

**By-laws
of
Saskatoon Sharbojonin Puja Porishod (SSPP)**

Amended January 11, 2020

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Article I-Organization

The name of the organization is “Saskatoon Sharbojonin Puja Porishod”, hereinafter “SSPP”. The structure of the organization is to be non-political, non-profit and charitable with the following objectives:

Section 1: Objectives

1.1 To foster Hindu religious activities reflecting the social and cultural heritage of the Bengali people.

Activities to implement this objective may include but not be limited to:

- a. Celebration of annual festivals of Durga Puja, Saraswati Puja, and Shyama Puja
- b. Observance of Shri Satya Narayan Puja, normally every two months
- c. Observance of Janmashtami (the appearance day of Lord Shree Krishna) annually
- d. Other important religious celebrations of Bengali Hindu community

1.2 To promote Canadian values of multiculturalism and equal respect for all faiths, races and linguistic groups. Activities to implement this objective may include but not be limited to:

- a. Participation in multi-faith events
- b. Participation in Canada Day celebrations incorporating multicultural presentations
- c. Participation in events observing International Day for the elimination of racism and discrimination

1.3 To provide service for community building. Activities to implement this objective may include but not be limited to:

- a. Organizing activities (.e.g., special prayers, organizing meal preparation, arranging transportation to treatment centres), in support of community members facing critical illness
- b. Organizing community drives for food, clothing and other necessities for community-based charities such as the Food Bank
- c. Supporting new immigrants during periods of their settlement and facilitating learning of English language and other assistance necessary for accessing broad-based community services

1.4. To take steps towards building a permanent home in the community for worship, practice of other religious practices, and healthy living activities (meditation, yoga). Activities to implement this objective may include but not be limited to:

- a. Organizing fundraising events to build a capital fund for future temple building
- b. Encouraging members and other supporters to commit regular contributions towards the capital fund

Article II- Membership and Subscription

Section 1: Eligibility

Full membership is eligible to all Hindu individuals of eighteen years (18 years) old or above who resides in Saskatoon and accepts the objectives of the SSPP and agrees to abide by the by-laws of SSPP. Youth Membership is eligible to all Hindu students enrolled in minimum high school and who resides in Saskatoon.

Section 2: Member and Membership Fee

The annual membership fee shall be determined by a majority vote by the Board. The annual membership fee may be set as \$10 CAD (Ten dollars) per member.

Youth membership shall not have any fee and shall not be entitled to vote for electing members of the board of directors.

Honorary membership shall be conferred to a distinguished individual to honour his/her outstanding contributions to the SSPP. Honorary members are not required to pay annual membership fees, and will enjoy the same privilege as the full members excluding the participation rights in the election process. An honorary member can convert to a full member with election participation rights after paying the annual dues. The granting of honorary membership shall be approved by the Board.

Section 3: Life Members

Any active and general member shall be eligible to become a life member of the SSPP subject to acceptance of the terms and conditions set forth in the constitution and upon payment of one-time subscription of an amount \$150.00. This amount can be changed by any AGM decision.

Life members of the SSPP shall be entitled to vote for electing members of the board of directors and shall be entitled to such other privileges as may be provided in this by-laws.

Section 4: Withdrawal from Membership

A member willing to withdraw the membership from the SSPP can do so after submitting a written request to general secretary of the SSPP. No refund will be made for the remainder of the membership fee paid for that year.

Article III- SSPP Executive Board

Section 1: Executive Board Members

The Executive Board members shall be elected by a majority vote of the SSPP full members. The Executive Committee of the SSPP shall constitute of the following positions:

- (1) President
- (2) Vice-President (VP)
- (3) General Secretary
- (4) Secretary-Finance
- (5) Secretary-Cultural Activities
- (6) Secretary-Food
- (7) Secretary-Membership and Fund Raising

When and where needed, other volunteering committees can be formed under the leadership of Board member to facilitate different activities of the SSPP.

