



SRI SATHYA SAI SEVA ORGANISATIONS, INDIA

Framework for use of Media, Social Media and Online Platforms

Background

In today's technology driven and media dominated era, various media platforms (online or others) such as e-media, print media, websites and other social media platforms occupy an important space in lives of almost every human being and has become the source of many information for all. The number of people using these platforms are ever on increase. Additionally, Covid'19 has also opened a new facet whereby various units of organisations at State, District and Samithi are increasingly making use of such platforms to be connected to each other and broadcasting content for use of devotees and members and for undertaking various spiritual activities online.

The core objective of the Organisation, as laid down by Bhagavan and enshrined in the Divine Charter, is to **“Awaken in Man the awareness of the Divinity INHERENT in him”**. Thus, the focus of anything that we do in the organisation should be towards realisation of this objective only.



Keep in view the prestige and honour of Sathya Sai Organisations. Whatever you do, be it good or bad, will reflect on Sathya Sai. To keep up the dignity of Sathya Sai, act in a truthful way.

—SSS Vol 31-41; 20 November 1998, First Overseas Convention of Chairs of Sai Centres Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam

The Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Secretaries of Sathya Sai Organisations from all over the world are here. You are officers of the Sai Army. How can you lead soldiers into the fray when you are not aware of the intricacies of warfare, when you are yourselves inefficient instruments?

— Divine Discourse at the World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Mumbai on May 17, 1968.



Swami has directed the Organisation at various occasions and He has always reminded about the purpose of the Organisation as well as explained how that purpose is to be achieved. *But out of our enthusiasm, we sometimes fail to keep up and abide by the Master's message and let our 'Emotions overtake His definition of Devotion'.* In fact, the message that He delivered during the World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Mumbai on May 17, 1968, in these profound words is very fundamental to operation and functioning of our organisation, *"I know you have the enthusiasm to carry My message among the people of this country and other countries. Let Me remind you that the best and the only successful way in which you can do it is to translate the message into your own lives. Your thoughts, words, and deeds must be saturated with the message. Then they will spread effortlessly and efficiently, and the face of the world will be transformed."*



Recently, it has come to attention that various channels on YouTube and different handles on social media and other online platforms have started operating under the name and banner of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations and its emblem, while also using the name of Swami.

"The Organisations named after Me are not to be used for publicising My Name, or creating a new cult around My worship. ... They must render seva (service) to the helpless, the sick, the distressed, the illiterate and the needy. Their seva (selfless service) should not be exhibitionistic; it must seek no reward, not even gratitude or thanks from the recipients.

— Divine Discourse, Prashanthi Nilayam, 23
February 1968



It has also been learnt that different books or publications on varied subjects are released by various states under the auspices of the Organisation or the Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications

Trust. *Additionally, is also observed, that there is an increased inclination towards coverage of the activities of our organisation by press and media at different levels and showcase this as an achievement.*

Bhagavan has time and again stressed that in His Institutions, the "Medium of Instruction is Discipline, while the First, Second and Third Languages are Love, Service and Sadhana". While it is heartening to note the enthusiasm of members and devotees in spreading the message of Swami and His Glory through all these platforms, it is extremely critical to exercise due caution in this regard, lest we detract or swerve away from the core objectives and principles of the Organisation and Bhagavan's Message and hence, collectively fail in our

spiritual endeavours. It is, therefore, deemed essential that certain guidelines need to be framed and adhered to in order to ensure correct spirit, quality, authenticity and reliability of the content that is being relayed and/or published on any platform accessible by public at large in the name of Bhagavan and Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations and also to preserve the sanctity of His Message and the principles of the Organisation.

Purpose of the framework

1. This framework is issued in order to prevent the misuse of name of Bhagavan and the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations in the domain of media including electronic, print, social media and other online platforms and to ensure that all content on such platforms and the conduct of all involved are in alignment with the spirit and principles of the organisation and essence of Bhagavan's message.
2. This framework is prepared based on Swami's important messages in regard to media and publicity that he has delivered from time to time and the core principle of the Organisation that is founded on His Message:

“The organisation does not strive for proliferation or publicity or propaganda of its work, activities or achievements nor does it indulge in any kind of fanfare or exhibitionism or pomp or show in carrying out any activities as these are alien to the spiritual path.” – The Essence



Do not think of the fame or praise you win; think of the good that people derive. Do not crave for publicity; crave for the joy that shines in the faces of the people whom you help. Seva (selfless service) brings you nearer to Me. The flower that is your heart gets fragrance by means of the seva you do, and so it becomes more acceptable to Me. Love is the essence of that fragrance.

