

Constitution of SIGNIS INDIA

1. NAME

1.1. SIGNIS INDIA

2 DEFINITION

2.1 SIGNIS INDIA is the Indian National Chapter of SIGNIS WORLD. SIGNIS INDIA is the National Catholic Association for Social Communication, and is recognized as such by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) to which it is organically linked.

2.2 In this Constitution, Social Communication includes all the fields relating to communication and information such as Journalism Radio, Television, Film, Audio- Visuals, Information Technology, New Media, Graphics, Group Media, Social Media, Folk Arts, Performing Arts, Fine Arts, Media Education, Public Relations, Production and Distribution of Media programmes, Training, Academic Teaching and Research.

3 ADDRESS

The official Address of SIGNIS INDIA is:

SIGNIS INDIA

CBCI Centre,

1, Ashok Place,

New Delhi – 110001

3.1. The address of SIGNIS INDIA for all correspondence is that of its National Secretary- Treasurer.

4. AIMS

4.1. The following are the aims of SIGNIS INDIA.

4.1.1. To promote in India the development of different fields of Social Communication in the service of National unity and progress, inspired by Christ's teaching.

4.1.2. To promote communication policies that represent Christian values, justice and human rights.

4.1.3. To coordinate the activities of its members.

4.1.4. To represent the interests of its members at the National and International levels.

4.1.5. To commission or undertake projects including training programmes, research, production and distribution of audio- visual and multimedia programmes and/or enter into collaboration and co-production with others.

- 4.1.6. To collaborate with the various Offices, Commissions, institutes and centres of the CBCI
- 4.1.7. To foster dialogue with communication professionals on moral, spiritual and professional issues.
- 4.1.8. To be in contact with other organizations/associations pursuing similar aims or are concerned with Social Communication and related issues.
- 4.1.9. To participate in the formation of public opinion based on sound ethical and spiritual values.
- 4.1.10. To *nurture and* encourage Catholic professionals working in academic field or secular Media Organizations.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1. The CBCI is a permanent member of SIGNIS INDIA. As such it is not subject to Article 7 on suspension and termination of membership.
- 5.2. Membership with voting right in SIGNIS INDIA is offered at Regional or National levels. A Region is the geographical area recognized as such by the CBCI.
- 5.2.1 Membership at the Regional Level is open to:
- 5.2.1.1. Catholic lay women and men who are educated or engaged in any field of Social Communication independently, or in a Church related or secular institution within the Region.
- 5.2.1.2. Individual Priests (Religious or Diocesan), Religious Brothers and Sisters engaged in, or have education or expertise in a field of Social Communications.
- 5.2.1.3. Diocesan Commissions and Centres for Social Communication within the Region.
- 5.2.1.4. Religious Communication Institutions within the Region, functioning at local or provincial level.
- 5.2.1.5. Regional Commission and Centre for Social Communications.
- 5.2.1.6. Catholic lay professional communication organizations/institutions.
- 5.2.1.7. Communication Departments of Catholic colleges.
- 5.2.2 Membership at the National Level is open to:
- 5.2.2.1. Catholic Institutions, Organizations and Associations that are set up primarily with the purpose of working in any field of Social Communication at the national level, and are registered as a Society with their own bodies. At least 50% of their activities must have a national character.

6. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

6.1. Application for Regional Membership

6.1.1. The application for Regional membership shall be addressed to the Regional President, at least three months prior to a Regional Assembly, supported by the recommendation of two active Regional Members, and of the Bishop of the place where the applicant is located.

6.1.2 Applications for membership shall be screened by the Regional Secretary/Treasurer and presented to the Regional Assembly which will confer membership through a secret ballot. A simple majority in favour will confer the membership to the applicant. The decision shall be notified to the National Office by the Regional Secretary-Treasurer, with a copy of the membership form duly filled.

