

MANIPUR STATE RURAL LIVELIHOODS MISSION (MSRLM) DEPARTMENT OF RD & PR, GOVT. OF MANIPUR

# Back To School

Training of Trainers (ToT) Booklet









# **Back to School Campaign**

# Training of Trainers (ToT) Booklet

Toolkit Volume 1

# A Community-Driven Learning Initiative

Inspired by Kudumbashree's 'Thirike School' Model

Empowering Women | Strengthening SHGs | Deepening Grassroots Learning



National Reral Livelihood Mission Government of India



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#### Preface

The Back to School campaign is a community-driven learning initiative launched under the Manipur State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM), inspired by the 'Thirike School' campaign of Kudumbashree, Kerala. This innovative effort aims to deepen the understanding of all SHG members of the four core thematic areas under Social Inclusion and Social Development (SISD): Social Inclusion (SI); Food, Nutrition, Health; Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (FNHW); Gender; and Convergence.

SHGs are at the forefront of driving financial independence, inclusive governance, and grassroots development. However, many members struggle to stay updated on SISD activities due to household and livelihood responsibilities. To bridge this gap, the Back to School campaign reimagines traditional learning by transforming it into an engaging, nostalgic experience. SHG members participate in classroom–style sessions, carrying lunch boxes, sitting with peers, and revisiting the joy of learning, where each SISD theme is treated as a "subject" in a thematic, interactive setting.

The accompanying toolkit is designed to guide SISD cadres, who serve as facilitators, through the flow of each session by providing detailed facilitator notes for every theme. These notes aim to help facilitators internalise the content, deliver sessions effectively, and ensure an inclusive and impactful learning experience for all SHG members. Through this campaign, MSRLM envisions fostering informed, empowered communities that lead change from within.

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(Smt. Binota Loitongbam)

State Mission Manager-SISD & M-CLF, MSRLM





#### About the Toolkit

The Back to School Toolkit - Volume 1 has been developed to guide and support Resource Persons (RPs) in implementing a community-driven learning initiative "Back To School" under the Manipur State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM), inspired by the Kudumbashree model of Kerala's 'Thirike School' campaign. This toolkit volume serves as a comprehensive guidebook for Resource Persons (RPs), outlining how to conduct practical sessions during classes. It is structured into five sections, each accompanied by facilitation notes. It begins with an introductory session that helps participants understand NRLM, SRLM, and the structure of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). Following this, participants are divided into four groups and guided to designated classrooms, each led by a representative (RP). The toolkit details four thematic sessions under the Social Inclusion and Social Development (SISD) component: Classroom One -Inclusion Room, focusing on breaking barriers and the inclusion of Elderly SHGs, VRPs, and others; Classroom Two -Gender Lab, encouraging dialogue around equality, rights, and roles, and introducing platforms like GSDCC/VCF, GPP Collective, and GPP; Classroom Three – Health & Wellness Hub, emphasising nutrition, hygiene, and health systems such as VHSNC and ALMC; and Classroom Four - Convergence Corner, which highlights collaboration with Panchayati Raj Institutions through tools like the VPRP. Each session includes guiding questions and facilitation notes to ensure an interactive and impactful learning experience.

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Vibhav Sonker State Project Coordinator (SPC)-Manipur

Universalisation of PRI-CBO Convergence Project (KS-NRO)





## Orientation Session: Understanding of NRLM, SRLM, and CBO

About SHG: In India, SHG federations are multi-tiered. This structure is designed to empower SHG members to manage the federation independently. Women in a village are organised into Self-Help Groups (SHGs); these SHGs, within a smaller geographic area (typically a village or locality), are grouped into a primary-level federation known as a Village Organisation (VO) or Village Level Federation (VLF). Several VLFs in a given area are organised into a secondary-level federation called a Cluster Level Federation (CLF), which is registered under the Societies Act. Each level of the federation performs a specific role in the effective implementation of activities.





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#### About MSRLM

- Established in 2014 under the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department (RD & PR), Government of Manipur, the Manipur State Rural Livelihood Mission (MSRLM).
- Aims to effectively implement the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) within the state.

