

Gender Equity Movement in Schools



Campaign

Guide



Promoting gender equity
with the children, by the children

Gender Equity Movement in Schools



Campaign Guide

This campaign guide aims to support facilitators to organize campaign on gender and violence in schools. This is based on the intervention research project – Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) – that was implemented in Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) schools by International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Committee of Resource Organizations (CORO) for Literacy and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).

International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), founded in 1976, is a private, non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, DC, with the Asia regional office in New Delhi, India; and East Africa regional office in Nairobi, Kenya. ICRW's mission is to empower women, advance gender equality and fight poverty in the developing world. To accomplish this, ICRW works with partners to conduct empirical research, build capacity and advocate for evidence-based, practical ways to improve policies and programs.

Committee of Resource Organizations (CORO) for Literacy is a non-profit organization registered in 1990 for the propagation of adult literacy in the Mumbai slums. CORO is registered under the Societies' Registration Act (1860) and also under the Bombay Public Trust Act (1950). Transformation of CORO from an initiative in literacy learning to a grassroots youth and women's organization is an unfolding of empowering processes for community youth and women. Engaging grassroots women and men in combating gender based violence has been CORO's unique demonstrative proposition.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) was established in 1936, as the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work. In 1964, it was recognized as a deemed University by the Government of India. The institute has consistently worked for the promotion of sustainable, equitable and participatory development, social welfare and social justice through its various professional education programs, research, field action and dissemination.

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* Now working elsewhere.

Now working with Instituto Promundo

Running a Gender Campaign

Hello!

Now that you have this exciting book in your hand, you must be wondering what this is all about.

This is a guide on how to conduct campaign activities in school. This will take you through the process of understanding what a campaign is, its importance and how to organize it. It draws upon our experience of implementing the GEMS campaign that addressed issues of gender and violence. This guide can also be used to address any other issue in a school setting.

GEMS (Gender Equity Movement in Schools) is a school-based program currently running in the Municipal Schools of Mumbai. It aims to promote gender equality by encouraging equal relationships between girls and boys, examining the social norms that define men's and women's roles, and questioning the use of violence. The main components of GEMS are Group Education Activities (GEA) and a campaign. The GEA uses participatory methodologies such as role plays, games, debates and discussions and are held in classrooms during a regular school day.

The GEMS campaign is a week-long series of fun and energy-filled events aimed at reaching out to students at large. It involves games, competitions, debates and short plays, that are designed in consultation with students.

It will be useful to read this guide along with the other materials of the GEMS kit (Training manual and My GEMS Diary). This will provide familiarity with the basic concepts of gender and violence that are key to the GEMS program.

Have a good campaign!

Introduction

"Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever does."

Margaret Mead



What is a Campaign?

There are many possible definitions for a campaign and the activity of campaigning. Some of the more useful definitions are:

- Campaigning is speaking up, drawing a community's attention to an important issue, and directing decision-makers towards a solution.
- Campaigning involves putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem and building support for action to solve the problem.
- Campaigns can involve many specific, short-term activities to reach a long-term vision of change.
- A campaign is a series of actions directed at changing policies, positions or programmes of any type of institution.

- Campaigning involves working with other people and organizations to make a difference.
- Campaigning consists of different strategies aimed at change at the local, provincial, national and/or international levels.

(Adapted from SARA/AED Advocacy Training Guide, by R. Sharma)

To summarize, a campaign is an effort to bring about some change. It is not one single action, but a combination of a number of actions, reports and events put together in a sequenced plan *(UNDP, Blue Book)*.

A campaign should be big enough to make a difference, but manageable enough to get short-term results. It should build the base for future campaigns and actions.



Some examples of campaign



1. Why do a Gender Campaign in School?



All the time, decisions are being made that affect your life; from climate change to food prices; from globalization to school meals. If you care strongly about anything, there's something you can do!

Because good campaigns can make things better

Many issues are raised and talked about, but there is something fundamental that we learn and do every day, as part of our normal lives, that we never stop to ponder on. Yet these small thoughts and actions shape what we are today and our future lives. This is about our roles, responsibilities, our actions and opportunities, what we are allowed to do and what we are not allowed to do. This is about being a boy and a girl and the values and worth associated with it. This is about gender. We may not realize it, but this affects our major life decisions such as education, health, marriage, relationships and career.