6.1.3. An absolute majority of the Active Members should be present while voting to admit new members.

6.1.4. An Active Member is entitled to recommend a maximum of two applications per membership in a year.

6.2. Applications for National Membership

6.2.1. The application for National membership shall be addressed to the National President of SIGNIS INDIA at least three months prior to the National General Assembly, supported by the recommendation of two Active National Members and the Chairman Bishop of CBCI Office for Social Communication.

6.2.2. Application for National membership shall be screened by the National Secretary/Treasurer and presented to the National General Assembly which will confer membership through a secret ballot. A simple majority in favour will confer membership to the applicant.

6.2.3. An absolute majority of the Active Members should be present while voting to admit new members.

6.2.4. An active member is entitled to recommend a maximum of two applications for membership a year.

7. SUSPENSION/TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

7.1. SUSPENSION: ***Membership of a person at the National, Regional level ceases If, a Member:***

7.1.1. With or without leave from the Regional President, does not attend three consecutive Regional Annual Assemblies. Representation by proxy is also considered equivalent to absence for this rule. An Institutional Member may be represented in the Regional Assembly by any member of that Institution.

7.1.2. Does not pay the Annual Membership Fee for three consecutive years.

7.2. Membership at the National level is suspended, if a Member:

7.2.1. With or without leave from the National President does not attend three consecutive National Assemblies; representation by proxy is also considered equivalent to absence for this rule. A National Institutional/Organizational/Association's Member may be represented in the National General Assembly by any member of that body.

7.2.2. Does not pay the Annual Membership Fee for three consecutive years.

7.3. **TERMINATION: After Issuing a clarification letter for a period of three Months** If the person does not respond then the Regional or National Membership maybe terminated by a two-thirds majority of the members present by a secret ballot at the Regional or National General Assembly respectively.

7.4. **AUTOMATIC TERMINATION:** Membership at the Regional or National level is automatically terminated if:

7.4.1. An Active Member is engaged in activities that are contrary to the aims of the Association, or are detrimental to the Association

7.4.2. A suspended Member does not express, within three months, her/his desire to remain a Member after being asked in writing to do so by the Regional Secretary-Treasurer (in the case of a Regional Member) or by the National Secretary-Treasurer (in the case of a National Member).

7.5. One who, for any reason, ceases to be a Member , has no right to the Association's funds , and shall not claim any refund , even partial, of dues paid.

8. AN ACTIVE MEMBER

8.1. An Active Member is one who:

8.1.1. Has no arrears of Membership Fees;

8.1.2. Either attends without fail the Annual Regional Assembly (in the case of a Regional member) or the Annual National General Assembly (in the case of a National member), or

8.1.3. Is absent, with prior information to the Regional President, from three consecutive Regional Assemblies (in the case of a Regional Member) or from two National General Assemblies with prior information to National President (in the case of a National Member), or

8.1.4. Votes through proxy in two consecutive Regional Assemblies (in the case of a Regional Member) or in two National General Assemblies (in the case of a National Member).

9. RIGHTS OF AN ACTIVE MEMBER

9.1. Every Active Member, whether Regional or National, shall have the right to:

- 9.1.1. Receive the official News Bulletin (Wavelength) of the Association;
- 9.1.2. Submit projects for funding (with the recommendation of the local Bishop);
- 9.1.3. Participate in all events of SIGNIS at all levels- Regional, National or International- as per the terms and conditions for the participation in the event.

9.2. Every Active Regional shall have:

9.2.1. A vote at the Regional Assembly

9.2.2. A voice in all other meetings of SIGNIS INDIA, but not a vote, unless she/he is an elected delegate with a vote.

9.3. RIGHT TO TRANSFER : *If an active member is transferred or moves to takes up residence in another SIGNIS India region, he / she has the right to join the new SIGNIS region as an active member with all rights therein. Such request for transfer of membership shall be made in writing to the President of the parent region, who after determining from the Secretary about the active status of the member, shall issue a request in writing to the President of the new region. The President of the new region shall then place this request before the regional assembly and the said member shall then be inducted into the new region as a full-fledged member with voting (rights) and all other rights.*

9.4. Every Active National Member shall have:

9.4.1. A vote at the meetings of the National Members;

9.4.2. A vote at the National General Assembly of SIGNIS INDIA. However, when the number of National Members grows beyond six, the National Members shall elect six representatives with voting rights to attend the National General Assembly.

