

Asha Austin Meeting Minutes: August 7, 2011

Attendees: Rahul, Mohit, Bhaskar, Savitha, Kiran, Sindhu*, Ranga

[* on the phone]

Fellowship Siddamma: Savitha

(Quorum: Savitha, Mohit, Rahul, Bhaskar, Arvind Rao, Ranga)

[Savitha has sent out slides]

1. Started in 1990
2. Bharathi Trust: **Helping Irulas to become self-reliant**

Irulas – Traditional Snake and Rat Catchers. Now, firewood collection, Rice

* Motivational center (30 centers have benefited 1000+ working children: bridging into government schools)

Q: How has she created so many motivational centers?

MCs in 7 villages supported by AfE through Asha-wide funds. Detroit supports a lot of Bharathi Trust activities. Other support from some organization in Belgium

--Community involvement, Child friendly, Nutritional food

--90% of children are now enrolled in government schools

--Resource center also a motivational center

--All teachers are from the Irula community (trained by Bharati Trust)

--Siddamma has done a fantastic job in working with the government.

Q: Does Siddamma attend the meetings of TN Workers Union and Sarpam?

Sarpam meetings in Thiruvallur and Vellore are very effective now, and hence Siddamma does not need to be present for all meetings. When government interaction is needed, she is consulted. She is focusing her efforts in the Cuddalore district now

Q: What is Siddamma's role in this?

Getting things set up, and in starting this up. Also, in interaction with government. Siddamma's interaction with austin started with the rice mill bonded laborers freedom. Once released and rehabilitated, they need funds for initial set up and stay, which is when Asha Austin got involved.

[AI] Q: Why only 70 people got land back or 120 people got compensation?

Belgium organizations are actively working with BT. Volunteers from there are visiting BT this week for organic farming, and helping with cultivation of previously uncultivated land

Accordingly to Siddamma, BT has reached to only ~ 30% of the affected communities.

Q: Are the sarpam leaders pursuing health and other initiatives with the government

A: Yes

Q: Are the Belgium organization and other supporters primarily associated with the resource center only?

Some of them are. Others are involved with other activities of Siddamma. Fellowship is completely covered by Asha Austin.

Recent updates for Siddamma's activities in Feb – Aug 2011

Siddamma is reaching out to new villages in the Uthokothai Taluk. She organized a clothes drives for these villages. When she goes to these villages, she spends 6-7 days continuously there. Sarpam leaders from established districts are also taken to these villages to exchange their experiences to the villages. Siddamma is also working to bring the condition of these villages with the government

Q: Are there cases of female infanticide in these villages

A: It is there, definitely. It exists silently.

Last site visit by Savitha in May

Q: Why Chitradurga distracts?

Kuvempu project of BT which Detroit supports is in Chitradurga district. So, they reached out to Siddamma to start a resource center there.

Siddamma will be visited US in Feb – Mar 2012. She would like to visit other Asha chapter. We could also hold an organic farming workshop.

[AI]Q: How does sarpam being 'tribal based community' help in availing of special schemes?

There were 3 questions that came up during the discussion during the last update :

1. How does Sarpam being 'tribal based community' help in availing of special schemes?

By converting the Sarpam into "Tribal Based Community" helps the Irulas with availing several schemes/programmes aimed at welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs enumerates all the schemes that are available at the following link :<http://tribal.nic.in/index1.asp?linkid=325&langid=1>

Currently, Siddamma's plans are to use the following schemes for the Irulas :

- Girls Hostels
- Boys Hostels
- Education : Schools
- Loans for purchase of cows
- Vocational Training Centers in Tribal Areas
- Scheme of coaching for Scheduled Tribes
- Health Facilities

2. Why only 70 people got land back or 120 people got compensation?

This is the information from during the struggle in 2004. The Revenue Division Officer in charge at that time who did the survey on the night of the struggle was not very well aware of the rules of survey for the Irulas since he belonged to so called higher class / caste. Today, more than 350 folks have the caste certificates and have their land back.

3. What are the plans for flood-relief on the long run?

Siddamma would like to set up a relief fund as a part of Bharathi Trust and would like to discuss this with Asha volunteers who have helped in the past. I will setup the call for sometime in the next couple of weeks.

August 28th 2011

1. Fellowship Siddamma : Update (Savitha)

Attendees : Bhaskar, Savitha, Arvind Rao(via phone), Ranga(via phone), Rahul(email), Mohit(email)

- Conference call to be setup to discuss strategy for flood relief for the coming years.
- For the upcoming year, how do we want to handle runners that want to specifically fundraise for Siddamma Fellowship. What % goes to chapter pool?
- Amount to be supported : Safety Net amount + Proportional funds allocated for Siddamma Fellowship
- [A]: Savitha / Ranga] Follow up with Bharath / Arvind to get exact disbursement amount.

*1. Asha Austin supports Fellowship Siddamma with the Safety Net amount of from Jan to July 2011.
\$1844 will be disbursed towards this support.
Yes:6 , No:0 , Abstain : 0*

*2. Asha Austin supports Fellowship Siddamma with the proportional funds allocated for Siddamma
\$1675 (= \$750 + \$925) will be disbursed towards this support from August to Dec 2011.
Yes:6 , No:0 , Abstain : 0*