

Meeting minutes for Asha Chennai on 3rd/10 July 2022

3 July 2022

Minutes of the Hybrid meeting held via GoogleMeet and in person on Sunday 3rd July 2022 at 9.30 AM

Following were present

- Bhaskar
- Kasturi Online
- Paripoornam
- Rajaraman
- Shiva
- Sriram
- Sundaram R Online
- Venkat
- Venkataraman
- Vidhwanath P.V.

0. Ratification of the minutes of the meeting

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 22nd May, 2022 via google meet and in person were ratified with the correction recording the presence of Venkataraman in the meeting. unanimously.

1. Staff Loans and implementation of Pay rise

A loan for purchase of scooters for a teacher in Sangamam Project was unanimously approved, providing for a top up so that the outstanding loan does not exceed Rs 50,000. Consideration of two other requests from Sangamam and Thulasi projects were deferred.

Implementation of rise except for the discretionary increment based on performance review had been completed.

2. Updates on

2.1 Students assessments

Students assessments both oral and written in all schools supported by Asha were completed. Rajaraman stated that some stray malpractices by invigilators had come to light and there was a need to tighten this aspect while conducting tests. At first glance the results of this survey held no surprise, in the sense that there was a noticeable learning deficit largely attributable to prolonged school shut down during Covid. Rajaraman stated that an unexpected finding was that in oral assessments, Class 1 students had done better than Class 2 students in Tamil!

2.2 Right Start

Although some initial hiccups were there due to resurgence of the pandemic and consequent restrictions by way of RTPCR tests, Right Start this year was a resounding success. Meena Suresh assisted by Kalavathi taught the teachers simple pedagogical methods for teaching mathematics. Purva Bhatar's activity based hands-on science learning evoked huge enthusiasm among participating teachers. Dr Abhjit Deshpande's explaining the scientific basis for modern technological products which are in daily use was very well received. Venkat's game based imparting English skills was much appreciated. Teaching English to young children under the uniquely developed method called Karadi Path, through actions, songs and stories was demonstrated generating great interest. It was proposed to try in one or two selected schools.

Rajaraman stated that as the Right Start was scheduled close at the heels of Teachers Excursion, the teachers had problems - having to travel away from family twice within two weeks. It would be better to have the excursion conducted in December every year.

2.3 Excursions

Sangamam teachers, some of them with their children, had a three day trip to Ooty, Thulasi teachers went on a four day excursion to Kodaikanal and Pearl teachers went on a whirlwind tour of Kanyakumari. Rajaraman, Venkat, Madan, Bhuvaneswathi and Shiva accompanied Sangamam teachers, Paripoornam went along with Thulasi teachers and Murugan organised the Kanyakumari tour. Excursion this year was not only highly enjoyable but also went off smoothly.

2.4 Teachers Annual Test

Teacher Evaluation Test for Asha teachers was conducted on 2nd July. The test covered English, Maths, Science, Analytical reasoning and General Knowledge.

2.5 Hiring of New Teachers at Various Projects

In view of funding by Amazon under Explore and Learn schemes Asha Chennai was moving into high gear for imparting computer skills to schools. Therefore a large number of computer teachers, about 30 have been onboarded very recently. Induction training to these teachers was being conducted.

2.6 Amazon Funding and Project Splits

Consequent to funding by Amazon, revised allotment of Regular Teachers and computer teachers including the newly recruited has been notified. All project proposals for 2022-23 reflect this indicating the no of schools to be covered and computer teachers yet to be hired. Rajaraman outlined the types and frequency of monitoring and reporting involved in executing projects funded by Amazon.

3. A Couple of New Things Happening.

RTCs (Rural Technology Centre) at Seethanjeri and Kanakammal Chathiram are up and functioning well. The new RTC at Kannigaiper Efforts are on to open the next RTC within a week or two at Pandur or Poondi. IIT M under whose aegis this is executed would want Asha Chennai to move fast in this matter.

Equipment Design Laboratory at Kanakammal Chathiram

IITM is keen on using the expertise of Asha to reach out to rural areas to impart skills in applied S & T and consequently RTC Kanakammal Chathiram has been selected as the place for their first Equipment Design Lab. Faculty members of IITM who are associated with this and are very keen to spread this awareness among rural children, visited the place and have approved this site.

4. Working with Other Organisations

Karadi Path

During Right Start representatives of Karadi Path gave a live demo of the efficacy of this method of teaching English. Rajaraman stated that a pilot project of introducing this method in two or three schools would be implemented.

Ms Ramya Vasudevan

Rajaraman introduced the guest Mrs Ramya Vasudevan who was keen on exploring opportunities in Children's Education, particularly by retelling stories in Tamil. She is already a renowned podcaster and available in Spotify under the title of "Under The Tree". She gave an account of her activities in this regard. Rajaraman thanked her for her presence and said that Asha Chennai would take up the idea as a programme implementation in due course.

NEXT .

Rajaraman mentioned a company called NEXT had approached us for possible cooperation in children's education. Not much was known about this organisation

CMCA

Rajaraman Stated that an Organisation known as CMCA had also approached Asha for a possible collaboration in Children's education. CMCA is mainly involved in teaching young children civic awareness, citizens' duties etc to school children right from the ages of 9 to 10. Not much is known about this Organisation too and it is debatable if the already poor teacher student ratio in government schools can take on the burden of such extra programme implementation.

