

I SAMPIGE CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE:

We, the Kannada loving community in Triangle Area in North Carolina in order to promote literary, educational and cultural activities, and to further the intercultural understanding among the people of the United States of America and Kannadigas in other parts of the world, do hereby join together to form an association.

Article I NAME

The name of the association shall be **Sampige, Triangle Kannada Association**.

Article II AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Section I: The aims and objectives of the association shall be to promote literary, educational and cultural activities of Kannada loving people, and to create an opportunity for the cultural exchange between the people of the United States of America and Karnataka in particular and any other part of the world where Kannadigas reside, in general.

Section II: No substantial part of the activities of the association shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the association shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles this association shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purpose of this association.

Section III: No part of the net earnings of the association will inure to the benefit of any individual or individuals except when the executive committee decides to grant honorarium to distinguished scholars and artists.

Article III MEMBERSHIP

Section I: Any person eighteen years or older who subscribes to the objectives of the association and pays the annual dues, as decided by the executive committee and the board of trustees, is entitled to be a member of the association.

Section II: Each dues paying member shall carry one vote. In the event dues are established separately for "single" and "family" memberships, the definition of "dues-paying-member" shall be as follows. The individual and his/her spouse shall both be dues paying member when he/she pays for family. Dependent parents and children living with the dues-paying family member/ members are entitled to all the benefits of membership except voting rights.

Section III: Membership may be revoked for a period not more than twelve months for conduct considered undesirable (see article X, section III of the bylaws for an explanation of undesirable conduct). The revocation requires:

1. Behavior is deemed unacceptable by the majority (more than fifty percent of the quorum) of the board of trustees
2. Behavior is deemed unacceptable by the majority (more than fifty percent of the quorum) of the executive committee
3. Due notice of a month to all the members to attend the proceedings
4. An opportunity to the member(s) to defend their conduct (if the member(s), whose membership is being revoked, attend the proceedings and requests for one)
5. Approval by two-thirds of the members attending (quorum for the proceedings shall be the same as general body meeting).

Article IV THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section I: The executive committee shall consist of five office bearers, one member and one non-voting youth member. Youths between the ages of fourteen and eighteen are eligible to be youth members.

Section II: The executive committee shall be elected by the members of the association at the general body meeting.

Section III: The office bearers shall be a president, a secretary, a communication director, a treasurer and a cultural coordinator.

Section IV: The term of office for the executive committee shall be one year.

Section V: A term of office for an executive member shall be limited to two years at a stretch, and a maximum of six years for life. Exceptions to this may be made under the special circumstances as outlined in article X, section V of the bylaws.

Section VI: The president and secretary should demonstrate their fluency in speaking Kannada, and writing their name and Sampige in Kannada.

Section VII: None of the members of the executive committee including the office bearers and youth member shall carry salary or take remuneration of any kind for their services.

Section VIII: An executive committee member cannot be a board of trustee.

Article V BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section I: The board of trustees shall be comprised of four members and a chairman. The five positions shall be initially filled by an election by the general body according to the rules in section III.

Section II: Two senior most trustees shall retire every year. In case of equal seniority, the outgoing trustee will be decided by lottery.

Section III: The outgoing president will be inducted as a trustee automatically. One additional trustee shall be elected by the members of the association at the general body meeting. If the outgoing president contests for an additional term, the second trustee position shall also be elected.

Section IV: A term of office for the board of trustees shall be limited to three years at a stretch. Exceptions to this may be made under the special circumstances as outlined in article X, section VI of the bylaws.

Section V: A board of trustee cannot be a member of the executive committee.

Article VI GENERAL BODY MEETING

Section I: The annual general body meeting of the association shall be held at the time of the last function of the year, the appropriate date and time being decided upon by the executive committee. The notice of the annual meeting shall be given by mail to each member of the association at least four weeks prior to the meeting date.

Section II: In addition to the final function, there will be at least two major functions during the year. In addition, the executive committee shall make an earnest attempt to receive and honor visiting artists and scholars considered in high esteem by Kannadigas. The executive committee shall make every effort to accommodate and involve children/youth in all functions of Sampige.

