

North American Position on the Vaiṣṇavī Dīkṣā-Guru Resolution

Resolution 701.06/2019, as amended in 2021

SUPPORT WITH CLARIFICATION

*Affirm the principle. Strengthen the implementation.
Protect the unity of ISKCON.*

North American RGB Representatives

GBC VDG Inter-Regional Conference • July 2026



Our mandate—and our position

“Reflect on the GBC Resolution.”

Keep the presentation within that boundary. Keep the unity of ISKCON sacrosanct.

SUPPORT

Retain the resolution’s essential principle.

CLARIFY

Make implementation precise, phased, and accountable.

UNIFY

Protect regional conscience without permitting a global veto.

Not categorical prohibition. Not hurried uniformity.



CENTRAL QUESTION

What is actually before us?

Not a referendum on every woman. A decision about categorical exclusion.

NOT

Whether every woman may become a dīkṣā-guru

She may not.

NOT

Whether qualification standards should be lowered

They must not be.

NOT

Whether cultural concerns should be ignored

They should not be.

THE ACTUAL QUESTION

May ISKCON permanently bar a mature, qualified Vaiṣṇavī solely because she is female?

NORTH AMERICA: NO

His direct record is affirmative

“Spiritual sons and daughters”

Those possessing the Bhaktivedanta title would be allowed to initiate disciples.

Letter to Hansadutta, 3 Jan 1969

“Men, women, boys and girls”

All were urged to become spiritual masters and faithfully represent the paramparā.

Vyāsa-pūjā lecture, 22 Aug 1973

“He or she can become guru”

A direct answer about a woman serving in the line of disciplic succession.

O’Connell interview, 18 Jun 1976

“It is not that woman cannot be ācārya”

Rarity was acknowledged; categorical impossibility was denied.

Room conversation, 29 Jun 1972

These statements refute a categorical “never.”



THE CATEGORICAL ANTI-VDG CASE

does not hold

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

Five critical problems in the categorical anti-VDG position

1

Bypasses the Founder-Ācārya

An independent reading of śāstra is placed above his explicit application.

2

Narrows “guru” without warrant

Dīkṣā is excluded even where initiation or disciplic succession is explicit.

3

Universalizes isolated texts

The Sunīti statement is made decisive while ISKCON-specific directives are discounted.

4

Turns “rare” into “forbidden”

“Not so many” is silently changed into “none.”

