

1981 Charter for Sri Sathya Sai Organisations Around the World

PERMANENT CHARTER granted by BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA to the SRI SATHYA SAI ORGANISATIONS, AT THE THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE, dated this 14th day of January in the 55th year of His Advent, Anno Domini 1981. BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA, out of His infinite Grace and Mercy sends blessings to all to whom this Permanent Charter shall be seen, showed, or read.

WHEREAS the advent of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as declared by Him is for the establishment of sanathana dharma,

AND WHEREAS this World Conference is a Spiritual Organisation founded for the whole Mankind, not recognising any distinction or separateness on the basis of religion, caste, colour, or creed,

AND WHEREAS this Organisation takes within its fold persons belonging to all religions in order to establish unity of all faiths,

AND WHEREAS, it is for establishing and promoting the content of such sanathana dharma and also to establish oneness of all thoughts that the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations are taking existence,

AND WHEREAS the most fundamental object of this Organisation as laid down by Bhagawan is to "Awaken in Man the awareness of the Divinity INHERENT in him" by propagating through practice and example the basic principles of *sathya* (truth), dharma (righteousness), shanti (peace), prema (love) and ahimsa (nonviolence) set by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba,

AND WHEREAS to experience this Divinity, mere environment and circumstances outside are not sufficient but a change in the minds of men is necessary,

AND WHEREAS the activities of the Organisation are only a means to the spiritual progress in this direction and which progress will ultimately enable everyone to enjoy inner peace notwithstanding the stresses and strains, the frustrations and sorrows, the defeats and successes, the ups and downs of life,

AND WHEREAS to achieve maximum results towards these objectives:

IT IS HEREBY DECLARED:

A. That this shall be the Charter governing the Sathya Sai Organisations all over the world.

B. That all the office bearers and members of this Organisation at present and all those who will join this Organisation shall be one in Deed and in Name, by the name of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, and as such, they shall be entitled to carry on the activities in the name of the Organisation.

C. That in order to achieve the objectives as laid down hereinabove the members shall follow a strict Code of Conduct of sadhana (spiritual exercises) so that they become worthy instruments of our Divine Master in the efforts to fulfil the objectives of this Organisation.

D. That no person shall be qualified to associate themselves as office bearer or worker with this Organisation who wilfully deviates from the Code of Conduct laid down hereinafter.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY DECLARED as follows:

1. This Charter shall govern and regulate the functioning of the Sathya Sai Organisation throughout the World.

2. Each and every function and activity, in whatever form, shall be performed and conducted under the name and style of the Sathya Sai Organisation (hereinafter called "the Organisation").

3. In view of the objectives of the Organisation as hereinafter laid down, all members of the Organisation must observe the Code of Conduct hereinafter prescribed by way of spiritual discipline, so that they may become worthy instruments of Bhagawan Baba and thus contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Organisation and the fulfilment of the Divine Mission of Bhagawan Baba.

I. THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Every member of the Organisation must undertake sadhana (spiritual discipline) as an integral part of this daily life and abide by the following Code of Conduct :

1. Daily meditation and prayer.

- 2. Devotional singing/prayer with members of his family once per week.*
- 3. Participation in the educational programmes conducted by the Organisation for children.*
- 4. Attendance at least once per month as group devotional programmes conducted by the Organisation.*
- 5. Participation in community service and other programmes of the Organisation.*
- 6. Regular study of Sai literature.*
- 7. Putting into practice the principles of "ceiling on desires" and utilising any savings thereby generated for the service of mankind.*
- 8. Speaking softly and lovingly with everyone with whom he comes into contact.*
- 9. Avoiding talking ill of others especially in their absence.*

Non-observance or violation of this Code of Conduct shall disqualify a member from holding any office or from being an active member in the Organisation. The appropriate authority in the Organisation may remove any such member from office and declare them disqualified to hold such office or to be an active member of the Organisation without assigning any reason.

II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

In order to enable the Organisation to be one in Deed and Name, every constituent of the Organisation must compulsorily affiliate with the Organisation in such manner as may be expedient from time to time and in the absence of such affiliation no person or body of persons, calling themselves Sai devotees, shall be entitled to use the name of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in any spiritual activities.