Section III: Special general body meeting of the association may be held at the call of the executive committee or by the written request of at least twenty members.

Section IV: The quorum for any general body meeting shall be thirty three percent of the dues paying members.

Section V: An earnest attempt should be made to use Kannada to conduct meetings, speeches, and communicating with members.

Article VII DISSOLUTION

Section I: For dissolving the association everyone on both the executive committee and the board of trustees should be in complete agreement. A general body meeting should be held, with at least four weeks notice to the present members as well as the previous year's members. The quorum for this meeting shall be fifty percent of the dues paying members. The association can be dissolved only with an approval of sixty six percent of the members present.

Section II: Upon dissolution of this association, the executive committee shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the association, dispose of all the assets of the association to Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bangalore, Karnataka State, INDIA. In case the assets cannot be disposed of to Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bangalore, Karnataka State, INDIA, all the assets of the association should be disposed of in such a manner, or to such organization or organizations organized or operated exclusively for charitable, educational or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualifying as a tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law).

Article VIII AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of all the voting members present at the meeting (the quorum for this meeting shall be fifty percent of the dues paying members) provided:

1. That the proposed amendment is submitted in writing, by a voting member and supported in writing by nine other voting members of the association to the executive committee, at least six weeks prior to the meeting, and
2. That the executive committee appoints an ad-hoc committee to review the merits of the proposed amendment and receives recommendations as to the merits of the proposed

amendment. The ad-hoc committee shall consist of equal representation of the people proposing the amendment, current executive committee, board of trustees, and neutral members, and

3. That the executive committee obtains approval of at least sixty six percent of the board of trustees for the amendment, and
4. That the executive committee reproduces the proposed amendment and the ad-hoc committee recommendations and distributes it to all the members of the association at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

II SAMPIGE BYLAWS

Article I LOCATION OF THE ASSOCIATION

For official purposes, the headquarters of the association shall be located in the state of North Carolina where it is duly registered.

Article II DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section I: The executive committee shall be responsible for the day to day functioning of the association including the financial management and all the activities of the association. Every major decision should represent the majority view of the executive committee and not few individuals on the committee. Any decisions having a long term bearing on the association, (for instance a decision extending beyond the current tenure of executive committee) will require an approval from the Board of Trustees.

Section II: The president shall be the spokesperson and chief executive of the association. In the event that the president is unavailable, the secretary will temporarily perform the duties of the president.

Section III: The secretary shall keep a full and complete record of all meetings and transactions of the association. The secretary shall be responsible to execute with the help of other members all decisions taken by the executive committee.

Section IV: The treasurer shall be responsible for the receipt, disbursement, recording, and safekeeping of all funds of the association. The treasurer shall pay all bills, which have been approved in the manner prescribed by the executive committee.

Section V: The communication director shall be responsible for the maintenance and coordination of communications with the members, and within the executive committee. The person shall be responsible for, creating, editing and distribution of newsletter and other means of communications, maintaining the association's website and electronic groups, in the manner prescribed by the executive committee. Any communication, with reference to a program held by Sampige, should be sent at least ten days prior to the program date.

Section VI: The cultural coordinator shall be responsible for the content, organization, and execution of the cultural activities sponsored and conducted by the association, in the manner prescribed by the executive committee.

Section VII: The youth member shall be responsible for coordinating youth activities, and furthering the youth agenda within the association, in the manner prescribed by the executive committee.

Section VIII: Volunteering for the executive committee involves time commitment by each member. The activities and tasks are coordinated and assigned by the president and the executive committee as a whole. Some of the aspects of the time requirements involve, but are not limited to, attending meetings, handling various aspects of activities, memberships, accounting, and coordinating with external entities.

Section IX: The executive committee will put every effort to maintain member privacy including the email address, mailing address and telephone numbers.

Section X: The executive committee is empowered to appoint members to represent Sampige at special events and meetings, only under special circumstances and on a temporary basis. This empowerment has to be in writing with appropriate limitations and used very prudently.

Article III MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section I: The executive committee shall meet at least four times between the annual meetings. The quorum for the executive committee meeting shall be three voting members of which at least two shall be office bearers.