5

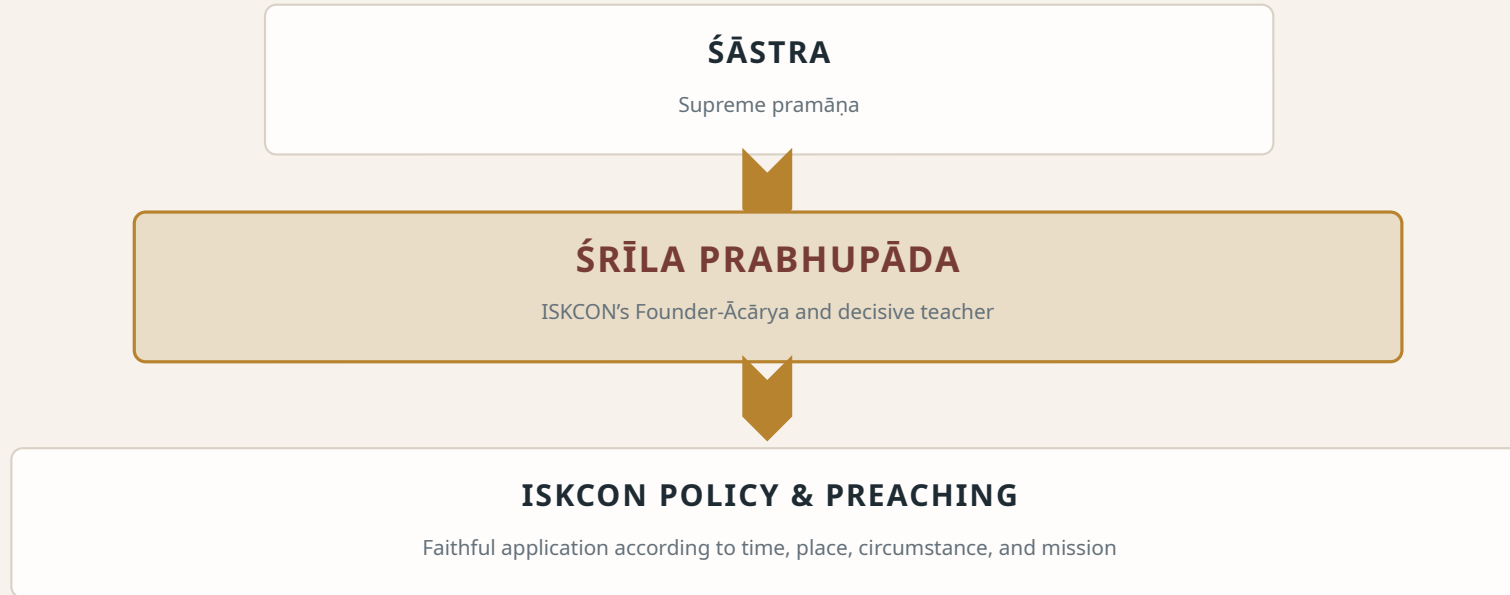
Mislabels two decades of study

Deep SAC and GBC research is dismissed as Western feminism.

Disagreement is legitimate. Mischaracterization is not.

The Founder-Ācārya is our interpretive center

The issue is not guru versus śāstra. The issue is whether an independent reading may override the ācārya who reveals and applies śāstra for ISKCON.

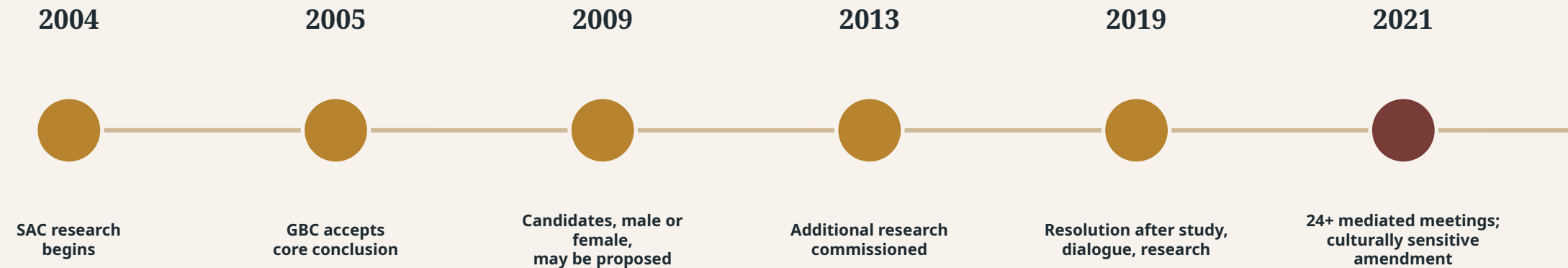


“The word guru is equally applicable to the vartma-pradarśaka-guru, śikṣā-guru and dīkṣā-guru.”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.128, purport

A categorical ban was never stated by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