**MISSION:** "To reduce poverty by enabling the poor households to access gainful selfemployment and skilled wage employment opportunities resulting in appreciable improvement in their livelihoods on a sustainable basis, through building strong grassroots institutions of the poor."

#### MSRLM is organised into four thematic verticals, namely:

#### 1. Institution Building and Capacity Building (IBCB):

- a. Social Mobilisation: To ensure that at least one member from each identified household is brought under the SHG network.
- b. Promotion of institutions of the poor: Creating village-level and higher-level federations to provide space, voice and resources for the poor
- c. Training, Capacity building and skill building: Developing the capacity of the federation by creating a resource pool, training on livelihood activities and record keeping through instruments of knowledge dissemination.

#### 2. Financial Inclusion (FI):

- a. To cultivate the habit of regular savings and to accumulate their own funds towards meeting their credit needs
- b. To promote financial literacy in order to have regular coordination with the banking institutions to cater for the needs of the SHG members by providing loans at a lower interest rate.

#### 3. Livelihood:

- a. Stabilising and enhancing the existing livelihood (farm and non-farm)
- b. Infrastructure creation to provide support for diversifying their livelihoods and to get marketing support for the institutions and individuals
- c. Training and capacity building on technical skill upgradation for rural youth employment by establishing RSETIs and through public-private partnerships.

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- 4. Social Inclusion and Social Development (SISD):





- a. Sensitising rural women on various social issues to create a support system among the women at the village level 6.6.5.5.5.5.5.5 No. o a V
  - b. Implementing multiple projects to address gender related issues, such as 0.0.00 Gender and FNHW
    - c. To develop the capacity of the SHG members to prepare a plan to address social issues in coordination with the line departments
    - d. Involves the formation of special SHGs( Elderly, PWD, Transgender) to cater for the needs of vulnerable people

# **Thematic Verticals of MSRLM**





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Back to School Campaign: A community-driven learning initiative has been launched under the Manipur State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM), inspired by the Kudumbashree model of Kerala (Kudumbashree's 'Thirike School' campaign). The campaign aims to empower women and strengthen Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by providing essential knowledge across four interconnected components of the Social Inclusion and Social Development (SISD) thematic areas—Social Inclusion (SI), Food, Nutrition, Health, and WASH (FNHW), Gender Equality, and PRI/VA-CBO Convergence. While SHGs are pivotal in advancing financial independence, community engagement, and inclusive governance, many members struggle to stay updated on SISD activities due to various commitments. Recognising these challenges and the fragmented understanding of how these themes interlink, the Back to School campaign was launched to ensure that no one is left behind and to promote a comprehensive understanding of social development at the village level with the assistance of the SISD thematic areas of MSRLM. To make the learning experience for each SHG member more engaging, the campaign reimagined traditional classrooms so that SHG members could relive the nostalgia of attending school with their friends, carrying lunch boxes and water bottles. We transformed classrooms into thematic learning zones, each with its own "subject"—turning key pillars of our mission into vibrant, interactive spaces.



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A DAY OF LEARNING AND EMPOWERMENT: Exploring SHG Institutional Mechanisms for Inclusion, Gender Equality, Health, and Conve

# Period 1 Inclusion Room



# Period 2 Gender Lab

This was where conversations sparked around equality, rights, and shared responsibilities. The session include a rationale for the formation of GSDCC, GPP Collective, and GPP

# Period 3 Health & Wellness Hub





Here, SHG members explored how to collaborate with Panchayati Raj Institutions to amplify their impact. The session included rationale for VPRP and way forward



This session focused on nutrition, health, hygiene, and well-being, and included a rationale for the formation of VHSNC and ALMC



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**Period 1 - Inclusion Room:** Here, they learned about breaking barriers and ensuring that no one is left behind. The session included a rationale for Ederly SHGs, VRP, and others.

**Period 2 - Gender Lab:** This was where conversations sparked around equality, rights, and shared responsibilities. The session included a rationale for the formation of GSDCC/VCF, GPP Collective, and GPP.

**Period 3 - Health & Wellness Hub:** This session focused on nutrition, health, hygiene, and well-being, and included a rationale for the formation of VHSNC and ALMC.