The Membership of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation or of any Unit thereof shall be purely voluntary and hence it cannot be claimed as a matter of right. All rights and privileges are reserved by the Organisation.

No difficulty or dispute should ordinarily arise in respect of the affairs of the Organisation in course of its functioning or administration. However, matters that are not covered by this CHARTER shall be placed before the Central Office for guidance by the appropriate authority or person.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE SAI ORGANISATION

The Sathya Sai Organisation is not an evangelical or proselytizing Organisation. Its principle objectives are:

(1) To help the individual

(i) to become aware of the Divinity that is Inherent in him and to conduct himself accordingly;

(ii) to translate Divine Love and perfection into practice in daily life; and therefore

(iii) to fill his life with joy, harmony, beauty, grace, human excellence and lasting happiness.

(2) To ensure that all human relations are governed by the principles of sathya (truth), dharma (right conduct), prema (love), shanti (peace) and ahimsa (nonviolence).

(3) to make devotees of the religions more sincere and dedicated in the practice of their respective religions.

These objectives can be attained in the following manner:

(1) By observing the four principles laid down by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, namely:

(i) There is only ONE religion, the religion of love.

(ii) There is only ONE language, the language of heart.

(iii) There is only ONE caste, the caste of humanity.

(iv) There is only ONE God, He is omnipresent.

(2) By constant remembrance of God and looking upon all creation as only a manifestation of Divinity in different forms and shapes.

(3) By underlining the essential unity of all religions and securing a proper understanding of all religions as based on love.

(4) By looking upon all work as service dedicated to the Divine.

(5) By bringing to bear upon all life's problems, attitudes flowing from divine love, such as understanding, compassion, tolerance, and helpfulness.

(6) By basing all actions on Love of Divinity, fear of sin, and steadfast observance of morality in society.

(7) By engaging in spiritual, educational, and service activities both at the individual and the community level, in an organised and systematic manner, without expecting any material reward or appreciation, but solely as a means of winning God's Love and Grace.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANISATION

The Organisation undertakes spiritual, educational, and service activities under the inspiration and guidance of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba through Sri Sathya Sai Centres.

Spiritual activities include devotional singing, study circles, public lectures, seminars, meditation, etc.

Educational activities cover bal vikas (children's education) and Education in Human Values (EHV) programmes, besides formal academic education combined with the development of the character of the students for age group of 6 to 15.

Service activities include items such as organising medical check-up camps; adoption of under-developed villages for accelerating rural development; blood donation; cyclone and flood relief; visits to hospitals, old age homes, etc., conducting eye-testing camps, veterinary camps, vocational training classes, coaching classes; feeding of the poor, etc.

For the purpose of conducting these programmes, rules and regulations for overseas centres have been framed by Central Office which are set out in the following pages.

V. THE STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANISATION

In order effectively to administer the affairs of the Organisation, the administrative structure of the Organisation shall be as follows:

(1) There shall be a Central Organisation or body at Prasanthi Nilayam, India, comprising the Central Office, the All India President and the International Chairman. The duties and responsibilities of the Central Organisation are:

- (i) To guide and supervise the working of the various constituents of the Organisation throughout the world.*
- (ii) To make rules and regulations and provide guidelines for the Organisation in India and overseas countries from time to time.*
- (iii) To determine all matters requiring authoritative decision in the Organisation and in relation to its constituent units.*
- (iv) To convene meeting of members or officers of the Organisation as may be necessary from time to time.*
- (v) To compile information relating to the working of the Organisation in each region.*

Rules and Regulations Of The Sathya Sai Organisations

(1) THE ORGANISATION IN INDIA

The functional pattern of the Organisation in India and rules and regulations relating to the Organisation shall be as separately laid down from time to time.

(2) THE ORGANISATION OVERSEAS

(A) (i) REGIONS. For the purpose of the administrative structure of the Organisation Overseas, the World is divided into regions as follows

I	U.S.A.
II	Latin America
III	Europe
IV	U.K.
V	Australia, Fiji and New Zealand
VI	Far Eastern Countries (incl. Nepal, China and Russia)
VII	Canada
VIII	West Indies
IX	Africa, Mauritius, and Middle East
X	Sri Lanka

(ii) Tenure of office bearers: All office bearers will ordinarily hold office for not more than two years, but are eligible for appointment for a further period of two years.