We believe that as we attain new knowledge in schools, we also learn the values around gender. Because learning about gender, or socialization of both boys and girls begins early, it is important

to start discussion together and initiate change processes at a young age, so that attitudes can be shaped and behaviors transformed to create an equal and just society.

A campaign can be a fun, yet effective way to start a public dialogue; thus, **the GEMS campaign**. It has helped to reach out to a large number of students and their teachers; and created an environment where they felt confident to talk, and discuss issues together.

Every campaign can raise an issue on which you can have your say – there are lots of opportunities to get involved. Sometime we may not know where to start planning a campaign. This guide can help with that. It doesn't contain everything you'll ever need to know about campaigning, but it is a starting point.

"Vision without action is merely dreaming. Action with no vision is just passing time. But, with vision and action, you can change the world."

Nelson Mandela

Key Steps in Planning a Campaign



There are certain important questions that we need to think through as we plan a campaign. Initially it may appear a long list; but a small team of facilitators, teachers and students with commitment and interest can effectively take it forward.

The key steps in planning a campaign are:

1. What is the goal of the campaign? What specific issue(s) will it address?
2. How to communicate about the campaign to others?
3. Do we have enough information about the issue that we want to address in the campaign?
4. What are the key messages that the campaign will focus on?
5. How are we going to organize the campaign?



- You can convince other people to sign up to it
- It focuses your energy
- You can work out what you need to do
- You will know when you have done it!

This is what we did in the **GEMS** campaign. We defined the goals that we wanted it to achieve, such as:

- Making girls and boys aware of their gender rights and existing discrimination
- Encourage girls and boys to raise their voice against gender discrimination and violence
- Initiate gender discussion among teachers

Let's discuss these in detail:

1. What is the goal of the campaign? What specific issue(s) will it address?

Think about the reasons behind conducting the campaign. Why do you think its important to do the campaign? One way is to describe this to yourself in simple terms or imagine telling it to a friend so that the goal is clearly stated. It is also important to spend time in thinking through the goal/s of your campaign so that:

Similarly, you can define your goal.

Is there something you have in your mind? Put it down here.

.....

.....

.....

.....

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.....

.....

Now that you have put down what you are going to do, the next obvious question is to think how this is going to be communicated to others; and whom all you need to speak to.



2. How to communicate about the campaign to others?

As **GEMS** was focused in schools, we decided that we must speak to students; to the teachers and to the headmaster of the school. Having a formal or necessary permission from school authorities is one thing, but having everyone in the school involved, convinced, and of course, excited is another! This is critical to the success of the campaign.

We talked to students in their classes. We raised certain questions on opportunities and discrimination such as whether girls get equal opportunity to education compared to boys. Why this difference? How does this affect their lives? Aren't these issues important to discuss? Do we face violence? Who perpetrates more and who faces more? Should we do something to stop it? Most often, these discussions led to a consensus on the importance of addressing these issues.

We also spoke to the headmaster at length. On our request, the headmaster called a brief meeting with all the teachers and gave us an opportunity to present the goals of the campaign and engage them in the planning and implementation phases.

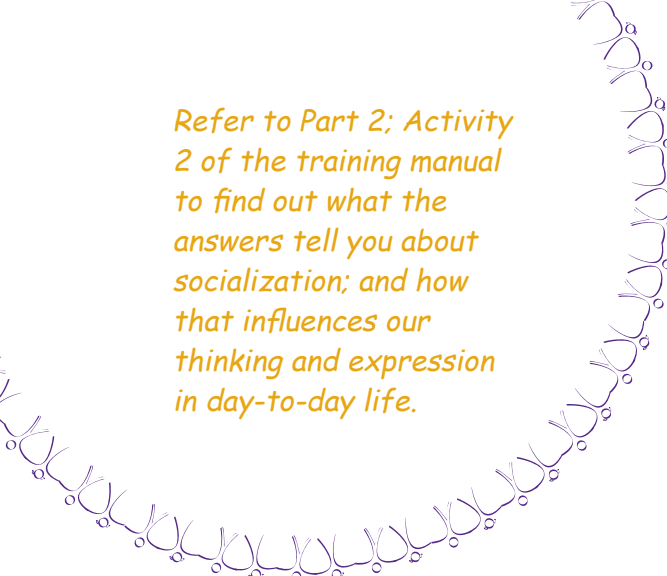
You can also use the assembly to share the goals of the campaign to the wider audience. Prepare a brief note, which can be put up on a notice board.

