

# St Stephen's College

## Proforma for Student Societies

I. **NAME OF THE SOCIETY:** The St Stephen's North-East Society

II. **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY**

The St. Stephen's North-East Society was an embodiment of the College's ideal of unity-in-diversity. Formed on 1st February 2016, it was the newest society among the multifarious societies of the College. For a long time, it was understood that there was a profound need to have a platform to exhibit North-Eastern culture in the College. Furthermore, it was perceived that there was a dearth of acquaintance with topical issues pertaining to North-East India among the college members. These concerns were addressed, to an extent, prior to the society's inception, by an event, "Unicolour", organized in January 2015 under the auspices of the Spic Macay chapter of St. Stephen's. Thereafter, an initiative was taken up to set up a wholly independent society to further the efforts towards addressing the prevalent social and cultural divide between the North-East and the mainland. The founding members of the society included *Heikrujam Prasanjeet, Khamrosang Buhril, Nang Daisy Mowke, Silas Gurung, Phungreikhan Longvah, Kanpatlung, Daiyairi Muivah, Lisathung, Jessica, and Reuben Paulianding*. Whilst still its in formative years *Khamrosang Buhril* served as the President. *Mr. Sanjay Rao Ayde* served as the founding staff advisor to the Society.

Notwithstanding its name, it houses students from all over the country and promotes the sharing and celebration of different cultures from different regions. Indeed, *Khamrosang Buhril*, the founding President, writes that the Society came to be called, "The St. Stephen's North-East Society" and not "North-East Students' Society," nor "The North-East Forum," since it was meant to be more than a society for the North-Eastern students – it was, as *Reuben Naulak*, a former President, writes, "a society about the North-East, but it would also be for all the students."

The first executive council (2016-17) was then led by *Vanessa Beddoe Sawkmie* as the President of the society. With *Phungreikhan Longvah* serving as the Vice President, *Reuben Paulianding Naulak* as Treasurer. *Irene Reya Sinclair, Ishwari Deka, Kethozhavi Liegise, and Allen Leom Lepcha* made up the positions of 4 Secretaries, *Kanpatlung Gangmei* and *Lisathung Patton* served as Assistant Secretaries. With the last position of Unicolour Convener being held by *Daiyairi*

#### IV. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE & TYPES OF ACTIVITY

The objective of having a North- East Society in college is to bridge the gap between the North-East and mainland India by promoting cultural exchange and understanding, fostering inclusivity, and ensuring representation. Through organizing events, festivals, and discussions, the society aims to highlight the rich cultural heritage of Northeast India, encouraging participation from all students to foster unity and mutual respect. It also provides a support network for Northeast Indian students, helping them adjust to the new environment and addressing any challenges they face. By preserving and promoting traditional knowledge and practices, advocating for the rights and needs of Northeast Indian students, and empowering them to take leadership roles, the North East Society works to build a more inclusive, informed, and harmonious college community.

In order to fulfill these objectives, the society has come about with numerous events over the years in order to foster the spirit of inclusivity and harmony.

##### (A) Cultural Objective:

1. The North-East Lunch: A *cultural event*, the North-East Lunch serves as a cultural bridge, allowing students to experience and appreciate the unique and diverse culinary traditions of North-East India. It provides an opportunity for students from different backgrounds to come together, fostering inclusivity and mutual respect. Additionally, the Lunch raises awareness about the ingredients, cooking methods, and dietary customs unique to the Northeast, promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of the region's culture. This helps in breaking down stereotypes and build a more cohesive and harmonious college community.
2. Echoes of the Eight: The event is a vibrant *cultural event* dedicated to promoting the rich tapestry of folk music from the eight North-Eastern states of India. It serves as a platform to showcase the unique and diverse musical traditions of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. Additionally, it encourages the preservation of these folk traditions in the face of modernization, ensuring that the rich cultural identity of Northeast India continues to thrive and be cherished by future generations.
3. Unicolour: The purpose of Unicolour is to celebrate and promote the rich cultural diversity of Northeast India within the college community. As the *annual cultural event*. It aims to foster understanding, inclusivity, and mutual respect by showcasing the unique traditions, art, music, dance, and cuisine of the eight Northeastern states. By providing a platform for cultural exchange, Unicolour helps bridge the gap

