

**The Sikkim Democratic Front and the
Politics of Popular Mobilisation in Sikkim
(1993-2004)**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy
(Arts) Under the University of North Bengal

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2010

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The study on "the Sikkim Democratic Front and the Politics of Popular Mobilisation in Sikkim" is on the role of a regional political party in the politics of Sikkim. It covers the period from 1979 to 2004 and more particularly the period after the SDF came to power. For the study to materialise I had to depend on several people without whose support I could not have completed my work.

First and foremost I gratefully acknowledge my profound sense of gratitude to my Supervisor, **Dr. Arun Kanti Jana**, Reader, Department of Political Science for being my teacher, guide and above all the source of inspiration. He had to spare his valuable time out of his busy academic and family schedule for many years. The study would not have been accomplished without his sincere dedication and guidance. I am fortunate to have a teacher/guide like him.

Secondly, I am very grateful to my parents and all my family members for their love and constant moral support, most importantly my husband Mr. Karma Samten Bhutia for being there to help me and support me in all the difficult times of my life. My grateful thanks to all my friends and colleagues who gave me valuable suggestions and inputs to help me out in the course of my study, especially Mr. B. L Khamdak, Mr. P.T Bhutia, Mr. Kunzang Bhutia, Ms. Laxmi Rai, Ms. Rinzing Choden Bhutia, Ms. Shraddha Rai, Ms. Kajal Pradhan, Ms. Sonam Choden Bhutia and Mr. Bikas Karki. I extend my grateful thanks to Ms. Dona Rai and Ms. Bindhiya Rai, who helped me in typing various chapters of my study and Mr. Amit Paul for formatting the material.

I acknowledge my thanks to my teachers in the Department of Political Science, N.B.U and staff of the Central Library, N.B.U, Namchi Government College Library, Sikkim Express Press, Various Panchayat Blocks, SDF Party Offices and State Institute for Rural Development for the valuable assistance which they provided during the course of my research work.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not extend my thanks to Mrs. Manita Mangar (ex- MLA) for her help and my sincere thanks to the respondents of Damthang Constituency, Lachen Mangshila Constituency, Geyzing Constituency and Gangtok Constituency, without whose co-operation and support the study could not have been completed.

At last, I express my sincere thanks to all my well-wishers.

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Abbreviations

AAYA	Antyodaya Annadan Yojna
ADFNB	Agriculture Department and Farmers' Welfare Board
APOC	Argentina's Peronists Organisational Commitment
AS	Annapurna Scheme
ASDFC	All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee
BLC	Block Level Committee
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CBI	Central Bureau of Investigation
CLC	Constituency Level Committee
CPI	Communist party of India
CPI (M)	Communist party of India (Marxist)
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
CWC	Central Working Committee
DC	District Committee
DCFH	Development Commission For Handicrafts
DPC	Denzong People's Chogpa
EAAY	Extended Antyodaya Annadan Yojna
EPT	Elakha Panchayat Tribunal
FIC	Farmer Training Center
GFPPF	Government Food Preservation Factory
GPU	Gram Panchayat Unit
HYV	High Yeilding Variety
IAY	Indira Awas Yojna
ICDP	Integrated Cereals Development Programme
INC	Indian National Congress

IPR	Information and Public Relation
JAC	Joint Action Committee
JP	Janata party
LF	Left Front
LL	Lombard League
MBC	Most Backward Class
MMAAY	Mukhiya Mantri Antyodaya Yojna
MMKSA	Mukhiya Mantri Khadya Suraksha Abhiyan
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MR	Muster Roll
NCCC	National Counter Corruption Commission
NF	National Front
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
NGP	Nirmal Gram Puraskar
NH	National Highway
NHPC	National Hydel Project Corporation
NPDP	National Pulses Development Programme
NREGAS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NSDP	Net State Domestic Product
NWDPR fed Area	National Watershed Development Programme for Rain fed Area
OBC	Other Backward Class
OPDP	Oilseeds Production Development Programme
OSU	Organisation of Sikkimese Unity
PA	Panchayat Assistance
PAC	Press Accreditation Committee
PMGSY	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna
PSI	Italian Socialist Party

