



SGM of IEEE Mumbai Section Welfare Association – registered entity of IEEE Bombay Section

Parent of 4 Sections:- Hyderabad, Gujrat, Pune & Madhya Pradesh

Anand Suhas Gharpure (Chair 2023-24, IEEE MSWA [Bombay Section])

AGENDA

- ❖ Call Meeting to Order and Opening Remarks by Chair
- ❖ Update on Suspension of 3 Officers of IEEE Bombay Section (IEEEBS)
- ❖ Impact on Section Activities
- ❖ Discussion and Passing of Resolutions
- ❖ High tea

Opening Remarks by Chair



IEEE Bombay Section and IEEE MSWA

- ❖ In 2012 Global IEEE Inc., an entity of IEEE USA clarified that all the sections in India have to register as an association under local laws
- ❖ IEEE Bombay Section was registered as IEEE Mumbai Section Welfare Association on 28 December 2012 with the Registrar of Societies with byelaws aligned to both IEEE MGA Manual and the local applicable laws.
- ❖ The IEEE MSWA byelaws were approved by IEEE Board of Governors in 2020
- ❖ IEEE MSWA is responsible for ensuring all tax compliance

Update on Suspension of 3 Officers of IEEEBS



Initial Note

- ❖ Email received 26th September stating that SM Sameer, Hitesh Mehta and Aiyappan as Interim Chair, Secretary and Treasurer/AESS Chair respectively, appointed as Interim Officers with effect from 27th September 2023.
- ❖ The stated reason - “Due to various concerns within the IEEE Bombay Section including issues with a recent election and some financial matters, reviews were conducted by the IEEE Election Oversight Committee (EOC), and by the IEEE Audit Committee.”
- ❖ A Nominations and Appointments Committee will be assembled to conduct the election, starting from the Call for nominations.
- ❖ Concluded with “***We sincerely thank you for your volunteer service and dedication to the Section.***”

Follow Up Note – 6 Days Later

- ❖ Email received 2nd October stating that Hitesh Mehta and Aiyappan has been replaced by Shashikant Patil as Secretary & Treasurer with immediate effect.

Appointment of Interim officers for Bombay Section a.gharpure@ieee.org x



Lance Fung <L.Fung@murdoch.edu.au>

Oct 2, 2023, 8:19 PM



to Anand, Christie, Sameer, Shashikant, Saurabh, kiran.talele.1968@ieee.org, Jill, Deepak, Takako, Cecelia ▾

Dear Anand, Saurabh and Kiran

Please be informed that Professor SM Sameer and Professor Shashikant Patil have been appointed as Interim Chair and Interim Secretary/Treasurer for the Bombay Section with immediate effect.

Please kindly liaise with them concerning the hand over of finance and matters regarding management of the Section.

Professor Takako will be the Region 10 representative acting as advisor during this period of transition until new officers are elected for 2024.

We thank you for your past services and your cooperation are very much appreciated.

With best regards

Lance Fung

IEEE R10 Director 2023-2024

Section-wide Communication by R10

- ❖ Email received on 3rd October from R10 stating that SM Sameer as Chair and Shashikant Patil as Secretary & Treasurer w.e.f. 29th September 2023 vide email sent to entire section.
- ❖ It also stated that 'Due to various concerns that have been brought forward through the IEEE Elections Oversight Committee (EOC), it is necessary to re-run the election for 2024 section officers.'
- ❖ Concluded by 'You will be hearing more about transition from the Interim Chair, SM Sameer.'
- ❖ Similar email was sent again after an hour to India Council Execom Members

❖ We wrote to R10 Director on 03.10.2023 stating:

'The arbitrary action by R10 of suspending office-bearers of the Bombay Section is unacceptable. Applying the laws of natural justice, a bare minimum expectation is that facts are laid down and due process followed with the concerned parties before such an unprecedented action is taken.

We neither accept any interim committee nor would we consider handing over the charge until we have clarity on the reason for suspension.

In the interest of maintaining the professionalism of the association and sustaining interest in volunteering it is critical that there is transparency and fairness in any action.

We sought explanation for the following points:

1. Exact and specific reasons along with justification and objective evidence on the points mentioned in the letter, which are as follows:
 - a. Various concerns within the IEEE Bombay Section
 - b. Issues with a recent election
 - c. Some financial matters

2. Suspension of officers as per MGA operation manual can be only for 3 reasons (third being ruled out since section received bonus) and we need to understand which conduct of ours is in materialistic violation of MGA Operation manual or seriously prejudicial to IEEE?