— Bombay, 6 January 1975



Applicability and effectiveness

3. This framework shall apply to the following forms of media and online platforms (hereinafter collectively referred to as 'media platforms') used or to be used by all levels of the organisation including the national or state level and shall come into force from the auspicious day of Guru Poornima, the 5th July 2020:
 - a. Website
 - b. Video sharing platforms such as YouTube and others

- c. Social networking platforms such as Facebook and Instagram and others
 - d. Blogs
 - e. Microblogging platforms such as Twitter
 - f. Wikis
 - g. Electronic Media
 - h. Press
 - i. Any publication in any form
 - j. Any other similar platform by whatever name called.
4. This framework does not apply to publication of translated version of Sanathana Sarathi, as published from Prashanthi Nilayam in regional languages by the State through the books and publications trust, in as much as the content of published version in regional language is restricted to the translation of original publication from Prashanthi Nilayam.



You must insist on the observance of the rules of the Organisation, for, they are laid down out of love, not to tyrannise. They are bunds erected on the river banks in order to direct the flood waters safe to the sea. Guide the devotees, taking it as a divine duty. Stir well the sugar of God in the tasteless water of worldly affairs, and it becomes drinkable. Have faith that it is adoration of Swaami that you are doing, through the work allotted to you; then, it becomes saadhana (spiritual practice) through which you can win Grace.

— Divine Discourse, Brindavan, 8th March 1971



Use of Media Platforms

5. The Media Platforms, as defined in this framework, are not to be used with any intention of publicising the name of Swami or the Organisation or advertising the work that the organisation and its members do. These are to be used purely with the intention of creating awareness and positivity in the society. We must remember, that we are here to transform ourselves and not the world and neither to advertise our work to the world!
6. No levels of organisation except the national and state level shall create and/or maintain any official online platform using the name of the Organisation or the name of Swami, especially “Sri Sathya Sai” and the emblem of the organisation and neither shall they bring out any publications in any form.
7. The state level organisations may, by the prior written permission of the All India President, publish any publication or create and maintain any online platform subject to fulfilment of the requirements and criteria laid down in this framework.

Criteria and Requirements for Online Platforms

8. For the purpose of this framework, the Online Platforms shall mean to include media types as mentioned at point 3(a) to 3(f) above.

9. Any online platform to be created or maintained by the State Level or National Level Organisation must adhere to the following criteria and requirements:



a. The name of the Organisation shall be used correctly as “Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations” followed by the name of the State or India, as the case may be.

“I have not got the slightest intention to utilise the Seva Samithis (Service Organisations) for propagating My Name or canvas homage for My Name. No! I am content only when spiritual endeavours and disciplines to elevate and purify man are progressing everywhere.”

— World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Bombay, 17 May 1968

b. The correct emblem of the organisation normally known as the ‘Sarva Dharma Logo’ with symbols of five major religions shall be used.



c. The platform shall be marked as the official platform of the State or India Organisation, as the case may be, clearly and be visible to visitor or subscriber of the platform. For example, on Facebook Page, the following style may be used:

“Official page of the Organisation”

d. A disclaimer in the following lines shall also be put on the official online platforms:

“This is the official [name of platform] of the organisation. Any other such [name of platform] making use of or portraying the name of the organisation is hereby disclaimed and we expressly state that those are not managed by the organisation and nor does the organisation has any connection with or bearing on them.”

e. The All India President at the national level and the State President at the state level shall ensure that a content monitoring team of not less than 3 people, headed by himself or his designee appointed for the purpose, is constituted with the people who are well versed with the principles of the organisation and Swami’s message. The role of this team would be to conduct a prior review of any content that is published or posted on the online platforms and ensure that they are in sync with the ideology of the organisation and Swami’s message.

10. Additionally, an 'Online Reputation Management' team comprising of at least 3 individuals who are well versed in management of online platforms should be constituted to monitor and improve the online presence of the organisation, both at the national and state level.
11. The ownership of all the online platforms, the content uploaded or published on them and the credentials shall vest in the Organisation represented by the All India President and State President at the National and State Level respectively.
12. The All India President and State President shall ensure that credentials to all the online platforms are safeguarded properly and are not misused by anyone.
13. A periodic record of all contents uploaded on state level online platforms shall be caused to be maintained by the State President and shall be made available to the All India President or his designee for the purpose, as and when required.
14. The All India President, State President and all those concerned in the management and maintenance of all online platforms must keep themselves abreast of cyber regulations while discharging their duties on online platforms.

