

Association for Socially Applicable Research



**ANNUAL REPORT
(2020-2021)**

Hello and welcome to ASAR's first official annual report!

ASAR was informally formed in February 2018 but was legally registered as a section 8 non-profit company under the Government of India on October 31st, 2020.

The past year has been exciting with a growing family of members, newer research projects, and exciting new collaborations. Read on to know more!

The growing ASAR family and changing ASAR structure

ASAR started this year with around 30 members and today has grown to 70 total volunteers (including members and interns). In the past year, we restructured the organization into teams for better management. The management team consisted of our co-founders (Siddhesh, Sweta, and Surabhi), our awesome external management head, **Aatmika Nair**, and 3 different heads for internal management over the course of the year (**Avanti Andhale, Pradeeksha Mukuntharaj, and Swasti Deshpande**). We also designated a social media and public relations team which was kicked off by **Ashmeet Sachdev** and Avanti Andhale and is currently managed by **Anamitra Banerjee**. Recruitment of new members took place through a preliminary form on the website, followed by an interview with the management team. Each ASAR project had a separate working group on Whatsapp/ Telegram and a common group where the ASAR family could interact with each other. It is with the grit and dedication of our interns and members that we are still standing and hope to keep fighting to help solve the social problems in India. ASAR was blessed to have the help of **Anuradha Parmar**, our volunteer CS, who helped us navigate the legal aspects of running a company. We would also like to thank our auditor **Mr. Bajaj** and our volunteer CAs -**Mr. Bajaj, Mr. Borkar, Ms. Tokekar, and Ms. Dhapare** who have helped us navigate the financial aspects of managing a non-profit organization.

Our Research

ASAR's work before 2020 was mainly focused on *solving the health workforce shortage in India*. With newer members with varied educational qualifications, we have now expanded our work in the health sector to creating high-resolution nationwide estimates for India's national surgical planning, creating and validating a comprehensive *geo locations database of over 500,000 public and private healthcare facilities*, and building an *Indian Data Library (IDaLi) for Health*. IDaLi is a single-point access platform that aggregates health systems and outcomes from a multitude of sources and makes it readily accessible for researchers and policymakers for analyses. We are also expanding to other areas such as understanding socioeconomic inequalities, *access opportunities to education*, *investigating inequitable mental health expenditures*, and *mapping violence risk*. We also worked extensively on the efficacy, economics, and ethics of using *movement restrictive measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic*. With the Center for Environmental Health, we started working on understanding the perception of *climate change and its impact on health*. With the National Ayurveda Institute and the Indian Academy of Pediatrics, we started a pan-India project to understand the association between *screen time usage and mental health issues*. ASAR's research has been published in impactful and prestigious outlets like [The Lancet](#), [The British Medical Journal Global Health](#), [Human Resources for Health](#), [John Hopkins School of Public Health's Global Health Now](#), and [Duke Students' Global Health Review](#) among others. We have published evidence-based advocacy op-eds in popular media outlets like [The Wire](#), [The Wire Science](#), [The Quint](#), [The Public Economist](#), and [Bioethics.net](#).

Journal Articles:

1. Scoping review of the state of human resources for health in India(<https://dsghrefview.org/2020/10/08/scoping-review-of-the-state-of-human-resources-for-health-in-india/>)
2. Ethics-driven policy framework for implementation of movement restrictions in pandemics(<https://gh.bmj.com/content/6/6/e005202.full>)
3. India's problem of data and deaths([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)01245-9/fulltext?rss=yes](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)01245-9/fulltext?rss=yes))
4. Do health policies address the availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality of human resources for health? Analysis over three decades of National Health Policy of India(<https://human-resources-health.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12960-021-00681-1>)
5. Workforce problems at rural public health-centers in India: A WISN retrospective analysis and national-level modeling study(<https://assets.researchsquare.com/files/rs-1050174/v1/6afa7c11-9442-4523-9fb5-27375ad7ece5.pdf?c=1636053113>)

Evidence-based Op-Eds:

1. Constitution Day: Do We Truly Know the 'Real' Ambedkar?(<https://www.thequint.com/voices/blogs/indian-constitution-ambedkar-caste-system-reservation-policy-activism-social-barriers>)
2. Why India's Surgical Care Crisis Is Less Jigsaw, More Tetris – in Three Charts(<https://m.thewire.in/article/health/why-indias-surgical-care-crisis-is-less-jigsaw-more-tetris-in-three-charts?utm=authorlistpage>)
3. Why Bonded Service for Doctors Has Seen Only Limited Success(<https://science.thewire.in/health/why-bonded-service-for-doctors-has-seen-only-limited-success/>)
4. Make lockdowns against COVID-19 outbreak ethical: What did we learn from Wuhan(<http://www.bioethics.net/2020/08/make-lockdowns-against-covid-19-outbreak-ethical-what-did-we-learn-from-wuhan/>)
5. Alcohol: Bad for Indian Outbreak, Worse for Indian Economy(<https://www.globalhealthnow.org/2020-05/alcohol-bad-indian-outbreak-worse-indian-economy>)
6. Can the patient have a say in the cost of treatment?(<http://thepubliceconomist.com/?p=139971>)
7. Unnoticed, Misunderstood, and Unaddressed: Why gender equity in global mental health matters(<https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/unnoticed-misunderstood-and-unaddressed>)
8. Helping Doctors Reach Rural India, Global Health Now Exclusive (<https://www.globalhealthnow.org/2021-02/helping-doctors-reach-rural-india>)
9. Solving systemic violence against healthcare workers in India(<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/10/04/solving-systemic-violence-against-healthcare-workers-in-india/>)

Abstracts selected for presentations on social issues in eminent conferences:

1. The Health Services Crisis in Rural India: A two-stream synthesis from academic and policy literature: Oxford, 2019
2. Solving the Measurement Problem of Health Workforce: A Longitudinal Analysis of Rural Indian Healthcare: CUGH, 2019
3. Assessing the distributional disparities in human resources for health in rural India: A longitudinal analysis of Rural Health Statistics (2005-2017): CUGH, 2020
4. Why are health workers not going to rural areas? A systematic review of the qualitative and quantitative studies: CUGH, 2020
5. Getting a C-section at a private facility, what are the odds?: Analysis of National Family Health Survey from India: CUGH, 2020
6. Bayesian Qualitative Analysis Reveals the Role of Implementation Anxiety in Shut Down of Rural Medical Assistant Programme (RMAP), India. CUGH, 2020
7. Are Women in Politics Helping Women's Health?: A Retrospective Analysis of National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-2016) and General Elections (2009) from India. CUGH, 2020
8. Inequalities in Global Health Spending: A formal analysis of the IHME GBD Study Estimates. CUGH, 2020
9. Estimating the Need, Costs, and Access to Essential Surgical Care in India: A Modeling Study. CUGH, 2020
10. Framework for Policymakers for Ethical Implementation of Restrictions in the Face of a Pandemic With Its Application to the COVID-19 Lockdown of India. CUGH, 2020

ASAR's evidence-based blogs on social issues:

1. Gender equality at home: Findings from a Facebook survey(<https://www.asarforindia.org/post/gender-equality-at-home-findings-from-a-facebook-survey>)
2. Is patriarchy bad for men?(<https://www.asarforindia.org/post/is-patriarchy-bad-for-men>)
3. Indian agricultural acts of 2020: Talking points(<https://www.asarforindia.org/post/is-patriarchy-bad-for-men>)

ASAR Talks

On Sundays at 9 pm, ASAR invites experts from the social research sector to talk about their work. The talks are free, open to the general public, and a wonderful forum to inspire and give direction to our young social researchers.

In the past year, some of the free talks we arranged were as follows:

1. Dr. Aditya Nair, Assistant Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, **University of Nevada**. Topic: ‘Development of the COVID-19 Risk Meter’.
2. Dr. Hampus Holmer, Ph.D. Global Health, **Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, part of India’s ‘Vaccine Maitree’ initiative. Topic: ‘Global Vaccine Access’.
3. Dr. Richa Sharma, Research Scientist at Centre for Environmental Health (**Public Health Foundation of India**). Topic: ‘Climate Change and Health’.
4. Dr. Sanjay Oak, **Chairman of Maharashtra’s COVID-19 task force**. Topic: ‘COVID-19: From hospitals to health systems.’
5. Anshul Sharma, Co-Founder Redwing Labs, **Alumnus Forbes 30 under 30 Asia**. Topic: ‘Drone-based delivery of vaccines.’
6. Professor Narendra Shah, CTARA, **IIT Bombay**. Topic: ‘Agriculture, food & nutrition: How can NGOs catalyze government action?’
7. Dr. Yogesh Kalkonde, a researcher at **SEARCH**, Indian Alliance Fellow in Public Health. Topic: ‘Universal health coverage in India.’
8. Paolo Brunori, Assistant Professor, **London School of Economics**. Topic: ‘Measuring inequality of opportunity.’
9. Joao Vissoci, Assistant Professor, **Duke Global Health Institute**. Topic: ‘Data science for health policies in LMICs.’
10. Dr. Diwakar Kulkarni, Former Director, and Principal Scientist,

National Institute of high-security animal diseases. Topic: ‘Emerging and re-emerging viral zoonoses.’