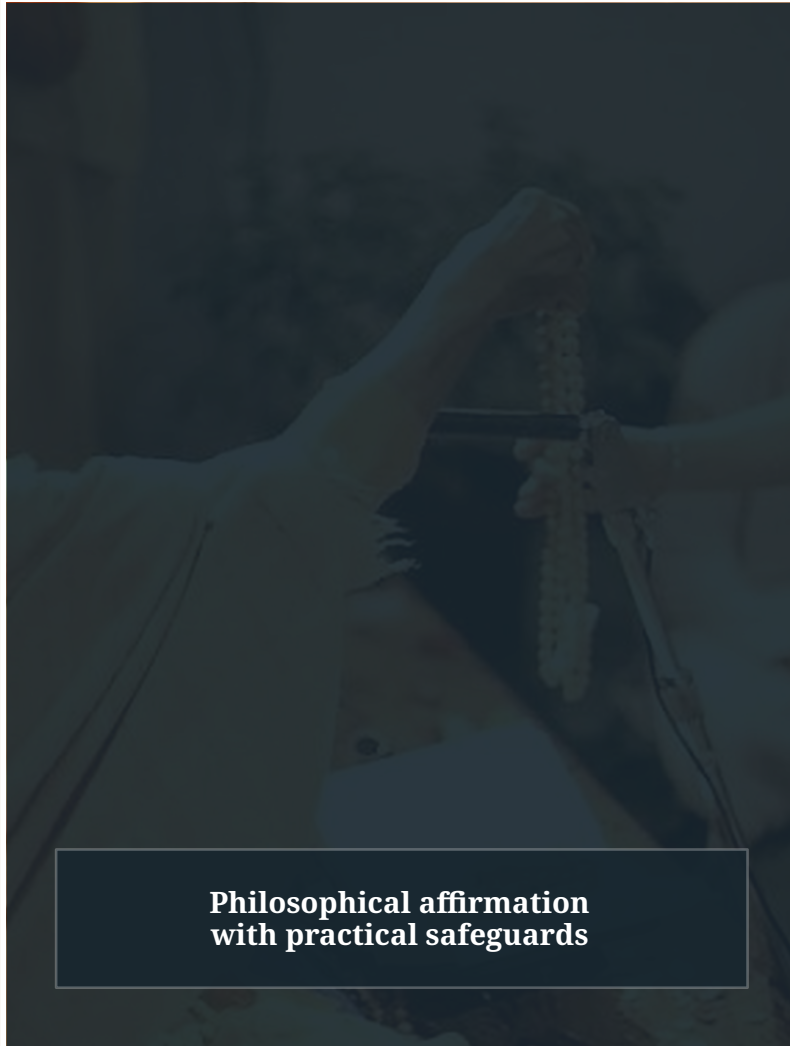
This was not a rushed decision



22+ YEARS OF SUSTAINED RESEARCH AND DELIBERATION

Further study may refine implementation. It should not become endless postponement.

The resolution is already cautious and conservative



01

All existing guru qualifications

02

Minimum age: 55

03

Stable family / protective support

04

GBC authorization &
accountability

05

Regional cultural accommodation

06

Scheduled five-year review

STRENGTHEN FURTHER WITH A CANDIDATE-SPECIFIC READINESS PLAN

disciple care • health • finances • support • complaint handling • continuity

Safeguards should address real pastoral needs—not become a disguised prohibition.

North American experience is relevant evidence

Mature Vaiṣṇavīs already serve as:

● Teachers & preachers

● Mentors & śikṣā-gurus

● Pūjārīs & temple presidents

● Board & ministry leaders

● Community builders

● Pastoral caregivers

“The substance of serious spiritual guidance is already present.”

Regional experience is not universal—but it is evidence that categorical exclusion is not necessary.



Cultural sensitivity may regulate local implementation. It should not erase the principle.

Our proposed clarifications

Make the resolution workable without hollowing it out.

1

Separate principle from implementation

Eligibility is philosophical; service depends on qualification, approval, and readiness.

2

Define “cultural context”

Timing and local arrangements—not a philosophical veto.

3

Phase implementation / define deferment

Ready regions may proceed; deferment requires reasons and review.

4

Require a readiness plan

Disciple care, health, support, accountability, and continuity.

5

Protect recognition + local discretion

Institutional respect without compulsory invitations or personal acceptance.

6

Review, mediate, communicate

Transparent reporting and one authoritative package for ISKCON.

SUPPORT WITH CLARIFICATION

Unity requires reciprocal discipline

SUPPORTERS MUST

- Respect sincere caution
- Avoid forcing every region to move at one pace

OPPONENTS MUST

- Not stigmatize authorized gurus or disciples
- Not turn disagreement into organized non-cooperation

ALL PARTIES MUST

- Use authorized channels
- Preserve common service and relationships
- Reject factionalism and schism

**UNITY IS
SACROSANCT**

Harmony permits conscientious disagreement. It does not permit mutual delegitimization.

Reaffirm. Clarify. Implement carefully.

