

# **CONSTITUTION**

Of the

## **TAMIL SANGAM MICHIGAN**

(Founded in 1975)

Revised as of Nov 17<sup>th</sup> 2007  
(Pursuant to constitution changes approved General Body on Nov 17<sup>th</sup> 2007)

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

- 1.1 The name of the organization shall be TAMIL SANGAM, MICHIGAN hereinafter referred to as “Sangam.”

## **ARTICLE II: OFFICE**

- 2.1 The location of the Sangam’s office shall be decided by the Executive Committee (referred to as EC hereinafter).

## **ARTICLE III: OBJECTIVE (Updated with Amendment XI)**

- 3.1 The Sangam shall be a non-profit and non-political organization.
- 3.2 The Sangam shall provide a common meeting ground for its members.
- 3.3 The Sangam shall promote and participate in the exchange of cultural activities with other ethno-cultural groups and organizations in the area, and to be an official liaison body between such groups, organizations, and government departments.
- 3.4 The Sangam shall promote activities for the advancement in Tamil Language, Literature, and Arts – especially by forming a Tamil Library, teaching Tamil Language, promoting Tamil literary discussions and South Indian music, dance and drama.
- 3.5 The Sangam shall invite and honor distinguished persons in Tamil culture.
- 3.6 The Sangam shall encourage humanitarian activities with specific emphasis on Tamil speaking populations.

Each year, the EC of the Sangam shall make monetary contributions to non-religious and non-political charitable causes, the total amount of which shall not be less than 5% of the previous year-end balance of the Sangam’s General Account. This paragraph of article 3.6 shall be inoperative in the event of the previous year’s General Account balance being \$3,000 or less (sub-article added per Amendment XI).

**ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**  
**(Updated with Amendments III, VII, VIII, XII)**

The following categories of members shall be recognized:

- 4.1 **Life Member:** Life membership on payment of one-time dues of \$400.00, with the right to vote and hold office for member, if single, and for member and spouse, if married. A Life member will automatically acquire membership for spouse on marriage. Life members as of Nov 17<sup>th</sup> 2007 are grand fathered.
- 4.2 **Annual Family Member:** Family membership on payment of annual dues of \$30.00 with right to vote and hold office for member and spouse.
- 4.3 **Annual Single Member:** Single membership on payment of annual dues of \$30.00, with right to vote and hold office for member.
- 4.4 **Annual Student Member:** Student membership on payment of annual dues of \$30.00 with right to vote and hold office for member, if single and for member and spouse, if married. Member shall be a registered full-time student in any Michigan or Ontario College or University.
- 4.5 **Honorary Member:** Honorary membership will be granted to distinguished persons, with the approval of the Executive Committee. Honorary member shall no right to vote or hold office.
- 4.6 If the status of any member should change, after enrolling and paying the dues for the year, the category of membership shall change the following year with corresponding change in dues, if any.
- 4.7 A single member, on change of marital status, can elect to become a family member on paying the difference in dues, if any.
- 4.8 Membership ceases, if dues are not paid within the period prescribed by the Executive Committee.
- 4.9 All membership applications shall be subjected to the approval of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have the power to revoke any membership, if deemed necessary.
- 4.10 Annual membership in the Sangam is for a period of one year from Jan. 1 of the year to Dec. 31 of the year for which dues are paid, regardless of when in that year it is paid.

**ARTICLE V: OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**  
**(Updated with Amendments IV, VI, IX)**

**5.1 A Board of Trustees** composing of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Trustee 1, Trustee 2, Immediate past president of Executive Committee, Current president of Executive Committee will have ultimately responsibility for compliance of Sangam's activities with the mission, goals and bylaws. The members of the board of trustees will have a 2-year term, with a limit of no more than 6 years in office either continuous or intermittent. The high level roles of the board of trustees include, but not limited to:

- Develop Sangam's Mission and areas of focus and growth
- Develop long term cultural, financial and liaison goals
- Establish policies and procedures associated to Sangam's activities
- To retain legal counsel and CPA to annually audit Sangam's financial records
- Avoid self-serving policies and conflict of interest
- Provide oversight on annual budget and financial matters of the Sangam
- Appoint ad hoc committees to work on topics such as constitution & bylaws, finance & audit, elections.

