

This is a quarterly newsletter that provides updates on SMSF activities. In the words of Revered Chariji, "This publication will essentially focus on the spiritual needs of human beings, how they are being or trying to be fulfilled by the Sahaj Marg philosophy and practice ..."

For archives of newsletters, visit <http://www.sahajmarg.org/newsletter/smsf-newsletters>.

## Featured in this issue

**ISAW:** A report on ISAW 2015 programme.

**CREST:** Activities of CREST in Bangalore and Berlin.

**Retreat Centre:** Reports on activities at Retreat Centres at Pune and Kharagpur, as well as SPURS Retreat, USA.

**Health:** Medical centre activities at Chennai.



(above) Master with ISAW participants at Manapakkam, Chennai during February 2015

## International Scholarship Award Workshop 2015

The International Scholarship Award Workshop (ISAW) kicked off on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2015 in the Manapakkam Ashram auditorium. Aged 24 to 64, most of the 26 participants had arrived from 16 countries. With a rush of excitement and a host of administrative tasks to be completed (registering for the ashram stay, getting SIM cards for cell phones, passport copies, etc.), the nine language and various administrative skills of the seventeen coordinators were immediately put to use, helping the group understand what was needed of them.

On the next day, 19<sup>th</sup> January, the group boarded a bus and together headed to CREST Bangalore – home for the next ten days. It was a fun nine-hour ride with getting-to-know-each-other conversations across languages, as well as sleep for many who were still tired from their long journeys to India (one brother from Venezuela had traveled forty hours!). En route, the bus stopped at Vellore Ashram for lunch.

The bus eventually reached Bangalore after night had fallen. Even in the darkness, amidst the flurry of unloading and unpacking of bags, the peace and purity of CREST was unmistakable.

Over the next ten days the group embarked on a

deep study of the basic practice and essential attitudes of Sahaj Marg.

Mornings began with physical exercise and tea before satsang. Additionally, in lieu of the above, participants were given individual sittings on alternate mornings. On alternate afternoons after classroom sessions, they had one-on-one sessions with their assigned coordinator – or mentor, to go over in detail each aspect of the practice as well as seek clarification in their own language. In the evenings, a DVD talk by one of the Masters was played.

The group spent a full day listening to brother Rishi Ranjan of Bangalore Centre on the Ten Maxims. It was an enlightening and enriching session for all.

On the morning of our departure, the group was feeling bittersweet. The atmosphere of CREST was hard to leave, were it not for the fact that we were returning to our shared home, Manapakkam. So, we boarded the bus for another laughter-filled ride. We stopped again at Vellore Ashram, had a satsang before we ate lunch and then moved on.

Back in Manapakkam, we arrived to an ashram in full swing. The Latin American seminar was about to





(above) Participants of ISAW at a session

begin, and participants had begun showing up. Also, ISAW participants had begun taking their preparatory perfect sittings, adding additional hours and schedule to their already packed programme. The daily talks and study sessions continued. When Master returned on 11<sup>th</sup> February, he gave a few joint talks and satsangs to the scholars, as well as local prefects.

The programme culminated on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> February when Master made all the participants prefects. On the first day, he gave eight participants a group satsang in the cottage hall and then gave each an individual sitting of five to ten minutes in his office. On the second day, he asked all fourteen remaining prefects to meet him and gave a group satsang.

Soon after, the programme came to a close. Contact information was shared and taxis to the airport were arranged. Unlike in years past, which ended with more outward emotion and fervour, this year the group remained composed, tending to share their deep sense of change, belonging and conviction in private than in public. Many were so changed by the experience of their first sittings that they were left without words.

After the participants had left, the coordinators gathered to not just debrief and celebrate what was another successful ISAW batch, but also lay the foundation for planning the next year's programme.

Source: Sis. Dolly Nicolai



(left) Participants of ISAW at CREST

## Programmes at CREST, Bangalore



(left) Seated left to right - Dr Mohandas Hegde, Dr K.S. Balasubramanian, Dr Priyadarshana Jain, Dr Sudha Gopinath, Rev. Fr Dr Francis D'Souza and Dr Ali Khwaja at the Inter-Faith Seminar on 'Love and Brotherhood'

During this quarter, ten events were conducted at CREST, Bangalore.