PSU	Public Sector Undertaking
RMDD	Rural Management Development Department
RS	Rising Sun
RSP	Revolutionary Socialist Party
RWW	Rangit Water World
SABCCO Backward Classes Corporation	Sikkim Scheduled Caste Scheduled Tribe and Other Classes Corporation
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCFBC	Sikkim Commission For Backward Classes Ltd.
SDF	Sikkim Democratic Front
SGP	Sikkim Gorkha Prajatantrik
SIBLAC	Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee
SICON	Sikkim Consultancy Services
SIDICO Corporation	Sikkim Industrial Development And Investment Corporation
SIMFED	Sikkim Marketing Federation
SIRD	State Institute for Rural Development
SISI	Small Industries Services Institute
SHRC	State Human Rights Commission
SHRP	Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad
SNAC	Sikkimese Nepali Apex Committee
SPIIL	Sikkim Precision Industries Ltd
ST	Schedule Tribe
SPC	Sikkim Prajatantra Congress
SPCC	State Pradesh Congress Committee
SSP	Sikkim Sangram Parishad
SU	Sikkim United
SUDA	Sikkim United Democratic Alliance

SWC	State Women Commission
TDC	Tourism Development Corporation
TRT	Thai Rak Thai
TTF	Tourism and Travel Fair
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
VLW	Village Level Worker

Glossary

Chogyal: Dharma Raja or the king of Sikkim which belonged to the Namgyal dynasty who ruled Sikkim from 1962 to 1974.

Chutimpa: Representative of the religious sect who are also called Lama (monk)

Dzongu: Place of Lepchas, the primitive tribe in North Sikkim

Dada parcha: Document related to landed property in Sikkim.

Dhurikhazana: Rents paid by the Sikkimese people for their dwelling space.

Gram Sewak: Advisor to the farmers.

Gyeme: Council of village elders in the Dzumsa system in north Sikkim.

Jharlangi: Exploitation of wages by the contractors (Kazi's) from the Porters who carried transport from Sikkim to Tibet. The Porters were paid wages by the Britisher's which the Contractors kept for themselves.

Kalobhari: A local name given to the black load containing arms and ammunitions to be carried to Tibet for the Britisher's through Sikkim.

Karbari: Class of people below the Zamindar's who collected the rents for the Zamindar's. These people were also called the mandals.

Kazi: Aristocrates during the Chogyal rule in Sikkim.

Kuruwa: Means a long await for transport of kalobhari from Sikkim to Tibet. During such wait they survived on their own supplies, this process of long waiting is called Kuruwa.

Kutiadars: Landless labourers who cultivate land of the landholders and pay the rent according to the agreement made between the owner and the labourers.

Khyomee: The head of Gyeme which is a Council of Village elders in Dzumsa system in North Sikkim.

Sangha: Monks belonging to different monasteries of Sikkim whose seat is reserved in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

Sunakhari: A species of noble orchid found in Sikkim.

Smrti Vans: Area where plantations can be done in memory of their dear and near ones.

Theki-bethi: Means the gifts presented to the Zamindar's and middle Man by the farmers during the festive occasion.

Tsong: Tsongs are the people belonging to the Limboo Community.

Yuma Samyo: Religion of the Limboos which is one of the ethnic groups of Sikkim. They have their own ways of performing rituals, healing diseases and illness which is distinct from other religion in Sikkim.

Pipon: The highest office bearers in the administrative hierarchy and are directly elected by the village community. It is prevalent in Lachen and Lachung of North Sikkim.

Gyapon: The next in the administrative hierarchy. They are also elected Body in the Dzumsa system.

Thimpeon: Are the jury members elected during the time of disputes or settlement of cases.

Mong-Khlm or Dzumsa house: Is the place where people meet to discuss their problem or to transact important business of the welfare of the community.

Introduction

The study entitled "The Sikkim Democratic Front and the Politics of Popular Mobilisation in Sikkim" is on the role of a regional political party in the politics of Sikkim. It covers the period from 1993 to 2004 and more particularly after the Sikkim Democratic Front (hereafter SDF) came to power in December 1994. The study focuses on the downfall of the Sikkim Sangram Parishad (hereafter SSP) which ruled Sikkim for more than a decade, the origin of SDF and the strategies it had employed in order to come to power and maintain power. The central focus of the study is the mobilising strategies adopted by the party and its support base throughout the state. The study on the support base of the party is based on the field survey conducted in four constituencies of four different districts in Sikkim. The study we will see later brings out an interesting development on electoral populism in Sikkim. The entire thesis is divided into six chapters plus the introduction and the conclusion. The chapters are further divided into several sections.

