

CONSTITUTION
of
COMPARATISTS IN CONVERSATION

—

I. NAME

The name of the Association shall be **Comparatists in Conversation** (hereinafter referred to as “the Association”).

II. REGISTERED OFFICE

The registered office of the Association shall be situated at:

The office may be shifted with due notification.

III. STATUS AND CHARACTER

The Association shall be a non-profit, academic, and professional body based in India devoted to the advancement of comparative literature and interdisciplinary humanities research and is subject to all legal processes of Indian law.

It shall function as a scholarly collective committed to critical inquiry across languages, regions, and traditions.

1. The Collective is founded on the principle that comparison is a form of conversation — across languages, literatures, cultures, texts, disciplines, and traditions.
2. It shall serve as a space for dialogue and intellectual exchange, rather than doctrinal consensus.
3. The Collective affirms:
 - Multilingualism and translation
 - Epistemic plurality
 - Interdisciplinary engagement
 - Ethical and critical scholarship
4. The Collective does not claim ownership over individual intellectual positions; rather, it enables their articulation.

IV. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Association shall pursue the following objectives:

5. To advance the study of comparative literature and literary studies across linguistic, national, and cultural boundaries.
6. To foreground multilingualism, translation, and cross-cultural circulation of texts.
7. To foster dialogue and support research in literature, orature, and allied disciplines.
8. To create a platform for scholars, teachers, translators, writers, and students.
9. To organise conferences, seminars, workshops, and public lectures that foreground comparative inquiry.
10. To undertake publications including journals, books, and digital platforms.
11. To encourage new pedagogical practices in comparative literature and allied fields.
12. To facilitate collaboration between institutions, associations, and collectives of Comparative Literature at national and international levels.
13. To establish and run courses that align with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) by fostering collaboration with industry experts, incorporating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), and developing non-credit value education courses.
14. To uphold intellectual freedom, critical thinking, and ethical scholarship.

V. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Categories

The Association shall consist of:

- **Life Members** — Committed members who provide long-term continuity, guidance, and institutional memory to the Association.
- **Annual Members** — Active participants who contribute to the Association’s activities, events, and governance on a yearly basis. May include independent scholars, artistes, teachers, and professors.
- **Student Members** — Emerging scholars who engage with and benefit from the Association’s academic and mentorship opportunities, including PhD scholars.
- **Institutional Members** — Institutions and associations that collaborate with, support, and participate in the Association’s initiatives (see 5.5 for sub-categories).

- **Honorary Members** — Distinguished scholars or practitioners recognized for their contribution to the field, who lend intellectual prestige and advisory support. Also open to international scholars and advisors from the publishing industry, the humanities at large, social sciences, and other fields of scholarship and research that are relevant to the status, character and aims and objectives of the Association. This is a non-voting, advisory position.

5.2 Eligibility

Membership shall be open to individuals and institutions engaged in or interested in comparative literature and allied fields.

5.3 Admission

Membership shall be granted upon application and approval by the Governing Body.

5.4 Rights

Members shall have the right to:

- Participate in all academic activities
- Vote in General Body meetings (except where specified)
- Contest elections (subject to eligibility)

5.5 Membership Fees

15. The Association shall levy membership fees for different categories of members as determined by the Governing Body and approved by the General Body from time to time. Each category of membership shall have a flat rate, which may be changed with the approval of the General Body.

16. The indicative fee structure shall be as follows:

- **Student Members:** For undergraduates and master's students: Rs. 200 per annum, or Rs. 500 for three years. For PhD scholars: Rs. 500 per annum, or Rs. 1400 for three years (based on availability of proof). Student membership shall be valid for the duration the member remains a student, with a grace period of up to one year for students transitioning between programmes (e.g. MA to PhD) or awaiting viva after thesis submission. After this grace period, the membership must be converted to an annual or life membership to remain in good standing.
- **Annual Members:** Rs. 800 per annum, or Rs. 1500 for three years.
- **Life Members:** Rs. 3000 (one-time payment, valid for ten years).

- **Honorary Members:** No fee.
- **Institutional Members:** Rs. 10,000 (one-time, valid for ten years), with an optional annual contribution of Rs. 3000 for continued collaborative benefits. This category is non-voting and comprises two sub-categories, to which the same fee structure applies:

Academic Institutional Members — University departments, centres, clusters, research groups, or academic associations engaged in comparative literature or allied fields, who partner with the Association for research, pedagogy, and programming.

Registered Association Members — Any registered association, society, or collective, irrespective of field or focus, that wishes to be affiliated with the Association and contribute to its activities.

Institutional Members (both sub-categories) may participate in the Association's academic activities and initiatives but shall not vote in General Body meetings or contest elections. Each Institutional Member shall designate one point of contact for correspondence with the Association.

