

SCARF

Caring for the Mind: A Journey of 35 Years... *and counting*



Schizophrenia Research
Foundation (India)

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The Tree of Life symbolically adorns the cover of our book with the qualities of beauty and wisdom, strength and stability, and universal protection enshrined within. The Warli art form depicted throughout the book brings to the fore the essence of SCARF—a sense of community, a deep harmony with nature and the inevitable interconnectedness of life. The quest for knowledge and awareness has made steady progress, as SCARF purposefully marches forward into the future, thematically illustrated in this publication, with the growth of a tree from seedling to canopy.

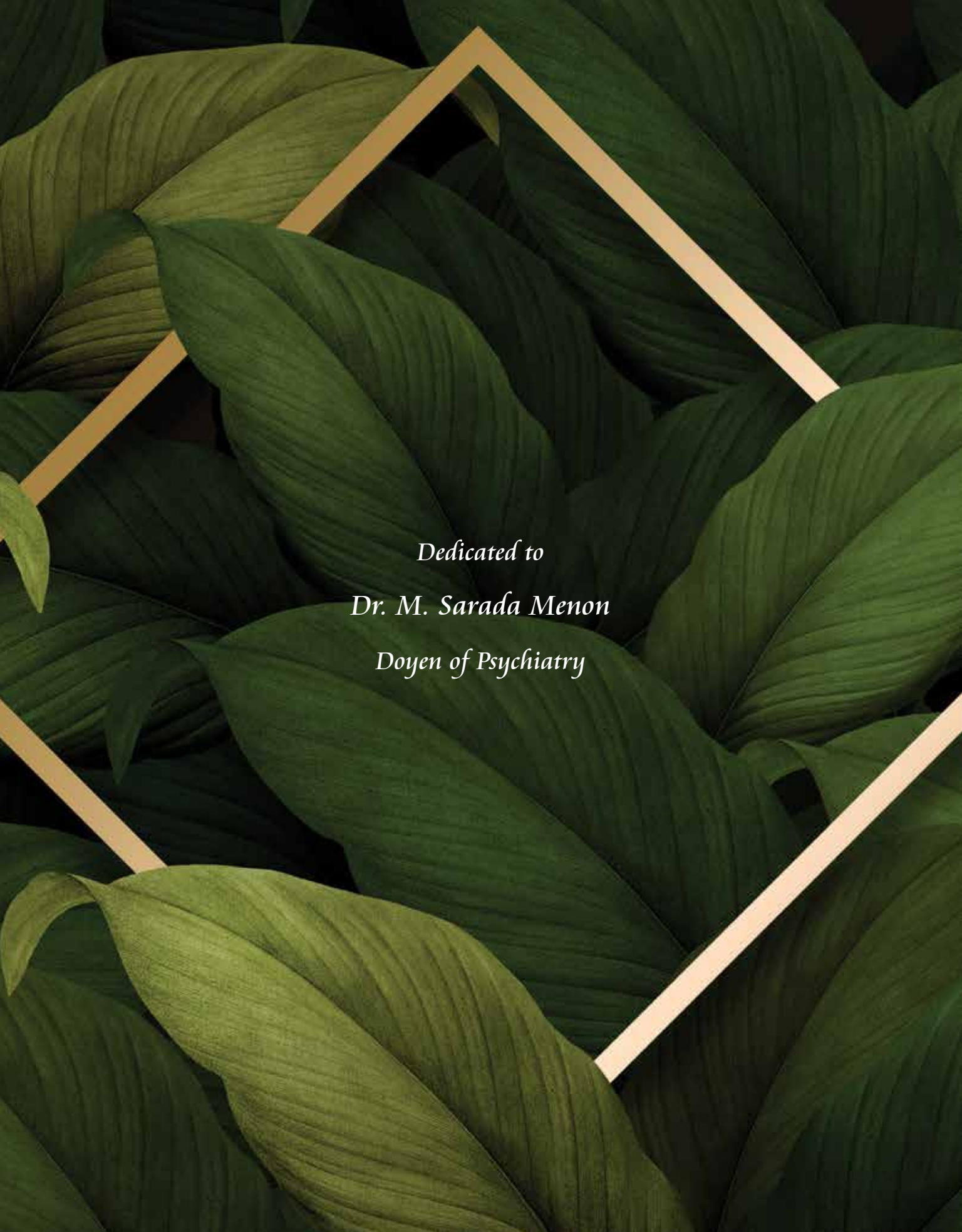
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*Dedicated to
Dr. M. Sarada Menon
Doyen of Psychiatry*

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Schizophrenia Research
Foundation (India)

On the Foundation of Hope

“What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candour, and more unashamed conversation.” – Glenn Close

The genesis of SCARF is firmly embedded in the aspirations and vision of a group of dedicated individuals with impeccable requisites, to establish a long-needed NGO in the field of mental illness. They were like-minded psychiatrists, trained and experienced in treating mental illness in different scenarios. They strongly felt the need to provide effective rehabilitation services for the mentally ill and further knowledge and research on the subject. With the help of many mentors and benefactors, SCARF came into being in 1984 in a rather modest fashion but today is a towering colossus internationally reputed as a treatment, rehabilitation and research organisation for schizophrenia and other disorders of the mind. The four original founders led by the inimitable Dr. M. Sarada Menon have put down their thoughts about the beginnings of SCARF and the role they played in getting it off the ground. On their journey of 36 years, they have soldiered on, braving many odds, overcoming every obstacle in their path and offering hope and succour to all who have passed through SCARF's doors.




सत्यमेव जयते
भारत के उपराष्ट्रपति
VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA

Disorders of the mind are gaining increasing importance and attention, and recent surveys have shown that close to 14% of the Indian population suffer from some kind of mental disorder, most of them requiring immediate attention. However, the fiscal and manpower resources to tackle this effectively are meagre in many parts of the country specially in rural areas. This poses a heavy burden on families and the country's health status and economy. The present COVID situation has also brought into focus the importance of mental health in not only patients but also people treating them and in frontline workers, in youth and women. A concerted effort is the need of the hour to tackle these issues.

In is in this context that the work of the NGO in Chennai, the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF, India), dedicated to the service of persons with mental disorders since 1984, assumes a lot of relevance. Founded by Padma Bhushan Dr. M. Sarada Menon, the first woman psychiatrist in the country, SCARF is a WHO Collaborating Centre and has set high standards in the mental health services treatment, rehabilitation, research and training. SCARF is an internationally acclaimed centre for mental health care.

While working closely with Government and other NGOs, SCARF has provided the leadership for many innovative, ingenious methods to reach persons with mental illnesses. One of them is the use of a mobile technology, using a well-equipped bus to connect to patients in rural areas.

The history and achievements of SCARF demonstrate what a well-led team of committed professionals and philanthropists can do to change the lives of highly stigmatised persons with mental illness.

I wish Dr. Menon, Mr. Seshasayee, the Chairman of the Board of SCARF, Vice-Chairman, Dr. R. Thara and all the staff continued success in their initiatives and commitment to this great cause.

24th September, 2020
New Delhi


(M. Venkaiah Naidu)

**Hans Raj Verma, I.A.S.,
Additional Chief Secretary to
Government**



At the landmark 35th anniversary celebrations of the Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW) which took place on 6th December 2018, among the many good ideas expressed on that day, one of them struck a chord in my heart and I felt a compelling need to act upon it. The idea was that “without emotional / mental well-being there is no sustainable well-being”. This powerful suggestion was made by Dr. Thara, Psychiatrist and Director, NGO SCARF. We also agreed upon the strategy that in order to close the gap in the treatment of mental disorders and spread awareness about mental health, we should leverage the power of enterprising and pro-active women who are Self-Help Group members and who were a large part of the audience in the Anniversary celebrations. My subsequent visit to SCARF and the discussions that ensued between the teams from TNCDW and SCARF crystallised this pioneering idea further. We decided to initiate a series of training programmes for the SHG members which would enable them to detect early symptoms of mental disorders and also offer simple emotional support. SCARF produced an array of educational and awareness materials and we were fortunate to have the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu release the booklet in an impressive function on 31st October, 2019 at Kalaivanar Arangam.

I am impressed with the vision of SCARF leadership, their commitment and sincerity to their work. The partnership between TNCDW and SCARF is well-cemented and now we are in the midst of the training programmes, which are being done in all districts along with DMHP teams.

This push for mental health and emotional well-being has become more relevant during these COVID times and I believe that many more such programmes are required at all levels of society. I am sure this will be a model for the entire country to emulate and wish SCARF many more decades of valuable contribution to the mental health of the citizens each of whom is a valuable asset of the society, the State and the Nation.


(HANS RAJ VERMA) 15/9/2020

15-09-2020

Dr. J. RADHAKRISHNAN, I.A.S.,
Principal Secretary to Government,
Health and Family Welfare Department
Government of Tamil Nadu



SCARF is planning to publish a book and dedicate it to its Founder, Dr. Sarada Menon, who is the first woman Psychiatrist. She served in Government and held the post of Superintendent of the Institute of Mental Health, Chennai. She founded SCARF after her retirement from Government service.

When I was Collector of Nagapattinam, I had the opportunity to work with SCARF during the Tsunami debacle in the year 2004. The SCARF team was active on the field delivering psychosocial care to many of the residents who lost their family members, property, livelihood, etc. I have since then been observing SCARF’s activities in providing care and rehabilitation, promoting awareness on mental health and engaging in world class research. I had the opportunity to inaugurate the 6th edition of their international conference ICONS in 2014. SCARF has lobbied for disability and other benefits for the mentally ill and worked well with Government and other NGOs. The Tamil Nadu Government is implementing many progressive programmes for mental health. I am glad that we have world class and highly committed organisations like SCARF in Tamil Nadu to complement our efforts. I wish SCARF to continue its good work in the years to come for the mentally ill people in the society.


(DR. J. RADHAKRISHNAN)

15-09-2020



When Mrs. Zubeda Asgar Ali told me in early 1996 that Dr. Sarada Menon was wondering if I could let SCARF hold a fundraising programme followed by dinner at Amir Mahal, I had no hesitation in agreeing to the request. The reasons for this are many. First and foremost, mental health though a very important component of health is much neglected and I am aware of many people who do not take proper treatment. Then, SCARF, a not-for-profit organisation started in 1984, had established itself as a reputed centre delivering free services. There were at that time few people in Chennai who had not heard of the eminent psychiatrist Dr. Sarada Menon who was known for bringing about so many improvements in the then Kilpauk Mental Hospital. Dr. Menon was known to be a kind psychiatrist who always had patients' welfare uppermost in her mind. I also knew others like Mrs. Asgar Ali and Mrs. C.K. Gariyali IAS, who were associated with SCARF.

The event went off very well and there was good publicity and substantial funds were raised for SCARF. I was really happy to be a part of that venture for a noble, yet neglected human cause. I wish SCARF all success in the coming years also, to continue the good work.

Prince of Arcot, Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali
Chennai



As a young girl in Chennai, I had heard about the eminent psychiatrist, Dr. Sarada Menon, as a pioneer who contributed immensely to mental health in general and brought about many reforms in the Kilpauk Mental Hospital, as it was known then. She was an inspiration, both as a woman and as a doctor. It was after I entered the civil service and joined the Finance Department in the early nineties that I became better acquainted with SCARF and its activities. Dr. Thara, the then Director used to apprise me of all developments, some of which required support from the Government. However, it was only after I was posted as Secretary, Health Department in 2002, when I chaired the State Mental Health Authority in which Dr. Menon was a member, that I personally saw her commitment and passion for improving mental health services in the State. I was also able to see for myself the comprehensive nature of work that the SCARF team under Dr. Thara's leadership was doing for providing mental health services both in urban and rural areas. SCARF's tele-psychiatry programme is one of its kind in the country and a model way of reaching services to the untreated. As part of a State Government who has always believed in public private partnership, I was happy to work together with SCARF on many programmes, during the ten years that I was associated with the Health Department.

When I attended the international conference ICONS as a Guest of Honour, I was pleasantly amazed to see the amount of goodwill and respect that SCARF as an NGO in India had been able to garner from experts in India and abroad. SCARF is also a Collaborating Centre of WHO, a matter of prestige to any organisation and is a teaching and training centre for all disciplines allied to mental health. These achievements are a testament to the inspirational guidance provided by Dr. Menon and the hard work done by the SCARF team.

After my retirement from the Government, I was invited to join the Board of Management of SCARF. I hope I am able to contribute my mite for this well deserving cause for which I had developed an abiding interest while I was working with the Government. I wish SCARF to grow from strength to strength and provide many more years of productive and useful work for the community.

Dr. Girija Vaidyanathan, IAS, (Retd.)
Former Chief Secretary, Govt. of Tamil Nadu



The Schizophrenia Research Foundation is the very epitome of a service organisation that is designed to transform society. Firstly, a transformational initiative needs to illuminate the dark corners of society, the forgotten back lanes. It is easy to function in areas where there is light, where there's a strong prevalence of public interest, sympathy and support. For many centuries, mental illness had remained a matter of shame, to be denied, to be hidden by families and society. That dark corner was often guarded from science and medicine by obscurantist religion. It required enormous courage and determination to venture into this space; and it took the temerity and strength of a pioneer, Dr. Sarada Menon to turn the lights on the forsaken

subject of mental illness. Half a century ago, it must have been a humongous task to convince people that mental illness is no different to physical illness and is indeed curable by medicine. Dr. Sarada Menon and her protégé Dr. Thara, have, through the establishment and management of SCARF, brought about a transformational change in the attitude of society towards mental illness. Over the last four decades and more, several thousand patients have received contemporary clinical care from SCARF and have been spared the ignominy of abandonment.

In the coming decades, SCARF will hopefully embark on a journey to transform its own focus from mental illness to mental wellness. Just as a sporting team can hope to win only when all its members are physically fit as well as mentally agile, a nation's true potential can be realised only when both the physical and mental wellness of its population are brought up front and centre.

Secondly, a service organisation should have an ethos, that puts service ahead of everything else. Gandhiji's act of personally nursing a leprosy patient was not merely born out of his compassion, but it was a necessary demonstration to destigmatise the disease. Empathy could be an innate trait in an individual, but it is difficult to infuse this character in an institution. The most challenging aspect of building an institution is to vest a sustainable ethos, that is aligned to the purpose of the institution. I have heard from many, who have availed of the services of SCARF, warm anecdotes of compassion and care, that pervades all layers of the organisation. I know of patients, who have been cured of their illness, but are retained in the residential campus, because of the fear that there might be a chance of a relapse if they were to be reverted to their uncaring family. This spirit of empathy can become an institutional character, only by taking extreme care in choosing the people who come to work for the institution, and in whom, compassion and competence are required in equal measure.

Compassion does imply a certain helplessness on the part of the recipient. In a modern society, compassion can only be a transitory virtue, to be replaced by dignity and self-confidence of the recipient that obviates the very need for compassion. In the coming decades, SCARF has the major task of helping patients who are cured of their illness to be integrated into society to lead a life of self-reliance and dignity.

Thirdly, there is another reason why care and compassion are not enough for the transformation of a society. Compassion for the poor is an inadequate goal in the context of elimination of poverty.

Unfortunately, the incidence of mental illness has been increasing in our society, where economic inequality is widening, where consumerism has created primacy for material gains and where civilisational beliefs are in violent conflict with emerging social behaviour. Elimination of mental illness might be an impossible goal, but that's no excuse for not making an attempt at the very least to contain it. SCARF, over the years, has been consistently widening and deepening its focus on research on the factors contributing to mental illness, nature of the illness and its cure.

In the coming decades, SCARF will no doubt, extensively deploy digital technology to analyse mass data, to design and validate specific solutions, and even forewarn of potential problems at an individual as well as at a societal level.

Lastly, societal transformation happens, only when a pioneering initiative inspires large scale replication. In the decades since SCARF was established by the pioneering vision of Dr. Sarada Menon and her illustrious colleagues, several institutions have sprung up in Chennai and elsewhere in the country. However, the supply of clinical facilities, availability of trained psychiatrists and other health professionals, and most importantly rehabilitation opportunities for cured patients, have all lagged behind ever increasing demand. No single institution can adequately scale up to cater to the gargantuan needs.

In the coming decades it would no doubt be appropriate for SCARF to focus even more on partnering with others and spawning new institutions, inducting new groups of dedicated people and training more health professionals, in order to achieve even a mild transformation towards the goal of pervasive mental wellness.

Dr. Menon, Dr. Thara, Dr. Padma and all their colleagues have just validated Margaret Mead, who said, "Never believe that a few caring people cannot change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have!"

R. Seshasayee

Chairman of the Board of Management, SCARF



It was in the year 1993 that I was invited by Dr. Sarada Menon, the Founder of SCARF and its prime moving force to join the Board as President of SCARF after the death of Shri D. C. Kothari, a reputed industrialist. The Committee consisted of members like Mr. M.A. Vellodi, Former Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Government of India, Mr. Mahalingam, a senior Executive of Tatas, Mrs C.K. Gariyali, IAS, Mr. Baliga, Mr. B. Vijayaraghavan, IAS, and others. They contributed their ideas and views to help SCARF grow from strength to strength. I was able to work closely with Dr. Thara, who succeeded

Dr. Menon as Director in 1996. Dr. Thara has taken this institution to enormous heights, achieving excellence, recognised both nationally and internationally due to her total commitment and hard work.

SCARF, with the collaboration of institutions within India like NIMHANS, Bangalore, lobbied aggressively with various Government agencies to pay attention to mental health. Internationally, a lot of institutions started collaborating with SCARF. SCARF also organises an international meeting (ICONS), every two years, which is well-attended by researchers within and outside the country. A film festival is also held in which leading film personalities participate.

Infrastructure and buildings were required for all our activities. First, a rehabilitation centre at Thiruverkadu followed by another near Mahablipuram came up on land leased out to SCARF by the Kanchi Mutt. The kind benevolence of none other than the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. J. Jayalalithaa enabled us to have our own land in Anna Nagar, on which the SCARF building stands today.

In addition to these activities, in the year 2004-05 when the great tsunami hit the east coast of Tamil Nadu, SCARF was requested to aid the people of the

Nagapattinam and Cuddalore districts where people lost all their belongings and became very depressed. SCARF entered in right earnest and provided counselling and support.

During my tenure as President, we had several VIPs gracing our functions, including the well-loved late President, Dr. Abdul Kalam.

The success of many of these programmes is due to the pioneering work done by Dr. Sarada Menon who is presently in her twilight era, but still very alert. The subsequent team led by Dr. Thara who devoted her life to SCARF consisted among others, Dr. Shantha Kamath, Dr. Padmavati, Dr. Mangala, etc. Even though I am not involved in the day-to-day affairs of SCARF now, I am keeping myself abreast of the happenings and developments and let me take this opportunity to wish everybody at SCARF the very best in all their endeavours. Before I conclude, I would like to mention about Raju, Administrative Officer at SCARF, who, for a long time, had also dedicated his life to the development of SCARF.

I am happy to have been a part of this great organisation as its President for 16 years and doing my bit for its growth.

V.T. Somasundaram

Former President of the Board of SCARF

Foreword

Mental health conditions contribute to poor health outcomes, premature deaths, human rights violations and global and national economic loss. With one in 10 persons (10.7%) affected by mental disorders, they are one of the greatest contributors to the global burden of disease. However, this is often under-recognised and under-appreciated.

At the WHO, there has been an increasing focus on mental health over the past few years, and specific guidelines have been provided during the COVID pandemic as well.

I would like to mention two major initiatives of WHO in the last few years.

- WHO Special Initiative on Mental Health
- WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030

The vision of the WHO Special Initiative on Mental Health that was launched in 2019 is that all people achieve the highest standard of mental health and well-being. It hopes to advance mental health policies, advocacy and human rights and scale up quality interventions and services for mental health conditions.

WHO's Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030 was adopted by the 66th World Health Assembly. It was a landmark achievement because it focused international attention on a long-neglected problem and was firmly rooted in the principles of human rights.

The four major objectives of the action plan are to strengthen effective leadership and governance for mental health, provide comprehensive, integrated and responsive mental health and social care services in community-based settings, implement strategies for promotion and prevention in mental health and strengthen information systems, evidence and research for mental health.

WHO seeks to work with member states, NGOs, patient and family groups and civil society to take these forward.



Dr. Soumya Swaminathan with Dr. Sarada Menon at ICONS, 2016

The Indian scene: A national survey in 2017 in India found that 1 in 7 persons suffered from some form of mental disorder, contributing 15 per cent of the disease burden. The number of mental health professionals continues to remain very low with a lot of variations across the different states. A large number of persons with mental disorders remain untreated especially in the rural areas, and the mental health gap is huge. Explanatory models of mental illness are still magico-religious in remote areas resulting in delayed help seeking. Stigma further compounds this delay in seeking treatment.

In India as in many other LMIC, there are few dedicated research organisations and research itself does not feature prominently in the medical curriculum. With a large amount of time having to be spent on patient care, it is also true that many medical professionals are unable to focus on research.

It is in this scenario that the work of the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF India) is extremely relevant and critical. While I grew up admiring Dr. Sarada Menon, one of the first women psychiatrists in the country, for the reforms she brought about in the archaic mental hospital in Chennai, it was in the 1990s I heard about SCARF. SCARF had gained a lot of credibility as a centre offering humane care for the mentally ill as well as carrying out world class research. SCARF has been designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre for mental health research and training since 1996. Dr. Thara who succeeded Dr. Menon has been an active participant in many WHO programmes and task forces. Under her leadership, SCARF has forged collaborations with many international centres to carry out meaningful and relevant research. When I inaugurated SCARF's biennial conference ICONS a few years ago, I saw for myself the goodwill and respect the international and national research community had for SCARF.

SCARF offers an array of services both in their clinics and in the community. Their mobile tele-psychiatry is an innovation widely acclaimed, reaching out as it does to the untreated in rural areas. This is a replicable programme, especially in the present COVID days to close the mental health gap. Innovations such as these can help improve access to specialists, and address the chronic human resource shortages we face. A recent noteworthy addition has been the DEMCARES programme to cater to persons with dementia, especially among the lower income groups. Special programmes also regularly reach out to the youth.

Violation of the rights of persons and discrimination experienced by people with mental health conditions is widespread as per recent reports from government agencies, the United Nations, non-governmental organisations and the media. SCARF's various initiatives to improve awareness, such as the media awards for good reporting on mental health and the film festival 'Frame of Mind' are laudable and should pave the way for reduction of stigma.

SCARF's commitment to developing capacity and training an array of professionals in mental health is creditable, and an activity not many NGOs are engaged in.

Over the years, the organisation has been responsible for influencing many policies of the government. Lobbying for inclusion of mental disability in the PWD Act, it led to the development of a tool to measure psychiatric disability. SCARF has contributed actively to the amendment and implementation of the Mental Health Care Act of 2017. Members of the organisation play a major role in the State Mental Health Authority

The work ethics of SCARF are deep-rooted. Governed by an eminent Board of Management, with Mr R. Seshasayee at the helm, and a number of luminaries in the past, SCARF sets very high standards—an act that needs to be emulated, if mental health care in the country has to reach international standards.

It is of enormous importance that the history of such an organisation is recorded for the purpose of posterity. The lessons that can be learnt through the stories narrated in this book can be a phenomenal stimulus to the young mental health professionals in the country. Having known this organisation over two decades and having watched the steady progress, I deem it a privilege to be part of the chronicle.

My congratulations to Dr. Sarada Menon, Chairman Mr. Seshasayee, Vice-Chairman Dr. Thara and the entire team that makes SCARF what it is today. We can all be inspired by the fact that one woman's action has resulted in lakhs of patients benefiting and thousands of families able to live peacefully knowing their loved ones are getting the best care. My best wishes to the organisation for many more years to come.

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan
Chief Scientist, WHO

Preface

Mental health has always been the Cinderella of all health concerns in developing countries despite the fact that most definitions of health include mental and social well-being. Meeting mental health needs is a complex and difficult task which has to take into account the limited extent of health services, low awareness and stigma, shortage of trained professionals to deliver the care and economic and social factors which widen the treatment gap further.

Historically, NGOs have played a critical role in promoting and facilitating health and educational activities. The last few decades have seen the emergence of some key NGOs in the field of mental health care which provide services and conduct research on a scale that is on par with major public institutions. It is therefore highly desirable to document the ways in which NGOs work, not just for posterity or nostalgia but as a means of information sharing, openness and possibly a kind of ready reckoner for those who wish to tread a similar path.

SCARF has existed since 1984. Why a book now? The reasons for this are many. As I mentioned earlier, documentation of the growth of an organisation with the agonies and ecstasies is critical, not just for those who were involved in it from the early days but for the more recent entrants as well. Its like knowing your family lineage. I was also keen that Dr. Sarada Menon, the Founder of SCARF who is now 97 years old, should be able to savour the contents of this publication, a large part of which is a reflection of her untiring work for SCARF. In fact, this applies to many of the Founder Members who are not getting any younger and would certainly enjoy this trip down memory lane. It is also true that if the history is not recalled now and documented, it may never get done since a large portion of the book has been drawn from the recollections of the old guard. That this book should be dedicated to Dr. Menon was a unanimous decision of the Board of SCARF.

On many occasions during these years, we have had mental health professionals visit us and request for branches of SCARF to be opened in their cities or towns. Since we had taken a well-thought



Board Members of SCARF, 2010

out decision not to do this, we were very encouraging of them spending a few days with us, visiting our centres and even borrow some of our early documents. All in good faith that more centres are required to meet the unmet needs. I believe that anybody desirous of starting an NGO could take a few lessons from this publication, which chronicles the history of SCARF in a very honest, and open manner, drawing attention to the various challenges in all the spheres of work, be it care and rehabilitation or research and awareness building.

It has been very heartening to receive an overwhelming response to my request to contribute to this publication from our friends, well-wishers, collaborators, former staff from all over the world. Each of these is a highly personal message combined with the nuances of a professional collaboration.

I wish to convey our immense gratitude to our Honourable Vice-President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu whose encouraging message has provided us with a tremendous fillip. Other senior secretaries in the Tamil Nadu Government such as Shri Hansraj Verma and Dr. Radhakrishnan were also very forthcoming in their response. The staff of SCARF—current and past have all pitched in to make this book complete. Some of our current and past members of the Board had no hesitation in sharing their experiences.

I thank the family of Dr. Sarada Menon for giving us such wonderful family pictures.

It was while compiling and sorting out the contents of this book that I was pleasantly wonderstruck by the range and amount of work we have done in the last three plus decades. This was not a job, but putting together a product which reflects the culmination of the dreams, aspirations, sweat and toil of many persons over the years. I must confess that there were times I felt distinctly emotional and grateful to have been a part of this journey.

The Founders' section sets the tone for the book, followed by an initial introduction on mental health and schizophrenia. The book goes on to describe the activities of the early years of SCARF, the details of some major activities such as clinical work, community outreach, rehabilitation, research and the links with various organisations around the world, awareness and teaching and training. Thoughtful perceptions and experiences of collaborators are interspersed. We also have a section in which some of our patients and family members and donors have shared their thoughts and feelings. The section on Dr. Sarada Menon is a fairy tale woven around the remarkable life of an outstanding doctor, administrator and woman.

I hope all of you will enjoy reading this and share our joy and pride in our 35-year journey. And of course, celebrate the life of the inimitable Madam.

Dr. R. Thara

Vice-Chairman, SCARF

Acknowledgements

When I first conceived of the idea of putting together such a publication, I had not bargained for the amount of work and co-ordination such an effort involves. This has however, been made easier by the tremendous support of one and all involved. I am happy to say that it was all done in less than three months. I however, have to single out our international and national collaborators, and the persons who sent us wishes and messages. They responded to my request so promptly. It was all done in record time and I am so thankful to all of you for this.

I wish to acknowledge

1. The Chairman and Board of SCARF who encouraged me to do this
2. Hon. Vice-President of India, the IAS officers, past and present, Chairmen of the Board of SCARF, past and present who sent their wishes
3. All our collaborators within and outside India
4. All our friends, well-wishers, associates, donors, patients and families who pitched in.
5. Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, WHO, who kindly wrote the Foreword
6. All staff of SCARF, past and present who sent their stories
7. Mr. Raju, former CAO who helped me retrieve a lot of old material and filled the gaps
8. Dr. Jayakumar Menon, nephew of Dr. Sarada Menon for sending her old photographs
9. Dr. Padmavati, Director of SCARF who helped in putting together some sections
10. Sruthi Mohan of SCARF who helped me with the photographs
11. Shruti Rao of SCARF who helped with proof reading, collating, etc.

And finally, I wish to acknowledge and deeply appreciate the untiring and creative efforts of Malvika Mehra and Rukmini Amirapu for giving this publication its sheen and shape!

As also Compuprint, our long-time associate for the fine printing.

Dr. R. Thara



SECTION 1

Seeds of Hope

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*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

Robert Frost



Dr. M. Sarada Menon

With a M.D. in General Medicine in 1947, Dr. Sarada Menon went on to specialise in Psychiatry at NIMHANS, Bangalore. On her return to Chennai, she joined Government service as a junior doctor at the Kilpauk Mental Hospital. Dr. Sarada Menon was promoted as the Superintendent in 1961 and to say that the era of psychosocial rehabilitation was born with this is no exaggeration. The hospital witnessed many reforms including beginning of outpatient services, appointment of professional social workers, starting of the Industrial Therapy Centre and introducing volunteers to help.

Dr. Menon was also responsible for starting postgraduate courses in Psychological Medicine. During the 17 long years as its Head, she transformed the hospital from being a 'Dumping Ground' into one of the country's best-run institutions.

After her retirement, she started SCARF and details of her yeoman role in SCARF are chronicled throughout this publication. She is the recipient of many awards including the Padma Bhushan.

Unlike other mental disorders, schizophrenia affects young individuals and by the time they are 25 or 30, they are not able to carry on with their activities of daily living. Having worked with mentally ill people during my medical training and in the Madras (Kilpauk) Mental Hospital and watching them from the stage of acute disturbance, reach a stage when they were quite manageable but could not function effectively, I used to wonder how these people will carry on with their lives, and how their families will cope. So, I decided something should be done and started in the mental hospital, an Industrial Therapy Centre. Gradually that section grew very well, and we had patients doing different types of crafts and the bakery unit was particularly successful.

So, after my retirement, I felt that this work must go on. When Thara, Rajkumar and I discussed this, we thought we could initiate some activity in the general hospital outpatient department itself. But this was not welcomed by other staff in the department at GH. So, we thought it best to start something by ourselves and that is how SCARF came to be. We wanted to form an organisation, we didn't know how, we had to give it a name, then we had to register it and then we had to collect the funds. Rajkumar helped a lot in the beginning, in giving the name, for getting the tax exemptions and fundraising.

Thara was helping with the ICMR research; she was also very much involved in fundraising and that is how SCARF was started.

As I said earlier, the urgent need naturally was to start a rehabilitation service. It is often thought that rehabilitation starts only when the person improves. No it's not so, it starts from the very first day when the patient is admitted. Start knowing the patient, knowing the family, knowing the environment in which they stay, study all that and try to modify whatever is necessary and help the patient come up. But we needed patients for this and so an OPD was started. Yes, I faced a lot of problems but I had the experience in the mental hospital of having attempted rehabilitation and been very successful.

First the psychiatric professionals, then the medical professionals, then the general public and others, had to be convinced about the need for rehabilitation. Even today there are many psychiatric professionals who do not believe in rehabilitation and think medicines alone will help restore functioning in these people.

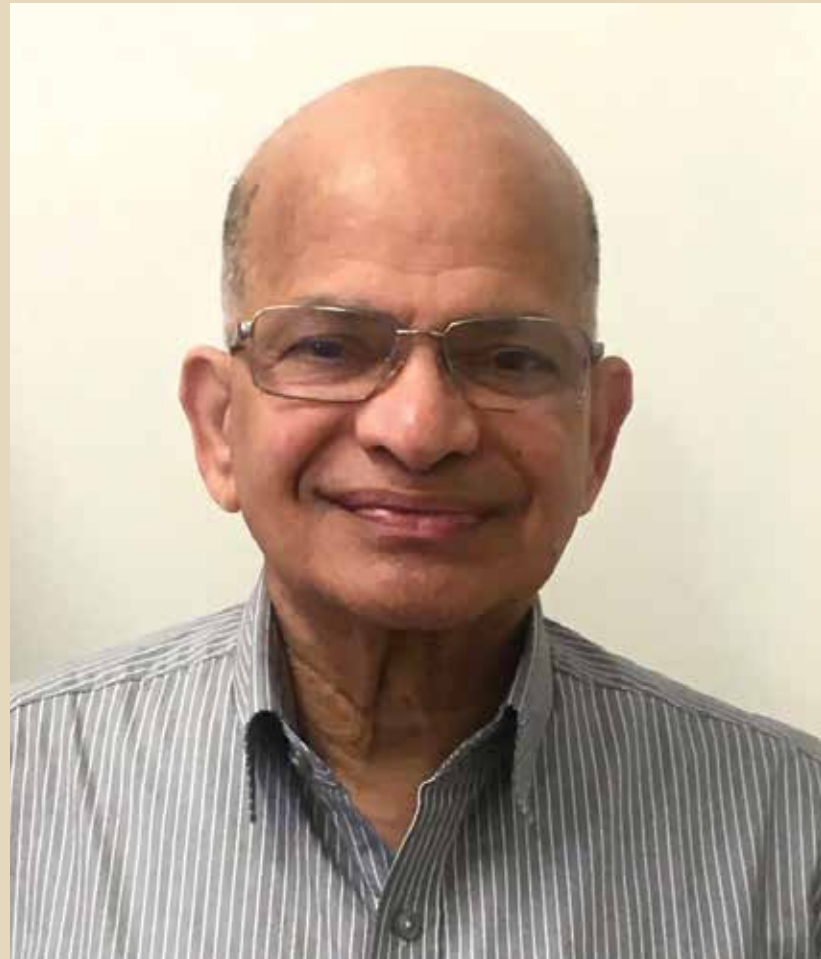
We also had to increase awareness among the general public and we had organised film screenings, like Victor Banerjee's film *Passage to India*, which also brought us some funds. Those days, Thara was in charge of the awareness programme, she did very well. For rehabilitation, I started a chalk-making unit—I learnt it from a patient's father. Now there are many things being manufactured in SCARF, and sold.

We are progressing very well and I hope we'll come to a stage where we can assess a patient completely, work on him and restore his functioning to the pre-illness stage. Just like in prisons where they have classes, they learn, they study, they appear for exams, sometimes PhDs. There should be more sheltered workshops. What is shelter? Sheltered from the pressure, all the problems related to the industry, keeping to timing, etc. More mentally ill persons should be trained so that they can be placed in outside jobs. So these are all my dreams, I'm sure they will come true with the work SCARF is doing now and it will flourish.

The other issue is stigma which we have to slowly reduce.

I am sure SCARF will continue to work on this also.

Extract from an earlier interview with Dr. Sarada Menon



Dr. S. Rajkumar

Dr. Rajkumar completed his M.D. in Psychiatry from AIIMS, New Delhi and started working in the Department of Psychiatry, Madras Medical College along with Dr. Sarada Menon. He was able to build a good research team there with grants from ICMR, WHO, etc. He is a co-founder of SCARF and also helped in the initial establishment of Alzheimer's Society of India called ARDSI. An eager and interesting teacher, he has mentored many young mental health professionals, who are now working all over the world.

After he migrated to Australia in 1998, he has been affiliated as a Professor with the University of Newcastle and University of Sydney as Clinical Professor. He was also the Foundation Chair of Rural Psychiatry, University of Newcastle and Director of the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, (2001-2003) in the rural setting of Orange, NSW, Australia.

For many, the past always seems more glorious and better than the present. This is true when I recall the early efforts of starting and building SCARF. Since Thara asked me to write about my impressions on our beginnings, here I am. I am happy and proud that SCARF has grown vastly in breadth and depth with a tremendous potential to inspire NGO initiatives globally.

A brief introduction about me—the inspiration to take up Psychiatry came when I first met my revered teacher and mentor Dr. M. Sarada Menon in 1965 as a 3rd year medical student. It was at one of those busy outpatients in a clinical setting of the Madras Medical College and Government General Hospital. After I completed my MD in Psychiatry from AIIMS, New Delhi, returning to work in my alma mater was my good fortune. It was special being Madam's (Dr. Sarada Menon) Assistant in 1974. To our misfortune, she had to retire in 1978 due to a policy decision of the government (in contrast she continues to work in a fulfilling manner at the age of 97).

I trained in Maudsley in the UK, and in the Johns Hopkins University in the USA as a Post Doctorate Fellow. This gave me a good exposure to academic centres. We were involved in a few ICMR projects such as the SOFACOS, SOFPUC, and some WHO studies on Dementia, Quality of Life, etc. I had a good team with me, Thara, Padma, Shantha Kamath, T.N. Srinivasan, Vijay Nagaswami, Shuba Kumar and several others, some of whom pursued a career in research. These projects became internationally relevant—course and outcome of schizophrenia and study of untreated psychosis in the community. Project and research staff (and funds) are ephemeral and one of the dilemmas that I faced with much angst was how to continue having such good teams with us.

After her retirement, Madam used to visit GH often and expressed her idea of starting a centre to rehabilitate improved patients. It was then decided to start an NGO which would have rehabilitation, research and public education as its objectives. When we named the NGO, SCARF, many told me they did not know what schizophrenia was and it was difficult to pronounce the name.

The Board of SCARF

When we started in 1984, we had very well-known and dynamic members of the Board and I was partly responsible for identifying and persuading many of them to join the Board of SCARF. Later, due to some IT-related compulsions, we had to drop the word Care from the name of the organisation and change the name to Schizophrenia Research Foundation (Although we maintained the acronym of SCARF). I made quite a number of gruelling trips to New Delhi: Nirman Bhavan, DST, Department of Foreign Affairs and such. This was required to obtain the tax exemptions which would facilitate donations to SCARF. Indirectly, we benefited by having two outstanding scientists on our Board at different times—Dr. T.R. Govindachari of Ciba Geigy Centre, Mumbai and Dr. M.S. Valiathan of Sri Chitra Thirunal Centre. They were able to help us with some of this work and enhanced the scientific profile of SCARF. Mr. K.R. Baliga, our treasurer, helped us with accounts and financial matters. Mr. M.B. Sreenivasan of the choir music fame, Mr. V.K. Sundaram and Mr. P.N. Nagaraj of Harrisons bakery were other Board Members who helped us a lot. The first two have unfortunately passed away.