Criteria and Requirements for Print Media or circulation of electronic media

15. Requirements of point 9(a) and 9(b) mentioned for Online Platforms shall also be applicable for print and electronic media.
16. Additionally the following requirements must be adhered to:
 - a. The All India President and State President must constitute a publication review committee comprising of at least 3 members at national and state level respectively.
 - b. Any publication must be reviewed and confirmed by this



You all know that books are being written by all kinds of people in all manners of style and content, urged by all types of fancy, mostly with an eye on personal profit. But, hereafter, this shall stop: no book shall be published on Sai Literature as suits the fancy of the writer or the publisher. There is a Registered Body named the Shri Sathya Sai Education Foundation. The manuscript has to be submitted to the Foundation, and published through the Foundation in the manner approved by them. For, books transform or deform the faculties of man. Many write books with no relevance or experience, relying solely on their imagination and so, people are left in the wilderness, unable to separate fact from fiction, truth from falsehood.

— Madras, 23 December 1971



committee who shall be authorised to take decision on all publication from the State and National Level, as relevant.

- c. In case of publication from state, after the State Level Review Committee has approved the publication, the soft copy of the manuscript of the publication along with a summary about the publication shall be sent to review committee at the national level for final decision on the approval of the publication.
- d. The publication shall be printed or circulated in any form only after the approval by the review committee at national level.

Engagement with Press

17. Press, for the purpose of this framework would include any magazine, newspaper, or news platform or any other similar channels or avenues.
18. The Organisation, at any level, shall not engage with press for any coverage or advertisement or publicity except when it becomes essential for safeguarding and protecting the sanctity of Bhagavan's name and the name of the Organisation, with prior written permission of the All India President. For the purpose, any content to be released in Press by any level of the Organisation, must be approved by the All India President in writing.
19. Any aspiration for proliferation of activities or publicising Bhagavan's name must be abstained from as it is Bhagavan's own direct instruction at umpteen number



“We do not need any publicity or advertisement. Work silently. *Prachar* (publicity) is not the *Achar* (practice) of Sai Organisation. We should work for the progress of the Organisation through practice and spread the message of love throughout the world.”

— Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan, 18 March 1999

“Sai Organisations have not been set up for propaganda purpose. We do not need any publicity.”

— Discourse of Sixth World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, 21 November 1995

Organisations easily fall into mere publicity and fanfare. The Sathya Sai Seva Organisations should be an example and inspiration for all. Practice alone can deepen your faith and justify the appreciation and affection that the Sathya Sai Seva Organisations have earned.

— Prashaanthi Nilayam, 21 November 1981



of occasions. Bhagavan has said that good work doesn't need any publicity. We are here to transform ourselves, and not to publicise our transformation, which is fundamentally against spirituality and the principles of the Organisation.

20. *If any press wants to voluntarily cover any activity of the organisation, they may do so. However, the organisation or anyone on its behalf shall not indulge in any attempt by whatever means to engage and pursue with the press for any coverage of whatsoever nature.*
21. If case of any voluntary coverage by the press, it must be ensured that the published article or content underscores the message of Bhagavan and selfless service of the sevadals without unduly highlighting any office bearer.

Requirements for content to be published on all media platforms

22. Any content on any media platforms should conform to the principles of the organisation, its philosophy and ideology and must be in sync with the message of Bhagavan.

23. The content shall not parade exhibitionism, advertising or boasting of our activities or aggrandisement in any manner.

24. Due attention should be given to qualitative aspects when presenting or publishing report on any activity where quantification is essential. It should be ensured that attention to quantification does not appear to override the qualitative facets or appear to be boasting of the achievements.

25. Any content that is posted or published shall be aesthetically appealing and must follow the contemporary standards. For the purpose, a team of content creators ranging from 5 to 7 persons should be created or professional help may be sought when required.
26. No content shall be in infringement of any copyright laws.



God will not ask you, when and where did you do service? He will ask, "With what motive did you do it? What was the intention that prompted you?" You may weigh the sevā (selfless service) and boast of its quantity. But God seeks quality, the quality of the heart, the purity of the mind, the sacredness of the motive.

— SSS 15.31: November 19, 1981



27. Stories of personal experiences of an individual, if published in any form, should be in the spirit of singing the glory of our Master and not personal glorification of the individual concerned. All such speakers or writers must be apprised of this in correct spirit. Additionally a disclaimer in the following lines should always be suitably included:

“The views expressed are the views of the individual concerned and do not necessarily represent the views of the Organisation.”

