

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Sikkim, a small and beautiful state nested in the Himalayas is a landlocked state bounded on 3 sides by the international border Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal in the North-East, East and West respectively and south by the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. It has a total population of 540851 (according to the 2001 Census) of which 47% are female.

The social compositions (ethnic group) of Sikkim are - Lepcha (19%), Bhutia (16%) and Nepali (56%) which constitutes a majority of the population.

The "Measurement of Human Resource has put Sikkim among the top of all the small States of India, Which has brought home a National recognition Award recently on 6th August 2004, in a conclave of Chief Minister held at New Delhi. In the conclave, the results of evaluation of the performance of all the states, union territories was done and then ranking based on their performance in the various categories like prosperity and budget, healthcare, law and order, investment, environment, agriculture, infrastructure, consumer market and education on 250 variables of performance were announced.

In the category of small states, Sikkim was among the first three best performing states in the field of law and order, health and investment scenario while, begged the first rank in the field of education. The annual rank of the state in the category of smaller states was fifth.

The weightage is given to composite indices such as HDI (Human Development Index), GDI (Gender Development Index), Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and HPI (Human Poverty Index) in order to reflect the status of human development, gender development, empowerment of women and human poverty and non income dimension such as knowledge and longevity as well

Sikkim has recorded several significant gains in the human development indicators after merging with India as a 22nd state of Indian union.

1. The infant mortality rate dropped from 60 in 1991 to 51 in 1997.
2. Literacy rates went up from 7% in 1951 to almost 70% in 2001.
3. Close to 83% of 6-17 year old children attend school.
4. In 1998-99 as against the national average of 47%, 21% of children below three years were malnourished, the lowest among all the Indian states and Union Territories.

5. Per capita net-state Domestic product is more than double in real terms between 1980-1990 rising from Rs. 1571 in 1980 – 1981 to Rs. 9472 in 1995-1996. This was 63% higher than income reported in Bihar.
6. Physical indicators of quality of life also suggest reasonable provisioning of many basic amenities in Sikkim according to the NFHS (National Family Health Survey) for 1988-1989.
7. Over 80% of households have electricity as against 60% for all India.
8. Almost 85% of households have drinking water that is piped or from a hand pumps as against 78% for India as a whole.
9. Closed to 73% of households have a toilettes or latrine facility as against 36% for the whole country.

Under the measurement of HDI (Human Development Index), women of Sikkim have been given special place in GDI (Gender Development Index), GEM (Gender Empowerment Measures) calculations. Women enjoy many freedoms and have recorded significant gains in the race of overall human development. However, like in many parts of the world, they still live in an unequal world. In Sikkim, women enjoy relatively greater freedom than in other parts of the country.

- According to the census of India 1991, closed to 38% of the women participated in the work force as against the national average of 20% (National Family Health Survey II for 1998- 1999).
- The median age at marriage is 19.8 years more than 3 year higher than the national average of 16.4 year.
- Some 79% of women have access to money as against the national average of 60% and 28% in Nagaland.
- Married women (42%) do not need permission to visit friends and relatives; the proportion is 24% India as a whole.
- 11% of every married woman have been beaten or physically mistreated since the age of 15 years. The Proportion for all India is 21%.
- Another striking feature of Sikkim is the absence of gender differentials along many indicators of human development. For instance in 1998-99 83.2% of boys and 82.6% of girls between 6-17 years attended school. In contrast to unfavorable sex ratio in population as a whole, the number of women in Government employment is greater than man. They are more visible in public sphere in Sikkim than a norm for India and south Asia as a whole.
- There has been no reported case of gender discrimination, inequality, sexual harassment, infanticide or dowry related death in Sikkim.

- The fact that in 1999-2000 the number of women headed houses in Sikkim rural areas (142 per thousand) was higher than national average, indicates not only the impact of migration but also the status accorded to women in the state.
- The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Indian constitution (1/3 reservation in Panchayat is implemented) has ensured equal access and increase participation in political power structure of women. The PRIs (Panchayat Raj Institution) and local self Government, will be actively involved in the implementation and execution of the National policy for women, at the grass root levels.

State government has taken some important decision for Up-Liftment of women in the state

- One MP out of two to represent the parliament
- Two women MLAs out of 32 to represent State Assembly
- At least one woman Panchayat member compulsory for every Panchayat Unit in the State
- Both the Central /State govt. have introduced a number of Programmes such as Mahila Samridhi Yojana, Balika samridhi Yojana, Small Family Scheme and Other women specific welfare and Empowerment programme to promote women's welfare and their Empowerment.

Taking the due from global HDRs (Human Development Reports), more than 100 National HDRs have been prepared. India has not only provided National HDR but have pioneered innovate sub-national HDRs. After Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka the Govt. of Sikkim is the 3rd in the Country 1st in East and North East to prepare significant Documents.

Within these favourable prevailing situations, women empowerment is still an eye-wash in the state; women still face unequal opportunities in a variety of spheres-

- 1) A woman is considered to be an asset in the household and commands a bride price but she has no rights of inheritance. It is only when a daughter remains unmarried that parents customarily transfers some property to her.
- 2) If Sikkimese women married a person, who is not a Sikkim subject holder the husband and off spring born of that marriage shall acquire no interest in any immovable property. which she may hold in Sikkim by virtue of Section IV of this Regulation. As Sikkim subject ship has come to an end with the incorporation of Sikkim as a constituent state in the Union of India, this law has now lost all its force and has no longer any field to operate. But yet the regulation has not yet been repealed by the legislature.
- 3) Women still remain largely involved in traditional and unpaid or meagerly paid economic activities mostly as agricultural labors and lower rung of other activities as well

- 4) Girls are typically denied the opportunity to pursue higher studies / education since it often involves moving out of the villages, districts and even the state
- 5) Socio –cultural and family considerations often deny women the opportunity to pursue employment outside the state

Gradually, with the inter-play of favourable factors in the due course of time, the condition of women has become better, which is reflected in the HDI scores of the state. Since the mid 1970's, the country have scored well in Human Development indicators

It has lower birth, death and infant mortality rates than the country as a whole. Its population is currently growing at an annual rate of 1.3% compared to the all India rate of 1.8%.The Human Development Index recently completed for Sikkim has shown steady improvement since 1991, although rate of increase has slowed down between 1995-1998.The HDI, which was 0.454 in 1991 rose to 0.509 in 1995 and to 0.532 in 1998. The East District has the highest HDI scores followed by South, West and North.

Sikkim literacy rate of 69.68% (2001) is well above the national average of 65.38% supported by the monthly expenditure of Rs. 960 per student is far above the all India average of Rs. 210 per student. Sikkim teacher/Pupil ratio of 1:19 at the primary level is good compared to all India ratio of 1:46 in 1995. Even though the state performs well on its Gender Development Index (GDI) the enrolment of girls is lower than that of boys at all levels except in the middle School. The girls' drop out rate is higher because of relatively early age of marriage. Over 60% of rural women and 70% of urban women get married before they are 20 years old.

Studies have shown that Family Health and Education are positively linked with the level of Mother's education. Sikkim's health standards have improved significantly over the last 15 years. Better health and Medical Facilities have hindered the infant mortality rate from 88 per 1000 in 1988 to 51 per 1000 in 1997 against the national rate of 71 per thousand. The birth rate of 1997 was 19.8 per 1000 and the death rate was 6.5 per 1000, which are lower than the all India average of 27.2 and 8.9 per 1000 respectively. The state also pays for secondary and tertiary health and treatment in and outside the state. According to 2001 Census, the sex ratio in India is 933 Female per 1000 Males, in which Sikkim has lower of 875 Females per 1000 Males.

Higher Maternal Mortality is the acute problem of Sikkim's women. The reasons beyond it are believed to be:

- i. Early marriage.
- ii. Burden of work at home and in the field at early age.
- iii. Bearing child – high risk during pregnancy and childbirths.

Sikkim has been growing at a satisfactory – rate of nearly 14.5% per annum between 1980-81 and 1995-96. Real growth rate during 12980-81 to 1991-92 was impressive at 10%, which is far higher than all India average growth. Higher growth should ideally lead to low unemployment and eradication of poverty.

Further more with almost 38% of the population below the age of 15, a large number of young people will be joining the labor force in the near future, which could exacerbate the unemployment problem unless job opportunities are created for them.

In Sikkim, the 73rd and 74th constitutional Amendment has been implemented and the new Sikkim Panchayat Act 1995 has been enacted and permanent Lok Adalats in all districts are set-up.

For women 33% representatives have been reserved in Panchayat at all levels and a 30% reservation in government job. Key Vehicle of social Mobilization for local democracy has been very effective.

Sikkim comes close to being a model state of India in terms of development interventions, social harmony and political process of its integration into the national Mainstream.

CHAPTER - 2

SOCIO – DEMOGRAPHIC SCENERIO

Communities, cultures, religions and customs of different hues intermingle freely here in Sikkim, to constitute a homogeneous blend. Hindu temples coexist with Buddhist monasteries and there are even a few Christian churches, Muslim mosques and Sikh Gurudwaras.

The predominant communities are the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese, Women attributes high Position in the society. In the urban areas Marwaries, Biharis, Bengalis, South Indians, and Punjabis have also settled who are mostly engaged in business and government services.

Cultural and economic forces boosted by the information technology and development activities are reshaping the way of life of the Sikkimese. Sikkimese has however proved to be resilient, accepting the benefits of progress while retaining their ethnic identity.

Lepchas

Lepchas, mean 'Ravine Folk'. The earliest Lepcha settlers were believers in the Bon faith or Mune faith based on spirits, good and bad, witch crafty and exorcism were very common. The well-known deities of the Lepcha are It bumoo, Rom, Itbu Debu Rom, Kongchen, Konglo and Tamsang thing.

Major festival of the Lepcha is the Namsoong marking the beginning of the New Year. The Lepcha priests are known as Bomthing. Lepchas population is concentrated in the central part of Sikkim areas encompassing the confluence of Lachen and Lachung rivers and Dickchu. They settle on steep hillsides living on agriculture of paddy, cardamom and oranges.

Life in a Lepcha dwelling is very simple, male wears a dress called 'Pagi', and the female wears 2 pieces dress called 'Tago' and 'Domdyan'. They speak Lepcha and are good at archery used for hunting and gatherings of food.

The polyandry marriages are permitted amongst the Lepchas although this is now becoming very rare. The Nuptial customs are quite intriguing. After both the parties have evinced interest in establishing marital relations, the boys' maternal uncle approaches the parents of the girl with some bottles of liquor, scarf and some money. The marriage can be ended but the husband has to pay some money to the girl's parents. The government feels protective towards the Lepchas, believing that they represent

a conservative force –a balance wheel which helps save a way of life from being overwhelmed by western culture.

The Bhutias

Bhutias, the other community are evenly distributed throughout the state of Sikkim, where they are the major inhabitants, they are known as the Lachungpas and Lachenpas. They name their own traditional legal system as DZumsa (public meeting place) to settle their disputes. The Bhutia's aristocrats are known as 'Kazis' they speak Sikkimese language, which infact, is a dialect of Tibetan language and also the script is the same. Marriage in a Bhutia family is arranged through negotiations by the paternal or maternal uncle of the boy who goes to the bride's place with gifts to ask for the hand to tie a knot with his nephew.

The traditional dress of the Female member is known as 'Bakhu', 'Honju' and 'Pangdin' (it is a symbol of a married women). Ladies are fond of heavy Jewellery made of pure gold.

Nepalese

The Nepali community constitutes 70% of the total population of Sikkim. A major sub-cultural stock of the Nepalese is the 'Keratis'. Other communities of Nepalese are Pradhan, newars; service castes are Kamis, Damais and Sarkis; Priests or pundit are Sharmas; warriors' classes are Basnets, Thakuris and Chettris.

The language spoken by Nepalis is of 'Devanagari script' understood and spoken commonly all over the state, which has got its inclusion in the 8th Scheduled of the Indian constitution.

In terms of religious beliefs the population of Sikkim is predominantly Hindu (68%) Buddhist is quite a large community (27%) and Christian represents 3% of the total population.

Demographic Constituents:

According to the Gazetteer of Sikkim (1891), Nepalese with 56 percent (including Murmi) constituted a majority of the population followed by the Lepchas (18 percent) and Bhutias (16 Percent). More than a hundred years later, the share of Lepcha population has gone down to 14 percent, whereas that of the Nepalese climbed to almost 70 percent with the Bhutias constituting more or less the same proportion.

All these three ethnic groups have their own language, culture and social practices and have a strong socio-cultural bond among themselves (Risley, 1894)

According to the 2001 Census of India, the population of Sikkim was 540,493, of which 46.7 percent were women. The population of Sikkim has increased by more than 12 times over the century

1891-1991 and an increase of 33 percent in the decade 1991-2001. However the population of Sikkim continues to account, even in 2001 for only 0.05% of the country's population.

RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION OF SIKKIM BY SEX-2001

State/district	POPULATION			
	Sector	Persons	Male	Female
North	Rural	39775	22642	17133
	Urban	1248	768	480
	Total	41023	23410	17613
East	Rural	191803	103852	87951
	Urban	52987	28893	24094
	Total	244790	132745	112045
South	Rural	127560	66083	61477
	Urban	3946	2144	1802
	Total	131506	68227	63279
West	Rural	121350	62809	58541
	Urban	1824	1026	798
	Total	123174	63835	59339
Sikkim	Rural	480488	255386	225102
	Urban	60005	32831	27174
	Total	540493	288217	252276
India	Rural	740255371	380438194	359817177
	Urban	284995688	149984221	135011467
	Total	1025251059	530422415	494828644

Source: Sikkim provisional population total of 2001

Variation in population growth:

The highest growth rate was recorded between 1901 and 1911, while a decline (of 6,199 persons) was recorded in the following decade (1911-21). This decline has been partly attributed to deaths resulting from the great influenza epidemic of 1917 and partly to the deaths of Gurkha Soldiers from the Sikkim in the World War I. Since then; for half a century, the population growth was Steady but low. Between 1971-81, there was a substantial increase (at a rate of 5.07% per annum) especially in the urban areas. This could be attributed to the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union and the

subsequent in- migration triggered off by large-scale development activities in the state. In the following decade (1981-1991) population continued to grow although, at a much lower rate (an average of 2.85%per annum). whereas in 1901-2001, the rate of growth was higher at 3.29%.

Population growth rates varied across districts. The North districts recorded the decennial increase of almost 10.4% in 1971-1981 and 11.07% in 1991-2001. Decennial increased highest at 18% during 1981-19991. Except for the West district, for which the high growth rate is attributed to the opening of the other three districts, mainly on infrastructure. All districts recorded a sharp fall in the decadal growth rate between 1981and 1991.

**ESTIMATES OF BIRTH RATE, DEATH RATE, NATURAL GROWTH RATE AND INFANT MORTALITY RATE
SIKKIM VIS-À-VIS INDIA**

Year	Sikkim											
	Birth Rate			Death Rate			Natural Growth Rate			Infant Mortality Rate		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
1995	22.5	22.8	16.4	6.9	7.0	3.0	-	-	-	47	47	27
1996	20.0	20.3	11.3	6.5	6.7	3.4	-	-	-	47	47	32
1997	19.8	20.0	12.8	6.5	6.6	3.5	13.3	13.4	9.3	51	51	41
1998	20.9	21.2	13.5	6.1	6.2	3.9	-	-	-	52	52	44
1999	21.6	21.9	14.7	5.8	5.9	3.4	15.8	16.0	11.3	49	50	33
2000	21.8	22.1	14.8	5.7	5.7	4.0	16.2	16.4	10.7	49	49	36

Note: IMR shown against 1997, 1998 1999are for the periods1995-1997, 1996-98&1997-99 respectively.

The Scheduled Tribe (ST) population (Lepcha and Bhutia including Chumbipa, Dophapa, Dukpa, Kagateg, Sherpa, Tibetan, Tromopa and Yolmo) constitutes over 22% of population; Whereas Scheduled Caste (SC) population (Kami, Damai, Lohar, Sarki and Majhi) constitutes only 5.93%. Following the trend of all states of India, except Kerala and Uttar Pradesh, the population of SC population increased between 1981 and 1991.

In contrast, the pattern of change for ST population, which varied widely across the country, was one of decline. The backward castes (Tamang, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Sunwar) also constitute the significant section of the population.

Distribution of scheduled caste population by sex

District	Sub-division	Sex-wise Scheduled Caste population		
		Male	Female	Total
North	Chungthang	24	24	48
	Mangan	111	115	226
	Total	135	139	274
East	Gangtok	4640	4363	9003
	Pakyong	1932	1815	3747
	Total	6572	6178	12750
South	Namehi	2029	2123	4152
	Ravangla	790	793	1583
	Total	2819	2916	5735
West	Gayalashing	1330	1238	2568
	Soreng	1346	1272	2618
	Total	2676	1510	5186
State		12202	11743	23945

Source: Statistical profile of Scheduled Caste, Social Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim.

DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED TRIBE POPULATION BY SEX

District	Sub-division	Sex-wise scheduled Tribe population		
		Male	Female	Total
North	Chungthang	1356	1242	2598
	Mangan	6743	6091	12834
	Total	8099	7333	15432
East	Gangtok	12557	11726	24283
	Pakyong	4133	3768	7901
	Total	16690	15494	32184
South	Namehi	3489	3334	6823
	Ravangla	3517	3235	6752
	Total	7006	6561	33575

District	Sub-division	Sex-wise scheduled Tribe population		
		Male	Female	Total
West	Gayalashing	5664	5029	10693
	Soreng	5232	4678	9910
	Total	10896	9707	20603
State		42691	39103	81794

Source: Statistical profile of Scheduled tribe social welfare department, govt. of Sikkim.

The total number of household in Sikkim was 76,329. These households are distributed in 411 revenue blocks, 447 Villages and 9 Towns (2001), in the state. Of the total households in the state, over 90% resided in the rural areas thereby making Sikkim predominantly a rural economy. The highest household size of 5.5 was recorded in the South Districts and the Lowest of 4.7 was in the North district.

**Sex ratio in rural and Town areas of SIKKIM (Females per 1000 males),
Sikkim human development Report**

Districts	Rural	Urban
North	836	581
Chungthang	782	
Mangan (HQ)	852	581
Pakyong	883	759
Rangpo	875	764
Singtam	901	
South		778
Namchi(HQ)	712	693
Ravong	898	620
Jorethang	914	
West	872	719
Gyalshing		760
Soreng(HQ)	919	626
Nayabazar	910	
Sikkim	928	866

Source: Sikkim: Registrar General of India (1991), district Census Handbook, Part XII- A & B, Series-22, pp.42-3, Directorate of Census operation, Sikkim, Government of India.

