

Minutes for Asha Chennai on 7th, Sep 2025

ASHA CHENNAI CHAPTER MINUTES OF THE ONLINE MEETING HELD ON Sunday 7th September 2025

Following were present

- Akshay Menon
- Kalyan
- Kasturi
- Komalavalli
- Paripoornam
- Rajaraman
- Shiva
- Sriram
- Sundaram

0.. Ratification of the Minutes of The Meeting held on 3rd August

Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 3rd August were ratified unanimously

0.1 Ratification of three polls held for fund allocation

Results of the three polls two posted by Rajaraman and one by Bhaskar were ratified

1. Routine Staff Matters Loans. Key staff exit/hiring.

One teacher each from Projects, Sangamam , Poorna Vidhya, Cauvery and Thulasi had applied for loans, three of them for personal reasons and one for vehicle purchase. These applications were admitted and approved unanimously to grant a loan of Rs 60,000 each with usual terms and conditions.

2. Review of Policies

- Scholarship Policy

The extant policy document was perused and some changes were suggested and accepted. Annual family income limit was decided to be raised Rs 2.4 L. Attention was drawn to recent discussions in the Focus group and it was decided to tweak the stipulation while selecting scholars regarding one- child- per family norm to allow for decision making in exceptional cases by voting in the Focus group. Paragraph relating to Nominator could be deleted. Kalyan was requested to make the necessary changes and circulate.

- Staff Policy

Existing staff policy was presented by Rajaraman. Provisions relating to regulating Balwadi teachers' Leave entitlement should be added. It is seen occasionally Asha Teachers take up outside jobs. Points regulating such moonlighting should be codified in the policy document. As far as child safety, the stipulation that every teacher should sign the document should be incorporated in the Staff policy. Updated policy will be circulated in due course.

- Admin Policy

Rajaraman presented Admin Policy and invited suggestions to bring the contents up to date.

3. AfE Checklist process and Reporting requirements.

- Reports -- Site visit reports, annual status reports, event reports, Blogs/research articles.

- Project Quantisation Metrics and Fund utilisation reports required by AfE.

Rajaraman explained the significance of the reporting system covering the above and made the following points.

1. All project stewards should also preferably get site visit reports written. Although they were not always insisted upon, stewards were requested to get site visit reports written by someone else to lend greater credibility.
2. Irrespective of the above, stewards should plan on writing at least one annual report of the project which explains the current status of all activities under the project.
3. He emphasised that AfE was making Fund Utilisation Reports mandatory. It should be covered in the proposal as well as the annual report. An audited utilisation report may also be required.
4. As far as furnishing Metrics as a part of the reporting system of the AfE it was informed that Bhaskar and Rjaram would continue to deal with it.

The annual report for the whole chapter is now being compiled by Priyanka and edited by Rajaraman.

3.a New items requiring attention

Rajatalab Funding

This new item was taken up at the request of Sriram as Austin funding for Rajatalab was limited to specific line items in the budget excluding line items for instance Teachers' excursion etc. Therefore it was decided that allocation from Asha Chennai would cover 80 per cent of the items not covered by Austin funding.

Amazon Funding FIA

Rajaraman mentioned that a fledgling NGO Foundation for Innovation and Action had approached us for help in getting funds from Amazon through Asha Chennai. This did not entail any expenditure from Asha Chennai. It was decided to render necessary help in this regard to the FIA.

Approval for Purchase of kits

Rajaraman requested approval for purchasing 3D printers, Drones (with cameras) and some computer accessories and other such hardware for RTCs as well as purchase some experimental hardware required for evaluating for the new courses in the RTCs (especially related to Robotics). Expenditure of Rs 5 Lakhs was approved on this account.

4. Status of Activities Related to the government.

* Spark Program

Tamilnadu's Spark program to spread computer education from Class 6 in government schools was being launched in clusters of schools in some districts. The success of this program hinged upon the idea of a one teacher from each of the Spark schools being selected and trained, who will then train others in their schools. Also, the curriculum, as was known publicly, followed the traditional pattern of limiting topics and sub topics classwise and seemed to skip elements of Digital Literacy. So far, reports suggested that government teachers who attended ACE thought ACE was more impactful in terms of learning outcome..

* ADW hostels bid

Rajaraman mentioned that ASHA Chennai's bid had crossed the first level scrutiny, that is about "due diligence". Now the proposal would be examined on its merits.

5. Upcoming Events

- Mid-year training in Science and Maths.

Komalavalli was requested to share the training schedule already chalked out for both Science and Maths. It was as follows.

Thulasi - 5th September - Math Training/ 6th September Science training.

Cauvery - 18th September - Science Training/ November 11th- Maths Training.

Pearl - 10th October - Maths Training/ 11th October Science Training.

Sangamam - October 16th and 17th - Science Training/ October 25th - Maths Training.

- Teacher Excursions.

Sangamam and Poorna Vidya Teachers were going to Coorg Sep 26th to 30th and Thulasi teachers were going to Kodaikanal and so were our office personnel.

6. Review of Events

- RTC Impressions at IIT M

RTC Impressions were held on 18th August as scheduled and the presentations were of a high standard.

- RTC Certificate distribution events.

RTCs have always been holding functions to celebrate the end of a term with lunch being served to all the students. This year we decided to bring nearby RTCs together and turn this function into an opportunity for many more students (who didn't get a chance to present their work in the RTC Impressions). The certificate distribution event also provided an opportunity for us to invite the parents and school teachers to come see the work of these students and thus entrench the RTCs better into the communities. All the 5 of these events were good success.

7. Other Updates.

- Fund Raising Plan / strategy.

Rajaraman mentioned that Trimble had promised Rs 10 Lakhs for RTCs.

- Volunteer work for delegation/redistribution.

Further to what was discussed in the previous meeting no additional points were made

8. Any Other Item as mooted by the participants.

These have been minuted under 3A