Funding

We had a wide variety of fundraising strategies. Elsewhere you would read about the screening of the film *Passage to India* (from Dr. C.K. Gariyali). There have been times when Thara and I have stood outside Nilgiris in Mylapore selling tickets for our fundraising efforts. I recall the many trips I have made with Madam for fundraising: to Guruvayur, Kollam where we met with cashew exporters such as Rajan Pillai, and many other places. My friend Mr. Bhujangaswamy also helped us with raising funds from jewellers in Calicut. Of course, the average donation would be Rs 5,000-10,000, but in the early years, this meant a lot.

On our trip to Mumbai, I met Shri Mukesh Ambani who gave us Rs. 5,000. It was interesting to meet Alyque Padamsee (People's Theatre) and there I met Naseeruddin Shah (actor) who donated Rs. 5,000. I got connected to the Creative Director of Lintas who offered to help us with our awareness programmes, but the effort did not materialise. It was my friend Sachitanand who designed our logo and also the impressive first brochure. I had good inputs from a young friend, Gopi Gadiyar (mathematician).

When we started raising funds, there were many hits and equal number of misses. I recall meeting Ashok Ganguly, then Chairman of Hindustan Lever. He was impressed with the cause and thought they could provide a research endowment of Rs. five lakhs to support mental health research. Subsequently we were not so lucky to get any funds as the chief medical officer chose to support cardiology and cancer. There were many such events and we had to take disappointments in our stride. These were an intrinsic part of starting an NGO, also a not-for-profit organisation.

I also pursued with bodies like ICSSR, ICMR and DST and we were fortunate to receive some grants from them.

On another trip to Mumbai we met Chief Justice Hidayatullah (former Vice-President of India) who kindly agreed to be the first Patron. All this would not have been possible but for the guidance of Professor M.G.K. Menon. He was genuinely interested in SCARF and used his good offices to help us in many ways.

I worked 22 years in Chennai and was fortunate in setting up a WHO Collaborating Centre in Mental Health Research at SCARF which Thara has been heading ever since.

Many young people joined the team—the earliest were Dr. Shalini Kurup, psychiatrist and Latha Srinivasan, psychologist. It was Raju our admin officer who stayed with SCARF for many decades and worked with unmatched sincerity and dedication. Dr. T.N. Srinivasan, who moved to Australia, still continues to collaborate with SCARF. Vijay Nagaswami and Radha Shankar did good work with WAPR (World Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation)

While many NGOs have wound up due to many reasons, what makes SCARF grow stronger? It is the genuine collective leadership, the excellent teamwork, passion, dedication and altruistic goals. I found that coincidentally, a lot of other NGO initiatives grew in Chennai such as Sneha Suicide Prevention Centre founded by Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar, The Banyan, and Samarth, started by Shuba Kumar, amongst several others.

On a personal note, when I was working in GH, a young man dropped by, seeking a job. He seemed ready to do any kind of work. His father died when he was four years old and his mother had chronic schizophrenia (lived in Bhavishya Bhavan and subsequently she died of a cardiac condition). The young man worked for us for a pittance of Rs. 300. He also took up a job during the evenings with me for another Rs. 300 per month. He remained a loyal hardworking man, and Shuba Kumar, social scientist, at the end of the project, arranged for a decent job for him. His name is Subramaniam Kannan. Raju and Kannan are caring, compassionate, untitled heroes who have stood by us through thick and thin. Any initiative requires the support of people of all kinds with different kinds of skills and loyalties.

I am reminded of a poem, by Oscar Wilde,
 “Something was dead in all of us,
 And what was dead, was hope.”

In this evening of my life, I see a great hope for SCARF, and I wish Dr. Padmavati, the current Director and all the staff who are contributing to its progress my very best wishes.



Dr. Thara Rangaswamy

Dr. Thara Rangaswamy is a psychiatrist and the co-founder of SCARF. Her first job was in the ICMR study on schizophrenia when she worked with Drs. Sarada Menon and Rajkumar. After her PhD on the subject of disability, she lobbied hard for the inclusion of mental disability in the Disabilities Act. She was also responsible for the development of a tool called IDEAS which is officially used to measure disability in schizophrenia. She has collaborated with premier institutions around the world such as the Johns Hopkins, USA, Institute of Psychiatry, UK and others in Australia, Canada, etc. She has over 180 peer-reviewed publications.

She is on the Advisory Committee to the Director General of the World Health Organisation, Geneva. She is also on the editorial board of several reputed journals including the Schizophrenia Bulletin. After serving as Director of SCARF for over two decades, she is now the Chair of Research and Vice-Chairman at SCARF.

It was the usual humid day in Chennai. I was at work in the Psychiatry Department of the General Hospital attached to the Madras Medical College, on the ICMR research study on Course and Outcome of Schizophrenia. Dr. Rajkumar (SR), my teacher and then my boss told me that Dr. Sarada Menon would like to meet us soon. Until then, I had not had a close interaction with Dr. Menon except in very formal official ways. However, this discussion was different. She told us that after she retired from the Kilpauk Mental Hospital (now called the Institute of Mental Health) after serving as its Superintendent for close to 19 years, she had been thinking a lot of the need to initiate rehabilitation services for the seriously mentally ill. Apart from the Mental Hospital where she had started a Vocational Training Centre for the inmates there, there was no structured rehabilitation facility available in Chennai. How do we go about doing this?

When I was following up first episode psychosis patients in the ICMR SOFACOS study, I had on several occasions wondered how we can offer these people some rehabilitation programmes which would restore their skills and get on with life. As a young researcher, I was also wondering what kind of opportunities were available in the city for those keen to further their research careers or even learn the basics of research. Government jobs in Tamil Nadu did not place a premium on research or publications or obtaining grants. Neither undergraduate nor postgraduate teaching had any research syllabus.

Dr. S. Rajkumar who had some training in the Maudsley Hospital, UK in the 70s, had been inspired by persons like Michael Shepherd and John Wing and shared my thoughts on the lack of resources for mental health research here. So, how can this marriage of a rehabilitation facility and a research centre happen in the community?

Dr. Mrs. C.K. Gariyali IAS, also used to join some of our discussions. After a lot of deliberations, we figured out that the only answer was to start a Non-Governmental Organisation which could address some of these needs and concerns. But how easy was that going to be? We realised that it was not going to be a cakewalk, but were confident that the initial struggles would ultimately lead to a concrete programme. I got in touch with Mrs. Shanthi Ranganathan, a lady with a great personal commitment and vision who founded the TTR Research Foundation to cater to persons with alcohol addiction. I discussed with her the various steps that needed to be taken in order to start an NGO.

I would like to point out at this stage that although Chennai now has many internationally reputed NGOs, TTR Foundation was the only one at that time, in the early 80s. Armed with a lot of information from her and her office, I set to work diligently to write the bylaws and the Memorandum of the Organisation. I had no clue then what these documents were meant for, but learnt later that they were mandatory to register SCARF as an NGO.

That was all good, but should we not have a name for the organisation? After some debate and thought, we decided to call it the 'Schizophrenia Care and Research Foundation'. Dr. Rajkumar was quick to point out that this would lead to the acronym SCARF—also a protective gear! This was a good first move. However, later on, much to our disappointment, the word 'care' had to be removed in order to satisfy some Government tax regulations.

The next was to start a bank account. I took Rs. 1000 of my personal money to the State Bank branch at MMC to start the account. I can say with pride and satisfaction that this amount, albeit small, was probably the best spent ever in my life!

An NGO requires a Board of Management. This would be a body of reputed mental health professionals and philanthropists who would not just guide the policies of SCARF, but add credibility to it in the public eye. Dr. Menon's reputation as a psychiatrist who brought about major progressive changes in the Mental Hospital, her charisma coupled with SR's persuasive skills and ability to sell the concept of SCARF resulted in a very impressive Board of the Founder Members of SCARF. Dr. D.C. Kothari, an eminent industrialist was appointed the President of the Board. We had a good mix of scientists, businessmen, doctors, journalists and others.

We requested these members also to contribute a small amount to get the organisation started, which they willingly did

The Constitution of SCARF identified three main objectives

1. To undertake scientific research in the area of schizophrenia and allied mental illnesses.
2. To provide care and rehabilitation to all persons suffering from schizophrenia and other mental disorders.

3. To improve awareness about mental illnesses with the aim of reducing the stigma of mental disorders.

The First Board Meeting

I remember vividly the first Board Meeting of SCARF that was held on March 24, 1984 at the home of Mr. P.N. Nagaraj of Harrisons who was also one of the Founder Members. While the President Dr. D.C. Kothari chaired the meeting, it was Prof. M.G.K. Menon's presence and participation which was sheer magic. Occupying as he did a premier position in the Department of Science and Technology with the Government of India, his advice to us was so meaningful and inspiring. It was he who suggested that we plan to carry out good research projects after which we could apply for IT exemption as a scientific and research body. Dr. Menon was appointed the Secretary to the Board and I was the Joint Secretary.

Inauguration of SCARF

Although we had been working for a while, the formal inauguration took place on Friday, January 13, 1985. Oh no, Friday, the 13th—not exactly an auspicious combination—many friends and well-wishers remarked. But since the Governor of Tamil Nadu Shri Khurana was the Chief Guest, changing the date was out of the question. Looking back, this combination of Friday and the 13th is not as ominous as it seemed to some people then.

It was a glittering function at the stately Rajaji Hall. The Health Minister Dr. Hande, Dr. Usha Luthra from ICMR and other dignitaries participated.

In the morning, the first SCARF-ICMR seminar on 'Priorities in Schizophrenia Research in India' was held. I still recall the periodic roars of the crowds and cheering from the adjacent Chepauk cricket stadium where the test match between India and England was being played.

Later when the refreshments were served after the event, a small crowd on its way back home from the stadium barged into the hall and liberally helped themselves, leaving nothing but crumbs for the tired and hungry staff of SCARF!

Now the challenging tasks of finding resources for clinical work, research and other activities, starting services and spreading the word around about SCARF had to begin in right earnest.

Looking back from where we are now, it all seems a bit hazy, a daring adventure in some ways and we the Founders would never have even imagined the kind of stature, reputation and credibility that SCARF has gradually attained over the years.



Dr. C.K. Gariyali

Dr. C.K. Gariyali, a 1972 batch IAS officer, has worked both as Secretary to Chief Minister and Secretary to the Governor of Tamil Nadu. She has served extensively in the Health and Social Welfare sectors. Born in Kashmir, she is a postgraduate in Medical and Psychiatric Social Work and a PhD in Women's Studies. She studied 'Poverty Alleviation' at Sussex and 'Women's Empowerment' at Oxford. Her main contribution has been in areas of 'Population Limitation' and 'Poverty Reduction' in India.

She has supported many voluntary organisations and helped them get land, buildings and grants. She has been associated with SCARF from its inception in 1984 and continues to be an active member of the Board of Management even now.

She is a well-known author. Currently, as Founder Trustee of Equitas Development Initiative Trust, she is handholding 30 lakh women in micro-enterprises across India.

While I was working as District Collector of South Arcot District, my husband Dr. Rajkumar was the Professor of Psychiatry in Madras Medical College. He, along with Dr. Thara and Shuba, was carrying out a pioneering ICMR study on Course and Outcome of Schizophrenia. Dr. Rajkumar's teacher and mentor, Padma Bhushan Dr. Sarada Menon, had retired after serving as the Superintendent of the Mental Hospital for over 15 years. During her long tenure in the Government Mental Hospital at Kilpauk, she had initiated many reforms in the care of patients. She also introduced skill training, bakery, gardening, sports and many other activities to improve the inpatient treatment of the patients. Yet there was a big gap between what the government could provide and what the community could supplement. She was restless to start something in that direction to fill the gap.

With my background in psychiatric social work, I was also deeply drawn to the cause of the mentally ill who were looked down upon by society. I had worked with chronic mentally ill patients with Dr. Mallick in Willington Hospital in New Delhi. He inculcated deep love and sympathy in my heart for mentally ill persons. After joining the Civil Services and being posted to Tamil Nadu, this obsession remained in my mind that I must continue my work with the mentally ill.

In 1983, Dr. Sarada Menon, Dr. Rajkumar, Dr. Thara, and I, had several discussions on how to take this idea forward, Dr. Rajkumar's friend, Sachitanand, an advertising consultant, helped us develop the logo, the acronym 'SCARF' and the first brochure. The acronym SCARF was apt since it is associated with protection. Our first brochure turned out to be world class. I remember personally going to the office of 'Registrar of Societies' along with Raju, to get SCARF registered as a charitable society. Now the stage was set to launch SCARF.

Fundraising was a challenge since many people had not even heard the word schizophrenia or knew how to pronounce it. Dr. Menon and Dr. Rajkumar visited many Indian cities to meet important

people to lobby for SCARF, create awareness in Government and private bodies. They travelled at their own expense, by trains in non-AC compartments. It is appropriate now to acknowledge the great support of Prof. M.G.K. Menon, brother of Dr. Sarada Menon, who facilitated a lot of work with the Central Government

Focus on Research

From the beginning, Dr. Rajkumar was eager to focus on research and was of the opinion that SCARF could contribute to the international body of knowledge. He formed the first Research Committee of SCARF which he chaired from 1984 till he left for Australia in 1997. He involved SCARF in some of his WHO and ICMR research projects from Madras Medical College, where Dr. Shantha Kamath, Dr. Padma and Dr. T.N. Srinivasan, Dr. Shuba, Chitrakanni and others worked on these projects.

Dr. Shantha Kamath, a very compassionate psychiatrist remains committed to clinical care and rehabilitation at SCARF OPD and Bhavishya Bhavan. Dr. Padma who worked in research and community programmes is now the Director of SCARF succeeding Dr. Thara who was the Director till 2018. Dr. T.N. Srinivasan who joined SCARF as a young researcher worked there for many years till he left for Australia in 2004. He continues his research collaborations with SCARF.

Founder Members

Apart from Dr. Sarada Menon, Dr. Rajkumar and Dr. Thara, some of the other members were Mr. Baliga, who helped with accounts and financial management, Habibullah Badsha an eminent lawyer, K.V. Sundaram businessman and the President of the Stock Exchange, Mr. N. Murali of *The Hindu*, Mr. P.N. Nagaraj, owner of Harrison Hotel, myself and last but not the least Shri. D.C. Kothari who became our founder-president. Dr. Kothari remained president of SCARF for his life and all the Board Meetings of SCARF during his lifetime were held in his office on Nungambakkam High Road in Kothari Building. After Mr. D.C. Kothari, Mr. V.T. Somasundaram of Tiruchi Distilleries became President of SCARF. He was a thorough gentleman and very encouraging and Board Meetings were held in his office in Adyar.

After volunteering for the first six years, in 1990, Dr. Thara, with a doctorate on 'Disability in Schizophrenia', joined as the joint director on a meagre salary of four thousand rupees, as SCARF could not afford to pay more. In the initial years, she did a lot of fundraising and established research collaborations. Later in 1996, she became the director of SCARF and remained so till 2018. There was considerable expansion of activities during this time including construction of the Anna Nagar centre.

I have been with SCARF for all the 36 years of its existence. My main role was to create awareness both within the State and the Central Government officials and ministries about the need to support NGOs like SCARF. We have had many successes with the successive governments.

The first one was to obtain a grant of Rs. 1 lakh in the early 80s from the then Chief Minister, Dr. M.G. Ramachandran. Dr. J. Jayalithaa increased this grant to Rs. 10 lakhs in 2011. Today, the grant from the Government of Tamil Nadu has increased to Rs 20 lakhs per annum. Dr. J. Jayalithaa also allotted a valuable piece of land to SCARF for building its main centre in Anna Nagar and personally laid the foundation stone on February 2, 1996. A start-up building grant of Rs. 10 lakhs was also given. I was also able to co-ordinate with the Government of India to sanction Rs. 25 lakhs, for the SCARF building project.

Today, we may not feel the need for big fundraising programmes, but I always feel nostalgic about those early years when we struggled for every paisa. I also initiated the 'SCARF Child Fund' to support the education of the children of persons with mental disorders. We also formed a group called Friends of SCARF consisting of people like Bimla Batla, Zubeda Asgar Ali, Bobby (Balchander Nair, IPS) then DC Traffic of Madras, Mr. Mahadevan of Hot Breads and many other volunteers, who played an active role in mobilising the much-needed funds for the budding organisation. I am sharing below some of the memorable fundraising events.

The Visit of Victor Banerjee

Our first fundraising event was the screening of *A Passage to India* at Sathyam theatre, which became a memorable event for us. The hero of the film Victor Banerjee and his wife personally graced the screening of the film. There were some interesting features associated with his visit. One of them involved his visit to the Madras Club which still has a dress code. He insisted that he would only wear a pyjama and kurta to the club and not follow their dress code. We were confused and wondered if the lunch itself had to be cancelled. However, due to the efforts of Dr. Rajkumar, the late Shri T.T. Vasu was contacted, who managed to convince the other trustees of the club that the dress code could be relaxed for Banerjee. The day was saved and newspapers of course walloped it.

The next issue was that he had only one set of kurta-pyjamas! For probably the only time in my life, I volunteered to wash and iron his clothes overnight. When I delivered a clean set of clothes to him, he looked at his wife and said, "Maya, look at this Indian hospitality. See what Mrs. Gariyali, the Collector of South Arcot has done for me!" I told him that it was my commitment to SCARF and its guests which made me do this.

That morning, we had a very successful charity show, attended by Health Minister Dr. Hande and the 'who's who' of Madras. The lunch at the Madras Club was uneventful and most enjoyable.

Charity Dinner with the Indian Cricket Team

Another fundraising event was a charity dinner at the ballroom of Taj Coromandel. It was to take place at a time when the Indian team was to play a Test Match in Chennai. Through the good offices of cricketeer Bharat Reddy, many members of the Indian cricket team were willing, but needed to get Captain Kapil Dev's permission. We did not know how to get hold of him. However, nothing short of a miracle happened.

On a return flight from Delhi, I met Kapil Dev and requested the presence of himself and his team at the charity dinner. The good man that he was, he agreed and then the entire team was there at the Taj. They participated in the charity dinner, signed autographs, got photographed with their fans and made press statements for the cause of the mentally ill, to the great joy of all the men, women and children present. Needless to say, it was one of the most successful fundraisers for SCARF.

Fundraising Dinner with the Prince of Arcot

Another interesting event I remember is when Prince of Arcot, Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali threw his ancestral residence, Amir Mahal open for SCARF and arranged a fundraising dinner in his princely home. The response was tremendous. The Friends of SCARF sold hundreds of tickets as everyone wanted to see Amir Mahal. It was the first public event permitted by Nawab Sahib. He also provided traditional Hyderabadi food cooked by the hereditary chefs of Amir Mahal. I remember Amir Mahal was completely lit up, there were lucky draws and prizes galore for events and the food was sumptuous. For the first time, we raised nearly four lakhs of rupees at one go.

SCARF helping Tsunami Survivors

During the tsunami, SCARF played a very important role in treating and healing the victim families. They helped me in the psychosocial rehabilitation of the tsunami victims in Cuddalore where I was Relief Commissioner. When I landed in Cuddalore on the morning of 26th December, there was tremendous gloom and depression among the survivors. Many of them were utterly suicidal. The first call I made from Cuddalore was to Dr. Thara asking her to send a team from SCARF to help me deal with the depression and suicide prevention. During those difficult times, SCARF played a pioneering role in mitigating the suffering of people in such an enormous natural disaster by developing protocols and counselling materials.

Tele-Psychiatry and Dementia Centre

With help from OXFAM, SCARF established a Tele-Medicine unit in Nagapattinam, to counsel patients. Today, SCARF has emerged as a pioneer in this area. It has developed a mobile Tele-Psychiatry

wing in a custom-built bus fitted with the required equipment. Currently SCARF has an innovative Tele-Psychiatry project in Puddukottai. A recent addition has been the starting of a Dementia Care and Resource Centre funded by Infosys. Currently a big dementia facility is coming up in Tambaram under the supervision of Dr. Thara, which will take forward the dementia agenda of SCARF.

Mr. R. Seshasayee Chairman SCARF

Mr. R. Seshasayee, formerly of Ashok Leyland is now the Chairman of the Board of Management of SCARF. With his valuable guidance and eminent leadership and support SCARF has spread its wings wider.

For me, it has been very gratifying to be a part of the tremendous growth of the SCARF since its inception and I am proud of its contribution to the cause of mental health.

Chapter 2

Dr. M. Sarada Menon - A Tour de Force in Mental Health

A tireless crusader for the rights and rehabilitation of the mentally ill, Dr. Sarada Menon is in the ninth decade of her life undeterred and determined to continue her life's work with the same degree of passion and commitment that she started out with. As the first woman psychiatrist in India her contributions to mental health have been phenomenal, culminating in the founding of SCARF, which is a premier institution in India for rehabilitation and research on mental health issues.

Born on April 5, 1923 to Mr. K.S. Menon and Mrs. Narayani Menon in Mangalore, she was one among 11 children, many of whom went on to occupy important positions, such as Prof M.G.K. Menon and Shri Gopala Menon. Her late husband Shri Srikumara Menon, retired IPS officer, was a great source of support to her. Her ancestral home (*tharawad*) is Mambilikkalam in Sreekrishnapuram, Palakkad, Kerala.

She had her early education in Good Shepherd School and Christ Church School, her father's judicial duties bringing them to Madras. She went on to Women's Christian College for her undergraduate studies and graduated in medicine in 1951 from Madras Medical College.

She completed her MD in General Medicine in 1957 and a two-year Diploma in Psychiatric Medicine from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS). She chose the harder and lesser-known path as she herself articulates in a *Times of India (TOI)* article of May 2013. "When I studied to be a doctor, the prevalent notion was that



Top left: Sarada Menon at her graduation



*Top right: With her sister and nephew
Mr. Haribhaskar IAS Retd.*



Below: With her brother Prof M.G.K. Menon



Right: With her husband Shri. Srikumara Menon IPS



Early years at IMH

mental disorders can't be cured completely, and psychiatry as a separate field of medical study found few takers."

Not long after she joined the Kilpauk Mental Hospital (now the Institute of Mental Health, IMH), she was promoted as the Superintendent in 1961 and to say that the era of psychosocial rehabilitation was born with this is no exaggeration. The hospital which only served as a custodial place for the mentally ill was slowly turned into a mental health centre through many far-reaching reforms initiated by her. She took the step of appointing for the first time professional social workers who were not only involved in the management of patients but also counselled the family members. "Working as a doctor I realised the need to rehabilitate these patients who were abandoned by their own families and looked down upon by society," she says. (TOI 2013)

Dr. Sarada Menon reiterates, "Even after being discharged from hospitals, these patients were treated as pariahs. Many of them lost their ability to communicate as no one was willing to talk to them. The challenge was to bring them on par with other persons in society. The rehabilitation programme restored the productivity of the patients. Once this was achieved, their families were more than willing to take them back." (TOI 2013)

Outpatient services which were hitherto not available were introduced, the Industrial Therapy Centre was started, which has now grown into a large set-up with several units employing many who were on the road to recovery. Patients were exposed to a more open and therapeutic milieu and encouraged to participate in group therapy, recreational activities and individual counselling.

Dr. Menon was also responsible for starting postgraduate courses in Psychological Medicine. She lobbied with the Tamil Nadu Government to establish psychiatric clinics in all the headquarters hospitals of every district in Tamil Nadu.



Inauguration of the new block of Institute of Mental Health



With Dr. O. Somasundaram, Former Director IMH and Dr. Nambi



Top right: With Dr. M.S. Valiathan

Below: With the Prince of Arcot



Top: With Late Prof A. Venkoba Rao

Below: With Mrs. C.K. Gariyali

Below right: With Dr. B. Saraceno (WHO)



A Legend in Indian Psychiatry; Mother of Psychiatry in Tamil Nadu



My association with Madam Dr. Sarada Menon began in 1976, when I was a Psychiatry resident in Stanley Medical College. As suggested by Professor M. Vaidyalingam, I used to attend all the guest lectures and clinical meetings at IMH by the senior psychiatrists and always found Madam to be an excellent teacher in Clinical Psychiatry. She is an astute clinician, a fine researcher, a teacher par excellence, a perfectionist, and above all an excellent human being. She is a great administrator and knows the art of extracting work from the correct person who is deemed fit for the work.

"Ithanaithanal ivanmudikkum enruaayn-thu athanai avanakan vidal" – Thirukkural.

(Select a person with appropriate skills to tackle a job, and entrust it to them for efficient management).

In 1978, she expressed to me her desire to have a memorable Christmas celebration before she retired. I organised a grand event with the help of a church in Royapettah when we erected seven stages with a wonderful sound and light programme. No event before and after this has been on such a scale and I fondly remember Madam's appreciation even today.

In 1982, when I was a final year MD Psychiatry student, I was actively involved in the ANCIPS conference in Chennai. Madam was the organising committee Chairman and Dr. O. Somasundaram was

the Secretary. Just a week before the event, a crisis developed when the Chief Guest expressed his inability to attend the event. Using my links with Mr. K.T. Kosalram (MP) and State Minister Mr. R.V. Swaminathan, I was able to arrange for Mr. Kalra, the then Union State Minister for Health as the Chief Guest. I did all this so that Madam and Dr. O. Somasundaram did not feel let down.

For decades after her retirement, she was interested in the activities of IMH and guided the administrators to improve the care of the inpatients of the Institute. During my tenure as Deputy Superintendent of IMH, we needed additional funds for the diet of patients. It was Madam who came to our rescue, took me to the Secretariat to meet the then Finance and Health Secretary. In a few days, we received the orders for additional funds.

I appreciate that her inter-personal relationship with bureaucrats and ministers were utilised only for the improvement of the hospital and never for her personal gain. Prof. Anbazhagan, the former DMK Health Minister had great respect for her selfless work.

Madam was instrumental in starting the first half-way home for mentally ill women in South India called 'Navajeevan' in collaboration with YWCA, Chennai.

I am proud to say that through my close association with Professor Rajasekaran, then chairman of the National Board of Examinations, the 'Dr. Sarada Menon Gold Medal' was instituted for the best student in Psychiatry. The fund was collected by me and Dr. Thara of SCARF. And the first gold medal in Psychiatry was awarded to Dr. Yamini Kanappan a DNB product of SCARF!

SCARF is Madam's brainchild, which is well-nurtured by Dr. Thara and is now an internationally acclaimed NGO.

My wife Dr. Shanthi Nambi and I have been very fortunate in getting her continuous guidance even to this day.

During my association with Madam for more than four decades, I observe the following:

"Simple chronological ageing is not a deterrent in Madam's relentless pursuit of excellence."

Dr. S. Nambi,

Former Professor IMH, Chennai



Inauguration of SCARF, 1984

The next most significant phase of her life was the founding of SCARF India in 1984. Her brilliant vision envisaged a meaningful programme of psychosocial rehabilitation in a non-governmental setting which she believed would be less stigmatised. SCARF identified three main objectives of care and rehabilitation, research and training and awareness and pursued them relentlessly as the other sections of the book reveal. In the early years of SCARF, she was dogged in her pursuit of getting land for all the centres—and creating the required infrastructure Without her credibility and reputation, this would not have been possible.

The most outstanding contribution of Dr. Menon has been at the level of influencing National Policy. She worked hard for the official recognition of disability caused by mental disorders, for reforms in jails which housed many mentally ill persons and improved conditions of hospitals. She still feels that more needs to be done. “There is more awareness of the subject and better drugs are available today, but psychosocial factors like the high



With late President Dr. Abdul Kalam at the 20th Anniversary celebrations, 2004

expectations of a fast-paced society and heightened societal pressure has led to an increase in mental ailments.” (TOI 2013).

Her humanitarian concern for the families of the patients saw the founding of AASHA, a support group for families. She is a teacher and mentor par excellence and has guided many students. She held key positions in the Red Cross and was primarily responsible for the work on cyclone shelters during the 70s. Mobile dispensaries to rural areas were started and programmes in disaster preparedness were conducted under her supervision. She has been involved with several NGOs such as Navjeevan, Asha Niketan, Ramachandra Medical College and the T.T. Ranganathan Clinical Research Foundation.

Dr. Menon’s contribution to psychiatric rehabilitation has won her wide acclaim all over the world. She was responsible for starting the Indian chapter of the World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation (WAPR) of which she is the Hon. Life President.



Facing page: An enthusiastic cook

Above: With the founders of Anbagam (bottom left) watching a webinar and (bottom right) with Dr. V. Shanta, Cancer Institute



Laying the foundation stone for SCARF building by Late CM, Dr. J. Jayalalithaa, 1996

As a fitting tribute to all her accomplishments, several awards have come her way, the most noteworthy being the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India in 1992. And more recently the Avvaiyar Award personally handed over by the late Chief Minister Dr. J. Jayalalithaa. Her compassion, her human touch, and her ability to motivate and inspire people have led to sterling achievements that she accepts with great humility. But she does not rest on her laurels as she emphasises, “The goal I set myself has not been reached. I have yet to establish that people with mental disorders can live a normal life.” She has been a tour de force in the rehabilitation of the mentally ill and there are happy families everywhere that owe her a debt of gratitude for the enduring legacy of her life and her work that has been “strong in will—to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.”



With her nephews Dr. Jayakumar Menon (above) and Mr. Hari Vasudevan (below)

A Tribute to Dr. Sarada Menon



It gives me great pleasure to write a few lines about a Doyen in the field of mental health in India, Dr. Sarada Menon. I am privileged to have known Dr. Sarada Menon from my childhood as she was closely associated with my father, Dr. M. Vishwanathan. Dr. Sarada Menon's contribution to medicine in general and psychiatry and mental health in particular are legendary and the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) is her dream project. Dr. Sarada Menon is a teacher of teachers and has mentored hundreds of excellent doctors who have gone on to become leaders in their own right. A good example of this is Dr. R. Thara who is presently the Vice-Chairman.

On the personal level, I have found Dr. Sarada Menon to be extremely humble, loving and caring. When I received the Padma Shri, she visited me despite her age to felicitate me personally. I was amazed when she remembered my birthday, year after year and she sent me birthday greetings. Legends like Dr. Sarada Menon are rarely seen and Indian Psychiatry owes a lot to this great person. I am happy that a few years ago, when we honoured several of our teachers who were above 90 years of age, Dr. Sarada Menon was one of the prominent recipients of the award. Madam also encouraged us to work on diabetes and depression and diabetes and schizophrenia. I wish to salute you Madam for your pioneering work and wish you many more years of happy, healthy and productive life.

Finally, I wish to congratulate Dr. Thara and colleagues for bringing out this publication of SCARF history and dedicating it to Dr. Sarada Menon. This indeed is a richly-deserved tribute!

Dr. V. Mohan

Chairman and Chief Diabetologist, Dr. Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre

A Tribute to Dr. Sarada Menon



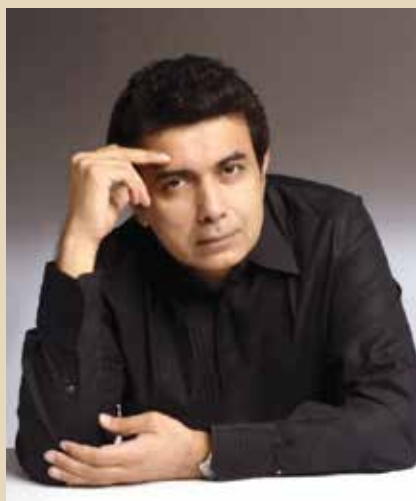
Dr. Sarada Menon, a symbol of compassion, selflessness, collaborative work, determination, resilience and commitment has been one of our role models since we were students. Very inspired by this larger than life figure and Mr. Vidyakar, the founder of Udavum Karangal, we set out to found The Banyan. Infants in this space, we were overwhelmed by her graciousness and humility. Contributions that she has made to the mental health sector, be it her continued engagement with service users or her foray into research and her sharp and dynamic entrepreneurial capability in setting up the Schizophrenia Research Foundation with Dr. Thara Rangaswamy, is inspirational, to say the least. As much as she led from the front, equally, she built a sustainable organisation, therefore empowering her team to take over the reins as she played the role of a mentor.

More than anything else, she exuded kindness and warmth in all that she did. Our *salaams* to her for her wisdom, leadership, a whole lifetime of service and hard work and most of all, for placing mental health on the national map, early on.

Vandana Gopikumar and Vaishnavi Jayakumar

Co- Founders, The Banyan and The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health

Dr Sarada Menon, a Guru & SCARF, a Temple of Higher Learning



Dr. Sarada Menon was a legend in our family, she was seen as a trailblazer, a doctor, a scholar, a graceful aunt, a pioneer in the field of Psychiatry in Chennai. As youngsters we approached her with reverence and trepidation, at family functions, we imagined that by looking into our eyes, she would magically hypnotise us and know everything that was lurking in the recesses of our minds.

I met Dr. Menon formally around 1988, when I was grieving the untimely suicide of a young friend. She was warm, affectionate and caring, and explained to me that the young are vulnerable and don't seek professional psychiatric help. She spoke passionately about her interest in the field of Psychiatry and her dream of creating a world-class mental health facility in Chennai. She was appalled by the misinformation being peddled by some feature films, and asked me to do something about the rampant ignorance amongst young people about mental illness. So I set out to make a documentary 'Understanding Schizophrenia'.

Dr. Menon was completely capable of playing multiple roles—clinician, administrator, and a mentor to a number of young dedicated doctors.

The missionary zeal with which great institutions are built also meant having a solid succession plan to carry forward the legacy. Dr. Thara and Dr. Sarada Menon shared a strong bond and this resulted in smooth transition in the leadership.

Rajiv Menon

Cinematographer and Producer

A Mentor to AASHA



Dr. Sarada Menon and SCARF have played a pivotal role in my journey as a caregiver and participant in the mental health sector. I met Dr. Menon in 1987 along with my brother who seemed to be displaying symptoms of mental illness—at that time I had no understanding of what schizophrenia was. She patiently explained the diagnosis, symptoms, treatment and what lay on the road ahead for us.

Dr. Sarada Menon strongly believes in the involvement and empowerment of families in the rehabilitation and recovery of people with mental illness. While my brother was getting treatment at SCARF, Dr. Sarada Menon urged families like myself to form a caregivers group and AASHA was conceptualised. Thus, AASHA was formed under her leadership on the premises of SCARF. AASHA was the first family movement in India, begun in 1989. We eventually moved out and started a residential rehabilitation home and focused on employment as a means of rehabilitation for persons with mental illness. Over the last three decades, many service users from SCARF have been employed in AASHA's employment projects.

Dr. Sarada Menon is a mentor and mother to the families and service users of AASHA. She has been our guide and inspiration through her commitment to mental health and rehabilitation of individuals with mental illness.

Ratna Chibber

Managing Director

www.kromatiks.com



SECTION 2

Taking Firm Root

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Chapter 3

Mental Healthcare in India—Historical Overview

Free-floating clouds, birds that soar into the sky, butterflies that flit amongst the flowers, are images that make us want to escape the restraints of mundane reality. We wish fervently that we can cut loose from our moorings and drift into the ether. To many it remains a dream but for some others there is a snap with reality that leads them into a state of mind which may be diagnosed as a mental health condition. Louise Gillett when first told about her diagnosis with schizophrenia, this is what she laments in her memoir, *Surviving Schizophrenia: A Memoir*, “I am very scared. I am a freak, a social outcast. I am an unknown quantity. A manic. A schizophrenic.”

Towards the end of the memoir, she emerges whole and healed, a beacon of hope to all those in similar situations. She writes, “I am complete now. I have been out of hospital and free from medication for many years, and I attribute this to the fact that I finally feel fulfilled in life, secure and loved. And so, at last I possess the one thing that I have always wanted above all else, the thing that has eluded for the longest time. I have peace of mind.” The memoir also talks about the stigma around the diagnosis of schizophrenia which can pose many kinds of problems.

In today’s society, one cannot underestimate the importance of mental health. The WHO India website describes succinctly, “Mental health is an integral part of health and is more than the absence of mental illnesses. Interventions, focusing on raising awareness of mental health issues and mobilising efforts in support of mental health, are necessary for addressing the situation.”

In order to close the mental health gap and get more people to seek treatment, a concerted effort of Government, private sector and NGOs is critical. It is in this scenario that the work done by the Schizophrenia Research Foundation of India (SCARF) in Chennai is noteworthy

Institutions for the mentally ill in India have had a long history. Termed as “lunatic asylums”, the first one in Bombay can be traced back to 1745. Subsequently, few more were established in Kilpauk, Chennai in 1794, Monghyr, Bihar in 1795 and in Calcutta in 1787. Their sole purpose was to isolate the mentally ill from mainstream society. Significant and long-lasting reforms happened only after Independence when mental health became a part of the national health programmes and important milestones were achieved over the decades. An article titled, ‘History of Psychiatry in India’ by S.R. Parkar, et al states, “One of the earliest Indian Psychiatrists to explain the importance of health was Govindaswamy in 1948. He gave three objectives of mental health—regaining of the health of mentally ill persons; prevention of mental illness in a vulnerable individual; and protection and development at all levels, of human society, of secure, affectionate and satisfying human relationships and in the reduction of hostile tensions in persons and groups.”

The All India Institute of Mental Health was set up in 1954 in Bangalore, which became the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) in 1974. The WHO too, set up an expert committee in 1974 and gave several recommendations to give mental disorders a high-priority status. In 1975, the first community mental health unit (CMHU) was set up. The National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) was launched in 1982 with the primary objective of integrating mental health care with primary care.

Further to this, over the years radical changes were made to the programme. R. Srinivasa Murthy, in his article in *The National Medical Journal of India* Vol. 24, No. 2, 2011, summarises the revisions, “After an in-depth situation analysis and extensive consultations with various stakeholders, the NMHP underwent radical restructuring aimed at striking a judicious balance between various components of the mental health care delivery system, with clearly specified budgetary allocations. After being approved at all levels, including by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the re-strategised NMHP was formally launched at a national workshop on 22 October 2003.”