5. Project Proposals for 2022-23

1. Scholarship

Venkataraman presented the Project Proposal for the year 2022-23 in respect of Scholarship Project. It was decided to keep at the same level as last year offering scholarship to about 100 students, 76 continuing students and 24 new students. The Budgetted expenditure of Rs 23,04,000 which provides for two thirds of Malliga's salary amounting to Rs 10,000 was approved unanimously,

2. Manigal

Since Usha Bhaskar was away abroad it was decided to defer this item.

3. Poorna Vidhya

Sriram explained the project proposal and proposed taking up 2 new schools for deploying regular teachers. It was felt that Poorna Vidhya, unluckily, did not have the benefit of services of a competent field coordinator or lead teachers unlike in Sangamam, Pearl and Thulasi. Moreover, with the funding from Amazon for spreading computer education in rural schools and IIT Pravartak commissioning Asha Chennai to establish Rural Technology Centres, the focus of Asha Chennai itself is transitioning into becoming a change agent for making rural children pick up computer skills quite early in their school career. It was decided to recast the proposal in the light of the discussion.

6 Follow Up

a) Asha Kanini

b) NSE

c) Other Parivartak Related Issues

Due to paucity of time consideration of the above was deferred. It was decided to have an online meeting in the following week to take up all the project proposals.

It was decided to meet online in a few days to discuss and approve Project proposals for 2022-23.

Minutes of the Extended Monthly meeting held via Google Meet Sunday 10th July at 5.30 PM IST

Following were present online

- Bhaskar
- Kasturi
- Paripoornam
- Rajaraman
- Sriram
- Sundaram
- Venkat

This meeting is especially called for considering Project Proposals that could not be taken up in the monthly meeting held on 3rd Instant due to paucity of time.

0. Staff Loan

Rajaraman stated that a teacher from Sangamam has applied for a loan of Rs 50,000 for the purchase of a scooter and explained the background. It was decided unanimously to grant Rs 50000 loan to the teacher.

1. Manigal Proposal

Usha Bhaskar explained her proposal to continue the project activities during 22-23 both in Kottur and Indira Nagar among gypsy (Narikoravas) children at the same level as previous year. Actuals for 21-22 was only Rs 8,97,729 because many regular activities could not be undertaken due to covid. A budget expenditure of Rs 12,51,000 was approved unanimously.

2. Poorna Vidhya Proposal

Sriram presented revised proposals taking into the points made during in the meeting held on 3rd Instant. The budget accounts for supporting the existing schools both Corporation schools in the City (4) and panchayat schools (5) in Guduvancherry, Nandivaram and Kattankulathur at the same level as 2021-22. The proposal for expenditure thereof of Rs 13,99,800 for 2022-23 was approved unanimously.

Additionally under the Amazon Explore project an expenditure proposal of Rs 6,71,200 for 2022-23 was noted.

3. Asha kanini Proposal

Rajaraman recalled that implementation Asha Kanini was being executed under the aegis of IIT Pravartak funded by John Crane. It would appear that no fresh funding might be forthcoming and the existing funds may last until August'22. Luckily whatever was set out to be done in the geographical locations in Tiruvallur District where Asha Chennai operates the task has made good headway. Asha Kanini software has been implemented in 400 government schools where the government teachers have also been trained to use the software and content. .

A proposal for an expenditure of Rs 20,20,000 was unanimously approved for 2022-23. Of course, the possibility of expanding the coverage is still being explored with the state authorities.

4. Right Start Proposal

Rajaraman stated that this year the event was a great success as recounted in the meeting on 3rd. This project is a short duration project lasting for a few days bringing all the teachers together face to face. The object is to impart refresher training and expose them to fresh ideas and orient them towards learning concepts and in turn use the knowledge to improve their pedagogical skills.

The event took place in June'22 from 7th to 11th Against a total approved (online poll) budget of Rs 3,55,000 an expenditure of Rs 3,45,000 was incurred. Rs 1,10,000 was sourced from Amazon Funding and balance from Asha Chennai.

5. Sangamam Proposal

Rajaraman stated that the proposal was for 25 regular schools and 10 computer schools to be supported during 2022-23 by way of providing 27 regular teachers, 10 computer teachers and 1 lead teacher. After segregating the line items which come under Amazon Explore and Learn schemes Sangamam's projected expenditure would be Rs 82,20,000 for 2022-23. Therefore the proposal for this projected expenditure of Rs 82,20,000 was unanimously approved.

6. Thulasi

Paripoornam laid out plans for 2022-23 basically to continue the activities at the same level by supporting 9 schools with 11 regular teachers and 3 computer teachers. After taking into account the Line Items which are being funded under Amazon schemes the proposed budget expenditure of Rs 28,85,100 was approved unanimously.

Thulasi has a long legacy of running Libraries and the proposal to budget Rs 2,54,000 for the Thulasi Library was also approved unanimously. There is a possibility of more funds for this activity from Asha Boston.

7. Pearl

Bhaskar presented the proposals to support regular teachers in 7 schools 2 Computer teachers under Pearl project apart from supporting 2 KG Teachers and 1 Balwasdi Teacher. While discussing the proposal it was observed that we could bring some items of expenses under Amazon Schemes. Bhaskar stated that he would make the necessary changes and circulate it for approval via online poll.