The North district comprises 60% of the total geographical area, which accounted for hardly 9% of the total population. Despite the fact that this district witnessed the highest decadal growth rate during 1971-1981, its density with 7 people per Sq. Km. in 1991 was insignificant. The majority of North districts population (55%) belonged to ST's while only, 4% belonged to SC's. It may be noted that this district has the highest population of ST to the total population in the state.

The East district, where the State Capital Gangtok is located, is the heavily populated district accounted for 46% of the population, implying a density of 187 persons per Sq. Km. Its share of SC population to the total population is 7%, which is the highest in the state followed closely by that of South district (6%). The North district, in contrast, has the lowest share of SC (4%) to the total population. In terms of population of ST (21%) the east district ranked infact second among all the four districts.

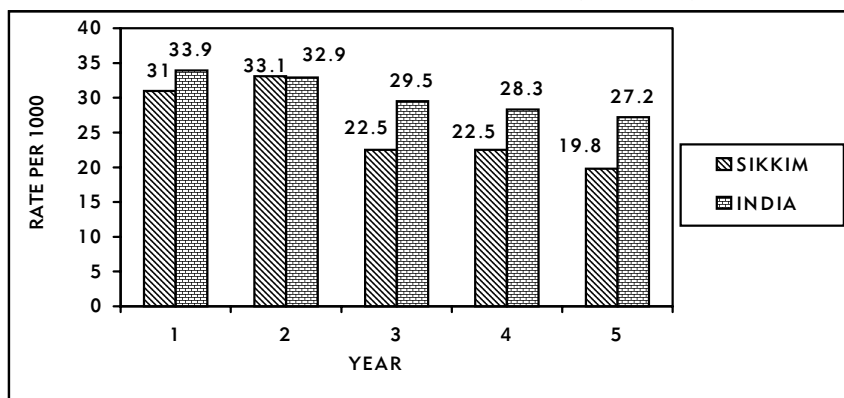
DISTRICT WISE DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED CASTE AND SCHEDULED TRIBE POPULATION 1991

District	% of SC to Total Population	% of ST to Total Population
North	4.00	55
East	7.00	21
South	6.00	17
West	5.00	20
Sikkim	24084(5.93)	90901(22)

Source: Registrar General of India (1991), Census of India, 1991, and Government of India.

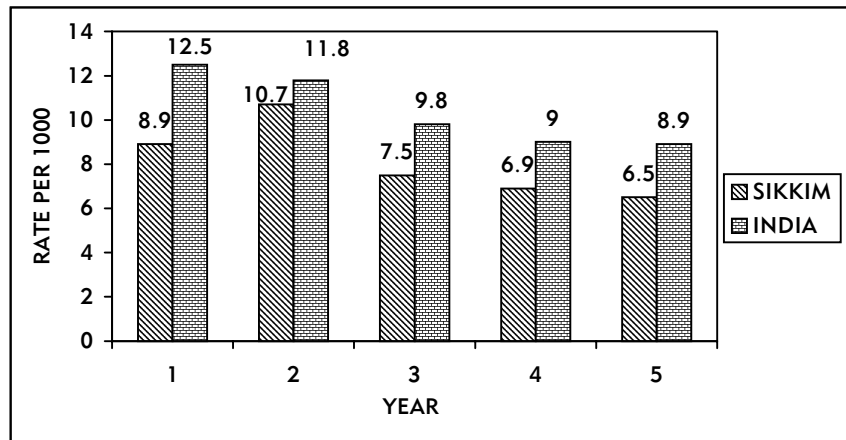
In the last twenty years, Sikkim has registered a steady decline in both birth rates and death rates at a pace faster than that of the country as a whole. In fact, the crude death rate of Sikkim is one of the lowest among the states and union Territories in India.

BIRTH RATE: SIKKIM AND INDIA (1981-97)



Source: Bureau of economic and statistics, Gangtok June -1999

DEATH RATE: SIKKIM AND INDIA

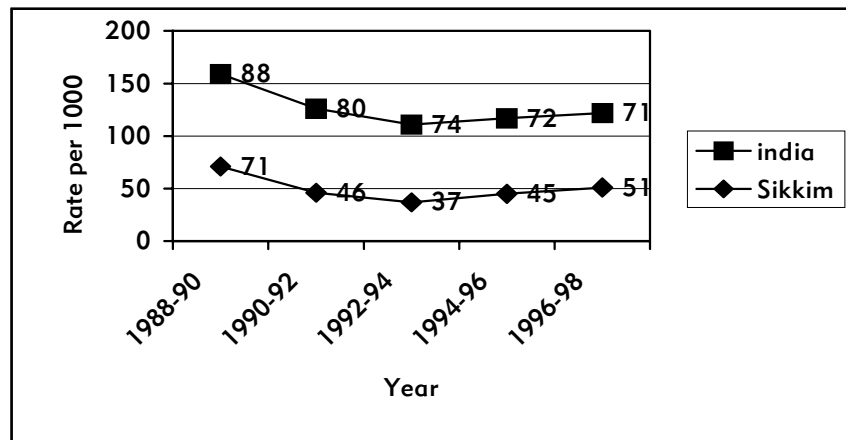


Source: Bureau of economic and statistics, Gangtok June –1999

INFANT MORIALIY RATE

Infant mortality Rate in (IMRS) in Sikkim has always been lower than those for the nation. In the late 1980s, a sharp decline has been recorded (moving from 77 per thousands in 1988-1990 to 37 per thousands in 1992-1994). However, since 1993-1995, there has been an increase in IMR (moving from 47 per thousands to 51 per thousands) that is indeed disturbing.

THREE-YEAR MOVING AVERAGE OF INFANT MORTALITY RATE PER 1000



Source: bureau of economic and statistics, Gangtok June –1999

Population projection indicate that the annual growth rate will continue to be almost double than that of the national average during the period from 1991 to 2016. This high rate of growth points to the need for interventions in the area of population management in state.

PROJECTED POPULATION 1996-2016

YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	URBAN POPULATION (%)
1996	485000	257000	229000	10.30
2001	570,000	296000	274000	11.64
2006	654,000	335000	318000	13.12
2011	714,000	363,000	351000	14.76
2016	739,000	373000	366000	16.56

Source: Registered General Of India (1991), State Profile 1991-India, Census Of India 1991, Government Of India.

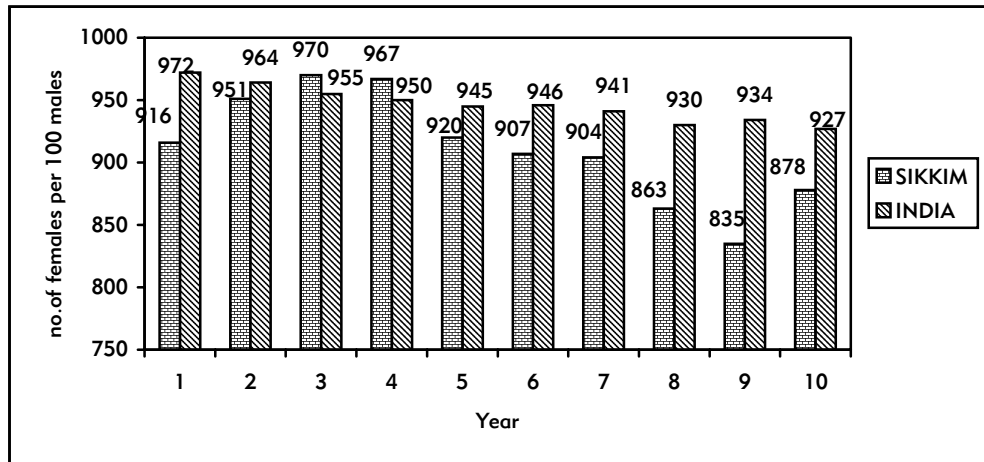
A positive feature however is that, Sikkim has a very young demographic profile, with only 4.5% of its population in the 60 and above age group. Population in the 0-14 age group is 39% of the total population, while 60% of the total population is below 24 years. Thus, state policies should focus more on the youth who, if properly motivated and trained, could be of tremendous value to the state building process.

Trends in Sex ratio

An important feature of the demographic trends in Sikkim is that till 2001 the sex ratio was moving lower than the national average. This could have been caused among other factors by in – migration of a large number of male workers.

Between 1991 and 2001, the sex ratio dropped in Sikkim from 878 to 875, the lowest in relation to the other north –eastern states. In 1991, there were 878 women per 1000 men, as compared to 933 at the national level. The ratio was even lower in urban areas, being as 581 in Mangan in the north and 620 in Namchi in the South. In rural areas it was relatively higher, being as high as 928 in Shoreng in the West district. The north district recorded the lowest female –male ratio in the state, being 836 in rural areas and 581 in urban areas. The east district ranking first (948), in terms of lowest Sex ratio in the age group 0-6 years (960).

SIKKIM AND INDIA: DECENNIAL SEX RATIO (1901-2001).



Source: Government of Sikkim, *Sikkim in brief, 1998*, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Gangtok, June 1999.

Interestingly, the female population in the age group 0-29 years was relatively higher than that of the male. This led to a much higher Sex – ratio (90%) for this group. The sex ratio was substantially lower for the 30 plus age group, dropping to 655/1000 for the 55-59 age groups. It again improved steadily for the 60-64 age groups, and was as high as 86% for the 80 plus age group. The steady improvement in the Sex ratio in the 60 plus age group, points to the fact that women, who survive the 30-59 years mortality zone tend to have a same life span as that of men.

Distribution of sex ratio by age group

Age Group	F/M Ratio (in %)
0-4	96.45
5-9	98.34
10-14	95.03
15-19	92.23
22-24	90.14
25-29	91.06
32-34	83.74
35-39	75.46
42-44	72.63
45-49	70.21

Age Group	F/M Ratio (in %)
52-54	66.23
55-59	65.45
62-64	72.41
65-69	74.70
70-74	72.47
75-79	77.89
80+	85.65
Age not stated	83.78
Total	87.80

Source: Registrar General of India (1991), Census of India, 1991, Govt. of India.

One possible reason behind these trends in Sex ratios according to the age groups could be that mortality rate among women in 30-59 age group was relatively higher than in the 20-29 and 60 plus age groups.

The highest decline in the ratio was recorded during 1971-1981, which coincides with high influx of migrant workers. The overwhelming proportion of male population among the migrants is also corroborated by the fact that it constituted as high as 61.54%, 60.88% and 56.88% of the total migrants in 1971, 1981 and 1991 respectively.

Regional disparities

Sikkim is divided into 4 Districts, North (Mangan) being away from large market of West Bengal and the capital city of Gangtok; does not enjoy the equal development of infrastructure, civil facilities, access to health and education schemes and employment opportunities as that of other 3 Districts, South (Namchi) West (Gyashing) and East (Gangtok). Moreover North Districts is unfavorable in terms of its topography because of extreme climate and mountainous terrain, which range in height from 17,000ft to 28,000ft. unlike the other districts. The habitations are scattered, there are very few roads and the area is traversed by a single state highway, only 7.69% of Sikkim's population live in this district, which account for 60% of land area, its population density is consequently extremely low at only 7 persons per sq. kms. compared to 187, 131,84 in East, South and West Districts respectively. Even though its position has been improving the North still scores lowest on both the Human Development and Gender Development Indices in all 3 time Periods, compared to the other Districts. North Districts is inferior in terms of health indices. It has highest Crude Death Rates and IMR; IMR is 60 per thousand live births, Compared to the state average of 51 and the Crude Death Rates is 9.94 per

thousand, compared to the state figure of 7.23. The Sex Ratio in the North is most unfavorable 916 per 1000, compared to 927 in East, 922 in the West and 924 in the South. In the North only 66.24% of the rural houses have electricity compared to 81.82% in the East, 77.78% in the West and 71.17% in the South (Gyatso and Bagdass 1998).

CHAPTER - 3

WOMEN AND HEALTH STATUS IN SIKKIM

There is a close link between education and better health care. Education particularly of female, greatly improves the ability of house-hold to manage basic health care, increases the nutrition content of diets, ensures more effective diagnosis of diseases and improves elementary health care. The role of Education in bringing down the rate of population growth is even more dramatic. There is particularly strong link between female literacy and lowering fertility rate and population growth gradually, tapering to replacement levels.

In the development approach, improvement in health status is viewed primarily as a product of Socio-economic development. By definition, development implies improved nutrition, hygienic living and working conditions, greater awareness of health problems and wider accessibility to health care services, which have a favorable effect on the health status of the people and Woman in particular.

Definition of health status and its measurement depends on the nature of the county's current health problems and on its capacity to deal with them. In essence, there are three components in the definition and measurement of health status; Physical, Psychological and social. In a wider perspective, health is defined in terms of adaptation to change in nature and society. Health status is generally related to income level and the specific health measures, which often fail to have much effect, when the surrounding Socio-economic and physical environments are unfavorable to health.

The expert committee of the Indian Council for Medical Research (INMR) and the Indian Council for social science Research (ICSSR) acknowledged this fact in its report of Health For All by 2000 A. D. "Health is a function, not only of Medical care but of the overall integrated development of socio-cultural, economic and Socio- political as well"

Improved health contributes to improve Socio-economic growth in different ways. Improved health is directly proportional to the improvement in educational Scenario or vice-versa, which together influence the HDI, GDI. Sound health, reduces production losses caused by worker illness. It permits the use of natural resources that had been totally or nearly inaccessible because of disease, it increases the enrolment of children in school and makes them better able to learn and it frees for alternative uses of resources that would otherwise have been spent on treating illness. The economic

gains are relatively greater for poor people, who are typically most handicapped by ill- health and who stand to gain the most from the development of under- utilized natural resources.

For the purpose of international comparison the WHO has recommended the use of Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Crude Mortality Rate (CMR), life expectancy at birth (LEB) and the proportion of Mortality at the age of 50 above (WHO 1997).

In the past few years, development of women have been receiving a special emphasis focusing on health issues, because the ratio of women to men in India is low (according to 2001 census, the sex ratio in India is 933 female per 1000 male). Indication is that statistically significant numbers of women die due to female infanticide, malnutrition, over work or lack of access to health care. Hence, not only the gross development but also the distributive aspects of development have positive effect on the women's health and population.

ANALYSIS OF HEALTH STATUS OF WOMEN IN SIKKIM

Sikkimese people are generally hale and hearty their normal ailment is related to inadequate environmental sanitations, worm trouble, goiter and tuberculosis, alcoholism which is number one public Health problem occupying an important place in State Healthy profile. New problems HIV/ AIDS and reappearance of malaria are very disturbing. Every preventive, curative and promotive service is provided but needs to be intensified in conformity with strategies to achieve the goal of "HEALTH FOR ALL". Accessibility of health services to people especially rural women in Sikkim is extremely poor due to inaccessibility of rugged hilly terrain and lack of adequate hospital, health care centers with qualified doctor and nurses in rural areas, general unawareness, ignorance, illiteracy of women folk and girl children are some of the discouraging factors responsible for low birth weight babies, high Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), chronic weakness from anemia, goiter, TB, Malnutrition in pregnant women. However in the rural areas traditional medicine has been continued to play an important role in Sikkim. There are large numbers of powerful traditional faith healer Dhani, Jhankri, Phenolongba. Bonbo (Nepali community) Poor and Nejum (Bhutia community) Bumuthing (Lepcha community) who depend on jhar phuk which is interestingly complicated expensive course of treatment using indigenous medicine. But as the literacy rate improved, awareness of other options grew through modern media; allopathic treatment started getting increasingly accepted by the villagers. This has led to a greater recourse to PHCs and PHSCs.

Before its merger with the Indian union in 1975, sikkim had only one major hospital- the Gangtok Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial (STNM) established in 1917 with 50 beds and 3 doctors. The Progress was made in health standards significantly over the last 15years. Difficult terrain, which increases the unit cost of service delivery as well as resources constraints had their impact in terms of unmet health targets in the state. It is appreciated that while in 1980 only 0.04% of the state

budgetary resources were allocated to health, which is increased to 0.43% in 1990s and went further to 5% in 1998. Better health and medical facilities have reduced the IMR from 88 per 1000 in 1988, to 57 per thousand in 1997 as against the national rate of 71 per thousand. The birth rate in 1997 was 19.8 per 1000 and death rate was 6.5 per 1000, which are lower than the all-India average of 27.2 and 8.9 per thousand respectively. Medical services along with food and basic medicines are provided / distributed at no cost to all impatient in hospital and PHC. The State also pays for Secondary and Tertiary health care treatment out side the State.

No. of Patients Refereed outside Sikkim for Treatment

Year	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
All Districts	333	269	362

Source: Health & Family Welfare Deptt, Govt. of Sikkim.

The Family Welfare and Mother and child Health (MCH) Programmed introduced in 1976-7, has had a significant impact:

- In 1976-7, hardly 30% of infants were immunized. This has increased to 62% in 1997.
- Basic health Services in the periphery and remote areas one provided by 293 indigenous dais (midwives), 345 health guides and a host of trained paramedics.
- Free Family planning services are on offer to eligible Couples through hospitals, PHCS and PHCSCs Couple protection rate has increased from 2% to 20.6%.
- A comprehensive Programme, the schools Health Programme initiated in 1979, covers student form class I to V with Services like immunization, health antenatal care from the state health agencies in rural areas rose from 3% in 1979 to 58% in 1997.
- The percentage of non-institutional deliveries has also declined from 95% in 1979 to 7.4% in 1997.

The results of improve health care are also partially reflected in changes in birth and death rates, which have been constantly lower than the national average of 27.2 per thousand, while the death rate was 6.5 per thousand as against the national figure of 8.9per 1000 population. The decline in the mortality rate is an indicator of better delivery of health care services, improved nutrition and higher rates of women’s literacy.

Yet, malnutrition and under- nutrition continue to be a cause of concern. A 1989 Survey of the record of age, weight and height and calculation of nutritional index indicated that

- 29% of Mother was under nourished.

- 14.8% were stunted (height less than 145 cm)
- Over 40 percent of children less than 5 year of age were suffering from various degree of malnutrition.

However figures for 1998-9 from National Family Health Survey (NFHS) show an improvement with regard to severe and moderate undernourishment for children under age 3, being 4.2% and 20.6% respectively as against the national average of 18% and 47%, while these figures continue to be better than the national averages. The Challenge of nutrition Security before the state is still formidable. In 1998-9 in fact, a large proportion of both women (61% as against 52% at the national level) and children (77% as against 74% at the national level) were reported as suffering from anemia.