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2013) recognised the need for manpower development, improved training facilities, removal of stigma and integration of patients into the community. The District Mental Health Programme

(DMPH) was given an impetus so that the mental hospitals had less demands on them and the patients did not have to travel great distances for treatment.

A few significant developments in the last decade have been

1. In the last two decades, the National Human Rights Commission has expressed a lot of interest in the working of mental hospitals, and after a careful study found gross violations of all sorts in some of them. Appropriate recommendations were made for immediate corrective measures.
2. For the first time, India developed and released a Mental Health Policy in 2014 which was accompanied by a mental health action plan for the next one year. The aim was to provide access to good quality treatment to mentally ill people, especially those living in poverty.
3. The Mental Health Care Act was passed in 2017 and came into force in 2018. Right to treatment for all, right of patient to decide on the type of care, and decriminalisation of suicide were some of the cardinal features of this Act.
4. The first ever National Mental Health Survey was conducted by NIMHANS and the Central Health Ministry in 2019 and reported on the prevalence, patterns and outcome of several mental disorders.

In order to close the mental health gap and get more people to seek treatment, a concerted effort of Government, private sector and NGOs is critical. It is in this scenario that the work done by the Schizophrenia Research Foundation of India (SCARF) in Chennai is noteworthy.

Today, SCARF is a premier institution in the treatment and rehabilitation of mentally ill persons and in path-breaking research in schizophrenia and other mental disorders. Its success stories are many, its impact on patients and families is significant and the succour it offers the mentally ill deserves recognition.

Today, SCARF is a premier institution in the treatment and rehabilitation of mentally ill persons and in path-breaking research in schizophrenia and other mental disorders

Chapter 4

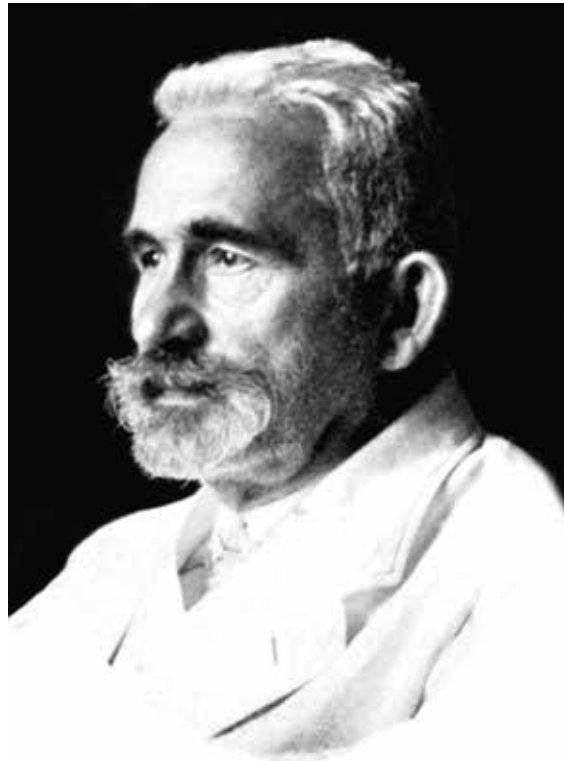
History of Schizophrenia

The oldest description of schizophrenia is said to date back to the Bible and Ebers Papyrus of Egypt but the illness as a separate entity has been described since mid 1800s. In 1887, Emil Kraepelin from Germany described the deterioration in the illness as irreversible and called it dementia praecox (early dementia).

As the illness did not always lead to mental deterioration, in 1911, Eugene Bleuler also from Germany, coined the term 'schizophrenia' which has



Kilpauk Mental Hospital, Madras



Emil Kraepelin

Greek roots. *Schizo* (split) and *phrene* (mind), to describe the fragmented thinking of people with the disorder. This term was not meant to convey the idea of split or multiple personality, a common misunderstanding amongst the public at large.

Schizophrenia has been subdivided into types based on symptoms, illness, progress over time, etc., but these demarcations have not been very reliable.

Emil Kraepelin was one of the first to describe schizophrenia as a brain disease and research over several decades has confirmed this with identification of brain chemicals (neurotransmitters like dopamine, glutamate), genetic factors and brain changes using brain imaging. But we are still far from having a clear understanding of what causes schizophrenia.

Arrival of chlorpromazine in the 1950s set the scene for antipsychotic medications. Since then several antipsychotics have arrived to help in the management

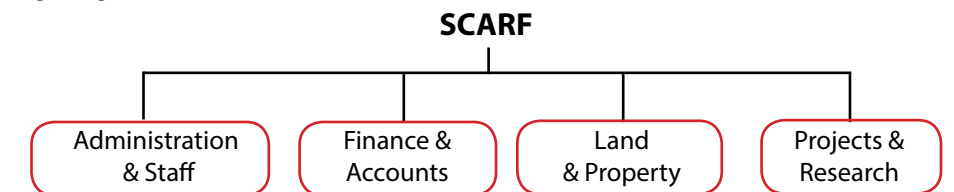
of schizophrenia. Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is another important treatment that has helped in reducing symptoms when it does not respond to medications or is severe enough to disrupt a person's life. There are other promising treatment options called neuromodulation (where the nerves are stimulated using electric current or chemical agents) being studied.

As people with schizophrenia were increasingly discharged from institutions back into the community, the field of psychosocial rehabilitation emerged as an important treatment practice. A recovery model with the need to promote people's abilities to overcome their disability and lead a meaningful life has become the driving principle of services since the 1970s. Structured treatments have been explored and tested to help people in this regard.

Chapter 5

Early Years – Tentative Steps

The early years of SCARF were an adventure and a challenge. Since the objectives had been laid down, each of them required planning and implementation which meant finding the resources. Resources required in turn were financial—funds for creating infrastructure and for day-to-day operations and human resources. Staff had to be engaged for clinical and research work, for administration and accounts, volunteers, friends to help with fundraising, awareness, networking with the media and so on. Mr. Habibullah Badsha, Board Member's encouraging words, gave a boost to the nascent organisation. "We should convince many people to give Rs 200-500 per month for a few years." He initiated it by giving a sum himself.



There were only a handful of people to do all of this. The significant role played by the Founder Members must be acknowledged here. Members and others like Prof. M.G.K. Menon and Mr. P.N. Nagraj of Harrisons hosted many of the early meetings.

At the first office in Nungambakkam, there was a small Outpatient Department (OPD) and a day care programme. The first two staff were Dr. Shalini Kurup and Ms. Latha Srinivasan. Unlike now, when staff have clear roles and responsibilities, the staff at that time were sometimes staring

into a vacuum and at other times deluged by work they had never dreamt to do. Some of the early staff have recorded their memories. Below are Latha's reminiscences of the early days.

My heart speaks: The SCARF Experience



Latha Srinivasan

In 1984, with an MPhil in Psychology, I was very excited on being hired as the first employee of SCARF. The monthly salary was Rs. 600. My boss was Dr. Sarada Menon, who evinced in me then and even now a combination of respect, pride, and fear. I was cautioned that she would expect us to be punctual, serious, very committed and, also wear only cotton sarees!

I worked with SCARF as a clinical psychologist from 1982 to 2005. In the beginning there were just three of us—a psychiatrist, Dr. Shalini, an administrative officer Mr. Raju and me. The office was a small apartment in Nungambakkam. Those were hard times. SCARF was trying to establish itself and get known. Not a day went by without us going from door to door seeking

donations and support for SCARF. Doors were shut on us rudely which was disappointing and painful to us. But seeing Madam go through it all with courage and determination made our pain seem trivial. But such experiences were compensated by small and big donations from good-hearted and knowledgeable people. The rent of the office, our salaries and the office furniture were all sponsored.

I remember the three of us would sit in our office anxiously waiting for the first client. Those days, people hesitated a lot to seek psychiatric consultation. Our happiness knew no bounds when the first client walked in after a month or so.

When we started the clinic, we would have free time as clients were only trickling in. To keep us company, we would play with the house owner's Pomeranian; it helped to relieve the stress of underactivity. The idea of a Companion Dog was invented by us then itself! But as soon as the watchman

indicated Madam's car was driving in, we would hurriedly deposit the dog back with the landlord and return to the office, looking serious.

Work ethic was strong. Madam was a stickler for punctuality. Many a time I would skip breakfast to reach office on time. We did not think that "this is my job, that is your job" or "I am not paid to do that job". Everyone was ready to and did everything they could.

When I got my first month's salary of Rs. 600, sponsored by a clothing retailer in the city, I felt I was the richest woman around. But when I got an increment of Rs. 200 after one year, I felt guilty about taking that additional money. It was not just the salary that motivated us to work, but the untiring efforts of members of the Board and some volunteers who worked hard to raise funds and create infrastructure for SCARF.

SCARF personally gave me a perfect blend of different kinds of experiences—speaking at public awareness programmes, presenting at conferences, addressing students, doctors, Rotary clubs, rural population or talking on television.

SCARF organised for me to train with Dr. Michael Green at the UCLA, Los Angeles on neuro-psychology. The experience was very enriching and motivated me to do my PhD on the subject. My training with Dr. Shobini Rao at NIMHANS Bangalore, incited interest in cognitive retraining for people affected by schizophrenia which is a part of their rehabilitation. With this, I was able to start in a modest way psychological services at SCARF. My highly satisfying work with tsunami victims was my last assignment at SCARF.

I fondly remember several colleagues I worked with at SCARF and am in touch with some of them even now. It was a family. There were hierarchies but no egos. There were rules but no bureaucracy. There were responsibilities but no burden. Every rupee was valuable, and every ounce of effort was recognised as valuable for the growth of SCARF. My connections with SCARF and people I worked with are everlasting.

Latha Srinivasan

Psychologist and the first employee of SCARF, now in Australia

* * *

SCARF organised for me to train with Dr. Michael Green at the UCLA, Los Angeles on neuro-psychology. The experience was very enriching and motivated me to do my PhD on the subject

Dr. Menon and Mr. Raju, the administrative officer, were busy finding the land and resources for it, which will be elaborated later.

Research activities had to be started simultaneously and this was no easy task. It was necessary to have a good team of persons who were interested in research and could also establish links with agencies in India and abroad to further the ideas of SCARF.

* * *

One such person was Dr. Vijay Nagaswami who is now an established author and a relationship consultant. Vijay has this to say:

The Summer of '84

1984! What a year it was! At least for some of us!



Dr. Vijay Nagaswami

And not for Orwellian reasons at all, if you're wondering.

Personally, some of my excitement in 1984 came from my having qualified as a psychiatrist. But mostly it was because of the launch of SCARF, the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (India) in February 1984.

Looking back, more than three and a half decades later, the summer of '84 and the next few years too, seem like a blur. The brainchild and long-nurtured dream of Dr. Sarada Menon (then, now and forevermore referred to only as "Madam"), shared and structured by Dr. S. Rajkumar and Dr. R. Thara, and enthusiastically supported by a whole legion of well-wishers, all movers and shakers in their own respective fields, none of us ever doubted that what we were

setting out to do was achievable, even if it meant a lot of hard work.

A sustainable facility for persons with severe mental disorders in the not-for-profit sector was considered a wild dream, improbable to realise. Many had written us off. They had reckoned without Madam's indefatigability, single-minded doggedness, and capacity to find and enthuse others around her to give of their best in this pursuit of 'a better future for the mentally ill'.

The brainchild and long-nurtured dream of Dr. Sarada Menon (then, now and forevermore referred to only as "Madam"), shared and structured by Dr. S. Rajkumar and Dr. R. Thara, and enthusiastically supported by a whole legion of well-wishers, all movers and shakers in their own respective fields, none of us ever doubted that what we were setting out to do was achievable, even if it meant a lot of hard work

But it took a lot of doing, and everyone associated with SCARF in its foundational days, brought all their energies and enthusiasm to the table. None of us was trained to do what we ended up doing for the first couple of years. But no one complained. The little apartment in Kumarappa Mudali Street was filling up rapidly. We had established a small rehab centre for a handful of patients who needed it, but we were only too aware that we had not even scratched the surface. We needed space. And for this, we needed more money.

All of us multi-tasked. For the first year or two, almost everyone was involved in creative fundraising. And despite some near mishaps (like a donated photocopier almost chewing up the original certificate of tax exemption under Sec 35 (1)(ii) of the Income Tax Act which would have created a serious dent in our fundraising efforts), we managed to pull off some coups (like the charity première of the film, *A Passage to India*) and raise enough funds to not only keep us running, but actively expand.

Soon, Madam found us much larger premises at C-46, Anna Nagar and we were able to pursue our goals of Rehabilitation, Research and Public Education in right earnest. By this time, we were all doing more specialised work that involved less multi-tasking, egged on by those relentless little task lists she would send to each of us on a daily basis.

I was part of the research stream at SCARF and between writing proposals, was involved in a few research studies: Rehabilitation Needs of Schizophrenic Patients, Social Networks in Schizophrenia (funded by the Curzon Seshachalam Foundation) and Social Disabilities in Schizophrenia (funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research), among others. A little before this, in her wisdom, Madam had sent a couple of us to NIMHANS for training in Community Psychiatry, which set the stage for the development of the Thiruporur Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) project that was to become, at the time, one of SCARF's key and highly visible programmes.

Soon thereafter, I moved on from SCARF to pursue other endeavours, but looking back, I realise what a substantial role the organisation played in making me a well-rounded mental health professional, for which I am

deeply grateful. Looking back, I also congratulate myself for having made an excellent decision in the Summer of '84 to link my lot with a fledgling dream that went on to become such a larger-than-life reality.

Vijay Nagaswami, *Psychiatrist*

* * *

The research activities received a fillip with some projects described by Vijay Nagaswami and the possibility of having a collaboration with Johns Hopkins University which proved to be a forerunner for many more international collaborations. In 1985, ICMR gave SCARF the first research project to work on children of persons with schizophrenia which was co-ordinated by Dr. Valsa Koshy.

B.V.S.S. Mani, Donor and, Nandagopal and Kothandaraman of Vivek & Co, pitched in to sponsor a research fellowship for a year.

Rehabilitation was begun with OP patients and those attending day care. In early 1985, SCARF was permitted to take over the Industrial Therapy

Centre and the newlyappointed P.S.W. Bernard Jacob was given charge of it. This association however did not continue for long. Drama therapy was started by Dr. Rudhran, Psychiatrist, and Ramesh.

Creation of awareness on schizophrenia and SCARF was an equally important agenda. In late 1984, Doordarshan approved a script on schizophrenia and Dr. Rudhran worked on it with Mr. Ajit Patel of Torino sponsoring it with a donation of Rs. 15,000.

Fundraising received a big impetus when Mr. Manohar Chugg of Dass Media Pvt. Ltd. offered the première of the film *A Passage to India*. It was decided to bring out a souvenir for which the late IPS officer Balachander Nair, known as Bobby to all at SCARF rendered substantial help.



Vice-President Shri M. Hidayatullah became SCARF's Patron-in-Chief, 1986

A group of enthusiastic women—Mrs. Bimla Bhatla, Mrs. Hemdev (late) and Ms. Viji Valecha put together a fun fair at AVM Mandapam. This was a well-attended event and raised close to Rs. 1.5 lakhs for SCARF.

SCARF's image received a boost when Vice-President Shri Hidayatullah agreed to be SCARF's Patron-in Chief.

In 1987, for the first time, on Mr. M.A. Vellodi's insistence, scales of pay were decided upon as well as some benefits like Provident Fund for the staff who were truly underpaid.

The very first Annual General Body meeting was held in July 1986 and a target of Rs. 2 lakhs was decided upon to raise during that year.

Help Age India which proved to be a constant source of support for SCARF donated a van in 1987.

Even in 1987, SCARF received the first of many such requests to start a branch of SCARF in Calcutta. But since SCARF was just finding its feet, the members had to decline this request.

These and many other activities reflect the early journey of SCARF in its multipronged efforts to raise resources, begin and consolidate activities and earn an image of a credible mental health organisation which is close to the population it serves. Though still patchy and a bit disorganised in structure and functioning, the passion and commitment helped the founders and staff to overcome all early obstacles and pave the way for a much smoother path in the coming years. SCARF salutes its early warriors.

SCARF's image received a boost when Vice-President Shri Hidayatullah agreed to be SCARF's Patron-in-Chief

Our Donors

Although SCARF has never had the magic donor we hear about, who gives a few million dollars at one stroke, we have been fortunate to have companies, individuals and Government to offer us support.

Government

- Annual grant from Tamil Nadu Government
- For the SMCS building from Central Govt under Swadhar scheme

Corporates/ Companies

- TVS Group: Sundaram Finance, Brakes India, Sundaram Motors, Sundaram Paribas, Royal Sundaram Alliance Insurance
- Sundram Fasteners Pvt. Ltd.
- Shriram Group
- The Hindu Group
- IDBI
- Indian Bank, SBI
- De Penning and De Penning
- Dynamic Computers
- Basic Engineers and Traders
- Tata Iron & Steel Company Limited
- Indian Oil Corp. Ltd.
- HDFC Ltd.
- Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.
- Megatrends Inc.
- CMS Pay Turbo Energy Private Ltd.
- Ramco Cements Limited
- ABI Showatech (India) Limited
- Khivraj Foundation
- Cavincare Pvt. Ltd.
- Heat and Control (South Asia)

Trusts/ Service Organisations

- TATA Trust

- Infosys Foundation
- Help Age India
- Madras Round Table 1
- Sarita Jain Trust (Ms Radhika Jain)
- SKDJ Trust
- Sri Durgambal Charitable Trust (Ms Kiran)
- Sri Venkateswara Trust
- Brig. G.V. Ramani Memorial Trust
- Shree Sarita Jain Foundation Trust
- Saraswathi Educational Cultural Charitable Trust
- Moolchand Chandiram Charitable Trust
- Shree Gayethri Trust
- Murugappa Educational and Medical Foundation
- Music Lovers Chennai
- Global Adjustments Foundation
- Aasha Charity, UK
- Chatnath Trust

For Land/ Buildings

- Devi Karumari Amman Temple Trust: For Bhavishya Bhavan land (on long lease)
- Sri Sankaracharya Kanchi Mutt: Mahabalipuram land on long lease
- Government of Tamil Nadu: Land in Anna Nagar West
- Mr Damodaran: Land in Tambaram for Dementia Centre—GIFT
- Justice Anita Sumant: Apartment on Graemes Road, on lease

SCARF is grateful to its numerous benefactors and well-wishers, some of whom are listed below.

Individuals

- Mr. Ajit C. Patel
- Mr. Ashok Vellodi
- Mr. Balaguruvaiah
- Mr K.R. Baliga (late)
- Mr. Bhaskar Menon
- Mr. Bhasker Shah
- Ms. Chellammal Narayanaswamy
- Mrs. V. Chellam Sundaram
- Mr. Chetan Chadha
- Mr. A. Damodaran
- Mr. A.M. Ganaprakasam
- Mr. A.V. Ganesan
- Shri. T.V. Gopalakrishnan
- Ms. Harini Rajaraman
- Ms. P.R. Jayasree
- Mr. Jeyaraman Rangan
- Mr. R. Kannan
- Mr. S. Kannan
- Mr. S. Krishnamurthy
- Mr. R. Kuppuswamy
- Mr. S. Lakshminarayana Moorthy
- Mr. Lal Mangaram
- Mrs. Madhu Parasuraman
- Mr. Mahadevan
- Mr. V. Mahaveerchand Jain
- Ms. Mallika Das
- Ms. Mala Vasudevan
- The Manian Family
- Mrs. Manonmani Rangaswamy
- Mr. K.B. Nambiar
- Mr. J. Narasimhan
- Mr. G. Narayanan
- Mr. C.J. Nayak
- Mr. R. Thiagarajan
- Ms. K. Padmavathy
- Dr. R. Parvatham
- Mrs. Parvathi Thampi
- Mr. Prasanna Parameshwaran
- Mrs. C. Prema Kumar
- Ms. Radha Sunder
- Mr. Rajaraman Krishnan
- Mr. Rajeev Ganesh
- Mr. Raj Kumar Menon
- Mr. R. Rajagopalan
- Mr. C.N. Ram
- Mr P.B. Ramanujam
- Mr. S. Ranganathan
- Ms. G. Rukmani
- Dr. M. Sarada Menon
- Dr. R. Sathiyabhama
- Mr. R. Seshasayee
- Ms. Shilpa Patel
- Mr. Shiv Chand Dalmia
- Mr. N. Sivakumar
- Ms. Shobana Ramchandran
- Mr. Srikant Mehta
- Mrs. Sujatha Raju, B. Raju
- Mr. & Mrs. V.T. Somasundaram
- Ms. B. Sreelakshmi
- Mr. C.S. Sridharan
- Mr. R. Subramanyam
- Mr. N. Sugal Chand Jain and Mr. G.N. Damani
- Mr. Sundarajan Marga Bandhu
- Mr. Suresh Kumar Agarwal
- Mr. P. Swaminathan
- Mr. P. Varadarajan
- Mr. S. Vasudevan
- Mr. M.A. Vellodi (Late)
- Ms. K. Vidhyutha

with gratitude



I am delighted to learn that SCARF is bringing out a publication as a dedication to its legendary founder, the eminent psychiatrist Dr. Sarada Menon. Over the years, SCARF has carried out high quality work in a particularly difficult area of working with persons with mental disorders. The multi-disciplinary team, working both in rural and urban areas has introduced a lot of innovations like the use of mobile tele-psychiatry. SCARF has also gained a lot of credibility in the international research scene.

The Sundaram Finance Group has been associated with SCARF for several years, supporting some of their important programmes.

I wish SCARF the strength and determination to continue their good work, which would be a fitting tribute to their visionary founder.

T.T. Srinivasa Raghavan

M.D., Sundaram Finance

The TVS Group of Companies has been one of our major donors



Begun in the eighth decade of the last century, the Schizophrenia Research Foundation was started with a powerful vision to fill a critical void in mental health care service delivery, research and training of professionals specially in the arena of severe mental disorders. The TATA Trust has journeyed with SCARF since the early days of its inception and more significantly from 2009 when SCARF took tele-psychiatry to scale, reaching villages with no prior access to mental health services. Breaking yet another glass ceiling, SCARF brought together varied partnerships to bring care to people, riding on a bus. This is the innovative twist to tele-psychiatry where the service moved from village to village.

In doing so the programme connected the dots with government service providers, other NGOs and important stakeholders from the community, training lay community members as frontline mental health care workers. SCARF has also been an important partner to the TATA Trust's work in Nagpur, both in developing a scaled community mental health model for the District Mental Health Programme of Nagpur as well as a clinical partner in the reform of the colonial era Regional Mental Hospital of Nagpur. We are indeed proud of this partnership with a visionary organisation that has traversed many a barrier in making a significant difference to thousands of people living with debilitating mental illnesses.

Ms Tasneem Raja

Lead, Mental Health

The TATA Trust well known for their philanthropy have supported SCARF in many ways for the last 15 years. The most notable outcome of this collaboration has been the STEP Mobile tele-psychiatry project.

with gratitude



Schizophrenia is an affliction which disrupts normal mental functions in a person and can be a lifelong ailment, at least till today... Sadly, it is also widespread with about 12 million persons suffering from schizophrenia in India. But there are very few psychiatrists and other mental health professionals in India to take care of this massive problem. There is hardly any private investment in hospitals for treating and caring for schizophrenia.

In this tough and daunting environment, Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) has been, for over 30 years now, trying to care for and to rehabilitate mentally disabled persons and to do research in schizophrenia. They have recently expanded into the educational field, helping to create many more mental health professionals.

SCARF has grown so far, thanks to some public-spirited philanthropists. But lot more funds are needed for future work. Though SCARF also conducts awareness programmes, they should target business houses and potential donors. We all need to encourage, support and share the burden of those engaged in this daunting task in SCARF.

I am happy SCARF is planning to bring out a book recounting the history of SCARF. I take the opportunity through this book to thank the SCARF team for all that they have done and are doing in this area and to wish them all the very best for the future.

R. Thyagarajan

Chairman, Shriram Group

The Shriram Group of Companies headed by Shri Thyagarajan have been of great support to SCARF for many of our programmes

with gratitude

with gratitude



I am an entrepreneur of The Jute Palace, Chennai, and have given job opportunities to around 25 persons with mental illness from SCARF, for more than 11 years.

Most of them are very sincere, obedient, trustworthy, well-qualified and ready to work at competitive pay. But few are less confident at work, slow learners, irregular at work, and don't perform well. We have to give special attention to these candidates to train them properly. In the beginning, it was difficult to train them as they had less initiative, and irregular at work.

Around five candidates were initially trained and employed in our concern for more than a year and now they are well settled in other companies with good pay. Two persons have been regularly employed in our unit since one year and one person has reached management level and now is the manager of our unit. I wish to offer opportunities to more candidates from SCARF in the near future.

I would like to suggest that other employers too, employ these candidates for a higher social cause.

Kirubakaran

Owner, The Jute Palace, Chennai



SECTION 3

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Chapter 6

Land and Buildings

Dr. M. Sarada Menon, with grit and determination, took upon herself the task of approaching the State Government for land

Since SCARF's inception in 1984, one of the prime goals was to acquire a piece of land to build a comprehensive mental health centre with all modern trappings. The reality however, was pitifully different. SCARF was then functioning from a rented, modest 800 sq. ft two-bedroom apartment in Nungambakkam. The bank balance was even more modest. It took a couple of months even to acquire the telephone connection. It was decided that it would be very difficult if not impossible to raise funds needed to buy land and construct the building at the prevailing cost. It was therefore decided to approach the State Government for land, either as a donation or on long lease, and raise resources for construction.

A sub-committee consisting of few Board Members and enthusiastic, influential volunteers was formed. Dr. M. Sarada Menon, with grit and determination, took upon herself the task of approaching the State Government for land. Mr. Raju, Administrative Officer accompanied her on all her visits. Sites were shown, promises were made, GOs issued, only to end on a disappointing note. Dr. Sarada Menon took all this in her stride with a smile and continued the pursuit. It would require an entire chapter to describe her herculean efforts towards this objective and fulfilment.

During the 11 years from 1984 to 1995, Dr. Menon's phenomenal commitment and drive enabled the following gains for SCARF in terms of land and buildings:

One acre of land in Thiruverkadu, a suburb of Chennai on long and nominal lease from S.K.D.J. Trust for the construction of a residential



Governor Shri Bishma Narayan Singh inaugurating the Residential Block for Senior Citizens in 1992

centre for mentally ill women and elderly was granted. When completed during her tenure in 1990, this centre came to be known as 'Bhavishya Bhavan'. It was inaugurated in February 1992 by the Governor Shri Bishma Narayan Singh.

Three and a half acres of land by the seaside amidst absolutely sylvan surroundings in Mahabalipuram on a long and nominal lease from Sri Kanchi Sankaracharya Mutt was given for the construction of a residential centre for mentally ill men. Since Mr. Sugalchand Jain and his Trust were the main donors, Sri Sankaracharya named the centre as 'Bhagwan Mahaveer Manav Sanmarga Seva Kendra' in 1994. The other donors were Round Table 1 and the East West Centre. This started functioning from 1994.

The big prize however was the allotment of free land measuring six grounds from the Government of Tamil Nadu by the then Chief Minister Dr J. Jayalalithaa. This was in Anna Nagar West which was then not so populated. The CM also sanctioned a building grant of Rs.10 lakhs and laid the foundation stone herself on February 2, 1996.



Bhoomi pooja of *BMMSK Centre, Mahabalipuram*

Having quietly accomplished all this, Dr. Sarada Menon stepped down as Director on December 31, 1995, paving the way for the Joint Director Dr. R. Thara to assume leadership as full-time Director.

When Dr. Thara assumed charge, she faced the immense task of raising funds for the Centre at Anna Nagar West. SCARF had the piece of vacant land and around Rs.10 lakh in the building fund. Another Rs. 60 lakhs had to be raised for the construction and a timeline of three years was set. But happily, the task was accomplished well before that.

Mr. R. Bhaskar, an upcoming and experienced architect and the builder Karuppiyah & Sons helped SCARF source much of the material at discounted rates. Steel from Tata Steel, cement from Ramco Cements, light fittings from Philips India and ceiling fans from Crompton were all sourced at much lower costs. The unimaginable had happened and finally on February 1, 1998, SCARF moved into 10,800 sq. ft of its own premises in Anna Nagar West.



Gruhapravesam of *Anna Nagar Centre, 1998*

The unimaginable had happened and finally on February 1, 1998, SCARF moved into 10,800 sq. ft of its own premises in Anna Nagar West

Dr. Thara however did not rest on her laurels and soon perceived the need for an expansion. A state-of-the-art auditorium was critical for all the conferences and workshops. Her appeal to the M.K. Tata Memorial Trust in Mumbai was successful and so was born the fully air-conditioned, 100-seater M.K. Tata Memorial Auditorium inaugurated by the present Chairman Mr. Seshasayee in the year 2000. Needless to say, this enabled plenty of savings in resources and time while holding meetings and small conferences.

As time rolled by, the OPD at SCARF drew large crowds and further expansion seemed imminent. Dr. Thara's suggestion to add two more floors met with the Board's approval and then back to fundraising again! The credibility of SCARF as a centre of excellence and repute made the task a little easier. The Madhuram Narayanan Trust in Chennai announced the funding for an entire floor. Dr. Thara also suggested that in view of the growing demand for residential care, one more centre could be opened on the second floor and named after Dr. M. Sarada Menon. This was



Inauguration of the Sarada Menon Centre by the Health Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Thalavai Sundaram, 2003

widely welcomed and applauded. Construction began immediately and the 'Sarada Menon Centre for Schizophrenia Care' was declared open on August 4, 2003 by the then Health Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Thalavai Sundaram. This caters to persons who are more acutely ill and who need intensive rehabilitation inputs. The fourth and top floor was allotted to the vocational training centre and subsequently a day care facility for the dementia-affected elderly was also initiated.

Land and buildings constitute an important part of the growth of any organisation and SCARF was able to complete three centres in 20 years since inception, thanks largely to the efforts of Dr. Menon first and then Dr. Thara and all the benevolent funders and supporters including the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Chapter 7

Films, Fun and Funds: SCARF's Fundraising Stories

Various events like screening charity premières of much anticipated films, music concerts, fun fairs, charity dinners with celebrities, souvenir publications, sale of greeting cards during festivals, etc., were constantly discussed and conducted every year

Soon after the initial euphoria in establishing SCARF in 1984, the inevitable reality began to sink in, the need for sufficient and constant availability of resources to sustain the service activities. There was a vigorous membership drive with three categories of membership, life membership for individuals (Rs.1000), institutional membership for corporates (Rs. 5000), and donor membership for Rs. 10,000. A fundraising sub-committee consisting of few Board Members, staff and enthusiastic, influential volunteers was formed. Though the members of the committee kept changing over a period of time, the committee played a very significant and successful role in raising the resources to stabilise the organisation during the first two decades.

Various events like screening charity premières of much anticipated films, music concerts, fun fairs, charity dinners with celebrities, souvenir publications, sale of greeting cards during festivals, etc., were constantly discussed and conducted every year. SCARF even ran a canteen known as 'Akshaya' within the I.I.T. Madras campus for a few years and the venture was very successful. Presented below some of the major events over the years.

Charity première of the English film *A Passage to India*, Devi Theatre, 1985

The première of the English film *A Passage to India*, starring Victor Banerjee, Judy Davis and Peggy Ashcroft was possible due to the distributor's kind gesture and Devi Theatre giving it free for screening. SCARF even got sponsors to advertise the charity première. It was a sell-out on that



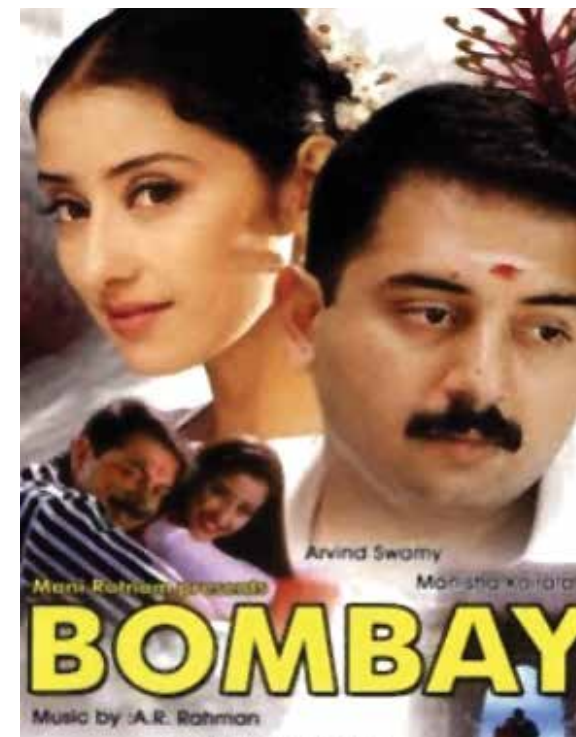
Victor Banerjee at screening of *A Passage to India*, 1985

Facing page: The posters of the films that were fund raisers for SCARF

Sunday morning in spite of the high rates of tickets. The highlight was the presence of the leading actor Mr. Victor Banerjee with his wife Maya during the show. Mr. Banerjee released the commemorative souvenir during the intermission. With practically no major expenses, the entire sale proceeds of the show together with a large number of advertisements in the souvenir brought the much-needed financial bonanza to the nascent organisation. This gave the experience and confidence to screen two more charity premières in later years that were similarly successful.

Charity première of the Tamil film, *Bombay*, Devi Paradise Theatre, March 1995

Exactly a decade after this, Mr. Maniratnam, Director, who became very popular with his Tamil film *Roja*, was planning the release of *Bombay*, the movie with new faces, a much-in-demand music director and a brilliant cine photographer. The pre-release expectations were quite palpable. All the tickets were sold out in less than two or three days when an unexpected problem cropped up. The producer had not yet obtained the Censor Board



certificate to release the film. Quite unexpectedly the release of the film was violently opposed by certain sections with religious and political colour. SCARF was informed that they may have to postpone the date of screening. Having sold all the tickets, the organisers were dreading the embarrassment this would cause. After few days of anxiety and uncertainty, the producer obtained the certificate and gave the go-ahead. The charity première was held without much fanfare on a Sunday morning with a full house.

Charity première of the Tamil film *Kandukonden Kandukonden*, Devi Bala Theatre, May 2000

After SCARF moved into its new building on February 1, 1998, there was a need for further expansion. Mr. Rajiv Menon who had earlier made a film for SCARF, readily consented to give them screening of his Tamil film, *Kandukonden Kandukonden*. Due to the popularity of the cast, it was a total sell-out. But the hitch came in obtaining the exemption from entertainment tax and permission from the police department for enhanced ticket rates. Unlike the two earlier occasions, there were many bureaucratic hurdles to cross. Mr. Raju, the CAO ran from pillar to post for days till the very last moment. At 9.30 pm, few hours before the screening, he conveyed the good news to Dr. Thara. Rajiv Menon was there at the screening and spoke to the audience.

SCARF places on record the kindness of Mr. Varadraj, owner of Devi Theatres who gave the halls free for all three events.

Fun Fair in A.V.M. Rajeshwari Mandapam, Mylapore

Though this event held on a Sunday evening was very successful, it was equally unforgettable for all the wrong reasons, hooligans and riotous crowd barging into the venue during the closing stages. The event was organised entirely by a well-intended ladies group called 'Friends of SCARF'. The hall was provided free, thanks to Mr. M. Saravanan. Several food and amusement stalls were erected. Jeevan Blood Bank, then in its early years came forward to set up a stall for a free blood check-up and group matching. There were stalls related to mental health. The popular cine actor Padmini of yesteryears distributed the prizes to the winners of the lucky draw. The highlight was the break dance with loud stereo music and psychedelic, revolving lights with smoke. It all began well on a bright note around 4 pm, the hall was brimming with people, much to the delight of the organisers. However, a few hours later, an unruly crowd which barged in, caused a lot of damage which vexed the owners. And the organisers had to tender a profuse apology and pay for all broken furniture, etc. The collections from the event were substantial.

Charity Dinner at Amir Mahal

This was a wonderful event combining history, royalty, excellent music with rich food and great ambience on an unforgettable night. It was to be a charity dinner at the sprawling lawns of Chennai's historic Amir Mahal, the home of the Nawab of Arcot since 1876. The Nawab of Arcot graciously agreed to lend his palace for the event and assured personal participation and all cooperation. The aim was to sell 500 tickets to raise Rs.10 lakhs for SCARF. The main attraction was the authentic Hyderabadi mutton biriyani and the special sweet *sheer khurma*. A short play in chaste Urdu on the life of the legendary 19th century Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib, a fashion show and an auction were the events held, along with singing of popular ghazals.

The whole venue was very beautifully decorated with colourful flowers and soft lights with the fragrance of rosewater gently wafting in the air. The Prince of Arcot with his Begum personally welcomed every single guest for the evening, most of whom were seeing the inside of Amir Mahal for

The Nawab of Arcot graciously agreed to lend his palace for the event and assured personal participation and all co-operation. The aim was to sell 500 tickets to raise Rs.10 lakhs for SCARF

the first time. The grand dinner with outstanding music was well enjoyed by everyone and much to the delight of the organisers the Prince of Arcot generously came forward to meet the cost of the few unsold tickets making SCARF richer by Rs.10 lakhs and the event memorable.

SCARF records its gratitude to the following people for the success of this event: Prince of Arcot, Mohammed Abdul Ali, Mrs. Shustari, Mrs. Asgar Ali Dhala, Mrs. Rehane Dhala, Mrs. Jaya Menon, Mrs. Bimla Bhatla, Mrs. Indira Hemdev and Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Valecha.

The Indian Cricket Team at the Taj

The volunteers of SCARF managed to get the Indian cricket team which was playing at Chepauk for a fundraiser at the Taj. The crowd was ecstatic to see their heroes Kapil Dev, Ravi Shastri, Madan Lal and Srikanth in a relaxed mood enjoying the glamorous fashion show and the ambience of the Taj.



The Indian cricket team at the fundraiser held at the Taj Coromandel

Grand Musical Concert by L. Shankar, Caroline Shankar and Ustad Zakir Hussain, Music Academy, Chennai

Mr. R.K. Shankar, member of the fundraising committee organised the concert of the world-renowned violinist Mr. L. Shankar in January 1991. He performed on the double violin along with his wife and the ever popular Ustad Zakir Hussain on the tabla and enthralled the audience of the packed Music Academy. The public response was overwhelming at the three-hour long magical evening. Later L. Shankar himself offered to perform for SCARF next year and kept his word. L. Shankar's second performance in solo during the succeeding year at the same venue was successful too.