3. Is there enough information about the issue that you want to address in the campaign?

In order to effectively give messages in the campaign, it is important to think whether we have enough information about the issues we want to address.

As mentioned in the goal, the focus population group for **GEMS** was students and issues were gender and violence. We organized a few group discussions with them to explore their understanding on the issues of gender and violence. We tried to capture their expressions/ language, so that messages of campaign could be appropriate. Some of the questions we raised to gather information were:

- What do you do when you go home? Does your brother/sister do the same thing? If not the same, why?
- How many hours do you study? Does your brother/sister spend the same amount of time on studies? If not the same, why? Does this affect their performance?
- What type of work are men usually engaged in? How are these different from the work women normally engage in?



Refer to Part 2; Activity 2 of the training manual to find out what the answers tell you about socialization; and how that influences our thinking and expression in day-to-day life.

- Why do some people perpetrate violence?
- Is violence the only way to handle a difficult situation? What are the alternative ways?
- What should be done to stop violence?

Similarly, several other questions can be raised based on the goal and the focus of the campaign.

4. What are the key messages that the campaign will focus on?

Once there is enough information and understanding on the issue, you can start thinking about the messages of the campaign.

In GEMS, we identified the following three themes/messages for the campaign and all the activities were planned around these:

- **Barabari ki baat, larke-larkiyo ka saath** (Engaging boys and girls for equality)

- **Shiksha ki jarurat ladko ko jitni, larkiyo ko utni** (Girls need education as much as boys)
- **Chup pitoro, hinsa roko** (Break silence, stop violence)

5. How and where to do the campaign?

At this stage, think about the ‘when and how’ of organizing the campaign. In school, you may plan to do a separate event or integrate it with other events in school. For example:

- during the parent teacher meeting, you can organize an exhibition
- during the sports day, organize races that can highlight gender
- during the Diwali mela or the Christmas carnival, set up stalls
- during the school year, a dedicated Gender Bender Day can be organized

In GEMS, we organized a separate week-long campaign culminating in a ‘gender day’. First, we organized a planning meeting with facilitators. A brainstorming of potential activities was done. Then the facilitators had discussions with students to seek their inputs on the activities that would interest them.

In the second planning meeting, we revisited key messages, matched messages to activities, detailed out activities for the campaign and listed materials required. We also divided roles and responsibilities within the team.

GEMS Activities - Based on the inputs from the students, we decided to organize essay, poster and slogan competitions, games (*Khul ja simsim*, snake and ladder, race), quiz, safety steps and short plays. Some of these are detailed in section 7. You can think of some other activities or can use similar activities to address different issues.



Next planning steps - After reaching a consensus on the activities, the next step was to detail out the process for conducting each of these activities and put them on paper. This came handy while implementing those activities. It also helped in listing out the tasks to be done before, during and after the campaign. Some of the tasks were:

- Preparing the invitation note
- Developing the instruction sheet for facilitators on how to conduct each activity; the question to ask; messages to reinforce
- Preparing a checklist of all the materials required
- Preparing posters and banners
- Delegating tasks to team members



Posters developed and displayed during the GEMS Campaign



Materials required - A detailed process outline helped in identifying a list of materials required to conduct these activities. Most of these were simple, and easily available at low cost. For example, we required chart paper, sketch pen, paper and pen for conducting the competitions. Some other material like the snake and ladder cloth had to be printed.

Role and responsibilities - For delegation of tasks, each member was asked how he/she could contribute. Depending on the respective interest and skill set, they suggested the responsibilities they would like to take-up. The selected name was listed against each particular task.

Timeline - For the effective preparation, we also put a timeline for each of the task.

6. Implementation of the campaign

After all the preparation, you have reached the big day(s). It is time to execute the plans you have prepared!!

As mentioned earlier, the campaign may be for a few hours, a day or for a few days. The **GEMS** campaign was a week-long affair, which culminated in a fun and energy packed event, namely 'The GEMS Day'.

During the GEMS week, we visited each of the participating schools, informed the headmaster, the teachers and the students about the goal of the campaign, the theme and the activities in detail. We also shared the invitation note with them and encouraged students to share it with their parents and sibling(s).

With the help of the students, we put-up a participation sheet for sign-up for different activities such as essay competition, quiz, poster making. Posters and banners were put

up in schools. A few students were asked to volunteer, lead and co-ordinate this process. They encouraged their friends to sign-up for different activities and prepare for it.

Select students on gender and violence during the school assembly to initiate a dialogue.

