

Sowaka Harshita Foundation

Minutes of Meeting

August 2024 till February 2025

August 31, 2024 9:30 PM- 10:30 PM IST:

Members present:

Rinita, Anusree, Somali, Komolika:

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce a new board member, Somali Panda. A new member was initiated into the meeting, Somali Panda. Those present introduced themselves and Somali introduced herself. Rinita asked Komolika to talk about their north 24 Parganas, which Komolika did. Rinita said that they need transport to get there. Somali offered a place for the clients to sit and talk.

During the meeting there were some doubts whether the single mothers, whose husbands are migrants, would speak in front of everyone about their situation and parenting. Then it was decided that instead of making them talk in a huge room, it is best to first talk to them individually in private and then if they agree, even if it is one member, they would speak in front of everyone.

Somali suggested that it is best first one person speaks to one therapist in private and then if they agree they can speak in front of a group, if not it is ok. This is a project, that Rinita, Komolika, and Dean of Liberal Arts, in RBU talked about in August. It would possibly start after the pujas.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM (IST).

Meeting: Members Present: Rinita, Komolika, Somali and guest Saiful from Dhaka.

Meeting With Saiful of Dhaka For A Project

September 9, 2024.

Meeting last for 50 minutes from 9:00 IST -9:50

Saiful talked about his project where he facilitates people who were forced to leave their homes in 1946/7 and 1971 from what was then East Bengal/East Pakistan and flee to India, to find their ancestral homes. Why did these refugees flee? To save their faith, their identity, and honor. Many of them were forced to convert and after fleeing they re converted. Saiful said that many of these refugees were badly treated in West Bengal (India) and seen as intruders and burdens.

Rinita added that her travel agent did not give her enough time to explore her mother's ancestral home in Arai Hazar near Narayangung, although she spent time with the family, a single mother, next to her dad's ancestral home.

Then Rinita said that a new therapy can be made along these travel lines. Just as in psychodynamics, one goes back to the past, childhood, so these travels can reveal a past of the family and their heritage. This will be a new therapy for the next generation as the partition has caused inter generational trauma. Rinita said that in the 1970s many Black Africans went to Africa to find their roots.

Somali talked about her own experience of discovering her ancestral home and how she is connected to Bangladesh in many ways. Somali also talked about her own organization where she is trying to promote global harmony and bonding via exploring indigenous music.

Suiful, Komolika, Somali, and Rinita also talked about enhancing some economic side of these exploration and discovering one's roots.

Sunday 09 08 2024: at 9:00 PM:

Rinita, Ayana, Nirmal Jhunjhunwala, Sudepto, Partho.

In this the primary discussion was the Saraswati puja under the banner of Sowaka Harshita Foundation in the north 24 Parganas. Mr. Jhunjhunwala will contribute to a part of the total budget and hence he needed to be introduced to the Director and the advocate of Sowaka HARshita. It was a short meeting for about 30 minutes, Mr. Jhunjhunwala wanted to know about the project, and was told that via this Puja we would have entry into the crowd of the North 24 Parganas, where Sowaka will start working soon.

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Meeting : Saturday September 21, 2024: 9:30-10:00:

The purpose of this meeting was to talk about the MOU between Sowaka Harshita Foundation, Kolkata, India, and Jonoraja Institute, Jammu, India.

Present: Rinita, Komolika, and Tito Ganjoo, Director of Jonoraj Institute. Mr. Ganjoo explained how the MOU works for Jonoraj Institute and said that he will send a copy of the MOU to Rinita. It was discussed that the MOU has to be exactly as it is from Jonoraja Institute, as it is the same MOU that is used for MOU with other institutes.

Minutes Of Meeting On October 5, 2024 (Saturday) IST 9:00 AM:

Minutes Taken by Rinita Mazumdar, Director.

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Meeting: 9:00 AM -10: AM IST

Members present:

Rinita Mazumdar, Director

Kamalika Majumdar: Director

Somali Panda: Board Member

Ayana Banerjee: Advocate and legal counsel of Sowaka Harshita Foundation

Komolika brought up the question of the project with RBU (Rabindra Bharati University) and Rinita asked for the time frame. It looks like it can start after the Deepavali celebration. Komolika mentioned that RBU will get UGC funding for the project and Rinita said to send to the group (Rinita, Somali, Ayana) the summary of the project and a rough budget, which they will put in an excel sheet (which is also subject to change).

It was decided that Komolika and resident psychologist, Aishwarya, would visit the women in North 24 Parganas after the Pujas and they would start talking to the women, single mothers, and so forth. Gradually, they would ask them to come and speak individually and provide support to these women. Somali said that a place could be arranged for them to talk in private.