There were more efforts on a modest scale. There was a light music concert by Gangai Amaran at Kamaraj Arangam. A dance recital by Ms. Anita Ratnam and her Arangham troupe was held in Narada Gana Sabha.



Ustad Zakir Hussain receiving a memento after a fundraising concert at Music Academy, Chennai, 1991



Inauguration of 'Akshaya', a canteen set up in I.I.T. Madras in 1997

A play by students of Stella Maris College was performed for the benefit of SCARF.

SCARF was engaged quite successfully in the running of a canteen in the Madras I.I.T. campus for several years since 1997. It also enabled SCARF to rehabilitate the sufficiently recovered clients in jobs in the canteen. The canteen was very ably managed under the guidance of Mr. P.N. Nagaraj, one of the founder members and very reputed hotelier in Chennai. 'Akshaya' as the canteen was known, was virtually the much-fabled Akshyapathiram ensuring a steady monthly remittance to SCARF for several years.

Chapter 8

Office Management

Administration and Human Resources

Administration and Human Resources form the backbone of any organisation's functioning. The first Administrative Officer was Mr. Raju, one of the earliest staff, a highly committed person who worked at SCARF for 26 years. It must however, be said that he did much more than what his designation called for. He accompanied Dr. Menon on her trips, looking for land, fundraising, meeting donors and co-ordinating many other activities.

Board Meetings were held infrequently in the early years although there was a full-fledged Board of Management right from the beginning. It was only after a few years since 1984, that at least three Board Meetings and one Annual General Body Meeting were held in a year. So far, 102 meetings have been held. The Board Members have always evinced a lot of interest in SCARF, especially in the early years. An Annual Report with accounts published, is brought out every year. The registration of the organisation is also periodically renewed.

The first President of the Board was Mr. D.C. Kothari, followed by Mr. V.T. Somasundaram and presently it is Mr. R. Seshasayee.



Dr. D.C. Kothari with Prof. M.G.K. Menon, Mr. K.R. Baliga and Dr. Rajkumar

Fire safety drills are conducted regularly in all the centres. The Administration is not confined to one but to all the three centres

SCARF is greatly indebted to the contributions of Mr. M.A. Vellodi and Mr K.R. Baliga, both of whom are no more.

HR Department

SCARF did not have a full-fledged HR Department like the corporates. Mr. Sujit John and the present CAO Mr. Venkatraman took care of most things. McKinsey & Company helped streamline the functioning of the Department pro bono and Tate Consultants helped with some of the SOPs. The following documents are in place:

Manuals for: Front office & OPD, ECT Department, Nursing Department, Housekeeping and Laundry, Kitchen, Facility and Maintenance, Pharmacy, VTC, Human Resource Department Manual (including recruitment policy, pay grades and designations with detailed job descriptions and evaluation framework)

Manuals for: Medical Records, Infection Control, Safety, Disaster Management Policy, Quality Assurance Manual, Child Protection Policy, Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy, Research Ethics Committee Manual, Finance and Purchase, Staff Travel Policy.



Mr. Venkatraman (left) and Mr. Sujit John from Admin and HR, who efficiently run the department



Admin and Accounts team



Mr. M.A. Vellodi (l) and Mr K.R. Baliga (r)

Fire safety drills are conducted regularly in all the centres. The Administration is not confined to one but to all the three centres. Maintenance of buildings is now a major activity since some of the older buildings require more attention.

Mandatory Licenses: The nature of the work makes it necessary to have the following licences:

1. Society Registration—Registrar of Societies
2. Institute of Mental Health Licence (SMRC, Bhavishya Bhavan and BMSSK)
3. DSIR Licence—Department of Scientific Research, New Delhi
4. Licences for Lift, Fire (Fire and Rescue Service Department), Building (Collector of Chennai), Pharmacy (Office of the Assistant Director of Drugs Control), Food Licence (Tamil Nadu Food Safety and Drug Administration Department) and Narcotic Drug Licence (Office of the Collector of Chennai)
5. Certificate of Registration of Hospital (Corporation of Chennai)
6. Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board Licence for Air & Waste and for Bio-medical waste generation

When I started as an accountant, we were only a family of 14 running this NGO with only one personal computer for the entire organisation and now here we are with more than 125 employees with almost all of them having their own pcs/laptops. Though the source of income was only from donations in the early stages, now we have other sources of income through education and training services, clinical services and research grants.

I feel satisfied working for an NGO and seeing it grow well.

Renuka

Money Matters

The management of accounts forms a very critical and important aspect of any organisation, especially for NGOs which are dependent on public funds.



*Ms. Renuka, Senior
Accounts Officer at SCARF*

For a number of years since the founding of SCARF, Mr. K.R. Baliga, served as the Treasurer of SCARF and ensured that funds were spent carefully. He streamlined the operation of all the accounts and made appropriate investments. More importantly, he mentored the Accounts Officer, Ms. Renuka who has been with SCARF since 1990. She takes all measures to reduce expenses, thereby increasing the corpus, which has now grown substantially. Ms. Rajeswari looked after the accounts of the residential centres for many years.

There are several teams auditing the accounts—the regular auditors, internal auditors, those from the Government for the annual grant that SCARF gets and auditors of project grants such as those from the TATA Trust. The State Government auditors have always been happy with the accounting practices at SCARF. The accounts are highly transparent and published in the Annual Reports every year. It must be said that it was the frequent insistence of the present Chairman, Mr. Seshasayee that these were all streamlined.

The accounts were maintained manually till 2008 after which they have been switched to Tally software. The statutory auditors were initially M/S Viswanathan & Co and presently it is SNS Associates. An annual

budget is prepared every March and submitted to the Board of Management for discussion and approval. The final accounts of SCARF are initially approved by the Board and then by the Annual General Body every year. A report is sent to the Department of Science and Technology.

List of Present Board Members, 2020

Mr. R. Seshasayee, Chairman
Dr. M. Sarada Menon, Founder-Advisor
Dr. R. Thara, Vice-Chairman
Dr R. Padmavati, Secretary
Mrs. C.K. Gariyali IAS (Retd)
Dr. Shantha Kamath
Mr. K.P. Mahalingam
Mr. Jeyaram Rengan
Mrs. Sheila Jayaprakash
Ms. Meenakshi Ramesh
Dr. Suresh Sankara Subbaiyan
Mr. Keshav Desiraju IAS (Retd)
Dr. J.S.N. Murthy
Mr. Sethuraman
Mr. Subba Reddy
Dr. Bagyam Raghavan
Dr. Girija Vaidyanathan IAS (Retd)

List of Founder Members

Dr. D.C. Kothari (late)
Dr. M. Sarada Menon
Dr. S. Rajkumar
Dr. R. Thara
Dr. T.R. Govindachari (Late)
Dr. M.S. Valiathan
Dr. A.M. Selvaraj (Late)
Dr. K.M. Marimuthu
Mrs. C.K. Gariyali

Mr. K.R. Baliga (Late)
Mr. N. Murali
Mr. P.N. Nagaraj
Mr. Habibullah Badsha (Late)
Mr. C. Bhujangaswami (Late)
Mr. M.B. Sreenivasan (Late)
Mr. V.K. Sundaram (Late)
Ms. Kamini Gopinath

List of Members Inducted Later

Mr. V.T. Somasundaram
Mr. M.A. Vellodi (Late)
Dr. S.M. Channabasavanna (Late)
Dr. Narayana Reddy
Dr. G.N. Ghatikar
Dr. Meena Dave
Dr. Subhash Phaterpekar
Dr. Ponnammal Natarajan
Dr. L.T. Easwaran
Dr. Vijay Nagaswami
Mr. K.P. Mahalingam
Mr. Rajiv Rai
Mrs. Rasheeda Bhagat
Mr. K. Jayaraman
Mr. Venugopal
Mr. R. Kuppuswami
Mr. C. Venuprasad
Mrs. Yasmin Ahmed IAS (Late)
Mr. Ramalingam



SECTION 4

Tender Saplings

9. Links with Organisations

100

- International and Indian



Chapter 9

Links with Organisations – International and Indian

By the 1990s, SCARF had attained a stature which drew the attention of many global and national organisations. The World Health Organization (WHO) had declared SCARF a Collaborating Centre for Mental Health Research and Training in 1996, which continues till date. Not many NGOs around the world have been thus designated. Dr. Thara was also invited to serve on many task forces of WHO such as Revision of ICIDH (ICF) and that of ICD and a few others. It was a good platform to showcase SCARF's work and contribute ideas born out of experience. The successive Directors of the Mental Health Division of WHO were very supportive of SCARF's work as you can see from their testimonials below.



An innovative approach to mental health care should be based on empirical and epidemiological evidence, common sense, a clear ethical framework and, finally from social commitment. This is exactly what SCARF does, an organisation created by an extraordinary woman, Dr. Sarada Menon succeeded by another extraordinary woman, Dr. Thara. SCARF is addressing the mental health burden in a comprehensive way because it is indeed a compounded burden: personal, family, economic and social burden affecting families and communities and the hidden burden associated with stigma and violations of human rights, freedom and basic liberties.

SCARF operates at the intersection of science and social commitment, ethics and praxis, global thinking, and local action. Grounded firmly in the bio-psycho-social model, it represents an outstanding "best practice" which should serve as a reference for the world. The Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health (2018) has shown that all



In India as in many middle-income countries, NGOs are expected to engage in advocacy and provide services in areas where there are none, while universities and national institutes take up teaching, training and research. SCARF broke this traditional way of thinking right from its inception and has continued to take a lead in research and capacity building while providing excellent service to some of the most neglected sections of society. It is not a surprise that SCARF has come to be known all over the world for setting standards in their work. With hundreds of scientific papers published, thousands of researchers and students trained, tens of thousands of persons living with mental disorders helped with their recovery and having innumerable supporters and admirers all over the world, SCARF

has evolved into a large and vibrant community. I have had the distinct privilege to know SCARF, its founding members and its dedicated staff for about 30 years and have watched it reach one milestone after another. I also had an opportunity to attend several of SCARF's legendary biennial conferences, which I found to be of exceptional educational value. SCARF is also one of the very few NGOs to be designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Mental Health Research and Training and has performed excellently in this role. I am proud to have been associated with SCARF!

Dr. Shekhar Saxena

Professor of the Practice of Global Mental Health

Harvard T H Chan School of Public Health

Ex-Director, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, WHO, Geneva

countries are 'developing' when it comes to mental health but SCARF has clearly demonstrated that the North can indeed learn a few lessons from a centre in the South.

I have visited SCARF several times, before joining the WHO and during my tenure as Director of the WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse to see for myself the clinical and rehabilitation activities, and to assess the performance of a 15-year-old WHO Collaborating Centre. I have also spoken at ICONS.

I must say that I was always pleasantly intrigued by the mixed perceptions of feeling at home among friends and being aware that I was in a high-level prestigious centre. The co-existence of science and humility, of international recognition and friendly environment, of commitment to the poor without giving up on high quality research and offering cost effective treatments, is the hallmark of SCARF.

Finally, the privilege of greeting with respect and admiration the two ladies, Dr. Menon and Dr. Thara has been always memorable to me.

Dr. Benedetto Saraceno

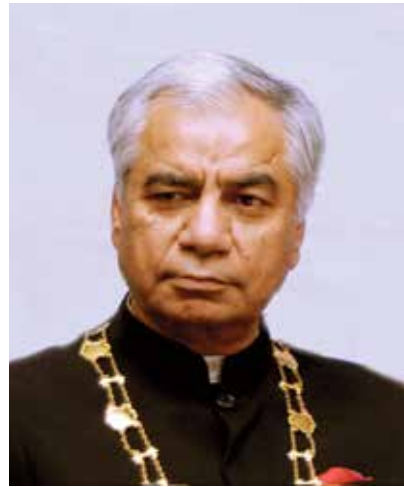
Secretary General of the Lisbon Institute of Global Mental Health and

Former Director, Mental Health Division, WHO, Geneva

World Psychiatric Association (WPA)

This is a global body of all national psychiatric associations. WPA has often used the resources of SCARF in its material development and publications. Dr. Thara has served on WPA sub-committees including the most recent one on science, education and publications. Two Presidents of WPA have been closely associated with SCARF even before they assumed this post.

This is what they have to say.



SCARF-What a Journey!!!

Fashioned after colonial Victorian asylum models, mental hospitals in India, barring a few exceptions, have until recently largely focused on custodial care of the mentally ill. In 1984, three visionaries Drs. Sarada Menon, Rajkumar and Thara set up the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) to deliver something unique and truly inspirational—located outside traditional asylums but delivering psychiatric care for severe mental illnesses—schizophrenia and other conditions as well.

From the early days they involved policymakers and stakeholders and their focus on primacy of patient care has never wavered. SCARF

has been a pioneer in providing care, rehabilitation, and family support, all very strongly assisted by research which helped build international reputation and relationships with premier research and academic institutions around the world.

As a WHO Collaborating Centre, it has led on influencing policy especially in low and middle-income countries plagued by challenges related to both financial and human resources. In its own unique way of thinking outside the box, SCARF has through international conferences, public education campaigns, film festivals and articles in newspapers, clearly communicated its mission of reducing stigma and improving knowledge powerfully and successfully. As a training centre, it trains students of multiple disciplines including postgraduate psychiatrists.

With 140 inpatients, 120 outpatients a day with day care programmes, rehabilitation and residential care, SCARF is an ideal centre for training and research. It is a beacon of light and a model that other low resource settings countries should try to emulate.

Dr. Dinesh Bhugra, CBE

Professor Emeritus, Mental Health & Cultural Diversity, IoPPN, King's College, London SE5 8AF

President, The Royal College of Psychiatrists (2008-2011), President, World Psychiatric Association (2014-2017)

President, British Medical Association (2018-2019)



Reflections on SCARF

A remarkable set of women and men has been associated with the establishment and success of SCARF over the past 35 years: as an international beacon for mental health care, training and research. First, the women, including the three successive directors, Dr. Sarada Menon, Dr. R. Thara, and Dr. R. Padmavati. Attending the first ICONS of SCARF conference in 2004 was an opportunity to meet all three, and to understand more fully the role of Dr. Menon as the Founder, of Dr. Thara the then director, and to meet for the first time Dr. Padmavati who has now succeeded these two illustrious women. I had heard about Dr. Menon's extraordinary achievements as the first woman psychiatrist in India. It was an

inspiration to meet her in 2004 and on several occasions since, and to understand the meaning of her work for people living with mental ill health and their families, for the profession of psychiatry in India, and for women in professional life.

Seeing Dr. Thara work at SCARF and in the meetings of the WPA enabled me to realise fully the extent of her influence on the development of an inclusive approach to mental health care in India and her success in collaborating with researchers and mental health workers from around the world. There are many innovations to her credit as well as continued fostering of the special teamwork at SCARF and cementing the role of SCARF as a highly productive and influential WHO Collaborating Centre for Mental Health Research and Training. It is a pleasure now to see Dr. Padma take up the challenges with her characteristic energy, optimism and ability. There are remarkable men to mention, foremost being one of SCARF's co-founders Dr. S. Rajkumar, who inter alia has provided encouragement and support for the links between SCARF and the WHO.

These people and their colleagues in SCARF are remarkable for their vision and integrity in leading SCARF, not only in its clinical and research mission but also its role in advocacy with and for people with lived experience of mental ill health and their families. Many notable figures in national life are associated with its Board and donors. I wish SCARF well for its continued work and leadership over the next decades.

Dr. Helen Hermann

President, WPA

Melbourne, Australia

King's College, London

SCARF has collaborated with this reputed institution in a few projects and their faculty have had a major presence at ICONS.

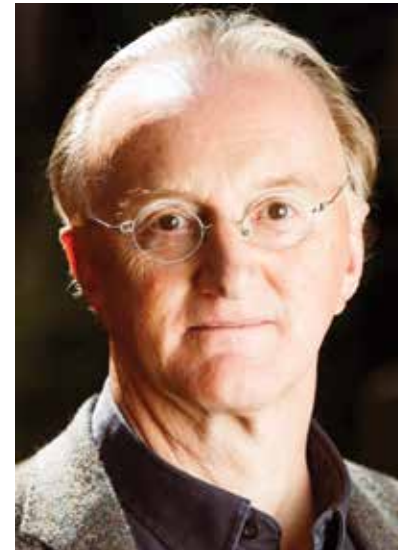


Who would have thought that a small charity established in Chennai in 1984 could have developed into the major institution that we see today? SCARF not only delivers a range of high-quality psychiatric services to people from deprived communities but plays a major role in providing training in Community Care, and has become an influential centre for postgraduate psychiatry. For foreigners like me, it has been the quality of research carried out by members of SCARF which has been most remarkable. It is easy to carry out good research in major Universities in London, Berlin or Los Angeles; it's a lot more challenging to do this in a centre run by a charity in India.

Amazingly, SCARF has a worldwide influence not only through the quality of its research but through the regular and highly successful ICONS international conferences. These have brought together researchers from across the globe and demonstrated to those of us in the West, the differences in illness presentation and outcome in developing versus developed countries. Distinguished colleagues from many countries volunteer to come and present at the ICONS meetings without any offer of travel expenses because of what they expect to learn by attending—to my knowledge, this does not happen anywhere else.

Sir Robin Murray

Sir Robin Murray is an international expert on schizophrenia and has attended a few editions of ICONS



As a medical student in the mid 1980s I spent a few months working in Tamil Nadu on two projects. The first was a rural primary health care centre in central Tamil Nadu, and the second was laying the foundations and brickwork for a new centre for people with intellectual disabilities next to the beach in Chennai. In many senses this was a long way from my base in London. I began to appreciate the historical depth, the ways faith imbued every aspect of everyday life, the material scarcities, and the cultural richness of this part of India. So when opportunities arose for me to collaborate with colleagues in a research organisation in Tamil Nadu twenty years later, I was very keen to collaborate.

When I first visited SCARF I was struck by several remarkable features: the complete dedication to the principle of the welfare of patients and family members; a 'no nonsense' approach that prioritised implementing real world improvements for people; a commitment to being part of international research consortia carrying out investigations to the very highest scientific standards, and a sense that this was not an isolated centre of excellence, but a beacon spreading illumination and enlightenment throughout Tamil Nadu and far beyond.

While it is true that SCARF has been guided by visionary and outstanding individuals, it is also the case that the organisation thrives because of its very high quality teamwork, both within SCARF and with its national and international partners. I have the greatest admiration and esteem for all who work at SCARF, and long may their remarkable accomplishments multiply and continue in the future!

Professor Sir Graham Thornicroft

*Centre for Global Mental Health,
King's College London*

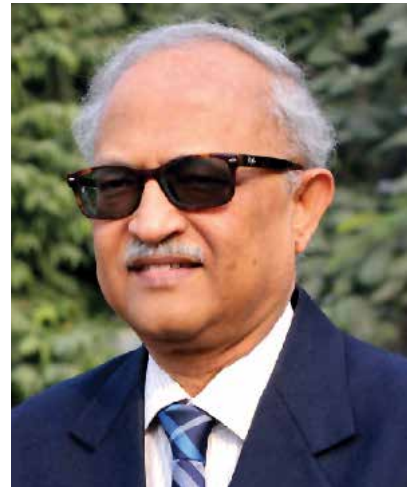
Indian Collaborations

SCARF has not lagged behind in collaborating with other organisations and NGOs in India. These have been largely with the Indian Psychiatric Society, NIMHANS, Sangath, AIIMS, Sneha, and Indian Law Society, Pune.

Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS)

Indian Psychiatric Society is the largest association of Indian Psychiatrists. It was founded in 1929 under the banner of Royal Medico-Psychological Association.

Its current president is Dr. P.K. Dalal.



As the President of the Indian Psychiatric Society, it is my privilege and pleasure to pen a message for the publication on SCARF's history aptly dedicated to its Founder Padma Bhushan Dr. M. Sarada Menon.

SCARF is one of the pioneering NGOs in India delivering mental health care and conducting internationally recognised research. SCARF has worked with the IPS in many capacities. Dr. Thara served as Chairperson of the Rehabilitation Committee during which time the tool IDEAS, to measure psychiatric disability was developed.

This tool is now the official instrument to measure this disability. All the eight editions of the well-attended International Conference on Schizophrenia (ICONS) has always been co-sponsored by the Indian Psychiatric Society, and many of our members are regular participants in ICONS.

Dr. Sarada Menon one of the earliest women to head a mental hospital is well known for the reforms she brought about and for improving mental health services in Tamil Nadu. On behalf of IPS, I offer her our warm felicitations. I wish SCARF many more years of service to the persons with mental health issues.

Dr. P.K. Dalal

*President IPS and
Professor and Head, Department of Psychiatry, KGMU, Lucknow*



As the President Elect of Indian Psychiatric Society, I deem it an honour to felicitate SCARF, one of the flagship mental health centres in India offering a comprehensive range of psychiatric care and rehabilitation services to persons with mental disorders. My personal association with SCARF started from the time I first attended the ICONS conference in Chennai. This event has now become a major attraction for mental health professionals to keep abreast with the cutting-edge research happening internationally.

We are exceptionally proud of our fellow psychiatrists, Dr. Menon, Dr. Padmavati, Dr. Thara and Dr. Kamath for their untiring and dedicated services. They have been the pioneers in tele-medicine mobile services in the last 20 years, offering services to the most affected areas during the tsunami. We have incorporated many learning objectives in tele-medicine practice in our National Tele-medicine Guidelines.

We are proud of the mental health research work of SCARF with partners like World Psychiatric Association, Johns Hopkins University, King's College London, ICMR, NIMHANS amongst others. They also offer an extremely good postgraduate training programme for different postgraduate professionals.

I wish Dr. Thara and her team great success in the coming years. It will be my personal endeavour during my tenure as President of IPS to develop services in different cities on the model framework of SCARF so that my fellow citizens are benefited across the country.

I pay my regards to Dr. Menon and wish her good health.

Dr. Gautam Saha

*Director, Clinic Brain Neuropsychiatric Institute and Research Centre, Kolkotta
President Elect, Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS)*

National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS)

NIMHANS, Bangalore is a premier institution in the country. SCARF has worked with NIMHANS on research collaborations, training and teaching. Dr. Thara was a member of the Institute Body of NIMHANS for five years.



I am happy that SCARF is bringing out a publication detailing its history and its various programmes. It is admirable that this compilation is to be dedicated to SCARF's Founder, Padma Bhushan Dr. M. Sarada Menon. Dr. Menon is well known for her reforms she brought out in the Madras Mental Hospital and in fact for the entire mental health services in Tamil Nadu. After her retirement, she had the vision to start the NGO SCARF which has now become an internationally reputed centre.

Over the years, NIMHANS has had good collaborations with SCARF. Dr. Thara, the co-founder of SCARF was a member of the Institute Body as well as other important committees of NIMHANS and contributed significantly. NIMHANS is also collaborating with the Diploma course in Mental Health Care that SCARF is running for the last four years, successfully. The faculty of NIMHANS also teach these students. We also collaborate with Dr. Padmavati and her team in the Yoga-based research that we are conducting. Students from SCARF including the DipNB students are placed here for training.

I wish SCARF many more decades of dedicated work for persons with mental disorders. I convey my respect and wishes to Dr. Menon for good health and energy.

Dr. B.N. Gangadhar
Former Director, NIMHANS

Sangath

Sangath is an NGO which has a national and international presence and impact through its outstanding research and community-based programmes. SCARF and Sangath have collaborated on a few programmes.



I first became aware of SCARF when I was plotting my return to India after completing my psychiatric training at the Maudsley Hospital in London. I remember learning how SCARF was not only strengthening the scientific foundation of psychiatry in India but had become a beacon for mental health innovations for all low resource settings. The model that SCARF pioneered, combining excellence in science with a commitment to care and justice, and a strong belief in the importance of partnerships with government, civil society and academia, was a key inspiration for my own journey which started with the

founding of Sangath in Goa in 1996. Sangath forged a substantive collaboration with SCARF, ranging from trials evaluating community-based support for people with schizophrenia (COPSI study) to developing a course on mental health for media professionals (ESSENCE). This collaboration has been one of the singular rewards of my career but, beyond that, I have been left with precious memories of invigorating intellectual stimulation and loyal friendship with the dynamic leaders of the organisation, not least of whom I am privileged to count Dr. R. Thara as a dear friend and colleague. SCARF is a role model for doing things differently for mental health, away from the ivory towers and deeply embedded in the lives of the people that matter the most.

Dr. Vikram Patel

*The Pershing Square Professor of Global Health and Wellcome Trust Principal Research Fellow
Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, USA
Professor, Department of Global Health and Population, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health
Co-Founder and Member of Managing Committee, Sangath*

Sneha Suicide Prevention Centre

Sneha is a voluntary organisation that offers unconditional emotional support of those in distress through their helplines.



My first encounter with Padma Bhushan Dr. Sarada Menon, was as an awestruck first year student. When her black Fiat car entered the campus of IMH, her presence would be marked by the hush and respect in the eyes of everyone around. She was a visionary by starting SCARF, ably followed by the missionary zeal of Dr. Thara. The success of SCARF has catalysed and enthused the emergence of many NGOs in mental health in Tamil Nadu. SCARF and the other NGOs have carved a niche for themselves in specialised areas of mental health. SCARF is a flagship NGO for schizophrenia not only in India but

also in the global arena. The development of innovative community outreach to complex genetic research, exemplifies the broad and varied spectrum of SCARF's activities.

Sneha has been associated both formally and informally with SCARF over the years. Recently SCARF and Sneha jointly conducted a pilot study of a community engagement toolkit for suicide prevention (developed by WHO) in Pudukkottai district. SCARF has become synonymous with quality care, excellent research and dedicated personnel.

I am as awestruck as I was on the first day.

Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar

Founder, Sneha

HOD Psychiatry, VHS Chennai,

Member WHO Network on Suicide Prevention and Research

Indian Law Society

The Centre for Mental Health Law & Policy (CMHLP) is one of its kind in India. With the primary aim of promoting a rights-based approach to mental health policy and legislation, CMHLP has focused largely on research and training and established a wide network of allied persons/organisations in India and outside.



SCARF is a pioneering mental health organisation and an inspiration for many psychiatrists and mental health professionals of my generation. It has blazed a trail which so many of us have happily followed. SCARF taught us that an Indian organisation could not only provide world class mental health service but also do globally recognised research in the field of mental health, all led by extremely talented women. SCARF's strength is its close relationship with the local community and its acute awareness of their needs. Tele-psychiatry services started by SCARF nearly five years ago is the latest in the long line of innovative mental health services pioneered by SCARF in India.

I have also been fortunate to attend as well as present our work at ICONS, an international conference organised by SCARF every alternate year. It is one of the few academic conferences that I attend for the high quality of the presentations and the opportunity to meet with academics from India and abroad and discuss pioneering mental health research in India and abroad. ICONS also provides a unique opportunity for psychiatric trainees from India to get exposure to international trends in research and best practices in clinical mental health.

Dr. Soumitra Pathare

Consultant Psychiatrist & Director

Centre for Mental Health Law & Policy

Indian Law Society, Pune



SECTION 5

Tendrils of Growth

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Chapter 10

Outpatient Department—The Pillar of SCARF's Clinical Services

With a grant from the Tamil Nadu Government from 1987, SCARF was now in a position to provide free medication to patients who were unable to buy them. A system for OPD functioning was put in place and clinics were operated six days a week, with a dedicated team each day

Clinical services are the mainstay of the work at SCARF. Outpatient (OP) consultations at no cost to the patient and family were a key element of this service when they were first started and remains so to this day.

The OPD was initially begun at the Nungambakkam office in 1984, with just one psychiatrist and a psychologist. Borrowed tables and chairs and a waiting space with mats on the floor set the scene. Each patient's history would be discussed threadbare—there was time for a thorough discussion.

When the office moved to more spacious settings at Anna Nagar East, there was an increase in the numbers seeking help. This inevitably led to SCARF hiring more doctors, psychiatric social workers (case managers) and psychologists.

The larger numbers also created the necessity for a systematic documentation process. With a grant from the Tamil Nadu Government from 1987, SCARF was now in a position to provide free medication to patients who were unable to buy them. A system for OPD functioning was put in place and clinics were operated six days a week, with a dedicated team each day. The growth in the patient population also raised several questions that required a methodical enquiry using rigorous research. And research unfolded—that is a strong SCARF history to tell!

However, a time came for SCARF to acquire its own premises. In the year 1997, SCARF moved to Anna Nagar West. This allowed the staff



The waiting area in the Outpatient Department, Anna Nagar

to physically structure the outpatient setting with dedicated space. The services have since, evolved over the years.

Today

- SCARF sees patients from neighbouring cities, NRIs and people of all age groups.
- SCARF continues to serve patients with all kinds of psychiatric problems. In recent years the services have expanded to exclusive Child and Adolescent clinics and Dementia care services.
- Electronic medical records system was put in place in the year 2012 and it has replaced the paper records of patients. Confidentiality of medical records is a definite agenda.
- The staff has grown in numbers—today there is a strong team of 13 psychiatrists and 11 psychiatric social workers, psychologists,



Clinical services team

There is a dedicated team of psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers, psychologists and nurses present at the OPD, each day

pharmacists, nurses and occupational therapists. Support staff at the reception and the waiting areas adds to the complement of staff.

- A licensed pharmacy on the premises facilitates the purchase of medicines at the outpatient services. Medications that fall under the category of restricted sales, especially for children—are available here. The pharmacy is run by trained pharmacists and is linked to the EMR system, ensuring proper accounting.
- Trainee medical students have ample opportunities to learn about various aspects in psychiatry. The OPD also serves the learning needs of interns from Social Work, Psychology and Nursing.
- In the event of an emergency access by patients and families, SCARF provides crisis services at this facility for immediate care and this is followed by either follow-up measures as OPD, admission to in-house facilities or referrals to other facilities.
- The waiting area also displays vital information on welfare schemes for the disabled, access to legal aid, etc.



Having worked in the OPD since I joined SCARF in 1999, I see an incremental increase in the number of patients seeking help for a range of psychiatric problems. Most of the referrals are through existing clients who are satisfied with our care. Increase in number of admissions into residential centres is also due to the trust families have developed in SCARF.

Many families are inspired by the dedicated service provided by the SCARF team and they are our supporters and well-wishers. Since 2012 when electronic records were introduced,

retrieving case sheets has become easier. We have also been able to provide free medication for many more patients.

Families and friends are also actively participating in the treatment and rehabilitation of the client nowadays. If the client is employed in a government or private firm, we are able to co-ordinate with his or her colleagues who are very supportive and help them to get back to work/benefits, etc.

Many families are benefited by getting Tax Exemption for the amount they spend towards treatment and also getting reimbursement from their companies which is a great relief to the families.

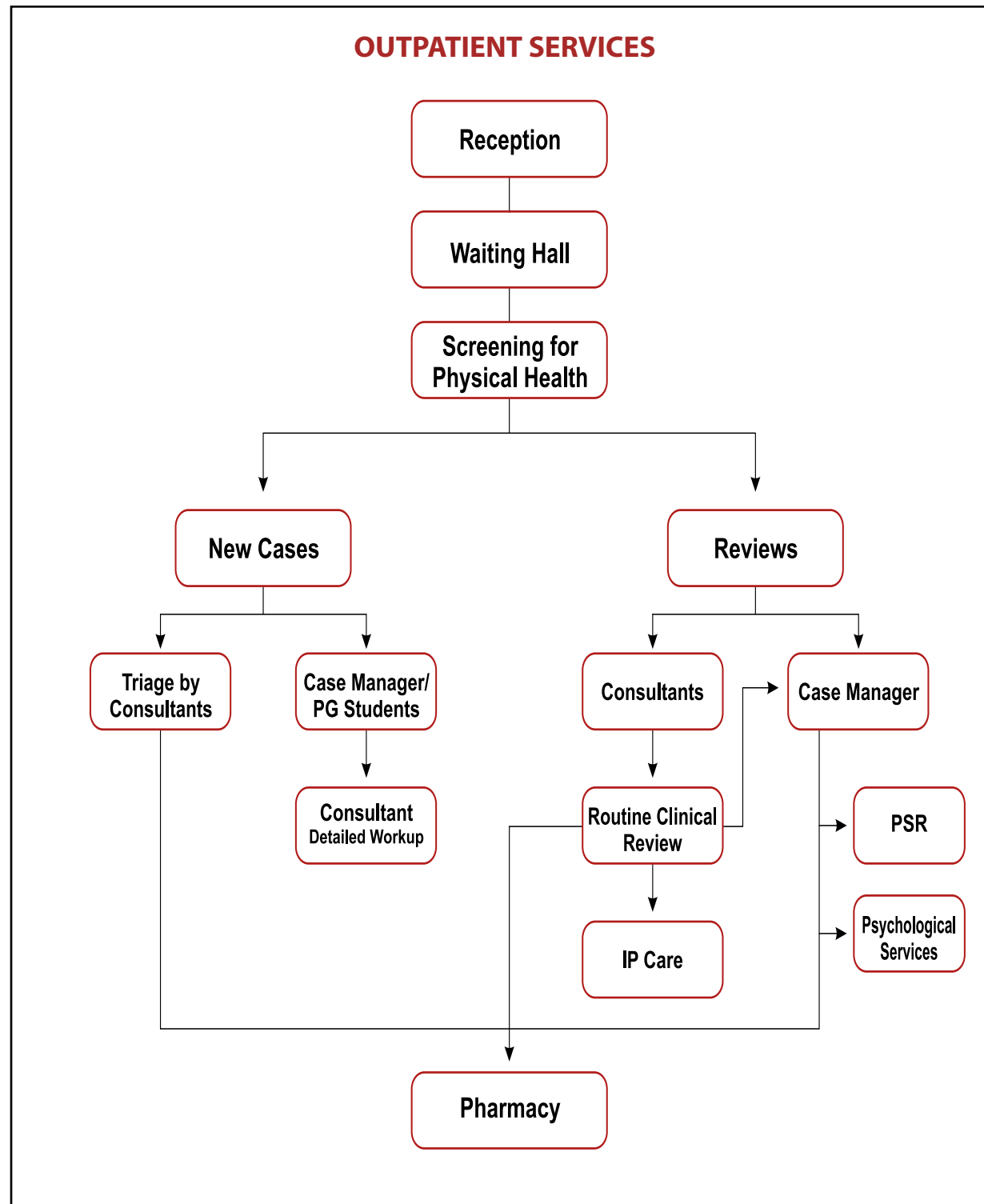
Disability benefits are availed by a few families. I have been co-ordinating clinical services for many years and the main source of my satisfaction is to see clients improve, get back to functioning and see families happy.

Ms. Karpagavalli
Senior Clinical Co-ordinator

OPD Timings

- The services function 5 days a week starting at 9.30 am.
- There is a dedicated team of psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers, psychologists and nurses present at the OPD, each day.
- Tuesdays, second Saturdays and Sundays are holidays.

A flow chart of the OPD patient movement below.



A patient speaks...

For eight years, I received different diagnoses—bipolar, manic depressive, schizophrenic—by different psychiatrists. All this meant a lot of effort, time and money too. When I landed at SCARF, I found that the focus was not just on medication as ‘treatment’—they followed a different approach. I had multiple options under a single roof—counselling, therapy, jobs at vocational pursuits that naturally interested me while following a healthy, nutritional diet—there were a lot of factors that added up. Starting out as a fidgety person who needed constant care and a lot of emotional support, I now saw the illness differently; my near and dear ones saw hope.

At SCARF, they understand that every person with a mental illness comes with a unique footprint that needs a unique way of management. They are there to reassure the affected and their family that ‘it is okay not to be okay’.

Another patient recalls...

From somebody with disturbing hallucinations, I was given personal attention during both my treatment and psychosocial rehabilitation. I was exposed to state-of-the-art interventions such as trans-cranial magnetic stimulation. I was roped in to help with programmes on-going at SCARF. This made me redevelop my social skills and be engaged at the same time, something I was completely cut off from, for almost three years.

My mother and father, my primary caregivers, were included in the treatment programme as well, this being a major difference with the care delivered in the US—as my mother says this gave them peace of mind and kept them from having a breakdown. Without SCARF, we would have led a headless existence, directionless for my parents and unable to come to terms with my own condition, for me. I can’t thank enough the guidance received from SCARF as they have re-charted my life journey from extinct to extant.

Chapter 11

Psychosocial Rehabilitation: A Critical Component in Recovery

Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) was probably a major driving force for the launch of SCARF in 1984. It was Dr. Sarada Menon's intense desire to start a PSR facility in the community for persons with mental disorders to access freely without stigma.

Evidence was also building up elsewhere in the world on the need and value of non-pharmacological interventions for persons with serious mental illnesses and different models were being tried.

In the beginning, a few patients who dropped in at the first office in Nungambakkam were provided counselling by the staff. Simple activities like making paper covers which were marketed to various shops nearby were initiated. When SCARF's office moved to a larger premises in Anna Nagar East, the focus was retained on vocational training. Other components like training in activities of daily living, social skills training, pre-vocational training, etc., were also introduced. The numbers of patients gradually grew and intensive care was proving difficult.