On 'The GEMS Day', all the students of grades V, VI and VII gathered in the available open space within the school campus. There was a lot of enthusiasm and interest to show their skill and preparedness to address issues of gender and violence. Colorful banners and posters added to the brightness. Batches of students went from one activity to the other—posters, quiz, games.

Students made amazing posters and wrote wonderful essays and slogans. All the posters and slogans were displayed for others to see and appreciate. One of them depicted a woman floating around a spaceship exemplifying the achievements of Sunita Williams in space research; just like any other male space scientist.

The 'snake and ladder' game and the debates also attracted lots of students. All of them wanted to play these games. While ensuring active participation in the game, facilitators were able to maintain the primary objective of engaging students in discussion and reflection on the issues of gender and violence. During one such discussion, one of the students even justified having a 'snake' with the text 'women should accept violence silently'. According to him, women should never accept violence.

7. Some examples of the campaign activities

In this section, we are providing a description of a few activities, which you can use as ready reference while planning a campaign.

"Take a Pledge"

In each school, 'The GEMS Day' ended with a pledge ceremony presided over by the headmaster or a senior teacher.

I, _____(name), a student of _____(name of the school), swear that:

- I will treat all boys and girls equally;
- Will resolve all problems respectfully;
- Will protest against all kinds of violence.

Khul Ja Sim Sim - The Debate

This game is to be played between two groups at a time. Six (or more) statements to be written on separate boards, which are hidden. One of the groups had to take aim and hit one of the boards. The flap from the targeted board would be removed and the group would read the statement loudly. Then the facilitator would ask their opinion on the statement and their reasoning. The other team would be asked to give counter arguments. The facilitator would also pitch in during the discussion. At the end s/he would sum-up and tell them how men and women's roles are socially constructed and that the harmful and debilitating ones need to be challenged and changed. Statements used in this game can be:

- Boys are rational, girls are emotional
- Girls should not take up higher education like engineering as they will waste a seat that can help a boy
- Girls cannot play cricket
- Boys should not cry
- Boys are better in mathematics
- You can make any other statement on gender stereotypes



Snake and Ladder Game

Snake & Ladder game is an adaptation of popular board game with grid squares numbered 1 to 100. On certain squares on the grid are drawn a number of "ladders" connecting two squares together. Similarly a number of "snakes" also connect squares together. Snakes pull-down the player while ladders help in climbing up the squares and achieve higher scores. It is played by 2 or more players with a dice. The player who reaches '100' first, wins the game.

In the adapted version, we used 'ladders' to give positive messages and 'snakes' to emphasize the negative implication of inequitable gender norms, e.g. the square with a message 'giving girls equal opportunity for education' has a ladder, while the square with a message 'household chores are primarily a girls responsibility' has a snake. In order to make it more interesting, the game was printed on a sheet of 8X10 sq. ft., where players could stand in the square while playing.

During the game, whenever a player steps on a 'snake' or 'ladder' square, s/he had to read the message and respond to the facilitator's question related to that message. Other players and students standing at the fringe were also involved in discussion to create common understanding around a message. The game continues till one of the players reaches the 'winner square'.



- Conduct the gender bender quiz game
- Conduct the slogan writing competition
- Conduct the poetry writing competition
- Conduct a 'complete the story' competition

Complete the Story Competition

Complete the following story:

Rina is a 12 year old studying in Class 7. Rina has two elder brothers, Ajay and Vijay and an elder sister, Namrata. Her mother is a housewife and her father works in a factory which is close to the

place they stay. Rina loves going to school with her friends. They usually walk to school together. Rina's brothers study in Class 7 and Class 9. Rina's sister is the eldest and studies in Class 10.

One day her sister Namrata finds Rina crying. Lately she has noticed that Rina has been avoiding going to school and has become very quiet. She is getting worried and now when she sees her crying, she is all the more worried. She asks Rina, "What happened? Why are you crying? Has someone hurt you? Did you have a fight with someone?"

Rina looks at her sister and starts crying again, "Didi, when I go to school, there are these boys who tease me every time I walk past them. I try not to go alone, but still when they catch me, they tease me a lot..."

What do you think should happen now? Complete the story.

Similarly, you can create your own stories.