Section II: The president shall preside over all meetings. The secretary, in the absence of the president, shall preside over such meetings. The treasurer, in the absence of both the president and the secretary, shall preside over such meetings.

Section III: The secretary shall prepare the proceedings of the meetings of the executive committee and keep minutes of the meeting.

Section IV: Each person in the executive committee, except the president and the youth member, shall have one vote.

Section V: The president shall vote only if there is a tie in the voting.

Section VI: In the event decisions are made based on telephone, email, or personal discussions with members of the executive committee, such decisions and opinions should be properly documented. The documentation should be saved along with the minutes of the meetings.

Section VII: A copy of the minutes shall be provided to the board of trustees within 10 working days of the meeting.

Article IV COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

The executive committee is empowered to appoint members to sub-committees and ad-hoc committees to accomplish such tasks and operations as to realize aims and objectives of the association, to investigate specific problems, and to make recommendations to the executive committee.

Article V FISCAL YEAR AND FINANCE

Section I: The fiscal year of the association shall be the calendar year.

Section II: The executive committee shall be responsible for the finances of the association.

Section III: A financial account in the name of the association shall be maintained in a bank and operated by the treasurer and another member of the executive committee. Of these two at least one should be a Permanent Resident of the USA.

Section IV: All cheques should be signed by both the bank account operators.

Section IV:

1. The treasurer shall provide quarterly financial reports to the executive committee and the board of trustees, within 10 working days of the ending of the quarter as identified by the committee.
2. The treasurer shall provide the financial report on demand from the president of the executive committee or the chairman of the board of trustees within 5 working days.

Section V: The treasurer shall present the financial statements and accounts in the annual meeting of the general body. In addition if and as required by the local and federal laws, an independent auditor approved by the executive committee shall review the accounts of the association and certify, with his/her comments.

Section VI: The executive committee shall make it available to all its members, the financial statements of the preceding fiscal year, during or before the first function.

Section VII: Only the members of the executive committee are empowered to make expenditures on behalf of the association.

Section VIII: The amount that can be spent for any single event should not exceed twenty five percent of the previous year's membership revenue. The amount that can be spent for the year should not exceed the previous year's membership revenue. Any exception to this should be approved by the board of trustees as per the article VI, section IV.

Section IX: All expenditures made by any individual or individuals on behalf of the association shall require the approval of the executive committee.

Section X: Life membership should be amortized over the span of 10 years. The executive committee can include one tenth of the amount paid as life membership dues, as part of their annual budget.

Section XI: Changes to the membership dues has to be approved by the executive committee and the board of the trustees.

Section XII:

1. All efforts should be made by the outgoing executive committee to pay all outstanding bills for the current year before handing over the office to the new committee.
2. In the event any bills cannot be paid by the outgoing executive committee under conditions beyond their control, the new executive committee shall pay these bills provided these bills are individually identified with sufficient funds earmarked for these by the outgoing executive committee.
3. Any reasonable and legitimate late bills that could not be accounted for or identified, as bills to be paid by the outgoing executive committee shall be paid by the new committee provided the amount is less than or equal to \$200.00. For bills of amount larger than \$200.00, the board of trustees and general body should approve the payment. However,

a provisional decision can be made to pay bills larger than \$200.00 at the discretion of the executive committee and approval of board of trustees, pending approval by the general body.

Section XIII: Treasurer should maintain a soft-copy of all the receipts issued.

Section XIV: Any kind of investment decision of Sampige funds have to be jointly approved by both the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Section XV: The outgoing Executive Committee shall be responsible for filing the amendment of office bearers with NC Secretary of State and for filing the taxes with IRS every year.

Article VI DUTIES OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section I: The role of the board of trustees and the authority will be limited to the ones explicitly stated throughout this constitution.

Section II: The board of trustees shall provide necessary guidance, only upon request, to the executive committee.

Section III: The board of trustees acts as an ombudsman for Sampige.

Section IV: The board of trustees shall be responsible for overseeing the fiscal discipline of the executive committee.

Section V: The board of trustees should audit the finances of Sampige at least once by the end of every year. If the annual expenditure exceeds \$10,000, then a third party independent auditor should be used.

