



## **ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH SCHOLARS, CHENNAI**

Registered Office: 737 Anna Salai, Chennai 600002

### **Minutes of the 29<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING (AGM)**

**Friday, September 12, 2014**

**British Council, 737 Anna Salai**

**Chennai 600 002**

#### **1. Welcome**

The 29<sup>th</sup> AGM of the ABS Chennai Chapter began with Ms Selvi Palani, Member, Executive Committee, ABS Chennai, calling the meeting to order. She invited Mr. A.V. Ilango, President, Mr. Manohar Samuel, Joint Secretary and Ms. Aparajitha V R, Treasurer to the dais. The President welcomed the gathering and thanked the office bearers and the Executive Committee for the support that was rendered to him during his four year tenure as President.

#### **2. Presentation of Reports**

The welcome address was followed by the Secretary's report which was presented by Mr. Manohar, the Joint Secretary as the Secretary was out of town on sudden urgent professional commitments. The Secretary's report was elaborate and spelt out in detail the programmes that were conducted by the ABS through the year. The Secretary's report was followed by the report of the Treasurer and the presentation of the Statement of Accounts. Both the reports were adopted by the House.

#### **3. Amendments to By-Laws**

Ms. Selvi brought to the attention of the House a proposal by ABS former President Mr Venu Prasad on scrutiny of By-Laws. Mr. Venu Prasad responded by stating that as there would be a new Executive Committee soon, the said Committee can examine the proposal to amend the existing By-laws.

#### **4. Elections of New Office Bearers and Committee Members**

Elections for the new EC were announced. Nominations were accepted from the floor of the house. While Mr A J Solomon, British Council Representative was present to stand-in as election officer, in case voting was required, the occasion did not arise as the office bearers and committee members were unanimously elected. The following office-bearers were declared elected:

President: Ms. Bhooma

Vice – President: Mr. Sudhir Ravindran

Secretary: Ms. Selvi Palani

Joint Secretary: Mr. Pitchaimuthu

Treasurer: Ms. Swapna Sathish

Names of members to serve on the EC Mr G T Verghese, Ms Naseema, Dr Bernard Sami, Ms Aparajitha and Ms Sandhya were also unanimously accepted.

Dr. Bernard D’Sami, EC member proposed a vote of thanks and thereafter the House adjourned for Fellowship and dinner.

#### **Executive Committee for 2014-15:**

1. V G Bhooma – President
2. Sudhir Ravindran – Vice-President
3. Selvi Palani – Secretary
4. Pichaimuthu – Joint Secretary
5. Swapna Sathish – Treasurer
6. G T Verghese – Member
7. Naseema M – Member
8. Aparajitha V R – Member
9. Bernard D’Sami – Member
10. Sandhya Gopinath – Member

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 2013-2014**

1. A V Ilango - President
2. Paul Chellakumar – Vice-President
3. B Jayashree - Secretary
4. Manohar Samuel - Joint Secretary
5. Aparajitha V R - Treasurer
6. Bernard D' Sami - Member
7. Selvi Palani - Member
8. Premalatha Seshadri - Member
9. N Pichaimuthu – Member
10. Sudhir Ravindran – Co-opted Member
11. A J Solomon - British Council Representative

Appendix: Secretary's Report



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**ANNUAL REPORT 2013 – 2014**

**29th Annual General Body Meeting – Friday, September 12, 2014**

**British Council, Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002**

Good Evening! On behalf of the Executive Committee, I extend a warm welcome to all, at the twenty-ninth Annual General Body Meeting of the Association of British Scholars, Chennai. Due to sudden unavoidable circumstances, I am unable to present the report in person and am grateful to the Joint Secretary for stepping in on my behalf.

The Report is presented along with a slideshow of images from various events that took place to enable members to glimpse the year that was, in pictures as well as in words. The report contains details of the events conducted as well as some key efforts that were taken in addition to routine events.

**EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES: 2013 – 2014**

Dr Gurnam Singh, Principal Lecturer in Social Work from Coventry University, delivered a lecture on Critical Pedagogy in November 2013. The lecture was found useful especially by academics and students. Also in November, ABS hosted a Gazetteer talk by Mr K R A Narasiah on Civil Aviation in Madras. The talk was a fascinating journey of pictures and information and was a treasure trove of anecdotes and stories, rarely heard. The event was attended by ABS members and students.

ABS Chennai hosted, in partnership with BC, an evening of the Charles Wallace Awardees, with the India Trust Secretary Richard Alford and 3 awardees from the ABS fold. Aspiring applicants and members benefited from this programme that was an exemplary presentation of presentations of great depth from each of the professionals – Dr Benny Kuriakose, Dr Renuka Rajaratnam and Dr Swapna Sathish. Director BC, South India Paul Sellers, presided over the event that took place in February 2014.

Violence against women is a much discussed topic in civil society. In order to provide an orientation to women in media with regard to the new Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Act, ABS Chennai along with the Network of Women in Media organized a workshop for journalists as part of efforts for International Women's Day. The panel of experts provided an indepth overview into the Act and its implementation.

