

BYLAWS OF GUJARATI SAMAJ OF GREATER TALLAHASSEE, INC.

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Article I - Name and Address

The name of the organization shall be THE GUJARATI SAMAJ OF GREATER TALLAHASSEE, INC., hereinafter referred to as "THE SAMAJ".

The official address of THE SAMAJ is:
GUJARATI SAMAJ, Inc.
P. O. Box 16023
Tallahassee, Florida 32317

Physical Address

Gujarati Samaj of Greater Tallahassee
9100 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, Florida 32311

Website Address: <http://www.mysamaj.org>

Article II - Purpose

The SAMAJ shall operate exclusively as a cultural, religious, charitable and educational non-profit organization:

- To maintain, enhance, understand, and appreciate Gujarati culture and language.
- To preserve Gujarati heritage by celebrating various Gujarati holidays.
- To educate children and youth about Gujarati custom, arts, and dances.
- To encourage friendship and fellowship among members with religious, entertainment and sporting events.

- To participate, coordinate, and/or co-sponsor cultural, religious, educational, charitable and social activities with other organizations or groups.

Article III - Membership

General Member:

- Any person 21 years of age or above of Indian Origin and or practicing Hindu religion who subscribes to the purpose of THE SAMAJ and wishes to further its cause together with his immediate family shall be eligible for membership of THE SAMAJ upon paying the annual membership fees.
- The General Member will have one individual vote for the husband and one vote for the wife. This Membership shall be considered as a single entity for purposes of payment of dues and mailing of notices, newsletters, etc.
- All members shall be entitled to the same rights and privileges.
- Members who have not paid THE SAMAJ dues within the prescribed time limit shall not be entitled to: voting privileges; the right to election, the Executive Committee, or any other committee chair; the right of the receipt of THE SAMAJ publication or notices.
- Duration of all membership is one (1) year, which can be renewed every year by paying dues on time. Each member may volunteer in at least one Samaj Committee.
- All rights and privileges of membership in THE SAMAJ shall be suspended in the event that a member does not pay any SAMAJ fees, dues, assessments, or other charges after thirty (30) days of their due date. Such membership rights and privileges shall be restored upon full payment thereof.
- Membership in THE SAMAJ shall terminate upon the death of the member or the receipt of the written termination notice of membership by the member. In the event of such termination, neither the former member nor heirs nor devices shall have any right, title, or interest in THE SAMAJ or its assets.
- A member may be expelled from THE SAMAJ only upon action taken by the Executive Committee. Such action must be initiated by the Executive Committee by filing of charges and supporting evidence. By accepting membership in THE SAMAJ, each member agrees to waive and release any and all rights and claims for damages against THE SAMAJ, its officers, its agents, Trustees and its members as a result of any SAMAJ sponsored activities and operations.
- The Executive Committee, at its discretion, may determine from time to time the amount of dues for membership classes as are reasonable and necessary to meet the expenses of the SAMAJ. Such dues shall remain effective until changed or altered by the Executive Committee. The due date of such payments shall be designated by the Executive Committee.
- Non-member may participate in Samaj activities on an event basis by paying the charges as established by the Executive Committee.

Founding Member:

- Founding Members shall be the ones, who had contributed \$1,000.00 (one thousand dollars) or more to THE SAMAJ before 31st December, 2008. After January 1, 2009, the Founding Member shall be required to pay \$10,000.00 (ten thousand dollars). One such contribution shall entitle the husband and the wife to become the Founding Members. The children of Founding Members upon attaining age 21 shall automatically become Founding Members subject to a contribution of \$ 2,500.00 (twenty five hundred dollars). Founding Members are responsible for the payment of the annual fees to the same extent as the General Members.

Associate Member:

- Any person less than 21 years of age of Indian Origin and or practicing Hindu religion who subscribes to the purpose of THE SAMAJ and wishes to further its cause together shall be eligible for Associate membership of THE SAMAJ upon paying the annual membership fees. The membership fees will be decided by the Executive Committee from time to time.

Article IV – Trustees

- Any Founding Member shall be eligible to become the Trustee of THE SAMAJ. The Trustees shall be elected by the Founding Members. The term of the Trustees shall be for two years. The Founding Members shall elect to a maximum of 15 Trustees in odd numbers only. In the event of elected replacement of a Trustee, the term of the new elected Trustee shall be for the remaining term of the displaced Trustee.
- The Trustees shall be the custodian of the Real and Personal property of THE SAMAJ.
- Trustees may be removed by a majority vote of the present Trustees for unexcused absence at two consecutive meetings for Trustees and failure to perform their assigned responsibilities.
- The Trustees shall look after the welfare of Gujarati Samaj and its members and emphasize and encourage Hindu religion and its philosophy and culture.
- The Trustees may be elected to act as Executive Committee members or The Trustees may appoint additional Executive Committee members by a Trustees vote only.

- The Trustees by majority votes shall have the final authority in any or all issues relating to THE SAMAJ or The Executive Committee.