**5. 2** The day-to-day activities of the Sangam shall be conducted by duly elected office bearers called the Executive Committee, subject to the provisions under the election procedures. The Executive Committee will continue on a one-year term. The high level roles of the executive committee include, but not limited to:

- Responsible for the day-to-day operations, program planning and execution
- Membership enrolment and renewals, maintain database of membership
- Develop program calendar and budget for the year
- Conduct, manage and administer all recurring events
- Coordinate activities and general policies with Board of Trustees
- Manage ongoing communication with Sangam members
- Support the activities and programs of Youth Committee
- Develop member participation in Sangam's programs
- Create partnership with community's cultural resources

The following office bearers for the Executive Committee shall be elected:

**5.3 President** – to guide and lead the EC and to act as an arbiter in case of disagreements. The President shall exercise the voting rights in the EC only to break a tie.

**5.4 Vice-President** – to assume responsibilities in the absence of the President.

**5.5 Secretary** – to coordinate the activities of the Sangam, including assigning responsibilities to other EC members, contacting the members regarding activities, conducting elections, scheduling activities and all the day-to-day operations of the Sangam.

**5.6 Joint Secretary** – in the absence of the Secretary, the Joint Secretary shall be in charge, the Joint Secretary shall assist the Secretary in the management of the affairs of the Sangam.

**5.7 Treasurer** – be responsible for the collection of all dues, fees and other revenue coming to the Sangam.

Be the custodian and maintain all books of accounts and all accounting records of the Sangam.

Prepare and submit a financial statement as required by the EC or the General Body and a Treasurer's report made available to Auditing Committee 30 calendar days prior to the annual General Body meeting.

**5.8 Web Manager** – to manage the functionality and information updates to Tamil Sangam's official website. Responsible for the configuration of email capabilities and assisting the President with ongoing communication needs, managing membership information updates to Sangam's official database.

**5.9 Kadhambam Editor** – will be in charge of rendering periodic Sangam's newsletter either in electronic or printed format. Will be responsible for soliciting articles from sangam members, developing the format, proof reading and compiling an information rich newsletter for the Sangam.

**5.10 Committee Members** – five committee members to represent the wishes of the members from the following geographic areas: Metropolitan Detroit – East, West, North, South, and Non-metropolitan Detroit area in Michigan and Ontario (changed by Amendment IV), to act as capillaries in propagating the activities of the Sangam and to help the Secretary in the Sangam activities.

**5.11** All decisions of the EC shall be made by a simple majority. For EC meetings, two-thirds of Committee Members shall constitute the quorum. If two-thirds is a fraction, the nearest lower number shall form the quorum.

**5.12 Youth Committee** – The youth committee will be led by a Youth Committee coordinator who will be an integral part of the EC. The youth committee composition will mirror the make up of the EC. The youth committee activities needs to be aligned with and sponsored by the EC. The activities of the youth committee are intended to provide leadership experience for Sangam's youth and to build future leaders who can carry the mission of Tamil Sangam.

**5.13** In the event that a duly elected member of the EC is unable to complete the elected term of the office, the EC shall appoint a replacement for the remaining term of the committee. The appointed member shall be accorded all privileges and responsibilities of the EC membership.

**5.14** The tenure of the EC will be for one year, starting on Jan. 1 and ending on Dec. 31 of the year for which the committee is elected.

A General Body meeting can be called by the EC at any time.

**ARTICLE VI: GENERAL BODY  
(Updated with Amendments I and II)**

6.1 **General Body:** Shall mean the dues paying members on roll at the time the meeting is called for, or action is taken. The General Body meeting shall be called by the EC and meet at least once a year to conduct election of the EC. The calendar year shall be the accounting period for the Sangam.

A General Body meeting can be called by any member any time, provided the request for such a meeting is signed by at least one-thirds the number of members (to the nearest whole number). Such intention to have a General Body meeting should be intimated to the EC in writing at least 16 calendar days in advance, together with the reasons thereof. 50% shall be the quorum for General Body meetings. All General Body meetings shall be convened with a minimum notice of 10 days. Any decision shall be a simple majority of the General Body present.

**AMENDMENT I: QUORUM FOR GENERAL BODY MEETINGS**

‘Every member, husband, and wife individually in case of family members, shall be entitled to represent his/her interests through a proxy in any General Body meeting of the Sangam. A proxy note shall be mailed to all members along with the notification for General Body meetings. A member unable to attend a General Body meeting may either convey her/his wishes in writing through the proxy note or can delegate full authority to any one of the EC members of the Sangam to act on his/her behalf. Any action by the member having the proxy authority shall be binding as if the member who has conveyed such authority is present. All proxies shall be counted for quorum.’