Article IV: Duties & Responsibilities

Section 1: President

The President shall:

- (a) Oversee the activities of SSPP as decided by Executive Board/Committee as per the overall suggestions of annual general meetings (AGMs) or special general meetings (SGMs).
- (b) Act as a representative of the SSPP in dealing with public relations.
- (c) Act as a public spokesman for the SSPP.
- (d) Be responsible for maintaining liaison with outsiders, other societies and government, non-government organizations.
- (e) Act as Ex-officio of committees, social functions.
- (f) Ensure that preparations of “Annual SSPP Return” and “Tax Return” are being done properly and on time.
- (g) Assure the security of the SSPP bank account.
- (h) Make sure that the next Executive Committee is elected in due time.
- (i) To keep the SSPP’s seals and official records safe in cooperation with the Secretary-Finance.
- (j) Have the authority to use the seal when required to deal with SSPP business.
- (k) Promote social interaction among members of the SSPP with respect and harmony.

Section 2: Vice-President

The Vice President shall:

- (a) In absence of President, Vice-President will act as President in-charge and take over the responsibilities of president.
- (b) Have the authority to use the seal when acting as “President in absentia” to deal with SSPP business.
- (c) Assist the President in performing his/her duties and/or any other major duties upon request and mutual agreement between the Vice President and the Executive Members.
- (d) Promote social interaction among members of the SSPP.

Section 3: General Secretary

The General Secretary shall:

- (a) Help the President, keep record and maintain meeting minutes.
- (b) Collect annual membership dues with support from Secretary-Membership and Fund Raising and Secretary-Finance.
- (c) Call regular board meetings with permission of the president.
- (d) Prepare annual return for SSPP registration and tax return in cooperation with the Secretary-Finance and tax consultants as required.
- (e) Maintain database of the members.
- (f) Safely keep SSPP database and records.

- (g) Deal with all communications from SSPP with the general members via e-mail/phone, with consensus of Executive Board members.
- (h) Promote social interaction among members of the SSPP.

Section 4: Secretary-Finance

The Secretary-Finance shall:

- (a) Properly keep record of all financial transactions.
- (b) Maintain bank balance record of the SSPP bank accounts.
- (c) Maintain receipts used for SSPP expenses.
- (d) Keep record of funds raised for various events.
- (e) Keep record of the donations or funds raised for any other purposes.
- (f) Distribute funds as necessary during SSPP's functions and celebrations.
- (g) Help general secretary to prepare tax return for SSPP.
- (h) Facilitate quick reimbursement of expenses, if any members, spends money for buying something for SSPP as requested by SSPP.
- (i) Promote social interaction among members of the SSPP.

Section 5: Secretary-Cultural Activities

The Secretary-Cultural Activities shall:

- (a) Organize different social functions and cultural activities upon discussion with the Executive Committee members as per the Annual General Meetings or Special General Meetings.
- (b) Facilitate and coordinate volunteers for cultural activities and social functions. Facilitate, promote and ensure active participation of the general members and their children in performing and organizing (e.g., being Master of Ceremonies with different persons in different slots/programs) cultural activities.
- (c) Ensure that there are a couple (or more) of ritual activities included in the cultural program and during the puja time.
- (d) Ensure that a draft program schedule is released to the participants and to the executive committee in due time so that any errors and omissions could be corrected before sending the final program to the general community. Having said that the cultural secretary could make last minute changes in the program along with accommodating guest participants upon consultation with the President and General Secretary.
- (e) Promote social interaction among members of the SSPP.

Section 6: Secretary-Food

The Secretary-Food shall:

- (a) Make necessary arrangements for food during any SSPP events upon discussion with the executive committee.

- (b) Seek recommendations for food items from Executive Committee members and discuss the proposed food items for each of the meals with the committee for any further suggestions.
- (c) Facilitate engaging community people in arranging and preparing the food.
- (d) Ensure food distribution in justified and timely fashion such as early food distribution for children if deemed necessary, and engage community people in distributing the food.
- (e) Promote social interaction among members of the SSPP.