### **Inter-Faith Seminar on Love & Brotherhood** 3 January 2015

This seminar was conducted with a view to understand and acknowledge the idea of 'Love and Brotherhood' as expressed in different religions. Experts on different religions were invited to speak. Though these values and ideals are emphasised elaborately in all religions and form the core theme of most religions, they are not known as a common unifying factor. The abhyasis as well as invitees who attended this seminar were happy to hear from such diverse speakers.

### **Faculty Development Programme (FDP)** 9 – 14 January 2015

The objectives of the programme were to:

1. Understand the role of faculty in the light of Sahaj Marg,
2. Appreciate the need to learn and work on oneself for constant refinement,
3. Develop a heart-based approach to connect and communicate with any audience, and
4. Develop exposure to different interactive methods of learning and teaching.

Thirty participants and four facilitators participated. Each participant was evaluated using pre-defined parameters on content, communication, connectivity with the participants and other aspects like language, expression and gestures. Brother A.P. Durai was

present for the valedictory program and guided the delegates with his personal experiences.

### **Inmates Day: 17 January 2015**

Seventeen inmates from CREST and the three ashrams in Bangalore, attended. Brother Perumal guided all inmates to work from the heart, to maintain the serenity and atmosphere with good behaviour, co-operation and co-ordination. The programme included a module on fire-fighting techniques and first-aid.

### **Workplace Ethics (WPE) Second level Training: 20 January 2015**

The second level training programme was conducted for doctors and staff from the *Samudaya Arogya Kendra* (a community health centre close to CREST). The topic was 'Work-Life Balance'. Participants were asked to introspect and answer questions relevant for a balanced existence.

### **International Scholarship Award Workshop (ISAW): 18 - 29 January 2015**

Please see Pages 1 and 2 for an article on the ISAW programme.

### **Library Exploration Programme (LEP) – 'Faith is power, knowledge is potential': 13 - 15 February 2015**

Fifteen abhyasis participated in the programme. Participants were asked to read and contemplate on selected Whispers messages. Each day, two



participants were asked to share their understanding and learning from a detailed study of the Whispers message. Participants were divided into groups and themes were given to each group for discussion. Each group prepared a report and presented a skit on the theme assigned to the group.

### **Workshop on Ashram life** 24 – 28 February 2015

The objective of this workshop facilitated by brother Prasanna Krishna was to learn to emulate ashram living at home. Every day, the first half was spent on lectures and the second half was spent in group discussions and introspection among the participants.

### **Orientation Programme for Research Aspirants (OPRA)** 22 - 29 March 2015

University of Mysore held the Eligibility examination for PhD scholars on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2015. Eleven scholars prepared for the examinations using the CREST library and group studies. Dr Anasuya, Dr Sarala Upadhyaya, Dr Seeta Kunchitapadam and Dr Perumal supported and guided the scholars in their preparation.

### **Economy and Equanimity** 24 – 28 March 2015

Fifteen delegates attended this programme which was coordinated by brother Manoj Agarwal. Each day of the programme, presentations were made in the first half of the day, group discussions in afternoon and circle time in the evening to share the experiences and understandings during the day.

*Source: Brother Mohandas Hegde*

(top) Participants of Faculty Development Program  
(centre) Participants of seminar on Work Place Ethics  
(right) Participants of workshop on "Ashram Life"





## Activities at CREST, Berlin

The ninth CREST seminar was conducted on the theme selected by respected Kamlesh bhai - '**Search Within**', from 27<sup>th</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. Fifty-two participants from all parts of Europe attended the seminar. The following topics were covered:

- Remembrance: Who, Where, What is Within
- The Inner Reality and Outer Reality as One
- The Real Nature of Happiness
- Beyond Ignorance and Knowing, the Inner State of *Tam*
- From Choice to Choicelessness

Each speaker was allocated a tutor who supported them through the process. The sub-topics were revealed the evening before. Thus there was very little time for the speakers or participants to prepare for the next day. This meant that each speaker had to search within and had to trust their own heart while presenting the workshop. The effect of this was extraordinary. Not only did speakers speak from their heart but



(above) Participants of seminar at CREST, Berlin

perhaps more importantly, the participants listened with their hearts. A real sense of unity and mutual support was created in the group. Barriers melted. Each day had a different flavour and brought new insights. Words didn't seem so important - they took us towards feeling a new condition.