10. VOTING RIGHTS OF MEMBERS AND PROXY VOTES

10.1. Every Active Member shall have one vote in her/his respective Regional General Assembly. The vote of the National Members shall be subject to Article 9.4.2. Suspended members do not have the right to vote.

10.2. A Member is entitled to exercise his/her voting rights through proxy, provided the proxy is given in writing, through registered email or SMS and is submitted to the Regional/National President/Secretary prior to the commencement of the Regional/National Assembly respectively.

10.3. Only an Active Member can be a proxy.

10.4. An Active Member cannot have more than one proxy vote.

11. ***Regional assembly.***

- 11.1. *The Regional Members of SIGNIS INDIA comprises of all the Active Members within the Region.*
- 11.2. The Regional Assembly shall ordinarily meet once every year.
- 11.3. Voting rights in the Regional Assembly will be in accordance with Articles 9.2.1 and 10.1., 10.2., 10.3., and 10.4.
- 11.4. The quorum for a Regional Assembly shall be the representation personally or through proxy (as per Articles 10.2., 10.3. &10.4) of one-third of the total Active Members. However, the total number of proxy votes cannot be more than one third of the Active Members present.
- 11.5. However, if less than one-third of the total Active Members is present in the Assembly, the President shall call for another Regional Assembly following the conditions stipulated in Article 13.4.1. This Regional Assembly shall validly deliberate and take decisions regardless of the number of delegates present
- 11.6. **Non-Active Members** and non-members may attend the Assemblies with prior approval of the Regional President, but without vote or voice.
12. FUNCTIONS OF THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY.
- 12.1. The Regional Assembly:
- 12.1.1. Decides on the admission, suspension, or termination of Members;
- 12.1.2. Elects the Regional President, Vice-President and Secretary- Treasurer, each for a term of **four** years. These are eligible for re-election for one consecutive term only. ***These Regional Executives shall be resident in their respective regions during their term/s of office. If an Office Bearer transfers / resides in another region / country for a duration that impedes proper discharge of obligations and responsibilities, that Office Bearer shall demit office and the position filled in as per clause 9 of the By Laws.***
- 12.1.3. Elects two members to the three- member screening committee. The term of office of the elected Members shall be **four** years. The two elected Members are eligible for re-election for one consecutive term only. The third member shall be the Regional Secretary-Treasurer; ***The Screening Committee members shall be resident in their respective regions during their term of office. If a Screening Committee member transfers / resides in another region / country for a duration that impedes proper discharge of obligations and responsibilities, that member shall demit office and the position filled in as per clause 9 of the By Laws.***
- 12.1.4. Elects three of its six representatives to the National General Assembly for a term of **four** years as per Article 14.1.3. ***These representatives shall be resident in their respective regions during their term of office. If a representative transfers / resides in another region / country for a duration that impedes proper discharge of obligations and responsibilities, that representative shall demit office and the position filled in as per clause 9 of the By Laws***

~~12.1.5. Approves the recommendation of the Screening Committee. REMOVED~~

12.1.6. Assures the pastoral care to Catholics- both Members and non-Members- involved in any field of Social Communication

13. THE DUTIES OF THE REGIONAL OFFICE BEARERS

13.1. The Regional President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer are the Regional Office Bearers. They shall:

13.1.1. Implement in their Regions the decisions and recommendations of the Regional and the National Assemblies;

13.1.2. Promote membership of the Association, paying particular attention to encouraging lay women and lay men;

13.1.3. Conduct Regional Conferences and Research, confer Regional Awards, organize Seminars and Training Programmes, promote co-production and collaboration, and raise funds.

