



Society of Parents of Children with Autistic Disorders

PATRON : Ms. Shanti Ekambaram

DIRECTOR : Kotak Mahindra

ANNUAL REPORT

2008-09

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It gives me immense happiness to present the seventh annual report of SOPAN to you.

The seven year journey has seen us grow from a fledgling organization to one that is recognized nationally for its work in autism intervention.

Besides our regular activities, a few events of this year need a special mention.

Dr. Shubha Raul, Mayor of Mumbai visited Samarpan. Being a doctor and an empathetic person by nature, she spent time with children and discussed many issues with members of staff.

Since the United Nations declared April 2nd as World Autism Awareness Day, we celebrated it by organizing a Public Walk. This awareness campaign was supported by Advocate Parag Alwani, and Shri Sachin Khedekar, a well known media personality who walked with our children, parents and well wishers. Several Mumbai based organizations working for children with autism also participated in the campaign.

We were among the few organizations that were invited by Sir Dorabji Tata Trust to present a paper on our best practice in autism intervention at their National Seminar. This invitation was a recognition and reiteration of the quality of our work.

We know that SOPAN's achievements have been possible because all of you are with us to encourage the efforts we make towards our mission to empower people with autism.

Best Wishes

Dr. Rubina Lal
President

SOPAN
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The year 2008-09 saw SOPAN achieving more goals and thereby fulfilling its objective of empowering individuals with autism and their families. This year saw SOPAN widening its horizon and reaching out to more people. SOPAN undertook the following projects and activities.

Samarpan Centre for Autism Spectrum Disorders

Samarpan, a training centre for children and young adults with autism was started in the year 2003. Samarpan continues to offer a variety of services ranging from assessment and diagnosis, early intervention, remediation, pre-vocational and vocational training, related therapies including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and adaptive physical education. The services are multidisciplinary in nature and follow autism specific and research based methods such as visual strategies, verbal behaviour analysis, sensory integration therapy and alternative augmentative communications. Music, Dance and Yoga therapy is also given to the children.

Apart from these, other services are also available for Samarpan students. Psychological testing is done for some students. Home visits for students were made available to enable a better understanding of the students. Parents are trained in behaviour management techniques where required on an individual basis. They are also given knowledge on sex education and adolescent issues related to their child.

The home management department which was set up to help train students in life skills is functioning well. This department has started marketing almond chocolates made by the students of this department.

The bus service which was started in June'2005 continues to provide services for the students of Samarpan.

Apart from its regular services of assessment, intervention and training the following activities were also held:



- The Annual Sports Day was held on 31st January 2009. The theme was “Robinhood”. **Ecole Mondiale School** had sponsored the sports day and some of their students had come to help the children participate in the sports day.
- Students celebrated different festivals like Independence day, Republic day, Ganesh Chaturthi, Gokulashtami, Raksha Bandhan, Holi, Teacher’s Day, Friendship Day etc. Diwali mela was held on 14th – 17th October 2008.
- Students of Samarpan participated in the sand castle competition held by Hi-Tech Foundation in the month of March.



- Samarpan held its third Annual Day on 12th October 2008 where each and every student of Samarpan performed on stage. Priyanj special school also participated in the Annual day function. This year some parents of children of Samarpan centre put up a play as part of the function.



- The Parle Mahotsav 2008 was held in the month of December. SOPAN was invited to help organize participation of special schools. One of Samarpan's children participated in the drawing competition and won a prize.
- The Mumbai marathon donors were presented with gifts made by the pre-vocational department.
- Dance and movement therapy was started in Samarpan this year. Trainers from VAF(Victory Arts Foundation) come to train the children of Samarpan twice a week.
- Yoga therapy was started at Samarpan this year. Some children are given Yoga therapy regularly.
- Training in Computers, audio-visual viewing and music therapy are also imparted as part of their training.
- The students were taken for a picnic to Aksa beach to the J.J. Hospital resort in the disability week which starts from 3rd December every year.

Human Resource Development Programs

SOPAN conducts a three month course on autism every year. This year the course was conducted from July'2008 to October'2008. The syllabus of this course is approved by the RCI and the course is open to parents, professionals and mainstream teachers interested in improving their knowledge about autism. It is an intensive course which gives information on autism in addition to hands on experience in teaching and training children with autism. The course was conducted in Samarpan premises.

In house staff development programs for teachers and therapists of Samarpan are done on a regular basis.

Workshop on Social Skills for children with Asperger's Syndrome was held. Topics like "Christmas" and "Valentine" were dealt with at the workshop.

Community Awareness & Advocacy

SOPAN continues its efforts in spreading awareness about autism and sensitizing people to the needs of individuals with autism. This year too a lot of efforts were made.

1. World Autism Day



The United Nations has declared 2nd April as World Autism Day. SOPAN had organized an **Autism Awareness WALK** on 2nd April 2008. The **WALK** led by Samarpan's patron **Mr. Parag Alwani**, **Mr. Sachin Kedekar** well known Media personality, **Ms. Shalini Kapoor**, television actress, had SOPAN's trustees, several media personalities, well wishers, teachers, parents and students of Samarpan. It covered several areas in Vile Parle(E). Handouts giving information on autism were distributed during the **WALK**. People carried placards bearing messages

on empowerment on individuals with autism. The **WALK** generated a lot of interest and awareness among the general public.

2. Promotional Events

- Exhibitions of products made by the students of Samarpan were organized during Diwali and Christmas. Decorative lamps, cards, and other craft items were sold at these exhibitions. There were three exhibitions held showcasing these products. They were at Besant Montessori school in Juhu, a mela cum cultural program for special children at Andheri(E) and at a well wisher's house in Andheri(W).
- Samarpan students were invited to participate in a dance show organized by the Shiamak Davar Institute of Performing Arts (SDIPA) in February 2009. The parents and children were invited to come and watch the show. The show was held at St. Andrews auditorium in Bandra.
- Students of Samarpan were invited by the trainers of Victory Arts Foundation (VAF) to perform for cancer patients at Tata Memorial hospital in March 2009.

Significant Events

Several significant events marked the year 2008-09.





The Mayor of Mumbai **Ms. Shubha Raul**, visited Samarpan Centre for Autism Spectrum Disorders in 2008. She spent time with the students and appreciated the work done by SOPAN.



Ms. Ujwala Modak Chairperson Education Committee(BMC) visited Samarpan Centre for Autism Spectrum Disorders. She was accompanied by

Mrs. Jogi Deputy Education Officer (BMC) and Ms. Patkar Administrative Officer, K East Ward (BMC). They met the students and teachers and appreciated the work done by SOPAN.

The **Mumbai Marathon** is organized every year by **Standard Chartered Bank**. This event is basically aimed at raising funds for NGOs who work for the underprivileged and differently abled sections of society. Patron of SOPAN **Ms. Shanti Ekambaram** participated in this event. She participated in the Dream run for SOPAN and raised funds.

SOPAN

Society of Parents of Children with Autistic Disorders

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