Sikkim is a tiny state. Initially it was a protectorate of India and has a population of about 5,40,493 as per the last census comprising of Nepali, Lepcha, Bhutia and other tribes and communities. In May 1974, the Sikkim State Congress decided to end the monarchical rule in Sikkim. The Chogyal was declared the constitutional head when the Sikkim Assembly passed the Government of Sikkim Act 1974 for providing responsible government in Sikkim. The 35th Amendment Act 1974 made Sikkim an Associate state of India. Very shortly this Associate state was merged with the Indian Union. The Indian Parliament passed the 36th Amendment Act on May 16, 1975 making Sikkim the 22nd state of Indian Union.

Regional political parties in India have played a significant role in the democratic process in every state. In Sikkim the democratic movement began with the emergence of political parties. Political development and the emergence of party-politics in Sikkim can be traced back to the 1940s. Under the direct impact of the Indian National Congress, Sikkim's State Congress under the leadership of Tashi Tshering, the President and C. D. Rai the General Secretary was formed in December 1947 and this was the first organised political party in the state. Demands like abolitions of landlordism, formation of an interim government and accession of Sikkim to the Indian Union were put forward by the party in 1947. As a new political party in 1960, the Sikkim National Congress also had its demands like responsible government, written constitution for Sikkim and Universal Adult Franchise based on joint electorate. October 1972 saw the emergence of Sikkim Janata Congress with the merger of Sikkim State Congress and the Sikkim Janata Party. With the emergence and growth of these political parties, a new turning point took place in the political development of Sikkim with the implantation of democracy and merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union in May 16, 1975.

The first 32 members Assembly election which was held in April 1974 witnessed the Sikkim Congress securing 31 seats while the National Party securing only one seat. Kazi Lhendup Dorjee was sworn in as the first Chief Minister of Sikkim from the Sikkim Congress Party. On 17th August, the Chief Minister Kazi Lendup Dorjee and his ministers resigned due to failure of constitutional machinery in the state. On August 18, 1979, Sikkim came under Presidential Rule following the dissolution of the State Assembly. On 12th October, 1979 the Second Assembly Elections were held which is considered as the first democratic election in the state. It is considered to be the first democratic election in the state

because since its merger with the Indian Union, the Assembly election of 1979 was for the first election conducted directly under the supervision and guidelines of the Election Commission of India and the Indian Laws. N. B. Bhandari with his party, Sikkim Janata Party swept the poll and was sworn in as the second Chief Minister of the state. Bhandari's Sikkim Pradesh merged with the Congress (I), which led to the formation of the Sikkim Congress (I) in 1980. More than defection politics it was a regional adaptation of a national party. Bhandari was dismissed in May 1984 by the Governor of Sikkim H. J. Taloyarkhan under article 164 (1) of the Constitution of India stating that "Bhandari ceased to command his pleasure". He appointed under the same article in his pleasure B. B. Gurung from Congress (I) who became the third Chief Minister of Sikkim but the government survived for just 13 days. As a result of the failure of the constitutional machinery Sikkim was once again brought under Presidential Rule for the second time in May 1984. Bhandari left the Congress (I) and founded a new regional political party, Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) in 1984. In the third state Assembly election held in March 11, 1985 Bhandari returned to power with the new regional political party with a symbol of an elephant, ending 10 months of Presidents Rule, securing 30 out of a total of 32 Assembly seats. Political parties like Congress (I), Janata Party, CPI, CPI (M) and two regional parties viz., Sikkim Sangram Parishad and Sikkim Prajatantra Congress, an unregistered political party in the poll alliance with Himali Congress and the Gorkha League and a number of independent candidates contested the elections (Chabra, 1985). In the meantime R. C. Poudyal, President of Rising Sun Party declared to contest elections in alliance with the National Front and the Left Front. In the Lok Sabha Election of June 14, 1991, the CPI (M) entered the elections for the first time in Sikkim. The poll was

swept over by the SSP but Bhandari could not continue in power for long. In early 1990's, the political parties like State Pradesh Congress Committee charged Nar Bahadur Bhandari with anti-party activities. The corruption charges and dissidence within the party led to fractions in the party.

