

Press Release from Social Welfare Department

Gangtok, August 13: The 4th State Level Nasha Mukta Sikkim Committee meeting was convened on August 12, 2025 at the Conference Hall of the Social Welfare Department, Lumsey, Tadong, under the chairpersonship of Smt. Sarika Pradhan, Secretary, Social Welfare Department.

The meeting was attended by key officials, including Shri Mahesh Sharma (Additional Director, Social Welfare Department), Shri K.P. Sharma (Additional Director/TI, SSACS), Smt. Gonam Bhutia (Additional Director, Education Department), Shri N.B. Bishwakarma (Joint Secretary, Women, Child, Senior Citizen and Divyangjan Welfare Department), Smt. Barsha Gurung (Joint Chief Architect, Rural Development Department), Shri Novin Rai (DySP, SPS), Shri Ram Kumar Tamang (Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department), along with representatives from various rehabilitation centres.

Key discussions and decisions are as follows:

The meeting commenced with a review of the four Sahayogi programmes — the successful training of teachers under Sahayogi Mitra, the training of Motor Vehicle Inspectors and Police Inspectors under Sahayogi Sarathi, and the follow-up of Nodal Officers under Sahayogi Karmachari. It was noted that Sahayogi Aama is yet to be implemented at the grassroots level.

District-Level Initiatives:

District Collectors from all six districts have successfully conducted awareness programmes in their respective jurisdictions. Since Resource persons are trained through Sahayogi Mitra and Sahayogi Sarathi from every districts. District Collectors will be requested to use these trained resources.

Establishment of De-Addiction Centre in Jail:

Shri Mahesh Sharma (Additional Director, Social Welfare Department) informed that the Government of India has instructed the establishment of a de-addiction centre within the state prison. The Secretary, Social Welfare Department, stressed the importance of working in coordination with the Health Department and Home Department to plan the operational framework of the proposed facility.

Kitchudumra Project:

The Kitchudumra facility is completed and will soon be operationalized as per the direction of the Chief Secretary. The Government will determine its operational model.

Sahayogi Aama Programme:

This initiative, which empowers women from Self Help groups to act as community vigilantes, is currently on hold. The Secretary, Social Welfare Department, proposed convening a second-round meeting with the Rural Development Department. She emphasized training Block Level Coordinators alongside Anganwadi workers at the district level, enabling them to serve as master trainers and assist District Collectors in rolling out the programme across all districts. The active involvement of Anganwadi centres and SHGs already working to curb substance abuse was highlighted as a crucial advantage for implementation.

Sahayogi Sarathi Initiative:

The Transport Department has identified 172 driver associations. With their cooperation and with recently trained MVI's and AMIV,s as master volunteers, they will sensitize all drivers' association and work towards controlling of transportation of illegal substance with the Associations initiative.

Addiction and Relapse Prevention:

The Secretary, Social Welfare Department, invited suggestions from the Committee on strategies to prevent relapse among rehabilitated individuals. Proposals included advanced training for counsellors, community engagement in awareness drives, and regular progress reviews.

Representatives from rehabilitation centres noted that family breakdowns are a major cause of substance dependence with Sahayogi Mitra may have to look into this matter seriously.

The meeting concluded with a collective agreement that the success of Nasha Mukta Sikkim will depend on robust inter-departmental coordination, active community participation, and consistent monitoring of all initiatives.

The session ended with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Shri Ram Kumar Tamang, Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department, who commended the commitment of all stakeholders and emphasized the need for sustained collaboration, resource-sharing, and integrated strategies towards achieving a drug-free Sikkim