**Period 4 - Convergence Corner:** Here, SHG members explored how to collaborate with Panchayati Raj Institutions to amplify their impact. The session included a rationale for VPRP and a way forward.

The Facilitator will now divide the participants into four groups and guide them to their designated classrooms, each accompanied by their respective Resource Persons. Every 45 minutes, the Resource Persons will rotate between the classrooms according to the timetable provided by the CLF/VLF, ensuring that all groups receive input from each Resource Person during the session.



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# Period 1 - Inclusion Room - Class on Social Inclusion (SI)



**Story:** "Everyone Matters- In a small village named Chandanpur, there was a Self-Help Group called Mary SHG. The group consisted of 12 women, ranging from young to old, literate to illiterate, from diverse castes and backgrounds. They met under the banyan tree every week to save money, discuss their plans, and learn new skills.

Among them was a woman named Gracy. She was always on time, listened carefully, and smiled often, but hardly ever spoke. Gracy came from a very poor family and didn't go to school. Some of the other members frequently interrupted her or talked over her. Others assumed she wouldn't understand things, so they didn't give her responsibilities.

One day, the group discussed a training program on making pickles and jams. Everyone was excited, but no one asked Gracy if she wanted to go. She quietly walked home, feeling invisible.

The facilitator will visit the following week. She asked, "Who didn't attend the training, and why?"

Gracy hesitated but finally spoke: "I wasn't invited... I thought maybe I'm not the kind who is chosen."

There was silence. The members looked at one another, realising what they had overlooked. The president stood up and said, "Gracy, you are one of us. If you are omitted, we all lose something important."







From that day forward, the group made small but powerful changes:

- Everyone had to speak once during meetings
- Roles were rotated
- They checked on absent members and encouraged them to return
- They stopped judging by appearance, education, or caste.

#### Questions to be asked after the story by the facilitator

- Why do you think Gracy didn't speak much before?
- Have you ever felt like Gracy—or seen someone else feel like her?
- What mistakes did the SHG members make without realising it?
- What did they do to become more inclusive?
- What are some simple ways we can ensure that everyone in our SHG feels included and respected?
- How can we ensure that quiet or shy members have the opportunity to participate fully?
- What is one small change for our SHG to become more inclusive?



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#### Explanation by Facilitator on Social Inclusion (SI)

#### Q- What is Social Inclusion?

**Answer**- Social Inclusion means making sure no one is left behind—older people, disabled people, single women, widows, poor families, people from marginalised communities.

#### Q- Why is Social Inclusion Important?

- Makes the group stronger and united
- Builds trust among members
- Helps the poorest or weakest members grow
- Ensures everyone benefits from savings, loans, training, and government schemes

#### Q- How can SHG Practice Inclusion?

- Invite and include women, minorities, and disabled members
- Ensure everyone speaks in meetings
- Give an equal chance to lead and learn
- Avoid judging based on education or background
- Help those who are shy, illiterate, or absent feel welcomed





Best practices are conducted with the help of CLF, VLF, I-Mentors, and SISD cadres to ensure the SI activities are practised in the Villages.

- Adult literacy Classes
- Special SHG formation
  - Planning support VRP utilisation VRF
  - Bal Sabha formation
  - Gram Sabha mobilisation



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# Period 2 - Gender Lab -Class on understanding and importance of Gender in SHG

## Activity: Exercise of the Groom and the Bride



Mode 1- Searching for a Groom/Bride— Qualities of a Groom/Bride: The facilitator will ask the participants to divide themselves into two groups. One group will list the qualities they would look for in a groom, and the other group will list the qualities they would look for in a bride

#### Points to facilitate discussion

**Q1-** When all the respective features are listed for the bride and groom, the facilitator will ask, 'What are your expectations from the bride and groom?'

**Q 2-** Why is it required for the groom to have this quality? E.g. why should the groom have a job or good income/business?

Q 3- Why do we not expect that from a bride?

The facilitator will then ask the participants to identify the qualities they would like to acquire and explain why. For the facilitator's benefit, the qualities will be listed as masculine and feminine, respectively. She/he can take the participants through a brainstorming exercise on the following attributes.