17. The Governing Body shall have the authority to revise the fee structure periodically, subject to ratification by the General Body.
18. In keeping with the Association's commitment to inclusivity and equitable access, the Governing Body may:
 - Grant fee waivers or concessions in deserving cases
 - Introduce sliding-scale or pay-what-you-can options
 - Offer special rates for participants from under-resourced institutions or regions
19. All fees collected shall be used solely for the purposes of the Association, including but not limited to:
 - Academic events and activities
 - Publications and digital platforms
 - Administrative and operational expenses
20. Membership fees once paid shall ordinarily be non-refundable, except under exceptional circumstances as determined by the Governing Body.

5.6 Termination

Membership may be terminated by:

- Resignation
- Non-payment of fees

- Misconduct, as determined by the Governing Body

VI. GENERAL BODY

6.1 Composition

The General Body shall consist of all members of the Association.

6.2 Powers

The General Body shall:

- Elect the Governing Body
- Approve annual reports and accounts
- Amend the Constitution
- Decide on major policy matters

6.3 Meetings

- The Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held once every year.
- Notice shall be given at least 15–21 days in advance.

Online and Remote Participation

- Meetings of the General Body, Governing Body, or any committee may be conducted wholly or partly through video-conferencing or other electronic means, at the discretion of the body convening the meeting, provided that all participating members can simultaneously hear and be heard (or, where applicable, see and be seen) by all other participants.
- A member participating through electronic means shall be counted towards quorum and shall be entitled to vote on the same basis as a member present in person, subject to the Association's ability to verify the member's identity and record their vote accurately.
- Voting at any meeting conducted wholly or partly online may be conducted by show of hands (visible on video), electronic poll, or such other method as ensures an accurate and verifiable count, as determined by the person chairing the meeting.
- Where a meeting is held in hybrid format (some members present in person, others online), the Association shall take reasonable steps to ensure that members participating remotely have an equal opportunity to participate in discussion and voting as those present in person.

- The Association may, at its discretion, permit voting by members who are unable to attend a meeting (in person or online) through a secure electronic voting mechanism circulated in advance, provided such votes are received before the close of the meeting or such other deadline as is specified in the notice.

6.4 Quorum

21. One-third of the general membership shall constitute the quorum.
22. Two-thirds quorum of the Governing Body shall be present at meetings where amendments and by-laws are ratified.
23. All amendments of laws and by-laws shall require a two-thirds majority of those present to be passed.

VII. GOVERNING BODY

7.1 Composition

The Governing Body shall consist of:

- President — 1 post
- Vice-President(s) — 2 posts
- Secretary — 3 posts
- Treasurer — 2 posts
- Executive Members — 7 posts

7.1.1 The Digital and Publication Team

The Publication Liaison and the Digital Infrastructure and Media & Communications Coordinators (together, “the Digital Team”) shall not be members of the Governing Body and shall have no vote in its proceedings. However:

- A representative of the Publication Liaison shall be present at all meetings of the Governing Body in an advisory capacity, to provide guidance on publication-related matters;
- A representative of the Digital Team shall be present at all meetings of the Governing Body in an advisory capacity, to provide technical and logistical guidance; and
- At least one representative of the Digital Team shall be present at all meetings involving the Executive Members in a technical advisory capacity.

7.2 Term

24. The term shall be two years.

- (a) A person shall hold no more than two consecutive or non-consecutive terms in the same office.

7.3 Powers

The Governing Body shall:

- Administer the affairs of the Association
- Implement its objectives
- Manage finances and resources
- Appoint committees
- Admit members

VIII. OFFICE BEARERS

8.1 President

The President shall:

- Preside over all meetings of the General Body and the Governing Body, and conduct proceedings in accordance with this Constitution.
- Exercise a casting vote in the event of a tie at any meeting of the Governing Body or the General Body.
- Act as signatory for banking purposes.

8.2 Vice-President(s)

The Vice-President(s) shall:

- Assist the President in the discharge of academic and administrative responsibilities.
- Preside over meetings in the President's absence or by the President's delegation.

8.3 Secretary (3 posts)

The Secretary shall:

- Be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Association, including correspondence on its behalf.
- Convene meetings of the Governing Body and the General Body, issue notices, and record and circulate minutes.
- Prepare and circulate the annual report of the Association's activities for presentation to the General Body.
- Work with the Treasurer to assist with the financial audit.

8.4 Treasurer (2 posts)

The Treasurer shall:

- Maintain the accounts of the Association and ensure all receipts and expenditures are properly recorded.
- Maintain the register of members, official records, and the statutory registers required under applicable law, in collaboration with the Governing Body.
- Operate the bank account(s) of the Association jointly with other authorised Office Bearers.
- Prepare and circulate annual financial statements and facilitate the annual audit referred to in this Constitution.