between Northeast India and the rest of the country, encouraging students from diverse backgrounds to come together and appreciate the region's heritage. The fest also seeks to preserve and promote traditional knowledge and practices, empowering indigenous communities and ensuring that their cultural contributions are recognized and valued. Through its various activities and performances, Unicolour strives to create a more inclusive and harmonious college environment, where the diversity of India's cultural mosaic is celebrated and cherished.

(B) Academic Objectives:

1. Orchid: Orchid, the annual journal of the Society, is an enterprise undertaken by the Literary Department of the Society. It gives a platform for students to express their voices and their talent; it is headed by the Editor-in-Chief along with their team members. The journal team also features eminent academicians, office-bearers, and personalities hailing from the North-East.
2. The Hills Are Alive: The latest enterprise of the Society is its blog, The Hills are Alive. It was envisioned under the presidentship of Schulu Duo to create a platform in which various articles, informational pieces, book reviews, and opinion pieces from the students of the Society could be shared. It is headed by the Literary Department of the Society. Through this platform, the Society hopes to engage the North-East with a dialogue of many colours with other cultures, as well as allow for self-critique and critical reevaluation of its own ideas, principles, and inherited cultures.

#### **IV. CURRENT STAFF ADVISOR AND OFFICE BEARERS**

The Executive Council and Staff Advisor for the The St. Stephen's North-East Society in the Academic Year 2024-25 are mentioned below. The Council was approved via the e-file 280624JMR03. The same is affixed to this proforma towards the end.

**Staff Advisor:** Dr. Ekta Kundra

#### **Office Bearers:**

##### THIRD-YEAR COUNCIL

*President:* Shazia Hussain, B.A. (H) History

*Vice-President:* Mhanka Bemo Ovung, B.Sc. (H) Chemistry

*General Secretary:* Borme Jordan Warjri, B.A. (H) Economics

*Cultural Head:* Imtisemla Lemtur, B.A. Programme

*Literary Head:* Jaunita Ruchel Dutta, B.A. (H) English

##### SECOND-YEAR COUNCIL:

*Logistics Head:* Paojalun Sitlhou, B.Sc (H) Physics

*Assistant Cultural Heads:* Alex Oinam, B.A. (H) History

Khakchangti Riang, B.Sc. (H) Physics

*Talks and Panel Discussions Coordinators:* Mercy Kimlalhat Gangte, B.A. Programme

Anurag Lakra, B.A. (H) Philosophy

*Publicity Heads:* Aneikele Mero, B.A. (H) History

Lhainunnem Taithul, B.A. (H) History

*Assistant Literary Heads:* Thejakhrieno Iralu, B.A. (H) History

Grace Haokip, BA (H) English

*Treasurer:* Gazala Fida Sabbir, B. A. Programme

## **V. ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE LAST ACADEMIC YEAR, APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024:**

### ODD SEMESTER:

#### *Orientation:*

Date: 29th August 2023.

The Orientation was a well-executed event that aimed at introducing the batch of 2027 to the society, and its various members and activities. Held in the AV room, the introductions were accompanied by an interactive session with quizzes and games.

#### *Freshers:*

Date: 16th September 2023.

To kick off their academic journey, the Society organized a Fresher's Meet was held to welcome the First-Years to the society, producing a lively and engaging atmosphere for all the attending students. The event took place in the Junior Common Room and encompassed various activities from the President's speech, song and dance performances by the first years, followed by ice-breaking sessions and games offering many chances for first interactions.

#### *The North-East Lunch:*

Date: 7th October 2023.

The event, held at the College Mess Halls was held in order to showcase the palette of diverse North-Eastern Cuisine. The lunch was prepared entirely by student volunteers and featured dishes from all the eight states of North-East India. The event, which aimed at exploring the cultural heritage of the region through a unique dining experience, was attended by over 200 students and faculty, who enjoyed the opportunity to explore the regional flavours of the dishes.