Then Rinita brought up the issue about getting foreign funds for a project. She said that they received Rs. 25000 for the Saraswati Puja from Nirmal Jhunjhunwala ji of New York. Rinita said that she cannot take money into her NRO account and then transfer it to Sowaka every time, although she did it one time. Somali suggested that there is a way to directly transfer money to an NGO, via some special way and it will go directly into Sowaka's

Somali said that she has vacation and the Temple restoration project in Pathra can be done, and an archeologist would be taken with them and Pathan bhai would be informed. Rinita said that she would inform Partho (Sowaka caretaker) and Arjo (Sowaka Supervisor) to take them to Pathra and start the process.

Rinita asked Komolika and Somali if they should keep Anusree, who left the position of the Director, as a therapist and they both said, she should be there as a therapist. She should not be part of board of members.

Ayana joined 10 minutes late:

Ayana said that some procedures would be followed for the new Director and have to be completed.

The meeting ended at 10:10 AM IST on October 5, 2024.

Meeting date: November 8, 2024

Meeting Members present: Rinita, Komolika, Somali, Aishwarya,

Started at 9 IST.

Ended at 9:15 IST

Minutes taken by Rinita Mazumdar, Director.

First Somali presented on her visit to Pathra, the Temple town. She discussed how the entire place could be developed, made into a tourist spot, and excavation could start happening. She also said that there are dues that are pending to the peasants and the protagonist, Mr. Yesin Pathan, who fought for the restoration of the Temples wants the money for the peasants.

Somali suggested tickets for tourists that will give the place a formalization. Since, there are so many tourist visiting the place, it is important that it be formalized. Somali said that she would have a meeting with the ASI Director and another personnel who is interested in the Temples of Bengal. So, that the work of restoration and excavation continues.

Rinita said that this kind of going around the ruins and the older architecture was something in Heidegger's theory, where he is talking about going back to the roots of Rhineland to search for one's identity in the midst of a rootless global world. A therapy on "Ruins and Recovery" would be developed by Sowaka.

Next the project pertaining to the women in North 24 Parganas would be developed. it would involve first a strong budget where they and then the budget has to be give to the Dean, who would then approve of it before the work starts.

The meeting ended after 45 minutes.

Minutes For Meeting on November 22, 2024

Members present:

1. Rinita
2. Komolika
3. Ayana
4. Aishariya
5. Somali

The meeting started at 9:00 PM IST.

The meeting started at 9:00 AM and the first thing discussed was the RBU project. It seems that RBU will donate Rs 1 lakh, but also Sowaka Harshita Foundation has to donate 1 lakh. Rinita said that at this point this is not possible, as Sowaka has no money. Ayaan suggested that Sowaka can show Rs 1 lakh and start the project. To which Rinita said but Sowaka cannot transfer the money, as it is the money donated for the Saraswati puja.

After the above, Ayana said that if a said Sowaka wants to do the project, it can do on its own, as then it can finance and budget itself. This issue did not get resolved as there was no way at this time to collaborate with RBU and come up with 1 lakh. The money in Sowaka account was for the upcoming Saraswati puja in February 2025. It also got donations from external people. To this Komolika said that she will bring this matter up with RBU and will talk to them and see what can be done. Ayana suggested that it can be done without their help.

It was then decided that Komolika would speak to those involved in this project in RBU and set up a time to meet with Sowaka on this issue.

Then Somali reported on her project with the Temple and said that she talked about it with the Director of ASI (Eastern Region). It seems that they are very much aware of the situation but there may be complexities which they are not willing to divulge. Somali wrote a very good proposal about what she saw in Pathra and her impression of how Sowaka can get involved in all of this.

Rinita brought in the issue that payment for Sowaka still has to be done via Rinita's NRO account and that a direct gateway is needed for people to pay Sowaka as the course of Sowaka is coming up on Conflict resolution.

The meeting ended at 10:00 PM. IST.

Members present:

Rinita, Anusree, Somali, Komolika:

This was not a general board meeting, nonetheless, it was a milestone. A new member was initiated into the meeting, Somali Panda. Those present introduced themselves and Somali introduced herself. Rinita asked Komolika to talk about their north 24 Parganas, which Komolika did. Rinita said that they need transport to get there. Somali offered a place for the clients to sit and talk.

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Good Morning All,

Prof Nilanjana Bagchi,
Department of English,
Hiralal College
North 24 Parganas.

Meeting on December 12, 2024

Sowaka Members present:

Rinita Mazumdar, Director
Komolika Majumdar, Director

From RBU Women Studies Representative:

Sourav ??