The child Mortality rate of 32.12% is far higher than national rate of 11.1% (1996). Female babies below the age of one year have far higher death rate (22.28%) than male babies (15%). One reason could be the low rate of child immunization; only around 53% of Children below the age of one year (both rural and urban) were immunized against all six Vaccine preventable disease. Only 62% of rural children and 66% of Urban Children below the age of five were fully immunized.

The female /male ratio (Females per 1,000 Males) is far below the all India figure. In the 2001 census, the Female / Male ratio was 875 for Sikkim compared to the all India ratio of 933. The Sex ratio for Sikkim deteriorates steadily between the ages of 30 and 59 to touch a low of 655 in age group 55-59. The death rate for rural women aged 15 to 50 years is extremely high (43.85 percent) compared to men (23.87%) in the same age group. A major reason could be a high maternal mortality rate, MMR is 2 as a national norm in which Sikkim has been able to achieve 540/ 1, 00000) as natal care is still largely undertaken by untrained people. Despite the numerous PHCs and staffs, most of the deliveries take place outside the health centers. Around 53% of the deliveries in the rural areas are carried out by relatives or untrained midwives. Further 41.24% of rural women and 22.91% of the urban women do not receive any antenatal care.

The recent mandatory inclusion of a woman doctor in every PHC should have a positive impact on women's health, but until roads access is improved, the effects will be limited. Improving health care for infants and Children, an important goal in itself, will also help reduce family size.

Disease related to inadequate environmental sanitation, tuberculosis, goiter and alcoholism continue to occupy an important place in the state health profile. At the same time, new problems like HIV / AIDS and reappearance of malaria, are very disturbing; 7% of the plan outlay and 5% of the non-Plan outlay should be earmarked for this Sector.

Recently, the National Health Family Survey has recorded an improvement in the housing Characteristics. According to thus survey, in 1998-9, 84.6% of them had a toilet or a latrine facility. In both cases, Sikkim did better than the national average, which was with 77.9% and 35.9% respectively.

Hospital Facilities

Availability of hospital is one of the important instruments for providing adequate health facilities among the disease-affected people. In Sikkim there is a lack of hospital facilities especially in rural areas. Number of full-fledged hospital in four districts of Sikkim is only 5, which are far below the minimum requirement. Numbers of primary Health Center (PHC) is 24 and number of primary health Sub-Center (PHSC) is 147 (2001-2002) [Health and Family welfare Dept, Govt.of Sikkim.]The following table shows the position in this context:

AMENITIES FOR MEDICAL & PUBLIC HEALTH GOVT. OF SIKKIM

S.No.	Items	Unit	District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
1	Hospital	No.	North	1	1	1	1	1
			East	2	2	2	2	2
			South	1	1	1	1	1
			West	1	1	1	1	1
			Total	5	5	5	5	5
2	PHC	No.	North	3	3	3	3	3
			East	8	8	8	8	8
			South	6	6	6	6	6
			West	7	7	7	7	7
			Total	24	24	24	24	24
3	P.H.S.C	No.	North	19	19	19	19	19
			East	48	48	48	48	48
			South	39	39	39	39	39
			West	41	41	41	41	41
			Total	147	147	147	147	147
4	Doctors	No.	North	12	12	15	15	16
			East	95	95	97	97	107
			South	21	21	25	29	31
			West	15	15	18	19	20
			Total	143	143	155	160	174
5	Nurses	No.	North	3	3	3	9	10
			East	88	88	102	112	125
			South	6	6	10	9	15
			West	7	7	6	6	10
			Total	104	104	121	136	107

S.No.	Items	Unit	District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
6	ANMs/ APHW(F)	No.	North	51	51	39	36	36
			East	222	222	232	229	228
			South	124	124	111	119	118
			West	86	86	96	88	90
			Total	483	483	478	472	472
7	Urban Family Welfare Centre	No	North	—	—	—	—	—
			East	—	—	—	1	1
			South	—	—	—	—	—
			West	—	—	—	—	—
			Total	—	—	—	1	1
8	Post partrom Centre	No	North	-	-	-	-	-
			East	-	-	-	1	1
			South	-	-	-	1	1
			West	-	-	-	1	1
			Total	-	-	-	3	3
9	Maternity & Child Health Centre	No	North	-	-	-	1	1
			East	-	-	-	1	1
			South	-	-	-	1	1
			West	-	-	-	1	1
			Total	-	-	-	4	4

Source: Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Sikkim.

From the table; it is clear that, there is disparity of medical facilities among the districts of Sikkim. The condition of East is much better than other and the condition of North Sikkim is worst. Out of 176 hospitals, PHC and PHSC in Sikkim, North has only 23 which is below the adequate number.

Sikkim has 5 well-appointed district hospitals, two in Gangtok and one each in Gayzing, Namchi, and Mangan all in important district places.

ACCESSIBILITY OF HOSPITAL AMONG PANCHAYAT

In the case of hospital accessibility, statistical abstract cannot tell the whole story. If the hospital is at a distant away from the patients, it becomes difficult for them to make a follow up for the early or timely cure of the disease; hence more and more emphasis has been put on the provision of medical

facilities for safe-guarding people being affected with diseases. There has been an increase in the accessibility of these facilities in the rural areas. The following table shows the position in this context.

No. of Panchayat Units Having a Hospital

District	Within 1 Km.	Within 1-2 Km.	Within 3-5 Km.	Within 6-10 Km.	Beyond 10 Km
East	4	5	5	7	47
North	1	2	2	1	15
South	0	2	7	9	48
West	2	2	5	10	40
Total	7	11	19	27	150

Source: An economic Survey, 1991-92: Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Government of Sikkim.

From the table it is clear that only 7 Panchayat units have a Primary Health Center (PHC) within 1 km of their boundaries, 30 Panchayat units have within 1 to 5 kms and another 27 Panchayat units have a PHC only at a distance of 6-10 kms and 150 Panchayat units are however not well placed as the nearest health center is found to be more than 10 kms away. It may however be added that the national norm of having Primary Health Centers for a population of 20,000 has not been achieved primarily because of the distribution of population and distances from the health Centers.

DOCTORS AND NURSE

In Sikkim there were 143 qualified doctors and 104 nurses in 1997-98, which is increased to 174 and 160 respectively in the census of 2001-2002. But this improvement is not sufficient to meet the needs of ever-growing number of disease-affected people.

Although the health coverage per qualified doctor comes to about 3000 persons, the inaccessibility due to rugged hill terrain and scattered farmhouse concept of a village result inadequate coverage in the state.

AVAILABILITY OF BEDS

According to a statistical profile of 1991-92 (HFWD) Government of Sikkim, there were 730 beds available in total health Center, which grew to the total of 920 beds available in 2000-01 (Source: Health and Family welfare Deptt. Govt.of Sikkim)

The total of 28244 and 498336 indoor and outdoor patients respectively got the treatment in 2000-01 (HFWD, GOS). The following table shows the position in this context: The state also pays for Secondary and Tertiary health care outside the stat

Maternal Mortality Rate

High Maternal Mortality Rate is an acute problem of Sikkim's women. There is very little work done on Maternal Mortality in the state. In Sikkim, Women have a high risk of deaths during pregnancy and childbirth.

Early marriage, poor health services, high fertility rate, low spacing of births, son preference are the main causes of the high Maternal Mortality rate and the major reason for the low female life expectancy in Sikkim.

INFANT MORTALITY RATE

Infant mortality is considered a more reliable index of the levels of nutrition and of health. Available data on Infant Mortality Rate for Sikkim indicate that in 1997-98, it was (52/000) rural (44/000) Urban, which has decreased to (49/1000) rural, (36 /1000) Urban, with better medical facilities. This implies that IMR in Sikkim during last decade has fallen sharply. In 2000, national average of Infant Mortality Rate was 68 / 1000 live birth (74) rural and (43) urban; in which case, Sikkim has tremendous achievement in health sector compared to the national average. The following table clarifies the comparative data of Sikkim and India.

Estimates of Birth Rate, Death Rate, Natural Growth Rate and Infant Mortality Rate Sikkim Vis-à-vis India

Year	Sikkim											
	Birth Rate			Death Rate			Natural Growth Rate			Infant Mortality Rate		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
1995	22.5	22.8	16.4	6.9	7.0	3.0	-	-	-	47	47	27
1996	20.0	20.3	11.3	6.5	6.7	3.4	-	-	-	47	47	32
1997	19.8	20.0	12.8	6.5	6.6	3.5	13.3	13.4	9.3	51	51	41
1998	20.9	21.2	13.5	6.1	6.2	3.9	-	-	-	52	52	44
1999	21.6	21.9	14.7	5.8	5.9	3.4	15.8	16.0	11.3	49	50	33
2000	21.8	22.1	14.8	5.7	5.7	4.0	16.2	16.4	10.7	49	49	36

Note: IMR shown against 1997, 1998 & are for the periods 1995-97, 1996-99 respectively.

Year	India											
	Birth Rate			Death Rate			Natural Growth Rate			Infant Mortality Rate		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
1995	28.3			9.0								
1996	27.5	29.3	21.6	9.0	9.7	6.5				72	77	46
1997	27.2	28.9	21.5	8.9	9.6	6.5	18.3	19.2	15.0	71	77	45
1998	26.5	28.0	21.0	9.0	9.7	6.6				72	77	45
1999	*26.0	27.6	20.8	*8.6	9.4	6.3	17.3	18.2	14.5	70	75	44
2000	25.8	27.5	20.7	8.5	9.3	6.3	17.3	18.3	14.4	68	74	43

Source: SRS Bulletin Oct 1998, Oct 2000 & Oct 2001

To reduce the Infant Mortality below 49 per thousand, government of Sikkim have implemented extensive immunization programme for children.

SUMMARISED DATA OF FAMILY WELFARE, MCH AND IMMUNIZATION

YEAR	TT for pregnant women	DPT	Polio	BCG	Measles	DT	TT 10Years	TT 16 Years	Sterli-sation	I.U.D	O.P
	ACH%	ACH%	ACH%	ACH%	ACH%	ACH%	ACH%	ACH%	ACH%	ACH%	ACH%
1995-96	45.3	87.0	85.7	92.6	71.7	59.9	69.2	30.6	86.7	77.5	204.0
1996-97	49.8	86.6	84.4	99.1	79.8	96.8	92.2	53.8	109.0	79.2	223.7
1997-98	53.3	88.9	89.7	100	76.1	89.7	94.9	39.0	92.7	80.1	240.2
1998-99	60.1	100.3	99.8	100.4	89.1	109.2	122.5	52.5	92.0	58.5	233.7
1999-2000	69.3	95.6	95.2	102.4	87.7	94.9	86.1	35.6	112.3	69.1	195.7
2000-01	67.3	86.1	86.3	101.6	81.8	87.2	103.1	56.2	80.4	64.2	211.8
2001-02	71.4	90.9	92.0	92.5	84.8	99.5	105.3	44.8	69.2	64.6	283.9

Source: Health & Family Welfare Department Govt. of Sikkim.

FERTILITY STATUS

In every society, it is very necessary to find out birth and death rate in fact; the birth of child or death of a member in family influences the whole family structure as well as the society as a whole. It also affects the health of parents their psychology and attitude towards family life. The factors determining human fertility are wide, which may vary from basic biological factor of race to social constraints. The basic determinant of fertility includes fecundity, age / time of marriage, Marriage

system, sexual habits etc. Besides these, there is long list of other factors which make their own contribution in influencing the fertility pattern of a population such as degree of urbanization, durations of marriage, working and non working status of females, religious background, educational level, desire to have a son, public policies, standard of living and diet etc. In fact the human fertility is controlled by a large number of personal psychological factors working in specific situations and it may not be possible to prepare intensive inventory of all these factors. The total birth rate in the year 1995 was 22.5/ 1000 women (22.8) rural, (16.4) Urban, which has gone down to 21.8 in total and 22.1, 14.8 respectively in the year 2000.

THE IMPACT OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

The marriage takes place quite early among women in rural and urban areas. This is across the state and hill communities. The menace of early marriage practice is ghastly reflected in table. In the rural Sikkim 32% of girls got married, this implies that 66% of the girls got married by the year they attained 20 in 1989. The marriage for female mostly takes place between 14-20 years and male between 18-25 years.

The situation seems to be alarming in the urban areas. Among the married women surveyed in 1989 almost 39% got married before they attained 17 year and another 36% by the time they attained 20 year, though this had slightly improved in 1997. The rate at which young girls get into marriage institution continuous to grip Sikkim with almost 71% of the women getting married before they attained 20 years.

Age at Marriage among Men and Women in Sikkim

Age at Marriage (yrs)	1989				1997			
	Rural (%)		Urban (%)		Rural (%)		Urban (%)	
	women	Men	women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
14	4.0	1.3	9.30	0.54	4.75	1.87	8.81	1.91
15-17	28.1	5.7	29.50	4.6	20.90	5.95	26.35	6.09
	(32.1)	(7.0)	(38.80)	(5.14)	(25.65)	(7.82)	(35.16)	(8.00)
18-20	34.2	23.1	36.00	21.7	34.90	22.18	35.38	(33.77)
	(66.3)	(30.1)	(74.80)	(26.84)	(60.55)	(28.00)	(70.54)	25.77
21-25	19.9	30.0	19.70	42.30	23.57	35.78	20.27	38.75
26-30	10.2	26.7	4.10	22.2	8.11	20.13	4.88	17.90
31+	2.4	10.5	0.35	4.9	3.19	10.35	1.23	6.94

Source: Chutani and Gyatso (1993); Gyatso and Bagdass (1998)

The new generations of children born of this weak marriage practices and institutions are brought up without any proper care and nursing and their schooling go totally disarray. The whole generation of human capital is destroyed in this manner though, no intensive study has been done on the various implications that early marriage can have on the mental and physical health of the married girl. Such conditions are reflected in the high rate of Maternal Mortality; Which the Social activist states is "due to the poor infrastructure Services".

For the young boys and particularly girls, the 16-18 years period is the most critical period. They require utmost attention at this time. After 18 they get slightly matured. The system of eloping of under aged girls and their subsequent motherhood has had delimitating impact on their deteriorating health conditions. If this to be discouraged, there has to be heavy doses of adolescent health educations including sex education in the school curriculum and also introduce increased awareness on ill effects of early marriage. There should also be effective implementation of Child Marriage Restraint Act So far this Act, has never been utilized both as a punitive measure and as deterrence.

In the effort to reduce the incidence of early marriages in the state, a small family scheme started in 1997. Under this scheme, girls who have attained the age of 13 years are given financial incentives, this aims at controlling population by delayed marriage and at reducing female mortality rate.

AGE SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATE

The general fertility rate which was estimated at 154.6 / 1000 women in 1989 drastically came down to 108.76/ 1000 in 1997. Age group 21-25 continues to remain the most fertile group in both rural and urban Sikkim with 183 and 140/1000 women respectively.

Interestingly, except the age group 15-20 the fertility among rural women has been much higher than the urban women. The urban women across various age groups had been rather large which has gradually been narrowed down in the last ten years or so.

Age Specific Fertility rate For Rural and Urban women in Age group 14-45 yrs.

	1989		1997	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
15-20	47.1	88.7	61.67	63.45
21-25	221.5	221.8	183.8	140.53
26-30	234.9	184.3	149.78	109.10
31-35	202.2	89.9	108.34	42.24
36-40	159.0	50.0	68.93	40.00
41-45	83.3	23.8	35.12	4.7

Source: Chuttani and Gyatso PP-47 – 48 and Gyatso & Bagdass PP 87-88

The fertility rate in the age group 15-20 has also been higher in urban areas indicating that the early marriage does affect the health of urban girls as well. Rather very high marital fertility in 15-20 year age group (274.8%) rural and (28.35%) urban in 1989 is because of early marriage and absence of contraception. The 1989 survey showed that 93% (89% in urban area) of the married women in the age group of 15-20 and 87% (74% in Urban) in 21-25 age groups in rural Sikkim did not use any contraceptive. The couple protected rate against the early pregnancy to slow down the rate of fertility is 53.8% (2001-02)

HEALTH HAZARD OF WOMEN IN SIKKIM

The women in Sikkim are the most affected Population due to under development of medical facilities as per its requirement. Women are affected with various fatal infections, infernal diseases due to under-nutrition, unhygienic, living and working conditions associated with poverty and inaccessibility of health care facility. Major water borne diseases which cause wide spread morbidity and high Mortality are the direct consequence of an unsanitary conditions and infected water supply. Tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping coughs, influenza, Measles are the major air borne diseases, whose spread is facilitated by unsanitary condition. The other diseases like goiter and anemia are worstly spread among the women. Besides these women are also affected by respiratory infections, leprosy and diarrhea diseases. The present prevalence rate of T.B among women is very high and women are likely to fall prey to this disease (T.B) because of poor health coverage, lack of bed facilities in hospital and under nutrition among women.

Recently T.B control programme has been accorded high priority. District T.B control Societies are being formed in the four districts for implementation of Directly Obscured Therapy short course (DoTs). The World Bank is funding this programme, which are being organized at the district and P.H.C levels to create awareness amongst the people regarding various aspects of T.B. control. Anemia is chronic problem among the women in the state, after which they lose their strength and productivity. The women should be made aware of cause and effect of anemia and related diseases with specific programmes.

Women and children with Anemia

It is clear, that in one year duration the anemia affected women rise tremendously because of anemic mother and their children are also born with anemia. which is not desirable in backward state like Sikkim. During 1995-96 the number of women with anemia is recorded as 5303 and the children is 5208 in the same year. Besides this children with vitamins deficiencies are recorded as 15,600.

Health survey conducted in 1979 (Deodhar etal 1982) identify the leading causes of morbidity amongst the mother aged 15-49 who attended health institution for treatment were found to be having ill defined intestinal infections, anemia, upper respiratory tract infections, peptic-ulcer, dental caries, goiter and malnourishment.

A survey on the nutritional status of women and children in Sikkim (All HPH and GOS, 1994) revealed that among children aged between 1- 14 years, nutritional deficiency diseases such as anaemia, dental caries, angular stomatitis, bleeding gums, glossitis conjunctival Xevixis and Bitot's spots were remarkably prevalent. Among the adolescent girls (aged between 10-17 years) the above-mentioned diseases has also been conspicuously present. District wise variation has been seen in distribution of these diseases for example; Prevalent of anaemia has found to be 35% in East District as against 70.4% in the North District. Noticeable Nutritional deficiency diseases among the pregnant and lactating mother and other women aged up to 44 years were again anemic, dental caries, bleeding gum, angular stomatitis, visible enlargement of the thyroid gland glossitis bilot's spot and conjunctival XeviXis . Prevalence of anemia was found to be prevalent among lactating women.