According to press reports the 32 SSP MLAs were divided into three main groups- one led by Bhandari with 12 members, the second led by Pawan Chamling with 12 members and the third group was led by N. Chamla Tshering with 8 members. After the split in the party Bhandari could not continue in office any further. The government was formed under the Chief Ministership of Sanchaman Limboo on 18 May, 1994, which lasted only for 6 months. It is under these conditions the SDF was formed by Pawan Chamling on March 4th, 1993 with the aim of establishing real democracy and safeguarding the rights and interests of the Sikkimese people (SDF, Election Manifesto 1994). Following Chamling's expulsion from the Cabinet and then from the party 19 MLAs defected from the SSP.

Early 90's witnessed a great turmoil in the politics of Sikkim. The era of one man politics and leadership came to an end and post-1993 democratic political electoral process brought average leaders on the political scene of Sikkim. The former Chief Minister Nar Bahadur Bhandari faced opposition from his own ministry. Pawan Chamling stood as a lone opposition to Bhandari's government in the Assembly. Many political organisations aroused against the ruling government. The government was criticised for corruption charges and anti-party activities which led to the breakup in the party. Many leaders left the party and joined the other political groups in the state. The new government formed under Sanchaman Limboo could not last long. With the failure of

the new government under Sanchaman Limboo there was political instability in the state. There was a need for a fresh election in the state and bring stability in the state government.

It is with the Fourth Assembly election that was held in December 1994, SDF attains an absolute majority and comes to power with Pawan K. Chamling as the new Chief Minister of Sikkim dislodging Bhandari's SSP. Defections in political parties could be seen, 6 SSP MLA's joined the SDF, 9 Congress (I) leaders joined the SSP. In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections Sikkim Democratic Front candidates secured a landslide victory against one time political supremo N. B. Bhandari. 1997 saw the emergence of a new political party Sikkim Ekta Manch (SEM) led by L. P. Tiwari. In the Lok Sabha poll of 1998, interesting developments took place in state politics. The Congress (I), the earlier ally of SDF became an opponent of the party. SDF won the election despite the Congress (I) getting the support from Sikkim Ekta Manch (SEM), SSP and the Sikkim National Front. More defections were to be seen in 1999. The SSP general secretary, K. N. Upreti and other dissidents of SSP joined the Congress (I). We also see second coming of R. C. Poudyal, President of the Rising Sun Party after 14 years who had kept away from politics for many years.

On October 16, 1999, the SDF comes to power for the second time in the state. The Sikkim Democratic Front is in power since 1994 and has dominated state politics for the past 16 years. In the state Assembly election of May 2004 the SDF swept over by securing all the 32 seats in the state. The major opposition was posed by the Congress (I) under the leadership of N.B. Bhandari. SSP lost its identity when it formally merged with the Congress (I) in 2001.

Research Problem

From 1979 to 1993, Sikkim politics was almost dominated by Nar Bahadur and his party. Bhandari formed the government in 1979 under Sikkim Janata Parishad and in 1984 formed another political Party Sikkim Sangram Parishad which contested the election of 1985. Looking at the election results Bhandari won the Assembly elections of 1979, 1985 and 1989, the new political party of N.B. Bhandari secured full majority. Bhandari in his fourteen years of rule emerged to be an uncrowned monarch of Sikkim. Political parties like the Congress (I), Janata Party, CPI, CPI (M), Sikkim Prajantantra Congress (SPC) in alliance with Himali Congress and Gorkha League existed. Gorkha League which was an unregistered party contested the elections but these parties could not make any dent in the politics of Sikkim in electoral terms. In the 1990's various political parties and ethnic groups like, the Citizens for Democracy (CFD), the Denzong People's Chagpa (DPC), the Rising Sun (RS) wanted the formation of a United Front and an alternative to the ruling SSP but could not succeed.