Response to Explanation Sought by IEEEBBS 1/2

❖ R10 Director replied on 04.10.2023 as follows:

Dear Anand

The appointment of interim section officers and ending of the terms of the 2023 Bombay Section Officers were decisions taken as a result of the direction of the EOC to conduct a new election for 2024 officers.

The EOC review found that the processes of the 2024 election, conducted by the Section, were non-compliant with the MGA Operations Manual.

Section 9.0 of the MGA Operations Manual states that an officer of a geographic organizational unit may be suspended by the Region Director with the concurrence of the Region Director-Elect and Past Region Director for non-compliance with the MGA Operations Manual.

Response to Explanation Sought by IEEEBS 2/2

Additionally, Section 2.11, it is stated that compliance with the IEEE Bylaws, IEEE Policies, and the MGA Operations Manual shall take precedence over local operating documents within the IEEE geographic organizational units.

Further, the MGA Operations Manual permits appointment of interim officers and permits the Region Director to provide oversight and make recommendations for resolution of issues.

The Interim Section Officers will now take over responsibility for the operations of the Section for the remainder of 2023 with immediate effect. Professor Takako Hashimoto, IEEE R10 Director-Elect, is tasked on behalf of Region 10 to assist, advise and provide the necessary support as needed.

These decisions have been carefully reviewed and are considered final.

IEEBS' 2nd Response

1/2

❖ We further replied to R10 Director on 05.10.2023 as follows:

This refers to your email mentioning the reasons for suspension of officers wherein issues pertaining to recent election i.e. election process scheduled in July 2023 for electing officers for 2024-25, a process which is suspended by section itself, is given as the cause.

We would like to inform you that conduct of elections is neither within the purview of Section officers nor their responsibility. They are merely the executors of the decisions made by the Nomination Committee.

As per MGA operations manual referred by you, an officer can be suspended for 3 reasons. However, none of them state that an officer can be suspended for actions taken by others.

MGA Operations manual talks of its precedence over Local operating Procedures provided the same has not been approved by the MGA/IEEE. IEEE Bombay Section byelaws have been approved by the then R10 director and forwarded to MGA which in turn approved the same in the Board of Directors meeting. As such there is no reason for any precedence over local operating procedure once approved.

In view of the same, we feel that the suspension order is ill-conceived hence it will be in order to rescind (not revoke) the Suspension with message to all members who were earlier notified about the suspension.

Escalation & Subsequent Developments

- ❖ To date we have not received a reply to our 2nd response from R10 director. So, we escalated the matter to the President on 10.10.2023 for which we received an acknowledgement on 12th October 2023 mentioning that it's under Review.
- ❖ Right up to the end of October 2023, Past Chairs and Officers of IEEEBS also sent emails and reminders seeking clarity while appealing for an impartial review.
- ❖ In the meantime, the following actions were initiated by IEEE:
 - ❖ IEEE Bombay Section was asked to postpone AISYWLC at the last moment.
 - ❖ IEEEBS Secretary, Saurabh Mehta's tutorial workshop at R10 HTC Conference was cancelled.
 - ❖ On 26th October 2023, the approved conference, IBSSC 2024, was suspended. This forced us to call for SGM and only General Body is authorised to take decisions.

Response from the President

- ❖ Eventually, President informed on 18th November 2023 that MGA-VP will be addressing the issue
- ❖ We responded on 21st November 2023 posing 14 questions to MGA-VP to understand the core issues at the heart of this unprecedented action and take necessary action, if required. Most importantly, we need to be convinced that such action was indeed warranted, especially when section officers have always had open engagements with IEEE and have diligently implemented measures (covered in later slides) that enhance transparency and clarity in the conduct of section affairs. We requested a response by 24th November 2023.
- ❖ We have the support from Past Chairs and Officers in our communications and we thank them. We also have support from Chairs of some other Section as well.

Preamble to IEEEBs Response to President

- ❖ In our response on 21st November 2023 to the President, we highlighted that although there is a clear conflict of interest by appointing VP-MGA as a reviewer of the decision, we agree to work towards a resolution, in good faith
- ❖ We reiterated to VP-MGA that we neither accept the “suspension” nor would we hand over responsibility to any interim officer. We respectfully insisted that the letter of “suspension” be rescinded. We highlighted, it is of great concern that even after 55 (fifty five) days since the issuance of the “suspension” letter, IEEE has not provided clear and compelling reasons for this drastic action.
- ❖ It was emphasised that principles of natural justice dictate that an action like suspension is warranted for a serious issue when the person/ parties have been engaged following due process of inquiry, show-cause notice etc. and during/after which co-operation is not forthcoming. In this instance, key section officers have not even been engaged properly.