Furthermore bleeding gums was also highly prevalent in pregnant and lactating mothers as well as women in general.

The problem of under-nutrition among pregnant women and women in general creates anemia related diseases among them. It equally affected their children which is not desirable for a developing state like Sikkim. Though it is true, that Infant Mortality Rate, Crude Death Rate and live birth rate is lower than the national level, however these indicators are significantly high as compared to some of the developed state.

The limited participation of women in health activity at the village level is one of the main problems of women's health in Sikkim as very few doctors are women. Among them very few are trained to look after pre- Pregnancy and post Pregnancy diseases.

As a result women are not getting important health advices from the doctors, which ultimately cause anemic child and lot of post Pregnancy diseases which ultimately creates ill health of mother and future mother, because mother's health is child's health.

Conclusion

It is widely recognized by WHO and other institutions that if we would gears up to improve the economic condition of women through mainstream participation then it becomes pre-requisite for the country or state to bring up the health status of women, because a healthy women can only accelerate the wheel of development. If we synthesize the economic history of any developed country then we ultimately find the truth for ex- kerala to verify. The provision of health facilities and the health status among women in Sikkim is inferior. The killer disease which needs timely and regular treatment like TB, which is widespread among women, the expenditure and bed facilities in TB eradication Centers are not adequate. As a result the women worker affected with TB die of inadequate or improper medical facilities.

RECENT GOVERNMENT POLICY ON HEALTH

- In recent times, Sikkim Government adopted measures relating to spread the health facilities among all district of Sikkim and to cover most of the people with special focus on women and children.
- One PHc has been established at Machon(East Sikkim) and one PHSC each has been established at Mazitar(East Sikkim) Chung Pung(West Sikkim) Bhasmey(East Sikkim) and Siripatam (South Sikkim).
- In addition 100 bedded community health Centers were constructed at Gyalshing and Mangan. A 500 bedded central Referral hospital at Tadong has been constructed.
- The equipment at STNM and Namchi Hospital has been upgraded thereby improving the quality of their specialist services. Paediatrics ward of the STNM Hospital Gangtok has been upgraded in terms of supply of equipment under French Protocol.
- TB control Programme has been accorded high priority. District T.B control societies are being formed in the four districts for implementation of directly Obscured Therapy short course (Dots). The World Bank is funding this programme. Programmes are being organized at the District and PHC levels to create awareness among people regarding various related aspects of T.B and its centers.

Future Agenda

Following have been earmarked for implementation in future:

- 1) To upgrade medical college and tertiary facilities at central referral hospital, Tandong.
- 2) To Start Health Insurance Scheme for the people of the State.
- 3) To construct State Food health laboratory through world bank assistance.
- 4) To upgrade the diet supply to the patients in the hospitals.
- 5) Implement Reproductive and child health Scheme through World Bank assistance.

GOALS SET FOR THE NINTH FIVE YEAR PLAN:

- 1) All health centers to function from government buildings.
- 2) 100% coverage of children under immunization schemes for vaccines against preventable diseases.
- 3) 100% coverage of pregnant mothers under tetanus vaccination scheme.
- 4) Reduce birth rate to 20/1000 population and infant Mortality rate to 30/1000 live birth
- 5) Eradicate communicable diseases like tuberculosis, leprosy, and reduce morbidity and mortality due to common diseases like acute respiratory infection and diarrheas diseases.

- 6) Improve secondary and tertiary level health care facilities to cover the entire populations of the State through augmented specialized services.
- 7) Augment Information, Education, communication and Mass Media Activities to generate public awareness and participation in the entire health programme.
- 8) Consolidate the health management information systems for the purpose of better planning, implementation and evaluations.

Policy Prescription:

To remove the malnutrition problem among women and girls child following measures may be effective:

- 1) To provide the nutritional security among girls child, School lunch Programme or midday meal can be helpful.
- 2) Special emphasis should be given to pregnant women like free medicine, subsidized food stuff and special health facilities in hospitals and health centre.
- 3) To provide iodized salt in goiter-prone area.
- 4) Public distribution system should be strengthening particularly in rural areas.
- 5) Special emphasis should be given on T.B and Goiter control problem and can build a special task force to stop the spread of these two diseases.
- 6) Upgrade the diet supply to the patient in the hospital.

Suggestions for improving Medical facilities

- 1) To increase the numbers of hospitals and primary Health Centers.
- 2) To provide modern equipment in health Centers.
- 3) To increase the bed facilities specially a maternity ward and T.B hospital.
- 4) To establish a local full-fledged medical College, this is the most important need in the Field of health care.
- 5) Special School health check up programme should be conducted, various National Programme are being Supplemented through regular health education activities like Health campus and Orientation Training Programs. The efforts are also being made to educate and motivate the people in better health care and small family norm through mass media like films, literatures, exhibitions etc.

CHAPTER - 4

WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN SIKKIM

Sikkim, a small and beautiful state nested in the Himalayas scores well in terms of human development indicators but faces problem of poverty and unemployment with the increase of population and better living standard favouring only creamy layers. The socio-economic backward classes and marginalized women population are worst affected in this race. The women in the mainstream of the socio-economic structure play a very important role in changing the course of direction with much faster progress. With the advent of modernized agriculture, industrialization and Globalization, the employment opportunities is expanding exponentially in developed and developing countries for both women and men; this determines the nature and pace of economy. In recent years, particularly after the 1960s, there has been considerable emphasis on women access to salaried employment in order to raise their status. It is contended that, for women belonging to the middle and upper classes; the non-household employment not only means more consumer goods and upward mobility for the family but may also result in personal gain, such as, large participation in decision-making, less vulnerability in times of stress and greater confidence on their own capabilities. In general, employment has been looked upon as enhancing women's status.

Among the lower class women the situation is somewhat different than better off middle and higher-class women due to prevailing patriarchal norms, which directly or indirectly affect their value of work.

The entry of lower class women into the world of enumerative work is not a recent phenomenon, but it always becomes questionable whether the work role leads her to get her a better control over resources and enhance her status in her family. Few studies have been able to show the woman is withdrawn from remunerative work soon after her family's economic condition improves on at best. She is considered a second owner. Another problem that comes their way to become the productive workforce is established on stereotype traditional way of living and attitude modification about their family responsibilities.

Through all these hurdle today women continue to substantially contribute doing a productive works both at farm and at home spending long hour's everyday. No serious effort has been made at local or national level to appreciate or value women's productive economic activities at home or at

farm. In Sikkim women constitute 46.75% of the total population (1991) 92% of the total female population lives in rural areas sharing about 30.41% of total workforce. The contribution of women population in the socio-economic development particularly of the rural areas has been quite substantial although it is a fact that the labour inputs by women in discharging the economic and domestic duties hardly get its due recognition. In Sikkim, women bear big hardship in agricultural operation, rearing animals, collecting fuel, bringing portable water, maintenance of poultry etc. These not only, contribute to the family income but also control family expenditure and takes active part in decision-making and other socio-economic activities.

Income Generation and Household Activities

Contribution of women's in household activities is a universal phenomenon. They are the most versatile section of the society who not only devotes to the family farm but also becomes an active partner in economic activities, which holds true in case of Sikkim as well. The primary role of Sikkimese women is as a homemaker or organizer. Excessive illiteracy among rural women in Sikkim makes them concentrated at household activities, which takes their full time and energy perhaps, without being recognized; as vulnerable productive workers. It is estimated that unpaid household work done by women in developing countries constitutes (25-40) percent of the Gross National Product. However, the productive work of rural women in developing countries does not get any monetary value nor it is computed in GNP.

Sikkimese rural women are fully engaged in agriculture and allied activities including small farm agriculture, livestock, food processing, gathering, small trading and vending. Women successfully diversify their off farm activities such as poultry farming, animal husbandry, beekeeping, tailoring in constructional sites, factories they provide cleaning, washing services etc. Hence besides agricultural sector, they contribute a large workforce at par with men. More than 50% women are employed in agriculture sector as wage laborers.

The women in rural areas are either engaged in agriculture or allied activities making their potential for income generations more confined which is further depressed by involving them in small activities like sowing, weeding, hoeing, cutting of fodders, harvesting and processing which earns a small value profit. Since the introduction of considerable mechanized farming in Sikkim, the demand for farm labour (constitutes mostly women) has reduced affecting directly or indirectly both the opportunities for work and income of the rural women.

Hence, growing number of women in rural Sikkim involve themselves in income generating activities like food processing, trading of agricultural products and production of handicrafts and weaving of carpets etc.

Sikkim shows a common gender division of labor as prevalent in almost all parts of India in maintaining their household and community activities, with the women attending to their home and family responsibilities as wives, mothers and home maker, with a shared responsibility of child-rearing, shopping and community activities etc.

However, the women have mostly exclusive responsibility of other household works. In the hilly area with harsh Geographical condition of rugged terrain and heavy rainfall, Sikkimese women face lot of troubles to fetch water from dhara (springs) in vessels which they carry on their backs. Besides, their work as a low paid agricultural labor, construction workers, seller of vegetables in the market places. The tribal women mostly (Lepchas and Bhutias) even maintain their traditional skills and involve themselves in spinning and weaving thereby contributing subsidiary income of the family.

The potential of versatility is again reflected in number of women led households in the state the number of 143 women led household for the rural Sikkim is much higher than the countries average of 104.

Female Headed Households in Sikkim (Per 1000 households)

RESEDENCE	SIKKIM	INDIA
Rural	143	104
Urban	83	99

Source: *Sikkim in Brief Bureau of economics and Statistics Govt. of Sikkim June 1999.*

PRIMARY SECTOR EMPLOYMENT AND WOMEN

Agriculture in Sikkim:

Sikkim has total of 7096 sq. km. area, common to country as a whole considerable amount of area has been devoted under the cultivation of food grains crop (62%) and rest of (36%) of the gross cropped area under non-food crops, which are effectively used as an industrial crops for example cardamom, orange, passion fruits, ginger etc.

Among the food grain crops cereals accounts for (54.49%), pulses (7.41%) of the gross cropped area in the state. Maize (29%) is the major cereals crop followed by, paddy of the Gross cropped area (13%) and wheat (8%) including ragi and barley. Among the non-food grain crops cardamom (high valued crop) and oil seeds are the most important covering 18.11% and 8.64% of the gross cropped area respectively. The other crops grown are potato, Soybean and fruits, which accounts for 3.29% each of the gross cropped area in the state. Though 65% of the Sikkimese population is dependant entirely on the cultivation of crops they really generate surplus in crops production. They cultivate only 11% of the total geographical area of Sikkim, which accounts the total net shown area, Out of this,

as low as 14% of area is irrigated. The technological inputs like chemical fertilizers pesticides etc. are sparsely used mostly in paddy cultivation due to low technological development in the field of agriculture. The productivity is worsely affected.

Women in Agriculture:

The nature and extend of women participation in agriculture vary greatly from region to region. The involvement within a given region depends mostly upon the type of farming system, local based family income earning opportunities, domination of caste, socio-economic and cultural specification of the residual families (Swaminathan). The total amount of labor time spend is determined by the availability of job, work done on the family farm or as hired labor, agricultural or non-agricultural work within or outside the village (Das-Gupta 1977).

In Sikkim, 76% women workers are directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Among the main workers 71.74% are cultivators, 7.37% are agricultural laborers, 1.58% are engaged in livestock, fishing, forestry, hunting, plantation, orchard and allied activities. So, women are the main participants in agriculture and allied production and they attend all secondary and cumbersome tasks that require more patient, time and devotion.

As far as upper class women are concerned, they mostly engage to those activities that can be performed within the household compound e.g. cleaning and sorting of grains, large scale food processing, cooking etc for their household. In case of lower class women, they participate extensively in the fieldwork as a member of family or wage laborer contributing substantially in the farm management decision. The work burden among the women of various economic strata seems to be unequal; the women in the middle income strata have longer working hours.

The poor women lack opportunities for employment due to limited size of the family farm and seasonal character of the demand for agricultural labour whereas, women in the high economic strata may hire outside labor for more strenuous food processing chores and other household work. Women in the middle economic Strata often take all the responsibilities of family animals as well as the food processing chores.

Agriculture Labour and Women:

Within the increasing poverty and unemployment, the lower- strata both male and female are increasingly joining the total number Of agricultural laborers which has increased from 4887 (3.31%) in 1981 to 12581 (7 .8%) in 1991 of total main worker. The male domination in the total labour force may be attributed to the fact that various farm operations require a lot of strenuous work like use of farm machinery, irrigation of field, work which require intensive use of spade on work for long hours or may be at night. This makes it difficult for farmers to prefer women for permanent employment.

The women are employed on daily or contract basis for a particular farm operation. As far as increase in male workers in the total labour force is concerned, they increased by about 263 persons in 1981-91 and female are not so less of about 262.84 persons in the same years. During the same period the increase for both the category was about 262.96 persons. It is worthwhile to mention that agricultural laborers are mostly from the downtrodden strata of the society and most of them belong to schedule tribes in the state.

Number of Agricultural Laborer

Year	Person	Male	Female
1981	4887	3361 (68.77%)	1526 (31.22%)
1991	12851	8840 (68.78%)	4011 (31.21%)

Source: Census of India 1991, Series 22, Sikkim

Women as a Cultivator:

In Sikkim, out of the total main workers, 71.74% females are cultivator against the all India figure of 34.22. Thus, looking into the proportion of female predominance in the category of cultivator, that consists of 71.74% to the total female workers against 50.96% male cultivator. The women worker engaged in other works show appreciable increase from that of 1981 in both rural and urban areas.

The women workers of Sikkim are participating in other works leaving the traditional cultivation sector showing their readiness to accept new challenges in the coming years. It appears as if there is a shift from agricultural sector to non-agricultural sector.

Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting and Plantation Activities among Women:

The women especially in the rural areas are involved in agricultural operation from sowing to harvesting, division of labor does exist where men are involved in ploughing, felling of trees etc. Whereas their female counterpart collect fuel and fodder, and fetch water and nurture the animals. Apart from cultivation of cereal crops, the women of Sikkim cultivate cardamom, Soya bean, ginger, pulses, and oil seeds over an extensive area, which fetches high price all over India. Among the main women workers, percentage of women workers engaged in livestock's, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation and allied activities increased from 0.92% to 1.58% in 1981 to 91.

Women in Secondary Sector

Employment in Secondary Sector has made women come out of the family and household, which had made their world. The wages earned through industrial employment have given them the measure of independence besides contributing handsomely to household earning. However, their prospect in the secondary sector has come under a cloud even before the full impact of such employment has become

manifested. The introduction of microelectronics and information technologies would make their position even more vulnerable. Women with their local skills would get marginalized in this new economic order.

Sikkim being one of the smallest in size with difficult terrain and climatic conditions have underdeveloped infrastructures unfit for prosperous industrial development. However, government is making hard efforts for introducing new industries and improving the existing industries in the state.

After Sikkim merged with Indian Union, all the four districts had been declared as industrially backward and a directorate of industries was set up in 1976, which have been able to make several achievements within a short span of time. Response has been strong for both industry and trade. Over those two years, the number of registered industrial units jumped from 10 to 78 in numbers, almost all small scale. By 1990 when CSO conducted its economic census in the country the number of all enterprises including those unorganized sector stood at 10,751 for Sikkim, with a decadal growth of 30.3%. Employment in these stood at 48,114 workers at a decadal growth rate of 57.7%. Thus, the creation of employment through entrepreneurial sources far outstripped the growth of population. Of the 10,751 enterprises only 615 related to agriculture and 10,136 in the non-agriculture sector. The total workforce comprises 36,545 male and 11,569 female workers.

Another plank of Sikkim development effort, has been the encouragement of rural non-farm activities. The rural -urban ratio of enterprises in the CSO data is 7429:3322; with 6827 enterprises in rural areas of non-agricultural nature against 605 agricultural based together employing 20619 male and 8109 female workers. The point brought out in the figure is attributed to the growth of new economic activity, which has created substantial additional employment for the village community.

Women main workers in different sub-sector (secondary sector)

Sectors	Male	Female	% of Female to total worker
Mining and Quarrying	329	29	08.10
Household industry	1089	178	14.04
Other than household industry	4337	1023	19.08
Construction	9728	1927	16.57

Source: census of India, Sikkim, Series 22.

Out of the total women workers 6% engaged in secondary sector. From the above table, it is clear that women employment in secondary sector is very low only 16.93% of the total workforce and it is observed that male domination in secondary sector is high. Participation of women in other than household industry is high (19.08%) then other sub-sector of secondary sector, Participation of women show low in mining and quarrying (8.1%). Due to few opportunities of women in secondary sector

women derives low earning as compared to men. So in Sikkim, women status in economic field is much lower creating many socio-economic problems for women.

Women in Tertiary and Other Sector

Service sector is a complex area and very often one finds different definition of services. The US trade and Tariffs Act of 1984 define service as “economic activities whose outputs are other than tangible goods”. However in reality one finds goods in which services are stored. Moreover the traditional belief that services cannot be stored but consumed as soon as they are produced, is not necessarily true. With the development of technology there is increasing time gap between consumption and production of services. Unlike, the traditional belief some services can be provided from the same storage repeatedly over a period of time and contrary to the production of goods some services can be represented with fewer inputs and in a much shorter time span. Commonly accepted definition of service sector includes labor services, travel, transport, port and shipping, insurance, banking and other financial services, Construction and Engineering services, education to resume health care miscellaneous and other private services.

A notable trend in women empowerment is the growing presence of women in service sector especially transportation, communication and financial services. Overall, the opportunities are better in the bank, public financial institution, and insurance, post and telegraph, travel and tourism industry to observations ever pertinent in this context.

- The service sector is open only to women with education.
- It holds out no hope for women workers.
- Push out of sunset industries that have neither education nor any well-developed skill. It is to middle class women with a background of education has accessibility of service sector.
- The kind of job available for the women in this sector is at the lower end of the spectrum where skills are low and level of pay relatively poor. For example information handling, secretarial jobs such as typing and stenography and clerical jobs such as accounts.

Women Main worker in different sub-Sector of Tertiary sector

Sectors	Total	Male	Female	% Female to total worker
Trade & Commerce	8598	7469	1129	13.13%
Transport storage & communication	2999	2870	129	4.30%
Others Services	22174	15988	6086	27.57%

Source: Census Sikkim, 1991. Series 22

Women Main worker in different sub-sector of Tertiary sector

Out of the total women workers 14% are one engaged in tertiary sector. Percentage share of women in service sector in total employment is much lower (20.74%) compared to male. In govt. employment the percentage share of women in statically services is the maximum. So the ratio between male and female in work participation in govt. employment is quite low compared to developed Indian States like Kerala, Maharashtra etc.