A common thread seemed to emerge over the five days. This was the importance of feeling the Master's presence and allowing it to guide and transform us now and into the future.

Source: Brother Christian Macketanz

## Activities at SPURS

SPURS Ranch Retreat Centre hosted eight abhyasis for the quarter ending March 2015. Major volunteer tasks included road repair, painting all fence posts and repairing and repainting the ceiling in the meditation hall. Pruning of all plants and trees was also accomplished. Some feedback from participants is given below:

- *I never meditated so many times in a day. I have time on the weekends and I could do this at home. I could feel the difference and benefit.*
- *The first three days were magnificent. This is a place where there is communication between me and my inner self.*
- *I think I made it to a different plane in Sahaj Marg, I could feel the progression. In hindsight, I wish I would have prepared more. A very profound shift occurred here.*
- *I felt a different kind of calmness and peace and felt like I was taking a step towards the goal.*

Source: Sister Suzanne Garner, SPURS Retreat Resident Prefect



(top) A picture of the SPURS retreat center

If you wish to spend a few days in this very special place, do not hesitate to call +1-512-301-2104 or e-mail [austin@sahajmarg.org](mailto:austin@sahajmarg.org). Information on SPURS is at: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/smwww/spurs-texas-usa>.



## Activities at Pune Retreat Centre



(left and below) Master at Pune retreat center

In the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, eighty-five retreatants spent 690 person days at the retreat. This quarter saw bitter cold, rain and intense heat as well.

It was a moment of great joy to receive Master at Pune Retreat Centre from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> March. His one word message for all present here was 'Silence'.

It is planned that the Zones-in-Charge will organise awareness and training of preceptors so that a preceptor recommending an abhyasi is able to prepare him/her to get into the retreat mood one week ahead of the retreat. A retreat is a unique opportunity available for an individual to dive deep inside and brood over one's inner condition. It is not meant to be a place for enjoying vacation in groups. It is recommended that abhyasis prepare themselves by reading the prescribed material, taking individual sittings.

Retreat Centres are open for all abhyasis holding permanent abhyasi cards. They can apply online at

[www.sahajmarg.org](http://www.sahajmarg.org) and visit one retreat centre of their choice every year. The approval process involves their preceptor's approval email. Senior citizens need to provide fitness certificate from a doctor.

The April to June quarter will be fairly hot. Towards mid-June monsoon will set-in. Abhyasis retreating here are requested to bring umbrellas.

Source: Br. Prem Apte



**A Poem***(Composed by Sister Madhavi Modi at Pune Retreat Centre)*

Everything seems to have slowed down here,  
Heartbeat, breath and time.

I surrender to HIM  
My heart is no more mine

The only thing that makes sound here is the lovely breeze,  
It makes its presence felt through rustling leaves  
Oh Master! What a beautiful slice of paradise on Earth you made  
Nothing should let this divine feeling fade.

I know I will visit this place when I close my eyes  
And will see the sunset, the flowers and pretty butterflies.  
But more than anything else,  
I will remember the moment I was reborn  
Now with a renewed purpose life should move on.

This divine experience started at some bend  
It is here to stay. It will never end.

Thank you Master!



(above) Master at Pune retreat center

**Applying for Retreats**

Abhyasis who wish to apply for retreats either at **Malampuzha, Pune or Kharagpur** may find more information about facilities and retreat program at:

<http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww/retreat-center-overview>. Abhyasis who wish to enroll for retreat programs may now apply online at above address.

***Activities at Kharagpur Retreat Centre***

As you are all aware, the third retreat centre in India at Kharagpur is functional since 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014. Master has created this facility to primarily serve the needs of abhyasis from the northern and eastern parts of the country. During the period until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, eleven abhyasis availed of the retreat facility at Kharagpur and collectively stayed for 215 nights. The Retreat Centre provided them the necessary seclusion and silence to discover the essence of Sahaj Marg in the core of their hearts. The environment was conducive for them to retreat into themselves, introspect and brood over their condition. Almost every participant was of the view that that this was a life changing experience for them.

Source: Br. U. P. Dhawan

***CREST, Bangalore Calendar***

Below is the calendar of CREST for the coming months in 2015.