Section VI: The board of trustees shall also be responsible for the execution of the special procedures listed under article X.

Section VII: Any amendments to the constitution or the bylaws has to be approved by the board of trustees as mentioned in article VIII of the constitution "Amendments to the Constitution".

Section VIII: The amount that the executive committee can spend for any single event should not exceed twenty five percent of the previous year's membership revenue. The amount that can be spent for the year should not exceed previous year's membership revenue. In case of an exception, the executive committee should present its case and obtain permission from the board of trustees.

Section IX: Changes to the membership dues has to be approved by the board of the trustees.

Article VII MEETINGS OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section I: The Board of Trustees shall meet at least two times in between the annual meetings. The quorum for these meetings shall be three trustees.

Section II: The board can also meet on demand as required by any of the special procedures.

Section III: The Chairman shall preside over all the meetings. In the absence of the chairman, the remaining trustees shall identify a trustee to preside the meetings.

Section IV: The minutes of the meeting shall be maintained by the Chairman.

Section V: A copy of the minutes shall be provided to the executive committee within 10 working days of the meeting.

Section VI: Each person in the board of trustees shall have one vote.

Article VIII VACANCIES

Section I: The board of trustees and executive committee shall take appropriate action to fill any vacancies in the executive committee, no later than one month of such occurrence.

Section II: The board of trustees shall take appropriate action to fill any vacancies in the board of trustees, no later than one month of such occurrence.

Article IX ELECTION RULES

Section I: The election of members of the executive committee (as stated in the constitution article IV, section I) and board of trustees (as stated in the constitution article V, section I) shall be held at the time of the annual general body meetings of the association. The positions on either executive committee or the board of trustees will be filled when vacancies occur (as stated in article VIII).

Section II: Three polling officers shall be appointed by the board of trustees two months prior to the final function.

Section III: The polling officers shall independently scrutinize the nominations for eligibility and shall take a minimum of 3 days and a maximum of 7 days before declaring them eligible.

Section IV: All eligible nominations should be made public as soon as possible and at least the day before the elections.

Section III:

1. Any person who has been a member (for definition of member, see article III, section II of the constitution) for a minimum of two years, may be nominated for a position on the executive committee and each nomination shall be signed by the candidate and two other members of the association.
2. The nominees for the executive committee should not be serving on executive committees of a tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law).
3. The executive committee presidential nominees should have served at least one year as a Sampige executive committee member in the past. Any member who has served on the executive committee prior to the adoption of this constitution is also eligible for nomination.
4. See article IV, section VI of the Constitution, for additional requirements for executive committee president and secretary.
5. The candidates can submit nominations for a specific position on the executive committee or just to be a member on the executive committee. If any positions have not been directly contested, those can be elected from within the winning executive committee members.

Section IV: Any person who has served as a member of the executive committee (see article IV of the constitution for definition of member of the executive committee) may be nominated for a position on the board of trustees and each nomination shall be signed by the candidate and two other members of the association. Any member who has served on the executive committee prior to the adoption of this constitution is also eligible for nomination.

Section V: A member cannot serve on the executive committee and the board of trustees at the same time. In the event that a member gets elected for both the bodies, the member has to resign from one of them.

Section VI: At least one of the members elected to the executive committee should be a Permanent Resident of the USA, in order to accept financial responsibilities for the organization as outlined in Article V, Section III.

Section VII: To ensure fair election process, the ballot should be coded and the voting should be conducted by secret balloting.

Section VIII: Voting by proxy shall be allowed only if they are originally signed proxy forms. Photocopies, Fax copies, email attachments etc are not allowed.

Article X SPECIAL PROCEDURES

Section I: The internal communications of the executive committee, including the minutes of the meetings should not be made public, without express consent of the executive committee or the board of trustees. Violation of this rule can be grounds for impeachment.

Section II: The internal communications of the board of trustees, including the minutes of the meetings should not be made public, without express consent of the board of trustees. Violation of this rule can be grounds for impeachment.

