

The Andhra Pradesh Societies Registration Act, 2001 (Act No. 35 of 2001)

1. Overview and Objective

The Act was passed by the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 2001 to consolidate and update the law governing societies formed in the state for purposes such as art, fine arts, charity, crafts, religion, sport, literature, culture, science, philosophy, political education, or any other public purpose. It replaced the earlier framework based on the central Societies Registration Act, 1860, bringing registration and governance of societies in Andhra Pradesh under a single, modernised statute.

2. Applicability

- Applies to the whole of the State of Andhra Pradesh
- Came into effect from a date notified by the Government in the Andhra Pradesh Gazette
- Covers societies formed for charitable, educational, cultural, scientific, literary, religious, sporting and similar public-purpose objectives

3. Societies Eligible for Registration

- Any group of seven or more persons associated for a literary, scientific, charitable or public-purpose objective may apply for registration as a society
- The proposed name must not be identical or deceptively similar to an existing registered society within the same district
- Names restricted under the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950 cannot be used
- Sensitive words such as "Co-operative," "Reserve Bank," "Union," "State," "Municipal" or "Chartered" require prior government permission before use in a society's name

4. Registration Process

- An application, along with the Memorandum of Association and Bye-laws, is filed with the District Registrar (Registration and Stamps Department) of the district where the society's office is located
- The Memorandum must set out the society's name, objectives, and details (names, addresses, occupations) of the founding members and governing body
- Photographs of Executive Committee members and a prescribed affidavit must accompany the application
- A registration fee is payable at the time of filing

- On satisfaction that all requirements are met, the Registrar issues a Certificate of Registration, giving the society legal identity

5. Management and Administration

- Every society must be managed by a governing body or committee elected in accordance with its bye-laws
- Bye-laws must prescribe qualifications, tenure, and the process for electing or removing committee members
- The society must maintain proper books of account and records of its income, expenditure and assets
- A copy of the bye-laws must be given to every member at the time of admission

6. Ongoing Obligations After Registration

- Filing an annual list of managing committee members with the Registrar
- Holding the Annual General Meeting and filing its minutes with the Registrar within the prescribed period
- Supplying copies of the balance sheet and related financial statements to members
- Displaying the society's name in a conspicuous position outside its office, in legible characters of the locally used language
- Intimating the Registrar of any change in the registered office address; a move outside the district must be reported to the Registrars of both districts
- Recording and reporting any amendment to the Memorandum or Bye-laws to the Registrar for endorsement on the registration certificate

7. Alteration, Amalgamation and Dissolution

- Societies may alter their objectives, amalgamate with another society, or extend/change their operations, subject to approval by members in general meeting and intimation to the Registrar
- A society may be dissolved by a resolution of a specified majority of members, followed by settlement of its assets and liabilities as per the Act and bye-laws
- Upon dissolution, surplus property is generally directed toward similar public-purpose objectives, not distributed among members

8. Regulatory Oversight

- The Registrar General exercises superintendence and control over District Registrars functioning under the Act
- The Registrar has powers to inspect records, call for information, and take action against societies that fail to comply with statutory requirements
- All fees and charges collected under the Act are credited to the Government

9. Penalties for Non-Compliance

The Act provides for penalties where a society or its office-bearers fail to comply with statutory obligations, such as non-filing of annual returns, false statements, or misuse of the society's name and funds. Persistent non-compliance can also affect the society's legal standing and its ability to operate bank accounts or enter into contracts.