Article V - Meetings

- Meeting for prayer may be held once a week.
- The annual meeting of Founding Members shall take place prior to the annual General body meeting. The annual meeting of Founding Members shall take place between the last week of December and the last week of February. The election of Trustees shall be concluded in this meeting every two years or as and when required.
- The annual meeting of the General Members shall take place between the last week of December and the last week of February. The election of Executive Committee shall be done in this meeting every two years or as and when required.
- Special meetings of THE SAMAJ members may be called by the President at his/her discretion, or by the resolution of the Executive Committee, or by a written request to the Secretary from 25% or more of THE SAMAJ members in good standing.
- At least 10 days advance written notice of Special Meetings shall be provided by the Secretary to all members, setting forth the place, date, and hour of the meeting, and in the case of a special meeting, the purpose thereof.
- A quorum of **1/4** of the voting members is required at the membership meetings for the transaction of any business. A quorum of Founding Members is not required at the annual meeting to conduct any business.
- Robert's Rules of Order, as revised, for parliamentary procedures shall apply in the conduct of all SAMAJ meetings.
- The annual meeting of Founding Members shall take place prior to the annual General body meeting.

Article VI - Executive Committee

- The Executive Committee of THE SAMAJ shall consist of a maximum of 15 (fifteen) elected and/or Trustees appointed members and in odd numbers only.

- The first duty of any Executive Committee member shall be to fully participate and perform the duties as and when required. Non-satisfactory performance of any of the elected Executive member can be subject to removal of that committee member from the Executive Committee by the majority vote of the rest of the Executive Committee member.
- The Executive Committee shall then elect a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer.
- The term of the elected members of the Executive Committee shall be for 2(two) years.
- The Executive Committee shall execute all operations and shall establish the policies of THE SAMAJ.
- The Executive Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancy of the Executive Member and/or sub-committee member that may occur during the unexpired period of the term.
- The Executive Committee shall guide and coordinate with the Youth Committee and other Committees.
- The Executive Committee shall ensure that all Samaj business is done in accordance with Bylaws of the Samaj.

Duties of the Officers:

The President:

- Shall be the chief executive officer of THE SAMAJ.
- Shall, from time to time, report to the members, to the Trustees, and to the Executive Committee all matters within his/her knowledge which the interests of THE SAMAJ may require to be brought to their attention.
- Shall preside over all meetings of the Executive Committee.
- Shall sign and execute, in the name of THE SAMAJ, all contracts or other instruments authorized by the Executive Committee, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated or permitted by the Executive Committee or by these Bylaws to some other officer or the agent of THE SAMAJ.
- Shall exercise the powers and perform all the duties of the President's office in the absence of any Executive Member.

The Secretary:

- Shall send notices of meetings to all concerned, by mail, facsimile, internet, or in newsletter.
- Shall keep the minutes of meetings.
- Shall maintain papers and records of THE SAMAJ as the Executive Committee may direct, which shall be made available for inspection by any member of the Executive Committee.
- May use the electronic media such as the internet for disseminating information to the members and keeping the members informed on the activities of THE SAMAJ.

The Treasurer:

- Shall receive all funds, including dues, fees, charges, and other assessments and shall deposit such funds in the name of THE SAMAJ in banks or other depositories.
- Shall disburse funds only as authorized by the Executive Committee, shall keep appropriate records of receipts and expenses, and shall exhibit such records at all reasonable times to any member of the Executive Committee.
- Shall send due notices, receive dues, and maintain a membership roster.
- Shall complete, execute, and file any statements or returns incidental to federal or local taxation.
- Shall prepare and present financial statements at the Executive Committee and General Membership Meetings, or as directed by the Executive Committee. At the end of the fiscal year, the Treasurer shall publish the audited annual report in THE SAMAJ Newsletter.
- Shall keep inventory of all properties of THE SAMAJ.
- Shall facilitate an audit of accounts as prescribed in Article IX.

Article VII - Youth Committee

- The Youth Committee shall represent the youths of THE SAMAJ.
- The Youth Committee shall conduct youth activities consistent with THE SAMAJ objectives, provide support in various SAMAJ activities, and interface with other youth organizations, all with the approval of the Executive Committee.

Article VIII – Sub-Committees

- The Executive Committee may establish as many Sub-Committees as deemed necessary to carry out THE SAMAJ activities. The Executive Committee may alter, revamp or discontinue any Sub-Committee, except for the Youth Committee, and the Audit Committee respectively.
- The Sub-Committees may be one or more of the following on a need basis as determined by the Executive Committee:
 - **Navratri Celebration**
 - **Diwali Celebration**
 - **Sports**
 - **Other celebrations**
 - **Membership/Directory**
 - **Web Operation**
- Each Sub-Committee member shall be a Samaj member in good standing of THE SAMAJ.
- Each Sub-Committee chairperson shall report and coordinate their committee activities with the Executive Committee. Each Sub-Committee chairperson

shall carry out his/her committee duties/activities as per established and approved goals, shall keep records of the sub-committee activities, and shall turn over the documents to the succeeding chairperson or to the Secretary. The Sub-Committee chair person shall seek the committee members from the Samaj showing interest and willingness to serve on the committee.