Other Sectors

Women participation is higher than the national average in other services, which constitutes mostly of government jobs. Women work participation at the administrative service is 12.82% in the IAS, 20.66% in state civil service and 3.77% in Statistical Service. Participation in IFS, IPS and Engineering Services is practically nil. Percentage of female belonging to SC, ST and non SC, ST categories are 4.25, 27.98 and 67.77 percent respectively. It appears that the SC and ST have received their due share work participation of women in employment sector is only 20.74% against the male employees of 79.26 percent. Women have not received their due share of employment. Further women are mostly concentrated on lowly paid teachers and clerical jobs. Government teachers alone constitute about 68% of total women employees. Women should be given special weight age for recruitment in govt. jobs to compensate their due share.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN DIFFERENT SECTORS

Sectors	Male	Female	% Female
Indian Administrative Service (IAS)	39	5	12.82
Indian Forest Service (IFS)	21	64	0
Indian Police Service(IPS)	21	-	0
State Civil service	164	47	28.66
Statistical Service	13	4	30.77
Engineering Service			
Electrical	37	1	0.79
Civil	126	-	0
Mechanical	23	-	0
Total employees in 34 govt. Departments	79.26%	20.74%	
Class I	442 nos	-	2.25%
Class II	974 nos	-	4.96%
Class III	14,957 nos	-	76.13%

Sectors	Male	Female	% Female
Class IV	3,273 nos	-	16.66%
Total	19,646 nos	-	100.00%
Scheduled Castes	-	-	4.25%
Scheduled tribes	-	-	27.98%
Others	-	-	67.77%
Male Employees	-	-	79.26%
Female Employees	-	-	

Source: *Subba & Subba in, cries unheard, 1994*

Shift in Working Population:

With the advancement in science and technology population dependent on agriculture decreased with consequent decrease in the primary sector over 20 years, the percentage of working population dependent on agriculture has come down to 84.75 % in 1971 to 65.50% in 1991.

SIKKIM: WORKING POPULATION SINCE 1971 TO 1991

Occupational	% Age distribution of working population								
	1971			1981			1991		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Cultivators	74.55	92.19	80.98	50.15	79.52	60.10	50.96	71.74	7.80
Agricultural laborers	4.12	3.16	3.77	3.45	3.06	3.31	8.03	7.37	7.80
Household Industries	0.50	0.13	0.36	1.24	0.74	1.07	1.00	0.33	0.80
Other work	20.83	4.52	14.89	45.16	16.68	35.52	40.00	20.56	3.60
Total main workers	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: *Census of India 1971, 1981, 1991, (sikkim)*

The increase in proportion of population engaged in non-agricultural sector from the level of 15.3% (1971) to 36.6% in (1981) dedicate the employment generation in the non-agricultural sector during the intervening period and the shift from the primary to secondary and tertiary sector. However, the growth of agricultural labourers from 3.31% (in 1981) to 7.80 (in 1991) is quite alarming. The density of population per square km increase from 4.5 in 1981 to 57 in 1991. The number of houses

increased from 58,746 (in 1981) to 76,329 (in 1991). The average number of persons per household in 1991 was 5.325 indicating that most of the people live in single unit houses. The percentage of main workers to total population went down to 46.6 in 1981 to 40.45 in 1991. The figure co-relates with the shift of population from agricultural sector non-agriculture Sector especially service sector. Accordingly the share of non-workers also increased from 51.70%-58.49% between 1981-91. The employment in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Section is better in 1991 than the preceding years. But in much lower then 927 in 1991 for all India average.

Women as an Entrepreneur

Women entrepreneurs represent a class of women who are exploring possible avenues of active participation in the economy. The small and large scale industries on handlooms, a handicraft etc. plays a pivotal role in providing work opportunities to women. The women mostly engage in Khadi weaving, cereals and pulse processing, cottage match making, carpet-weaving entrepreneur faces major problems.

The women entrepreneur in Sikkim faces major hurdle of lack of adequate finances, technical know-how, non-availability of raw materials, inadequate marketing facilities, lack of technical and managerial skills. Though women entrepreneur does not uniquely face these problems only, women deserve especial attention and protection from the govt. on account of their relative immaturity in the business world. In Sikkim the women are making a substantial contribution in the small-scale industries positively affecting the state economy.

In recent years, women in Sikkim have been able to put a strong step forward from Small Scale industries like of papad, pickle and ghee to sophisticated industries like electronic software consultancy. This is undoubtedly a healthy change and govt. should try its best to remove hurdle in such a change over.

Entrepreneurship is proverbially shy in Sikkim. This is particularly due to the history, tradition and geographical location of the state. It is well known that industrialization depends upon the growth of entrepreneurship, which is associated with the capacity to take risky venture. These risky ventures are associated with the economic status of women and quality of population. Therefore, it can be presumed that in Sikkim, the challenge of private entrepreneurship and capitalist enterprise would not be an insurmountable problem considering the "right" cultural atmosphere for the growth of entrepreneurship.

In fact during the short span of development new entrepreneurship has emerged from the rising urban middle class.

Women Entrepreneurship Potential in Sikkim

Several women entrepreneurs in Sikkim have taken up to an industry of their own which are as follows:

Women entrepreneur to total entrepreneur potentials

District	Total number of units	Women entrepreneurs	Percentage to total
North	5	1	20
East	183	46	25
South	39	7	18
West	22	5	23

Source: *Subba and subba in 'Cries Unheard'*

- A. Manufacturing: Bakery, Confectionary, Handlooms, Handicrafts, Food processing, Tarpaulin, Aluminium & Steel products and heather.
- B. Servicing: Rice Mills, Printing Press, Automobile Servicing.

Nowadays, elite women in the state are making a land marker in the non-conventional fields, such as consultancy, marketing, interior decoration, beauty clinics, handicrafts, food processing, readymade garments etc. The Government district entrepreneur Centers at Jorethang for South and West District and Gangtok for North and East Dist are conducting training of women entrepreneurs, providing technical guidance and helping them to establish their units by providing extension services and financial assistance through Banks.

Apart from providing more opportunities for education and training to women, Government should pay special attention to their specific problems like non-availability of accommodation, bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining finances, existence of ill behaving labor and sales inspector, quality control and marketing problems, huge consultancy charges, sizeable legal procedural and operational formalities etc.

There should be special incentive programmes to attract more women in the field. Government policies towards special and institutional finance, interest subsidy, concessional finance margin, and money assistance technical and managerial support, government purchase programmes, entrepreneurial development programme, etc. would go a long way in this direction if dealt with all seriousness and sincerity.

The Nature and Employment of ST Women in Sikkim:

It is said that the Bhutia-Lepcha women in Sikkim have a major role in the earning of the family. Sikkim was a feudal state till the recent past and the main source of income was the land and forest. Cordomom plantation is the prime cultivation dominantly possessed by the Bhutia-Lepcha landlords. Other crops like Rice, Millet etc. are also grown simultaneously. The Bhutia-Lepcha women in the rural areas take an active part in cultivation of the land. Besides they always utilize other avenues for self-employment. Almost in each house both men and women spend their free time in carpet weaving and

knitting the wool. Lepchas, on the other hand, are very efficient in bamboo work and various things out of bamboo like containers, hats, mats etc.

Bhutia-Lepcha women also run small business. It is very often seen that they use the front room of their house as tea stall or grocery or stationary shops. Even in the market place, most of the shops are run by the women and out of that large number of shops owned by Bhutia-Lepcha women. But it is very unusual to see any Bhutia-Lepcha women working as laborers at the road making or building construction. The women working as laborers are mostly Nepalese in origin.

Changing Nature of Employment of ST Women and the Role of Government in this Context

To confirm with the changing situation and social development; the educated Bhutia-Lepcha women are getting more and more interested to join administrative service.

Even the young Bhutia-Lepcha, women with a peasant background are migrating to urban areas seeking white collar jobs in government and semi-government and in other offices. It is surprising that in Sikkim, 20-74% employee in the government administrative services are women out of which 38% are Bhutia-Lepcha women. There are 48 ST lady gazetted officers out of 102 lady officers in different departments and 2 Bhutia women in the regular IAS grade. The Bhutia-Lepcha women are also joining in teaching and nursing profession in quite appreciable number.

The Govt. of Sikkim has implemented the reservation policy in the govt. services for SC and ST. The Bhutia-Lepcha women are joining these reservation facilities. The SC and ST Welfare Department aims at encouraging and promoting the professional skill of the local SC and ST people including women and it provides assistance for vocational or other training.

Besides implementing the scheme on its own the department is channeling special central assistance to other department in order to implement income generating schemes relevant to local needs.

CONCLUSION

The available evidence shows that the women's participation in the total labor force is very low and vast majority of them are engaged in agricultural operations. Here also they are not the owner cultivators but the casual laborers. Their employment is quite irregular and they suffer from maximum insecurity in employment. The backward social customs have contributed to retaining women's work status at low level.

The main potential for women labor absorption in Sikkim is agriculture and allied occupations such as food grains processing, dairy, poultry and fishery as well as forestry including collection and sale of forest products and the development of these occupations must set the due preference. Besides, the PWD and Engineering departments, the Khadi and village commission, the handloom, coir and other such small scale industries may provide more gainful job opportunities to the women workers

and therefore, their development should get a preferential treatment with a policy of providing more employment opportunities to the women workers.

In Sikkim, a women worker also varies on the basis of their social role expectation accordingly to their socio-cultural norms and values. In every society, the women have a specific role to play and the role expectation of women varies from society to society.

In urban Sikkim, except those who are engaged in tertiary occupation, the women do not have any specific and compulsory work but usual house hold duties. On the other hand, in rural areas, almost every woman has some distinct allotted works. She has to perform house hold and farm work simultaneously. So quite obviously women's work load varies from society to society according to their role expectation.

A shift of women workers from agriculture Labour can be explained by the fact that there has been a decline in the real wage for agriculture Labor.

Hence, the policies of the Government must recognize the actual role of the women workforce and specially of the rural women. More jobs must be created of women both in rural and urban areas. The committee on Employment for women set up by the National conference of women and Development (May, 1979) has apathy remarked the main challenge before the policy makers is to reach the neediest women with employment and related services such as child care and minimum health facilities. The committee has as such recommended an employment guarantee scheme to provide a minimum earning to the women workers.

Regularity of employment and equality of employment and equality of wages are also essential conditions for ameliorating the economic condition of women workers. In order to give them income stability, regularity of employment must be increased. Equal pay for equal worth must be a reality and not merely a slogan. Equal Remuneration Act should be implemented rigorously.

Again, the nature of jobs for women workers can be changed mainly with their education, training and technical knowledge. For a rational distribution of women labor in economic activity, it is desirable to give preference to women for training in those trades and occupations for which they have special aptitudes.

The pace of vocational training programme should be further accelerated for the purpose. The spread of education and training facilities will improve upon their employability in other industries where technological changes have necessitated their retrenchment.

In order to increase the supply elasticity of female workers, apart from making special efforts to improve their skills and qualification their availability both geographic and occupational should be facilitated. Better and efficient transport network can go a long way in this regard.

CHAPTER - 5

WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN SIKKIM

Education is seen as having an emancipator and empowering role for women and this has been endorsed by all. Education has important bearing on the general well being of people and particularly in the case of women. An educated woman not only has greater chances of access to public areas, where she can earn a living but it has also been seen that it has bearing on her well being too. In the complex mesh of various causes and effects, education definitely is one important indicator of women's status.

Attempting to achieve economic development in the absence of educational development and progress is like trying to achieve economic development in a vacuum. Education supplies the economy with human resources along with the requisite knowledge, training and qualifications to meet the demand for economic development. Investment in education sector should proceed as instrument in the other economic sector. Since an economy equipped with the right type of human capital shall face, no problem during the transitional period from a less developed to a more developed stage.

Education and women development

Our philosopher President Dr. Radhakrishnan had rightly said that if you educate a man you educate a person but if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family. This observation bears testimony to the importance of women education in itself.

Education of women, therefore, occupies top priority among various measures taken to improve the status of women in society. Eradication of illiteracy among women is recognized as an indispensable component for human resource development. The education of a mother pays off, in better home management and health and nutritional care of her children. Educating of women ensure empowerment, raising her status in the family and society as a whole , where She can be at equal footing with male counterpart in knowledge and decision making in any aspect Of the matter. Education also provides women with knowledge and skills in various areas of health, nutrition, water, sanitation, environment, budgeting and overall home management so on. Girls education is a necessary condition to ensure that development effort is well sustained (Siwal 1998).

The benefits of women education are compounded across generation. The economic and social lost of neglect of female education in India are simply enormous but whenever basic education for

women was spread, the social and economic benefits were quite dramatic and visible clearly. For instance, the negative and positive of human development report on South Asian Nation Education due to negligence or emphasis on girl's education respectively.

Thus there is clear evidences from South Asian's own experience backed up by the experience of the other regions, the female education leads to many social benefits, including improvement in standards of hygiene, reduction in infant and child mortality rates, decline in population growth rates, increase in labor productivity, rise in civic consciousness, greater political empowerment and democratization, and an improved sense of national unity.

Sikkim education at a glance

Modern education began in Sikkim in the year 1830's onwards, with the entry of Missionaries. Scandinavian Mission Alliance established School at Khamdong, Sang, Demtam, Wachen, Chakung and Mangan. The Scottish Missionaries also established a number of schools, Later on two schools were established for Bhutia and Nepali named Bhutia Boarding School at Burtak and Nepali Boarding School in the lall Bazar area of Gangtok. But after 18 years in the year 1824, both the boarding schools were amalgamated, into one high school after the name of the king Chogyal Tashi Namgyal of Sikkim. During this period, a primary school for girls was also started by a Scottish Missionaries named after the then prince as Paljor Namgyal Girls senior Secondary School in Gangtok. In 1954, the first education directorship was set up to impart education in a planned and systematic way.

Tashi Namgyal Academy was the first public school established in 1964 financed completely by the Government of Sikkim especially for the children of ruling elite group. The old Tashi Namgyal High School in Gangtok, continued to function as general school for the children of common people of Sikkim. In the same way, Enchey School was established to impart the knowledge of Buddhists Scriptures and for high education Sheda Nymgma College was also established in 1963.

After the merger of Sikkim with India in 1975 the department of education took a number of steps for the improvement of education. In fact, the year 1975 may be considered as a landmark for educational development in Sikkim. At present all the schools are co-educational except for few like Deorali Sen. Sec. School. In 1975, there were 264 institutions which increased to 501 in 1980s and 999 in 1986. Between 1975-1995, the number of institution increased by 1459 (more than 40%). Now this number is increased to 1559 in 1996-7.

Female Literacy Rate and Gender Differences in Sikkim

The literacy rates for Sikkim throughout the last decades revealed an upward trend with large percentage of population being able to read and write. Progress in literacy since 1951 had certainly been rapid. The ratio of literate population rose from 6.59 per cent in 1951 to 34.05% in 1981 and

56.94 percent in 1991. From a low of 1.2 in 1951, the female literacy rate is at 46.76 in 1991. The corresponding male literate percent rose from 11.19 to 65.7 over the same period. However, the gap in percentages between male and female in fact rose from 9.99 in 1951 to 21.65 in 1991 and it has fallen to 18.94 in 1991. The rural -urban divide is stark in terms of educational indicator as any other development indicator can be and it provides some interesting insights. Total rural literacy rate as per the 1991 census is 54.39 while it is 80.89 for urban areas irrespective of the area of residence, literacy rate for female is lower than that of male literacy rate (63.44%). However, again it is noted, that urban women literacy rate is much higher than rural women literacy rate. One can say that despite perspective improvement more than half of the women population in rural areas remains non literate and both rural urban and gender differential have increased in absolute term.

Needless to say rural women who constitute the majority of those excluded are this section that required critical intervention through concerted policies and schemes. Those problem facing women and girls especially in rural areas who need to devote their precious hours in household, farm, child care activities, the problem of non-availability or inaccessibility of school due to the great distance to the school, cost of schooling, economic and social fear of assault and many others.

Progress of literacy (in percent) in Sikkim and India

Sikkim				India			
Year	Male	Female	Total	Year	Male	Female	Total
1951	11.19	1.2	6.59	1951	27.16	8.86	18.33
1961	19.5	4.2	12.3	1961	40.4	15.34	28.31
1971	25.37	8.9	17.74	1971	45.95	21.97	34.45
1981	43.85	22.2	34.05	1981	56.5	24.97	43.67
1991	65.7	46.76	56.94	1991	64.13	39.29	52.21

Source: An Economic survey on Sikkim- Bureau of Economics and statistics (1996-97)

If we trace out the progress of women's education in Sikkim in comparison to the country as a whole. It positions the Sikkimese women in a favorable place with a good increase in rate of female literacy as per the country. In 1951, female literacy rate was 1.2% in Sikkim, which was very low against the national level of 8.86%. It has increased to 22.2% (1981) after the merger of Sikkim with India against the national level of 39.29%. Sikkim is developing fast affecting the literacy with good increase or vice versa. The rate of growth of literacy between 1971-81 was 91.94% and below. 1981-91 it was 67.23% in Sikkim. The substantial increase in literacy is essentially due to increase in educational facilities. Although the rate of increase of female literacy is lower, as compared to its male counterpart. In Sikkim the improvement made by Sikkimese female in literacy is quite encouraging.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AMONG WOMEN

Primary Education:

Since history, the importance of education has been realized by the people of Sikkim gradually with the entry of missionaries that increasingly developed after its merger with the Indian Union in 1975. So in this vision to make then monarchy state the full fledged literate and developed in terms of its socio-economic aspects. Basic education (pre-primary and primary) develops a person's capability to learn in order to interpret information and gaining knowledge of its basic conditions. Education also has its positive effect on economic productivity and other aspects of life such as health, it helps to determine a persons well being on the other hand schooling enhances ones ability to reallocate resources in response to economic change, various studies show that child mortality declines and nutritional status rises with increased parental education especially of mothers. The educated mother is more aware of the problems related to health, education and other socio-economic issues and tackles them more confidently with scientific and modern remedies. Therefore, it is realized that primary education among girls is very imperative for accelerating development activities of the society and country as a whole.

