



SATHYA SAI CENTRES & GROUPS

Module 7

ORIENTATION PROGRAMME FOR SSIO OFFICE BEARERS

Module 7 ~ General Outline

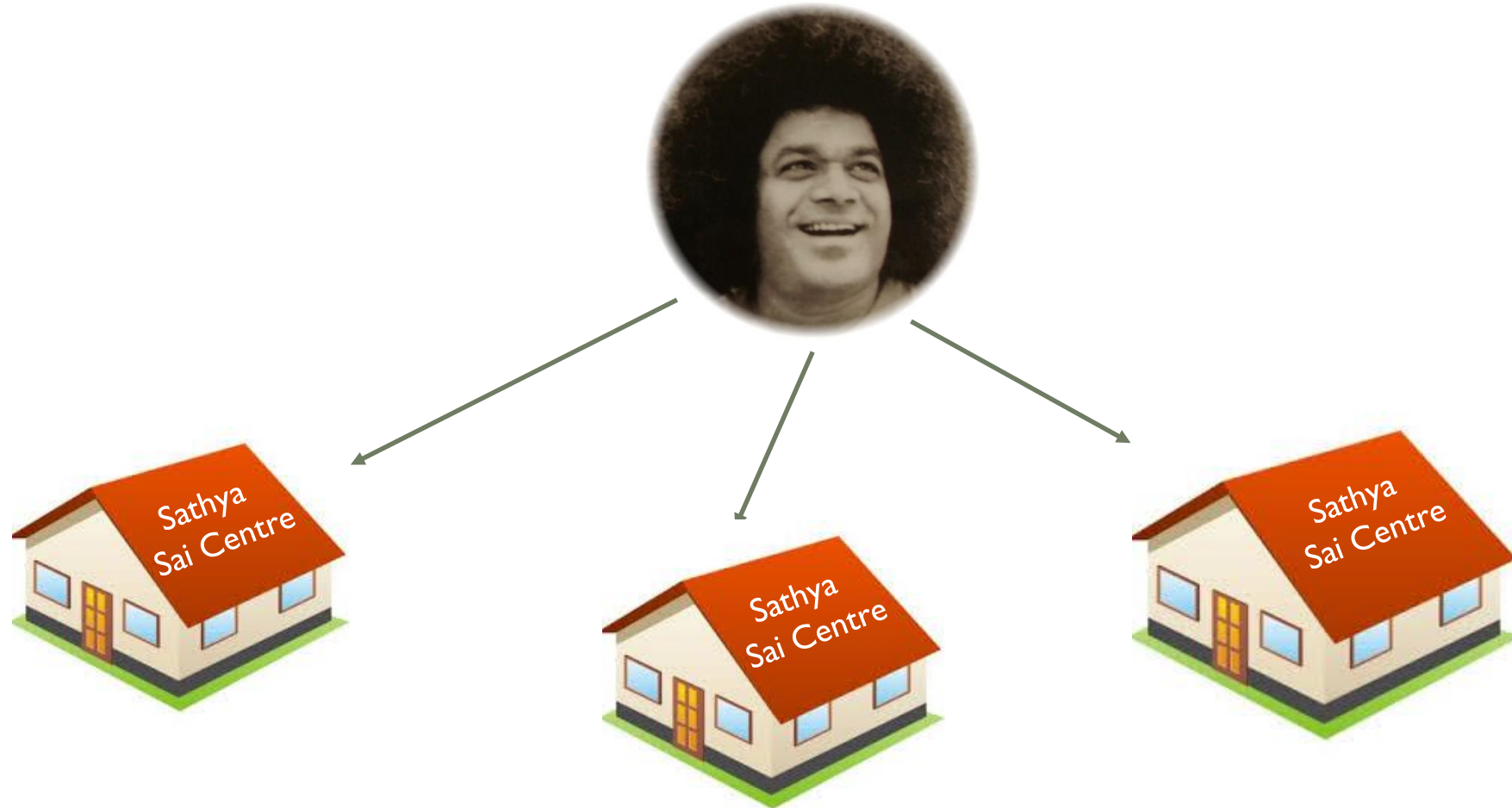
- Purpose of Sathya Sai Centres & Groups
- The Universal Nature of the SSIO
- Devotional Meetings
- Office Bearers' Selection Process
- Planning of Activities & Other Aspects



*Purpose of Sathya Sai
Centres & Groups*



The Purpose of Sathya Sai Centres & Groups



The Purpose of Sathya Sai Centres & Groups

- *Sathya Sai Centres are the principal instrument through which the goals of the SSIO are achieved.*
- *They provide a meeting place for studying, self-reflection, practising the Universal Teachings of Sathya Sai and to provide information about Him and the SSIO to the public.*
- *They are also like sub-stations through which His Love & Teachings are transmitted towards our local communities.*





“I want that every Samithi (Centre) and every unit complementary to it must be bubbling with joy at the work already achieved, and with enthusiasm for the work ahead. Love, respect, tolerance, mutual cooperation, forbearance – these must flow from the hearts of each to all.”