11. Christina Willie, Director of **Insecurity Insight** and Rohini Haar, Research Fellow at **UC Berkeley**. Topic: ‘Violence against healthcare workers.’
12. Dr. Itamar Megiddo, Associate Professor, **University of Strathclyde**. Topic: ‘IndiaSim and its applications.’

ASAR Blogs: Voices of Warriors (VoW)

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, ASAR wanted to bring to the forefront the challenges faced by the frontline workers in the pandemic. Given that we are primarily a research-focused organization, this might seem a digression. But we believe that the frontline experiences and original contemplations of these experiences are valuable evidence that could be harnessed to change our health system. We published a series of seven blogs with experiences from medical students to surgeons to psychiatrists, in both Marathi and English. You can read them here: <https://www.asarforindia.org/blog>

ASAR's Public Policy Forum

The government of India, time and again, releases policy drafts for feedback from the public. ASAR Public Policy Forums aim to seize this opportunity to provide well-researched feedback on government policies. This is a fairly new venture and this year, we conducted one policy forum on the 'Drone Policy, 2021' released by the government. In the future, we hope to open these forums to the public to build a culture of interest in the general public in contributing to government policies.

ASAR's Journal Clubs

Journal clubs (JCs) is a fairly new venture meant to help our members and interns to be better equipped in understanding and thus, conducting research. Co-ordinated by one of our enthusiastic interns- Shirish Rao, ASAR members are provided a platform to learn by regular reading, discussion, and critical evaluation of papers published in peer-reviewed journals. Papers for the JC are either chosen by the presenters or given to them by the management team, such that they fulfill a Specific Learning Objective (SLO).

This year, we conducted two JCs:

1. Presenter: Tanmay Jadhav

Paper: *A spatial database of health facilities managed by the public health sector in sub-Saharan Africa*

SLO: Understanding how to create geospatial databases

2. Presenter: Yash Jawale

Paper: *Effects of nurse-to-patient ratio legislation on nurse staffing and patient mortality, readmissions, and length of stay: a prospective study in a panel of hospital*

SLO: Understanding prospective panel study designs & understanding the importance of human resources for health.

Our Collaborations

In November 2021, ASAR became an official knowledge partner for the [Lancet Citizens' Commission - 'Reimagining India's Health System'](#). In the past year, we also collaborated for our varied research projects with the [Centre for Environmental Health](#) (Centre of Excellence of Public Health Foundation of India), and [Redwing Labs](#). We also work in collaboration with researchers at the Department of Surgery [Duke University School of Medicine](#), [Duke Global Health Institute](#), [University of California Berkeley](#), [Insecurity Insights](#), [National Institute of Ayurveda](#), among others. We have also formed advocacy-focused collaborations with the student organizations like Rotaract Club of Caduceus and Asian Medical Students' Association (AMSA).

Other Activities

ASAR was thrilled to have been invited to be a part of ‘The Changemakers’ Cassette’, a podcast series on Spotify. Here, we were given a platform to speak about ASAR’s unique vision and work. This year, ASAR also had the opportunity to speak about ‘social research’, to medical students all over India, as an invited speaker for Seth GS Medical College’s Annual Conference- ‘Confluence 2021’.

We are also proud to have conducted 3 “ASAR Sabhas/ Townhall Meets” in the past year where our members interacted with each other and spoke about their work. These meetings were the brewing pot for most of ASAR’s awesome ideas!

Looking Ahead

We are off to a kick-ass beginning but there is still a long road ahead. We envision building a culture of evidence-based problem-solving in Indian policy-making. We aspire to inspire and train young researchers to contribute to building the requisite evidence for social problem-solving in India. In the coming year, we will shift a little bit of our focus towards acquiring funding to help us keep our research activities afloat. We will also be searching for avenues to help convey our research findings to bureaucrats and policymakers. And of course, we will keep taking on newer research projects that our members and followers think are the need of the hour. If you think you can help us in this regard, please do reach out and we shall be grateful.

Thank you for reading!

With love,

Team ASAR

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