Sikkim has about 322 primary, 179 pre-primary and 131 Junior High School for nearly, 85075 students in primary, 20115 in J.H.S. The total no. of girls students in primary level are 41050 and in J.H. School it decreases to 13124. So if we aggregate these two numbers, the total number of girls enrolment in Sikkim reaches 54174. According to the data available the total no. of pre-primary and primary school rose from 85 to 300 during 1979-80 to 700-527 during 1991-2 which was a remarkable achievement. In the same time enrolment of girl's students in pre-primary and primary level rose from 1186-8774 to 6754-16129 respectively. It is clear from the data of enrollment of girl's students which declines progressively as they move from pre-primary to primary level which is peculiar feature of girls enrollment in primary level in the state.

If we take an account of the total Primary schools (PP +Pr) in different districts of Sikkim. We find that, out of 1253 Primary School, East dist has 889 schools, West district (374), South dist.(360) and the lowest number has been recorded in North dist, where it is 1330 Schools. The East dist. shows a tremendous achievement occupying the highest position and the number of primary schools as compared to other three districts.

A peculiar picture arises from the data that though West district Occupies second position(14050) in total No. of Primary and Pre-Primary Schools but its literacy ranking is on the lowest even below the north district which occupies the lowest position in terms of its total number of Pre-Primary and Primary Schools.

**NUMBER OF SCHOOLS (PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY) AND LITERACY RANKING
IN DIFFERENT DISTRICTS OF SIKKIM**

Item	Total no. of pre-primary and primary schools	Literacy rank
East	389	1
West	374	4
South	360	2
North	130	3

Source: An Economic Survey 1996-1999; Bureau Of Economics And Statistics, Government Of Sikkim

**PERCENTAGE OF GIRL STUDENTS TO TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN PRE-PRIMARY
AND PRIMARY STAGE**

Year	Pre-Primary	Primary	Pre-Primary+Primary
1979-80	46.50%	39.70%	40.43%
1991-92	51.4%	45.89%	45.51%
1998	—	—	48.25%

Source: A statistical profile (1979-80 & 1991-92) Bureau of Economics and Statistics and Sikkim Today (1998-2000), government of Sikkim

The above table shows that there is a low increase of enrolment of girls student in Primary Section compared to its pre- primary Section, which increased only by 4.5% between 1979-80 and 1991-92. The low decreasing level enrollment of girls with their successive classes have many socio-economic reasons behind among which the most important is the high drop-outs of girls student compared to their male counterpart due to various reasons like traditional values, assumption of domestic and child care activities from an early age, segregation from male, lack of source of income and poverty so on.

Number of teachers in primary Education:

Most of the Pre-Primary Schools are generally managed by a school mother who has passed class VIII, the minimum qualification needed for the primary teachers is secondary school certificate (Class X), and the preference for the teachers was based on the training of teachers. As per the data available, there are about 723 teachers in Pre-Primary schools and 2563 in Primary Schools in 1995.

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF TEACHERS FROM 1975 TO 1995 IN SIKKIM STATE.

INSTITUTE	1975	1980	1986	1991	1995
PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL	—	100	328	700	723
PRIMARY SCHOOL	626	1106	2053	2363	2563

Source: 'Development of education in Sikkim' by D.P.S Rana in 'Sikkim Perspective for Planning and Development' Ed. By Rai, Sundriyal and Sharma (1998).

PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE TEACHERS TO TOTAL NUMBER OF TEACHERS

Year	Pre-primary	Primary
1979-80	100%	22.69%
1991-92	100%	27.16%

Source: *Ibid*

Secondary and Higher Secondary Education:

Though there has been slow but steady rise in higher Secondary (H.S) schools, the ratio between the total students and H.S schools is high. The total H.S (XI-XII) school in Sikkim was 8 in 1979-80, which rose to 18 in 1991-92 and according to the latest data it is around 289 in number. So, compared to the rise of total student enrolment in the H.S stage, the number of School is not perhaps adequate. The number of schools (XI-XII) is almost one third compared to the secondary school (75) and one fourth compared to Junior High school (J.H.S) 131. The total enrolment in H.S classes is very low which is only 3809 and girls contribute nearly 44% of total enrolment (1975-98). In secondary school the total enrolment of student was 6815 out of which girls contributed 3196 (47%). The enrolment declines steadily as students move from secondary to Higher Secondary stage due to lack of H.S. schools. The total enrolment in J.H.S is 20115 in which girls includes only of 13124 in number.

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF SCHOOLS FROM 1975-1998

Institutions	1975	1980	1986	1995	1998
Junior high school	29	44	122	144	—
Secondary school	—	29	54	67	75
Higher / senior secondary school	07	08	13	24	28

Source: 'Development of Education in sikkim' by D.P.S. Rana (1998)

CLASS WISE ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS FROM 1975-1998 IN SIKKIM

Enrollment number

Class	1975	1980	1986	1995	1998
J.H.S	2100	7899	16180	21309	20115
IX-X	630	1544	4247	8072	6815
XI-XII	172	658	1187	3554	3809

Source: 'Development of Education in Sikkim by D.P.S Rana' (1998)

SEX-WISE ENROLLMENT FROM 1979-80 TO 1998-2000 IN SIKKIM.

J.H.S (VI-VIII)

STUDENTS	1979-80	1991-92	1998-2000
BOYS	6409	12578	12991
GIRLS	3793	10963	13124
TOTAL	0202	23541	26115
SECONDARY SCHOOL (IX-X)			
BOYS	6615	13161	3619
GIRLS	3627	11630	3196
TOTAL	10242	24791	6815
SEN.SEONDRARY SCHOOL (XI-XII)			
BOYS	3157	8305	2120
GIRLS	2200	6936	1689
TOTAL	5357	15241	3809

Source: Development of education in Sikkim by D.P.S Rana (1998)

**PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS TO TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT JUNIOR HIGH SECONDARY,
SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY CLASSES**

YEAR	J.H.S	SECONDARY	SENIOR SECONDARY
1979-80	37.17%	35.41%	41.06%
1991-92	46.56%	46.91%	45.50%
1998-2000	65.24%	46.89%	44.34%

Source: Development of education in Sikkim by D.P.S Rana (1998)

Number of Teachers in Secondary Education

For Junior High School and Senior Secondary graduate teachers from Humanities, Science and Commerce are appointed. Post-graduate teachers must have a Master Degree preferably with B.Ed. to teach at High secondary level (XI-XII). With the increase of numbers of High secondary Schools there is corresponding rise in the total number of recruitment of (PGT) Post Graduate teachers in which female has considerable share.

NUMBER OF TEACHERS FROM 1979-80 TO 1991-92

J.H.S (VI-VIII)	1979-80	1991-92
Male	364	1063
Female	112	498
SECONDARY		
Male	353	721
Female	219	534
SENIOR SECONDARY		
Male	138	441
Female	61	578

Source: A statistical profile (1979-80 to 1991-92), Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Gangtok.

PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE TEACHERS TO TOTAL NUMBER OF TEACHERS AT J.H.S, SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY LEVEL

YEAR	SECONDARY	SENIOR SECONDARY
1979-80	38.69%	30.65%
1991-92	42.54%	45.59%

Source: Sikkim- A Statistical profile (1979-80 to 1991-92)' Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Gangtok.

Large scale Dropouts among Girls student in school level

In a counting among children between 5-9 years, only one third of them know how to read and write while twice their number do not go to school and remain illiterate. In the age group of 10-19 years 40% are illiterate thus a large number of our children do not know how to read and write who becomes easy victim of ignorance and underdevelopment.

In Sikkim, more than 63% of enrolled children drop out even without completing the primary level and around 30% of them do so before reaching VIII standard.

Before reaching class X around 60% of students drop out from the school. More than one third of the students in Sikkim drop out with out completing H.S level after enrolment.

DROPOUT OF TOTAL STUDENT

CLASS	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	NO. OF DROPOUT	IN PERCENTAGE
I-V	28395-10480	17915	63
VI-VIII	8816-6281	2535	28.75
I-VIII	28395-6281	22114	77.87
VI-X	8816-3532	5284	59.93
X-XII	3532-1915	1617	45.78
VI-XII	8816-1915	6901	78.27
IX-X	4763-3532	1231	25.84

As common to the whole country, the drop out among girls student is the serious problem hampering the education system in the country. Among dropouts the share of girl's student is more as compared to the boy's students. A significant proportion of them come from vulnerable section of the society. The factors behind the large scale drop outs among the girls are insufficient number of secondary and high secondary School in rural areas, long distance and poor communication between home and school, poverty, social costumes and superstitions, ignorant about importance of education etc. Due to the problems of this mass scale drop-out among girls student they are under educated and lack skills and confidence to find better jobs. Which thereby affect their level of income compared to men women get into the vicious circle of under-educated, ignorance, lack of knowledge and skills, low or marginalized income source, poor management of home and poor well being of children who also get into the same circle to become poverty stricken and illiterate or under educated. The situation thus is not desirable for accelerating development of the society and women in particular.

Only very few women reaches up to become the part of the respectable white- collar higher spectrum of jobs as doctors, engineer, IAS, professors, head of the firm etc.

STAGE WISE DROPOUT OF GIRLS

Class	Student enrollment	Number of dropout	In percentage
Primary school to junior high school	4105-13124	27926	68.02
Primary school to secondary school	41050-3196	37854	92.21
J.H.S to secondary school	13124-3196	9928	75.00
Secondary school to H.S school	3196-1689	1507	47.15
Primary school to H.S school	41050-1689	39361	95.88

Source: *Sikkim Today (1998-2000)*

STAGE WISE GIRLS' STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Other possible reasons for drop outs:

- (i) **Academic:**-In Sikkim, even the government or Semi-government schools, the medium of instruction in schools from pre-primary to higher level is English. The children generally belonging to the rural areas do not follow the language as they are not used to listening and understanding the language at home and their surroundings. The children shut themselves mentally and hence try to escape.
- (ii) **Socio-Economic Problem:** -Some families belonging to lower income group do not have sufficient money for their survival, therefore, they engage themselves as a laborers and support their children in doing so, to add the income of the family for their better livelihood.
- (iii) **Free Education system:** -In order to boost the education among the lower section of the society the government has provided free education with minimum facilities. In many fields, this could be one reason for our children and their family not taking any serious interest in studies.
- (iv) **Private Schools** do not have such drop out where fees are high, teachers are low paid but results are excellent why? However no attempts have been made to study these phenomena.
- (v) **The early marriage of girls** is a crucial reason for drop-out of girls. However, according to the education department and teachers, Marriage for girls is not altogether reason for the high drop out in school. They strongly feel that it is due to the failure or poor performance in studies that force them to leave schools. Further, they feel that the whole system of education does not identify with their socio-economic scenario, deteriorating quality of teaching and learning and hence cause large or mass drop outs.

No policy measure has been initiated to check the rate of drop outs in the state. It is hoped that all the incentives like free ration, free books, free exercise books, free uniform, free mid-day meal supplemented to improve academic and co-curricular standards may inspire and encourage our students to drop the idea of dropping out of school.

Higher Education:

Besides the above institutions a number of institution for providing higher education and technical education were set up to improve the quality of education. The number of institutions for higher education in the state is given below:

TOTAL NO. OF TECHNICAL, HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN SIKKIM (2002)

Degree college	3
Law college	1
Research institute of Tibetology	1
T.T.C	1
T.T.I (Institute)	5
Technical industrial institute	1
Monastic school	50
Blind school	1
Sanskrit Pathshala	12
Advanced Technical Training Center	1
Polytechnic –Boarding (Diploma)	1
Medical College	1
Institute of technology (Manipal) in Engineering	1

There are three-degree colleges, Out of these two are situated in East District and third is in South Sikkim, Law College is situated in Gangtok (East Dist). The expansion of higher education institutes in Sikkim has been a remarkable achievement in the field of higher education inspite of its hilly terrain and lack of development of infrastructures like good road, airport, lack of open flat space hostel facilities etc. The single institute of higher education, in the form of Sikkim Government Degree College got multiplied into numerous centers like Sikkim Law College, B.Ed. College, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), and Sikkim Institute of Higher Nymgma Studies, Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology.

The vision for the higher education in different technological and medical fields have come to be a reality with the establishment of Manipal Institute of Technology (Degree Course in Engineering), Technical Training Centre at Bardang (Polytechnology) is set up in collaboration with Indo-Swiss Training Centres –CSIO is functioning offering various courses in mechanical and Electronics, manufacturing technology, dye and mould making. In order to facilitate the higher studies in medical sciences – MBBS, Dental, Nursing, Pharmacy and other allied health training at the under graduate, graduate and post, graduate level; the Manipal University of health and medical and technological sciences have been established. In all the three degree colleges' new courses along with the honours for existing courses like Geography, physics have been introduced.

As far as the percentage of girl's participation in higher education is concerned they represent near about 45% of the total students of higher education.

Distance Education:

The decision of IGNOU to establish a study center in Sikkim Govt. College Campus is therefore a welcome step for the people who due to some socio-economic problem cannot go in for regular courses. People of Sikkim are, however not altogether new to distance learning approach. The 'Patrachar Vidyalaya' and 'Open School' system already gained considerable popularity in the state. Exposure to course of Open University would be one step forward towards distance education. However, the prospects of distance learning in respect of higher education in Sikkim have to be considered in the light of courses that are being offered by the IGNOU. At present the following courses of the University are in operation:

- Bachelor Development Programme (B.A/B.Com)
- Diploma in Management
- Diploma in Distance Education
- Diploma in Creative Writing
- Certificate Course in Food and Nutrition
- Certificate Course in Rural Development

Some more courses will also be launched in near future. They are :-

- Bachelor of Library and Information science
- Bachelor of Science
- Diploma in Higher Education.
- Diploma in Rural Development.
- Diploma in Childcare and education.
- Master Degree (Distance Education).
- BSW

Among the above mentioned courses the bachelor Degree Programme would be of immediate use to those who could not get inter- collegiate education because of non-availability of facilities. The other courses of the moment might not attract a large group of clientele from the point of view of employment potentiality. What is needed therefore is to evolve a series of need-based courses which are particularly relevant for a region in the Sikkim.

Teacher Education

The present govt. has accorded high priority to the programme of teacher's education (B. Ed). During 1979-91 not only the facilities for teacher's education have been expanded but variety of

programme and schemes have been diversified in order to help them in-service newly recruited or in-service teachers to improve on their skills on school education.

Various institutes have been taken towards teachers training such as:

- (i) Presently there are five teachers training institutes including one B.Ed College both Govt. supported and Private undertakings
- (ii) Every year govt. has been sponsoring in-service teachers in batches for Bachelor of Education from different teachers training institutions on B.Ed College.
- (iii) Instructors at TTI have been sponsored by the Government to pursue their higher studies in education like M.Ed.
- (iv) Primary teachers, School Mothers, and Language Teachers were given special orientation courses.

Sanskrit Education and Madrasa:

The state has 12 Sanskrit pathsalas which provide education up to class X and XII level, these schools nectar grant -in -aid from the government. The Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya at Gyalsing (West) was established in 1997 and started functioning on 15th July 1998. It prepares students for Degree in Sanskrit. In Sikkim only one Madrasa is their, which is situated in Gangtok.

Monastic Education:

The religious education is intended for the benefit of those who are preparing for the priesthood, ie. lamahood under the monastic order in lamaseries. It was an unwritten law in Sikkim, that every Bhutia Lepcha family must send at least one son for Buddhist religious education as well as to accept lamahood in the monasteries.

Bhutia-Lepcha women are also admitted as nun to a few monasteries in Sikkim, but their number is extremely small and most of whom are quite aged. Some of the nuns Known as 'Lamini' are learned in Tibetan Makayuna Buddhist Philosophy and preside over Buddhist functions and impart teaching to disciples. Most of them have no real training and can not read or write properly. They do not perform religious ritual or ceremonies for private individuals, nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services. Their devotions are continued almost entirely to the turning of prayer wheel and counting the beads. They usually spend few hours in the monastery by turning the prayer wheels.

The state Government provides financial support to the 50 monastic schools in the state, Sheda Caters to Buddhist education and research at the higher levels.

Technical Education:

With the wide spread provisions of educational facilities all over the state and phenomenal growth in participation of children for schools and college education. The government has become

deeply apprehensive about the employment for the huge number of educated girls and youths which lead to the incidences of mass unemployment, now and in near future. Therefore to tackle the problem of growing unemployment effectively and well in time. The government has planned provision of vocational and technical education facilities in the state to prepare them for self-employable job opportunity. In the sector of technical education, therefore, a polytechnic is being established in addition to Industrial Training Institute at Rangpo. During 1990-91 in the several senior secondary schools, vocational education courses have been introduced under a centrally sponsored scheme.

Adult Education:

Due to the gradual exposure and necessity the illiterate people are coming ahead for adult education programme particularly women for their better home management. In Sikkim out of 414 new revenue blocks, 361 have been covered under the literacy campaign and basic literacy have been provided to all illiterate youths below the age group of (15-35). More than 53 adult education centers are sponsored by the government to make the state an illiteracy Free.

Education among SC and ST and position of Women:

The SC belongs to the group once subjected to the unjust practice untouchability in the traditional caste system of India. The expression 'SC' was coined by the British Simon commission and was embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 to refer to the groups which were known as the depressed class. Thus officially the SC is the group that is named in the SC order of the president of India. Tribal are believed to be the earliest settlers in the Indian peninsula and mountainous terrain. They are also known as Adibashis in the plain and plateau areas meaning the "original inhabitants". They come under the constitutionally recognized Schedule Tribes order of the president of India. The tribe people are ethnically distinct from the Hindu majority

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Sikkim have been listed in the constitution; Scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes order, 1978.

The communities listed under S.C. and S.T. is in perfect communal harmony along with the general people, which become difficult to distinguish each other especially in the urban areas.

Schedule Caste (SC) and (ST) communities constitute an inseparable part of Sikkim. As per 2001 census, the total population of Sikkim is 540493. Out of which the male population is 28817 and 252276 of female counterpart and ratio of female population according to 2001 census is 875 per 1000 male.

The ST population of Sikkim as per 2001 census is 81794 which is 15.12% of total population. The number of tribal male population is 42691 and 39103 of female population. Among the SC, the female sex ratio is higher than average Sikkim's Sex ratio i.e. 960 per 1000 males.

The SC population of Sikkim as per 2001 census is 23945 which is 4.42% of total population. The number of SC male population is 12202 and 11743 is female population. Among the SC the female sex ratio is higher than national average i.e. 939 per 1000 males.

DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES IN SIKKIM (1991)

STATE/DISTRICT	TOTAL	POPULATION		% TO TOTAL	
		SC	ST	SC	ST
SIKKIM	4,06,457	24,084	90,901	5.93	22.36
NORTH	31,240	1111	17,301	3.56	55.38
EAST	1,78,452	12,482	37,632	6.99	21.09
SOUTH	98,604	5,564	16,671	5.64	16.91
WEST	98,161	4,927	19,297	5.02	19.66

Source: Census of India, series 22, Sikkim

The highest population of SC is observed in east dist.(6.99%) and lowest in North Dist. (3.56%). In South and West dist. the proportion of SC was (5.64%) and (5.02%) respectively.

The ST proportion is highest in North District (55.38%) followed by, East (21.09%) West (19.66%) and South District (16.91%). The percentage distribution of SC to total population has increased from 5.78% in 1981 to 5.93% in 1991. The percentage total population has increased from 70.95 in 1981 and 71.71 in 1991.

Literacy:

The level of general literacy in Sikkim, as per 1991 census is 56.94%, with the male literacy being 65.74% and female literacy is 46.69%. Whereas, the literacy of tribal people in Sikkim is 48.40%, with male literacy being 55.15% and female literacy 41.08%. In spite of special provisions having been made as a measure of constitutional obligation, the tribal people are far behind the general population in literacy rate. The total literacy rate increased from 1981 to 1991 is 15-27 percent whereas male and female literacy increase from 1981-91 are 12.05% and 18.64% respectively. From this data we can say the female literacy among tribal women increased compared to male.

The literacy of SC people in Sikkim is 41.16%, with male literacy being 47.63% and female literacy of SC was 19.65% which is increased in 1991 by 17.62% and male literacy is increased by 11.89%. From the data we can say education spread among female sharply than man.

LITERACY PERCENTAGE OF GENERAL, SC & ST (1981-1991)

SCHEDULED CASTE	1981			1991		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Total	28.06	35.74	19.65	41.16	47.63	34.25
Rural	22.65	30.27	14.28	38.07	44.63	31.06
Urban	47.91	55.94	39.20	65.13	71.01	58.95
SCHEDULED TRIBE						
Total	33.13	43.10	22.37	48.40	55.15	41.01
Rural	29.14	39.44	18.09	46.28	53.01	38.96
Urban	55.84	63.43	47.32	72.31	78.24	65.25

Sources: Census of India, 1991 series 22, Sikkim and census of India 1981

HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES AMONG SCs and STs

Education up to school level has been widely spread in Sikkim. There are more than 1474 schools in all over Sikkim including the Pre-primary to the Sen. Sec. level schools as on 31st March 2000. Most of these schools are co-educational and moreover education is free up to senior secondary level or very subsidized rate in government or semi government schools. The state offers a common school system of uniform quality to all children irrespective of caste, creed and sex. The SC and ST children get some money from the government in a form of annual stipend to help them for minor expenses in their schooling.

Moreover in order to facilitate the higher education of SC and ST students. The Govt. of Sikkim has provided quota or reservation in different colleges for different (General or Honors) courses and in other Medical and technical colleges in and outside the state. The reservation or quota for different social sciences, medical and technical courses outside the state has been extended to Sikkim by the centre to compensate for its late entry into the Indian System of Education after 1975, not only for SC/STs but also for general students aspiring for higher studies in different course.

The meritorious students in the Sen. Sec. are given the quotas, where reservation is guaranteed for meritorious SC and STs Students.

The facility of higher education provided by the centre have been very effective for overwhelming majority (SC/ST and other general students) of medical doctors, engineers and other social sciences and professionals in Sikkim who have studied against reserved quota in different colleges and universities. Along with the quota for admission in different colleges the meritorious students are provided with the government scholarship in order to help the student to bear the expenses.

PERCENTAGE OF ST GIRL STUDENTS TO TOTAL ST STUDENTS IN DIFFERENT SCHOOL STAGE (1990-91)

Stage	Boys	Girls	Gender Gap	%Gender Gap
Pre-Primary Stage	1619	1339	280	9.4
Primary Stage (I-V)	8250	7218	1032	6.6
Middle Stage (VI-VII)	1728	1657	71	2
Secondary Stage (IX-X)	746	716	30	2.05
Higher Secondary Stage (XI-XII)	292	176	116	24.78

Source: Bhattacharya A. in 'The Bhutia-Lepcha Women of Sikkim' in Sikkim (Ed. By M.P Lama)

CONCLUSION

Our philosopher President Dr. Radhakrishnan has rightly observed that if we educate a man, we educate only one person but educating a woman we educate an entire family. This observation bears testimony to the importance of female education. The rural population constitutes almost $\frac{3}{4}$ th of population of India and as such the education of the rural women can not be ignored.

In Sikkim, though we have found that the condition of women in educational field is better than the national average and, there has been a considerable improvement in women's education during last three decades, but it is also found that there is a wide disparity among rural and urban women in educational status. On the other hand compared to the other developed state in India (like Kerala, Maharashtra, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep etc) Position of Sikkim is still far behind. In above analysis we also found that though girls enrolment in pre-primary and primary level have touched a prestigious figure, problem of dropouts among girls students between primary to secondary and primary to higher secondary stages is very high. This is one of the main drawbacks of women education in Sikkim Dropouts may create many social and economic insecurity within the woman folk.

In case of higher education, enrolment of female is very negligible. There is not much scope where female can use her capacity or capability in a productive manner. Sikkim is among those few states of India, where there is no women's college which is necessary step for educational empowerment of women.

It is observed from various studies that education not only builds up knowledge and information but helps the citizens to understand the complexities of life. It is therefore, suggested that:

- (i) Programme of free universal education up to the stage of 18 years should be implemented. Attention should be paid to the content of education. The courses of studies of gender equality, self respect, courage, independence which would help, develop the personality of women.

- (ii) School timings should be flexible and fixed to suit local conditions. Girls should be encouraged to enter professional courses. The open school system should be expanded extending the facilities to all the girls in rural and backward areas.
- (iii) Opening of primary schools in every village and making women elected representatives of Panchayats responsible for ensuring enrolment and attendance of girls should be attempted.
- (iv) Special effort may be made by the community and people in situation to check the problem of drop-outs.
- (v) Support facilities should be provided to parents to enable girls to continue schooling.
- (vi) Efforts should be made to sensitize the education structure and innovative projects with cultural specific issues should be developed.
- (vii) Mass media should be utilized for projecting positive image of girl child and gender sensitization campaign for community should be initiated. The school teacher should be oriented towards gender issues.
- (viii) Policy planners must face the educational challenge of women's literacy.
- (ix) Regular crèches to Primary schools.
- (x) Syllabus needs to be more relevant for children of rural areas. Practical subjects like animal husbandry, Cattle Care, Soil Conservation, agriculture, and social forestry are added and such options offered along with subjects like history, modern science and Physics.
- (xi) It should be made possible to have more women teachers by posting them in their home, villages or nearby villages.
- (xii) Recognition that 'liberty in itself' is not a solution to the basic problem of poor women viz- exploitation and hunger and therefore literacy to be understood in the wider context of the social structure.
- (xiii) Sustained modernization of public opinion and community support for creating a favorable environment for girls.
- (xiv) Special incentives in low female enrolment area.
- (xv) To increase the foundation of more girls' school and co-education schools especially secondary and higher secondary schools.
- (xvi) To increase the vocational/technical training for girls.
- (xvii) Income generating programme for girls after school hours to supplement family income.

(xviii) Strengthening Science teaching in girl's schools and colleges.

(xix) Women's career counseling centre should be opened.

Finally, at present, there are three full time colleges in Sikkim (one private sector). The number of female students increased in pursuing higher education locally to fast joining up. With tremendous expansion of facilities at the lower levels, the number of those qualifying in the higher secondary examination are raising steeply. In anticipation of this and view of the considerable popular enthusiasm for the proposal of full fledged university, it is desirable that a beginning with a full time university be made as early as possible. The establishment of such an institution will also impart certain 'completeness' to the state's educational system. This will also give a new thrust on the state of research and academic activities in the state which seems to be on low ebb today. This is one reason that no Government action particularly in the field of economic development gets any independent assessment which is highly required in a resource, scarce and environment sensitive state like Sikkim the university is required mainly on the following grounds.

- (a) Sikkimese Students should have the benefit of studying within their state.
- (b) A university must necessarily cater not only to the local population, but to the population in the adjoining regions.
- (c) Establishment of university in Sikkim could ensure a better documentation of Sikkim specific subject / areas through research as absence of documented, authentic records is currently the greatest drawbacks.
- (d) A university's presence could enhance the academic environment so necessary to our hill students.
- (e) The need to open new colleges in the future will be inequitable and would be worthwhile to have Sikkim colleges affiliated to a Sikkimese University rather than to a university which is apathetic to the Sikkimese sentiment.

CHAPTER - 6

WOMEN AND THEIR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN SIKKIM

Sikkim the erstwhile sovereign monarchial country became the 22nd state of Indian union in May 1975 as a result of referendum by the people of sikkim and an agreement signed between Chogyal Palden Thendup Namgyal, the then Maharaja of Sikkim and the Government of India. Sikkim has total population of 540,851, in which women comprises 252367 i.e.(46.7%) which is relatively equivalent to men according to 2001 census.

In 1985 election, altogether some 95 candidates were in fray. In the most prestigious Gangtok constituency, 12 candidates including Smt. Dil Kumari Bhandari(SSP) were fighting elections. Besides there were three former Chief Minister, 14 Ex – Ministers, and ex-IPS officer, an ex-Chairman of Gangtok Municipal Corporation, two ex-Secretaries of Government of Sikkim and 10 women Candidates, who contested from various constituencies.

Owing to the lack of socio- political awareness, opportunity for education , social-evils and Superstitions, women's participation in election was low in the year 1985 as compared to men(45.88% of women participated as an electoral, which is lesser than men constituting 54.22%). But in the year 2004 women's participation is improved i.e. (48.30%) in contrast to their male counterparts constituting (51.70%).

Total number of Electors and polling stations in Assembly Election wise

Election	Male	Female	Total	Polling Station
1994	114009	103437	217,446	313
1999	132591	122786	255,377	336
2004	145738	136199	281,937	349

Source: Election Deptt, Government of Sikkim.

Similarly in Lok Sabha Poll-1991 to 2004 total number of women votes' ware 136199 and that of men were 145738 of the total voters 281937.

Lok Sabha poll - 1991 2004 total number of voters and polling booths in Sikkim

Year	Electors			Polling Station
	Male	Female	Total	
1991	N.A	N.A	201704	284
1996	N.A	N.A	229160	323
1998	123023	113298	236321	335
1999	132591	122786	255377	336
2004	145738	136199	281937	349

Source: Election Deptt, Government of Sikkim

Women's Legal status in Sikkim

Although a number of Acts, providing legal protection for women exists in India. In Sikkim, no such legal umbrella of protection is available to women. They are left vulnerable to social injustice unlike other states. Before merger of state in the Indian Union, there was practically no law especially for protection of women. The State Government has not provided adequate legal protection, by understand that the Central Acts, Cr. P.C. and I.P.C which must be enacted and enforced by a competent legislature implementation practically. The Central Acts so far extended to the State which contain provision for protection of women are:

- Hindu Marriage Act, 1955(22 to 55) with Amendment of 1976.
Enacted on 21.10.1988.
Enforced on 21.10.1989
- Immoral Traffic Act; 1956.
Enacted on 29.7.1983
Enforced on 15.9.1984

And 3 Cr. P.C. 1898(New Cr. Pc.1973) has not been extended so far).

A host of such Central Acts, Cr.P.C and I.P.C which are essential for legal protection of women has not been extended and enforced so far. This is because of unawareness, ignorance and backwardness on the part of women in the State. There is no doubt that the status of women in Sikkim may be comparatively better than many other States. Social evils are minimal, social customs traditions etc. are better in many respect. However, we should not forget the innocent women folk of remote rural areas of Lachung, Lachen and Dzongu of North District who have perhaps never had a chance to visit their nearest market Mangan, Borong, Payong, lingi area of South Dist, where many women may die

without visiting their nearest market and their district Namchi, Mangnam, and Labi area of West District. Where poor women may perish without visiting their nearest market place Gyalshing, Barapathing, North and South Regu, Lingtam area of East District, women may not have a chance to visit their Capital – Gangtok. The male domination in the rural area is unexpectedly serious. We must take into consideration of the women of such remote areas while evaluating the women's status in the State.

The State Government has taken some important decisions for up liftment of women in the State. These are:

- One women M.P out of two to represent the Paliament.
- Two women MLAs out of 32 to represent State Assembly
- At least one women Panchayat worker compulsory for every Panchayat Unit in the State.
- Posting of women Secretary in the Departments like Establishment.
- Formation of women Council.

Some of the most important Acts, which require being extended and enforced for raising the Status of women in the State are:

- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929.
- Hindu Women's Property Right Act, 1937.
- Special Marriage Act, 1954
- Hindu Succession Act, 1956.
- New Cr. P.C. 1973 Act, and
- Host of Other Central Acts, Cr.PC and I.PC that are essential for raising the Status of Women in the State.

Women and Property Rights in Sikkim

The distribution of population in the State, which has three major communities, the Lepchas, the Bhutias and the Nepalese experience wide variation in terms of their Socio-cultural milieu. The most important of all is the religious belief.

The population of Sikkim is predominantly Hindu (68%), followed by Buddhism consisting of quite a large community (27%) and the Christians represent only 3% of the total population. The Indian Hindu succession Act of 1956, established the currently prevalent Hindu Personal laws, inheritance or

marriage; which govern other religious communities like Sikh, Jain and Buddhists in India. It is not applicable to the Bhutia-Lepcha people in Sikkim, though they are Buddhists by religion barring a handful of Christian Lepchas. The Hindu laws, except Hindu marriage act of 1955 have not been extended or enforced in Sikkim even after its merger into the Indian union in 1975. So the Bhutia-Lepcha people in Sikkim are still governed and guided by their customary laws; in respect of succession, inheritance and also of marriage.

As the Bhutia –Lepcha people of Sikkim follow the patriarchal family system, all the property either movable or immovable; belong to the father or head of the family. After the death of the father the eldest of his sons becomes the head of the family and takes charge of the property. As far as the property matters are concerned, the women except for their movable personal belongings, ornaments and utensils etc have no locus-stand and legal rights in the family property. But according to unwritten norms of the society there are ample provisions for safeguarding the interest of the female members of the family. This is the social principal that has to be followed by every family's head. Though the Bhutia-Lepcha women has no legal rights in the property ,usually the daughters, sisters, aunts and near cousins are given gifts of immovable assets in the form of live stock, utensils, ornaments and other useful materials etc. The rich and well to do family sometimes may give a piece of cultivated land or a house to the daughters or sisters. But that they give out of compassion not as per law. The daughters or sisters can take those gifts along with them when they marry and go away from their parental house. The laws which, Bhutias and Lepchas are governed by, does not allow the daughter the right to inherit the properties of their father even when there are no sons. If a Bhutia-Lepcha man dies leaving behind his widow and daughter only, with no sons, the widow shall inherit the property only for her life and on her death, the property shall revert back to male agnates of her late husband but not the daughter. Women are not entitled to sell, transfer or mortgage that property of her late husband. The Bhutia- Lepcha women may, however, acquire property by way of gift or under a will from her father or other relations. But under the Married Women Property Regulations Act, 1962, if Bhutia-Lepcha women marry a non Bhutia-Lepcha person, she will forfeit her rights to such properties.

According to these Regulations:

1. "A Sikkim women who holds immovable property in Sikkim at the time of her marriage shall continue to hold such property notwithstanding her marriage with a person who is not Sikkim subject holder and shall have the power to dispose off such property either by sale, mortgage or otherwise to a Sikkim Subject holder during her life time"
2. "A Sikkimese women married to a person who is not a Sikkim subject holder shall have no right to acquire any immovable or any interest in such property in the territory of Sikkim subsequent to her marriage".

3. "If a Sikkimese women married a person, who is not a Sikkim subject, the husband and any offspring born of that marriage shall acquire no interest in any immovable property, which she may hold in Sikkim by virtue of section 4 of this Regulation".

The Regulation has not yet been replaced by the legislature and continued to be in force under the government proclamation of 1968. A Sikkimese woman was to lose her Sikkim Subjectship, if she married a non-Sikkimese. As Sikkim Subjectship has come to an end with the incorporation of Sikkim as a constituent State in the Union of India this law has now lost all its force and has no longer any field to operate.

In spite of all these restriction, it must be said that the Bhutia-Lepcha in Sikkim still enjoy more freedom economically and socially compared to women of other developed parts in India.

Poverty in Sikkim

A conclave of Chief Ministers was held in New Delhi on Aug 2004, Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam; President of India, who gave a call for a new developed model to take India in the category of developed countries by the year 2020, inaugurated it. In the conclave; the results of the evaluation of the performance of all the States and Union territory, by a team of eminent economists and their rankings based on their performance in the various categories like prosperity and budget, health, law and order, investment environment, agriculture, infrastructure, consumer markets and education on 250 variables of performance were announced. The best states in each category were given awards by the President, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and Finance Minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram. In the category of Smaller States, Sikkim was among the first three best performing States in the field of law and order, health and investment scenario, while the state begged the first rank in the field of education. The overall rank of the state in the category of smaller states was fifth.

Though Sikkim scores well in terms of Human Development indicators, but faces a chronic problem of unemployment and poverty. Therefore, the Vision for Sikkim sets the state an accelerated path of Eco-friendly Sustainable Development. The key objectives are to alleviate poverty, create income generation opportunities by empowering the people especially the marginal group, inclusive of women through education and employable skills and building the requisite infrastructure. Sikkim had been on a trade relationship with the neighboring domestic states in the Gangetic plain and international trade relationship with the neighboring countries, but it has been on a halt with countries like China, due to some misunderstandings, which proved to be a big loss for people who had been deriving their economic sustenance from cross-border trade.

Sikkim has been growing at a satisfactory nominal rate of nearly 14.5% per annum between 1980-81 and 1995-96. Real growth rate during 1980-81 to 1991-92 was impressive at 10%, which is

11.07% in 1991-2001, which is far higher than the all-India average growth. Nevertheless, the excellent growth performance mask fundamental problem of unemployment and poverty facing the economy today. According to Planning Commission estimates 1994-95, Sikkim ranks fifth in the country in terms of poverty, which proves that benefits of growth have not percolated down to the general people. Furthermore with 38% of the people below the age of 15, the number of young people entering the workforce and looking out for jobs, in government or non-Government services will increase in near future, which would shoot up the unemployment problem and hence poverty.