Section III: The following undesirable conduct by a member can be grounds for starting the proceedings for the membership to be revoked (see article III, section III of the constitution):

1. Activities that work against the aims and objectives of the organization (see article II of the constitution)
2. Activities that hinder the functioning of the board of trustees and/or the executive committee
3. Making representation on behalf of the organization when not authorized to do so.

Section IV: Any member with at least 10 member signatories can register issues or lodge complaints about the association, with the board of trustees. The board of trustees shall investigate the matter further and take appropriate action.

Section V: In the event that qualified members are not available for the executive committee, the board of trustees has the authority to relax the “two years at a stretch” rule (as listed in the article IV, section V of the constitution). Even after this, if suitable candidates are not available, the board of trustees have the authority to relax the “maximum of six years for life” rule (as listed in the article IV, section V of the constitution). Even after this, if suitable candidates are not available, the board of trustees have the authority to relax the “minimum of two years” rule (as listed in the article IX, section III).

Section VI: Even after this, if suitable candidates are not available, the current executive committee shall continue in a caretaker role until 6 eligible nominations are received. The caretaker committee is under no obligation to conduct Sampige events.

Section VI: In the event that qualified members are not available for the board of trustees, the board of trustees has the authority to relax the “three years at a stretch” rule (as listed in the article V, section IV of the constitution).

Section VII: A member of the executive committee or the board of trustees can be considered for Impeachment Proceedings based on the investigations conducted by the board of trustees. A

general body meeting should be held with at least four weeks notice to the dues paying members. The quorum for this meeting shall be thirty three percent of the dues paying members. The member of the executive committee or the board of trustees can be impeached only with an approval of sixty six percent of the members present. Upon impeachment, the board of trustees can take suitable action, including expulsion from the organization to legal proceedings.

Article XI ACTIVITIES

Section I: Any member can propose a project to get charitable funding from Sampige.

Section II: A member in the Board of Trustees or in the Executive Committee should sponsor the project by doing due diligence on it.

Section III: The sponsor should present the project to the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee.

Section IV: The project's commitment terms should include and clearly define a fixed donation amount, start date, end date, applicable restrictions and termination clauses.

Section V: The project's commitment duration should not exceed 12 months. Funding for long running projects should be taken for voting and renewal every year.

Section VI: The sponsor should work with the project proposer and submit a written report every 6 months to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees on the on-going progress of the project and a final report on how the grants funds were used.

Section VII: The Executive Committee should notify and make available to the members the project proposal as submitted by the sponsor.

Section VIII: The Executive Committee should vote and approve funding for the project, no sooner than 1 month and and no later than 2 months from the date the proposal is made public.

Section IX: The Board of Trustees should vote and approve funding for the project, no sooner than 1 month and and no later than 2 months from the date the proposal is made public.

Section X: The project is funded only when both the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees approve the proposal.

Section XI: Apart from the activities listed in article VI of the constitution, some of the other activities in which the association can be involved are:

1. Sponsor Kannada and Karnataka culture related movies, plays, songs, and dances
2. Conduct Kannada and Karnataka culture related contests such as, poetry recitation, story writing, essay writing, debates, *rangoli*
3. Organize trips and camps involving members and their children
4. Recognize Kannada conversant children and academic achievements
5. Organize Kannada literature and Bhavageethe clubs
6. Organize and maintain a Kannada book library for member's utilization
7. Organize community and charitable work
8. Organize fundraisers to help the association and the community.

Article XII AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

The bylaws of the association may be amended, altered, or repealed by a majority of all the members voting at the annual meeting, provided the procedures mentioned in Article VIII of the constitution "Amendments to the Constitution" is followed.

Constitution Committee

Vishwatheja Tharuvesanchi
Ganapathi Lakshminarayan
Savitha Ravishankar
Supriya Desai

Board of 2003

Prasad Kashyap
Rajeev Thalla
Sudha Srikantaswamy
Veena Rao
Raman Khadri
Rishi Acharya
Raju Kirivase
Sindhu Ravishankar

Ratified on 2003

Constitution Amendment Committee 2009

Prasad Kashyap
Vishwatheja Tharuvesanchi
Ganapathi Lakshminarayan
Ravi Ravishankar

Ratified on Dec 5th 2009