

Information Brochure



GORA & SARASWATHI GORA INTERNATIONAL ATHEIST RESEARCH CENTRE (GSGIARC)

Established as a part of Atheist Centre, AP, India,
on Nov.15, 2012

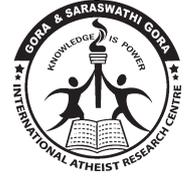
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GORA & SARASWATHI GORA

INTERNATIONAL ATHEIST RESEARCH INSTITUTE

(GSGIARC)



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RULES & REGULATIONS

SHORT TITLE

This document shall be called, "The Rules and Regulations of Gora & Saraswathi Gora International Atheist Research Centre" hereinafter called as "GSGIARC"

ADDRESS

The Registered Office of the Gora & Saraswathi Gora International Atheist Research Centre (GSGIARC) shall be situated in

Atheist Centre, Benz Circle, Vijayawada - 520 010, A.P, India. Ph: +91 866 2472330.

Email: positiveatheist@gmail.com; Web: www.atheistcentre.in

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

1. To promote learning and research on atheism, humanism, rationalism, free-thought, skepticism, critical thinking, scientific temper, peace & non-violence and secular social work
2. To develop leadership and critical thinking skills in the youth
3. To contribute to the development of atheist and humanist movements and discourses globally
4. To train and enhance the abilities and skills to investigate the claims of the paranormal

GSGIARC ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Honorary Chairman : Prof. P.M. BHARGAVA - Former Vice-President, National Knowledge Commission of India; Eminent Scientist and Former Director, CCMB (Centre of Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad)

Vice-Chairman : DR. VIJAYAM - Executive Director, Atheist Centre, Vijayawada and Editor, Atheist Monthly

Director : DR. G. SAMARAM - Medical Practitioner, Former National President, Indian Medical Association, Reputed Author, Vijayawada, India

Deputy Director : Mr. VIKAS GORA - Rotary International Peace Fellow, Expert Paranormal Investigator, Social Development & Humanitarian Assistance, New Delhi, India

Correspondent : Mr. G. NIYANTHA - Director, Gora Science Centre, Vijayawada

Treasurer : Mr. HARI SUBRAMANYAM - Social Worker, Vijayawada, India

BOARD OF MEMBERS (NATIONAL)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Prof. Balamohandas	Former Vice Chancellor, Nagarjuna University, India
Prof. B.A. Parikh	Former Vice-Chancellor, South Gujarat University & President, Satyasodhak Mandal, Gujarat
Dr. K. Veeramani	Dravidar Kazhagam, Tamil Nadu, India
Mr. G. Niyanta	Director, Gora Science Centre, Vijayawada, India
Dr. Dhaneswar Sahoo	President, Orissa Rationalist Association, Odisha, India
Mrs. J. Mythri	Chairperson, Atheist Centre, Vijayawada, India
Mrs. Ch. Vidya	Former Member of Parliament, Vijayawada, India
Dr. G. Maru	Gynecologist, Vijayawada, India
Mr. Ch. Vazeer	Entrepreneur & Industrialist, Vijayawada, India
Ms. P. Jyothi	Advocate, Vijayawada, India
Mrs. Rashmi Samaram	Secretary, Vasavya Mahila Mandali, Vijayawada, India
Mrs. Nau Gora	Secretary, Arthik Samata Mandal, Vijayawada, India
Mr. Narendra Nayak	President, FIRA, Paranormal Investigator & Guru Buster
Mr. G. Lavanam	Chairman, Samskar, Vijayawada, India
Prof. I. Ramasubba Reddy	Neuro-psychiatrist, Chancellor, Prashanti Institute of Medical/Mental Sciences, Vijayawada, India