(B) CENTRAL COORDINATORS. There shall be one or more Central Coordinators for each Region. They shall be appointed by the International Chairman, and their duties and responsibilities will be:

- 1. To help disseminate within the Region policies, directives, and messages received from the International Chairman, Central Officer, Prasanthi Nilayam.*
- 2. To motivate and help all countries of the Region to bring about the raising of spiritual consciousness through activities under three wings of the Organisation, namely, spiritual, educational, and service.*

3. (a) *To coordinate training of bal vikas (children's education) and EHV teachers and bhajan singers/leaders and to hold symposia, conferences at the regional or country levels.*
3. (b) *To liaise with bal vikas (children's education) and EHV Programmes of the Region with guidance and literature from time to time.*
3. (c) *To help printing and sale of Sai Literature.*
4. *To supervise the working of the Sai Organisation in each country, while the detailed working is left to the Central Council or Coordinating Committee concerned.*
5. *To furnish periodical reports of activities of Centres and Groups in each country of the Region to the International Chairman, Central Officer, Prasanthi Nilayam.*
6. *Any other work that may be assigned by the International Chairman from time to time.*
7. *The Central Coordinators may take the assistance from the Central Councils, wherever existing.*
8. *The Central Coordinators will be responsible to the International Chairman.*
9. *Central Coordinator will help divide each country into Area of Zone or Region and form Coordinating Committee as per Rules and Regulations.*
10. *Central Coordinators will arrange selection of office bearers of Central Council and/or Coordinating Committee.*

(C) CENTRAL COUNCILS AND COORDINATING COMMITTEES

1. *There shall be a Central Council in every country where there are ten or more Centres and a Coordinating Committee in every country where there are less than ten but more than three centres.*
2. *In countries where effective administration of the Organisation so requires, the Central Coordinator may establish several Coordinating Committees. In such a situation, the members of the Central Council for those countries will comprise the Chairman of the various Coordinating Committees.*
3. *The Chairman of every Central Council shall be appointed by the International Chairman on the recommendation of the Central Coordinator concerned.*

4. *Where there is no Coordinating Committee in a country, the members of the Central Council shall comprise the Chairman of the Centres and one representative for every three Devotional Groups.*

5. *The members of a Coordinating Committee shall comprise the Chairman of the Centres and one representative for every three groups, and the Chairman shall be appointed by consensus of the members. If the members are unable to agree, the Central Coordinator will appoint a suitable person to be Chairman.*

(D) POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF CENTRAL COUNCILS / COORDINATING COMMITTEES

(1) To promote the setting up of Centres/Groups.

(2) To guide and supervise the various organisational activities of the Centres/Groups in their jurisdiction and maintain liaison between the Central Coordinator and Centres/Groups.

(3) To obtain for each half-year (ending 30 June and 31 December) reports from the various Centres/Groups in the country by the first month of the following half-year and present a consolidated report (in duplicate) for the country as a whole by the middle of the following half-year to the Central Coordinator concerned, with a copy to the International Chairman, Central Office, Prasanthi Nilayam. The Central Coordinator concerned will forward his comments thereon to the International Chairman, Central Office, Prasanthi Nilayam, as soon as possible thereafter.

(4) To furnish to the Central Coordinator concerned, with copy to the Central Office, Prasanthi Nilayam, special reports on any significant events taking place in the country immediately after each event, without waiting for its inclusion in the periodical report.

(5) Where necessary, to propose to the International Chairman, through the Central Coordinator, additions, deletions or amendments of Rules and Regulations laid down for the Centres/Groups within its jurisdiction, to suit local conditions.

(6) To affiliate new Centres/Groups, an affiliation number will be allotted to such Centres/Groups.

(7) To organise the sale of books, records, tapes, pictures, etc. through its constituents and to ensure that such sale is carried on in a proper way, keeping a minimum margin to cover overhead expenses.

(8) The Central Council may form subcommittees from among its members to look after and conduct various activities of the Organisation. Such subcommittees shall function under the direct supervision of the Chairman and shall follow the guidelines provided by the International Chairman, Central Office, Prasanthi Nilayam for the conduct of such activities.