1993 marked the birth of the SDF which is an important landmark in the history of Sikkim's politics. It was the lone opposition party to the ruling SSP. After its birth in 1993, SDF won all the assembly elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004 and parliamentary elections of 1996, 1998 and 2004 in the state. But in Sikkim, after the decline of the SSP there arose again the dominance of one party and this one party dominance had been established by the SDF. Many defections were seen among the political parties in the state. There was a second coming of the Rising Sun Party under R. C. Poudyal after fourteen years of retreat. In all the parliamentary elections in the state, the candidate from the SDF won all the elections. Following its success

since 1994, the SDF got re-elected for the third time in May, 2004. Hence since its birth, the SDF has been able to maintain its hold over Sikkim for the past ten years.

Analysing the facts above, several general questions arise. What are the reasons behind the emergence of SDF? What are the principal reasons behind the domination of one party for about more than a decade in Sikkim? Why a regional political party like the SDF has been able to win consecutive elections in the state legislative assembly? Why there has been almost a non-existent of opposition, regional as well as national in Sikkim? How is the SDF able to maintain its domination in state politics? What strategies the SDF has adopted for the maintenance of its domination in the state?

Research Questions

Many general questions have been identified in the present study but the central focus is on the specific questions which are answered in different chapters. In this study we have tried to answer the following questions:

- a)** What were the objective conditions that gave birth to the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) and contributed to its initial success in Sikkim?
- b)** What are the strategies which the party has adopted for winning elections since 1994 and maintaining its dominance in the politics of the state? Has electoral Populism been a part of its strategy?
- c)** Which are the classes, castes and communities that support the party? In other words what is the support base of the party in the state and how do the party mobilise them?

- d) What kind of economic policies the SDF has pursued since coming to political power in 1994?
- e) What form of governance it has been able to provide in the state since 1994? How far the party has been successful in realising its primary objective of 'Real Democracy' and '*Janta Ko Rajma Jantai Raja*' (In a popular regime people are sovereign)?

Literature Review

Even though there are a good number of studies on Sikkim but we will see that these studies hardly answer the questions raised above. Hence let us review the available literature on Sikkim and point out the research gaps. Works on Sikkim are not however many. The available literature may be grouped into two main categories but it can be grouped also in several sub-categories. The first kind deals with general issues on Sikkim like, historical and political developments in Sikkim since independence. The second category of literature evaluates the emergence and growth of regional political parties and development of party politics in Sikkim. The works of Basnet (1974), Rao (1978), Das (1983), Sengupta (1985), Bhadra (1992), Lama (1994) and Chakravarti (2003) deals with the politics in Sikkim in General since its birth. The works of Kazi (1993), Sharma (1996), Gaunley (2002) and Bali (2003) falls within the other category of literature which deals with party-politics in Sikkim. The works of Sinha (1975), Bhattacharya (1981), Dasgupta (1992), Thapa (2002) and Kharel (2002) deal with the socio economic aspects of Sikkim. Singh (1985), A. Bhattacharya (1988), Datta (1991), Wanchuck (2007) and Subba (2008) deals with the socio cultural aspects of Sikkim. Baldev, Srilekha and Agnihotri (1995) deal with the educational status in Sikkim.

Rishley's book "The Gazetteer of Sikkim" (1894) discusses the history of Sikkim in detail. In the first part of the book he discusses the physical features of the state, British intervention and the treaties signed by Sikkim. Rishley's concern was on British policy towards the East Himalayan States like Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim. The next part of the book focuses on the geographical position and description. The boundaries and the area of Sikkim is discussed at full length. The book also traces the rulers of Sikkim and the origins of the early Tibetan Kings with short descriptions of their reigns, population, tribes and chief families of Sikkim, nomenclature of places, old laws of Sikkim and marriage customs. It also gives full account of the geological and mineral resources such as copper, iron, lime and their locations in Sikkim. Agricultural system, kinds of cultivation vegetation including flowering plants and ferns, orchids, bamboos, rhododendrons, primulas, herbaceous, plants, trees and alpine zone of Sikkim, species of butterflies, reptiles, birds and mammals found in the different regions of Sikkim. It also gives a general account on Lamaism as the state religion of Sikkim, origin of Buddhism and its spread in India and outside, its extension to Tibet, the Lamaic sects and introduction of Lamaism in Sikkim. The next part of the book focus on a general description of Sikkim Monastries, their kinds and location, monkhood, monastic routine as a village priest and some magic rites and charms. The focus is little on the political development of Sikkim. The history section of the book consists of just the origins of the kings of Sikkim and the history of laws.