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Mr. Levi Fragell	Former President, International Humanist and Ethicist Union (IHEU), Oslo, Norway
Ms. Sonja Eggerickx	President, IHEU, Belgium
Mr. Roy Brown	Former President IHEU, Switzerland
Mr. Roar Johnsen	Vice-President, IHEU, Norway
Mr. Jim Herrick	British Humanist, Rationalist writer and Former Editor, The Humanist, London UK
Mr. Thomas W. Flynn	Editor, Free Inquiry, Center for Inquiry, Amherst, NY, USA
Mr. Bill Cooke	Rationalist, New Zealand
Dr. Volker Mueller	Humanist Association, Germany

Prof. S. Hariharan	University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago, West Indies
D.J. Grothe	President, James Randi Educational Foundation, USA
Ms. Marie Castle	Editor, Moral Atheist, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Mr. Rene Hartmann	International League of Non-Religious and Atheists (IBKA), Germany

COURSES TO BE OFFERED BY THE GSGIARC

Three categories of courses are proposed:

1. **Certificate Course**
2. **Foundation Course**
3. **Fellowship Course**

All three categories will be offered by one or a combination of the following:

- **Direct (face-to-face) teaching**
- **Distance learning (including on-line format)**
- **Mixed-mode delivery**

GENERAL INFORMATION

FEES

All the courses are self-financed and a fee will be charged for each course. Fees will be charged according to the period and type of the course. We strongly encourage participants to apply for the scholarships and fellowships in their country or through the universities, colleges, organizations, etc.

LIBRARY

The Centre's library has a large collection of books, magazines, periodicals on atheism, humanism, rationalism, free-thought, skepticism, rural development etc. The library also receives magazines from across the world. It also have collection of paper cuttings on various topics in India.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

All GSGIARC Courses are conducted in English. Course materials will be in English and applicants should have proficiency in English Language.

BASIC CERTIFICATE COURSES

As a part of promoting and reaching the basics of humanism and non-religious concepts to a wider audience, GSGIARC offers an on-campus short term certificate courses at Atheist Centre and online (short term and long term) web-based certificate courses.

ON CAMPUS CERTIFICATE COURSES

The GSGIARC on-campus courses will be organised at Atheist Centre, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. Lasting a period of three-weeks each, the courses aim to provide the students the opportunity to have philosophical, practical and critical thinking orientation, to enhance their learning. The on-campus three-week courses provide students with new knowledge, tools and skills towards critical thinking and free inquiry and to understand atheism, humanism, rationalism as they exist in India.

ONLINE CERTIFICATE COURSES

The online certificate courses will have an instructor who will be the focal point and experts with whom the students will get a chance to interact. A virtual platform will be developed to facilitate group learning; internet resources will be used for the learning.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & APPLICATION PROCEDURE

A maximum of 15 participants will be admitted to the on-campus course. A minimum of Secondary School Leaving Certificate (10th Standard Completion) is a must. Eligible candidates should preferably have experience and interest in working in atheist, humanist, rationalist free-thinking, investigating claims of the paranormal social development and reform in India and/or globally. Such work experience might have been gained in NGO's, inter-governmental organisations, governments or research institutes and universities.

FOUNDATION LEVEL CERTIFICATE COURSES

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The Certificate course is meant for people who have interest and inclination to gain knowledge on atheism, humanism, free-thought, skepticism and rationalism.

1. Applicants should have a Bachelor's Degree from a recognized university as per the guidelines of GSGIARC.
2. Ability to work on computer and familiar with internet
3. Should have atheist, humanist and rationalist views

PRACTICUM REPORT

The candidate is required to submit a report at the end of course, after undertaking an Internship/Field work assignment with GSGIARC. The Internship is unpaid and completely need to be self-financed by the students.