**AMENDMENT II: Proxy Method for Constitutional Amendments in General Body Meetings**

“Any proposed constitutional amendment which comes to the floor for voting shall be printed on a card for distribution among all members. Each eligible member present at the meeting shall receive a copy of the proposed amendment. Each member shall indicate his/her approval or disapproval of the proposed amendment by checking the appropriate box provided therein, initialing his/her signature and returning the copy to the Secretary the same day. In case a member is unable to attend a General Body Meeting, the member is entitled to indicate his/her approval or disapproval of the proposed amendment through a proxy as explained in Amendment I.

**ARTICLE VII: ELECTIONS**  
**(Updated with Amendments V and X)**

7.1 Elections for EC shall be conducted once every year in or around the month of November (changed per Amendment X). Such elections shall be conducted by the General Body with 50% quorum. Nominations shall be invited by the Secretary, designating closing dates. The nominations shall be scrutinized and presented to the General Body by the Secretary.

In case a General Body meeting cannot materialize at the first attempt for want of quorum, the EC, under the direction of the President, Secretary, and the Treasurer shall conduct elections by mail ballot and inform the results to the General Body. The results shall be certified by a simple majority of the EC.

7.2 Auditing Committee – a committee of three members shall be elected for the purpose of auditing the Sangam’s financial activities for the current year. The Committee shall submit an audit report within thirty calendar days of the Treasurer’s annual report, to the President who shall cause the report to be circulated to the General Body in the full and complete form.

7.3 The EC shall appoint a Nominations and Election and sub-committee, consisting of three members of the Sangam, who shall receive nominations for all ten positions and conduct elections according to Article VII. No member of the EC shall be appointed as a member of the Nominations and Elections sub-committee (per changes by Amendment V).

**ARTICLE VIII: ACCOUNTING**

8.1 Banking: a. The Bank A/C shall be in the name of the Sangam as “Tamil Sangam, Michigan”  
b. All payments and withdrawals shall be by check (signed by two office-bearers, as authorized)

8.2 Signing Officers: The President, Secretary, and/or Treasurer shall be and hereby jointly authorized to sign, accept, draw, and make all or any bills of exchange, notes, checks, and orders for payment of money. All checks shall bear the signature of any two of the above authorized office bearers.

8.3 Auditor: The accounts of the Sangam shall be annually audited by a Committee of three, elected at the time of elections.

The Sangam shall function as a non-profit organization. No efforts shall be made to consciously accumulate large sums of money. Activities shall be designed such that members get full benefits of their membership.

Dues shall be used in providing members privileges and activities. Dues shall be accumulated only for the activities of the year and not for long range causes of indeterminate nature.

All out of the ordinary schedule of activities shall be handled on an individual basis and in a self-sufficient manner without recourse to the general funds earmarked for normal activities.

## ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 The Constitution, with the exception of the spirit of the fundamental objectives, may be amended.
- 9.2 Any amendment to the Constitution shall be proposed and signed by at least 5 members and shall be submitted to the EC in writing at least 15 days prior to the General Body meeting.
- 9.3 Amendments shall be made by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present at the General Body meeting, called specifically for the purpose as provided under item 9.2 above.

## ARTICLE X: DISSOLUTION

- 10.1 **Motion to Consider Dissolution:** A petition to consider dissolution of the Sangam should be submitted in writing by at least two-thirds of the members in good standing of the Sangam to the Secretary. The Secretary must circulate such a petition to all the active members of the Sangam within thirty calendar days of the receipt of the petition. A motion for dissolution will require passing on affirmative vote of three quarters of the active members of the Sangam in a General Body meeting.
- 10.2 **Dissolution:** If the motion to dissolve the Sangam is accepted, the EC shall remain in office until dissolution is completed. The EC shall cause all debts of the Sangam to be discharged to ensure compliance with all requirements of the laws. Any remaining assets of the Sangam shall be liquidated and the amount be donated to a non-profit charitable organization selected by the EC.

## ARTICLE XI: INDEMNIFICATION OF OFFICERS

- 11.1 Any person made party to any action, suit or proceeding by reason of the fact that he/she is or was an EC member of the Sangam shall be indemnified by the Sangam against the reasonable expenses, including attorney's fees actually and necessarily incurred in connection with the defense of such action, suit or proceeding. Any person party to such suit, action or proceeding shall further be indemnified by the Sangam for any judgments or liabilities resulting therefrom. This indemnification does not cover any criminal act committed by the member of the EC.