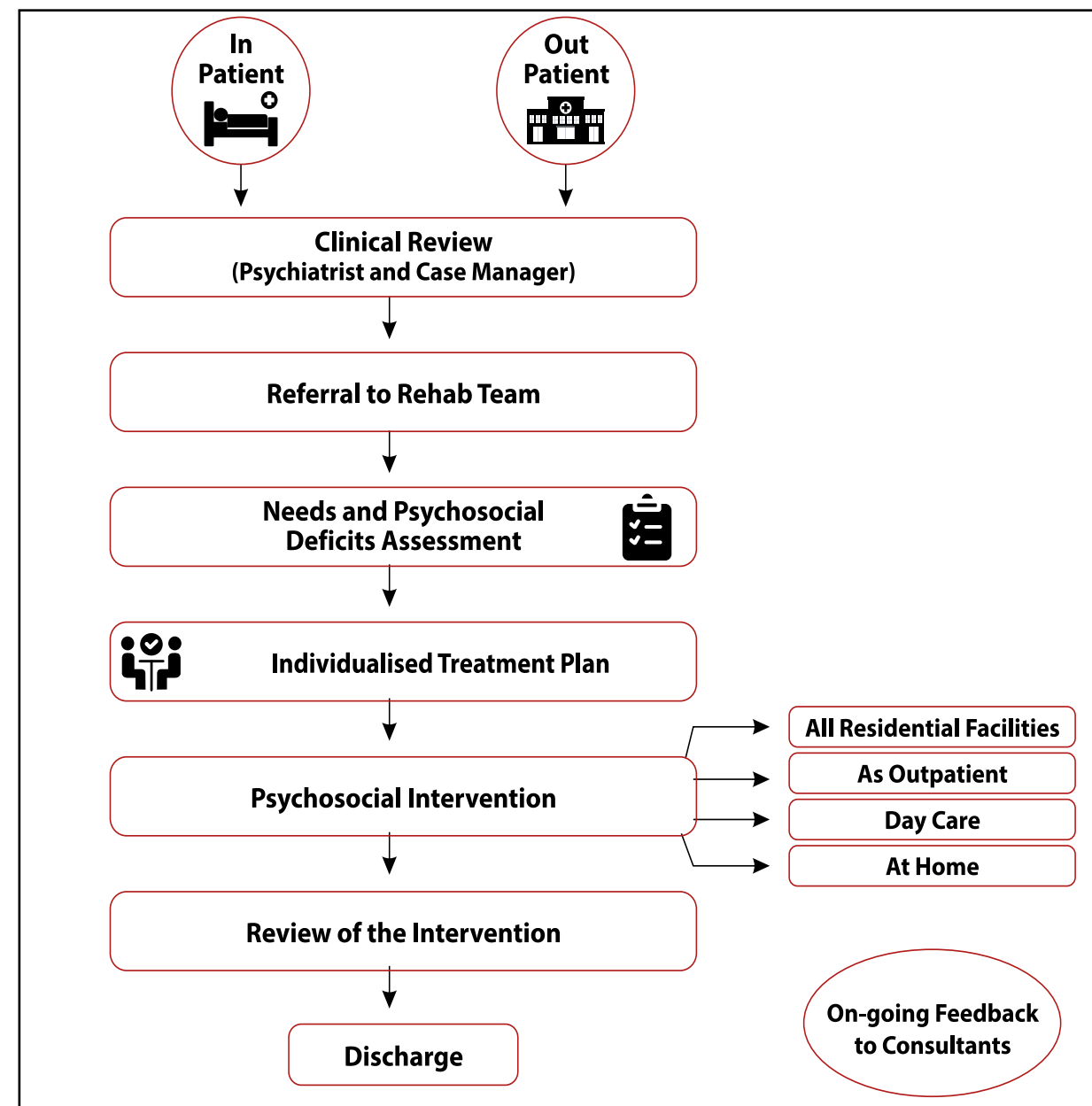
Eventually SCARF moved to its own building in Anna Nagar West and space was not a constraint. But there was a strong need to have well-thought-out programmes in place.

Current Model of Rehabilitation in SCARF

SCARF delivers PSR in outpatient, day care and inpatient settings. The Department of PSR which was set up in 2008 had a team of four therapists who use a structured format for assessing the rehabilitation needs. In

addition to a detailed rehabilitation focused history, structured tools are also used to complete the assessments. At intake, all patients are assessed for disability, cognitive functioning and quality of life, periodically, to monitor progress.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation Process



It was Dr. Sarada Menon's intense desire to start a PSR facility in the community for persons with mental disorders to access freely without stigma

A rehabilitation plan is drawn up for each patient keeping in mind the patient's choices and strengths and available resources. The patient and family are encouraged to be active participants in the rehabilitation process. Most patients have multiple needs. The needs are prioritised and the therapist works with the patient consistently.

The therapist adopts a flexible, collaborative and motivational approach. Interventions include activities of daily living, social skills training, cognitive interventions, vocational rehabilitation and social benefit access.

The interventions are evidence-based, matched to the needs of the patient, and focus on their strengths. They are flexible enough to allow for situations in a patient's life (bereavement, illness of caregivers, etc.) that prevents adhering to the plan. Therapists make sure they are available for patients in crisis through telephone contact and social media. For those able to access technology, alternate means of communications like Email, WhatsApp, telephone, Skype, etc., are also used as reminders for sessions and therapy.



Face-to-face consultations are carried out on a regular basis

A rehabilitation plan is drawn up for each patient keeping in mind the patient's choices and strengths and available resources. The patient and family are encouraged to be active participants in the rehabilitation process

Face-to-face meetings with the patient and family happen at regular intervals. The therapist also keeps in regular touch with the patient and family by telephone and social media in between sessions to monitor and review patient's progress and also to deliver interventions if required.

Families are involved and supported to facilitate recovery in the patient. Looking after a person with severe mental illness can be distressing and exhausting. Hence, the SCARF model incorporates active inputs for families such as psycho-education and helps to manage crises. They are often encouraged to become co-therapists helping, supporting and monitoring patients in completing their goals at home.

The Vocational Training Centre

The Vocational Training Centre (VTC) has been in existence for a long time. New units such as file-making, making of areca nut plates, paper covers and a computer division have been added. Attending the VTC, imparts to patients a sense of daily routine, connecting with others, being engaged in some work as well as being exposed to the different forms of therapies.



Mr. Chitrakanni (left) and the Vocational Training Centre (right)



Mr. Chitrakanni has been the VTC supervisor ever since he joined SCARF in 1991. In his own words, "At the VTC, we have different kinds of patients. Some are happy to attend, some or not. They then become

irritable, angry and even become aggressive at times. I have been able to manage most crisis situations by being firm, assertive and persuasive. If the VTC is closed for a prolonged time, many patients and families get restless and want to come back.”

SCARF’s rehabilitation programmes were well recognised as evidenced by the message of Dr. S. Kalyanasundaram, Consultant Psychiatrist and Hon. Advisor, Richmond Fellowship Society (I) Bangalore.

Newer Interventions

SCARF soon realised the important role of yoga and physical exercise in the process of PSR. Yoga was introduced and evaluated as a collaborative effort with NIMHANS, Bangalore.



SCARF, started in 1984, by Dr. Sarada Menon, the doyen of Psychiatric Rehabilitation in India, has grown from strength to strength over the last three and a half decades, and is known both nationally and internationally. SCARF has been providing quality psychosocial rehabilitation services for people with schizophrenia over three decades, a service that is mostly available in few centres in South India. Their active involvement in this made them create an official department within SCARF with the appointment of a PSR co-ordinator in 2015.

SCARF pioneered the use of telemedicine and also runs a one-year Diploma course on ‘Mental Health Care and Counselling’, A recent addition has been a certificate course for students on PSR for Severe Mental Illness (SMI) in collaboration with the Madras School of Social Work and plans to initiate an online training programme on PSR. It has been a privilege for me both professionally and personally, and Richmond Fellowship Society (RFS India) in Bangalore to be associated with SCARF for over three decades and I wish them the absolute best in their future endeavours. And our *namaskars* to dear Dr. Sarada Menon.

Dr. S. Kalyanasundaram

Consultant Psychiatrist and Hon. Advisor, Richmond Fellowship Society (I) Bangalore



The Vocational Training Centre team

One of the families decided to support a project to encourage physical activity of these patients who tend to lead a sedentary life. Dr. Meera Mahalingam, daughter of Board Member Mr. Mahalingam has this to say.

“My sister S was diagnosed with schizophrenia in her early 20s. After a lot of initial denial, when we finally accepted that S had a real mental health issue, she went through a number of doctors, a series of mismanagements, all with little effect on her mental state. She started with electroconvulsive therapy, then moved on to several antipsychotic medications. We moved from city to city, searching for the ideal combination of medications, the right psychiatrist, but floundered for more than a decade. Her condition progressively deteriorated to a point where she could not be kept at home and was institutionalised.

One day, the visiting psychiatrist at the institution where S was admitted saw her and identified her as someone who could be helped and brought back to society and family with a comprehensive approach that encompassed medication, guidance, counselling and occupational therapy. This psychiatrist was none other than Dr. Sarada Menon, the Founder of SCARF—a panacea for the mentally ill.



Inauguration of the Sheila Mahalingam Yoga and Physical Activity project, Dr. Sarada Menon with Dr. Meera Mahalingam

In the three decades that I have known Dr. Menon, I know she is the real thing. She not only understands schizophrenia but also has the right holistic approach to its management—two rare abilities—rarer still when they occur in the same person. Her increasing age has not in any way diminished her efforts to think of ways to improve the lives of those with mental afflictions.

Three years ago, we lost S suddenly. I was devastated. In order to assuage my feelings of grief and guilt, I wanted to do something for SCARF, which had been my sister's second home for several decades. In one of my conversations with Dr. Menon in the months that followed, she said something that struck a chord with me. Here I quote, "You know Meera, I truly believe that these patients would benefit with some physical exercise as part of their rehabilitation... I have been thinking of this for several years now."

Thus, came to fruition the 'Sheila Mahalingam Yoga and Physical Activity' project, inaugurated in January 2019! At a time when I was struggling to

come to terms with S's death, Dr. Menon helped me find a light in the rehabilitation project, granting me a sense of calm that I do not know that I would have found otherwise. She not only is an incredible physician but also a great human being and someone I am proud to call a friend. I know my world, like that of many others, is a better place only because of her."

Global Links

The World Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation (WAPR) was quick to invite SCARF to start the Indian chapter of WAPR which was done in the year 1989 with Dr. Menon as its Hon. Life President. Dr. Vijay Nagaswami and Dr. Radha Shankar played a role in continuing the links with WAPR.

SCARF has played an advisory role for PSR in other bodies such as the WHO.

Challenges and Solutions

Patient and family engagement in PSR are the biggest challenges. Lack of awareness about the importance of PSR, time, travel and stigma are some of the factors that affect engagement. At SCARF, the concept of PSR is introduced from the very early stages. Bilingual posters on PSR are put up in the waiting area with details on how to access rehabilitation. Those requiring PSR are referred to the rehabilitation team.

Financial barriers also impact engagement with PSR. Patients and families are linked up to social benefits they are eligible for (e.g., free bus pass, disability benefits). Rehabilitation is provided at no cost and the frequency of sessions are modified to enable engagement.

To reduce/prevent burn out in therapists, they have monthly peer supervision and keep themselves updated in the field through training, visits to other services, etc.

The PSR model is constantly evolving. The emphasis is on improving the functioning of patients and the family. As SCARF continues to deliver psychosocial interventions, it is a constant learning process.

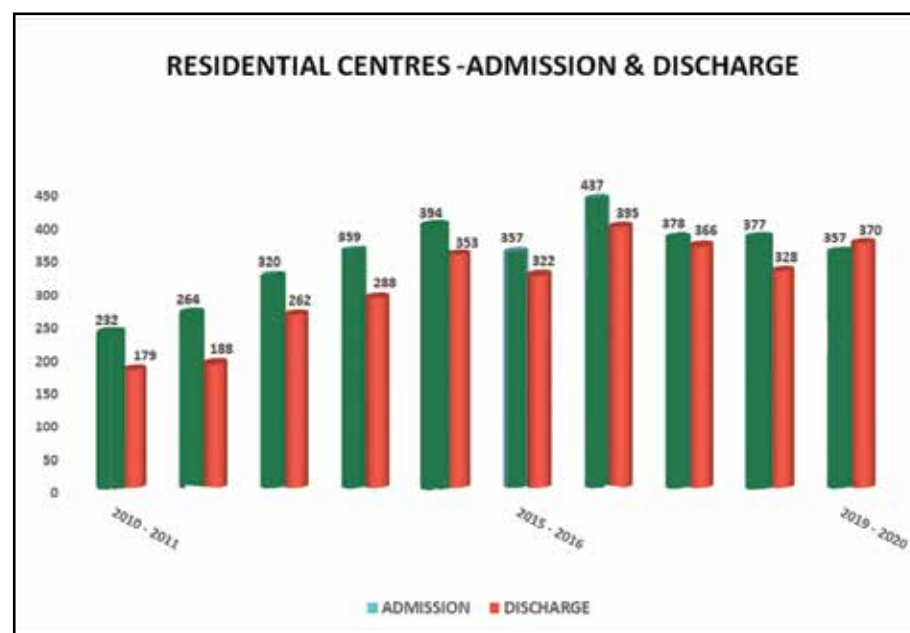
In the three decades that I have known Dr Menon, I know she is the real thing. She not only understands schizophrenia but also has the right holistic approach to its management —two rare abilities —rarer still when they occur in the same person

Chapter 12

Residential Centres—for Rehabilitation and Recovery

Global data from the World Health Organization on the course of schizophrenia indicates that about 20 per cent of this vulnerable population shows unremitting symptoms and disability that worsens over time. While it is widely acknowledged that the family is key to the management of persons with chronic mental illness, it is also recognised that there is a sub-group of persons with the condition who need periods of inpatient care that allows close monitoring and rehabilitation.

In the context of the emerging needs, plans for residential care were initiated soon after SCARF was founded, and finally in 1990, after



Admissions and discharges from the residential centres

While it is widely acknowledged that the family is key to the management of persons with chronic mental illness, it is also recognised that there is a sub-group of persons with the condition who need periods of inpatient care that allows close monitoring and rehabilitation

untiring and persistent efforts by Dr. Sarada Menon, the first Residential Centre, Bhavishya Bhavan at Thiruverkadu was started. Over a period of time, two other facilities, the Bhagavan Mahaveer Manav Sanmarga Seva Kendra at Mahabalipuram, in 1994 and the Dr. Sarada Menon Centre For Schizophrenia Care in the second floor of the Anna Nagar centre in 2003, were added.

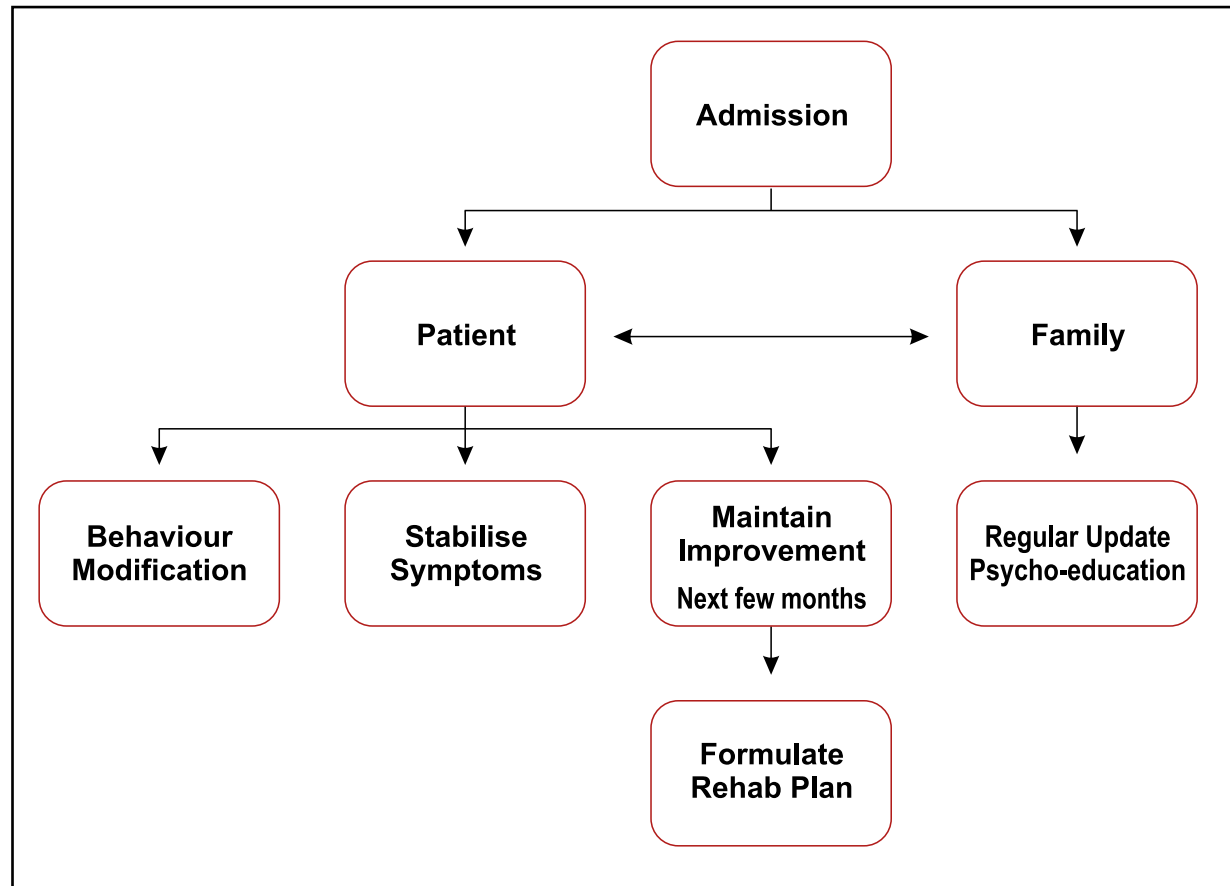
Over the years, several 1000 patients and families have benefited from these centres. Admissions are either for short term or intermediate term duration. There are some patients however, who are with SCARF for their entire life.

When does admission happen?

There are several reasons for admission. These are:

- When patients have **acute/severe symptoms**: Usually violent and aggressive behaviours, sometimes severe symptoms of the illness—they cannot be managed at home, intensive medical care is required
- At times, families have a great difficulty in **getting patients to function**—as in activities of daily living, socialising, managing basic needs or even vocation-related. Supervised intensive psychosocial interventions become necessary to augment these functions.
- Very often, there is a need to **ensure compliance to taking medicines**. Due to lack of insight or side effects, patients default on medications and tend to relapse. This is by far the commonest reason why patients are admitted.
- **Respite care for a short period is at times required**: Situations when parents or siblings are unable to take care of them due to various reasons such as illness in the caregiver, or when a short travel is planned by the family and the patient cannot accompany them.
- **Absence of caregiver**: This happens when the families are not available to take care of the patient. Parents are old and pass on and other family members reside abroad.

What happens after admission?



Staff at each Residential Facility

- A full-time residential manager
- Nurses
- Psychiatric social worker
- Occupational therapist
- Ward attenders
- Cook and his/her team
- Housekeeping staff

Follow-up and aftercare of these persons after discharge from the facility is an integral part of the rehab plan.

Staffing Pattern

Each centre has largely full-time and few part-time staff. The doctors take turns to visit the centre, review and follow up on patients admitted. The psychologist also visits when required.

A general physician visits the facility once a month and all patients have a general health check-up. The residential manager liaises between the consultants and family members. Staff meetings are also held at regular intervals.

Vocational Training Centres/ Occupational Therapy

These facilities are available in all three centres. Patients are engaged in activities to improve attention, concentration and include making of paper covers, areca plates, and phenol for local use and for sale. A lot of crafts, bags and block printing are done at Bhavishya Bhavan. The women there are also engaged in cooking. A log register is maintained to record all the products completed and sold. Patients receive incentives for the work they engage in the VTC on a monthly basis.

Patients are engaged in activities to improve attention, concentration and include making of paper covers, areca plates, and phenol for local use and for sale. A lot of crafts, bags and block printing are done at Bhavishya Bhavan

Physical Health Care

When dealing with a population of chronic mentally ill, it becomes essential that their physical health is also monitored.

There is a regular evaluation of physical health parameters that include

- Monitoring of weight, blood pressure
- Laboratory investigations for chronic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular health
- Medical management of chronic disease conditions

Preventive measures like physical exercise, yoga, and maintaining a proper diet are key to comprehensive health care

Recreational Activities

Several activities are provided at all centres:



Golu festival celebrations at one of the centres

In order to have a change in the normal routine, picnics are planned, with the staff accompanying them to nearby places

- Television programmes and screening of movies are a regular activity. The staff choose lighthearted, comic movies. Some patients prefer movies of yesteryears.
- Everyone is encouraged to read the newspaper—made available in English and Tamil.
- A library comprising of magazines and books of various genres (fiction, crime thrillers, mystery, philosophy, spiritual) is available. Books are generally donated by families or other NGOs. Playing outdoor and indoor games are encouraged.
- Birthdays of the patients and staff are celebrated with special meals.
- Festivals such as Pongal and Diwali are celebrated with great zeal and enthusiasm to give a ‘at home’ feel for all the patients.
- In order to have a change in the normal routine, picnics are planned, with the staff accompanying them to nearby places.
- Mental Health and Disability Days are marked by performances of dramas, stage plays, dance programmes by staff as well as patients. Special guests are invited to judge the performances and prizes are given away.

Changing perspectives in the last 5 years

- Over the years, more young people with substance abuse are admitted.
- Social media is used to connect patients with families.
- Greater demand for admitting patients for ‘lifetime’. With parents either dying or ageing, the siblings are unable to take care of the Person with Mental Illness (PMI).

Challenges faced in running a residential facility

Patient related challenges are managing uncooperative patients, episodes of aggressive behaviour, those with co-morbid physical illnesses like diabetes, hypertension, parkinsonism, emergencies, language barriers and substance use and deaths.

Families: Some families have unrealistic expectations from the admission, and are very anxious. Some believe that admission will eventually and

invariably lead to patients being ready to take up jobs or for marriage. Many do not visit the patient, once admitted.

Staff related issues: Living 24 x 7 with a PMI is not an easy task and very often there are symptoms of burnout in the staff. Constant guidance with change in nature of job or responsibilities will help this. They should be encouraged to discuss issues freely with the management and given intermittent breaks from work.

Bhavishya Bhavan (BB)

This was the first residential facility started for women and the elderly with mental disorders, in 1990.

The centre which started with around 20 women residents soon grew in strength due to the heavy demand for admissions. Cottages for single occupancy were also constructed. Now, it houses close to 70 women and



Bhavishya Bhavan, which was started in 1990

the elderly. While the turnover is quite high, there are a few who have been staying for a prolonged time due to lack of family caregivers.

In the 29 years since its inception, Bhavishya Bhavan has received patients from all over the country, from all religions and socio-economic classes

The VTC here is very active and a number of products are made and sold. In the 29 years since its inception, Bhavishya Bhavan has received patients from all over the country, from all religions and socio-economic classes. This model has been replicated in other parts of the country.

Dr. Menon regularly calls up Bhavishya Bhavan to speak to Sister Omana to enquire about the patients' welfare. The dedicated staff headed by Dr. Shantha Kamath, Dr. Mangala, Sister Omana and the team have helped Bhavishya Bhavan become an oasis of good care and protection to the lives of women battered by mental illness.

The 25th year celebrations of the centre in 2015 was a happy event with Mr. Venkatesh of *Dinamalar*, as the Chief Guest.



25th year celebrations of Bhavishya Bhavan

Some celebrities who have visited the centre

- Shri Bhishma Narain Singh, Governor of Tamil Nadu
- His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Mutt
- Shri K. Anbazhagan, Minister for Education, Tamil Nadu
- Mrs. Sarojini Varadappan
- Maj. Gen. Pannu (Retd), Helpage India
- Swami Ramadasar
- Ms. Revathy, Cine Actor
- Ms. Smitha Nagaraj, Central Social Welfare Board, New Delhi



I joined Bhavishya Bhavan as a nurse in 1994. Initially I did not have the confidence in dealing with mentally ill patients, but constant guidance from Madam Dr. Sarada Menon and Dr. Shantha Kamath helped me gain the skills to manage all kinds of emergencies, deaths, etc. The number of patients admitted slowly increased and I also had to continuously train new nurses as they joined.

In 2005, I was asked to be the Manager of the centre and had administrative duties also. While this job has been stressful at times, I have felt very happy about having helped many women and elderly men to deal with their problems and many have returned home to live happily with their families. I will never regret this decision of mine to join SCARF and work with the mentally ill women

Sister Omana

Nurse in-charge, Bhavishya Bhavan

Some of the staff members of Bhavishya Bhavan

- Doctors: Shantha Kamath, Mangala R., Mubeen Taj, Ravishankar
- Admin /Nursing: Omana, Geetha Mathew, Ramamurthy, Banumathy

Nurses: Omana, Vimala, Punitha, Parvathy, Mini, Chandra
 Social Workers: Ramalakshmi, Jayanthi, Sajini, Valli, Leena,
 Omega, Kalaveena

Often termed as 'the resort', this facility provides short-term and long-term admission facilities for mentally ill patients of a broad diagnostic spectrum

Bhagwan Mahaveer Manav Sanmarga Seva Kendra (BMMSSK)

Encouraged by the success of running Bhavishya Bhavan, it was decided that there was a need for a similar facility for men. After years of search and persuasion, the Kanchi Mutt gave SCARF on a long lease, a piece of land just before the town of Mahabalipuram. Funds were raised for construction largely from Sugal and Damani Brothers and the Round Table 1. In 1994, the centre started its operations.

Located about 60 km from Chennai, the sea breeze has a cooling and comforting effect on all residents and there is plenty of space for walks, games, etc. It houses 40 patients in the age group of 25 – 70 years. About 40 per cent of the patients residing are above 50 years of age.



Often termed as 'the resort', this facility provides short-term and long-term admission facilities for mentally ill patients of a broad diagnostic spectrum. In the last five years, 335 patients have been admitted while 320 were discharged from this facility. As in all the facilities, there is an emphasis on both psychosocial and recreational activities

Being far away from the city has its disadvantages too. It is often a struggle to get across to the city especially in times of emergencies. When a patient dies, the whole centre plunges into gloom. Visits from family members too, are infrequent, given the distance.

Some of the staff at BMMSSK

Drs. Thara, Padmavati, Hema Tharoor, Aarthi, Ramesh Kumar
 Dhanalakshmi (Nurse), Bhagavathy (Manager)
 Senthilkumar (PSW), Krishnan Nair (Cook)



Working as residential staff in a 40-bedded psychiatric facility for eight years is challenging. I need to be on constant vigil due to occasional unpredictable behaviour of the residents. I liaise between the consultant, patient and family members. Administration, managing the staff, implementing rehab plans, and periodic clinical updates to the psychiatrist are all my responsibilities.

It is heartening when families and patients keep in contact even after discharge. During the stay in the facility, residents enjoy talking casually to us about their lives, job, family and future, and this seems to help them a lot. I feel very happy when patients secure employment and become re-integrated into society. Of course, not all improve to the same extent. Handling emergency situations has been tough. I miss my family especially during festivals but I celebrate them here happily with the patients and staff. I feel privileged to do my job.

Mr. Bagavathi Raj
 Manager, BMMSSK

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Sarada Menon Centre For Schizophrenia Care (SMCS)

Since both Bhavishya Bhavan and BMMSK were located away from the city, SMCS was started in the second floor of the Anna Nagar centre and was inaugurated by the then Health Minister Mr. Thalavai Sundaram.



The interior of the Sarada Menon Centre for Schizophrenia Care, Anna Nagar

This Centre is a forty-bed facility for men and women. Those requiring intense supervision, and rehabilitation inputs and those with physical illnesses are admitted here. They are usually admitted for 2 to 6 weeks. The treatment input is holistic and multi-modal. Inpatients are encouraged to attend the day care centre which takes care of both vocational and rehabilitation needs.

The patients receive both medical and nursing care, 24 hours a day. In addition, the support staff who are present round the clock take care of the day-to-day needs and the ward environment. And they enjoy the wholesome and nutritious food.

Through the Eyes of a Caregiver



My younger sister, a graduate from Delhi University had gone through a difficult one year of marriage and was battling with the symptoms of schizophrenia. My aunt Dr. Akhilam, a colleague of Dr. Sarada Menon at Madras Medical College suggested we place her under the care of Dr. Menon. The journey towards rehabilitation that started in 1986 has been extremely prolonged, stressful but ultimately rewarding. I have been a caregiver for 36 years along with my mother and supportive husband. My grateful thanks to SCARF for its support, care and counselling; the doctors and other staff of Bhavishya Bhavan. I feel the need to share

my experiences for the benefit of those who are presently going through a similar journey.

The initial period of rehabilitation was extremely stressful. When she turned violent, we were forced to admit her in a private hospital at Purasavakkam, Chennai, for a few days till she improved enough to take her home. Based on a discussion between families and Dr. Menon, a few of us got together and arranged for a residential facility at Anna Nagar, but this did not last long. However, much to our relief, a new residential facility was established by SCARF at Thiruverkadu, to house women. Vocational training was also being imparted at this centre. Some of us took a lot of interest to visit regularly and help in running this facility. SCARF expanded its operations by having another residential facility at its main Anna Nagar centre.

At this juncture, my sister was introduced to the new drug Clozapine. This brought in a dramatic improvement in her condition. Regular counselling sessions by senior doctors and counsellors at SCARF coupled with the care and understanding of my mother and I, sustained this improvement. Our family's ability to understand that she is suffering from a condition beyond her control and the perseverance not to lose hope was of utmost importance. It was a tremendous effort and a collective one with the assistance of SCARF that I have been able to achieve this. My sister is now at home, involved in regular household chores and tries her best not to get into stressful situations by engaging herself in tating and playing indoor games. It is now 22 years since she is home and I am extremely happy. I am grateful to Dr. Sarada Menon, Dr. Thara, Dr. Shantha Kamath, Dr. Ravishankar and all the staff of SCARF for their efforts to ensure that my sister has a semblance of a good life.

Gomathy Jayaram

Caregiver



Staff of SMCS

Some of the staff at SMCS

Doctors: All SCARF psychiatrists

Nurses: Shyamala, Sujatha, Chandra, Thulasi, Saroja, Rathika

Cooks: Shanthi, Thirumal, Lalitha

Housekeeping: Anbukarasi, Pathimuthu

Chapter 13

Psychological Services

One of the important clinical services offered at SCARF is the psychological interventions by the team of psychologists. Ms. Latha Srinivasan, one of the early recruits at SCARF initiated the psychological services at SCARF.

Psychological Evaluation: Psychological services include evaluation and psychotherapies. As part of the evaluation process, some of the assessments conducted cover Intelligence Tests, Personality Assessments, Cognitive Assessments, etc. These evaluations would aid in developing



Counselling session at the OPD

Workshops and training programmes are conducted to train students and professionals. SCARF runs a one-year diploma programme on Mental Health Care and Counselling and the team of psychologists take part actively in this course to train the students on basics in psychology and counselling skills

a treatment plan for the individual. Trained psychologists would conduct these assessments with the patients and a detailed report would be provided to them.

Interventions: Based on the assessment and clinical diagnosis of the patient, the psychologist would make a treatment plan for non-pharmacological interventions. Psychotherapy, also otherwise known as ‘Talk Therapy’ helps individuals to cope with their stressful life situations, handle their emotions, set goals and make informed decisions. Psychological therapies delivered here promote one’s self esteem, help individuals in improving their interpersonal relationships, equip them with coping strategies, thereby improving their quality of life. At SCARF, various forms of talk therapies for people with mild to severe mental disorders like Anxiety, Depression, OCD, Schizophrenia, etc., are provided. This is also available for individuals who experience day-to-day problems. Clients along with the therapists examine the causes of the problems and arrive at a possible solution.

Through Supportive Counselling Services, family members are helped to reduce their stress and burden while caring for persons with serious mental illness. Various coping mechanisms like relaxation techniques, mindfulness, etc., are provided to them to deal with the stressors. Also patients and families feel relaxed when they ventilate about their problems to the therapists. The therapist provides non-judgemental and unconditional positive regard which enhances their overall well-being. Psychologists at SCARF facilitate individuals to set goals, have a different outlook towards life and empower them to take ownership of their life.

They also work along with the Rehabilitation team, particularly in delivering Cognitive Remediation for persons with serious mental illness who have mild to moderate cognitive deficits. Psychologists from UK and Australia train and supervise SCARF psychologists on various psychotherapies and help to adapt and modify the therapy to suit local culture.

Training and Education: Students pursuing postgraduation in psychology and those who have completed it, undergo internships at SCARF for 1-3 months. These students are exposed to various psychological assessments and interventions. They shadow the psychologists delivering therapies and



A training programme being conducted

are also encouraged to work with outpatients and inpatients under adequate supervision. Workshops and training programmes are conducted to train students and professionals. SCARF runs a one-year diploma programme on Mental Health Care and Counselling and the team of psychologists take part actively in this course to train the students on basics in psychology and counselling skills. Psychologists also get involved in community mental health activities like creating awareness, training self-help group members and other members of the community about mental health and mental illness.

Capacity building activities: As part of capacity building, they attend workshops on new advances in psychotherapies, psychological assessments, etc. These help them to hone their skills, resources and abilities, and allow the organisation to grow and flourish. Two psychologists at SCARF participated in two different fellowship programmes last year.

Bioethics and Ethics Committee Administration International Fellows Programme: Ms. Subashini Gopal, Psychologist, who is also the member

secretary of the SCARF Institutional Ethics Committee attended a eight-week fellowship organised by Western Institutional Review Board (WIRB) at Seattle, Washington State, USA from 1st March to April 30, 2019.

Understanding the functioning of an IRB, co-ordinating and handling the administrative part of the same were some of the skills acquired during this fellowship.



As a psychologist at SCARF I have a great opportunity to learn more about the psychological aspects of the persons with various mental disorders and develop the skills to help them by working along with a team of mental health professionals. My postgraduation degree in Psychology gave only a theoretical understanding of mental health but my experience at SCARF laid a strong foundation for me to grow as a professional.

I have become better in psychological testing, teaching, supervision, therapies and research. There are many mentors

here and we have access to international ones like Dr. Frances Dark, to hone my skills.

The biggest satisfaction comes from the feedback of patients and families that the therapies are helping them. The encouragement provided by SCARF has enhanced my confidence in my current role as the co-ordinator of Psychological Services.

SCARF gives me the freedom and space to independently co-ordinate and run the Diploma Programme on Mental Health Care and Counselling, successfully for the past 5 years.

I am also the secretary of the IEC of SCARF, which is a unique experience. SCARF is a place filled with lots of opportunities and all that one needs is the willingness to learn and make use of the opportunities in a productive way.

Subashini Gopal

Co-ordinator, Psychological Services

**Through Supportive
Counselling
Services, family
members are helped
to reduce their
stress and burden
while caring for
persons with serious
mental illness**

Ms. Suhavana, Clinical Psychologist attended a fellowship on 'SPIRIT-South Asia Implementation Research Fellowship in Mental Health', for the year 2019-20

This is a research partnership that focuses on bridging the gap in scientific evidence and practice in suicide prevention and mental health interventions in India and Bangladesh. The fellowship gave her insight into the methods of implementation research and policy making.

Research: Psychologists at SCARF focus on various research activities such as adapting intervention modules from the West to suit Indian culture, validating psychological questionnaires, etc. They have also published various research papers in reputed scientific journals. Ms. Greeshma Mohan is pursuing her PhD in the University of Warwick as part of the Warwick India Canada (WIC) capacity building.

Chapter 14

Community Programmes

A turning point in SCARF's history of community mental health was the invitation from the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) to initiate the Rehabilitation component of the programme in 1987

SCARF's clinical services were not confined to clinics and hospitals, but expanded to the community as well. SCARF has played a pivotal and pioneering role in the contributions to community mental health care in the country.

SCARF's foray into community mental health began as a response to a request from a person in Karnambut, North Arcot District, Tamil Nadu leading to a year-long programme (1987–1988). The clinic established there, offered free services and served many persons hitherto untreated.

A turning point in SCARF's history of community mental health was the invitation from the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) to initiate the Rehabilitation component of the programme in 1987. With funds from the Government of India, it was aimed at integrating community-based rehabilitation (CBR) in the NMHP in Thiruporur Block of a population of 100,000.

In the words of Dr Vijay Nagaswami who led this programme: “Integrating a mental health component into an existing CBR programme for persons with physical disabilities, was the way to go. Despite some initial hiccups, it worked like a charm. The Indian Red Cross who ran a CBR programme for persons with physical disabilities in Thiruporur block, permitted us to work with them. We trained their Rural Community Rehabilitation Workers (RCRWs), who were basically volunteers from villages in this block, in the principles of identifying persons with severe mental disorders and bringing them for treatment, which we offered by setting up fortnightly

‘clinics’ at different locations in the area and providing free medicines. We also trained the RCRWs in the basic principles of rehabilitation of such persons, and for an extremely modest stipend, they did a tremendous job.

Initially, it appeared that our interventions would be thwarted by two major religious healing centres in the area—a temple at Hanumanthapuram and a dargah at Kovalam, both well-reputed for healing patients with mental disorders. We soon realised that attempting to dissuade patients from seeking help here was not only futile, but foolishly disruptive of existing support systems in the community. We changed our approach and used these religious centres almost like referral hospitals with the only expectation that the patients who went there would also take medication. We weren't worried about who got the credit for the ‘cure’. But this worked rather well.”



Breaking the chains in Pudukottai

While this project was hugely appreciated in a variety of international fora, such as the WHO, the International Labour Organization and the World Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, SCARF was on the lookout for funds to develop it further. The efforts finally bore fruit with the International Development Research Centre of Canada sanctioning some welcome funds that contributed to its further expansion and development. J.R. Ayankaran the community co-ordinator for many of SCARF's projects in this area has been instrumental in tying together the various human and technical components of the projects in this and adjoining areas.

Over the years, SCARF also ventured into vocational rehabilitation in this area. Setting up small businesses—petty shops, distributing livestock, farming, doll-making, etc., were some of these activities.



The monitoring team from TATA Trust with the SCARF team

Community Programmes

PROGRAMMES	AREA	DURATION	KEY ACTIVITIES	FUNDING
IDRC Project Pilot NMHP	Thiruporur Block	10 + years	Training lay CLW	NMHP IDRC Canada
CBR programme	Karnambut village in North Arcot	1 year	Public awareness, clinics and counselling, training CLWs	Intra mural
Tsunami Psychosocial interventions	East Coast of Tamilnadu - population affected by Tsunami	4 years	Training community volunteers, video consultations, referrals for rehabilitation	OXFAM India PLAN India, Deutsche Bank
STEP	Pudukottai	10 + years	Survey, case detection, tele-psychiatry, mobile, awareness, rehabilitation	TATA Educational Trust
SCARF Beatitudes programme	Vyasarpadi, Chennai	1 year	Clinics, Awareness, target – school students	Don Bosco
SCARF Chetpet programmes	Chennai	Ongoing – 10+ years	Clinics	Anna Lakshmi group of hotels
SCARF – MCDS programme	Patinapakkam		Clinics, outreach	Montford Community Development Society

Community outreach during disaster: Innovations in mental health delivery services:

SCARF's tele-psychiatry project is a pioneering programme which has since been replicated in many parts of the country

When the tsunami of 2004 caused untold human suffering in the coastal districts of Chennai, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam, SCARF was invited by the Tamil Nadu Government, to offer psychological support to the victims.