FOUNDATION COURSE 1

Course Title

INTRODUCTION TO ATHEISM, HUMANISM AND RATIONALISM AND THEIR EVOLUTION IN INDIA

Duration : One Year

Module 1 : General Introduction to ancient atheism, humanism and rationalism in India

The learner will be introduced to India as not only a cradle land of religions, but also atheism, humanism and rationalism. History demonstrates that unbelievers were numerous in ancient India, even in the times during which the Upanishads, were compiled. Long before the advent of the Buddha, there were atheists known as *Nasthiks* (no-sayers) or *sangaya* (nihilists or agnostics). Charwakas and Lokayatas, Gautama Buddha and many other social reformers through their actions, urged people to follow alternate path and to strengthen the non-religious stream of life as it harness the spirit of questioning and challenges the blind beliefs.

Samkhya, an early system of rationalistic philosophy, had its roots in pure philosophic speculation concerning *prakruti*, a complex primal substance and *purusha*, a sentient principle that was held to have distributed *prakruti* thus triggering the evolution of the contemporary universe. This process was described without any reference to *Iswara* that is God. Kapila, revered as the Founder of Indian Philosophy (c. 800 BCE), is considered the Founder of *Samkhya* (sometimes termed *Nireswara Samkhya* – “Nireswara” meaning “godless.”). *Samkhya* proceeds from the ideas of *swabhava* (physical reality, or the laws of nature) and *parinama* (an active principle best summarized as “evolution”). The *Samkhya* system was originally atheistic, but over generations theists succeeded in smuggling God into it, presented as a supreme spirit ruling over both *prakruti* and *purusha*.

Module 2: Introduction to atheist, humanist and rationalist movement and reformers.

The participants will be introduced to Indian atheist, humanist and rationalist movement and contribution of Gora, Saraswathi Gora, Periyar, Abraham T. Kovoor, M.N. Roy, B. Premanand, H. Narasimhaiah, to name a few who have brought in atheist social reform aimed at building a society on rational thought, scientific temper and spirit of inquiry. They all fought to alleviate the human suffering from the ignorance promoted by and the ills of religious, caste and other parochial discrimination and oppression. This course gives a historical view of the evolution of atheism, humanism, rationalism in India.

FOUNDATION COURSE 2

Course Title

INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL THINKING AND MIRACLE EXPOSURE

Duration : One Year

Module 1: History and impact of superstitions in India

The participants will be introduced to the superstitious practices in India and how god-men and god-women are fooling the ignorant people. It also would introduce the participants to the impact of superstitious and miracle healing practices on health and well-being of people and society at large.

Module 2 : Science behind the miracle tricks

The participants will be exposed to the scientific principles behind the miracle claims. The theory of science behind the tricks that fool the people will be introduced.

Module 3 : History of Magic & Miracles

The participants will be introduced to the paranormal practices globally and specific to India. They would be introduced to the history of miracles.

Module 4 : Learning and practice of tricks

The students will get opportunity to interact with investigators of the claims of the paranormal and famous magicians and guru busters and learn the tricks.

FOUNDATION COURSE 3

Course Title

INTRODUCTION TO SECULARISM AND FUNDAMENTALISM IN INDIA

Duration : 1 year

Module 1 : Fundamentalism in India

Fundamentalism is often associated with religion. As a matter of fact, it is a very complex phenomenon. Fundamentalism can take different forms in different places.

1. Fundamentalism began by being religious. Threatened by modern scientific discoveries or by liberal cultural and political ideologies, some believers hang on to what they consider the fundamentals of their religion. They may organize themselves to defend their belief. They may be perceived as conservative or revivalist.

2. A particular group of people, gathered together in the name of religion, ethnicity, caste, language, etc. may think that they share the same economic and political interests which they seek to pursue and defend, together. This is more commonly called communalism (at least in south Asia). This may happen when there are wide economic and social disparities in society and a group feels unjustly exploited and/or discriminated against.

3. A communal group may imagine itself as a nation, discovering its historical roots. A very powerful force that can weld such a group together is religion. Such a group may fight for autonomy or independence or seek domination over other groups.