14 Points raised with VP-MGA

1/6

1. Please share the records which were made available to EOC and the recommendations from them such as MoM, observations etc.
2. As per directions of R10 Director wherein Single Candidate Slate for 2024 was not approved, Bombay Section had suspended the Elections in 2023 and informed R10 director that grey areas in Byelaws will be sorted out before starting afresh the election process, including formation of Nomination Committee, processing petitions etc. Despite the same, the EOC & R10 director chose to “suspend” the officers who were elected in the AGM held in July 2022 although there is no complaint about that Election. What were the compelling reasons that instead of questioning the Election Monitoring Committee or Nomination committee, R10 Director & MGA chose to “suspend” three officers elected in 2022?
3. The letter of “suspension” mentioned “concerns with some financial matters” but we are yet to receive details. Earlier on, we had responded to audit observations for the past year but have not received any communication since then. Please share details of issues, if any.

4. Why is IEEE seeking to act against Anand Suhas Gharpure for financial issues during the term in which he was not responsible for decisions?
5. Anand Suhas Gharpure was elected as Chair-elect 2023 in the election conducted in 2021 and Chair-elect 2024 in the election conducted in 2022. The letter communicating the “suspension” does not talk about the “suspension” of Chair-Elect 2024. However, he has been removed from Vtools in Chair-Elect 2024 position. Please reinstate the same immediately or give reasons for not doing so.
6. If the decision for “suspension” of officers is due to Election issues and financial issues of Bombay Section, then why is Anand Suhas Gharpure sought to be “suspended” from the position of Chair AESS Bombay Chapter, when AESS is a different OU?

14 Points raised with VP-MGA

3/6

7. Assuming that an “Interim Committee” is required, we understand that B. Satyanarayana (Immediate Past Chair and officer in current execom) was the original choice for “interim” role as Chair, which was suddenly changed to S M Sameer. However, “Interim Chair” appointee S M Sameer is not from Bombay Section. IEEE MGA Guidelines are clear about Officer Appointment. The officer must be a member of the OU. Why were MGA guidelines flouted by MGA itself? Why was there a change in choice of “Interim Chair”?

8. The original “suspension” letter stated that Hitesh Mehta and Aiyappan were to take on the “interim” role of Secretary and Treasurer respectively, both being Senior Members and experienced Past Officers of Section. It is understood that they had categorically insisted that due process be followed before taking any action, assuming that there are serious issues. Informatively, they too were not given any convincing reasons. They were then replaced. Why did this change happen? Why was due process not followed?

14 Points raised with VP-MGA

4/6

9. We wrote to the R10 director requesting the exact and specific reasons along with justification and objective evidence on the three points mentioned in the letter, namely various concerns within the IEEE Bombay Section, issues with a recent election and some financial matters. However, in his reply, the R10 director stated only the Election Issue. Why is there no consistency in providing concrete reasons that justify such drastic action?
10. Even if we take it for granted that the “suspension” was for election Issues only, it falls under the purview of the Nomination Committee, which is responsible for the same and not the officers of the section. Why are Kiran Talele and Saurabh Mehta “suspended” for the actions of the Nomination Committee?
11. MGA operation manual which was referred to in the “suspension” letter, has some more important guidelines. The Regional Director can appoint an individual if an individual is suspended. However, Regional Director has to consult OU execom for appointing Interim Officer (page 87 under Section 9). While appointing interim Officers, there is no record of section execom having been consulted. Why?

14 Points raised with VP-MGA

5/6

12. Appointing a non-OU member as Interim Chair, replacement of initially appointed senior and experienced Interim Officers, arbitrarily tasking an inexperienced serving execom member with the dual responsibility of Secretary & Treasurer responsibilities, replacing the Chair of an unconnected OU by another serving execom member and making allegations without any objective evidence raises serious doubts about neutrality as well as the actual reason for seeking to “suspend” the officers. This leads to a strong suspicion of personal vengeance. Please clarify.

13. Even if the EOC review found that the processes of the 2024 election, conducted by the Section, were non-compliant with the MGA Operations Manual, as mentioned by the R10 director, it raises an important question as to whether a simple non-compliance would lead to suspension of Officers of the Section? By that token, won't the non-compliance by officers of R10 and MGA of their own manual necessitate similar action?