Using video conferencing, it became possible to reach populations over 400 kilometres away, provide counselling, and support. The technology gradually got better and SCARF acquired larger television screens with

better picture clarity. The initial support came from OXFAM and the Deutsche Bank. Working with another NGO, CHES, they also reached out to the children of affected families. Interventions through trained community workers included counselling of the child, parents, families, behaviour therapy and medications as required. Freemasons of Chennai organised for the funding of this programme from Grand Charities, London and Plan International.

SCARF Tele-psychiatry in Pudukottai (STEP) Programme: By now it was clear that telepsychiatry could be one of the effective tools to reduce the mental health gap in rural areas. TATA Educational Trust sponsored the project in 2010 in Pudukottai district which at that time had very little formal mental health services. Ashok Leyland helped fit a tele-medicine setup in a bus which would provide mobile services to remote areas. A fixed line consultation was also used.



Former Union Minister D. Napoleon (extreme right) inaugurating the Tele-psychiatry bus along with Chairman Mr. R. Seshasayee (left) and Mr. Sujit John (middle)



A tele-medicine setup in a bus to provide mobile services to remote areas

Ashok Leyland helped fit a tele-medicine setup in a bus which would provide mobile services to remote areas

The programme itself consisted of enlisting lay community volunteers who were trained to identify mental health problems in the community. Research assistants screened and recruited subjects who were given treatment after consultations with the psychiatrist sitting in the headquarters at Chennai. Efforts were made to keep tabs on the physical health of the patients as well. All patients were provided medications at the clinics or by the pharmacy on the bus at no cost. In addition, the CLWs were engaged in PSR strategies that included individually tailored interventions, improving access to Disability certificates and other welfare schemes. They also worked on enhancing job opportunities and liaised with other NGOs and service clubs in the area.

While the mobile unit was one of its kind and was globally appreciated, other centres in India began replicating this model. Today, most of the patients have been integrated into the local DMHP and STEP now offers only PSR services.



Relief distribution during COVID times

Kotteswara Rao, who ably coordinated this programme for over seven years, had built an excellent team of research assistants and Community Lay Workers.

The key features of SCARF's community programmes have included

1. **Training of Community Lay Workers:** Volunteers, mostly women who had completed school level education were trained in recognition and identification of mental health problems in the community and referral to appropriate sources of treatments.
2. **Increasing public awareness on mental disorders:** Folk dance, music and drama were used in the rural areas and street plays in the urban communities to spread awareness, and also to demystify mental illnesses as a whole.



Community Lay Workers trained by SCARF

3. **Networking for rehabilitation:** The networking was with government and other NGOs in the community, to facilitate mobilisation of resources for rehabilitation.
4. **Training Community Lay Workers in implementing simple psychosocial rehabilitation:** The focus was on the adaptation of case management techniques that could be delivered by the lay volunteers.
5. **Involvement of the local community:** The local community was involved in many aspects of the programme.



SECTION 6

Blossoms of Light

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Chapter 15

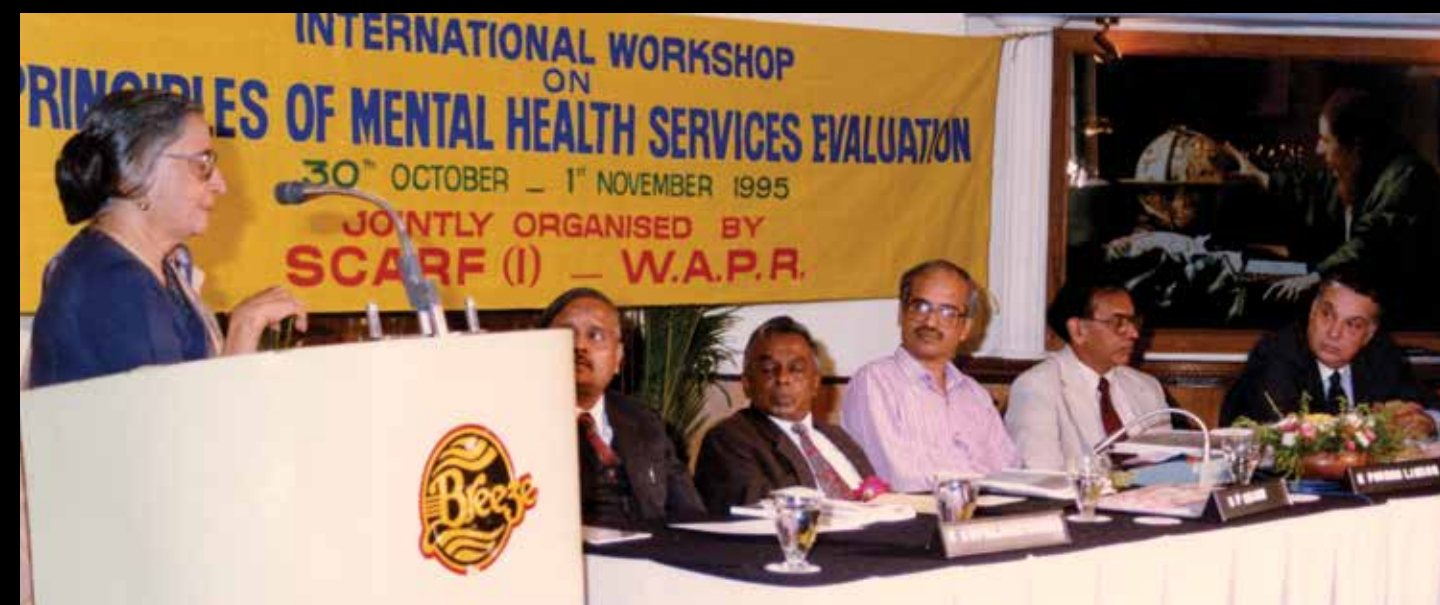
Conferences and International Conference of Schizophrenia (ICONS)

The mental health fraternity of India was quick to take advantage of this rich programme and ICONS was there to stay. It has had eight editions so far and is a greatly valued academic event in this part of the world

SCARF, having established itself as a credible research body, a natural sequel seemed to be to initiate and organise some conferences on subjects that the institution was working on. Some of the more memorable ones were

1. SCARF–MAY & BAKER Symposium on Biology of Schizophrenia, 1985
2. Natural History of Schizophrenia attended by Prof. Michael Shepherd, UK and Prof Hafner from Germany. Both of them also addressed the public at the British Council, 1989
3. LAW Asia Meet. This was a star-studded conference with legal luminaries like the Chief Justice of India and others attending it, 1992
4. IDRC Seminar on Community Mental Health, 1997
5. International Seminar on ‘Disability Caused by Mental Disorders’, along with Indian chapter of World Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, 1999
6. Seminar on Emotional Well-Being with Anna University, 2003
7. SCARF Silver Jubilee Oration by Dr. Marianne Farkas of Boston University, 2009

However, the time seemed ripe to host an International Conference which would not only serve to showcase the work done at SCARF, but also in other parts of India and the world. There were apprehensions about the first edition of ICONS proposed to be held in the year 2004, since there was uncertainty about how many international researchers, they would be able to attract.





This was soon allayed by all the collaborators and their network who responded to SCARF's invitation and there was an amazingly rich faculty from India and abroad speaking on an array of subjects. The mental health fraternity of India was quick to take advantage of this rich programme and ICONS was there to stay. It has had eight editions so far and is a greatly valued academic event in this part of the world.

What delegates say about ICONS

What are the ingredients to success when it comes to providing mental health care in the community and developing a world-class research culture? Contrary to what people might think, it is not lots of money (while that can help, it is not sufficient!). The key ingredient is having senior leaders with passion and vision. This is what makes SCARF such a remarkable organisation. The fact that SCARF has a leadership team of highly skilled clinicians such as Dr. Sarada Menon, Dr. R. Thara and Dr. R. Padmavati is the 'secret' to the success of SCARF. We have been privileged to attend several ICONS meetings—there is no doubt that this is one of the most loved meetings in the field of schizophrenia research. The quality of the research is excellent, and the mix of topics is very distinctive. It is balanced, with input from the expected set of mainstream research topics, but with a stronger focus on rehabilitation, anthropology and sociology. We always come away from these conferences inspired by the science and re-energised by the compassion and energy of this meeting. We congratulate the people who had the vision to create SCARF and look forward to many inspiring meetings in the future.



Prof. John McGrath

*Niels Bohr Professor, Aarhus University Denmark
Queensland Brain Institute, University of Queensland Australia*



Dr. Frances Dark

Metro South Hospital and Health Service, University of Queensland Australia



This combination of an evidence-based practice and an ethically-guided ethos has also been manifest in the biennial ICONS of SCARF research conferences, with an impact far greater than most NGOs (in any country) can achieve, and indeed I recall that one year a keynote speaker was the President of India.

Prof. Sir Graham Thornicroft

Centre for Global Mental Health, King's College London



This wonderful conference remains one of the very best international meetings for schizophrenia research in the world. A perfect mix of world-renowned researchers and early career academics and psychiatrists from across India, the conference embodies all that is special about SCARF – using the very best evidence to inform the compassionate and humane delivery of the most effective interventions to support those with a diagnosis of schizophrenia and their families. It is this that keeps so many of us returning, time after time.

Prof. Craig Morgan

King's College London



What does one associate with ICONS? Its efficiency, the gains in knowledge that it provides, all packaged so well that the delegates do not feel overwhelmed, but yet, gather enough within a short period of time.

There is something for young and seasoned researchers; clinicians and academicians; psychiatrists and allied mental health specialists and 'biologically' and 'psychosocially' oriented professionals. ICONS brings the best of Indian research in schizophrenia to the rest of the world and vice-versa: to use an oft-quoted cliché, one gets the best of both worlds in this conference. I wish the SCARF team the very best and hope that organisers of other conferences emulate them.

Dr. Jagadisha Thirthalli

*Professor of Psychiatry and I/C Head of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services,
Department of Psychiatry, NIMHANS, Bangalore*



I have attended all but the first edition of ICONS. I value this conference as the most enriching one. ICONS provide the best opportunity to learn about what is happening around the world on schizophrenia. The scientific sessions are so absorbing that, you do not realise that the whole day has passed. One has the opportunity to meet and interact with all the big names in schizophrenia research, and to develop collaborations with colleagues from other institutions. Anyone who is interested in schizophrenia cannot afford to miss this conference.

Dr. Sandeep Grover

Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh

While the COVID situation abruptly interrupted the smooth flow of ICONS, it will surely be able to resume soon. For more details, one can access www.iconsosscarf.org.

SCARF has over 300 published articles to its credit and they are all available on www.scarfindia.org.

Chapter 16

SCARF and Research

Research and academic activities have been one of the primary objectives of SCARF from its inception. Unlike clinical services which were easy to initiate and get a response from the public, to start off research activities was a far more complex task.

The critical elements required to initiate research in any new organisation are: What are the important and relevant areas of research for our population? Do we have the appropriate and trained staff to carry it out? Are there financial resources to fund the research?

Sometimes, existing and on-going work comes in handy to provide a start. Dr. Thara had been following a group of persons with schizophrenia right from 1984, as part of the SOFACOS study of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Even after the external funding stopped, she decided to follow up this group at SCARF. She was able to convince a leading researcher, Prof. William Eaton of the reputed Johns Hopkins University in the US to help with data analyses. The proposal was funded by National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), USA and the 10-year follow up data analyses was started.

This was a great forerunner to many similar collaborations and was personally an exercise which imparted many new skills in research. Dr. Thara has continued to follow up this group for 35 years and the Madras Longitudinal Study is one of the well-known long-term follow-up studies from this part of the world. A spate of publications was contributed by SCARF from this data.

Dr. Thara had been following a group of persons with schizophrenia right from 1984, as part of the SOFACOS study of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)



I have spent my career studying schizophrenia and other mental disorders from the perspective of public health, and was delighted to meet with Dr. Thara and learn about the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) in Chennai, about 25 years ago. The data on course of schizophrenia that had been collected at SCARF was in many ways the most useful and highest quality available in the world, and I had no trouble obtaining a NIMH grant to analyse it, attracting the most skilful biostatisticians at Johns Hopkins to participate in the project.

These analyses led to several publications in internationally known journals. I visited SCARF several times, and hosted Dr. Thara at the Department of Mental Health of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health several times. I have been impressed with the dedication and scientific ability of SCARF leadership and staff and it truly inspires mental health organisations around the world.

Prof. William W. Eaton, PhD

Professor and Former Chair, Department of Mental Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA

Around the same time, the World Health Organization (WHO) initiated a study called ISOS (International Study of Schizophrenia). Dr. Thara convinced WHO to include her follow-up sample in ISOS since the methodology was similar. This led to a spate of meetings in different parts of the world where she was able to network with persons from reputed centres and convince them of SCARF's passion for and capacity to do research.

Soon, the WHO also named SCARF as their Collaborating Centre for Mental Health Research and Training—it is worth noting that very few NGOs around the world have been accorded such a status. SCARF continues to be a WHO Collaborating Centre.

Some of our Collaborators

William Eaton	Johns Hopkins University	USA	Long term follow-up of schizophrenia
Ellen Corin, Gilles Bibeau	Douglas Hospital	Canada	Anthropological aspects
Robin McCreddie	Dumfries Hospital	Scotland	Untreated psychosis
Bryan Mowry	University of Queensland	Australia	Genetics of schizophrenia
Graham Thornicroft, Vikram Patel	King's College	UK	Community based interventions
Ashok Malla	Douglas Hospital	Canada	First episode psychosis
Craig Morgan, Alex Cohen	King's College	UK	INTREPID study
Swaran Singh	University of Warwick	UK	FEP and school-based interventions
Tanya Lührman	Stanford University	USA	Auditory hallucinations

Soon, the WHO also named SCARF as their Collaborating Centre for Mental Health Research and Training—it is worth noting that very few NGOs around the world have been accorded such a status. SCARF continues to be a WHO Collaborating Centre

As the world began to see SCARF's passion for research and the rigour in collecting data and dealing with it, more international bodies forged highly enriching and fruitful collaborations. Some of the longest have been with Dr. Robin McCreddie on untreated psychosis, Dr. Bryan Mowry of Queensland on genetics of schizophrenia, Dr. Ashok Malla of Canada on First Episode Psychosis and now the ongoing INTREPID study with Sir Robin Murray and Prof. Craig Morgan of the UK. These have not only led to increments in knowledge but have also helped refine the service delivery and treat many more untreated persons.

Today, SCARF is a nationally and internationally-reputed research centre having completed close to 100 research projects and published around 300 papers in peer-reviewed journals. Apart from this, research grants have helped by enabling SCARF to improve the infrastructure, library and get more computers. Since many of the regular staff work on these projects, the financial burden on SCARF is significantly reduced. Many young persons have shaped their careers based on their experience at SCARF.

The collaboration with Dr. McCreadie dealt with an interesting area of abnormal movements in untreated psychosis.



I first visited India (SCARF) in 1994. From then until 2010, I was in India almost every year and sometimes twice a year. The main reason for my visits was to carry out research in an understudied area—namely abnormal movements in people with schizophrenia. It was thought that the anti-psychotic drugs used to treat schizophrenia could produce these abnormal movements, called ‘tardive dyskinesia’. However, many years before the discovery of these drugs, a noted German psychiatrist, Emil Kraepelin, had described abnormal movements in some patients with very long-standing schizophrenic illnesses.

The best way to examine this was to study never ever treated persons with schizophrenia in rural areas where mental health services were not easily available. Many visits were made to rural villages up to 50 km from Chennai. Over the years, Dr. Thara’s team and I, examined several hundred patients. We did indeed find that abnormal movements, some quite disfiguring, were not uncommon in patients who had certainly never been treated with drugs.

Our findings, published in many papers in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* and other journals over the years suggested that the drugs probably didn’t cause dyskinesia but probably brought to light something that was already there.

It goes without saying of course that these patients were then offered treatment free of cost.

This body of work could not have been done without the enthusiasm and sheer hard work of many people working at SCARF. I will only mention one person: Social worker Ayankaran. He was indefatigable in his travels throughout the villages. And at the end of many a long day, far from Chennai, he would say—‘Come on, Doc, just one more village;’!

Prof. Robin McCreadie

Formerly Director of Clinical Research, Crichton Royal Hospital, Dumfries and Honorary Professor of Psychiatry, University of Glasgow, Scotland

Two of the early collaborators of SCARF have been the anthropologists Ellen Corin and Gilles Bibeau of McGill University, Canada. Apart from being good friends, they have attended many editions of ICONS.



More than twenty years already. And the vivid and stimulating character of our first encounter in Chennai, around 1996, remains as a precious memory. As an anthropologist and researcher attached to Douglas Hospital, Montreal, Canada, I arrived at SCARF with many questions to explore the role of culture and help-seeking on the outcome of schizophrenia.

On the basis of research conducted in various cultures, including Quebec, on perceptions and reactions related to mental health, we designed an instrument called the “Turning Point Interview” (TPI). This is a qualitative and rigorous exploration of the various phases of the evolution of the problems as perceived by patients and by family members, since the very first signs of disturbance.

Under the supervision and with the active involvement of Drs. Padmavati and Thara, the TPI was applied in various settings in SCARF. Interviews conducted in temples and darghas revealed another perspective on why people sought help from religious centres. The role of religious attitudes in shaping and orienting the reactions of patients and relatives were compared between the two sites in India and Canada. The findings provided us a lot of insights into behaviours of patients and families.

We also had the pleasure and the privilege to present these at several ICONS conferences. My collaboration with SCARF has been a very enriching human and professional experience.

Prof. Emerita Ellen Corin

McGill University, Canada

From anthropology to genetics—SCARF has indeed tried its hand at everything. The genetic study with Dr. Bryan Mowry of the University of Queensland, Australia was yet another landmark study which went on for close to 20 years with funding from NHMRC, Australia. Apart from many publications, the striking finding was the discovery of a novel gene associated with niacin metabolism.



I first met Dr. Thara in 1999 in New York after corresponding about the possibility of setting up a collaborative project. That meeting consolidated our initial planning and preparation for our first competitive funding application. Since then, we have been fortunate to obtain continuous Australian funding for our work up to the present.

Among other activities, this funding stream has enabled the establishment of a blood processing genetic lab within SCARF. It has also been possible to foster a number of young scientists to conduct

PhD studies. In mid-2019 we published a novel gene association with schizophrenia, underlining the importance of conducting studies in all world ethnicities.

I have always been impressed with the dedication, commitment, and hard work of the SCARF team I have worked with over the years. Sujit John stands out as a wonderful clinical co-ordinator for all the projects I have been involved in.

Thara's leadership is second to none: she is a generous, intelligent, focused, and highly effective psychiatrist and advocate for the mentally ill, as reflected in her many awards nationally and internationally.

The SCARF collaboration has been a source of great joy in my life.

Dr. Bryan Mowry

University of Queensland, Australia

Tanya Luhrman from Stanford University worked with SCARF on auditory hallucinations which she elucidates.



Being involved with SCARF has been one of the most important experiences of my career. I first made contact with SCARF through ICONS, which I found to be one of the most inspiring conferences I have ever attended. I was captured by the combination of scientific integrity and cultural sophistication.

Then I met Thara and Padma, who encouraged me to do research there. Thara, Padma and Hema Tharoor have been wonderful colleagues. They warmly invited me to work with them, and through them I have written some of the papers of which I have been most proud.

It was Thara who first suggested that we compare the experience of 'hearing voices' in Chennai and the US. I worked with Padma and Hema on this project, but really it was the generosity and effectiveness of the entire SCARF team that made the research so good. The team found patients for us to interview, facilitated interviews during the time I was present, and enabled us to do follow-up interviews. Padma and Hema did the first round of Chennai interviews, but when I visited, the SCARF team enabled me to interview more patients, and to see the way the entire SCARF organisation worked—the outreach teams in the villages, the services in Mahabalipuram, and so forth.

SCARF is a remarkable institution—warm, professional and well run, offering remarkable care in sometimes difficult circumstances. I am so, so proud of my association with SCARF.

Dr. Tanya Marie Luhrmann

*Howard H. and Jessie T. Watkins University Professor of Anthropology
(and Professor, by courtesy, of Psychology) Stanford University, USA*

As SCARF progressed with its research activities, many active researchers joined SCARF. One of them was Dr. T.N. Srinivasan who was able to work on new projects, manage research teams, analyse data and publish papers. He is now settled in Australia and this is what he has to say.

The stint with SCARF that shaped my career



The years I spent at SCARF not only shaped my research career, but my life as well. I feel compelled to share this experience with young researchers who are hesitating to venture into, what they see as, the 'lion's den'- the world of Research. The mention of the word Research can sound very daunting, bring the vision of serious looking people absorbed in numbers that only they or their computers can understand, get funded by exotic agencies, fly all around the world, and talk in a language that seems alien. This supernatural image of a researcher makes one conclude that "Research is something others do, not me".

If the word 'Research' in 'Schizophrenia Research Foundation' conjures that image, erase it. If you want to know how research can be carried out in a simple way, as a relevant activity capable of translation into practice for the benefit of millions of people and families carrying the burden of mental illness, you should work with SCARF. My association with SCARF for over two decades started indirectly in 1981 when I was working with Dr.Thara and Dr. Rajkumar who were the founding members of the organisation led by the illustrious Dr. Sarada Menon. However, it was in 1994 that Dr Thara, in her inimitable style, asked me, "TN what are you doing? Why don't you come to SCARF?" I was excited and took a formal position with the organisation as a part-time consultant and research co-ordinator.

Working with SCARF, made me realise that research can be carried out successfully and enjoyed, if one has the aptitude for it. It takes organisation, dedication, persistence, and hard work to ask the right questions and take the right path to find the answers. And the supportive and promotive network of people at SCARF makes this possible. The

demystification of research that SCARF fostered, infused the rest of my career till now, and will continue. Work with SCARF has given me an identity and recognition by people who matter to me.

At SCARF, my research was largely clinical, and I had access to a lode of research data collected meticulously over decades. We were able to mine this high-quality data without any additional funds, publish and draw the attention of researchers across the world. What I learnt in terms of clinical research at SCARF, I continue to apply in my practice even today which other clinicians also can. Many of my publications helped break the myth of impregnability of reputed international journals. SCARF does not merely employ people but also plants the seeds of passion for research, and encourages its growth. It empowers its staff to learn and gives the freedom to perform to the best of their ability. I was given all the opportunities to explore what I wanted in the way I wanted to. SCARF gave me that environment and encouragement to research... and continues to do so.

In low resource settings, research is best directed towards improving the lives of people with mental health issues and their families.. Research should not be an activity divorced from the people we care for. Research IS and SHOULD be about caring for them, caring in a scientific and organised manner that others can learn. This kind of Research addressing the needs of people who are disadvantaged socially and economically, has been SCARF's strength and achievement. The healthy co-existence of service and research at SCARF has been of immense benefit to consumers and their families and thereby, the society at large.

This co-existence of research and care is not a Utopian dream. SCARF was born with a dream of its founders and I am proud that I was able to play my cameo role in that Dream, like the tiny squirrel that was said to have helped Lord Rama build the bridge to reach Lanka. Today, many young people are working with SCARF, adding their own little mite to sustain that Dream and making it their own dream as well. When I see and interact with the young researchers at SCARF, I can see myself reliving my own experience of learning and growth in the warmth and comfort that the scarf of SCARF surrounded me with when I was a young professional.

Dr. T.N. Srinivasan

Senior Staff Specialist, Hunter New England Mental Health, NSW, Australia

Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of SCARF

The Institutional Ethics Committee of SCARF, mandatory for any research organisation was started in the year 2003. All research projects proposed at SCARF go through the committee for approval. The purpose of the establishment of IEC is to formalise and specify the institution's commitment to the promotion of high scientific and ethical standards in research conducted at and by SCARF by valuing community interests. The intention of the IEC is to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of the human research participants. IEC has multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral team members. SCARF acknowledges the role of Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar, Chair IEC and other members.

All research projects proposed at SCARF go through the committee for approval. The purpose of the establishment of IEC is to formalise and specify the institution's commitment to the promotion of high scientific and ethical standards in research conducted at and by SCARF by valuing community interests

Research Management

Research project management can be broadly divided into three sections (1) managing the scientific components of the study (2) financial management and (3) administrative management.

1. The first involves adherence to the protocol, data collection and developing the digital database and managing it (done in association with the data manager), supervising the team members, etc. Other activities under this head would include submission of reports as required, keeping the Principal Investigator (PI) abreast of all developments and co-ordinating with partner agencies and institutions as necessary.
2. Financial management as the term implies refers to drawing up the budget, forecasting expenditure, sticking to the budget requirements for instance, purchase of capital goods, drawing up utilisation certificates and certificates of expenditure in the required formats. This work is done in close co-ordination with the finance and accounts department of the organisation.
3. Administrative management refers to everything from pre-project planning including making available all due records and certification starting with the application process, creating accounts with the funding agency, submission of all required documents such as the



Research papers

due diligence forms, drawing up of MOUs with partner organisations, acquiring insurances policies, ethics committee approvals, etc. The other component involves hiring of the required staff as per the HR policy of the organisation, training them, evaluating their performance, etc.

The hierarchy followed at SCARF for the research team is that it is headed by the Principal Investigator, followed by the Project Co-ordinator and then the Research Assistants and all other team members including the Database Manager, etc. A good Project Co-ordinator is critical to the success of the project—senior enough to elicit respect, knowledgeable, tactful and firm.

On-going Projects

The Warwick India Canada (WIC) study is a collaboration between SCARF, AIIMS, University of Warwick and Douglas Hospital. It addresses issues related to youth mental health and first episode psychosis,

Prof. Swaran Singh, Principal Investigator of the study has this to say:



When India launched the National Mental Health Programme in the 80s to improve the lives of those with serious mental disorders, many of whom were still languishing in long-stay hospitals, three psychiatrists in Chennai had the vision, drive and courage to start a community-based organisation, Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) which would not only provide care and treatment but also engage in high-quality research. I had heard about SCARF even during my psychiatry training at PGI, Chandigarh in the late 80s. I started attending the ICONS (International Conference on Schizophrenia) meetings, perhaps the most informative,

high-profile and productive of all psychiatric conferences in India. Over the past 30 years, I have been hugely impressed by the sheer scale and scope of SCARF's ambition, and more importantly its ability to conduct world-class research while providing state-of-the-art care and support to the mentally ill individuals and their families in Tamil Nadu and beyond.

When an opportunity arose, with UK's Department of Health and Social Care for funding projects in Low and Middle Income Countries (LAMIC), we successfully bid for a grant, the WIC (Warwick-India-Canada) project. WIC brought together knowledge and expertise from four internationally recognised institutions with a single overarching ambition—to reduce the total burden of psychotic disorders in those living in LAMIC. The UK Department of Health was very impressed by our early work and have given us an additional grant to extend the work.

SCARF is a remarkable organisation—an exemplar of what can be achieved with motivation, drive, energy and relentless pursuit of excellence despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The three women who have led SCARF—Dr. Menon, Dr. Thara, and Dr. Padmavati—are inspirational individuals and it has been my privilege to know and work with them. Long may it continue.

Prof. Swaran Singh

Director, Centre for Mental Health and Well-being Research, University of Warwick, UK

INTREPID: This is an important international project into its fourth year now. It is a collaboration between SCARF, Centres in Nigeria and Trinidad and King's College London.

The Principal Investigator Craig Morgan says



I began working with Thara and colleagues at SCARF on developing a project to study the presentation, onset, and outcomes of schizophrenia and other psychoses in three countries: India, Nigeria, and Trinidad. This became INTREPID. Twelve years on, and now in its second phase, INTREPID has grown into the largest multi-country study to date of the epidemiology of psychoses in the global South. This has been one of the most rewarding projects I have worked on.

Two things in particular stand out. The dedication of all at SCARF to deliver research of the highest quality and methodological rigour, has been an inspiration. This is most reflected in the brilliant stewardship of Sujit, whose rare blend of good humour, patience, and attention to detail has kept the programme on track, despite many challenges.

I have visited many times and highlights include meeting the wonderful team of women who, in their roles as community workers, survey the study catchment area to identify study participants. But, above all, it's been great fun. It's been a pleasure to work with Thara and other PIs, Oye Gureje and Gerard Hutchinson, whose collective generosity, wit, and intelligence have made INTREPID such an enjoyable programme. I will never forget Thara trying to explain the rules of cricket to a bemused Alex Cohen while watching a 20:20 game during a programme meeting in Trinidad! There are many other similarly warm memories.

In sum, SCARF realises a vision of blending world-leading research and the highest quality of care to provide an inspiring service for its users and a model for us all.

Prof. Craig Morgan

Principal Investigator, INTREPID, King's College, London

Alex Cohen is an anthropologist at Harvard. He has worn many hats as a researcher, teacher and mentor. Alex and SCARF go back a long way.



In 2004, I foolishly declined Thara's invitation to speak at the first International Conference on Schizophrenia but have attended all of the subsequent conferences. During the past 15 years, I have had the privilege of co-authoring papers with Thara and collaborating with her and the talented SCARF staff on the INTREPID research project, an epidemiological project about psychosis in catchment areas in India, Nigeria and Trinidad.

This research revisits WHO studies which found that the incidence of schizophrenia was fairly constant and concluded that its course and outcome were better in

the developing world. The overarching hypothesis of the INTREPID research is that the incidence of schizophrenia and other psychoses vary across countries and that the cross-cultural profiles of course and outcome are far more complicated than has been generally assumed for the past five decades.

Prof. Alex Cohen
Harvard University

Intramural Research

The vast experience of working on funded high standard research over the years has encouraged a number of intramural studies in SCARF.

Some of them were:

1. Observational research like understanding metabolic consequences in patients, fertility patterns, perceptions of mental illnesses, physical activities by patients, sexuality, etc.
2. Interventional research like use of adjuvant therapy such as anti-diabetic medications, oestrogen supplements, etc.



The INTREPID team

3. Service research such as reasons for admission to the residential facilities, help-seeking patterns, understanding the effectiveness of use of technology in service delivery and the role of cognitive interventions.
4. Research done as part of Dip NB course.

Currently, two psychologists are pursuing their PhDs.

SCARF Publications

SCARF has over 300 publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals such as *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, *Schizophrenia Research*, *British Journal of Psychiatry*, *World Psychiatry*, *Archives of General Psychiatry* and Indian journals such as the *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, etc. SCARF faculty Drs. Thara and Padmavati are on the editorial committees of many journals.

Research Awards

Marfatia Awards given by the Indian Psychiatric Society for the best published papers have been given to SCARF a few times. Dr. Thara won the prestigious award for excellence in clinical and community research from the Schizophrenia International Research Society (SIRS) in 2020.

Dr. Vijayaraghavan, a young researcher in SCARF relates his experiences.

My experience with SCARF as a young psychiatrist

When I compare myself, jagged and rough, fresh out of my psychiatry residency programme in 2015, with what I am now, I sense a gradual transformation to a nuanced and skilful mental health professional. What

made this possible and how have I built my capacity in various spheres? This is the story I wish to share of my personal and professional growth.

Why did I join SCARF?

Even as a student, I was passionate about research. After graduation, when I looked around for suitable organisations that would help fuel this desire, the only one I was convinced about was SCARF. The range of research done at SCARF as evidenced by the publications and their translation to improve patient care was unparalleled. So, the day after I gave my final MD Psychiatry exams (and known that I had cleared them, tentatively!), I landed at the doors of SCARF and was ecstatic when Dr. Thara, then Director told me that I could join SCARF on a research project.

Work experience

Ikigai, the Japanese word comes to my mind when I think about the work experience at SCARF. SCARF has provided me the best place to do—what I love, what is important, what I am good at—mental health research and services. The work culture at SCARF is so facilitatory for independent thinking and pursuit of your ideas. The system here is not rigid and although there is an inevitable hierarchy, this is not stifling. Everybody



Dr. Vijayaraghavan

is treated with respect and dignity and all rational ideas are encouraged. The atmosphere permits good inter-personal relationships and sharing of knowledge and experience.

Skills Gained

Working with SCARF's clinical services in OPD, inpatient care and tele-psychiatry services, gave me the experience in dealing with a wide range of diagnostic conditions. Teamwork is the rule of the game here and guidance is for the asking. This has also made me humble, respect the work of all mental health professionals and work together as a team.

I can confidently opine that SCARF is on par with any international institution in research. From the beginning, I have been exposed and involved in various research projects at SCARF, many of them in collaboration with reputed international researchers and institutions, and this gave me the opportunity to directly interact and learn cutting edge research from them. Mentoring by seasoned researchers is plenty.

ICONS, SCARF's biennial conference is a dream come true. I got to meet the doyens of psychiatry whose papers I have read and whom I never imagined I would be able to meet in person. They were also so open and approachable for informal conversations even with young people like me.

Over time, I was able to develop protocols, implement research projects, collect and analyse data and write research articles. It is amazing to see the reputation of SCARF in the international research community, evidenced by the success rate of my getting fellowships that I applied for.

SCARF enabled me to also hone my leadership skills a lot. Working with leaders such as Drs. Thara, Padmavati and Mr. Sujit John and imbibing their ways helped a lot. I too have been able to work with different groups of people, keep them motivated and happy and help them grow along with the project. It is like working in an extended family or even better!

“From the beginning, I have been exposed and involved in various research projects at SCARF, many of them in collaboration with reputed international researchers and institutions, and this gave me the opportunity to directly interact and learn cutting edge research from them. Mentoring by seasoned researchers is plenty”



SECTION 7

Towards Fruition

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Chapter 17

Training and Education

In the early years, SCARF experimented with running short-term certificate courses—in psychosocial rehabilitation and in research methods—the latter combined theory with practice

Today, SCARF has the distinction of being a reputed centre for education and training. While training did not figure as one of the initial objectives of SCARF, it became evident along the way that the institution was concomitantly providing a lot of “training” to people from various backgrounds. SCARF has the distinction of being one of the few NGOs the world over to be recognised as a WHO Co-ordinating Centre for Mental Health Research and Training.

In the early years, SCARF experimented with running short-term certificate courses—in psychosocial rehabilitation and in research methods—the latter combined theory with practice. This laid the foundation for more structured programmes.

Internship Programmes

SCARF is a much sought after centre for internships, for students from many Colleges/ Departments of Social Work, Psychology, Occupational Therapy and Nursing. The students are exposed to various aspects of care and treatment, that include history-taking, evaluation, planning psychosocial interventions, group therapies, vocational rehabilitation and other interventions.

Students are also encouraged to organise various activities like public awareness campaigns, fundraising, mobilising welfare benefits for patients or accessing legal aid. Psychology interns learn various psychometry methods and nursing interns are involved in residential care settings.

More recently, SCARF has had a few law students intern with them. Those studying Architecture, Journalism and Mass Communication, have also approached SCARF for internships.

SCARF has had many international students visit and even from semester-at-sea programmes. One such programme was led by Ricki who writes :

“My association with SCARF began in 1991 when I, Ricki (standing next to Dr. Menon) brought a group of American students traveling in the Semester-at-Sea (SAS) program to tour the facility. Seven years later, I brought another SAS group to SCARF and had the opportunity to meet and talk with Dr. Thara.

During our conversation, I mentioned that I knew Alex Cohen very well. On hearing that, Thara, without saying a word, stood up and left her office, leaving me wondering about this abrupt behaviour. Thara soon



Ricki (next to Dr. Sarada Menon) and other international students from the semester-at-sea programme

Over the years, two of SCARF's students Dr. Yamini Kannappan and Dr. Sindhu Maran were awarded the Dr. Sarada Menon Gold Medal for the best outgoing student in Psychiatry at the national level

returned with an article Alex had written in which he had been critical of cross-cultural research on schizophrenia. I was impressed.”

Since then SCARF has had many international students interning in Psychology and Social Work from all over the world.

Training in Research

Research, one of SCARF's main activities has also been taught to many students over the years. Several areas of practical relevance have been addressed, such as training young students in research methods and actually guiding students to do small research projects. In recent years, SCARF has conducted annual workshops to build research capacities for students and early career researchers in Research Methodology, Questionnaire Construction and in Qualitative Research methods. This has been led by Samarth, a Social Science NGO in Chennai in collaboration with SCARF.



Training programme of Samarth and SCARF

PhD Programmes

Dr. Thara is a recognised PhD guide for the Dr. MGR Medical University, for those pursuing research in Mental Health. She has guided students of Psychology, Social Work, Psychiatry and Nursing.

Postgraduate Training in Psychiatry

A major accomplishment of SCARF has been to start the Diplomate of National Board (DipNB) programme in Psychiatry in 2009. Till date,

SCARF has successfully trained twenty postgraduates in Psychiatry. Over the years, two of SCARF's students Dr. Yamini Kannappan and Dr. Sindhu Maran were awarded the Dr. Sarada Menon Gold Medal for the best outgoing student in Psychiatry at the national level. This has been a matter of pride for SCARF. The training of the DNB students involves clinical discussions, case conference presentations, seminar topics, therapy demonstration sessions and lectures on all aspects of Psychiatry. The students from all over the country are both primary candidates (post MBBS) and secondary (post DPM). They are also mentored and encouraged to make presentations at national and international conferences. Currently there are six students pursuing the degree.



Gold medalists both; Dr. Yamini Kannappan (l) and Dr. Sindhu Maran (r)



Diploma in Mental Health Care and Counselling

Another milestone in training has been the introduction of the one-year Diploma course in Mental Health Care and Counselling in 2016. The aim was to create and train a group of interested persons on basic principles of mental health and disorders and equip them to help others deal with their emotional/psychological issues in an informal manner.