4. Finally, a group with a strong identity looks on other groups, not only as different, but as inimical to their interests. In a religious setting the others can be demonized, when one group thinks that God is on its side. This can lead to defensive or aggressive violence, particularly when it experiences itself as the victim of deprivation, injustice and oppression. Indiscriminate violence against the innocent is called terrorism.

Module 2: Secularism

Secularism is an outcome of the modernisation process in the West. Enlightenment, progress of science and reason were brought to bear on religion. The State and the church were separated. Atheism, materialism and secularism dealt blows on religion reducing its influence in the lives of people at the personal, familial and societal level. In the West organised religion was relegated to the background and to private realm.

Religion as we see has come back with a bang. In India, the terms secular and pseudo-secular are prevalent. The Constitution gives equal respect to all religions. Religion far from confining itself in the private space has come to dominate the public space. Hence, one cannot speak of secularism in the singular but acknowledge multiple secularisms.

The module would look at how secularism has evolved in India and the movements that have been taking place to build secular outlook in India.

ADVANCED LEVEL FELLOWSHIP CERTIFICATE COURSES

DURATION

Two years. Applicants should be willing to spend 5 hours per week for research.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The certificate course is meant for people who have interest and inclination to gain knowledge on atheism, humanism, free-thought, skepticism and rationalism.

(Note: The applicants would have completed the foundation certificate courses or already have the evidence of sufficient knowledge may take up the advanced courses)

1. Applicants should have a Bachelor's degree from a GSGIARC recognized University
2. Ability to work on computer and familiar with internet
3. Should have atheist, humanist and rationalist views

RESEARCH REPORT

There is also an end of course research paper writing component and an opportunity to undertake Internship/Field work assignment with GSGIARC. The internship is unpaid and completely need to be self-financed by the interns.

METHODOLOGY

On-line and periodic interaction with the facilitator. The online fellowship courses will have instructor who will be the focal point and experts with whom you will get a chance to interact.

The material which will be provided for the courses will be through internet.

The thesis should be submitted and must be accepted by GSGIARC at the end of the course.

On acceptance of the thesis Fellowship Certificates will be awarded to the Research Scholar.

FELLOWSHIP COURSE 1

Course Title

PHILOSOPHY OF POSITIVE ATHEISM

The philosophy of Positive Atheism was advocated by Gora in India. Gora founded Atheist Centre and worked to end untouchability in India. He eventually met Mahatma Gandhi and they later worked together toward India's independence, which occurred in 1947.

Positive Atheism lays down the precise atheistic attitude towards several aspects of life. Because positive atheism asserts freedom of the individual, a detailed code of conduct is incompatible with the freedom. Theistic scriptures like the Gita, Bible and Quran did not recognize freedom of the individual.

Thus, real living requires man's active mastery over his world as opposed to passive surrender. Mastery is therefore, anti-theistic or atheistic. Whereas theism stands for man's surrender to his world, atheism is man's mastery over his world.

The safe and stable method to fight inequality and to abolish marginalization, oppression and discrimination is the adoption of atheism. All people are, of course, invariably are atheistic in practice. If they think also atheistically, they not only grow honest but they remove restrictions on initiative, act free, achieve more, and earn comforts. Indeed, all free men live equal, because they belong to the same species. Atheism in thought, word, and deed asserts man's mastery over his world without reservation and thereby establishes equality with honesty in social relations.

Therefore Positive Atheism indicates only the guidelines for the individual to plan his or her own life with full initiative and moral responsibility.

This course is aimed at building understanding on Gora's Positive Atheism.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To learn about the evolution of Gora's atheistic philosophy & practice
2. To gain deeper understanding on Gora's Positive Atheism.