28. As far as contents are concerned, **Swami’s literature and teachings should be encouraged as against the personalised interpretations from individuals.**

29. Every content should be guided by modesty and humility, without any intent to aggrandise in a manner that will portray the Organisation as an NGO or as an attempt to promote it as a brand or trying to compete with any other Organisation.



Be sincere in saadhana; do not attempt to imitate others; let it arise out of your own genuine yearning. You should not also be urged by competitiveness or the desire to show off.

— SSS Vol 10-34; Prashaanthi Nilayam, All-India Conference, 22-11-1970

30. All contents posted or published should be unbiased to any specific religion and must be universal and promote human values in lines with the message of Bhagavan.

You elaborate in your lectures the unique powers of Sai, the incidents that are described as “miracles” in books written on Me by some persons. But, I request you not to attach importance to these. Do not exaggerate their significance; the most significant and important power is, let Me tell you, My prema (love). I may turn the sky into earth, or earth into sky, but that is not the sign of Divine might. It is the prema and the sahana that is effective universally; ever-present, that is the unique sign.

— Divine Discourse at the World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Mumbai on May 17, 1968.

31. Propagation or proliferation of Miracles of Bhagavan should be avoided. We must realise that **He does Miracles for He is God, He is God, not because He does Miracles.** Thus, miracles are very natural to the Sri Sathya Sai Avatar and we should not attempt to substantiate His Avatarhood or convince people by making use of His miracles. We are not here for this purpose. Our purpose is self-transformation alone.



32. If mentioning any quotation from Bhagavan, His name – ‘Sri Sathya Sai’ must be provided along with the quotation. The reference source for the quotation should also be made available.



“This scarf and this badge confer on you the right to declare that Prashanthi Nilayam is your home. Keep that in mind and do not behave in any manner that will tarnish the brightness of that declaration.”

— Divine Discourse, Prashanthi Nilayam, 16 October 1974

33. If any service activity of the Organisation is posted, it must be ensured that the sevadals are wearing the scarf and badge in the pictures or videos accompanying the activity writeup.



34. Posting or publishing of pictures of ladies and gents sevadal working together should be avoided, to the extent possible.

35. In case any speech or contents or comments are inappropriate, it should be ensured that they are immediately deleted permanently.



36. The write-up or narration for the story of any activity should bring out the essence and intent of the activity and its impact on the society or the beneficiary in a modest and humble language. Reference to the office-bearers and including their names should be avoided. Utterances like “inaugural address was delivered by [office bearers’ position]” should not be used. Reference to guest of honour may, however, be included.

“You join the Samithi, you share in its activities, for your own sake; not for the sake of Sathya Sai or the Samithi started in that name. If you feel that you can earn fame or name, or social status, or some other type of gain by entering this Organisation, there is no place for you in it. This is a place for Saadhana, constant, vigilant Saadhana (spiritual striving).”

— Divine Discourse, 22 December 1971



37. Additionally, the following should be borne in mind:

- a. The picture of the video should speak the story of the transformation of the sevadal and the beneficiary through the impact of Love acting on each other. It should not

be mere reporting of the facts or a happening

- b. The focus of the picture should not be on the sevadal but on the beneficiary of the that activity. Therefore, pictures or videos where sevadals are looking into the camera or posing for the purpose of the snapshot



should not be posted.

- c. Pictures or videos of the office bearers of the organisation with government or other dignitaries posing for a snapshot should be avoided.

Social service should not become show-
cial work(!) carried out for publicity or
with the camera in view.

— Divine Discourse, Inauguration of Central
Committee, Mahila Sathsang, Bangalore, 1st February
1970

- d. Images of recognition or appreciation from government should not be posted or published.



Issued on this auspicious day of Guru Poornima, the 5th day of July 2020 by

Nimish Pandya
All India President



You can attempt to lead others only after practising the disciplines to perfection. This is true of all fields of human activity. Ananda (bliss) and prasanthi (supreme peace) have to be acquired first by you and then can be communicated to others.



Teachers in schools have themselves to be examples of what they require the pupils to be. Men in authority who exhort others to follow the paths of love and co-operation have themselves to practise those virtues. The people are now not willing to be led; the leaders have no capacity to lead. Progress is the result of mutual trust between the leaders and the led.



I do not want the impression to gain ground that I desire this name and this form to be publicised. I have not come to set afoot a new cult; I do not want people to be misled on this point.

—Divine Discourse at the World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Mumbai on May 17, 1968