Section 7: Secretary-Membership and Fund Raising

The Secretary-Membership and Fund Raising shall:

- (a) Coordinate collecting the membership dues and puja donations with the General Secretary and Secretary-Finance.
- (b) Take initiatives for fund raising in accordance with the spirit of SSPP.
- (c) Help General Secretary to prepare a comprehensive list of the members.
- (d) Promote social interaction among members of the SSPP.

Article V- Election

Section 1: Candidate Eligibility

To be eligible as any of the executive board member the candidate should be a good standing full member of SSPP. Again, as noted in membership eligibility in Article-II (Section 1), the member accepts the objectives of the SSPP and agrees to abide by the by-laws of SSPP and willing to swear in to carry out his/her duties towards meeting the objectives of SSPP.

Section 2: Election of the Executive Committee

Election must be held after two years for each position of the Executive Committee. New members will be encouraged to stand for the Executive Committee positions to attain maximum participation of all the members. A member shall not hold the same positions for more than two consecutive terms or be in the Executive Committee for more than two consecutive terms (unless there are no alternative choice).

Section 3: Notice of Election

The members must be notified of the annual general election at least 15 days and not more than 50 days in advance including weekends and holidays. Such notice can be circulated through group email, website of SSPP or through telephone.

Section 4: Method of Election and Voting

The annual general meeting/Executive Board shall form an election committee consisting of two members. A candidate must be nominated by a member for a designated position and the nomination must be endorsed by one more member. Such nomination shall be forwarded to the

election committee. Such notice can be written or through email. The candidate must notify his/her acceptance of the nomination to the election committee. Any member who is standing for a position must be present during the time of election and accept the nomination publicly during the annual general meeting. If there are more candidates for a particular position, there shall be voting for that position. Voting for Executive Committee members shall be confidential and by means of ballot papers. Each regular member shall be entitled to one vote and he/she must be personally present in the election to exercise his/ her vote. Re-election shall be performed in case of a tie. In the absence of fulfillment of any position of Executive Committee except the president, the president shall designate the responsibility to other Executive Board members until such time that Executive Board will find another willing SSPP member for that position.

Article VI- Functioning of the SSPP

Section 1: Meetings

- (a) Regular Executive Board meetings shall be held approximately every two months and on emergency. In general, four to six regular Executive Board meetings are anticipated each year.
- (b) Regular Executive Board meetings can be pre-scheduled or arranged later in a mutually convenient date by the General Secretary with the consent of the President.
- (c) Special Executive Board meetings can be held on written request from members or when special circumstances arise.
- (d) A preparatory general meeting must be held prior to major annual functions such as Durga Puja, Shyama Puja, Saraswati Puja, and social events for proper coordination of the functions. A special general meeting should also be called in case of any broader issues and the meeting should also discuss any potential expenses involved. Such meetings can be held in conjunction with regular Executive Board meetings.
- (e) The Executive Board meetings will make good standing and reasonable plans for executing the events including assigning responsibilities, estimating the expenses, and pre-approve the major expenses upon consultation with Secretary-Finance. This would ensure transparency and free flow of information among board members and confirm general members if necessary.

Section 2: Notice of Meetings

- (a) Pre-scheduled regular meetings need not be notified. It is the responsibility of the committee member to notify the General Secretary if he/she cannot attend the meeting.
- (b) General Secretary shall notify all the committee members about the cancellation of the meeting if it is apparent that there will not be a quorum.
- (c) Notice for special meetings must be provided to the committee members at least one week in advance through telephone.
- (d) The General Secretary shall circulate the meeting agenda to all the Executive Committee members prior to a meeting.

Section 3: Quorum for Meeting

The quorum for a meeting requires the attendance of at least 75% of the Executive Committee members. One of them must be the President or the General Secretary. An attendance sheet must be completed in each meeting to verify the quorum.