8.5 Executive Members

Executive Members shall:

- Participate in the deliberations and decisions of the Governing Body and contribute to the formulation of policy and planning.
- Undertake specific tasks, projects, or liaison functions as agreed upon with the Governing Body from time to time.
- Serve, where required, on committees constituted under this Constitution.

8.6 Publication Liaison

The Publication Liaison shall:

- Coordinate the Association's publication activities in print and digital formats.
- Serve as the point of contact between the Association, its contributors, and any external publishers, journals, or academic partners.

- Oversee editorial timelines, review coordination where applicable, and report on publication activity to the Governing Body.

8.7 Digital Infrastructure Coordinator(s)

With the assistance of the Governing Body and Coordinating Members, the Digital Infrastructure Coordinator(s) shall:

- Be responsible for the development, maintenance, and security of the Association's website and any other digital platforms or repositories it maintains.
- Maintain domain registration, hosting, and technical infrastructure, and ensure continuity of access across changes in office.
- Coordinate with the Secretary and Publication Liaison to ensure the website accurately reflects the Association's membership, activities, and publications.
- Liaise with the Media and Communications Coordinator(s) to streamline website and social media content.

8.8 Media and Communications Coordinator(s)

With the assistance of the Governing Body and Coordinating Members, the Media and Communications Coordinator(s) shall:

- Plan, manage, and oversee the Association's presence across social media and other public communication channels.
- Prepare and circulate publicity material for the Association's events, calls for papers, and announcements, in coordination with relevant committees.
- Liaise with the Digital Infrastructure Coordinator(s) on the integration of social media and outreach content with the Association's website.

IX. MEETINGS

9.1 Governing Body

- Shall meet at least four times a year.
- Quorum: one-third of members.

9.2 Special Meetings

Special meetings may be convened when required.

X. ELECTIONS

- Elections shall be conducted at the AGM.
- Voting may be conducted online.
- A Returning Officer or Returning Committee may be appointed by the Governing Body.

10.1 Nominating Committee

25. There shall be a Nominating Committee of three (3) members, none of whom shall themselves be candidates for election in that election cycle.
26. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Founding Members, sufficiently in advance of the Annual General Meeting at which elections are to be held.
27. The Nominating Committee shall invite and receive names for the following positions and prepare a shortlist of candidates for each:
 - (a) President — 1 post
 - (b) Vice-President — 2 posts
 - (c) Secretary — 3 posts
 - (d) Treasurer — 2 posts
 - (e) Executive Members — 7 posts
28. The shortlist for each position shall be circulated to the membership along with the notice of the Annual General Meeting.
29. Elections shall be conducted by contest among the shortlisted candidates for each position.

XI. COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

The Association may constitute committees and appoint or invite committee chairs for:

- Conferences and workshops
- Research and collaborations
- Membership and fundraising
- Outreach

XII. ACTIVITIES

The Association shall:

Publications and Research

- Publish journals, books, and edited volumes
- Create and circulate learning materials, reading lists, and pedagogical resources
- Undertake relevant research projects, individually or in collaboration with other institutions
- Support translations of literary and critical texts

Events and Convening

- Organise conferences and seminars
- Organise courses, workshops, and reading groups
- Convene public lectures, panel discussions, and roundtables
- Host scholars and writers

Training

- Offer internships

Collaboration and Outreach

- Undertake academic collaboration with institutions, associations, and collectives, in India and abroad
- Engage with schools, colleges, and the wider public to promote comparative literary study
- Maintain a digital archive or repository of the Association's activities and outputs

XIII. FUNDS AND ACCOUNTS

13.1 Non-Profit Character

The Association is a non-profit body. It shall not be operated for the profit or financial gain of any member, office bearer, or Governing Body member, and no part of its income or funds shall be distributed, directly or indirectly, to any member by way of dividend, profit, or other financial benefit.

13.2 Sources

The Association's funds shall consist solely of:

- Membership fees

- Donations and grants
- Event and registration income

13.3 Use

30. Funds shall be used solely for the objectives of the Association, as set out in Section IV, and for the activities undertaken under Section XII.
31. Any surplus of income over expenditure shall be retained by the Association and applied solely towards its objectives, and shall not be distributed to any member.
32. Reasonable reimbursement of actual expenses incurred by a member, office bearer, or Governing Body member in the course of the Association's work shall not be treated as a distribution of profit for the purposes of this section.

13.4 Bank Operations

Bank accounts shall be operated jointly by authorised office bearers, to be nominated by the Governing Body.