**Mode 2** - Searching for a groom/bride—qualities of groom/bride: The facilitator prepares the chits containing these headings - Anger, Aggressive, Dominant, Fearless, Courageous, Strong, Confident, Independent, Knowledgeable, Intelligent Scholar Bread-earner, Harsh, Patience, Loving/caring, Timid, Fearful, Not courageous, Weak, Not confident, Dependent, Ignorant, Innocent, Illiterate, Homemaker, Sensitive/emotional and asks each participant which chit should be placed in the Masculine or Feminine column if they want to find a Groom or Bride. After the participants have stuck all the chits, the facilitator will ask the participants the following points:

- When all the respective features are listed against the bride and groom, the facilitator will ask What is your expectation from the groom and bride?
- Why is it required for the groom to have this quality? E.g. why should the groom have a job or good income/business?
- Why do we not expect that from a bride?

The facilitator will then ask the participants to mark the qualities they would like to acquire for themselves and why. For the benefit of the facilitator, the qualities will be listed as masculine and feminine, respectively. She/he can take the participants through a brainstorming exercise on the following qualities.





Masculine	Feminine
5 7 55 7 7 7 7 7	Patience, Loving/caring, Timid, Fearful, Not courageous, Weak, Not confident, Dependent,
	Ignorant, Innocent, Illiterate, Homemaker, Sensitive/emotional

Explanation to Participants by Facilitators: After the exercise, the facilitator will explain to the participants the perspective of social constructionists, who argue that gender differences are not innate but are learned and reinforced through socialisation from an early age. For example, gender distinctions often begin in early childhood through specific activities, expectations, and behaviours assigned to boys and girls. These differences are further reinforced by the differential treatment children receive at home and within the community. Children typically begin to identify themselves by gender by the age of three. From birth, they absorb gender stereotypes and roles through observation and interaction with their parents, family members, and broader social environment, shaping their understanding of what is expected of them as boys or girls.



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# Examples of social construction among boys and girls

Boys	Girls
<ul> <li>Boys learn to manipulate their physical and social environment through physical strength or other skills.</li> <li>Boys are encouraged to adhere to masculine qualities from childhood, and such behaviour may result in the perpetuation of violence against girls and women in many ways.</li> <li>Boys are expected to earn an income, provide for their families, and be considered the heads of the family.</li> <li>Boys are supposed to exhibit qualities of strength, dominance, courage, self-assertiveness and independence.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Girls learn to present themselves as objects of scrutiny.</li> <li>Girls are treated as a burden and liability; hence, their parents attach less importance to their education.</li> <li>Stereotyped roles are assigned to girls in society, where they are expected to look after the household and family.</li> <li>Girls face nutrition discrimination within the family, and often get less food than they require.</li> <li>Girls have to look after younger siblings when both parents go to work.</li> <li>There is a traditional bias against educating girls; they are often not sent to school or drop out at an early stage because of a lack of supporting infrastructure (for example, toilets for girls at schools).</li> </ul>



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Understanding Gender Disparities in Rural Contexts: While facilitating this session, it is essential to highlight the structural and social issues that significantly impact girls' development, particularly in rural areas. Emphasise the following points to initiate critical reflection among participants:

- Girls in rural communities often face challenges such as malnutrition, limited access to menstrual hygiene products, and a lack of supportive infrastructure in schools. These factors stunt their physical, emotional, and intellectual growth from a very early age.
- Families tend to be more focused on controlling and shaping the social behaviour of • girls compared to boys. There is a pervasive belief that girls must be protected from societal 'evils' and should instead be trained in household responsibilities, limiting their exposure and opportunities.
- In many communities, the birth of a boy is celebrated with great joy and pride. Boys are seen as assets who will inherit property, secure jobs, and support the family financially. As a result, they are often provided with the best opportunities and resources for growth and development.
- In contrast, the birth of a girl may be met with disappointment or even grief. Daughters are frequently perceived as liabilities whose role is confined to the domestic sphere. In some regions, this mindset is deeply rooted in tradition, with sayings such as "the servant of your household is born" used to greet the family of a newborn girl.