MODULES:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1: History and definition of Positive Atheism | 5: Atheistic Politics |
| 2: Gora Positive Atheism | 6: Atheistic Economics |
| 3: Atheistic Philosophy | 7: Atheistic Technology |
| 4: Atheistic Ethics | |

FELLOWSHIP COURSE 2**Course Title****INVESTIGATING THE CLAIMS OF PARANORMAL & WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY**

The superstitions and blind beliefs are rampant in the society for times immemorial. They were promoted by religions to keep the masses silent and be subservient to the kings, monarchs, religious heads and religious institutions. Superstitions, witchcraft & sorcery are age old practices, but have a direct bearing on the health and well-being and the overall progress of the society. Even in the 21st Century, we are witnessing that there are growing number of god-men/god-women, spiritualist, charlatans, quacks etc., who have been fooling the masses and claiming to posses divine and spiritual powers. Currently there are few people with scientific temper who are challenging the claims. This course is tailored to prepare the participants with the tools, methods and abilities to investigate claims of the paranormal.

OBJECTIVES:

This fellowship course is being conducted through correspondence has been designed for meeting the growing needs of people who have the urge to build scientific temper and keen on investigating the claims of the paranormal in India and globally.

1. To develop ability of critical thinking & scientifically.
2. To acquire a clear understanding on the history and current reality of claims of god-men/god-women, spiritualists etc.
3. To learn practical skills for conducting an investigation

MODULES:

Module 1 : Introduction to critical thinking & importance of investigating the claims of the paranormal

Module 2 : History of superstitions

Module 3 : Impact on children, women and the society

Module 4 : Steps & tools in investigating the claims

Module 5 : Individual research work

***MORE FELLOWSHIP COURSES ARE PROPOSED TO BE OFFERED IN
NEAR FUTURE***

FACULTY

FROM INDIA

Prof. Balamohandas	Former Vice Chancellor, Nagarjuna University, India
Prof. B.A. Parikh	Former Vice-Chancellor, South Gujarat University & President, Satyasodhak Mandal, Gujarat
Dr. K. Veeramani	Chairperson, Dravidar Kazhagam, Tamil Nadu, India
Mr. G. Niyanta	Director, Gora Science Centre, Vijayawada, India
Dr. Dhaneswar Sahoo	President, Orissa Rationalist Association, Odisha, India
Dr. G. Maru	Gynecologist, Vijayawada, India
Ms. P. Jyothi	Advocate, Vijayawada, India
Mr. Narendra Nayak	President, FIRA, Paranormal Investigator & Guru Buster
Mr. G. Lavanam	Chairman, Samskar, Vijayawada, India
Prof. I. Ramasubba Reddy	Neuro-psychiatrist, Chancellor, Prashanti Institute of Medical/Mental Sciences, Vijayawada, India
Mr. Raghavachary	Senior Journalist, Vijayawada, India
Dr. B Keerthi	Vijayawada, India
Mr. Narendra Nayak	President, FIRA, Paranormal Investigator & Guru Buster
Dr. Innaiah	Director- Centre for Inquiry, Hyderabad
Prof. B. D. Desai	Secretary, Satyasodhak Mandal
Dr. RVR Chandrasekhara Rao	Former Vice Chancellor, Open University, Hyderabad
Mr. V Kumaresan	General Secretary, Rationalist's Forum, Tamilnadu

FROM ABROAD

Mr. Levi Fragell	Former President, IHEU, Oslo, Norway
Ms. Sonja Eggerickx	President, IHEU, Belgium
Mr. Roy Brown	Former President IHEU, Switzerland
Mr. Roar Johnsen	Vice-President, IHEU, Norway
Mr. Jim Herrick	British Humanist, Rationalist writer and Former Editor, The Humanist, London UK
Mr. Thomas W. Flynn	Editor, Free Inquiry, Center for Inquiry, Amherst, NY, USA
Mr. Bill Cooke	Rationalist, New Zealand
Dr. Volker Mueller	Humanist Association, Germany
Prof. S. Hariharan	University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago, West Indies
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Mr. Rene Hartmann	International League of Non-Religious and Atheists (IBKA), Germany
Dr. Sam Ayache	Libre Pensee, France
D.J. Grothe	President, James Randi Educational Foundation, USA

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