~ *Sathya Sai Baba* (Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 10, pg. 35: 1970)

*The Universal Nature
of the SSIO*



Universality of Outlook

“To understand God’s nature, man has to develop universality of outlook and cultivate the all embracing concept of expansive love.

~ *Sathya Sai Baba*
(Summer Showers 1979)

Universality

- **Universalitas** (*Latin*)
‘common to all’
- The Centre should reflect and demonstrate the universal nature of the SSIO and universality of Sathya Sai teachings both in its programme, as well as in the decoration of the hall where the activities are held.

Universality of Outlook *(continued...)*

- *Sathya Sai Baba came for the spiritual upliftment of all people and Centres should represent this fact. Therefore no predominance should be given to any single religious tradition or belief. Meetings should be conducted acknowledging local cultural sensitivities and regulations.*
- *It is recommended that Sathya Sai Centre meetings are held in a public meeting hall (either rented or owned by Centres), rather than in private homes or places of worship associated with a particular religion, as His Teachings are universal in nature and emphasise the basic oneness of all religions. It is important to recall Sathya Sai Centres are spiritual centres and not religious centres.*
- *The altar should be simple with: the logo with the 5 Human Values (which are at the core of all faiths) in the central part, and a photograph of Sathya Sai, as the founder of this spiritual Organisation that bears His name. A flame is optional.*

Aspects to Consider at Devotional Meetings

- *Discipline must be followed to ensure the programme starts & ends on time.*
- *Men and women are to be seated separately. The wearing or not wearing of shoes during devotional meetings is unimportant and optional.*
- *Multi faith prayers & songs are recommended for inclusion in the programme.*
- *A short spiritual talk may be given at the end of the devotional meeting.*
- *Centres may set up a small area for the sale of Sai literature and other spiritual material, photos, DVDs, etc. following the appropriate laws of the country governing the sale of such items and following the guidelines of the SSIO as well.*

*Office Bearers'
Selection Process*



“Each office bearer must take an oath, from the very depths of their heart, before engaging themselves in the service activities. ‘Swami, bless me with the skill, intelligence and enthusiasm necessary for the task I am dedicating myself to carry out for my own upliftment. Guide me along the correct path; shower on me Your Grace so that I may earn a fair name in this attempt; guard me from temptation and wrong steps.’”

~ *Sathya Sai Baba* (April 1967)





“Do not doubt your destiny: it is to merge in the Highest Wisdom, Power and Love. Do not waver or stay away. At every step, inquire, discriminate, and search for Truth. Be self-reliant, bold and free. Know that you are the instruments of God in a Divine Task and so there is no justification for weakness or vacillation. Be an example to others in humility and devotion. Do not scatter advice, without the authority of practical experience. Love, cooperate, serve. Your Office is a call for spiritual exercise, a reminder of your being under My care and direction.”