13.2. The Regional President shall:

13.2.1. Convene and preside over the Regional Assembly;

13.2.2. Represent the Region at the National General Assembly;

13.2.3. Submit reports of the Region to the National General Assembly.

13.3. The Regional Vice-President shall:

13.3.1. Assist the Regional President in all aspects of her/his work, at her/his discretion;

13.3.2. Chair the Regional Assembly in the absence of the Regional President.

13.4. The Regional Secretary-Treasurer shall:

13.4.1. Inform all the Regional Members about the date, venue and agenda of the next Regional Assembly **at least one** months prior to the Assembly.

13.4.2. Keep the Minutes, the official records and accounts;

13.4.3. Collect the Annual Dues, and send to the National Secretary-Treasurer 50% of the amount thus collected.

13.4.4. Present the audited statement of accounts and budget to the Regional Assembly;

13.4.5. Maintain contact and correspondence with the National Office Bearers and the Regional Members;

13.4.6. Screen applications for new membership, present the findings to the Regional Assembly, and notify the National Secretary-Treasurer the decision of the Regional Assembly;

13.4.7. Screen, together with the two elected Screening Committee members, the projects of the Members and present the recommendations of the Committee to the Regional Assembly;

13.4.8. Send to the National Screening Committee the projects approved by the Regional Assembly;

13.4.9. Maintain the correspondence concerning projects;

13.4.10. Verify, with the help of the other Members of the Screening Committee, if the projects funded by SIGNIS are carried out.

14. REPRESENTATION OF THE REGIONS AT THE NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

14.1. The Regions shall be represented at the National General Assembly as follows ;

14.1.1 The Regional President and Secretary-Treasurer, each with one vote.

14.1.2 The Director of the Regional Communication Centre or the Secretary of the regional Commission for Social Communications (where there is no Regional Centre), with one vote, provided the Commission or the Centre is an Active Member;

14.1.3 Three members elected by the Regional Assembly;

14.1.4 These three elected representatives are eligible for re-election for one consecutive term only.

15. THE NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

15.1 The National general Assembly consists of :

15.1.1 The **National Executive**, composed of the President, the Vice-President and the Secretary-Treasurer, each with one vote.

15.1.1.1 The two National screening committee members with one vote each.

15.1.2 National Members or their six elected representatives, each with one vote as per Article 9.3.2;

15.1.3 Six Representatives from every region three of whom are elected as per Article 12.1.4 and three by virtue of their office, as Article 14.1.1 and 14.1.2.,each with one vote;

15.1.4 One representative nominated by CBCI Office for Social Communications with one vote.

15.2 The National General Assembly meets ordinarily every year.

15.3 The quorum for the National General Assembly shall be the representation personally or through proxy (as per Articles 10.2., 10.3., and 10.4) of one third of the total Active Members with vote at the National General Assembly. However, the total number of proxy votes cannot be more than one-third of the Members present with voting right.

15.4 If less than one third of the total Active Members is present at the National Assembly, the President shall call for another National General Assembly following the conditions stipulated in Article 16.3.9. The National General Assembly shall validly deliberate and take decisions regardless of the number of delegates present or represented.

15.5 Regional Members without vote may attend the National Assemblies, with voice. Non-members may attend the National Assembly with prior permission from the President, without voice or vote.

15.6 Extraordinary National General Assembly

15.6.1 The President may call for an Extraordinary National General Assembly upon the request in writing of the absolute majority of the Active Members with voting right in the National General Assembly. They should indicate in writing to the President the points for agenda.

15.6.2 The Secretary /Treasurer shall send notice about the extraordinary National General Assembly as per Article 16.3.9.

15.7 **The National General Assembly**

15.7.1 It is the Supreme Body of the Associations It:

15.7.1.1 Confers, suspends or terminates National Membership;

15.7.2 Acknowledges new Regional Members;

15.7.1.3. Elects the National **Executive**, consisting of the President, Vice President and the Secretary-Treasurer for a term of **four** years. These Office Bearers are eligible for re-election for one consecutive term only for the same office. To be eligible for these offices, the Regional or National Members need not be Regional or National Delegates with voting right at the National level. Any Active Member at the Regional or National level is eligible for these offices; ***These National Office Bearers shall be resident in India during their term/s of office. If an Office Bearer transfers / resides in another country for a duration that impedes proper discharge of obligations and responsibilities, that Office Bearer shall demit office and the position filled in as per clause 9 of the By Laws.***