13.5 Audit

Accounts shall be audited annually.

13.6 Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the Association, any funds or assets remaining after satisfaction of its debts and liabilities shall not be distributed among the members, but shall be transferred to another organisation with similar non-profit objectives, as determined by the General Body.

XIV. CODE OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

The Association shall:

- Encourage inclusive and critical dialogue
- Respect all forms of diversity
- Support intellectual autonomy

XV. AMENDMENTS

15.1 General Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a General Body meeting, subject to the quorum and notice requirements set out in Section VI.

15.2 Quick Amendments

33. Notwithstanding Section 15.1, the Governing Body may approve a “Quick Amendment” by a two-thirds majority of the Governing Body present and voting at a duly convened meeting, without referring the matter to the General Body for prior approval.
34. A Quick Amendment shall be restricted to matters that are administrative, logistical, or operational in character, and shall include only:
 - (a) Correction of clerical, typographical, or numbering errors;
 - (b) Updates to the registered office address, contact details, or signatories to bank accounts;
 - (c) Changes to the indicative fee structure under Section 5.5, within limits already approved by the General Body;
 - (d) The creation, renaming, or removal of committees and committee chair positions;
 - (e) Any other matter that the Governing Body unanimously determines to be of a purely administrative or operational nature.
35. A Quick Amendment shall not be used to alter: the name of the Association (Section I); its aims and objectives (Section IV); the categories or rights of membership (Section V); the composition or powers of the Governing Body (Section VII); the office bearers and their duties (Section VIII); the quorum or voting thresholds set out anywhere in this Constitution; or this Section XV itself.
36. Every Quick Amendment shall be recorded in the minutes of the Governing Body meeting at which it is approved and shall be reported to the General Body at its next meeting for information.
37. A Quick Amendment may be proposed by any member of the Governing Body, and shall be included on the agenda circulated for the meeting at which it is to be considered.
38. A Quick Amendment shall take effect immediately upon approval by the Governing Body, unless the resolution approving it specifies a later effective date.

XVI. GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

16.1 Grievance Redressal Officers

39. There shall be two (2) Grievance Redressal Officers (“GROs”), nominated by the Nominating Committee (Section 10.1).
40. The GROs shall not otherwise hold office in the Governing Body during their term, and shall serve a term coterminous with the Governing Body then in office.
41. The GROs shall be persons of standing within the Association, chosen for their ability to handle sensitive matters with fairness, confidentiality, and discretion.

16.2 Grievance Committee

42. Upon receipt of a grievance, the two GROs shall constitute a Grievance Committee for that matter, comprising themselves and such additional co-opted member(s) as they consider necessary.
43. In constituting the Grievance Committee, the GROs shall ensure equitable representation relevant to the grievance at hand, having regard to factors such as the gender, discipline, seniority, or constituency of the parties involved, as appropriate to the matter.
44. A person with a conflict of interest in the matter, including any person named in the grievance, shall not be co-opted onto the Grievance Committee for that matter.

16.3 Scope

The grievance redressal procedure shall apply to any complaint brought by a member of the Association concerning:

45. The conduct of another member, office bearer, or Governing Body member, including allegations of harassment, discrimination, or misconduct;
46. Financial or procedural irregularities in the functioning of the Association;
47. Disputes arising from the interpretation or application of this Constitution; or
48. Any other matter a member reasonably believes warrants the Association’s attention.

16.4 Procedure

49. A member may submit a written complaint to either GRO, in confidence, setting out the nature of the grievance.
50. The GROs shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within seven (7) days and shall constitute the Grievance Committee under 16.2.

51. The Grievance Committee shall conduct such inquiry as is necessary and proportionate to establish the facts, which may include hearing from the complainant, the respondent, and relevant witnesses.
52. The Grievance Committee shall maintain confidentiality throughout the process, disclosing information only to the extent necessary to conduct a fair inquiry.
53. Within a reasonable time, and ordinarily not exceeding forty-five (45) days of receipt of the complaint, the Grievance Committee shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Governing Body.
54. Where the complaint concerns a sitting member of the Governing Body, that member shall recuse themselves from any deliberation or decision on the matter.
55. The Governing Body shall consider the Grievance Committee's report and determine appropriate action, which may include measures under Section 5.6 (Termination) or such other action as it deems fit.
56. The complainant and respondent shall be informed of the outcome, to the extent consistent with confidentiality and fairness to all parties.

16.5 Non-Retaliation

No member shall face adverse consequences from the Association for raising a grievance in good faith.

XVII. DECLARATION

We, the Founding Members of Comparatists in Conversation, agree to the establishment of the Association and adopt this Constitution.

Date: 6th August 2026