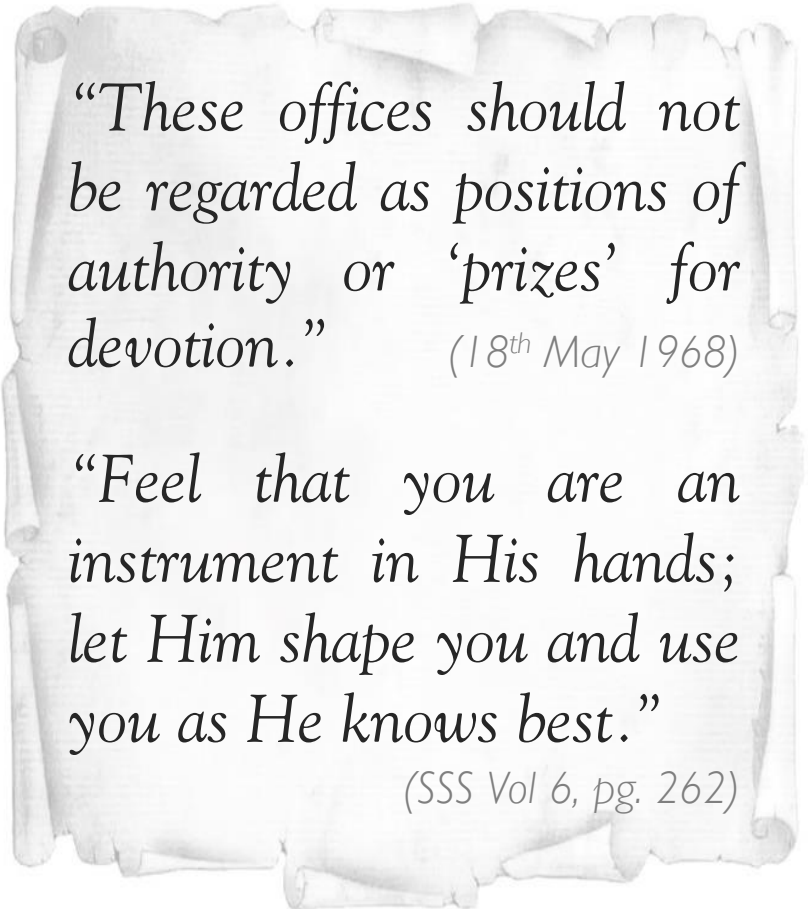
~ Sathya Sai Baba (22nd November 1969)

Office Bearers' Selection Process at Centres & Groups

- *Officers of the Sathya Sai Centre are chosen by selection and not election. Sathya Sai Centres have 5 officers: President, Vice-president and a coordinator for each of the 3 wings.*
- *A Selection Committee is made up including the NCP, the Centre President and Vice-president and senior members. In the case of small Centres and Groups, the NCP may permit selection of officers by active members in an open discussion without the need for a formal Selection Committee.*
- *To ensure fairness and inclusiveness, the Selection Committee will invite nominations of members who have participated actively in the Centre activities in the preceding 9 months and will prepare a proposed list of nominees of the suitable candidates to serve as officers.*

Office Bearers' Selection Process *(continued...)*

- The task of the Selection Committee is to ensure that love and unity are maintained both during and after the selection process.
- Officers will be selected from the final list of nominees by members seeking unanimity. The Selection Committee may permit choices to be submitted in private chits.
- If consensus is not achieved, the matter is submitted for resolution to the NCP, who may consult the Central Coordinator and/or Zone Chair.



“These offices should not be regarded as positions of authority or ‘prizes’ for devotion.” (18th May 1968)

“Feel that you are an instrument in His hands; let Him shape you and use you as He knows best.”

(SSS Vol 6, pg. 262)

*Planning of Activities
& Other Aspects*



Participation in Centre & Group Meetings

- *Members are encouraged to participate in the regular meetings that take place in the Centre such as weekly devotional singing meetings.*
- *It is also important for members to participate regularly in Study Circles as their purpose is to help members deepen their understanding of Sathya Sai's teachings and His spiritual organisation.*
- *Membership meetings are to be held regularly, at least quarterly, to plan and decide the Centre's programmes and activities, and to consider any other relevant matters. Office bearers and all active members are expected to attend. Planning meetings are open to all members.*

Aspects to Consider when Planning Centre Activities

- *It is important to have regard for the culture of your community and country.*
- *All activities and programmes must strictly obey the laws of the land.*
- *The 3 wings (along with the young adults programme and ladies section) ought to lovingly cooperate in all Centre programmes.*

Financial Matters

“Fund collection is as much opposed to this movement as fire is to water. If you yield on this point, spiritual advance will perish.

~ Sathya Sai Baba
(14th May 1971)

- *There are no membership dues or fees for any activities.*
- *All service projects are carefully discussed by members to ensure the projects are within the resources of the Centre.*
- *Members can contribute making anonymous, voluntary financial donations, practising the Ceiling on Desires programme.*
- *Solicitation of public donations or raising funds are strictly opposed to the SSIO guidelines.*

Financial Matters (continued...)

- *As donations may be received and sums spent for the maintenance of the Centre and payment for its activities and projects, proper financial records should be kept and accounting undertaken in accordance with local laws to ensure confidence and transparency in the financial integrity of the Centre.*
- *All expenses and income statements should be available to all active members (without giving names of donors).*
- *A Centre's finance and resources needs should be determined at the quarterly membership meetings. Financial reports should be shared at these meetings either quarterly or annually.*
- *Where necessary a National Trust should be constituted to hold or administer assets or to carry out the activities of the SSIO.*

“Love All, Serve All;
Help Ever, Hurt Never.”

~ Sathya Sai Baba

