

Press Release from Education Department

Block-Level Orientation on Reintegration of Out-of-School Children Held at Khamdong

Gangtok, 23 September 2026: A Block-level “Orientation on Operational Guidelines for Reintegration of Out-of-School Children in Sikkim” for the Block Information Team, Panchayat Members, Ward Councillors, Heads of Institutions (HOIs) and School Management Committee (SMC) Chairpersons of Government and Private Schools under Khamdong Block was held at the Auditorium Hall of PM SHRI Singtam Senior Secondary School on 22 September 2026.

The programme was organised under the aegis of Samagra Shiksha, State Project Office, Education Department, Government of Sikkim, in collaboration with the District Education Office, Gangtok District.

The programme was attended by Mrs. Asha Khatri, Additional Director, Samagra Shiksha, Education Department; Mrs. Chimi Denzongpa, Chief Education Officer, Gangtok District; Joint Director, Skill Development Department; Block Development Officer, Khamdong BAC; Panchayat President and Ward Panchayats of various wards under Khamdong Block; and Ward Councillors from Singtam Nagar Nigam.

The programme also witnessed the participation of Block Education officials, BRCs, CRCs, School Heads and teachers representing 27 Government and Private Schools under Khamdong Block, along with members of the School Management Committees.

School dropouts and Out-of-School Children (OoSC) continue to remain an important challenge despite sustained efforts to improve access to and retention in education. Children who remain outside the education system are more vulnerable to risks such as child labour, early marriage, substance abuse, exploitation and long-term social exclusion, which can adversely affect human capital development and the socio-economic progress of the State.

Taking cognizance of the issue, the Education Department, Government of Sikkim, has developed the “Operational Guidelines for Reintegration of Out-of-School Children in Sikkim”, aimed at ensuring zero dropout and universal retention of children in the age group of 6–18 years. The Guidelines seek to rehabilitate, reintegrate and reskill OoSC through flexible, dignified and sustainable pathways, while also establishing mechanisms for the early identification and prevention of children at risk of dropping out.

The Guidelines were officially launched as a State policy on 15 August 2026 by the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Sikkim, Shri Prem Singh Tamang.

As part of the implementation process, the Khamdong Block of Gangtok District has been selected as a pilot area to systematically operationalise and test the mechanisms for identifying children at risk of dropping out, identification and tracking of OoSC, provision of special training, reintegration and universal retention before scaling up the initiative across the State.

The opening session and introduction to the programme were presented by Mr. Sushil Tamang, Deputy Director, Samagra Shiksha, Education Department, followed by a keynote address by Mrs. Chimi Denzongpa, Chief Education Officer, Gangtok District.

Subsequently, Mrs. Asha Khatri, Additional Director, Samagra Shiksha, delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the various provisions, modalities and implementation mechanisms under the Operational Guidelines for Reintegration of Out-of-School Children in Sikkim.

A key focus of the presentation was on the roles and responsibilities of the Block Implementation Team (BIT) in developing and maintaining the Dropout Registry, as well as the role of schools in developing and maintaining the At-Risk Register. The importance of timely identification, tracking, follow-up and coordinated intervention for children at risk of dropping out was also highlighted.

Mr. Amrit Sharma Social Worker from District Child Protection Unit under Women, Child & Senior Citizen & Divyangjan Welfare Department made a presentation on the mechanism for conducting the Social Investigation Report (SIR) of Out-of-School Children, highlighting the importance of understanding the individual, family, social and economic circumstances of children for appropriate intervention and reintegration.

Mr. K.C. Rai, Joint Director, Skill Development Department, also briefed the participants on various training and skill-development programmes being offered by the Department and highlighted the opportunities available for skill development and alternative pathways for eligible children and youth.

An open interactive session was subsequently conducted, providing participants with an opportunity to raise queries, share feedback and offer suggestions regarding the implementation of the Operational Guidelines at the grassroots level.

The orientation marked an important step towards strengthening school-community convergence, early identification of children at risk of dropping out, systematic tracking of OoSC, inter-departmental coordination and effective reintegration and retention of children in education and appropriate skill-development pathways.

The programme concluded with detailed discussions and deliberations on the ward-wise assignment of areas/councils to the Block Implementation Team functionaries for systematic identification and development of the Dropout Registry