These social attitudes and norms are not just cultural but are deeply ingrained and perpetuated across generations, reinforcing gender inequality at every stage of life. Encourage participants to reflect on these realities, challenge stereotypes, and consider how they can contribute to more equitable environments for both girls and boys.

"Socialisation is how people learn and accept the rules, beliefs, habits, and customs of their society. It helps us understand how to behave and what is expected from us in our community."



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**Explanation on MSRLM's Institutional Mechanism:** As the SHG federation where the MSRLM operates consists of females, they encounter numerous gender-related issues in their daily lives, which many women prefer to discuss and resolve within their groups. To make this mechanism functional, the institutionalisation of gender has been introduced. In the gender institutional mechanism, gender-related issues are first discussed at the SHG level under the guidance of the Gender Point Person (GPP). If the SHG members believe that the issue warrants discussion in a larger group, the GPP notes the problem and brings it up in the GPP collective with SISD cadres for consolidation. This is then presented in the SAC subcommittee meeting through SISD cadres, and if it remains unresolved, it is elevated to the VCF for further discussion. Thus, with the help of this mechanism, SISD thematic initiatives aim to address gender-related issues.



# **MSRLM's Institutional Mechanism**



To effectively address the gender-related challenges faced by women in SHG federations under MSRLM, a structured Gender Institutional Mechanism has been introduced. Since many women prefer to discuss sensitive gender issues within the safety of their groups, this mechanism empowers them to do so through a systematic process. Initially, gender-related concerns are addressed at the SHG level under the guidance of the Gender Point Person (GPP). If the issue requires broader attention, the GPP records it and escalates it to the GPP collective, where it is discussed with SISD cadres for further consolidation. These consolidated issues are presented at the SAC subcommittee meeting through SISD cadres. If the unresolved issue is further escalated to the Village Community Federation (VCF) for resolution. This step-by-step process ensures that women's voices are heard at all levels and that gender concerns are addressed in a timely and structured manner, aligning with the SISD thematic focus on gender equity and inclusion.

**Please note:** The Village Coordinating/Coordination Committee (VCF) can only be formed if a GPP (Gender Point Person) is selected from each SHG, and SISD cadres are trained in its formation. Additionally, Gender Collectives are formed and actively working in the field. After proper functioning, the VCF will also include officials from the Line Department and frontline workers in its composition.





**Period 3 - Health & Wellness Hub:** Class on FNHW (Food, Nutrition, Health, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene)



## **Case Study**

"Small Steps, Big Impact: Improving Nutrition and Hygiene in Anju's Village"

Anju is a 30-year-old member of a small village's SHG. She lives with her husband, two young children, and her elderly mother-inlaw. Anju has always tried to care for her family, but things have not been easy.

FOOD & NUTRITION CHALLENGES Every day, her family ate mostly rice and potatoes. Her children often fell sick and looked weak. Her pregnant neighbour advised her to add green vegetables and pulses, but Anju thought that only expensive food could be healthy.

#### HEALTH

#### ISSUES

Her daughter missed vaccination schedules. Her son had frequent stomach problems. But Anju didn't think regular check-ups were needed unless someone was seriously ill.



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#### WASH

PROBLEMS

The family fetched water from a nearby pond without boiling or filtering it. Her children sometimes skipped handwashing. Their home was filled with stagnant, dirty water, which attracted mosquitoes and flies.

#### What Changed?

One day, during an SHG meeting, a health facilitator visited and explained the importance of good food, hygiene, and check-ups. She displayed a food plate chart and discussed WASH practices.

Anju was shocked to learn that simple changes could make a big difference. With support from her SHG friends, she began:

- Adding green vegetables and lentils to meals
- Giving her children three proper meals
- Boiling drinking water
- Ensuring her daughter's vaccinations were complete
- Cleaning her backyard to prevent mosquitoes
- Washing hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- Encouraging her pregnant neighbour to take iron tablets and go for checkups



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#### Result

Anju's children gained weight in three months and fell sick less often. Her home looked cleaner. Other women in the SHG followed her example. The group even started a kitchen garden and invited a health worker for a talk every month.

