



Dr Jagannath Wani, a Canada based NRI and a caregiver of a family member suffering from schizophrenia, was instrumental in formation of a caregivers' organisation, the Schizophrenia Society of Alberta (SSA), in the Province of Alberta in Canada in 1980. Encouraged by the effective work of SSA for persons suffering from Schizophrenia and their families, Dr Wani wanted to form a similar body in Maharashtra, the state of his birth in India, where the need to provide such help was much more pronounced. Dr Wani's initiative paid off and Schizophrenia Awareness Association (SAA) was incorporated in Pune on the 18th December 1997 and later registered as a public trust on the 18th February 1998.

Soon after the formation of SAA, at the request of Dr Wani, members of Ekalavya Self Help Group formed in 1998, joined the Managing Committee of SAA and merged their group with SAA. For the first five years, SAA was striving with its meagre resources to do something meaningful to help persons afflicted with schizophrenia and their families without much success. The turning point came in 2002 when K.S. Wani Memorial Trust (KSWMT) offered to help SAA. They approached Canada based Maharashtra Seva Samiti Organisation (MSSO), also formed by Dr Wani, for raising funds for SAA. MSSO enlisted support of the Canadian International Development Agency and the Wild Rose Foundation to provide matching funds. This financial assistance helped SAA to create adequate infrastructure and to carry on many awareness activities including publication of many books on mental illness and the award winning awareness movie, Devrai.

SAA owes its success to Dr Wani's continuous guidance and fund raising activities. The details on the birth and growth of SAA may be found in Dr Wani's memoir Triumphs and Tragedies available from SAA. The price is Rs 350/- including postage and handling.