Express Yourself

Material Required: Old magazines and newspapers, glue sticks, sheets of chart paper, scissors

Time: 40 minutes

Procedure:

- Participants are divided into small groups – boys and girls separate. Avoid mixed groups, for this may prevent the emergence of stereotypes clearly.
- Each group is then handed a chart paper, 5-6 old magazines and newspapers along with glue stick and scissors.
- The groups need to make a collage showing how the people of opposite gender express happiness, sadness, jealousy and other emotions. That is, boys would make a collage showing how girls express their emotions or experience them; and girls would do it for boys.
- Each group is then asked to come and present their collage and explain it in front of all the participants.
- The facilitator then asks the participants to find similarities and differences across various groups in terms of the emotions expressed.
- Participants are asked to critically analyze certain stereotypes like 'boys don't cry' or 'they don't feel shy' or 'girls are more sensitive'.

Review Questions:

- Are emotions felt in the same manner across different cultures and genders?



Conduct various games with children (the process to be followed with the time and materials required is given above). Several activities of the GEMS Diary can also be used.



- What are the commonalities and differences?
- How does being aware of these stereotypes help/hinder?
- Do they feel that these categories are useful or should they be completely avoided?
- What role do you think the female actor played in the scene you just watched?
- What message is given to the audience when you watch these films?

Possible Discussion: The facilitator asks the participants to be conscious of their stereotypes and question them.

Feature Film

In this activity, screening of feature films/or short snippets will take place followed by small group discussions.

Material Required: TV, speakers and CD player

Time: 30 minutes

Procedure:

A short film will be shown. You can also select any portion of films like *Damini*, *Godmother*, *Bandit Queen*, *Khubsoorat*, *Corporate* etc., where you want to show a strong woman's character. Or you can show a film which has no role for the female actor other than being a fill-in woman's role.

Review Questions:

Subsequently girls/boys will discuss:

- Which characters/scenes were gender biased?
- What will be the effect of watching such scenes/ characters on the audience?

Crossword puzzle

Material Required: Crossword Puzzle in the activity book

Time: 60 minutes

Procedure: The crossword game could be adapted in the form of a simple puzzle which would comprise of questions on general awareness and also issues and information related to gender equity.

Questions:

- Q. A Maratha female warrior who fought against the British
- Q. The first Indian woman in space
- Q. The first Indian woman to scale Mount Everest
- Q. The first woman president of India

Possible Discussion: The facilitator highlights the achievements of women and links it to the ability of people across gender to excel in different professions.

Flash Card Game of Sports

Flash cards will have various types of sports depicted on the card and the group members will be asked to choose the type of sports that they would like to play. Based on the stereotypes associated with each sport, the facilitator initiates a discussion among the group on breaking those stereotypes.

Role Models

Group Members are asked to choose a role model. They are then asked to talk briefly about the role model and why they admire the person. The role model could be a man or a woman.

After the group finishes presenting, the facilitator explains to the group about the role models and how despite their gender, they influence people in different ways. Linking the role models to gender equity, the facilitator then explains how a person of any gender is capable of achieving great things in life.

Personal Hygiene

Think of different activities in maintaining hygiene.

Through this exercises, the group engages in a discussion of the importance of personal hygiene. It could start from brushing teeth to clipping nails and how these activities are similar for both the sexes. This again demonstrates the similarity between the routine activities of girls and boys highlighting the equity in needs.

Moot Court

Picture-based situations on gender issues are shown with descriptions to the groups in this game. The groups are asked to pick the situations and debate on the right and the wrong halves of the situation.

Through this, the group also understands simple gender perspectives facilitated by the teacher.

What happens next?

A comic strip with half a story line is given to the group and the group is asked to complete the story. Based on the way the story is developed, the facilitator tries to generate a discussion with them on the situations that could have taken place, what went right in the story and what went wrong.

How to say 'no' to things you don't want to do?

Presenting the group with situations and then expressing their reactions through role plays. With the help of these role plays, students are taught to be assertive and to be able to say 'no' to things they do not want to participate. This would also help them cope with peer pressure and bullying in school.

Know your Rights

Listing down the basic rights of children, and how these rights apply to every child (girl and boy alike).

These include the Right to Food, Education, Safety, Opportunity etc.

This would be educative and would also help in explaining the equality of rights between genders.

Chinese Whispers

This activity is done in two groups – girls' group and boys' group. There should be about 10 persons in each group. One person from each

group is given a sentence to remember. This person then joins her/his group and the group sits in a circle. The first person whispers the sentence in the ear of the person sitting next, and so on till the message reaches the last person. The last person utters the sentence loudly. The facilitator notes the difference in the original sentence with this one.

