

Asha Chennai: Minutes of the Meeting held at 9:30 AM on Sunday, 29th March 2026

Following were present:

Bhaskar, Kasturi, Komalavalli, Madhavan, Paripoornam, Pushpaleela, Rajaraman, Shiva, Sundaram, Venkat.

- 1) Ratification of minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2026 and Ratification of poll for grant of loan for a teacher in Pearl Project held on 12 March 2026
Minutes of the meeting on 22 February 2026 and the poll held for the grant of a loan for a teacher in the Pearl project were unanimously ratified.
- 2) Placing on record our Appreciation of volunteer M.Venkataraman

The meeting placed on record it's deep appreciation of the services rendered by our volunteer M Venkataraman for nearly a decade. At critical times his sagacious tips helped to smooth out crinkles in our way.

He wished to cease being a volunteer owing to personal reasons.

- 3) Staff loans and changes

A loan proposal of Rs 50,000 for an RTC Teacher in Sangamam and another loan grant of Rs 20,000 to a teacher from the Tulasi Project for vehicle repair were unanimously approved. Conditions apply.

- 4) Fundraising Updates

- a) City Union Bank: Sriram and Jayalakshmi reached out to City Union Bank's officials and got funding for our Poorna Vidhya project. As it was the end of the year, they could only give a small amount. They hope to get a larger funding in the coming year. There is expected to be a change of guard at the Bank from 1st May 2026. It appeared that CUB would be interested in supporting schools in Chennai and similar urban areas. Sriram is continuing to follow up with them..
- b) Sheng Long: Efforts are underway to stay in touch with them and submit a proposal for support to Asha Chennai.

- c) Michelin: Rajaraman stated that the library planned for school children in Palavakkam, supported by Michelin, was inaugurated on 4 March 2026. The company appeared interested in supporting an RTC and some nearby schools. This will be followed up.
- d) Baettr: This is a Danish wind energy company with facilities in Thervoy Kandigai, Thiruvallur. It appeared that the company was assessing options to support schools close to their factory through Asha Chennai. Rajaraman stated that he had made proposals to include both existing and new schools in the suggested neighbourhood, involving a budget of Rs 73,50,000 for 2026-27.
- e) HP India: Rajaraman stated that HP India, under its CSR initiatives, is supporting Digital Equity and Education, among other things. It is taking computer education to rural areas through its "World on Wheels" Mobile Computer Labs. Proposal to fund the remaining 8 RTCs has been submitted. We are exploring the company's potential as a long-term donor.

5) Asha Funding

- a) Asha Central Funding: Rajaraman was happy to announce that our chapter would receive USD 2,50,000. It is worthy of note that Asha Chennai is the biggest chapter worldwide in terms of disbursement.
- b) Funding by St. Louis: St. Louis is expected to maintain its funding at the same level as last year.

6) Visit by Prateek of Amazon – Basic Literacy and Karadi Path

Rajaraman stated that Prateek from Amazon visited mini-libraries at schools as well as our AI activities. He visited Thomur and Majakuppam and seemed thoroughly impressed by PUPS Thomur. It was gathered that Amazon is looking at a new project in basic literacy. Prateek saw the Karadi Path implementation in Asha-supported schools and was quite struck by it. He had a detailed call with the Karadi Path team. There is hope that a three-way partnership among the KP Team, Amazon, and Asha Chennai could result.

7) Update on CS curriculum work

- a) Rollout of Robotics and Web Development 2.0 courses: Rajaraman reported that curriculum work regarding Robotics is complete and Web Development 2.0 is nearly complete.
- b) New AI course: Lesson plans have been completed and the course has been rolled out at RTC Thomur; its implementation is being closely monitored.

8) Interactions with the Government

- a) ADW Resubmission of Proposal for Rs 30 Lakhs: Rajaraman reported that a revised proposal to cover a smaller number of schools, involving funding of Rs 30 Lakhs, has been submitted to the TN Adi Dravida Welfare Department at the latter's request.
- b) SPARK: Fruitful discussions are ongoing with Mr. Sudhan (CMD, NSNOP) and his PMU staff regarding the inclusion of the Asha Chennai Curriculum and how Asha Chennai could cover one or two districts with our ACE Programme. For further development, we may have to wait for elections to be over.

9) Ongoing and Upcoming Events

- a) School and RTC Excursions: These are proceeding apace; RTC excursions are planned for early next month.
- b) Amazon TIS Makerspace: Asha Chennai students participated in a training session in Bangalore under TIS held from 13th to 15th March.
- c) ACE and Asha Impressions: It was noted that Asha Impressions for Rajatalab and Mirzapur were held on 26 March in the presence of our volunteer, Sriram. Asha and ACE Impressions are scheduled for April 18th and 20th respectively for all projects.
- d) Right Start: Rajaraman outlined the invitations sent to guest speakers, namely Dr. VR Devika, Hema Ramanathan (both distinguished professional teachers), and Mr. Arun from Marutham Farm School. Komalavalli, Paripoornam, and Pushpaleela were requested to check if Ms. Tilakavathi, an expert trainer in non-violent communication, could also be approached. Additionally, training for Asha teachers in Maths by Mrs.

Meena Suresh, Ms. Purva Bhattar, and the Karadi Path team will be scheduled.

- e) Laptops Distribution: Rajaraman stated that laptops have been distributed mostly following data collected through Google Sheets. A function to hand over free laptops to scholarship students pursuing college degrees in computer courses will be held, during which the applicable terms and conditions will be explained.

10) Assessments

- a) Written: Grading of written assessments is being carried out. We will ready the reports for the schools during summer holidays.
- b) CS Assessments at ACE, RTC, and Sprint: These have been completed.
- c) Paper to be published with IITB Prof. Ramkumar: Discussions are taking place based on the assessment analytics we have compiled.
- d) Prof. Raghunath Rao (UT Austin) Critique: It was heartening to note that Asha Chennai's annual assessment analysis of learning in TN Government schools from 2015 to 2025 has drawn the attention of this distinguished academician. While he agreed with most of the conclusions in our reports, he suggested further areas for study and correlation.

11) Administration

- a) FCRA Update: Rajaraman stated that an account has been opened at SBI New Delhi as mandated. We are working with the auditor to get the application completed.
- b) CSR Rule Changes: Under the new rules, it is mandated that CSR donors obtain a fund utilisation report from the implementation agency and have it certified by the agency's auditor.
- c) Funding of Admin Expenses: Historically, Asha Chennai has treated interest income and donations from volunteers as support for admin expenses. While our Admin expenses have gone up, so have our interest income. For now we will continue handling Admin expenses in the same manner.