Practitioners of Homeopathy and Ayurveda, teachers in schools and colleges, lawyers, students of psychology and even family members of persons with mental disorders, have all completed the course. In the last



MOU with NIMHANS

Another milestone in training has been the introduction of the one-year Diploma course in Mental Health Care and Counselling in 2016

four years, 53 people have successfully completed the Diploma course. This course received more recognition when NIMHANS collaborated with SCARF and their faculty to teach these students. While this course does not give the students the licence to practise as professional counsellors, the knowledge they obtain, makes them more sensitive to mental health issues and help others in distress.

Training in Intervention Methodologies

In the recent years, SCARF has initiated two training programmes:

Certificate Course in Psychosocial Rehabilitation: In a collaborative venture with the Madras School of Social work, SCARF initiated the first programme—30 hours spread over three weeks in January 2020. It was well-received and SCARF was urged to hold more such courses. The course had to go online during the COVID-19 pandemic in August-September 2020 and is likely to be held at least three times a year.

On SCARF and Dr. Sarada Menon



Misconceptions shroud the understanding of mental health compounded by a dearth of trained mental health professionals to deliver services to millions of Indians suffering from serious mental disorders. But SCARF has continued on its journey to provide clinical services, rehabilitation and advocacy in a very evidence-based manner. Recently, they have started a one-year diploma course that would provide training to those willing to join hands with Mental Health professionals. I learn that they have plans to provide other similar programmes. My congratulations to all the dedicated personnel of SCARF.

For an NGO, finding funds is always a struggle and SCARF is no exception. While some sensitive philanthropist and business houses have contributed to SCARF, much more needs to be done to continue the current work and for future diversification and expansion. I appeal to all who can afford, to generously help SCARF to do its immensely important work and also as a token of appreciation for the small band of dedicated workers. Through this publication which SCARF has brought out to recount its history, I convey my appreciation and thanks to all at SCARF and wish them success in all their tasks ahead.

Mr. R. Kannan

Director, Shriram Group

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT): This is delivered by SCARF's psychiatrist Dr. Hema Tharoor to groups of mental health professionals interested in CBT.

Community Level Workers (CLW)

Training Community Level Workers by SCARF was initiated in the early 90s in the IDRC project and has since then continued over several programmes such as the COPSI, STEP and INTREPID. The training focused largely on identification of mental health problems, on referral



Warm greetings from the Madras School of Social Work (MSSW)

I am delighted to know that a book on the history of SCARF is being published. SCARF has etched itself an indelible place in the history of mental health care in the country.

Apart from providing the much-needed succour to persons with mental illness, it has been providing training to multitudes of students from a host of disciplines including Psychiatry, Social Work, Rehabilitation Science and so on.

It is apt that this book is dedicated to Padma Bhushan Dr. M. Sarada Menon, a legend in the field of Mental Health, whose intense commitment to mental health care has transformed many lives.

It is a privilege for us to partner with SCARF on student internships, training programmes and more recently an online certificate course on Psychosocial Rehabilitation.

I have found the faculty and staff of SCARF to be highly competent in their area of expertise and very committed to mental health care. I have great pleasure in wishing the Founder, Director and Staff of SCARF, all the very best in their endeavours and prayers for countless years of committed service to humanity.

Dr. S. Raja Samuel

Principal, Madras School of Social Work

systems and in administration of simple psychosocial interventions. Women from the local community with some basic education are trained and recruited to work in these projects. The outcome has been most gratifying since these CLWs were indeed a critical component for the success of these programmes.



Women from Self-Help Groups attend a training programme

Training of Self-Help Group Members: A collaboration with Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW)

SCARF along with TNCDW has initiated training of self-help group members (over 30 lakhs in number officially) on principles of mental health to equip them to detect early symptoms of mental distress and provide basic support. A syllabus was drawn up, training materials were developed and the training has begun in many districts of the State. This is a pioneering programme capable of being scaled up and replicated in other parts of the country.

Chapter 18

Creating Awareness

Public awareness and anti-stigma campaigns, busting myths and misconceptions surrounding mental health, have been a strong focus of SCARF's activities since inception. Three and a half decades ago, when health awareness programmes were primarily government-driven and focused mostly on physical health-related themes, SCARF was one of the pioneering organisations to initiate dialogue on mental health and conduct periodic awareness programmes in the community in various formats.

SCARF was probably one of the first institutions in India to observe World Schizophrenia Day on May 24, which was already being observed in several countries

Initial Campaigns

The earliest campaigns were at the Karnambut village in North Arcot District followed by Thiruporur, where a Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) programme was conducted. Well-known persons from various walks of life were roped in to talk to the people in the community.

Over the years, these programmes have evolved, have become more structured and tailored to address the different target groups and adopted different methods.

Partnering with the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) Anti-stigma Campaign for Schizophrenia

The 20th anniversary of SCARF, an important milestone, was made very special by the presence of the then President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. When he made the audience take an oath to treat persons with mental illnesses with respect, the anti-stigma campaign of SCARF reached



Former President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam at the 20th Anniversary celebrations of SCARF, 2004

out to a great number of people across the country. SCARF was the Indian partner for the campaign initiated by WPA.

World Schizophrenia Day

SCARF was probably one of the first institutions in India to observe World Schizophrenia Day on May 24, which was already being observed in several countries.

Some of the activities SCARF undertook in 2004 were:

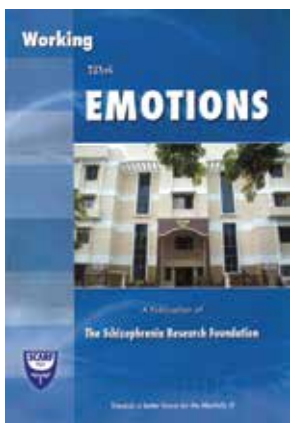
- A short message on schizophrenia was sent to all subscribers of BSNL cellular phones in the city which was quite a huge number.
- The State-run Aavin milk which is delivered to numerous households, carried a two-line message printed on the sachets distributed in Chennai with SCARF's phone number, but this resulted in SCARF receiving complaints about the milk for the next couple of days!
- Posters pasted on to the backs of city buses.

Since then, every year, World Schizophrenia Day has been observed with a wide variety of programmes ranging from rallies, talk shows, contests, melas, art exhibitions and job fairs.



Experimenting with different ways of communicating on Mental Health

One target group was students and teachers in schools and colleges. A short film made on Schizophrenia and SCARF by a group of college students was used for this.



A street theatre group with staff members and service users was formed and formally trained. This group travelled to several parts of the city and performed skits to raise awareness on schizophrenia. The disbelief and surprise that the team evoked amidst the onlookers, when they revealed their experiences with schizophrenia turned into admiration and better understanding about the illness. SCARF could not continue with the same team beyond a few years due to various reasons but it still remains one of the institution's most effective strategies for some groups.

After each of these events, there was a small but significant increase in the number of people seeking help from the OPD.



- The annual Maitri awards for caregivers of persons with mental illnesses and Aadhar awards for persons providing employment for service users, helped improve public understanding of mental health-related issues
- The print media played an important role by providing good coverage for the event
- A couple of other organisations were inspired to institute similar awards in their places of work
- When a job fair was organised to facilitate jobs for service users, the support from sensitised potential employers was heartening

Partnering for Better Reach

- A booklet titled 'Working with Emotions' was brought out in English and Tamil as a simple guide to understanding mental health issues and was used to educate industrial workers and employers about managing mental health-related challenges.

Mental Health Café

- Open forum to discuss mental health topics over coffee
- First of its kind in India
- Quarterly event
- Panelists from different fields
- Interactive sessions in English and Tamil

- Branches of the Indian Medical Association were addressed on various issues of mental health.

Radio and Television

Over the years, SCARF has used radio and television to reach out to larger audiences successfully.

- The national TV channel, Doordarshan collaborated with SCARF for a year-long weekly show on mental health where mental health professionals answered queries from callers. Doordarshan also produced a documentary on schizophrenia and SCARF, which was shown all over the country.
- SCARF, over the years, has been a regular participant in talk shows on many TV channels and the radio.

Films made by SCARF: *Understanding Schizophrenia* was a film made by Rajiv Menon. He says, “The misinformation being peddled by some feature films on mental health was appalling, and so was the rampant ignorance amongst young people about mental illness. So, as requested by Dr. Sarada Menon, I set out to make a documentary ‘Understanding Schizophrenia’. The process of writing the film meant I had to unlearn a lot of myths about psychiatric problems. I would go regularly to SCARF, at their old building, near Chintamani in Anna Nagar. Watching the psychiatrist at work, meeting counsellors and patients was an eye-opening experience.”

A first of its kind event in India, its purpose was to educate people on mental health-related issues through impactful, good movies which dealt with mental health in a scientific and positive way

Apart from this, SCARF has made other short films for students, families and other target groups, all of which are used regularly.

Frame of Mind (FOM)

A survey conducted in Chennai city highlighted the impact of mass media especially cinema, followed by print media in shaping public understanding and opinion on mental health issues. Wrong, unscientific and stereotyped portrayals led to persistence of misconceptions in the public mind which influenced their attitudes.

To address this, SCARF launched ‘Frame of Mind’ a biennial film festival on Mental Health. A first of its kind event in India, its purpose was to educate people on mental health-related issues through impactful, good movies which dealt with mental health in a scientific and positive way.

The publicity for FOM in the form of hoardings, news reports and interviews in the print and television media and handouts detailing the movies screened and the illness depicted in them served as educational material as well. When BSNL obliged SCARF by sending out a SMS



At the inauguration of 'Frame of Mind'



Mr. Mabesh Bhatt (above) and Ms. Suhasini Maniratnam (below) at the 'Frame of Mind' festival

Reflections and My Association with SCARF



When I began coming to India in the early 1980s, working in the field of cultural psychiatry and what we now call global mental health, I learned about innovative plans of Dr. Sarada Menon and was fortunate to meet her. As its founder in 1984, she established SCARF for the comprehensive care of people with schizophrenia through outpatient, inpatient and rehabilitative services, mindful of patients' dignity and maximising potential for their social recovery.

To promote community awareness of schizophrenia and other mental health problems, SCARF also harnessed the power of films in a biennial film festival, Frame of Mind (FOM). The festival screens feature films and engages filmmakers and mental health professionals in discussion with a community audience in Chennai. A short-film competition for young filmmakers has been its centerpiece, and I have been privileged, first in 2006, to participate on FOM juries for that.

Through research and by regularly convening its International Conference on Schizophrenia (ICONS), SCARF has become a leading institution for global mental health.

Dr. Mitchell G. Weiss

Switzerland

announcing the film festival to all its city subscribers, the landline of SCARF crashed with a huge influx of calls in a short period. While some callers wanted more details about the event, there were some who demanded to know why they received a message about a "mental festival". Some reported that that they were teased as "mental" by people who did not receive the message, (The person who was most distressed by this turn of events was our CAO Mr. Raju who happened to attend most of those calls!) From there, the event has come a long way and lot of people look forward to it and talk fondly about it now.

The discussions after each movie have evolved over the years and recent editions witnessed people coming forward spontaneously to share in public, their personal experiences with mental health issues.

On SCARF and Dr. Sarada Menon



Dr. Sarada Menon who was probably one of the early women psychiatrists in the country was one who I look up to with great respect and admiration. Her determination and skills in bringing out reforms in the rather archaic mental hospital with a focus on rehabilitation was a pioneering effort and a trend setter.

In 2002, when Dr. Thara who succeeded Dr. Menon as Director of SCARF invited me to get involved in the Film Festival on Mental Health that SCARF was planning, I was only too happy, films and theatre being my equal love and an integral part of my life. For many years since then, my friend Dr. Mitchell Weiss and I, have been taking part in this festival appropriately named 'Frame of Mind' in which some of my films were also screened. I was so impressed by this festival that I was able to bring luminaries like Shri Mahesh Bhatt to be part of it. I am happy that many other cities are also now holding such festivals.

While Drs. Thara and Mangala were the leaders in this venture. I found total dedication, commitment and hard work from all people at SCARF and was able to interact with volunteers like the Kodas and other jury members. My talks at ICONS were equally gratifying, attracting as they did a large national and international audience. Meeting Dr. Menon and Dr. Thara in these meetings was like renewing my interest and understanding of Psychiatry and Humanity. I convey my respects to Dr. Menon and my best wishes to SCARF to continue the great work.

Dr. Mohan Agashe

Psychiatrist, Actor

Short-Film Contest

- To encourage young, potential filmmakers to handle mental health sensitively and sensibly, a short-film contest with attractive cash prizes, was included in the festival.
- Over several editions from 2006 to 2018, the participation has improved both in numbers and in the quality of contest films.
- Several film festivals modelled on this event, happening across the country in recent years are testimony to its impact and success.
- Young filmmakers have shown keen interest to discuss the appropriateness of the mental health content of their films with SCARF, in the recent years, which is seen as a baby step towards realising SCARF's goal towards a correct and sensitive portrayal of mental health in the films.

SCARF wishes to place on record the great support of Dr. Mitchell Weiss from Switzerland and Dr. Mohan Agashe from Pune, well-known psychiatrist and actor for the planning of FOM. Others who helped were Harsha and Prabha Koda, Dr. Rangarajan and the Indo-Cine Appreciation Foundation.

SCARF Media for Mental Health Awards

The SCARF Media Awards were instituted to recognise the best stories on mental health published in the print media

The SCARF Media Awards were instituted to recognise the best stories on mental health published in the print media. There have been entries from all over the country with some trail-blazing stories from Kashmir. Eminent people like Mr. Gopalkrishna Gandhi, actor Ms. Revathi, Mr. Rajiv Menon, Justice Prabha Sridevan and Justice Dr. Anita Sumant and journalist Mr. P. Sainath have all given away awards for this. Dr. Jaya Shreedhar and Mr. Venkatesh have been helping us with this.



Mr. P. Sainath giving away the Media Awards



Shri Gopalkrishna Gandhi speaking at the Media Awards event



It has been an uplifting experience to work with SCARF for the past several years, to help improve popular understanding of mental health through the media.

SCARF is firmly committed to bettering public awareness about mental health through film festivals, discussions in cafes and other events. Building the capacity of journalists to report accurately and sensitively on mental health is done through the Media Awards and Essence Fellowship. It has been a privilege to work closely with Dr. Thara, Dr. Padmavati, and Dr. Mangala to initiate the SCARF Media Awards and chair them since 2015. These awards motivate journalists to deepen their involvement with mental health issues and enhance the quality of their work.

The synergy between quality journalism and the work of SCARF, is helping to shape policies and interventions, clear misconceptions about mental health and promote the quality of life of persons with mental health conditions.

Dr. Jaya Lakshmi Shreedhar

*Chair, SCARF Media for Mental Health Awards,
Adjunct Professor of Health Journalism, Asian College of Journalism*



Above: Awardees with Justice Prabha Sridevan

Below: The Communications Team

SCARF Essence Fellowship is given to senior and junior journalists for producing in-depth stories on mental health. This is done along with Sangath, another NGO.

The Digital Era

In the post-COVID-19 scenario, virtual media platforms have become the most effective means of information dissemination. Messages and video capsules on important issues are shared regularly on these platforms now and will remain the mainstay of awareness communications in the future.



SECTION 8

Canopy of Trees

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Chapter 19

Recent Initiatives for the Youth

The programme aimed to achieve early remission through effective interventions, re-integrate patients into mainstream life by improving social and work functioning and therapeutic engagement and prevent relapses

In the last three to four years, SCARF has initiated clinical and research programmes for two specific age groups—the youth and the elderly. The programmes for the youth are ‘First Episode Psychosis Programme’, ‘citiesRISE Programme and ‘Resource Centre for Youth Mental Health Programme’ (rYMs). For the elderly, Dementia Care in SCARF (DEMCARES) has been started.

First Episode Psychosis (FEP) Clinic & Research at SCARF

This clinic established a few years ago has been focusing on persons who come with the first episode of psychotic disorder. This includes a lot of young people having their first breakdown.

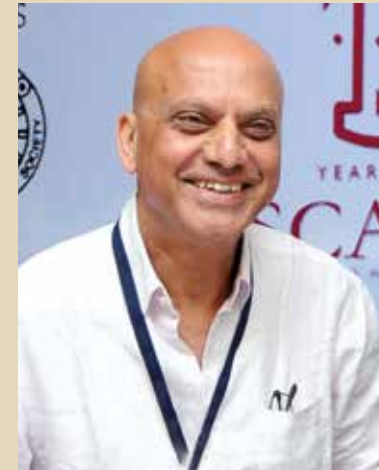
The First Episode Psychosis Programme (FEP), one of the very few of its kind in the country, was set up in the year 2003 initially as a research collaboration with the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme for Psychoses (PEPP), affiliated with McGill University, Montreal.

While the research aimed at comparing many facets of first episode illness in the two countries, this also paved the way to start a FEP clinic at SCARF. The programme aimed to achieve early remission through effective interventions, re-integrate patients into mainstream life by improving social and work functioning and therapeutic engagement and prevent relapses. After two pilot studies, SCARF obtained a five-year grant from NIH, USA for a larger study.

The project’s findings are currently being published in various peer-reviewed journals, and hopes to convey SCARF’s understanding of the

course of early psychosis in India; of cross-cultural variation in schizophrenia outcomes; and of how families contribute to better outcomes in India.

Dr Ashok Malla, SCARF’s main collaborator sends the following message.



In the nineteen eighties in India, not much had changed for millions of people with serious mental illness such as schizophrenia. Apart from minimal treatment at a few large mental hospitals, and a handful of teaching hospitals, most people with schizophrenia received little or no treatment. While the able-minded enjoyed freedom and increasing opportunities, the mentally ill had been denied any of that and remained the wretched of the earth. It was in the context of that darkness that three visionaries, a senior psychiatrist, Dr. Sarada Menon and her two enthusiastic junior colleagues (Drs. Thara and

Rajkumar), decided to bring a quiet revolution to the field with their progressive ideas, a dedication to improve the lives of people with mental illness and a personal investment of a sum of 1000 Rupees each. Thus, began the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) of India, in the city of Chennai (then called Madras).

Their revolutionary approach was as simple as it was profound. Their philosophy was to provide compassionate, evidence-based care, devoid of a singular ideology, to not only those who knocked on their door but also those they identified in villages and other communities in need of such service. They did so irrespective of people’s ability to pay. Over time they began to produce innovation in the delivery of care in both rural and urban environments in India, that has now been replicated by many across the world. New evidence began to emerge in many domains (biological, social, psychological, anthropological) through research in collaboration with leading researchers across the world and within India. Through this growth, SCARF has maintained both its original values and independence, while contributing significantly to a sea change in policies for mental health in the country and globally.

Over two decades ago, I was fortunate to get to know Dr. Thara, and, through her, Drs. Menon and Rajkumar and, since then, many other colleagues at SCARF. Together we built a lasting collaboration. Given my own birth connection to the northern tip of the sub-continent, SCARF became my professional connection to the country of my origin. Personally, SCARF has provided me with education and learning that I would have been deprived of otherwise.

I am grateful to the leadership of SCARF for trusting me with the research and training collaboration we have built over the years. This relationship has produced unique studies of early intervention in psychosis and an in-depth examination of comparative outcomes between a high-quality treatment of psychosis in India with a comparable treatment in Canada.

No other programme could have confirmed the role of family in the treatment of schizophrenia as SCARF has done. The reach of research and training provided at SCARF is exemplified by the International Conference of Schizophrenia (ICONS of SCARF) held every two years over the past two decades. This is the only conference I 'never' miss and I have persuaded numerous colleagues to attend, not only for the depth of science but the breadth of issues related to service, community, law and ethics that get discussed and debated. It is indeed time for us to celebrate the success of this unique jewel in India that has and will continue to contribute to the field of mental health globally.

Dr. Ashok Malla

*Professor and Canada Research Chair in Early Psychosis and Early Intervention
in Youth Mental Health
Department of Psychiatry, McGill University, Canada*

This research furthered SCARF's understanding of the nature of early psychosis presentation in India, the impact on patients and their families. It is certain that the FEP clinic will be refined further, based on research evidence and cater to more young people.

Greeshma Mohan, the co-ordinator of the programme attributes the success to the wonderful team work.



Current FEP team

Members of FEP team: Past and Present

Drs. Mangala, Shiv Prakash, Ramesh Kumar, Vijayaraghavan, Anitha Jeyagurunathan, Sushma Rameshkumar, Deanna, Arthy Jayavel, Jainey Joseph, Sneha Natarajan, Helen Martin, Anjhana K., Shruti Rao, Sangeetha C., Vimala Paul, P. Ramakrishnan and Vijayalakshmi.

citiesRISE

In 2019, SCARF along with citiesRISE (CR), a global body, initiated a programme for youth mental health. This aims at improving mental health literacy and early access to mental health care among school students. The focus is on positive mental health promotion among the youth. Five large schools in Chennai were reached through the programme and 569 students between the ages 13-16 received the intervention. Six facilitators alongside the respective school counsellors were given training to deliver Stan Kutcher's 'The Guide', a mental health literacy curriculum, highlighting the importance of positive mental health, understanding mental illness and its treatment, and finding support.

SCARF noted a positive impact in increasing knowledge about mental health, reducing stigma and enhancing help-seeking behaviour for students



Above: The citiesRISE team, below: Dr. Helen Hermann with the CR team

and teachers. The students were highly receptive and enthusiastic to learn about mental health. After the classes, the facilitators were also approached by the students regarding inter-personal problems, and mental health issues and a few of them were referred to mental health professionals. This programme was an enriching experience for the facilitators and made them aware of the contemporary issues and needs of the youth regarding mental health. These insights have paved the way for further plans to improve the youth mental health holistically through whole school approach. Dr. Suresh Kumar co-ordinated this programme along with a young team.



The partnership between citiesRISE and SCARF has been flourishing since the last three years and it has been an immense privilege to work with colleagues at SCARF in our collaborative efforts to improve youth mental health in Chennai. I am grateful for the close friendships with SCARF colleagues, especially Dr. Thara, whose strategic insight, courage and leadership has inspired us to discover ways of helping young people take charge of their own mental health.

The team at SCARF is highly trained and professional and has assisted us in successfully implementing our projects. They always have been impeccable and the integrity of their research methods facilitates building a strong foundation for our work. Our partnership, built on trust, communication and respect, is embarking on a journey of making a difference—to people around us and the minds within them.

We nurture a symbiotic relationship as we touch the lives of young people and their families not only in Chennai but worldwide.

Ms. Moitreyee Sinha

CEO and Founder, citiesRISE



As part of WPA-SCARF-CR ‘Practice Transformation’ collaboration, SCARF has also trained mental health professionals from Chennai and equipped them to handle mental health issues faced by young people. Dr. Helen Hermann, then President of WPA also participated in the training workshop.

Resource Centre for Youth Mental Health – rYMs

Nearly a year ago, Dr. Shiv Parkash, child and adolescent psychiatrist at SCARF, initiated along with a team of young people rYMs (Resource Centre for Youth Mental Health)

To quote Dr. Shiv Prakash

“Youth listen to youth’ is what we hear from them repeatedly. This important thought summarises the difficulties faced by any intervention that aims to “educate” young people. Keeping in mind that nearly 75% of all the mental health disorders have their origin in youth less than 25 years of age, engaging this vulnerable population in a discussion about their own



Dr. Shiv Prakash, child and adolescent psychiatrist at SCARF

There has been a felt need for a space for young people to congregate and discuss mental health issues without fears of ostracism or judgment

care becomes imperative. Armed with the knowledge about mental health, the young research assistants at SCARF were engaged in creating an inclusive safe space for all youth to learn about mental health and discuss the same among their peers with no fear of judgment or discrimination. Thus rYMs was created. It has been a very energising and interesting experience for me to work with the young team of rYMs.”

While the health professionals are necessary and important in the care of young people with major mental health problems, the vast majority of young people going through the vicissitudes of life do not have an outlet to vent. There has been a felt need for a space for young people to congregate

and discuss mental health issues without fears of ostracism or judgment. SCARF as a part of its youth mental health activities initiated the Resource Centre for Youth Mental Health by SCARF (rYMs), as a non-clinical space with the intent of promoting mental health and destigmatising mental health problems in the youth by increasing awareness.

Over the course of the past year, rYMs has espoused characteristics and succeeded in being not only youth-focused and youth-driven but has been democratic and safe for the participants and accessible even during the pandemic. The safe space (as it is called) is run by volunteer youth programme managers who manage the everyday functioning of the safe space in terms of programming the events, hosting and engaging the youth, actively participating and constantly growing the programme. Through the activities of rYMs, SCARF has been able to engage youth from across the city initially but, over the course of the pandemic, those across the country and the world. The activities are engaging and deliver various aspects of mental health in a non-didactic fashion which is one of the best ways to demystify mental health and take it to the community.

The following are some of the activities of rYMs

- **Listener’s Circle:** An open group held for youth on a bi-weekly basis where they discuss their issues while their peers provide support
- **Enna jokes aa!!** Exposure of youth to stand-up comedians



Above: Various programmes to actively engage the youth

Below: The young, dynamic rYMs team

- **Use of the arts in expression:** Zumba sessions, enhancing abstract thinking through art, exploring self through movement, martial arts and self-defence workshops, decoupage workshops, Afro dance movement workshop—‘Beat It’
- **Downtime activities:** Movie discussion, game nights, photography walk, *motto podu*—jam session with a group
- **Educational activities:** Mental health bingo, offline connections, myth busters and quizzing

SCARF has launched the Y4Y (Youth 4 Youth), warm line on October 10, 2020.

A helpline has also been started exclusively for the youth.

Chapter 20

Recent Initiatives for the Elderly

India is the one of the fastest ageing low- and middle-income countries in the world. Dementia, a disorder related to ageing is a growing concern in the country with numbers estimated at 5.3 million currently living with the illness. There is a pressing demand to develop sustainable services for persons with dementia (PSD). Interventions developed in high income contexts require adaptation to be used in the Indian setting. Dementia also has a significant impact on caregivers in complex ways. Therefore, a multi-disciplinary focus is required to tackle mental health within the elderly population.

Dementia also has a significant impact on caregivers in complex ways. Therefore, a multi-disciplinary focus is required to tackle mental health within the elderly population

How was DEMCARES established?

‘Dementia Care in SCARF’ was established in 2015 with a generous contribution from the Infosys Foundation and various donors. DEMCARES was first set up in an office space on Graemes Road, Chennai, which was generously given to SCARF on a nominal lease by Justice Dr. Anita Sumant. A lot of the research, awareness programmes, support services (the caregivers support group and Dementia Friends Programme) took place there. As the office was located centrally, it was easy for service users to access this location. Clinical services continued to be delivered in the SCARF Centre, Anna Nagar.

In 2016, when the project was ready to set up Day Hospital Services, clients and caregivers found the location was not elder/dementia friendly or accessible (as it was on the first floor). Therefore, the Centre for Active Ageing (CAA) was set up in SCARF MHC as a clinical service

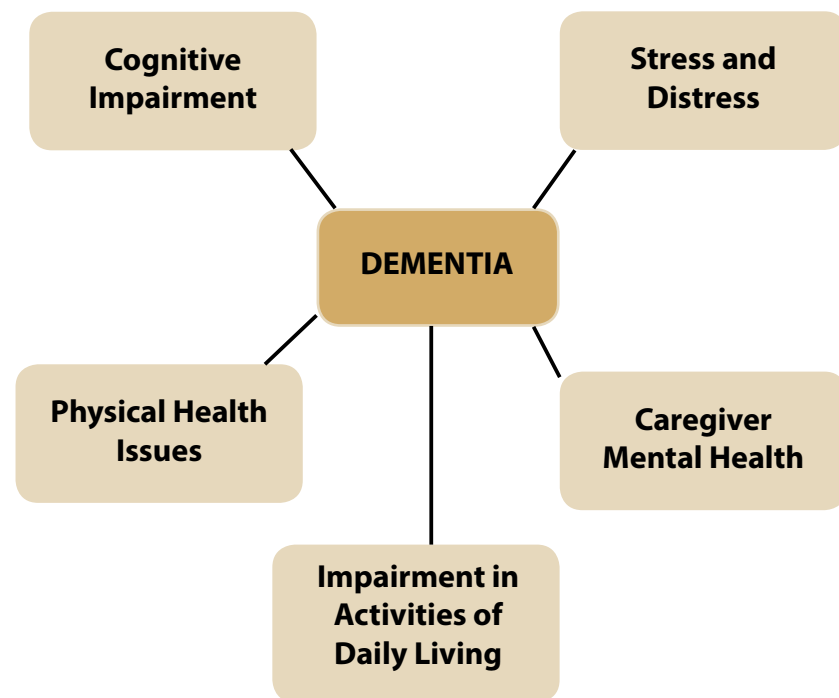
with generous contributions from The Good News Scotland charitable trust and The Street. The CAA works with a multi-disciplinary team that offers clinical services, provides support services to families of persons with dementia and the community and generates knowledge through research.

SCARF's work thus far:

Clinical Services

The clinical services try to target one or more of the domains in terms of treatment as shown below.

Domains for Intervention in Dementia



In 2019, 65 clients availed of the CAA services. Cognitive Stimulation Therapy, to improve cognition and social participation is the main service that is provided for eligible clients

The team is made up of consultant psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and nursing assistants. A treatment plan that includes pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions appropriate to meet the needs of the client is formulated. All treatment plans are person-centred, that is, each plan is targeted to meet the unique needs of the client and their family. In the year 2019, 1008 clients availed of the outpatient clinical services at DEMCARES. On average, monthly, 15 new cases are registered and 70 review clients are seen.

Home visits are an option for those who are immobile or have severe behaviour problems. Twenty-three home visits were made in the year 2019 by DEMCARES staff.

The Centre for Active Ageing (CAA) was inaugurated in 2017. It focuses primarily on psychosocial management for dementia. This day care programme has the capacity to host seven individuals in a day for group and individual sessions. In 2019, 65 clients availed of the CAA services. Cognitive Stimulation Therapy, to improve cognition and social participation is the main service that is provided for eligible clients. Activities of daily living are also assessed and directions supporting the client to perform these activities as independently as possible are provided through expert advice, demonstrations, and training for professional caretakers.



Inauguration of the Centre for Active Ageing by Dr. V.S. Natarajan, 2017

Delivering clinical services during the COVID-19 pandemic

DEMCARES has been quick to adapt to deliver most of its services by tele-consultation to protect the elderly from exposure to the virus. Since March 2020, most clients have been seen through audio and video consultation via telephone calls, WhatsApp video, Zoom or Skype, for both intake interviews and reviews by case managers and consultants. A study was conducted by DEMCARES which explored the unique needs of caregivers during this period. It was found that outpatient services were easily translated to remotely delivered tele-consultations and is currently being evaluated to understand the existing barriers to effective implementation and facilitators that can be enhanced to improve ease of delivery. A total of 229 clients including 38 new ones have been seen through tele-consultations in this period of lockdown.

Since March 2020, most clients have been seen through audio and video consultation via telephone calls, WhatsApp video, Zoom or Skype, for both intake interviews and reviews by case managers and consultants

Research

Research is an integral part of service development in DEMCARES.

1. Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) for dementia was adapted culturally and tested for feasibility to be delivered to the local population. DEMCARES is the lead site in India for an international study (CST-International) to test the implementation of CST in India, Brazil and Tanzania.
2. Strategies for Relatives (START) of persons with dementia is also being adapted for local use as it has been found to be effective in reducing caregiver distress in high income contexts
3. Novel projects like supporting sensory impairments (hearing or vision loss) through specialist services and hearing aids and assessing how this is related to cognitive impairment or using social robots to engage persons with dementia are also currently being tested on a small scale at DEMCARES.

Awareness

A number of programmes have been held in colleges and service clubs. DEMCARES has also worked with the Senior Citizens Bureau to run



The fruitful collaboration between the Dementia Services Development Trust (DSDT) in Scotland and DEMCARES (Dementia Care in SCARF) in Chennai started in November 2016 with the main objective of building capacity and improving knowledge and skills amongst staff at DEMCARES and other professionals in India. DSDT funded 6-week observership at NHS Tayside in Scotland for three members of DEMCARES staff in May/June 2017 and April/May 2019.

DSDT and DEMCARES also organised the pre-conference workshop on dementia in August 2018 funded by DSDT. The first of this kind, it focused on the

management of symptoms associated with dementia.

This international collaboration has allowed the Trust to expand its UK remit and for DEMCARES staff, it has resulted in a first-hand experience in Scottish dementia care and service improvement which they have applied to their daily work back in Chennai. The DSDT remains committed to continue building on this fruitful and fulfilling relationship with DEMCARES for many years to come.

Dr. Cesar Rodriguez-Castello

*Geriatric Psychiatrist
DSDT Trustee 2003-2020*

awareness programmes and memory screening camps for elderly citizens in the community. A lot of resources like information booklets and resource directories are also generated by the team.

Social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and the DEMCARES website (www.dementiaindia.org), also has a lot of resources and information on dementia and the on-going work at DEMCARES. These platforms are also useful in recruiting interested participants for on-going studies and also help reach students who may be interested in internship that provide first-hand experience with geriatric mental health.

Support Services

Support services offered by DEMCARES include training formal and informal health care staff in providing person-centred dementia care, facilitating caregiver support groups that offer peer support to family caregivers of persons with dementia and, a novel programme that has a role in providing respite to caregivers and also increase awareness among young college students around dementia called the Dementia Friends Programme.

The Health Care Assistants Training course was developed by DEMCARES to provide basic information for health care assistants to deliver care services for dementia.

The DEMCARES Caregiver Support group is a collaborative service where an ex-caregiver with some background in counselling acts as a facilitator for the group and leads the sessions. There has been an overwhelmingly



The DEMCARES team

The DEMCARES Caregiver Support group is a collaborative service where an ex-caregiver with some background in counselling acts as a facilitator for the group and leads the sessions

positive response to this service as caregivers find their basic needs for information met, along with the normative support that their peers provide them during emotionally turbulent times.

The Dementia Friends Programme was initially developed to serve as a first-hand experience for college students who are in the fields of Psychology or Social Work to gain an understanding of what it is like to work with someone with dementia. The programme runs for a period of six months during which students make weekly visits to the homes of persons living with dementia. They are mentored by members from the DEMCARES team. The Dementia Friends Programme has successfully seen three batches of students (a total of 37 students) enrolling in the programme.

Future Directions

Residential facility: This will be a state-of-the-art facility to offer inpatient care to persons with dementia to stabilise them clinically and control some of the behavioural symptoms. It will also provide respite care for the family members who will be educated on how to handle these persons.



Mr. & Mrs. Damodaran who gifted the Tambaram land to SCARF

smaller donations.

The team is confident that this centre, one of its kind, will fill a huge gap in dementia care.

Chapter 21

The Future as it Unfolds...

It is critical that SCARF becomes a nodal agency for training various groups of mental health professionals, health care personnel and people from different walks of life interested in the care of persons with mental disorders

The tremendous strides made over the years has set the benchmark for the future. Some of the key areas that will be the focus for the future are as below.

1. A purposeful re-integration of the recovered patients into society will happen with an organised plan in place. This would in some cases mean opportunities for them to work in the world outside. The plan is to set up vocational training programmes in a centre outside a mental health service facility—accessible to patients and with an exit goal for open employment. Strengthening the links with potential employers, increasing their awareness about psychosis and involving them in patients' recovery process will be an important component in the vocational training programme. Building capacity in vocational training through regular certification courses for mental health professionals will be another important step towards re-integration of recovered patients which SCARF will lead. Developing, adapting and testing cognitive interventions for serious mental illnesses is an area of focus for SCARF in the coming years to achieve the goal of recovery for patients. SCARF strives to become a centre of excellence in this endeavour.
2. It is critical that SCARF becomes a nodal agency for training various groups of mental health professionals, health care personnel and people from different walks of life interested in the care of persons with mental disorders. Establishing an exclusive centre for training is

the need of the hour and SCARF will forge ahead to implement this idea in the near future. The different categories of training will include courses for an array of health and mental health care professionals like medical graduates, psychologists, psychiatric social workers, nursing professionals, occupational therapists and rehabilitation therapists. The programmes will be offered in the form of internships, certificate courses and fellowships. Professionals in other disciplines play a role in the care of persons with mental health problems. SCARF believes that the responsibility of providing a comprehensive understanding of mental illness lies with the mental health professionals that are placed in a position to deliver. Some of the disciplines that SCARF is considering include

- **The legal professionals:** Applications of law in protecting the rights of the mentally ill and facilitating their welfare needs an in-depth understanding of the science of the disorders and the legal mechanisms that can aid this. An example of this would be the legal provisions for financial care for the future
 - **The Architect:** Designing spaces for a mental health facility taking into consideration the condition of the patients who would use these. Safety measures, ambience, spacing, etc., become critical measures in the planning and designing of the space for this purpose.
 - **Insurance professionals:** With the incorporation of health insurance for persons with mental illness in the Mental Health Care Act, insurance companies would greatly benefit with a mental health course tailored to provide knowledge and understanding to enable develop packages to bridge the gap.
3. The mental well-being of the youth is a strong determinant of the future of the country. SCARF has in the recent years forayed into mental wellness of the youth through several school-based programmes, research on young people with mental health problems, training young college students to be peer counsellors and more specifically in providing a safe space for young people to communicate. This agenda needs to be scaled up—our goal is to ensure that there is a

strong attention to this population of India—the future leaders of our country.

4. Over the years, SCARF has realised that a continued research collaboration with national and international agencies has increased competence and capacities. The future plan is to expand on these collaborations with a focused agenda to make mental health care delivery, better.
5. Networking with people and organisations to forge partnerships for collaborative training, awareness programmes and lobbying for the welfare of the mentally disabled is critical. There is strength in unity.
6. SCARF Dementia Care Services: It is expected that by 2050, across the world, there will be more persons aged 60 and above than those under 16 years of age. The number of elderly persons in India is expected to be more than 20 per cent by 2050. The physiological and psychosocial processes that operate in normal ageing overlap with diseases that are common in the elderly such as dementia, depression, and psychosis, and throw many challenges in their diagnosis and management. Special understanding and training are required to meet these challenges. Geriatric psychiatry is a new sub-specialty in psychiatry that addresses the specific needs of the elderly. Very few centres in India deliver specialist geriatric mental health services.