15.7.1.4. Elects two Regional or National active members to the three Member Screening Committee for a term of **four** years. These Office Bearers are eligible for re-election for one consecutive term only for the same office. To be eligible for this office, the Regional or National Members need not be Regional or National delegates with voting right at the National level. Any Active Member at the Regional or National level is eligible for this office; ***These Screening Committee members shall be resident in India during their term/s of office. If a Office Bearer transfers / resides in another country for a duration that impedes proper discharge of obligations and responsibilities, that member shall demit office and the position filled in as per clause 9 of the By Laws.***

- 15.7.1.5. Accepts the Regional reports and audited statement of accounts;
- 15.7.1.6. Approves the National Secretary-Treasurer's audited statement of Accounts, and the National budget; and appoints the auditor annually
- 15.7.1.7. Lays down guiding principles for the activities of SIGNIS INDIA at the National and Regional levels;
- 15.7.1.8. Approves the amount of the annual Membership Fee, and the percentage to be paid by the Members of the SIGNIS subsidies received for projects
- 15.7.1.9. Makes sure that the Regional bodies function in accordance with the aims as stated in the Constitution of the Association by taking appropriate measures whenever necessary.
- 15.7.1.10. Makes amendments to the Constitution by a two-third majority of total membership with voting right in the National General Assembly. However, the proposed amendment must be sent to all the members three months prior to the National General Assembly. Only an Active Member can make a proposal for an amendment;
- 15.7.1.11. Conducts National Conferences and Research, confers National Awards, promotes co-production and raises funds;
- 15.7.1.12. Helps to establish and promote Regional SIGNIS INDIA
- 15.7.1.13. Has the right to entrust to the National Executive Committee its administrative tasks at its discretion.

16. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL *EXECUTIVE*

16.1. The National President shall:

16.1.1. Convene and preside over the National General Assembly and meetings of the Executive Committee

16.1.2. Officially represents SIGNIS INDIA whenever and wherever required.

16.2. The National Vice-President shall:

16.2.1. Assist the President in all aspects of her/his work, at her/his discretion;

16.2.2. Chair the National General Assembly and the meetings of the Executive Committee in the absence of the President.

16.3. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall:

16.3.1. Collect the annual dues of the National Members;

16.3.2. Collect the fixed percentage on subsidies granted to members for their SIGNIS projects and the percentage of the Regional membership fees;

- 16.3.3. Present the audited statement of accounts and the budget to the National General Assembly;
- 16.3.4. Keep the Minutes and the official records;
- 16.3.5. Maintain contact and correspondence with SIGNIS WORLD, SIGNIS ASIA, the National Members and the Regional Office Bearers;
- 16.3.6. Maintain correspondence concerning projects;
- 16.3.7. Screen the projects together with the two elected Members of the screening committee and, if necessary, with the representative of the CBCI Commission Office for Social Communication as an observer, and present the recommendations to the National General Assembly.
- 16.3.8. Screen applications for membership at the National level and present the findings to the National General Assembly;
- 16.3.9. Send information about the date, venue and agenda to all Members of SIGNIS INDIA three months prior to the next National General Assembly;
- 16.3.10. Be available for special delegation whenever required;
- 16.3.11. See to the regular publication of the Official News Bulletin, Wavelength.
17. **THE SIGNIS INDIA GOVERNING BOARD**
- 17.1. **THE SIGNIS INDIA GOVERNING BOARD** consists of:
- 17.1.1. The National **Executive** (the President, the Vice-President and the Secretary-Treasurer), each with one vote; **The SIGNIS India President will preside over and chair the meetings of SIGNIS India Board and in his / her absence, the Vice-President will do so.**
- 17.1.2. The Regional Presidents each with one vote;
- 17.1.3. One Representative, elected by the National Members, with one vote, for a term of **four** years, re-eligible for a consecutive term.
- 17.1.4. **The Chairman Bishop of the CBCI, Office for Social Communications, as Patron or his nominee, with one vote.**
- 17.1.5. The two national screening committee members with one vote each
- 17.2. The National Executive Committee shall:
- 17.2.1. **Meet at least twice annually; once during the National Assembly and once more in the interim period between two consecutive National Assemblies.**
- 17.2.2. Assist in executing National project such as Publications, including the News Bulletin, Wavelength, Research, National Media Awards, Study Days and Conferences;