#### *Echoes of the Eight:*

Date: 8th November 2023.

The Echoes of the Eight, a collaboration between the St. Stephen's North-East Society and Music Society, proved to be a captivating celebration of music, diversity, and cultural unity. The event, held in the Mess Lawns, showcased an ensemble of indigenous songs from all eight states of North-East India, each sung in the respective languages of their origin. This diverse array of musical performances beautifully represented the different cultures and genres that make up the vibrancy of the North-East region.

## EVEN SEMESTER:

### *Canvas of the Hills:*

Date: 31st January 2024.

The collaboration between The Fine Arts Society and the North-East Society resulted in an event titled "Canvas From The Hills," which aimed to capture and showcase the cultural experiences of the North-East region through the powerful medium of art. The event comprised an engaging art exhibition centred around the theme "Brushstrokes of identity" and a compelling Khasi play titled "U Sier Lapalang" from Meghalaya. The art exhibition was a resounding success, featuring a diverse array of submissions that artfully depicted the unique regions and cultures of the eight Northeastern states. Some selected artworks not only added vibrancy to the event but also earned the honour of being displayed on the pages of the society's annual journal, Orchid.

### *Unicolour:*

Date: 5th and 6th April 2024.

- DAY 1 (5th April 2024):

Unicolour, the flagship event of the St. Stephen's North East Society was a cultural extravaganza celebrating the various cultures of the North-East, with an array of splendid performances. The inaugural day commenced with a captivating play from Nagaland, setting the stage for a day filled with cultural immersion. A thought-provoking panel discussion on "Empowering Indigenous Communities and Preserving Traditional Knowledge" provided a platform for insightful dialogue on the modern challenges and opportunities faced by Indigenous groups. Participants explored strategies for preserving traditional knowledge amidst rapid social and technological changes.

The cultural exhibition continued with a mesmerizing display of Kene (Naga Wrestling) and traditional warrior dances, captivating the audience with their athleticism and cultural significance. The Thangta performance added another dimension to the festivities, showcasing the martial arts heritage of the region. The day concluded with an intercollege debate on the re-implementation of the free movement regime

- DATE 2 (6th April 2024):

The festivities continued on the second day at the SCR lawns, with an array of electrifying performances showcasing the vibrant cultural mosaic of the North East. The audience was treated to captivating plays from Tripura and Mizoram, each offering a glimpse into the unique traditions and storytelling of their respective states. Dynamic dance performances represented various states, highlighting the diversity and richness of North Eastern culture. The Attire Walk provided a platform for participants to showcase traditional costumes, further celebrating the region's heritage. The night culminated in a mesmerizing live

concert featuring local bands and a breathtaking lantern-lighting ceremony, symbolizing hope and unity.

*Talks and Panel Discussions:*

The Talks and Panel Vertical of the society held a number of talks throughout the year. The following are the events that have been conducted:

- “Harnessing the Power of the Road Less Traveled”, a Talk on Entrepreneurship.
- An Interactive session with Hon’ble MP (Lok Sabha) Mr Pradyut Bordoloi.
- Panel Discussion on 'The Mainland Gaze in the Reportage of Violence in Conflicts.
- From ‘Countering’ to ‘Understanding’ Marginal Narratives: Ethno Political Unrest and Religious Influence.
- Reclaiming Narratives: Addressing the underrepresentation/ misrepresentation of Northeast India’s Freedom fighters in History Books.
- Panel Discussion on ‘Vanishing Voice.
- Recentring the Centre: Not accepting definitions of ourselves by others, and understanding the idea of marginalization through a different lens.
- Empowering Indigenous Communities: Preserving Traditional Knowledge and Practices.
- Debate on the motion: “Free Movement Regime should be re-implemented”
- "Potential of Social Service, its multi-faceted attributes and the purview of the music industry in North-East India"
- Navigating Challenges: Conflict Reporting in North East India.

Signed (Dated)

Dr. Ekta Kundra

Staff Advisor

The St. Stephen's North-East Society