(9) To conduct/cause to be conducted training programmes for bal vikas (children's education) teachers and/or bhajan leaders.

(10) To conduct celebrations of special occasions at the country level in consultation with the Central Coordinator.

(11) To convene meetings of members of all Centres and Groups once in six months, or at such other interval as may be convenient.

(12) The Central Council / Coordinating Committee shall maintain an up-to-date list of all its affiliated constituents with names and addresses of the heads thereof and number of members in each case as on 31 December each year. A copy of this list shall be furnished to the International Chairman, Central Office, Prasanthi Nilayam by the 15 February of the following year. Any changes in this list will be communicated to the International Chairman, Central Office in the half-yearly reports.

(13) To take action in cases of violation of the provisions of these Regulations or in respect of activities or conduct against the interest of the Organisation by any of its constituents or members thereof under advice to the Central Coordinator concerned.

(14) To write to all the non-affiliated Organisations to affiliate themselves with the Organisation; in the event of their not doing so, an announcement may be made in the Organisation's bulletin disclaiming such Organisation as having anything to do with the Sathya Sai Organisation.

(15) To see that none of the affiliated constituents associates itself with any Organisation whose application for affiliation has been rejected. If any constituent is found to be doing so, the Chairman will report with his recommendation for action against such constituent together with reasons therefor, to the Central Coordinator concerned.

(16) The Central Council / Coordinating Committee shall be the authority in charge of publication of books, records, tapes, photos, etc., in the country in consultation with the Central Coordinator, who in turn, will consult the Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam, (A.P.) PIN 515134 (India) in regard to the publication of books.

(E) CENTRES

(1) (a) Formation

A. Any group of devotees of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba numbering not less than nine (9) and desiring to engage themselves in activities under at least two of the three wings of the Organisation, namely spiritual, educational, and service, with plans to function in all three wings may constitute themselves into a Sai Centre and apply for affiliation to the Central Council or Coordinating Committee concerned, or to the Central Coordinator concerned, if there is no Central Council or Coordinating Committee in their country.

B. Any group of devotees engaging themselves in activities under only one or two of the three (3) wings, irrespective of number, and those numbering less than nine (9) even if they are engaged in activities under all the three (3) wings, may constitute themselves into

a group and apply for affiliation in the same manner.

(b) Procedure to form new Centre or Group

The sponsor of the Centre or Group may be advised to apply in the prescribed form to the Chairman of the Central Council / Coordinating Committee / Central Coordinator / International Chairman, Central Office, as the case may be, who, after scrutiny, may grant the 'A' or 'B' classifications.

(c) Affiliation of Centres and Groups

A Sathya Sai Centre will be defined as a Centre having at least one regular activity of each of three wings selected from the list of activities suggested by the Central Council / Coordinating Committee / Central Coordinator. Such a Centre will be classified as 'A' for the purpose of affiliation. Other Centres or Groups will be affiliated under category 'B' and may be promoted to category 'A' as and when their activities increase. There will be no probationary period for granting of affiliation of a Centre. Similarly, there will be no system of limiting affiliation to any particular period; hence, there will be no system of renewal of affiliation from period to period. However, the Central Council / Coordinating Committee / Central Coordinator will have the right to disaffiliate any Centre / Group which is found not working within the Rules & Regulations, after giving the hearing to such Centre/Group.

(2) Membership

Any person who is a spiritual aspirant, has faith in the teachings of Bhagawan Baba, and who is willing to abide by the nine-point code of conduct and the Rules and Regulations of the Organisation in force will be treated as a member.

Such of the members as are in a position to devote at least four hours a week to activities of the Organisation shall be treated as active workers.

The Chairman of the Centre or Group shall be a person elected by consensus amongst the members of the Centre or Group. The Chairman may nominate not more than four active workers to be members of an Executive Committee for attending to the activities of the Centre or Group under the three wings spiritual, educational, and service. He may co-opt additional members for any special meetings.

(3) Register of Members

Each Centre and Group will maintain in serial order a register of members under the categories, 'active workers' and 'other members' separately, showing the full name with address and telephone number, if any, in each case.