17.2.3. Carry out the administrative tasks entrusted to it by the National General Assembly or by the National Office Bearers;

17.2.4. Assist in raising funds towards financial self reliance;

17.2.5. Collate the Regional reports and identify issues to be addressed by the National General Assembly;

17.2.6. Be entitled to be asked that its members to represent SIGNIS INDIA when and where required.

18. MEETING OF NATIONAL MEMBERS

18.1. National members may meet at least annually to:

18.1.1. Elect their representative to the National Executive Committee;

18.1.2. Elect six representatives with voting rights to attend the National General Assembly as per Article 9.3.2.

18.1.3. Share information on their activities to avoid duplication and promote collaboration..

19. VALIDITY OF THE CONSTITUTION

This Constitution was adopted in 2002 for a probationary period of four years. It was ratified and adopted on 21st September 2006 at the extraordinary National General Assembly of SIGNIS INDIA, held at St. Anne's Generalate, Hyderabad. At the Annual National General Assembly of SIGNIS INDIA, held at Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati, during 29th February- 1st March, 2008, some amendments were made and incorporated into the Constitution, as per the norms laid down in the Constitution for such amendments.

BY-LAWS

01. The Regional as well as the National Office Bearers may co-opt the services of experts, who are not Members of SIGNIS INDIA, for their Assemblies. However, these experts will not have a vote.

02. The annual Membership fee is fixed as follows:

i) Individual Member	Rs.250/-
ii) Diocesan Centre or Offices for Social Communication, Religious Centre	Rs.400/-
iii) Regional Centre	Rs.700/-
iv) National Member	Rs.2000/-

These may be reviewed from time to time.

03. Out of the Membership fees collected, the Regional Secretary-Treasurer shall send to the National Secretary-Treasurer the amount specified for the support of the Official News Bulletin of SIGNIS INDIA for all the Active Members of the Region (as per Article 13.4.3.). Of the balance amount, 50% shall be retained for regional expenses, and 50% shall be sent to the National Secretary-Treasurer for national expenses. **Failure of this payment for two consecutive years will make the region “Not in good standing” and lose its voting right at the National assembly.**

04. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall collect Contribution from the project holders 3% of the subsidy received. Of this amount, she/he shall retain 50% for the obligations of the National Association, and ***put the remaining 50% into a separate corpus fund to be created and used exclusively for the purpose of asset creation for SIGNIS India. This practice shall continue for a period of 10 years till 2024 or until Rupees One crore is achieved, whichever is earlier. Thereafter the balance 50% shall be shared equally with the regions.***

05. A project holder (member or non-member) who has not paid 3% of the subsidy received is not eligible to submit further projects till the arrears are cleared. ***In case of a member being transferred, the non-compliance shall be mentioned in the letter of request issued by the President of the parent region and the embargo on submitting further projects shall continue until the provisions are adhered to.***

06. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall pay the membership fees due to SIGNIS WORLD, and meet the cost of representation of SIGNIS INDIA at the Asian or World Assembly.

07. No subsidy of any kind shall be offered by the National Office to voting Members or observers for participation in the National General Assembly or the National Executive Committee meeting.

08. Participation of delegates or Office Bearers in the Regional/ National/ International events may be financially supported if possible, by the respective Regional/ National office.

09. When a vacancy arises in any of the elected positions at the regional or national level due to the inability of the Office Bearer(s) to complete the full four- year term, an election shall be conducted to fill the vacancy for the remaining period. The elected person is subsequently eligible to be elected for two full terms of ***four*** years each.