Mr P M Belliappa, senior member of ABS Chennai gave a talk on "The Importance of Good Governance in Public Life" in March 2014. Attended by ABS members and other scholars and professionals, the talk provided an opportunity for greater understanding of the civil services and the functioning of bureaucrats. Both these events were well-reported in the media.

ABS Chennai hosted a talk by the Artist's Grant awardee, Ms Sandhya, at the residence of the British Deputy High Commissioner in May 2014. It was a warm gesture on behalf of the BDHC and proved to be an occasion with lot of opportunity for fellowship and warmth from the members as well as for greater rapport building with the BDHC – an event that helped further the rapport between ABS Chennai and the BDHC.

In June 2014, ABS Chennai Secretary participated in an all-India meeting of ABS chapters and alumni associations in New Delhi, held to discuss the way forward and future collaborative efforts across associations. The Secretary presented, on behalf of South India efforts taken by each of the chapters. The role and work of ABS Chennai was appreciated at this forum.

ABS Chennai hosted a book Launch of "Masterji" by Puja Borker an ABS member in July 2014. The book was launched by Sahitya Akademi awardee and ABS member Indran and well-attended by members and guests.

ABS Chennai hosted a seminar on "Understanding Human Rights" with Dr Gladstone and Ms Selvi in August 2014, specifically focused on students of social work. It was well-attended and found useful by college students.

The former BC Director, South India, Paul Sellers has been a patron and pillar of support to the ABS Chennai chapter, all through his tenure in Chennai. In view of his departure to his new posting, ABS Chennai hosted a farewell dinner for Paul in August 2014. The farewell, accompanied by much warmth on all sides, proved to be a memorable occasion and in the words of Paul "an unforgettable memory".

Also in August 2014, ABS Chennai hosted an Art Show by women artists “Madras Jasmine” as part of Madras Week celebrations. The 10-day show featured 22 prominent women artists and was inaugurated by Dr Nanditha Krishna. It featured talks by Dr Razia Tony and by Dr Lakshmi Priya Daniel and was curated by ABS member Ms Premalatha Seshadri. The event was well received by the public and by the media.

Through the year being reported upon, ABS completed a phase of English training for artists that had been initiated in 2013. A total of 10 artists were supported and completed their English training in partnership with VETA. This unique initiative has helped facilitate English language skills among artists, an important requirement for their being able to showcase their work in India and abroad.

The ABS Chennai website that has been kept active through the year with the voluntary support of ABS member Vikas Chawla, had the following statistics from Apr 2013 to Mar 2014: 878 visitors visited the website cumulatively 932 times and spent an average 7.5 minutes on it. This is a growth of 95% in users from previous financial year. On Facebook, we had 71 fans in April 2013 and have since grown to 113 fans, having added 42 fans.

ABS Chennai also contributed towards the fund for former BC employee, Nim Bahadur’s family. Through contributions from members, we raised about 34,000 rupees and making a similar provision from ABS funds – a total of Rs. 70,000 was handed over to BC in favour of Nim Bahadur’s family’s benefit fund.

Since the last AGM, eight Executive Committee Meetings were held and provided an opportunity to discuss activities and events of the Chapter. Three new members were inducted during the period under review.

As we complete this year, I thank, on behalf of the Executive Committee, Mr Bharat Joshi, Patron and British Deputy High Commissioner for his support and involvement in various activities of the ABS, who also took the initiative to involve the ABS Chennai chapter and its members in various activities. We also thank Mr Paul Sellers, former Director – British Council, South India, who has been readily and constantly with the ABS Chennai chapter’s activities, offering his time and his encouragement in support of the chapter’s efforts. We also welcome Ms Mei-Kwei, the new Director – BC, South India and look forward to a mutually satisfying period ahead and thank her for her gesture of sending across her message for members at the AGM.

Facilitating the British Council support is the friendly and willing team of members at the BC especially their representative on the EC, Mr A J Solomon. We also had the opportunity to collaborate with BC on some events this year and this proved to be an extension of the warm rapport that the ABS Chennai chapter has with BC.

The media has supported us through various events with wide coverage and support and we are thankful for this visibility and recognition of ABS for various activities reported in the media.

To conclude, I thank the Chapter President Mr A V Ilango for his efforts at initiating and executing various activities standing in for many of the EC members at times of need putting together his own office staff and team to facilitate various activities of the ABS, so the EC could function more effectively. EC members, who are all established professionals in their own right, have volunteered their valuable time, skills and efforts towards ABS events and this is gratefully acknowledged.

Most of all, a warm 'thank you' to the members, especially those who have been constantly participating, encouraging, supporting and guiding the ABS Chennai chapter through the year, providing feedback to ensure that the Chapter is vibrant. As this team steps down, to welcome and hand over to a new committee, it is hoped that the open, friendly atmosphere and bonhomie provide the basis for strengthening the functioning of the chapter in the days and years ahead.

***B Jayashree***

***Secretary, ABS Chennai***

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