(4) Names of Centres and Groups

There shall be a uniform pattern of Organisation all over the world under the name "Sathya Sai Centre" or "Sathya Sai Group" as the case may be in any locality.

(5) Number of Members and Meetings

All devotees entered in the register of the Centre/Group and who have agreed to abide by the nine-point code of conduct will be treated as members of the Centre/Group. A meeting of all members of the Centre will be held once a quarter at a place and time fixed by the Chairman of the Centre.

(6) Rules and Regulations

The Centre/Group will follow the Rules & Regulations and guidelines laid down from time to time for the Sathya Sai Organisation. The Centre/Group will not ordinarily be registered under the local law relating to registration of societies, if such registration is not mandatory.

(7) Duties of the Centre/Group

(a) Spiritual Wing:

- (i) To organise the holding of group devotional singing (bhajan) sessions and study circles.*
- (ii) To draw up and maintain a panel of bhajan lead-singers and study circle leaders.*
- (iii) To arrange for training of bhajan lead singers jointly or independently.*
- (iv) To take such other action necessary for expanding and intensifying spiritual activities.*

(b) Educational Wing:

- (i) To organise bal vikas (Sathya Sai Education for children) programmes at different Centres.*
- (ii) To arrange for training of bal vikas teachers jointly or independently.*
- (iii) To organise the distribution and sale of Sai literature at Centres, exhibitions, and other Centres where the public gather.*

(iv) To maintain a reference library and reading room of Sai publications and journals.

(v) To take such action as may be necessary for expanding and intensifying educational activities.

(c) Service Wing:

To arrange for the following in particular:

(i) Visits to hospitals, leprosaria, orphanages, prisons, homes for the handicapped, old age homes, etc., for attending to the spiritual and other needs of the inmates.

(ii) Assisting at functions organised by the Centre in the matter of maintaining discipline and order, provision of loudspeaker arrangements, cleanliness, etc.

(iii) To allot to each member a specific item of service activity keeping in view the experience, aptitude and skill of the member and arrange for the training of members in specific types of service.

(iv) Such other service activity as may be called for.

(d) General:

(i) To maintain the register of the members referred to in paragraph (3) above.

(ii) To arrange for the enrollment of new devotees who are desirous of associating themselves with the work of the Organisation.

(iii) To arrange for the expansion of existing Centres/Groups and starting new Centres/Groups.

(iv) To submit half-yearly reports to the Chairman of the Central Council or Coordinating Committee concerned.

(v) To submit to the same authority special reports on any event taking place within its area immediately after such event, without waiting for its inclusion in the periodical report.

(vi) To give guidance to members and to see that the policy laid down and the instructions issued by the Central Council / Coordinating Committee or Central Coordinator are implemented.

(vii) To see that the members continue to hold the qualifications as laid down in para (2) of this section.

(viii) To resolve all organisational problems amicably and on the basis of Love.

(ix) To attend to any other organisational work within the area that may be assigned to it by the Central Council / Coordinating Committee or Central Coordinator.

(8) Finance and Property

(i) The expenses of the day-to-day activities of Sri Sathya Sai Centres and allied units should be met by voluntary contributions by the members themselves, and no funds should be raised from other sources for this purpose.

Due care has to be taken that there is no pressure on anyone and that no high/low complex is created among the members. For this, the best course is to work out the estimate of total expenditure and inform all the members of the Centre; thereafter, keep a box in a separate room where the members can go one by one and offer their voluntary contribution so that nobody knows how much each member has put in. Thereafter the box may be opened and the deficit, if any, may be met by the members on a voluntary basis. If there is a surplus, the same may be used for feeding the poor or for meeting items of future expenditure.

(ii) To meet the expenses for holding conferences, public meetings, and celebrations, Centres alone may raise funds by collecting voluntary contributions from amongst the Sai devotees in the area, through a committee constituted for the purpose.

(iii) No collection for capital expenditure such as the purchase of land, building, or property of any kind shall be made by the Centres or other units without getting the prior written permission of the International Chairman by an application made through the Central Coordinator concerned.

(iv) In no case shall a public appeal be made for any funds, donations, or contributions in cash or kind.
