

# Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 24th, March 2024

Minutes of the meeting held via Google Meet on Sunday 24th March 2024 at 9.30 AM

Following were present

Kasturi

Komalavalli

Paripoornam

Rajaraman

Shiva

Sundaram

Venkat

0 Ratification minutes, various loan polls.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18/2/2024 were ratified unanimously. Polls held for grant of loans to 7 Teachers and 2 Staff members too were ratified unanimously.

1.0 Staff changes / loans

1.1 Rajaraman explained the circumstances that led to the unfortunate dismissal of a computer teacher in the Sangamam project. Complaints that she resorted to corporal punishment from parents and others, were enquired into before taking this action.

1.2 Paripoornam proposed a grant of a loan of Rs 50,000 to a teacher in Thulasi Project which was duly approved subject to laid down terms and conditions. .

2.0 Proposed changes to Asha's mission statement.

Krishna Pagadala from Asha Silicon Valley joined online and placed his arguments passionately as to why the current Mission Statement which is "To catalyse socio-economic change in India through education of underprivileged children" is inadequate to capture what is being done. He wanted to replace the word "catalyse" with "accelerate" and the term "socio economic change" with "human development". He was also OK with catalyse remaining and his main desire was to replace "socio economic change" with "human development". It was heavily debated without arriving at a consensus during the meeting. Chennai Chapter noted what was being proposed and decided to review the same at the voting stage.

3.0. Report on recent events.

3.1 Amazon Pune conference Feb 21 to Feb 23

Rajaraman gave an account of the Pune conference which was attended by our teachers Kumari and Nathiya along with Rajaraman. Trainers from [Code.org](https://code.org) gave training on topics that are useful to our teachers. In particular the [Code.org](https://code.org) courses that we were using in our RTCs were discussed. Asha Chennai got an opportunity to display projects by our students in our booth. On the final day they attended a Hackathon, organised by Amazon, where students using Make Block sensors displayed some projects. The general impression was that our students of RTCs are better at such activities.

3.2 Asha India Conference. Feb 24 to Feb 25

Rajaraman, Kumari, and Nathiya, Dinakaran, Akilan, Ali, Ajay and our volunteers Shiva and Sriram participated. Apart from speeches, one of the highlights was the presentation by Rajaraman on the underlying philosophy, the approach adopted and actual work done by Asha Chennai on the ground. The team from Asha Chennai visited Asha Mumbai's computer lab. Our teachers taught some unplugged activities to the students and teachers from Mumbai.

After the conference our team had a chance to visit the lab run by "The Innovation Story" or TIS. They came away thoroughly impressed by the robots made by the students there. This gave the teachers an idea of what we should aim for with our own efforts to teach robotics. Rest of the staff got an opportunity to see the other sights of Mumbai including the Gateway of India, Elephanta caves etc.

3.3 Wrap up of the excursions.

This year there was a phenomenal increase in the number of children (1800+) who participated in the excursions. Children from Sangamam, Poorna Vidhya project and Thulasi visited Anna Central Library, Birla Planetarium and Marina. Pearl Project students went to Madurai, Keezhadi and Cauvery project children went to Tarangamabadi. We should place on record our appreciation of the field level coordinators and Malliga for a smooth conduct of these excursions. Children, no doubt, enjoyed every minute of these outings.

3.4 The role of Abhishek Rajatalab/Mirzapur

Rajaraman gave a brief resume of Abhishek who is an IIT Kanpur graduate and from the Hindi heartland. Therefore it was felt he would be a good resource as a coordinator who could visit the schools in Rajatalab and Mirzapur more frequently and also oversee progress in CS curriculum teaching and would be able to assist Sujatha, our Volunteer/Steward for Rajatalab Project. Since Abhishek was employed by Mala Foundation in Pondicherry it was felt that he could make half a dozen visits to Rajatalab every year. At the moment terms and conditions of associating Abhishek with Asha Chennai are still to be worked out.

#### 4.0. Update on discussions with the Govt.

##### 4.1 Namma school regn.

Thanks to our Volunteer Murali, we have now obtained Namma School Registration in all the districts where we operate. Unlike the MOU, this explicitly identified all the schools where we have the potential to work with, with our Explore, ACE and RTC programs as well. CEOs are supposed to give their approval based on this approval from Namma School.

A couple of days after this meeting we also received the approval letters from the CEOs of Villupuram and Tiruvannamalai.

##### 4.2 Possibility of working with Schools of excellence, ADW schools and hostels.

Rajaraman explained the discussions around the possibility of launching ACE like programs with Schools of Excellence, Adi Dravidar Welfare Board Schools and Hostels etc said that he had been in touch with Ms Archana Hari who has expressed a desire for greater involvement by Asha Chennai, particularly with Adi Dravidar Welfare Schools and Hostels. Discussions are also going on about starting another ACE v2 to cover 50 additional schools.

##### 4.3 Meeting in IIT with Sudhan (in charge of Model schools)

Rajaraman stated that Model Schools have been launched to improve the competitive skills of TN students in NEET JEE etc. in various districts. He mentioned a few points that were discussed with Mr Sudhan who is an advisor to the TN government in setting up Model Schools

#### 5.0 Amazon proposal for 2024-25.

Rajaraman presented the spreadsheet of the proposed funding by Amazon for 24-25 and explained the details. After discussion, the proposal amounting to Rs 2,47,21,000 was approved. This includes an estimate of expenditure of Rs 73,68,000 for ACE

#### 6.0 Upcoming events.

##### 6.1 Asha Impressions

This annual competition of the best computer science projects in both the presentation and programming categories will be held on 16th April at Amazon Office in Perungudi.

##### 6.2 RightStart.

Right Start for refresher training of Asha Teachers will be held from 13th May to 17th May. 2 days will be devoted to Maths pedagogy by Meena Suresh. Half or one day will be spent on Karadi Path training in English skills. In addition, another half a day or one day may be devoted to a new method of teaching English by using Syllabic Phonetics by [LeapForWord.org](http://LeapForWord.org).

#### 7.0 Broad plan for proposals for 2024-25

Rajaraman sketched the outline of proposals for 2024-25 and requested all stewards to prepare budget proposals and present them during the April and May Meetings for approval. .

Regards and best wishes

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