#### Questions should be discussed with the participants:

- What were the key problems in Anju's home?
- What simple steps did she take to improve health and nutrition?
- How did her SHG help her?
- What can we do in our homes and groups to follow this example?

# Explanation of the themes of Food, Nutrition, Health, and WASH (FNHW) from the Facilitator to the participants

# Q-Why FNHW?

Answer- Because knowing doesn't always equate to practising. FNHW assists us in staying healthy

- Saving money on illness
- Improving child development
- Living longer and better lives





"Food, Nutrition, Health, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) thematic approach enables SHG members to understand proper nutrition, access health services, and maintain adequate sanitation and vaccination. This support helps SHG members' families save money through reduced expenditures on health services, leading to enhanced well-being and an improved quality of life. Hence, the FNHW thematic ensures that SHG members and their families lead healthy lives."

Best practices are conducted with the help of CLF, VLF, I-Mentors, and SISD cadres to ensure the FNHW activities are practised in the Villages.

- Adolescent Girls' Classes on Menstrual Hygiene: "Cherish Puberty".
- Poshan Pakhwada
- Awareness Class on hand washing and maintaining hygiene by the Department of Social Welfare
- Awareness Class on Drug Abuse by the Department of Health
- Awareness Class on Malaria awareness, newborn, child care & immunisation by the Department of Health
- Awareness Class on TB test, immunisation by the Department of Health
- Awareness Class on the Importance of Daily Exercise for Maintaining Overall Health and Wellness by the Social Welfare Department



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# Period 4 - Convergence Corner - Class on the understanding of Convergence

Convergence Story: Three Races of the Rabbit and the Tortoise

- Rabbit was fast, tortoise slow → Tortoise wins.
- Rabbit learns, doesn't nap  $\rightarrow$  Rabbit wins.
- Land + river race → they team up. Rabbit runs and carries tortoise on land, and the tortoise carries the rabbit on its back and swims across the river. They both WIN TOGETHER!

Moral: Synergy. Partnership. Respecting strengths.

#### Q- What is Convergence?

A-Working with departments, local committees, and service providers to deliver services better, faster, and fairly.

#### Examples:

- Health check-up camps with the Department of Health.
- Training and jobs with the Skill and Livelihood Dept.
- Legal awareness with the District Legal Services Authority
- Schemes with WCD, Social Welfare, Panchayati Raj





# **Understanding of Convergence**





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Best practices are conducted with the help of CLF, VLF, I-Mentors, and SISD cadres to ensure the Convergence activities are practised in the Villages.

- VPRP Preparation
- VPRP Gram Sabha
- Health Camp
- Opening of School during Lockdown
- Opening of Market in Pallel Area
- Convergence Mela



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# Annexure 1 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) Cluster Level Federation (CLF) and Village Level Federation (VLF)
- ✓ Arrange logistics (attendance, refreshments, banners, etc.).
- ✓ Manage documentation and media (photos, videos).
- ✓ Send invitations to guests, media, and government departments.
- ✓ Facilitate consultations with PRIs and schools.
- Monitor and review progress.
- ✓ Include SISD and campaign issues in Management Committee agendas.
- b) Social Action Sub-Committee (SASC) of the VLF Mobilisation and Engagement
- ✓ Mobilise SHG members and coordinate school-level arrangements.
- Encourage youth/village members to set up small vendors during events.
- Circulate event-related information such as schedules, uniform checklists, water, lunch boxes, etc.
- c) SISD Cadre of the VLF Campaign Execution
- ✓ Serve as timekeeper and coordinator.
- ✓ Follow up with SHGs and Executive Committee members.
- ✓ Facilitate sessions and provide implementation support.





## d) Internal Mentor

- ✓ Identify and guide SISD cadres as facilitators.
  - ✓ Coordinate with Mission and CLFs for campaign planning.
  - ✓ Prepare calendars and timelines.
  - Foster collaboration with Village Authorities (VAs), SMCs, Schools, and other stakeholders.
  - ✓ Facilitate across all thematic components.
  - ✓ Ensure attendance and submit reports to the concerned authorities



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