Sowaka Harshita Foundation and RBU Joint Project:

Meeting started at 9:00 PM IST

The meeting was with regards to the project in Northern 24 Parganas to collect data about the challenges faced by single mothers whose husbands have migrated to other states for jobs. Data will be collected pertaining to their challenges and if needed some skills training and therapy will be provided.

Komolika initiated the discussion on the project and said we are here to talk about our collaboration.

Rinita mentioned that it will not be possible for Sowaka Harshita Foundation to come up with a matching grant of any amount in this project as Sowaka just got registered in May 2025 and still has no access to any grants, everything is done via private donations.

Sourva then said that there is no compulsion that we have to come up with the money. We can do as proposed. We can present the reports in May 2025 in RBU.

Rinita said that then Komolika and Aishwarya can go to the locations and start collecting data. As we discussed earlier, these women may need therapy but may be unwilling to talk in front of everyone. Somali said she can provide a private safe place for them to talk, if not the first day, the second day. Aishwarya is the resident therapist, so she can do this, but the safe private space is needed.

Sourav stressed that there is no *compulsion* that we have to come up with the matching amount, but the only thing is that the people working on this will not be paid.

Rinita said that since Komolika and Aishwarya are Directors and Resident Psychologists of Sowaka they will do it now without remuneration, but of course, as days go and money comes in we will arrange for a stipend for them.

Sourav mentioned two important things: In the final presentation in May 2025, they can provide transport for the subjects to come to RBU. They can also provide the room for these subjects for therapy is nothing else is available.

Rinita mentioned that Sudeepta Dutta, the Supervisor of Sowaka and Partho, the caretaker will be there the day Komolika and Aishwarya visit the 24 Parganas, as it is not safe at this time for them to go there all by themselves.

Meeting ended with the idea that a Sowaka meeting with members is needed to make them aware of what is going on. Also, the date for the visit by Komolika and Aishwarya has to be fixed. It may take more than one visit to collect the data.

The meeting ended at 10:00 PM. IST

Minutes Of Meeting On December 22, 2204

Members Present:

1. Rinita (Director)

2. Komolika (Co Director)
3. Nilanjana Bagchi (Volunteer)

Meeting started at 9:00 PM IST

The meeting started with Nilanjana introducing herself as a Prof. of Hiralal College (North 24 Parganas, Kolkata), and Komolika also introduced herself.

Then the talk went to the first project. Komolika said that she and Aishwarya had a talk and will start after the week of Jan 4, 2025.

Nilanjan was informed about the project and talked a little about her own interests and she quit after about 10 minutes. Rinita mentioned that a room to provide therapy and transport on the day of the presentation could be arranged by RBU.

Rinita and Komolika discussed the project to some extent, specially the logistic of how they will proceed, where they will go, and how they will approach the subjects of the research. The process will happen at several stages:

Introduction and getting familiar

Data collecting

Then arranging and putting it into a framework

Presentation (from Sowaka) after April 2025.

Rinita and Komolika also discussed about the possibility of providing some kind of group counseling to these women.

The meeting ended at 9:45. PM IST.

owaka Harshita Foundation:

Meeting Date: February 13, 2025

Meeting Time: 8:00 PM IST -8:40 PM IST

Members Present;

Rinita, Director

Komolika, Director

Ayana Banerjee, Advocate

Aishwariya : Chief Therapist

Nilanjana: Member

Achintya: Guest

Ayana said that she is applying for CSR: Corporate social responsibility funds from different Companies, since this organization is registered as a CSR NGO.

Rinita said that so far the following projects have been completed:

1. Rinita lectures on Conflict resolution (ongoing, You tube).
2. Genocide Course (ongoing, online course).
3. Pathra Temple visit by member Somali and project report uploaded in Sowakah.org
4. Saraswati Puja conducted in Gobordanga.

Nilanja and Aishwariya introduced themselves.

Proposed project in North 24 Parganas by Director Komolika, Resident therapist, Aishwariya. The first day it was decided that Achintya will go with them to introduce them to different people. From then on Komolika and Aishwariya will go on their own. Ayana mentioned that a data base has to be made of the people interviewed and those to whom Sowaka will provide service.

Achintya mentioned that Sowaka has to be cautious about asking people their demographic details, as this is a sensitive area and most of the people are those who fled persecution from neighboring state and may be reluctant to give details. It was decided that the service providers will have to deal with caution and will collect the rudimentary information in paper, before entering them in computers.

Rinita said that her long term goal is to set up a school in and near Gobordanga where the puja happened, stressing most the need for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) study.

Rinita asked Achintya to get in touch with Komolika and Aishwariya to carry on the project in North 24 Parganas, as he is the one mostly familiar with the area.

The meeting ended around 8:40.