Section 4: Minutes of Meeting

Written record of meeting minutes must be kept for each meeting. The General Secretary is responsible for recording and distributing the meeting minutes. The President can record the minutes in the absence of the General Secretary or can delegate another member for this task. The recorded minutes shall be distributed to Executive Committee members and corrected for any omissions or errors within 4 weeks of the meeting date. The final meeting minutes shall be kept in file for records, either electronic or hard copies, and shall be accessible to any member of the SSPP.

Section 5: Handover to the Next Executive Committee

Following the bi-annual election of the Executive Committee, the sitting board members shall ensure that there is smooth transition of SSPP properties, files records, bank accounts etc. to the new executive committee. The transition shall occur within two weeks following the election of the executive committee. The bank account shall be transferred to the authority of the newly elected President and Secretary-Finance. At least two signatory persons from each of the past and present executive committees must be involved in the process, and must be in attendance for any meetings needed.

Section 6: Format of the Regular Executive Board Meetings

- (a) The format of the regular executive board meetings shall be as follows:
- (b) Meetings shall be completed in pre-defined allocated time.
- (c) The president shall call the meeting to order and lead the meeting.
- (d) Review of previous meeting minutes and endorsement.
- (e) Reporting of any particular activities and completion of the duties assigned to the Executive Committee members.
- (f) Discussion of agendas and other walk-in issues.
- (g) Tentative agreement for the next meeting and venue.

Section 7: Essential Activities

The Executive Committee shall organize the following activities:

- (a) At least one annual general meeting
- (b) Bi-annual election of the new Executive Committee
- (c) Celebration of Durga Puja, Shyama Puja and Saraswati Puja, and other events as desired by the membership

Section 8: Other Social/Volunteering Activities

If the resources are available and circumstances allow, the SSPP will organize and/or participate in other activities that promote and enhance community welfare and build the rapport of SSPP with other like-minded organizations. The activities for fund raising may include but limited to social functions.

Section 9: Annual SSPP Registration and Tax Return

- (a) Annual SSPP Registration forms.
- (b) Federal/Provincial tax Return.

Article VII- Member Duties and Rights

Section 1: Member Duties

- (a) Members must act for the overall welfare of the SSPP and maintain harmony, cordially with other members in the SSPP's events and social functions.
- (b) Members must not bring political/personal issues to the SSPP and cause it to be an issue for debate.
- (c) Members must ensure timely payment of annual membership dues and costs for other social functions.
- (d) Members are responsible for actions of his/her and their family members including guests invited by them during any SSPP events or functions.
- (e) SSPP shall not deal with any conflicts between two or more general members.
- (f) If there is any conflict among two or more executive members, that shall be resolved by the majority decision of the executive committee.
- (g) If any general member strongly disagrees with any decision made by the executive committee, s/he should send an email to all executives or raise the issue in a general meeting. It is expected that all the members shall maintain mutual respect to the others. The executive committee is expected to respond to the complaint with due respect with the majority decision of the committee in due time. The matter could be also resolved with mutual discussion between the executive committee and the complaint on a specified date and time. Some other community members could also be invited if requested by the complaint/committee. Everything should be dealt with due respect and with mutual agreements on such cases.

Section 2: Member Rights

- (a) Members have the right to access to information available to the SSPP.
- (b) Members have the right to access or rent other facilities belonging to the SSPP upon payment of required fees.
- (c) Members have right to see/inspect the books and records including minutes of meetings, audit reports and account balances. The general secretary and the president must be notified at least two weeks in advance for such requests. The inspection can be done at the current SSPP address or at a mutually convenient location within Saskatoon city limits.

- (d) Members can request for a meeting of the executive committee for social consultation after written request to the president or the general secretary.
- (e) General members have the right to talk about or disagree with the decisions/actions of the executive committee and could talk to them in person. The executive committee members are expected to listen to any issues raised by the members and should try their best to resolve the concerns as best as possible. However, it is expected that such conversations would happen upon mutual agreement and with due respect to each other. Article VII(g) was meant for strong disagreements and potential serious conflicts between general members and executive members.