- In the event the position of the Sub-Committee Chairperson becomes vacant, Executive Committee shall appoint another member to such position.

Spring, Navratri, Diwali, Christmas Sub-Committees:

- Shall arrange programs and activities during THE SAMAJ functions.
- Each Sub-Committee shall coordinate and encourage the learning of dance, music, drama and other cultural and religious activities by THE SAMAJ children, youth and members.
- The Sub-Committee shall encourage cultural participation and interface with other community organizations.

Membership/Directory Sub-Committee:

- The Sub-Committee may publish annual directory, distribution to the members and conduct new membership drive.

Article IX - Finances

- The fiscal year of THE SAMAJ shall be the calendar year ending on December 31.
- The membership year and dues shall start from January 1st each year.
- THE SAMAJ shall have no Capital stock, either authorized or issued.
- THE SAMAJ shall have the right to enter into contracts, including leases, to receive, hold, use, disburse and dispose of all money and property of every name/nature donated, bequeathed, devised, conveyed or transferred to it, and to do and perform any/all acts necessary or incidental in order to carry out its purpose as described in Article II.
- All members of the Executive Committee and Committees are honorary, serving on a voluntary basis without any salaries.
- Members, Executive Committee members, and Officers of THE SAMAJ shall not be personally liable to any extent whatsoever for the obligations of THE SAMAJ.
- The Executive Committee may raise additional funds from members as well as other sources they consider appropriate to meet the objectives of THE SAMAJ.
- The Executive Committee or its officers shall not at any time authorize an expenditure that exceeds the available net assets of THE SAMAJ.
- Donations received for a specific purpose, including any income from the investment of the funds received, shall be used for the same specific purpose.
- THE SAMAJ funds shall be maintained in two types of accounts: Working Capital Account and Long-Term Capital Account. The Working Capital account shall be managed and maintained by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall always maintain a minimum of \$10,000 in the Long Term Capital Account. Any withdrawals from the Long-Term Capital Account shall require approval by the majority of the Executive Committee. The signature of both the

Treasurer and any one of the Executive Committee member shall be required for any withdrawal over \$ 1000.000 from all accounts of THE SAMAJ.

- No funds of THE SAMAJ shall be disbursed nor liability incurred on behalf of THE SAMAJ by any member, committee, officer, or trustee unless and until such disbursement or liability has been previously authorized by the Executive Committee.
- Any bank account or legal document shall have a minimum of two (2) names of the current Executive members of THE SAMAJ.
- Disbursement from various funds shall be made by a check signed by the Treasurer, or any other authorized officer of THE SAMAJ as approved by the Executive Committee.
- For expenses more than \$5000.00 The Executive Committee will have to take the approval from The Trustee Committee.

Article X - Amendments

- Amendments to these Bylaws shall first be approved by the majority joint vote of the Trustees. The Amendments shall become effective on the approval of the majority vote of THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE SAMAJ who are present during the annual meeting of THE SAMAJ.

Article XI - Tax Exemptions

- The said organization is organized exclusively for cultural, religious charitable and educational purposes, within the meaning of Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the corresponding provision of any future United States tax law.
- No substantial part of the activities of THE SAMAJ shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and THE SAMAJ shall not participate in nor intervene in (including the publishing and distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
- Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, THE SAMAJ shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on: (a) by an Organization exempt from the Federal income tax under Section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the corresponding provisions of any future United States tax law; or (b) by an Organization, the contributions of which are deductible under Section 170(C)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the corresponding provisions of any future United States tax laws.

Article XII - Dissolution

- The notice to consider dissolution of THE SAMAJ shall be submitted to all voting eligible members of THE SAMAJ at least six weeks in advance of the date of a meeting of the membership called for the purpose, or the date of the closing of a letter ballot, after a majority resolution of dissolution is approved at the joint meeting of the Executive Committee.

- Dissolution shall require a 3/4-majority vote of the Founding members.
- Upon dissolution of THE SAMAJ, the Executive Committee shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of THE SAMAJ, dispose of all the assets of THE SAMAJ to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable or educational purposes, as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Executive Committee shall determine.

Article XIII Records Retention

The Samaj shall retain records for the period of their immediate or current use, unless longer retention is necessary to comply with legal requirements. Records and documents outlined in this policy include paper, electronic files (including e-mail) records regardless of where the document is stored.

Records retention for Non-Profit Organization	Minimum Best Practice Required
Accounts receivable & Payable ledgers & schedules	7 years
Articles of Incorporation	Permanent
Audits and reports	Permanent
Bank statements, deposit records, cancelled checks	3 years
Contracts, mortgages, notes	7 years
Correspondence	3 years
Correspondence -Legal	Permanent
Deeds, mortgage, bills of sale	Permanent
Insurance records	Permanent
Inventory records	7 years
Tax returns and worksheets	Permanent
Cancelled checks	Permanent
Financial statement, Minutes, By-laws, and charter	Permanent
Tax returns	Permanent