Programme	Session Date
Faculty Development Programme	12 to 16, May 2015
Library Exploration Programme	11 to 14, June 2015
Ashram Life	26 to 30, May 2015
Respect for Guru	23 to 27, June 2015
Time Management	7 to 11, April 2015; 4 to 8, August 2015
Economy and Equanimity	7 to 11, July 2015

For more details, visit CREST section in <http://www.sahajmarg.org>

Free Medical Centres (FMC) at Manapakkam and Satkhol have been undertaking many activities towards imparting medical services to the needy. Medical Camps are regularly held in many other centres. Physicians, medical students, residents, nurses and others in the medical community have formed Sahaj Marg Physicians Group (SMPG) to offer medical services to the needy in the FMCs. This group may be contacted at [rgokula@hotmail.com](mailto:rgokula@hotmail.com) or [smpg@sahajmarg.info](mailto:smpg@sahajmarg.info)

## Medical Centre News

### Services of Free Medical Centre at Manapakkam during the period from January to February 2015

The FMC served 8,382 patients in January and 7,746 in February. Details of the activities in this period are given below:

Specialty	Jan15	Feb15	Panel of Doctors		
Cardiology	22	57	Dr V. Vanaja		
Dentistry	386	250	Dr Jagadish Kumar, Dr Vikram Shrivatsava, Dr Swathi Ragu, Dr N. Parkavi		
Dermatology	111	230	Dr M. Jayaraman		
Endocrinology	16	6	Dr M. Ravi Kiran		
Gastro-enterology	24	31	Dr M. Manimaran		
General Surgery	97	101	Dr Anamay K. Bidwai		
Physiotherapy	329	281	Sister P. Kiranmayee		
Nutrition and Diet	34	20	Sister G. Srilatha		
Ophthalmology	54	23	Dr Harshitha Bakshi		
Orthopedics	38	27	Dr D. Narendra, Dr Phani Kiran		
Optometry	37	0	Mr Arun Prasath		
Paediatrics	1016	873	Dr Natwar Sharma, Dr S. Kishore		
Psychiatry	0	0	Dr A.P. Mythili		
Pulmonology	13	22	Dr G. Raja Amarnath		
Urology	3	13	Dr Sanjay Sharma		
Gynecology	15	0	Dr Jayanthi Mohan		
Neurology	0	0	Dr R. Padmini		
Department	Jan15	Feb15	Panel of Doctors		
Allopathy	7653	7019	Dr U. Ravindran, Dr Anamay K. Bidwai, Dr S. Kishore, Dr R. Sulochana, Dr V. Vidyavathi, Dr JegdishKumar, Sis. P.Kiranmaye, Mr Jibu George Varghese, Dr R. Sudharani, Dr Jaya Prasanthi, Dr Vikram Srivatsava, Dr N. Parkavi, Dr.M.Umakanthan		
Ayurveda	171	154	Dr V. Janani Mukundan, Dr Ram Subramaniam		
Homeopathy	558	573	Dr C. Jayasree		
Gender	Jan15	Feb15	Categories	Jan15	Feb15
Male	3007	2739	Abhyasis	2630	1920
Female	4359	4134	Others	5752	5826
Children	1016	873	Total	8382	7746
Service details	Jan15	Feb15			
Services outside hours	60	37			
In patients	29	31			
Clinical Lab investigations	519	476			
Minor Surgical Procedures	22	17			
Spirometry	0	0	Courtesy Lupin Laboratories		
Team		Team	Team	Volunteers	
V. Sandhya (Lab Technician) K. Kavitha (Lab Technician) K. Jaya (House-keeping) R. Abinaya (Receptionist)		A. Krishna Kumar (Pharmacist) S. Dhanalakshmi (Pharmacist) D. Eswaramma (Nurse) P. S. Soniya (Nurse) A. Uma Maheswari (Nurse)	B. Sathya (Nurse) K. Radhika (Nurse) M. Thenmozhi (Nurse) K. Suganya (Nurse)	Dr U. Ravindran Dr R. Sulochana Dr R. Sudharani Dr M. Umakanthan Dr Jaya Prasanthi Sister Janaki Sudha	

Source: Br. Dr Ravindran Ulaganathan

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