Article VIII- General Meeting

The President can call a general meeting every six months in consultation with the general secretary. However, there shall be at least an annual general body meeting every year. The date for the annual general meeting can be combined with election or other functions.

Section 1: Notice

Members must be notified of a general meeting not less than 15 days or more than 50 days in advance. The notice of the general body meeting can be delivered through email or in person. The notice of the general body meeting must clearly state the agenda.

Section 2: Anticipated Activities

- (a) Election of the executive committee members.
- (b) Amendment of any existing by-laws.
- (c) Acceptance/Amendment of the by-laws must be approved by more than 50% of the members present during general body meeting.
- (d) Presentation of annual reports on financial status and review of achievements. The financial statement must be up to a date not more than 1 month before the annual meeting of the members.
- (e) Appointment of reviewer to review the presented financial statement.
- (f) Presentation of new members.

Section 3: Quorum

For general body meeting to be valid, the attendance must exceed 50% of the standing members of the SSPP. Since over the years, it was observed that members cannot attend general meetings for different personal reasons, non-controversial decisions (e.g., unanimously approved by the attendees with no possibilities of opposition by other members) could be made by a general meeting even if quorum is not met. In case of any controversial issues, another general meeting should be called meeting the quorum.

Article IX- Financial Rules and Regulations

Section 1: Sources of Income

The following are the sources of income for the SSPP:

- (a) Annual membership dues.
- (b) Funds left after organizing social functions.
- (c) Donations accepted after approval by executive committee.
- (d) Funds raised through organization of special cultural activities of functions.
- (e) Funds raised through volunteering activities in some charity.
- (f) Upon approval by executive committee, donations could also be accepted from outside of SSPP membership.

Section 2: Use of Funds

With the authority from the Board, an executive member can use the SSPP funds to meet the required costs associated with social functions and events. A portion of fund could also be used for printing meeting minutes, agenda, signature sheets and so on. An authorization must be taken either from the President or the General Secretary. There shall be no borrowing of money from banks and other credit unions without unanimous agreement from the general body meeting.

Section 3: Account Transfer

The president and the Secretary-Finance are in charge of the SSPP accounts. When the new executive committee is elected, the new president and the new Secretary-Finance will be in charge of the account after handing over the account activities and bankbook. Such handing over of the bankbook and account activities shall be done within 10 business days following the election. It is the obligation of the past President and Secretary-Finance to hand over the account to the new committee in a timely manner and with complete information, and it is the obligation of the new President and Secretary-Finance to verify that they have received the account in good order with complete information. At least two signatory persons from each of the past and present executive committees must be in attendance in such meetings.

Section 4: Fiscal Year and Annual Tax Return

The fiscal year for the SSPP shall be beginning of July of a year to end of June for next year. The current president and Secretary-Finance shall ensure that annual federal tax return is filed by end of June for the previous year.

Section 5: Special Functions and Expenditure

The Executive committee shall form expert committees to organize celebration of the special functions and events. The committee shall estimate the cost required for such events. Any surplus shall be deposited to the SSPP bank account and any short fall shall be compensated from the same account. If the SSPP bank account cannot compensate the short falls, the funds shall be raised from the members to make up the difference.

Section 6: The SSPP Bank Account

The funds of the SSPP shall be held in a corporate bank account. The location of the bank where account is held can be changed through a general body meeting.

Article X- Record Keeping and Auditing

Section 1: Record Keeping

- (a) Record of all income must be properly kept.
- (b) For funds raised through membership dues, the general secretary must keep record of membership dues and any unpaid members, and the amount handed over to Secretary-Finance.
- (c) For funds raised through other means, proper written records must be kept.
- (d) All expense receipts must be proper dated with initial of individuals and the purpose for which they were used.
- (e) After each social function, the person in charge of the function shall submit the expense statements and the balance to Secretary-Finance within four weeks of the function date.