14. IEEE has suspended the IBSSC conference planned in 2024 by the section citing “suspension of officers” as the reason. Please note that this conference was approved on 09th September 2023, prior to the issuance of the letter of “suspension”. Why is IEEE acting in a way that damages its reputation?

Key Initiatives to Manage Section Affairs

1/3

These Initiatives were taken by Section Officers in the past 3 years for greater Transparency & Clarity.

1. Section finally got the 12A and 80G benefits as well as Tax Exempt status.
The Section was trying to get the same since 2013.
2. Updating AGM/EGM/SGM Minutes of Meeting on Section Website
This gives more clarity about section activities
3. Updating Execom Minutes of Meeting on the Section Website
We are the only Section which places them on website prominently
4. Formulated simple, clear policies on funding the Student Branch events
It saves lot of time in approval. Funding is directly proportional to membership, event type & size
5. Formulated Conference Approval policies and organises POCO twice a year
Improve the quality of conference as well as compliances with IEEE norms. No conference approved by IEEEBS in past 2 years was rejected by IEEE (except the two events mentioned earlier).

Key Initiatives to Manage Section Affairs

2/3

Initiatives taken by Section Officers in past 3 years for greater Transparency & Clarity.

6. To hasten the claims process, separate claims portal was created. Internet banking started to reduce the disbursement time and facilitating higher events.

Overall time for disbursement/reimbursement of claim has reduced to a week and compliant with all local laws.

7. Increased Number of Transactions handled which means higher number of IEEE events

Section clocked more than 1500 transactions which were earlier about 300+. Section not only supported our own SBs and OU but also supported other OU's activity such as Information Theory Workshop which was on verge of cancellation due to non availability of Compliant OU's.

8. Fully Compliant with IT, TDS and GST laws of India

We are one of few sections which are fully compliant with the Laws of the Land. Income Tax, TDS and GST Returns are filed on time without any penalty.

9. Use of Collaboratec's Section Webspace for storing the Section Documents including Financial, to maintain continuity.

Again, we are one of few sections who does that and shares with IEEE complete access.

Initiatives taken by Section Officers in past 3 years for greater Transparency & Clarity.

10. Section signed the Service Agreement with IEEE India Office in 2012. Many of the clauses were obsolete as well as non-compliant with the current Laws of the Land. There were contradictions in financial procedures. The Section took the initiative and organized a “Treasurer and Secretary Conclave” of all sections from India to identify and resolve issues with respect to the funding/rebates/awards/Byelaws/Agreement. The same was appreciated by attending sections and a further follow-up meeting was organized by the IEEE India office.

The follow up meeting was much appreciated and IEEE India has readied the draft of the New Agreement. Overall, all sections that attended applauded Bombay Section for taking the lead. In fact, many at IEEE India Office appreciated the Claims Portal and were interested in projecting the same as Best Practice at global level.

Bombay Section prides on its fair, transparent and professional approach. It is hence shocking that there was no prior dialogue with key officers before initiating this drastic action.

Summary of Issues

- ❖ Suspension of officers of the section without following due process of inquiry, show cause notice, hearing etc. nor presenting any material evidence
 - Action not in line with IEEE and IEEE MSWA byelaws or principles of natural justice
- ❖ Foisting an Interim Committee on the section
 - Action not in line with byelaws of IEEE or IEEE MSWA
- ❖ Violation of IEEE Code of Ethics
 - Unfair treatment/ vindictive action against members; Insinuating malpractice without material evidence
 - Not respecting laws of the land
- ❖ Poor Communications and Engagement
 - Leadership unwilling to engage
- ❖ Lack of fair and transparent processes
 - Due process for initiating punitive action not followed
 - Appeal process against punitive action not available
- ❖ Damage to the reputation of IEEE, Bombay Section and Members
 - Cancellation/ Suspension/ forcing postponement of approved events
 - Alleging malpractice without material evidence or proof of thorough inquiry

Related Deliberations

We now invite members who were directly involved to share any other relevant background information

Discussion and Passing of Resolutions

Discussion

- ❖ We now request Members present, including the Past Chairs, Officers and experienced volunteers to suggest next steps.
- ❖ Make resolutions as deemed required, to enable the section to move forward

Thank you for joining the SGM, Nov. 25, 2023

Scientists investigate that
which already is;
engineers create that
which has never been.

Albert Einstein

Let's network over High tea!