SCARF is starting a 20-bedded specialist purpose-built dementia care inpatient facility in Chennai shortly. This exclusive dementia centre will integrate dementia-friendly design principles

- The Dementia Care in SCARF (DEMCARES) service was started in 2015 to provide dementia care and geriatric mental health services in SCARF. It aims to deliver evidence-based interventions that are culturally adapted and appropriate for local needs. SCARF is currently providing outpatient geriatric mental health services and has integrated the use of tele-medicine in the regular practice to overcome the challenges due to the current pandemic.
- SCARF is starting a 20-bedded specialist purpose-built dementia care inpatient facility in Chennai shortly. This exclusive dementia centre will integrate dementia-friendly design principles. This will provide an opportunity to train future health care workforce in dementia care. SCARF has also established a network including



The dementia care inpatient facility in Tambaram, work in progress

both national and international dementia research organisations of repute.

- SCARF's vision is for its Dementia Care Centre to be a regional hub in South Asia to lead research in the implementation and delivery of culturally appropriate interventions for dementia. SCARF also aims to be the centre of excellence in providing clinical care, training the specialist work force, and guiding policy development for dementia care in the region.



SECTION 9

Potpourri



Associates



Compuprint's association with SCARF started almost 25 years ago with designing and printing small communication materials for SCARF.

SCARF was involved in path-breaking research work and treatment in the field of mental health. Schizophrenia was then an unfamiliar term and SCARF and its team had their work cut out in educating the public. As their research and rehabilitation work increased, our services were used more frequently in their quest to enlighten the public.

What a journey it has been! From printing simple leaflets, to training manuals, Annual Reports and the print collaterals for all the editions of their ever-popular ICONS, we were privileged to be a trusted print partner of SCARF.

We deem it fortunate to have worked together with the selfless team at SCARF, led by Dr. Thara, all these years and look forward to several more years of mutually fruitful association.

Mr. A.S. Diwakar

Compuprint, Chennai



We in Marundeshwara consider ourselves as an integral part of SCARF since 2003, when we were 10 years old and started working with SCARF on the first edition of SCARF's International Conference (ICONS of SCARF). Marundeshwara has been proud to be associated with SCARF and ICONS on all the 8 editions held so far and we commit to be part of it in the years to come.

Dr. Sarada Menon and Dr. Thara have been a guiding force for us and we at Marundeshwara are happy to be part of this great organisation with wonderful people.

Our journey with ICONS of SCARF and Frame of Mind has enabled us to get acquainted with so many people not only at the national level but also at the global level, many of whom have become our friends.

Our salutations to Dr. Sarada Menon.

Ms. Lalitha Rai

Marundeshwara Enterprises

Canine Companions



Bhima



Shanthi

Bhima also called as Bheeshma by some is truly a *bhishmapitha* of SCARF. Deserted by his mother on our campus close to 15 years ago, he is a good watchdog, albeit not a very friendly one. Enjoys his afternoon siesta in Dr. Thara's room—very exclusively!

Shanthi landed with us in an advanced stage of pregnancy 6-7 years ago—probably chased out by her owners. She delivered six beautiful pups, all of whom found good homes. Lazy that she is, she loves an AC room!

The Seniors Speak



I joined SCARF in June 1984 during its infancy and retired in April 2010 as the Chief Administrative Officer of a globally reputed organisation. What do those 26 years mean to me now, 10 years after retirement apart from several pleasant memories?

When one joins an organisation during its infancy the feelings of fondness and ownership of the organisation begins to grow within. SCARF was like my kid brother or sister to grow up with, the resultant feelings of responsibility and pride of ownership were inevitable. Every additional rupee to the corpus, every additional fitting and furniture,

the first vehicle, brought in plenty of cheer as were the several good accounts in the media. I must admit that my involvement with SCARF made me ignore, and even sneer at stories of other NGOs that were also doing good work—what I call juvenile jealousy though I was then in my late thirties.

To be serving in SCARF meant serving the neglected cause of mental health. It also meant the privilege of working closely with Dr. Sarada Menon, a legendary name in the field of Mental Health in India and with many other remarkable and reputed individuals on the Board of Management, capable volunteers, warm and affectionate colleagues.

It also meant witnessing the painful realities and situations of persons affected by mental disorders. Although I was not a mental health professional, it was heart-wrenching to witness several brilliant persons become unproductive through the vagaries of mental illness. I started becoming truly kind, gentle and friendly with every one of those patients. Interacting with their families and addressing their issues and concerns in my capacity as CAO gave me immense job satisfaction. I used to invite those in the residential centres to my home during Navaratri and Deepavali festivals when they would interact with our neighbours and family.

Since I retired, SCARF has grown from strength to strength and expanded its services in urban and rural areas. Even today, I can vividly recall all the moments of fulfilment, elation, disappointment, laughter, self-rebuke, tears of joy and sorrow that we collectively experienced in SCARF. I sincerely thank our beloved Dr. Sarada Menon and Dr. Thara for their affection, guidance and patience with me during my tenure. My sincere thanks to respected Dr. S. Rajkumar who was responsible for my joining SCARF for my betterment.

Best wishes to the current energetic and excellent team at SCARF.

Mr. B. Raju

Former Chief Administrative Officer



SCARF is not work, but a journey of fulfilment

To start with, I do not consider SCARF as an office I go to every day. Having been associated with SCARF since inception, I have been involved in several activities such as fundraising, training staff and improving awareness that mental disorders can be treated. In the early years all of us played several roles with only one goal that SCARF should grow and establish itself.

What gives me the most fulfilment is helping my patients, most of whom are from poor backgrounds, get back their confidence and do something useful with their lives. At the same time, it makes me very sad to see the suffering caused by this disorder. As psychiatrists, we should be very patient and sympathetic listeners to the woes of a family that cares for persons with mental disorders. While some might argue that it is not desirable for doctors to get involved with the personal lives of patients, I have found that understanding their life problems and trying to suggest a way forward may at least alleviate, if not solve the problem. When they improve and are able to lead a productive life, the sense of fulfilment is overwhelming. That perhaps is the best reward a doctor can get.

I have also been working at Bhavishya Bhavan and that has given me a different kind of experience that I value and cherish. The work environment at SCARF is very conducive for the multifaceted role played by a doctor. Some of us have grown with SCARF and imbibed its ideals and work fabric. Working with Madam Dr. Sarada Menon and Dr. Thara, who are exceptional people, has been a great experience and I have learnt much from them.

Dr. Shantha Kamath



Passage through time...

A colleague of 30 years says – there is “No place like SCARF” – a sentiment that I echo loud and clear. I know of no other...

Having graduated from the University of Mumbai, armed with an MD degree, I moved to Chennai in 1987. Eager to pursue “research”, I was introduced to Dr. S. Rajkumar at the Dept. of Psychiatry, Govt. General Hospital. After a period of 6 months of volunteering, I landed a Research Officer position in the ICMR SOFPPUC project in collaboration with SCARF and then as an

employee at SCARF in 1990. The rest is ...my own personal story.

The initial years were a period of “unlearning” from textbooks to the real world, of “learning” to write, to speak mental health in the common man’s language. Soon, with encouragement from Drs. Sarada Menon and Thara, more responsibilities came—each time new learning, new experience—and this continues, no matter the position. Opportunities to travel for conferences and meetings, to interact with world leaders in the field, making new friends are all unforgettable experiences.

Friends in the organisation have moved on, new people have come in. Amidst all others, patients whom I am seeing for a long time or new ones are strong reasons for what I am today. And long ago, an unfortunate accident that snatched away a colleague is etched in memory.

Life at SCARF has been a very dynamic period defined by a strong team spirit—each day over the past three decades has brought in something new and this is how it will be in future, that’s how I like it!

Dr. R. Padmavati



I joined SCARF in 1993 as a driver having previously worked at MRF. My main duties initially were transporting patients from their homes to the Vocational Training Centre (VTC). As SCARF slowly established itself, my duties went beyond that of a driver. I can fondly recall the roles I played in the early days of SCARF for many donation drives and visiting the clinics in Thiruporur, Chengalpattu and Vellore.

During disasters such as the tsunami, floods and COVID-19, I tried to help Dr. Thara, Dr. Padma, Dr. Mangala and Mr. Kotteswara Rao as much as possible during those challenging times. Being punctual to work is what I learnt from Dr. Sarada Menon and I strictly adhere to it. I expect everyone to follow suit, but that is always not the case. I am the first person to arrive every day at SCARF and usually the last to leave. During the COVID-19 lockdown, I helped in setting up the screening system and in having the pharmacy open to help our patients get the medicines. I firmly believe that in times of crisis, the hierarchies in SCARF evaporate; everyone is ready to do everything for the well-being of humanity.

Mr. M. Palani



I joined SCARF in 1993 as a Statistician for collaborative projects with Johns Hopkins. At that time, I had no clue what a prestigious collaboration this was. When I saw my name on the publications—it was a thrilling sensation.

In 1995, I was confirmed as a full-time employee at SCARF—This was an eventful year—a change in leadership—when Dr. Thara took over, the 10th year of SCARF celebrations. It was fun to be involved in activities—as one would in one’s own home! A quarter of a century has flown by—and my roles have changed. My skills in People—Technology interface—managing communications hardware, medical software have risen over time. I miss core statistics tasks, but I am well aware of my contributions in technology management. Importantly, I enjoy the freedom this job gives me—a strong reason why I have never attempted to move away!

SCARF comes first...

Mr. Albert Joseph



No place like SCARF...

I have been with SCARF for over 25 years now. With a Master's Degree in Social Work, I was looking for a job when I heard that SCARF had an opening in a community project. I knew nothing in mental health—but needed a job and was willing to be out in the community. And thereafter, it has been a long satisfying time with SCARF. I say once again... there is no place like SCARF!

I have been very lucky—one after the other, several community projects both on research and service provision have kept me on the field. The exciting visits to the community with Drs. Gilles Bibeau, Ellen Corin, Robin McCreadie, and more recently Alex Cohen, Craig Morgan, Mohan Isaac, and many others have been very engaging—I simply loved showing them interesting mental health spots!

The people at SCARF—Dr. Vijay Nagaswami in the beginning and Dr. Thara and Sujit John over the last two decades—have been so understanding of my passion to be out there and very encouraging. The freedom to work that I have enjoyed has been phenomenal. There was a brief period when there was no community work and Dr. Thara had kindly agreed to have me work at SCARF. That was an unhappy period—I quit employment and was away for two years. Luckily, yet another community project beckoned me back to SCARF, this time to stay.

I have been able to identify many persons in remote areas who had never had treatment, build and train a team of simple rural women who worked as community health workers, help patients in villages access mental health services; all these and more have kept me passionate about community work. I tell my junior colleagues, who want to move away—there is no place like SCARF—a place that has taken care of me in every way and given me tremendous fulfilment in my work.

Mr. J.R. Ayankaran



My first job at SCARF in 2001 was on a research project on genetics. I was initially intimidated by the high qualifications, experience and professionalism of many around me, but this soon turned to respect and I was at ease. I shall be ever grateful for the extensive training, and guidance of Dr. T.N. Srinivasan who slowly kept raising the bar until I was confident of my own abilities. I learnt many new skills. When Dr. T.N. Srinivasan emigrated to Australia, to my great surprise, I became the project co-ordinator. Soon after, I found that Dr. Thara offered me great freedom in how I operated

and backed me on my decisions. Her hands-off approach tremendously boosted my confidence and encouraged me to live up to the faith reposed in me. She also initiated me into writing for journals, project reports, drawing up budgets for new projects. I have been involved in admin and financial issues of all major research projects. The mentoring I received from her and Dr. T.N. has been the template I now use for supervising and mentoring the junior staff.

I now have two major responsibilities at SCARF, one being Research Co-ordination and the other Human Resource Management. The rewards in research are more tangible such as professional growth, co-authoring publications, learning from global experts like Drs. Thornicroft, Vikram Patel, Mowry, Lakshmi Vijayakumar, and of course Dr. Thara. Just sitting at the same table and listening to them or making a field visit are huge learning experiences. The off-duty hours of unwinding and informal chats were equally rewarding.

The HR work profile is more subtle and goes unnoticed if things go well. When something goes wrong—be it serious breaches of conduct to squabbles arising from tea not being served, then challenges arise.

When I initially joined SCARF, I had thought that I would work for a couple of years then move on but here I am now for 20 years. I cannot imagine another organisation where I would have been able to grow as much personally and professionally, this is primarily because of the SCARF management culture that gives you great freedom to operate, learn from the best and grow.

I honestly cannot imagine working anywhere else.

Mr. Sujit John



When I joined SCARF in 2003 as a Research Assistant, the work was good, but I soon became restless to do community work and spoke to Dr. Thara about it. She said I will have to wait till a replacement was found, but gave me the freedom to start community-based activities such as training, awareness, community clinics, etc.

In December 2004, after the tsunami struck Tamil Nadu, I was entrusted the task of leading the SCARF team to work in the affected districts. Our work was well-recognised by the Government and the international community. I was happy to be able to utilise my skills and really thank SCARF for the trust reposed in me to handle this critical assignment. In fact, we learnt a lot about various post disaster interventions.

Dr. Thara was determined to start tele-psychiatry and persisted despite a lot of discouraging comments at the beginning. I truly appreciate her strong and unshakable determination to continue the programme. This then led to the very innovative mobile Tele-psychiatry Programme at Pudukottai (STEP) which I was asked to co-ordinate. During this period, I have had the chance to work closely with various organisations such as the TATA Trust, MCDS, etc.

I also train and teach students of Social Work who do their field work at SCARF. I have contributed to projects like Acute Psychosis, COPSI trial, School Mental Health Programme, WHO tool kit on Suicide, citiesRISE Project, and the Diploma Teaching Programme.

As a caregiver of my grandmother who suffered from dementia, I feel committed to working in mental health all my life. I am happy to do that at SCARF, an institution with commitment, professionalism and flexibility, which facilitates personal growth.

Mr. Kotteswara Rao



When I joined SCARF in 2003, all I had in my mind was the excitement of being associated with two of the greatest women in the history of Indian Psychiatry, Dr. Sarada Menon and Dr. Thara. The timing was great as SCARF was in the middle of preparations for the first ICONS.

My first assignment at SCARF, as part of the genetic study project, involved meeting several patients and families. The home visits were often adventurous bike trips with Mr. Ayankaran covering hundreds of kilometers in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu.

This was not just a novel experience, but also a lesson in understanding the psychosocial ramifications of schizophrenia. I evolved to become a better clinician, thanks to the time spent on this project.

Rehabilitation in thought, word and deed, describes SCARF. I was struck by the number of persons with serious mental illnesses who worked alongside us in the organisation. To look at patients as people beyond their diagnosis and treat them with dignity is a major lesson I imbibed.

I still wonder why Dr. Thara chose me to organise the pre-conference workshop on Media and Mental Health for the first ICONS but it has become an important area of my work at SCARF over the years. Any good new idea is encouraged and supported by the management, a key factor for the growth of the institution.

I owe my thanks to the late Prof. V. Palaniuppan, who introduced me to Dr. Thara and opened the gates to a wonderful professional association with one of the greatest institutions of India. Proud to be a SCARFIAN!

Dr. R. Mangala



My 15 years in SCARF have been a good mix of clinical work, research, training and later the running of the residential centre BMMSK. In the OPD, my knowledge of several languages has helped in catering to the needs of people from different states. My DNB training for two years helped me hone my clinical skills. Being a student first, a consultant and later a tutor for the trainees has been a long and satisfying journey.

I was initially asked to shadow a senior consultant during the visits to the Mahabalipuram centre, little did I realise then that

I would eventually be in charge of the centre. I have seen young people responding well to treatment and getting back to their jobs. I have also been distressed by some who have been so refractory to treatment that discharging them becomes difficult. Death of patients is also a reality we have to deal with, painful as it is.

What I probably like best about SCARF is the environment that facilitates independent action and the trust and confidence the management and senior consultants have in a younger person is immense. At the same time, a lot of mentoring is available for research and clinical work. The honesty in research and the genuine commitment to patient welfare is evident and you can't but imbibe these. SCARF is a great place for a young psychiatrist to start his/her career in Mental Health.

Dr. Aarti Ganesh



When I returned from Australia, a bit uncertain about the future, I was lucky to join SCARF as a consultant.

I had a lot of adaptation to do—personally and professionally—this was very different from the luxury I was used to back in Melbourne. The settling down period was soon over—getting to know colleagues and patients, the elderly lady who served tea twice a day, the systems in place, the rides to the facility. Through the past years, my involvement with various activities at SCARF—the clinical services, tele-psychiatry, academic interactions, postgraduate teaching—have been very

satisfying. Being part of the community mental health services has perhaps been, the most fulfilling. I also started the ECT service with some trepidation, but it is well established now. I have been part of research programmes like the one on FEP and now INTREPID II.

I look forward to my future here—I see it as very fulfilling and growth-oriented, not to mention the delicious, healthy lunch at SCARF!

Dr. Ramesh Kumar



Sitting in 7C bus and catching a glimpse of the SCARF building near Chintamani, Anna Nagar and a dream of becoming a psychiatrist was an oft-repeated feeling during my MBBS days. A couple of decades later I had a serendipitous moment of interacting with Dr. Thara during her visit to Manipal. I moved back to Chennai in 2010 and SCARF gave me the perfect landing to conduct the DNB postgraduate teaching programme and Dr. Thara described my role at SCARF as “we all do everything here”.

During these ten years, I have been largely involved in clinical work and teaching. I am proud that two of our DipNB students were awarded the national first prize in Psychiatry—the Dr Sarada Menon Gold Medal. Dealing with students who do not know the local language Tamil, has been particularly challenging.

I have also been involved in some research projects and have a few publications. The multiple roles we have to play are really a unique feature of SCARF.

Now a decade later, my life at SCARF and the glimpse from the bus have truly turned into living my dream.

Dr. Hema Tharoor



From walking past the SCARF building as a school girl with braids, always miserably failing to pronounce the word “Schizophrenia” to now—my journey at SCARF has been incredible in every sense of the word. I vividly remember listening in awe to Dr.Thara talk about SCARF during my final year of Psychology at college. It was one of the ‘blink’ moments that Malcolm Gladwell talks about when I decided that I was going to work there!

I joined in 2009 as a Research Assistant in an international project on First Episode Psychosis (FEP) which has evolved into a FEP programme at SCARF. Working along with patients, their families and team mates, I not only learnt the science, but more importantly, understood that empathy and being a keen listener went a long way in building relationships.

Over the years, the programme has been shaped by the immense contributions of the wonderful research staff—people have come and gone, but have left their footprints on the programme. Many of us are still in touch.

I met my life partner in SCARF! Having two boys and now doing my PhD at Warwick, along with my FEP work has been a fine balancing act. It is an almost impossible task for a woman without the support of an understanding management. I look back at the opportunities, the mentoring and space provided to me, with gratitude and satisfaction and look forward to new learnings—a truly enriching personal and professional journey indeed.

Ms. Greeshma Mohan



I believe ...mental illness does not stop anyone from achieving goals

It was my first time at SCARF in 2010 for a job interview—mentally revising psychopathology, case management, the spelling of schizophrenia. I was anxious—but trying to appear calm and composed.

At the reception desk—I was grilled—why was I there, how did I travel, and an in-depth discussion on how I need to approach the patient who comes there. It did not strike me then to check who I was talking to! Much later, I came to know that this gruelling 20-minute conversation had been with recovered patients at the front desk!! I realised it is okay not to be okay and

mental illness does not stop anyone from achieving the goal if guided and cared for.

Since then, my journey with SCARF has been a bountiful experience of clinical care, teaching and research. The commencement of the Department of Psychosocial Rehabilitation in 2015 was a significant occasion for me. Seeing Dr. Sarada Menon’s involvement in it, was overwhelming, yet a big learning process. The contentment I get in working with persons with mental health issues and their families is immeasurable. Just as with patients and families, I believe that SCARF has always held my hand securely!

Ms. Jainey Joseph



The decision to move back to India from UK, seven years ago was a big one for me. People wondered how I was going to adjust to working in India again. Dr. Jayanthini directed me to SCARF and there has been no looking back since. Working with a multi-disciplinary team, offering more than just medications to patients has been the most satisfying aspect of the job. But this has also been the most challenging part of the job, as there is not enough staff or time for the number of patients we see but we keep striving to provide better care all the time.

It has been exciting times for PSR in SCARF recently, as we have been working on adapting cognitive interventions to suit our population. We have also been invited to adapt and test a solution-focused approach to empower patients. I have been particularly delighted to co-ordinate the quarterly newsletter ‘Towards Recovery’ and be part of the team conducting courses in psychosocial rehabilitation. In SCARF, we learn quickly to adapt and that has been the biggest learning for me personally in the last seven years.

Dr. Lakshmi Venkatraman



While some would call it an early mid-life crisis, I believe it as putting-my-dream-to-action, on our return to India from the UK, after having worked there for 12 years. My teacher Dr. Jayanthini referred me to SCARF and I approached Dr. Thara for a job. I had been to SCARF a few times before, to learn more about tele-psychiatry work being done in India. I met Mr. Sujit John then who subsequently became a colleague and a very good friend.

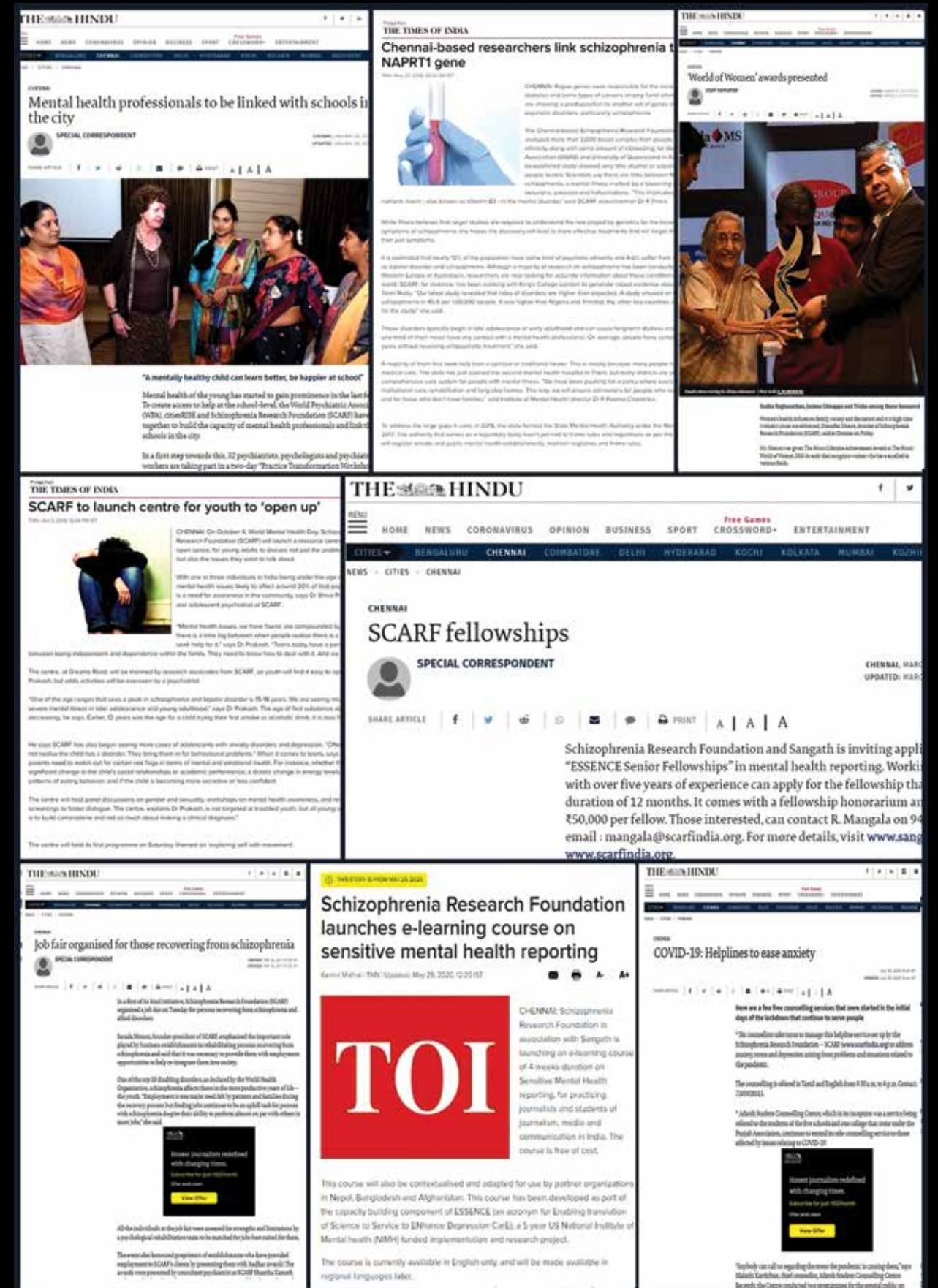
When I first asked Dr. Thara if I could set up a dementia service in SCARF, she sent me on a job hunt to a private medical university and then to a new elderly care facility. These did not work out and I was back in her office within a week. I think she wanted me to realise that finding a job was not easy. Through the good offices of Mr. Seshasayee, the Chair of the SCARF Board, we received a generous donation from the Infosys Foundation. Almost simultaneously, Dr. Anita Sumant, offered very generously a prime property that belonged to her family in the centre of the City to start the dementia services which was officially named DEMCARES—Dementia Care in SCARF.

The most interesting and enjoyable aspect of my work in SCARF has been identifying needs of those seeking help in our clinics and delivering suitable interventions for them. We have been successful in setting up a day hospital for dementia, adapting and delivering evidence-based interventions, and running many innovative research projects. We are also in the process of setting up Tamil Nadu's first purpose-built dementia care facility and much of the credit goes to Dr. Thara for her untiring efforts to seek donations.

I personally have grown along with DEMCARES. We stand on the shoulders of giants who founded and directed SCARF. Of course, much work is needed, and I sincerely believe we will continue to strive for greater success.

Dr. Sridhar Vaitheeswaran

SCARF in the Media



Permanent Staff

SCARF STAFF

Psychiatrists: Drs. Thara, Shantha Kamath, Padmavati, Ramesh Kumar, Hema Tharoor, Mangala, Aarthi, Sridhar, Lakshmi Venkatraman, Sindhu, Vijayaraghavan

Psychologists: Sujit John, Karpagavalli, Subashini Gopal, Greeshma Mohan, Sangeetha, Suhavana, Syed Rabia

Social Workers: Kotteeswara Rao, Ayankaran, Chitrakanni, Jainey Joseph, Sonia Sims, Omega, Kiruthika

Communications: Sruthi Mohan

Statistician: Albert Joseph

Data Entry: Premalatha

Nurses: Manju, Saraswathy, Abirami

Pharmacy: B. Kanchana, Vellivel, Venkatesh, Rogini

VTC Supervisors: Renuka, Raji

Admin: Venkatraman, Subashini Venkatesh, Vinoth Kumar

Accounts: M. Renuka, Amutha

Front Desk: Saraswathy, Latha, Niasuddin

Housekeeping: Sivagami, Sathya Priya, Samundeeswari

Driver: Palani

Security: Selvakumar

PROJECT STAFF

Drs. R. Shiv Prakash, Vaishnavi, S. Subhashini

INTREPID Project: Karthick, Kulandesu, Kruthika

DEMCARES: Monisha, Nirupama Natarajan, K. Sangeetha, A. Amala, R. Shanthi, Anbarasi, Niveditha, Gayathri Nagarajan

Others: U.Vijayalakshmi, T. Haripriya, Guhapriya, T. Gunaselvi

citiesRISE: Dr. Suresh Kumar, Savitha Sriram, Chiranjeevi, Angelin Lidiya, Hanisha Arulvendan, Priyadharshini, Sarah Tahreen Syed, Sanjana

Field level workers on all projects: Lillipushpam, Shanthi, Selvi, Ellammal, Kalaiselvi, S. Kavitha, P. Jayanthi, Bhuvanewari, T. Latha, M. Ambika, Jothi

Livelihood Co-ordinator: D. Sekar

FORMER STAFF (Not a complete list)

Mental Health Professionals: Drs. Shalini Kurup, Valsa Koshy, Vijay Nagaswami, R.K. Rudhran, Gautam Das, Radha Shankar, Ananda Ram, Mubeen Taj, T.N. Srinivasan, Soundari, Palaniappan, Ravishankar.

Latha Srinivasan, Vimala Uttarkar, Maureen Rubin, Gautam, Bernard Jacob, Radha Rajagopal, Narayanan, Viswanath (late), Anuradha, Maria, Uma, Louis Joseph, Koushik, Ramalakshmi, Lavanya, Preeta Arun, Rani Mohanraj, Sowmini, Pavai, Bhuvanewari, B.K. Ramesh (late) Anita Koshy, Baranidharan, Anandhalakshmi, Edward Sudhakar, Sasikala, Vimla Paul, Ramakrishnan

Admin and Accounts: B Raju, Govindarajan, Suganya, Rajam, Lakshmanan, Usha, Ravindran David, Rajeswari, Vijayaraghavan, Venkatraman, Sujjethra, Selvi, Mrinalini, Sairam, Elumalai (late), Vedagiri, Velayutham.

Awards and Recognition



Padma Bhushan, Dr. Sarada Menon, 1992



HelpAge India Golden Award, Dr. Sarada Menon, 2012



The Hindu Award, Dr. Thara, 2018



Dr. Sarada Menon receives the Arvaiyar Award from Late Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, J. Jayalalitha, 2016



The Human Rights Award, SCARF, 2006



Award for tsunami work by SCARF, 2004

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
[June 19, 2020; 12:00 pm Eastern]

CONTACT: SIRS, (615) 324-2370
info@schizophreniaresearchsociety.org

Rangaswamy Thara receives the SIRS 2020 Outstanding Clinical and Community Research Award

The Schizophrenia International Research Society has named Rangaswamy Thara, Ph.D., FRCPsych, the 2020 Outstanding Clinical and Community Research Awardee. Dr. Thara is a psychiatrist by training and the co-Founder of SCARF (Schizophrenia Research Foundation), located in the city of Chennai in Tamil Nadu, India. SCARF is a Collaborating Centre of the WHO for mental health research.

After receiving her Ph.D. at Madras University on the subject of disability in schizophrenia, she passionately lobbied for the inclusion of mental disability in the Indian Disabilities Act and was largely instrumental in the development of IDEAS, a measuring tool used to measure disability in mental disorders. Her prominent piece of research is the Madras Longitudinal Study, a 35-year follow-up of an incidence schizophrenia sample. Dr. Thara pioneered the use of mobile tele psychiatry to deliver high quality care for schizophrenia in resource-less rural communities, which is now serving more than 1,500 patients.

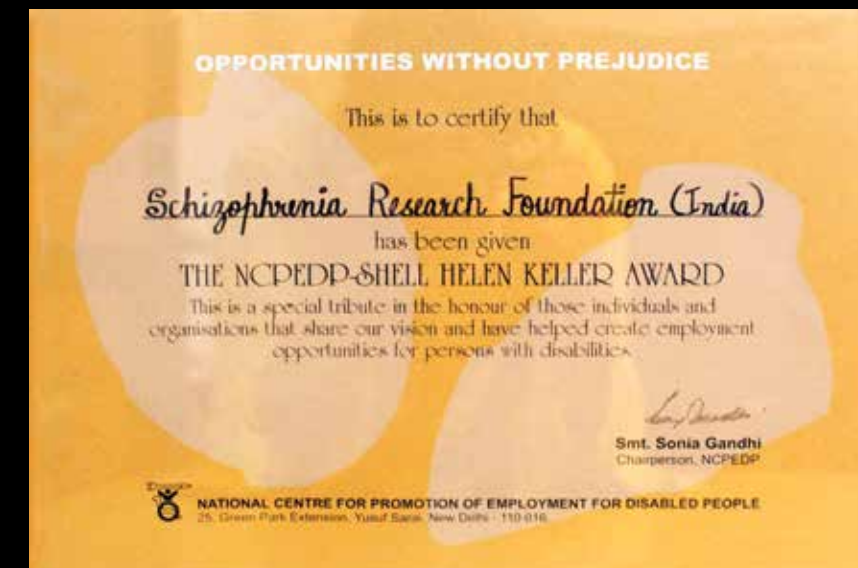
Dr. Thara has been largely instrumental in forging collaborations with premier institutions around the world. She is on the Advisory Committee to the Director General of the World Health Organization, Geneva and was a member of the Institute Body of NIMHANS. In 2012, Dr. Thara was awarded the President's Gold Medal from the Royal College, UK and in 2014, the Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, UK. She has served on the Editorial Board of numerous reputable journals, including Schizophrenia Bulletin. She participated in many International Meetings around the world in the last 35 years and has authored over 180 research publications.

Dr. Rangaswamy Thara will receive the 2020 Outstanding Clinical and Community Research Award at the 2021 Congress of the Schizophrenia International Research Society in Toronto, Canada.

Media contact: Tricia Sullivan at (info@schizophreniaresearchsociety.org; 615-324-2370)

The Schizophrenia International Research Society (SIRS) was founded in 2005 with the goal of bringing together scientists from around the world to exchange the latest advances in biological and psychosocial research in schizophrenia. The Society is dedicated to facilitating international collaboration to discover the causes of, and better treatments for, schizophrenia and related disorders. Part of the mission of the Society is to promote educational programs about the latest findings in schizophrenia research, to effectively disseminate them worldwide, and to expedite the publication of new research.

SIRS Award, Dr. Thara R, 2020



NCPEDP- Shell Helen Keller Award, SCARF, 2001

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Milestones

1984
Founding of Schizophrenia Research Foundation-SCARF, Recognition under 35 (i) (ii) of the IT Act

1985
Full-fledged Day Care Centre at Anna Nagar East
Screening of 'Passage to India' for fundraising

1986
National Mental Health Programme started at Tiruporur, Tamil Nadu
Distinct psychosocial rehabilitation programmes implemented

1987
Rural services at Vellore launched with OXFAM aid
SCARF recognised as a placement centre for students of social work
Akshaya, a cafeteria at IIT, Madras inaugurated

1988
Beginning of the Family Cell for family psycho-education and support for the children of several disabled clients

1989
First International Workshop on Natural History of Schizophrenia
Rural Mental Health programme at Tiruporur, IDRC grant

1990
Construction of residential centre at Thiruverkadu for mentally ill women and elderly

1991
SCARF identified as one of the centres of the WHO co-ordinated International Study of Schizophrenia
Meeting of the Central Welfare Ministry at SCARF to recognise mental illness as a 'Disability'

1992
Dr. Sarada Menon receives the Padma Bhushan
Bhavishya Bhavan inaugurated
Film on Schizophrenia produced by Film Division
International seminar jointly hosted by SCARF & Law Asia

1993
Workshop at Thiruverkadu inaugurated
Bhoomi pooja at Mahabalipuram for a residential centre for men
Mr. V.T. Somasundaram becomes President of the Board

1994
SCARF's second residential centre Bhagwan Mahaveer Manav Sanmarga Seva Kendra (for men) opens in Mahabalipuram
10th Anniversary of SCARF celebrated with an International Workshop on Rehabilitation
Tamil Nadu Government increases the annual grant

1995
SCARF receives the National Award from the President of India for the Best Employer of the Handicapped.
Mr. Maniratnam's 'Bombay' screened as a preview for fundraising

1996
Dr. R. Thara becomes full-time Secretary and Director
SCARF designated as the Collaborating Centre of the WHO for Mental Health Research and Training.
The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu lays the foundation stone for the new building at Anna Nagar

1997
IDRC Seminar on Community Mental Health
SCARF one of the centres for the WHO's CIDH study
National Commission for Women, New Delhi, funds a study on divorced/ separated, mentally ill women

1998
Two training programmes initiated by SCARF - 'Strategies in Mental Health Research' and 'Mental Health Psychosocial Rehabilitation'
SCARF moves into its own building in Annanagar West

1999
Expansion at Mahabalipuram centre completed
FACES Programme funded by Tata Social Welfare Trust
15th Anniversary of SCARF celebrated
International seminar on Disability caused by Mental Disorders

2000
Inauguration of MK Tata Memorial Auditorium
A patient of SCARF attends the Consumers Meet at Oslo, Norway
Pune Psychiatric Society Award for best published paper

2001
Rajiv Menon's film 'Kandukondein Kandukondein' screened as a fundraiser
Marfatia award for best paper presented at the annual conference of Indian Psychiatric Society
SCARF annual seminar on Stress and Management

2002
'Mind Matters' - A portrayal of Mental Health by dancer, Anita Ratnam
Co-ordination of field testing of IDEAS, a tool to measure Mental Disability-a landmark progress for the mentally ill
Commencement of the Urban Community Mental Health programme, sponsored by the WHO
SCARF- Synergy seminar on Treatment Resistance

2003
The Sarada Menon Centre Inauguration at Anna Nagar
Panel discussion on Media and Mental Health - an open house meet
Seminar on Emotional Well-being, organised jointly with Anna University

2004
The 1st International Conference on Schizophrenia, Chennai (ICONS)
His Excellency, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India inaugurates the 20th Anniversary celebrations

2006
First programme of 'Frame of Mind'

2009
Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss inaugurates the 25th Anniversary celebrations
Diplomate of National Board in Psychiatry is instituted

2010
Mr. R. Seshasayee assumes charge as President of the Board
SCARF stamp was released

2011
SCARF- AADHAR Awards
Dr. Yamini Kannappan receives the Dr. Sarada Menon Gold Medal in DipNB exams

2012
MAITRI Awards instituted

2013
SCARF & the Press Institute of India institutes SCARF Media for Mental Health awards for mental health reporting

2016
Dr. M. Sarada Menon is awarded the 'Avvaiyar Award'
Diploma Course on Mental Health Care and Counselling started
Mental Health Cafe launched

2018
Dr. R. Padmavati assumes charge as Director
World of Women Award from *The Hindu* for Dr. R. Thara
The Diploma in Mental Health Care & Counselling receives accreditation from NIMHANS
In 2018, Dr. Sindhu Maran (2017 Batch) receives the Dr. Sarada Menon Gold Medal for Psychiatry for her excellence in the examinations
Youth Mental Health programme begins

2019
Dr. Sarada Menon was awarded 'The Hindu Lifetime Achievement Award' at The Hindu World of Women
The construction for DEMCARES begins
Mr. Kotteswara Rao, Assistant Director, SCARF India selected as state level member for Tamil Nadu State Mental Health Authority (TNSMHA)



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