The possible outcomes are: both groups mis-communicated the sentence or one of the groups communicated it correctly.

Discussion: If both the groups have committed the mistake – what is the difference between boys and girls if both commit similar mistakes? If one of the group has not committed a mistake (which is very rare) – what did they do to ensure there was no error? How is it linked to their being male/female? So irrespective of being male/female, our results are outcome of our actions.

Hobby

Girls and boys separately tell their hobbies. The facilitator takes a note of it.

Discussion: Are there any major difference in the hobbies that girls and boys pursue? Is it related to gender conditioning?

Trust a friend

This activity is done in groups of three each. Two persons stand facing each other. The third person stands in between facing any one of them. This person is supposed to fall forward (on toes) and backward (on heels) with a belief that other two will hold her/him.

Discussion: The ‘falling’ person describes how much she/ he trusted the other two. Facilitators can give inputs at this stage to confirm whether this person was free-falling or not. How many girls displayed a better trust level as compared to boys? Ask a boy if he was the ‘falling’ guy would he trust two girls standing there to hold him? Why? Similarly ask a girl whether she would trust the boys to support her? Why?

8. Ideas for integrating Campaigns within ongoing school events

Running an exhibition for the Parent Teacher Meeting

- Collect the posters that you can exhibit
- Make banners
- Prepare a corner/notice board which is visible to people as they walk to the various classes for the meeting
- The notice board can have very attractive posters, facts and figures
- The posters can have important messages that you want to give to the parents
- Student volunteers can make badges/ buttons that can be distributed to parents when they enter the classes/pass the exhibition corner. The badge/button can have an attractive message like: *“I am a gender bender, are you?”*, or *“I treat my son and daughter alike, do you?”*

During sports day

Organize races that have gender as a theme:

- Boys and girls together- who can peel onions/ potatoes faster
- Hurdle race, which can include stitching buttons and dribbling balls. Ask boys and girls to compete in the same race. They will start from one point with two hurdles. At first, they will have to stick a button, and then run dribbling a ball. The first one to reach the finish line wins the race.
- Cycling from one end to the other, transferring water from the bucket at one end to the bucket at the other – with a team of two boys/two girls on each cycle, one rides, the other carries the water
- Organize posters and banners during the meet
- Organize for badges/buttons to be distributed by student volunteers

During Diwali mela/Christmas carnival

- Organize for a food stall to be run by the boys. (Will be interesting to train the boys to make a good *panipuri/ pavbhaji*, heating of *pavs/ vadapav/* making fresh *nimbu pani* and serving it)
- Organize for a game stall to be run by the girls
- Make posters and banners that talk about gender awareness and the importance of knowing ourselves.

- Provide information on where to get help in case one is a victim of gender violence, as well as important persons and numbers to contact.
- Provide information on what how to recognize gender violence.
- Put up a stall to give information on gender violence and counseling for anyone who wants to walk in and find out
- Put up a stall of books and information brochures (organizations who work for this cause can be invited to set up their stall or have their person sit in at the stall with the relevant information
- Set up a play for the visitors, make an announcement before you stage the play (*nukkad nataks* do not require elaborate costumes or props)
- Have a stall with games (snakes and ladder, potato/onion peeling, cycle racing or other such races can be thought of)

Gender Bender Day

Setting up a separate day when you will celebrate the evolution of a gender just society.

Themes for the posters/slogans/ essay competition/quiz can include

- Engaging boys and girls for equality
- Girls need education as much as boys
- Break silence, stop violence

- Boys make as good cooks as girls
- A gender just society is a healthy society
- I need to take care of myself

Children can be given the topics in advance and asked to discuss with their family members and get ideas from them.

Give the rules of each competition: Time – 40 to 45 minutes; number of words – 300–700, size of the poster, colours to be used, language of the essay/poems, how the winner will be judged etc.

- Organize for competitions
- Get students to participate
- Make announcements for this two weeks in advance
- Put up posters in all classes listing the events and inviting participation from the students

- Close participation 3 days before to give you enough time to organize for the same and get all the gifts/prizes etc.
- Get in touch with organizations which can help you with the competition
- Set up and prepare the stalls
- Make banners and posters, put them up on THE DAY
- Inaugurate the function
- Set up the stalls – refer to the Christmas/ Diwali celebrations for the stall ideas
- Set up and stage the play
- Organize the competitions
- Conduct the debates on the themes



Have a Good Campaign!