REAFFIRM

the amended resolution rather than rescind it

CLARIFY

eligibility, implementation, and cultural context

IMPLEMENT

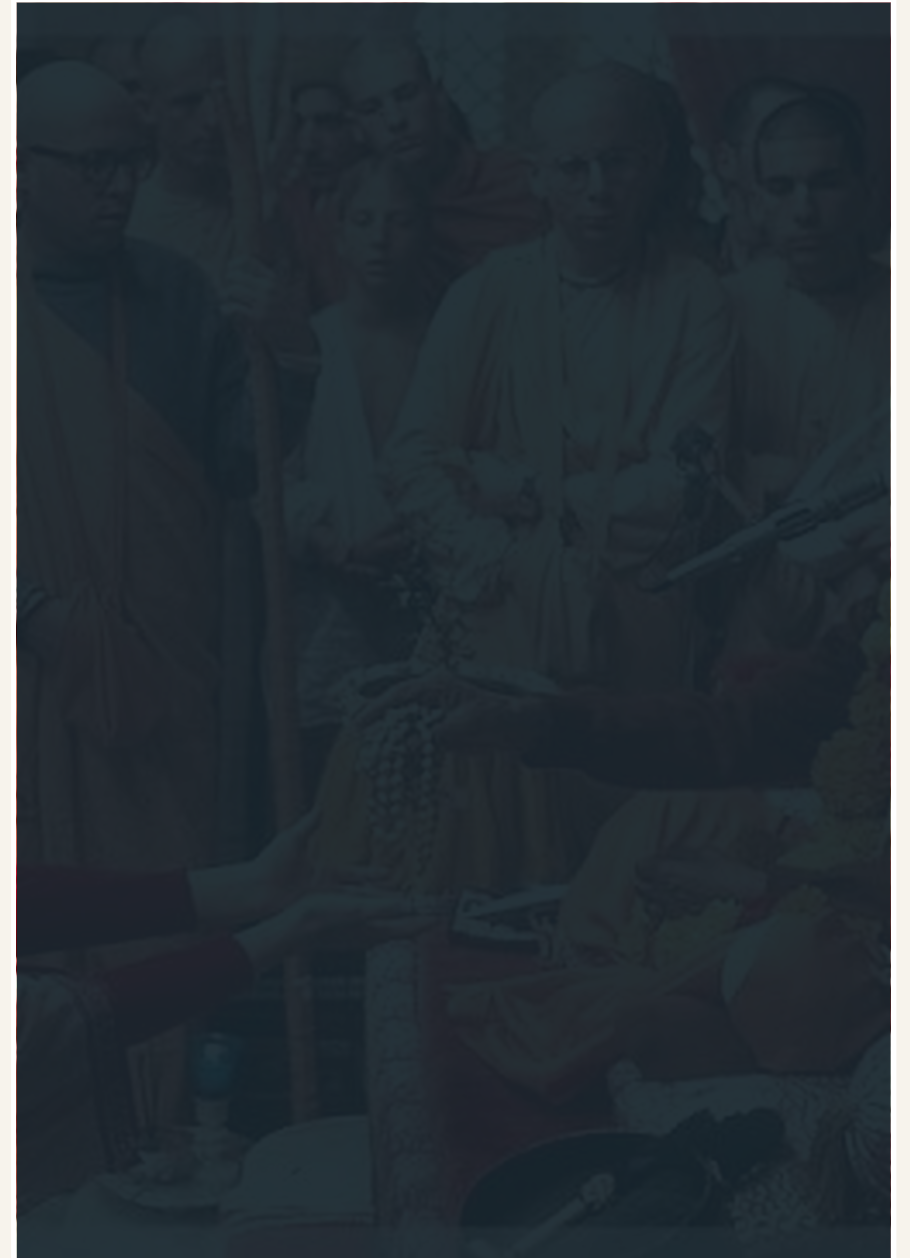
regionally, gradually, and under existing approval procedures

PROTECT

institutional respect, review, mediation, and local discretion

A mature and qualified Vaiṣṇavī is eligible to be considered for dīkṣā-guru service and is not categorically disqualified solely by gender.

Eligibility is not entitlement. GBC authorization and sustained accountability remain essential.



CONCLUSION

A faithful, workable, and unifying resolution

Reaffirm the principle.

Regulate the implementation.

Protect regional concerns.

Move forward together.

Mature and qualified Vaiṣṇavīs may serve as dīkṣā-gurus in ISKCON under proper GBC oversight.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