Section 2: Annual Tax Return

- (a) The fiscal year for the SSPP shall be beginning of January to end of December.
- (b) The Secretary-Finance shall prepare the financial statement showing clearly sources and amount of income and expenditures.
- (c) The Secretary-Finance shall ensure that all income and expenditure report are in proper order and be compatible with final the bank balance at the end of the fiscal year.

Section 3: Auditing

- (a) For auditing of SSPP activities, the SSPP can hire external auditors or use internal auditors.
- (b) Two members of the SSPP who are not members of the Executive Committee can be appointed as auditors during a general body meeting.
- (c) Any member of the SSPP can participate in the auditing activity after notifying the Secretary-Finance and the appointed auditors.
- (d) The auditors must ensure the completeness of information and correctness of financial statement prepared by the Secretary-Finance before submitting to the general body meeting.
- (e) The financial statement and the report of the auditor or of the reviewer, if required, should be sent to the corporate registry not more than 30 days after the annual meeting at which it was presented.

Section 4: Possession of the SSPP Files

The SSPP records shall be securely placed in an organized manner. Until such time when the SSPP has permanent address, president shall be responsible to keep the SSPP record files involving external transactions with government agencies. The General Secretary shall keep records dealing with database, membership records, annual dues and other general information. The Secretary-

Finance shall be responsible for keeping bank records and other transactions. Besides, all other files shall be managed by President.

It is preferred that accounts, audit report, membership list, and activities of SSPP shall be documented in electronic version (pdf) for every financial year. President, General Secretary, and Secretary-Finance are responsible for this documentation.

Article XI- Interaction with other societies and government organizations

In dealing with other associations or government organizations, the following protocol shall be observed:

- (a) For regular issues, President shall consult with Executive Committee via telephone or email and make the decision.
- (b) For important issues, special meeting of the Executive Committee shall be called.
- (c) The relevant issue must be discussed and agreed to the common standing.
- (d) The president will act as the spokesperson in representing the SSPP to other organizations.

Article XII- Affiliation with political entities

- (a) The SSPP is declared as a non-political organization.
- (b) The SSPP shall not show any political bias or support any political parties of Canada.
- (c) The SSPP shall not be affiliated with any political parties outside Canada.

Article XIII- Resignations

- (a) Any Executive Committee members wishing to resign shall submit a written letter to the President expressing his/her intention with an explanation.
- (b) The president will designate the relevant duty to another Executive Committee member until the substitution is found.
- (c) The president may call a special meeting to find a substitute for the position until the next election. Any substituted Executive Committee member must fulfill the eligibility requirement.
- (d) If the president wishes to resign, he/she can submit the resignations to Executive Committee. The Vice-president shall take over the role of the President until the next election.
- (e) If the Executive Committee member has permanently moved out of Saskatoon or does not attend three consecutive executive committee meetings without providing any notice, the President shall ask the member to resign from his/her position. In the absence of a response from him/her, the next Executive Committee meeting shall decide to terminate his/her position with a two-thirds majority vote.

Article XIV Miscellaneous

Section 1: SSPP Address

Until the SSPP has the permanent address, the official address of the SSPP shall be the residential address of the current President. After each election, the change of address must be forwarded to the appropriate authority

Section 2: Disputes

All disputes arising within “the SSPP” shall be resolved through mutual understanding with the mediation of the executive committee. An executive committee member should refrain him / herself from manipulating any events for his / her benefit.

Section 3: Amending of By-laws

The By-laws of the SSPP shall not be amended except by a Special Resolution of the SSPP. For all purposes of the SSPP, “Special Resolution” shall mean a resolution passed by a three fourths (3/4) majority of regular members that are present in person at the general body meeting for which a notice specifying the intention to propose of resolution as a “Special Resolution” has been duly given. Voting to this effect shall be held by obtaining the endorsement signatures of the members either accepting or rejecting the resolution.