNERS

CHC members are on the Governing / Executive committees of various volags and help in their planning, eg. INSA – India, DAF-K, KRVP (Karnataka Rajya Vignana Parishat), etc., while other areas are,

- with CHAI and its members at National, Regional and Professional group meetings during the Jubilee year October 1992 to October 1993 on CHAI Golden Jubilee Evaluation Study report, its implications and planning for CHAI's future.

- With Community Based Rehabilitation Project partners of Action Aid on Exploring Sustainability issues in Volag Programmes.

DIALOGUE ACROSS THE OCEANS

CANADA

Montreal : at Centre for Tropical Diseases (McGill) on 'Community Health Action – need for a paradigm shift' (RN)

Tatamagouche: Canadian Society of International Health Workshop : 'Advocating for Health – Building Coalition' on 'Lessons from Indian Experiences' (RN)

Halifax: at Lester Pearson Institute on 'Health Action in India': Role of NGOs in Development . (RN); at Dalhousie University Medical School on 'Towards A New Paradigm in Health Care'. (RN); at Dalhousie University Medical School 'On Epidemiology of Bhpal Disaster'. (TN)

Antigonish: at Coady Institute Informal Dialogue with staff and nursing faculty (RN) and on Delphi Technique (policy evaluation method) (TN).

Ontario: attended Tricennial Workshop at McMaster University (TN)

Sherbrooke: International Conference on Student Centered Learning and Biennial General Meeting of International Network of Community Oriented Health Sciences Institutions (Presented 3 papers from CHC Medical Education Project) and presentation at the special interest group discussion on Community Orientation and public health training of undergraduates. Also participated in discussions with a Women's Health Group within the Network. (TN)

UNITED KINGDOM

London: AHRTAG AGBM on 'Information for Health and Development Action – towards an alternative paradigm'. (RN)

NETHERLANDS

Oestgeest: An overview of the key findings of the CHAI evaluation. (TN)

GERMANY

Aachen: to facilitate a Health Consultation on Health Priorities and Health Issues for the 1990's in India. (RN)

f) LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION

The Library and Documentation unit has been a corner-stone in the interactions of CHC with Voluntary organisations in the various workshops / meetings/ seminars / courses / training programs and networking initiatives. This report focuses on the Library and Documentation unit.

The Library and Documentation unit started as a collection of written and audio-visual material from individual team members of the CHC. It was to facilitate the CHC team in

its interactions with Voluntary agency sector in health. This material increased in volume as CHC's interactions increased, and personnel from other Voluntary agencies also started utilizing our collection for their training and other needs.

A round of liaison with other libraries and documentation centres at Bangalore made us realize that CHC's collection is unique because of its focused activity, availability of reports of various voluntary agencies, and seminar / symposium / workshop reports of NGO's which are not available elsewhere.

Considering these aspects, CHC collects written and audio-visual material useful to Volags, generated by volags and those not routinely stocked / subscribed to by other libraries and documentation centres.

Library Staff and material generated

About two-thirds of visitors of CHC have come to utilize the library facility for their articles, study-thesis, program formulation and evaluation, and other publications in Voluntary agency magazines, apart from personal updating of information.

CHC has prepared annotated bibliographies of material for specific purposes, like

- the AIDS policy formulation workshop of CHAI
- the Medical Education Project.
- for VHAK's State of Karnataka's Health reports, and
- of Training material for Volags (ongoing).

The posters/slides/videos and other Health Education material are utilized by Bolags in their training and Education efforts. The Drug Action Forum of Karnataka has been using the CHC as its primary resource group in its campaigns in Rational Therapeutics. The CHC in its training programs has utilized and generated new Health materials e.g., the 'Acupressure' chart – which is an innovation aid for illiterate traditional birth attendants.

Library – handout

A library handout has been prepared to help liaison with voluntary agencies and libraries, whose members are already using our services, or are potential users. This details the materials available with us under separate headings. In return, these agencies keep us informed of their collections which could be useful to voluntary agencies. The material added to our library since November 1993 is under updating at present.

Currently, we have added to our books / journals / newsletters and Audio-visual collection. In addition, we have

- Resource files of published and background papers on Community Health issues under 83 heads;
- Reports from voluntary agencies and Government institutions under 44 heads;
- Field material as a part of CHC's Medical Education Project under 54 heads;

- Training centre information under 27 heads; and
- Filed information on the CHAI Golden Jubilee Evaluation Study in fifty files.

This material is under going reclassification and sorting out.

Computerisation

The NISSAT – ISIS 3.0 package has been obtained from DSIR, Government of India, for computerization of the library. The Documentation Officer and Library Assistant are familiarizing themselves with the package to enable information storage and retrieval.

g) STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Weekly meetings of Staff on Wednesdays are arranged to share work experiences and evolve action, and special meetings organized for

- CHC / Society / Staff policy evolution,
- Evolving internal monitoring methods, and
- Internal Staff Development Workshops.

Members of the Executive Committee have been participating in this process.

A majority of Staff members have enrolled for academic programs to improve their educational qualifications.

An organisational attempt at creating 'pools' of staff members for its various house-keeping functions like office management, accounts, library and training have been initiated and regular meetings of these pools to evolve a participatory decentralization mode of functioning is in place. These pools plan, evolve and execute their functions arriving at efficiency and affectivity with CHC's goals in mind.

Two members of the CHC team, Drs. Ravi and Thelma are on a sabbatical from January 1994 onwards, as part of the consolidation project of CHC, bringing together the learning over a decade of the CHC experiments; the Research programs they were involved in were being completed.

CONCLUSION

As CHC completed its third year (after registration), it has continued its activities and evolved mechanisms to tackle increasing demands on its abilities and resources.

PLACE : BANGALORE

DATE : 6TH JULY 1994.