A stagnant agricultural sector combined with steadily declining industrial activity has severely limited employment opportunities outside the government service. Growth which has taken place, has not been equitably balanced in all four districts of Sikkim with the North district still remaining relatively backward in comparison with other three districts.

The imbalance and inequitable distribution of growth can be explained by considering that Sikkim remained marginalized from the development activities that characterized mainstream India only in the last 25 years, the philosophy of growth with equity and self reliance in the planned development of the State has been focused.

According to the Planning Commission estimate there has been a continued decline in the incident of BPL percentage except in 1993-94 in Sikkim. which recorded decline in the decade 1977-87 moving from 36% to 41.43 in 1993-94. The decrease in urban poverty has been constant whereas rural poverty shows fluctuation.

Number and percentage of population below poverty line

Years	Rural		Urban		Combined	
	No. of persons (Million)	% of Total	No. of Persons (Million)	% of Total	No. of persons (Million)	% of Total
1987-88	0.13	39.35	0.004	9.94	0.135	36.00
1993-94	0.18	45.01	0.003	7.73	0.184	41.43

Notes: poverty ratio of Assam is used for Sikkim.

In 1993-94, 45.01 percent of rural and 7.73 percent of urban population were below the poverty line. The overall trained in poverty HCR for Sikkim, which stagnates and even records a small increase between 1987-8 and 1993-4, does not seem to indicate any significant impact of government programmes to reduce income poverty level.

Sikkim, being part of the North Eastern region, the poverty ratios of Assam are used as the base line.

AN ARRAY OF POVERTY ESTIMATES

Dubey and Gangopadhyay (1998), have provided poverty estimates for all Indian States using six possible methodologies, the calculations are on the basis of raw data on household expenditure, from the NSSO(National Sample Survey) 43rd and 50th rounds income data was excluded due to its unreliability.

It is not reliable at the household level and not available at the regional level, while expenditure based poverty estimates relate more closely to the actual consumption of the individual or the household. Dubey & Gangopadhyay have used the price level of rural Manipur and Urban Meghalaya to compute the poverty figure of Sikkim.

The approaches to poverty HCR computation are

1. OPL: Poverty line based on the official norm and updated using disaggregated price adjustment suggested by Minhas et al (1988).
2. EOPL: Poverty line based on the official norm and updated using Price adjustment suggested by Expert group (1993).
3. APL: Poverty line based on the alternative norm and updated using disaggregated price adjustment suggested by Minhas et al (1988).
4. AIOPL: All India OPL used for all the states/regions.
5. AIEOPL: All India EOPL used for all the States/regions.
6. AIAPL: All India APL used for all the states/regions.

The innovative estimate of poverty, based on these arrays of approaches, which depends on the choice of the user requirement of poverty survey. With the use of different approaches the variable analysis of poverty trend has been recorded. Between 1987-8 and 1993-4, the highest reduction of poverty was recorded using AIAPL (moving from 26.70 % to 10.68 percent), while the lowest reduction was using the APL approach (moving from 26.09% to 25.6%). Further, the AIAPL approach recorded the most spectacular decline in Urban poverty (from 26.89% to 1.63%), and the AIOPL approach recorded the highest reductions in rural poverty (from 39.67% to 24.45%). Depending on the choice of approach, the evaluation of poverty eradication in Sikkim can range from the average to the Spectacular. Based on the norms and assessment format the BPL surveys have been conducted.

1. Department of rural development estimated the percentage of BPL families taking a norm of Rs. 11, 000 per annum per family as a threshold level.
2. Taking the same norm, the State Bureau of Economics and Statistics estimated that 71% of BPL (Below Poverty Line) total families were there in 1995, which was criticized both on grounds of methodology and non-sampling error.

3. The State Bureau estimated BPL number by adopting calorie intake and expenditure method as followed by planning, commission. The ninth five year plan estimated approximately 57% (rural) and 25% (Urban) BPL families in Sikkim.
4. The comprehensive poverty survey using indices like per capita ranking, per capita income, and growth rate helps to roughly check the equality/inequality of income distribution.

In Sikkim, though the per capita ranking has been going up over the years. Its poverty ranking has sharply gone down. Among the 25 Indian States, in 1983-4 Sikkim ranked twelfth both in terms of highest per capita income and HCR by 1993-4 the state was able to rank 10th in terms of per capita income but its ranking vis-à-vis poverty was extremely low, 4 indicating, a sharp rise in poverty in the state, which was highest of all the north-eastern states and was only better than Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal.

Ranking of the Hills State (Out OF 25 STATES) IN TERMS OF PER CAPITA NET STATE DOMESTIC PRODUCT (AT CURRENT PRICE) AND POVERTY

States	1983-84		1987-88		1993-94	
	Per Capita Rank	Poverty	Per Capita Rank	Poverty	Per Capita Rank	Poverty
Arunachal Pradesh	6	8	8	8	7	7
Assam	19	9	19	9	19	5
Himachal Pradesh	8	25	15	23	14	15
Manipur	16	16	12	17	18	13
Meghalaya	18	14	16	14	17	9
Mizoram	22	17	6	18	11	17
Nagaland	9	13	10	13	9	9
Sikkim	12	12	7	10	10	4
Tripura	24	11	22	11	24	8

Compiled by Mahendra P. Lama.

- This can be interpreted in many ways
- Firstly, the high per capita income vis-à-vis a very high poverty status implies that income distribution is very skewed in Sikkim. The coexistence of extremely affluent segments within the astonishingly poor overwhelming majority has been common to many states in the North-East.
- Secondly, since most of the poverty-stricken people are concentrated in rural areas, the urban-rural gap, in terms of both distribution of income and asset creation could emerge in a very

precarious manner. In the long run, this may go against environmental security and socio-economic sustainability of the State.

- Thirdly, the syndrome of income concentration indicates a deviation in the fundamental principle of objective governance and management of the economy wherein the guiding philosophy has been distributed national wealth across the state in an increasingly equitable manner.
- To create and sustain livelihood opportunities it is useful to examine trend and workforce composition.

According to census data between 1981-91, the absolute number of workers increased from 153,000-169,000 while the percentage of total workers to the total population decreased from 48.4 to 41.7. The percentage of non-workers to total population, recorded and increase of 6.7% points work opportunities in Sikkim therefore, seems to be precarious which has an adverse impact on women who nearly represent 38% of the workforce as against the national average of 20% (1991 census). The Annual Plan 2000-01 reflects promotion of employment opportunities as a strategy against poverty, through strengthening the key sectors of economy to progressively reduced unemployment alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life of people particularly in rural and backward areas. In order to build capabilities, improving survival rates and harnessing the human development potential of the youth. The state strategies and plan should directly focus on strengthening the role of women in all the aspects of mainstream development and boost the local mechanism of accountability and transparency, which can prove to be the most successful management of plans outlay and civil society action, hence more effective.

In order to combat poverty among the people; the state should with no halt, focus on lowering regional and gender disparity in all aspects of development, So as to make the country horizontally and vertically "A Poverty Free State" in the North East Region, amongst the small states and nation as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Gender discrimination and gender inequalities, embedded in the psyche of population across the globe has started attracting serious attention of policy makers in several countries over the last few decades, there has come about a great awareness, particularly in the developed countries including India and as well as among the small states like Sikkim of the face that gender discriminatory practices are neither conducive to the development process nor to the stature of women. One of the most important dimensions of the problem relates to the significant amount of women's contributions to the national economy, which remains invisible and therefore needs quantification.

The constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio

economic, education, and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental rights, among others ensures equality before the law, equal protection of law, prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion race, caste sex or place of birth, and guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Article 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(A, B, C) and 42 of the constitution are of specific importance in this regards. Important social legislation relating to women are;

1. The maternity benefit act 1961
2. The medical termination of pregnancy act, 1971
3. Dowry prohibition act, 1961
4. The immoral traffic (prevention) act, 1986
5. The in descent representation of women (Prohibition) act, 1986
6. The commission of sati (Prevention) act, 1987

Some special initiatives have been formulated for the protection of rights and identity of women

1. National commission for women

In January 1992, the government set up this statutory body with a specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women review the existing legislation to suggest amendments whenever necessary, etc.

2. Reservation of women in local self- Government.

The 72nd and 73rd Constitution Amendment Acts passed in 1992 by parliament ensure one third of the total seats of women in all elected office others in local bodies whether in rural or urban areas.

3. The National plan of action for the girl child (1991-2000 AD)

The plan of action is to ensure survival, protection and development of the girl child with the ultimate objective of building up a better future for a girl child.

The developmental activities in hill area like Sikkim, the involvement of general people along with women is perhaps, should be prerequisite.

But the real situation is grim though relatively better than most, with the marginal role of women in the process of development because of unequal gender-relation in the societies and gender bias in health education and economy. The available evidence shows that the women participation in the total labor force is very low and the vast majority is engaged in agriculture operations

Here also they are not the owner cultivator but the casual laborers. The employment is quite irregular and they suffer from maximum insecurity in employment. The backward social customs have contributed to retaining women work status at low level. Work per se is arduous and the concept of triple burden of work exists in Sikkimese society.

The women have to do the work both inside and outside (paid work) the house, with a big responsibility of child rearing in the urban Sikkim except, those who are engaged in tertiary occupation. The women don't have any specific and compulsory work but the casual household duties. On the other hand, in rural areas, almost every woman has some distinct allotted work. She has to perform household and farm work simultaneously. It is obvious that the women workload varies from society according to their social role expectation.

Such backbreaking jobs in the daily life of Sikkimese women have serious implication especially on their health conditions. This is more so because the families are big in Sikkim, 30% of the rural and 22% of the urban families have more than 6 members. Workload coupled with the fact that early marriages (16 to 20 years) of girls take place especially in the rural place only to worsen health condition.

It is said that maternal mortality is high in Sikkim, given the amount of work drudgery loss in appetite thereby, a low nutrition intake adds up to their poor health status. Women mostly take to drinking which actually kills ones appetite and also the tendency of women to first serve her husband and children and later have the left over food have serious implication on her overall health.

Though ICDS (integrated child development services) are numerous in Sikkim it is yet to be analyzed whether the women do have time and energy to visit the centers to consume the supplied nutrition. Apart from various diseases and ailment which the women in the hill suffer it is important to check whether osteoporosis (loss of bone density due to excessive absorption of calcium and phosphorus from the bone) which leads to breaking of bone occurs among women folk in Sikkim.

Such issues have created in lowering the health status of women in Sikkim and hence needs to be seriously analyzed with a 'bottom up approach'.

For the development of the people (specially women) there should be a new approach where the development of women is a must. We should take women into confidence and involve them fully in development process.

There is an urgent need to understand the role and linkages between women, health, education, employment and optimum development the reason is inching towards better tomorrow and this may be speeded up and in the right direction by the involvement of Sikkimese women from the grassroots to women of today.

A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SIKKIM

by

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NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
NEW DELHI

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FOREWORD

The existential pathos of a woman's life has been inimitably captured by the great Hindi poet, Shri Maithilisharan Gupta, in a memorable couplet which says, "Alas, woman! Thy destiny is eternal sacrifice, eternal suffering!"

Despite the exalted position given to women in some of India's religious texts and the exceptional attainments of individual women in fields as diverse as philosophy, statecraft and even warfare, the profile of the average woman through the ages has been that of a perpetually poor, perpetually pregnant and perpetually powerless being.

Independent India has tried to redeem the situation by proclaiming equality of the sexes as a Fundamental Right under the Constitution and directing state policy towards removing the various disabilities that prevent women in realizing their potential. Nearly six decades of Independence have also seen a plethora of laws passed by the State and Federal Governments to protect women from violence and discrimination and to strengthen their entitlements in the social and economic fields. Numerous committees and commissions have x-rayed the position of women, the advances made by them and the obstacles faced by them and they have made umpteen recommendations to improve the situation. Scores of schemes have been floated by various Ministries of the Government to address women's problems, particularly those related to education, health, nutrition, livelihood and personal laws. In the institutional area, independent administrative departments to give undivided attention to women's problems have sprung up at the Centre as well as in the States. Development Corporations were an innovation of the Eighties to energise economic benefit schemes. The Nineties saw the setting up of the National Commission for Women and State Commissions for Women in various states to inquire into the working of various legal and constitutional provisions concerning women, to investigate cases of violation of women's rights and generally to advise on the socio-economic policy framework in order to mainstream women's concerns. In recent years, the Governments, Central and State, have also articulated comprehensive policies for the empowerment of women through a variety of instruments and approaches focusing on an explicit vision of equal partnership of women in all walks of life.

Credit must also be given to a robust women's movement which has often given forceful expression to women's aspirations and joined issue with all the organs of state—legislative, executive and judicial – for reviewing the age-old prescription of a patriarchal society. Often they have networked effectively with the international community for a quest for worldwide solidarity on issues affecting women. These interactions have often times changed the idiom of discourse on women's rights to justice and development.

The half century of struggle and reform has undoubtedly had considerable impact on women's world. Some of the key indicators of development have perked up significantly; women's life expectancy has risen; education levels have improved; economic participation has grown. But there are areas of darkness too; crimes against women, both at home and outside, continue unabated; traditional economic occupations have withered in the face of global competition; there is increasing commodification of women's persona and vulgarization of their image in the media's marketplace. The new economic regime, has meant the precipitate withdrawal of the state from many fields leaving the weak, including women, in the cold. Similarly, though laws changed; mindsets haven't. Therefore between progressive legislation and sensitive enforcement falls a long shadow. Critics also point out that whatever advances have been made remain confined to urban India and the vast hinterland resists change obstinately.

The overall picture is thus a mixed one leaving the profile of the average Indian woman not substantially altered. But in this vast country there is no average Indian woman. As in all matters, diversity marked the Indian woman's picture too. How society and economy are coping with the forces of modernization differs substantially from region to region. The geography of a state provides its own constraints and opportunities; history gives its own moorings to values and momentum to change. Thus the regional profile is superimposed on the national profile. The NCW has therefore commissioned these studies to gauge how women's life has been changing or not changing in different States of the country, and to situate these studies in the historical and geographical context region or State so that progress can be measured across time and across space. Such spatial comparisons can highlight what lessons there are to be learnt from the 'leading' areas and equally they help in focusing the attention on the 'lagging' areas. Regionally disaggregated data helps in benchmarking progress of different regions, areas or districts, and can be used for improving performance by attempting to raise the performance levels of the laggards to the average of the State and then matching the State's average to the national average. Interesting insights can also be gleaned from the experience of implementing agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, in dealing with different problems. Some of these may be rooted in the soil of the region and may not lend themselves to

replication but many others can be useful examples to emulate. That is how Best Practices become common practices.

These studies have been carried out by different research groups having special knowledge and interest in the area – its people, its history, its administration, its cultural ambience etc. They have interacted with official agencies as well as with leading NGOs working with women in their respective areas. The NCW has given a helping hand by providing information from its own database where available and also by interacting with the government of the State to set the stage for these exercises. The result is in your hands.



(GIRIJA VYAS)

Chairperson

National Commission for Women

PREFACE

It's impossible to think about the welfare of the world, unless the conditions of women are improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly only on one wing. –Swami Vivekananda

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women.

Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the Fifth Year Plan (1974-78) onwards there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development.

In recent years, the Empowerment of women has been recognized as the Central issue in determining the status of women.

The National Commission for women was set up by an Act of Parliament, in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlement of women.

Women Empowerment simply is to make women powerful or capable through training and exposure, to equip them with better skills and enhance their knowledge, so as to prepare them to face new challenges due to technological development, urbanization, modernization, Globalization and Liberalization; so as to assert themselves as quality person at home, society, community and nation at large.

For the overall development of any society, the status of women is a key factor determining progress (status referred to as a position in social system or a sub-system, which is distinguishable from and at the same time related to other position through its designated rights and obligations, Status involves comparison and grading) this is because women in their roles as mothers, daughters, sister and daughter in laws are a crucial link in the family.

They are the one's, who give vital inputs to future generation, when they are at the malleable age.

The modern age, mobile flashing up market and sassy lady of new millennium is a great symbol of empowerment of women. There's just one little catch. Empowerment doesn't just come from a part of population getting their share of rights or may be more. It needs an awakening in every woman. Women on the top in the corporate sector; politics and every field, earlier considered the domain of males are a magnificent example of the true empowerment but partially. There are still some women left out of this progressive lucky circle.

The women in the remote areas of the country who have not even graduated to gas- stove from the old wood and charcoal fires can only fantasize about three meals a day for their family and may be healthy kids.

The women who slog as domestic helps, construction worker and worst of all, those who are forced to sell their bodies to survive, don't they deserve their share of Empowerment. How many of them have even the basic rights of exercising choice either in the case of their families or even in their own lives?

Let us not confuse obscenity and vulgarity with Liberty and Emancipation.

In Sikkim women constitute nearly 47% of the total population. Their social Economic position in the state seems to be better than that in the rest of the country.

Women are not secluded, while instance of infanticide or dowry related deaths have not been reported. Women also play a major role in trading activities. In contrast to the unfavorable sex-ratio (875/ 1000) in the population as a whole, the number of women in government employment is greater than that of men.

Women are more visible in the public sphere in Sikkim, than is the norm for India and South Asia as a whole.

The status of women in Sikkim, their economic contribution socio-cultural autonomy or authority, involvement in the decision making process in all socio-economic cultural and most important of all political sphere has been an eye opening for the state, country and continent as a whole.

The mixtures of successes have brought the glory to the State with Nation Conferring the State with 'Award of Best Performing State' among small State in India in Aug 6, 2004.

As far as the completion of the research work on the 'Situational Analysis of Women on Sikkim' is concerned; given the very limited time and dearth of resources including references due to the virginity of the topic, not attempted before, there could be many omission and gaps.

I have made a humble effort. This document is the output of the same. I have great pleasure in submitting it to the Commission.

I take this opportunity to pay my respects to Mrs. Manita Pradhan, chair person of Sikkim Commission for Women. It was through her kindness that I had the privilege of writing the SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN IN THIS MODEL STATE.

I heartily thank my brother Mr. Bikash Diyali, who assisted me as the rapporteur and my sister- in- law Mrs. Arti Diyali who had been my constant support during the preparation of the research paper.

I must also acknowledge the support of my friend Mr/Mrs Tika Acharya, Mr. gopal Acharya and their family in siliguri.

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I thank the various data supplying agencies without whose help I couldn't have done my basic reading.

Finally, this research paper is dedicated to my beloved parents Shri/Smt. D.B.Diyali, who have always been my strong support and inspiration as a Guide to appreciate and criticized me, at the right time and told me to work Seriously, so to achieve deserving success.

(CHANDRAKALA DIYALI)