A. C. Sinha's "Politics of Sikkim: A Sociological Study" (1975) provides an analysis of political developments in Sikkim. It contains three parts. Part one studies the historical evolution of the significant social forces active during the pre-merger period in

Sikkim. It tries to highlight how Lamaism and its tradition of Tibetan feudalism got accommodated in the kingship in Sikkim. This gave monarchy a unique character in Sikkim which ruled Sikkim for 333 years. Monarchy in Sikkim was more based on Buddhism. In Part II the author identifies different sections of society like the elite, the Kazi's, the ambitious pro-palace bureaucrats, the Nepali political leaders and the youth Congress Leaders. The youth Congress leaders were leading the various social forces in Sikkim. This part of the book sheds more light on the social background, economic status, political affiliation and perception of various elite groups in Sikkim. Part III has four chapters dealing with the political process and development in the post- 1947 period, i.e. after Indian Independence. Sikkim politics during that time was influenced by Indian Independence movement. The interference by the elite class, pro-palace bureaucrats, was more on the monarchical rule in Sikkim which was resented by the common people. The democrats and the common people did not favour this kind of political structure where democratic participation in decision making was absent. However, the book has certain limitations. Its study base is mostly sociological. The political aspects, peoples' participation in the political process, description on political institutions, policy formulation, electoral behaviour and role of political organisations are not covered in this book.

Basnet's (1974) book is on the Geography and Demography of Sikkim. The entire work is divided into two parts. Part I discusses the geography and demography of Sikkim and conservation of the first Bhutia King of Sikkim in 1642. It also deals with the Bhutanese and Gorkha invasion in 1700 and 1740 respectively. The book presents a detailed account of the Treaty of Sougali (1816) between British and Nepal and the Treaty of

Titaliya (1817) between British and Sikkim. Part II reflects on the emergence of political parties, agitation launched by different political parties and sections of society and the intervention of the Indian government in the political affairs of Sikkim. This part of the book presents the first Panchayat election of 1950, the first Sikkim Council election of 1953, allocation of seats in the council for Bhutia- Lepcha, Tsongs (Limboo), Scheduled Caste and Nepalese in 1966. The author talks about the revolt against Monarchy and the Zamindari system under the monarchy which resulted in the implementation of democracy in Sikkim in 1975. But the book does not deal with the political upheavals' in Sikkim after 1973.

Rao (1978) begins with the influence of India's Independence on the democratic movement in Sikkim. He discusses about the struggle of the people of Sikkim for a democratic set up and also deals with the political development in Sikkim in the pre-merger period. It highlights the internal intrigues to embarrass India by siding with the feudal regime and awakening of the political consciousness of the people of Sikkim culminating in making modern Sikkim the 22nd state of India. Chapter I of the book sheds light on the creation of Sikkim Council after the first democratic election in 1953 which was based on "Parity System" and formation of an Executive Council. The book also reveals the signing of Tripartite Agreement between the Chogyal of Sikkim, political parties of Sikkim and Government of India on 8th May, 1973. It also gives a detailed account of the Government of Sikkim Act 1974 and its provisions for the formation of Assembly, Chief Executive, Council of Ministers, Judiciary, status of Sikkim as an "Associate state" under the 35th Amendment Act of the Indian constitution and the status of Chogyal as the constitutional head. The book however remains silent on the political development in the post merger period. The

author talks about the role played by the central government in the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union but fails to discuss about the political developments after the merger.

B.S Das' (1983) book "The Sikkim Saga' is the book which the research scholars working in Sikkim use as a reference. The book makes a historical analysis on the reasons behind the transformation of power from Monarchy to Democracy and merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. To him, the merger of Sikkim and democratic elections in the state led to the emergence of political parties (regional and national) and democratic decentralisation in the state. The author tries to deal with questions like; was the Merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union necessary? Was there really a popular uprising against the Chogyal in 1973? He also tried to study the role played by the central government in the merger of Sikkim and the details of May 1973 Agreement between the three political parties and the Chogyal of Sikkim and the requirement of a democratic setup in the newly created state. The book also tries to give the role of three great women; Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, Hope Cooke, the wife of the Chogyal Palden Thendup Namgyal and Elisha Maria, the wife of former Chief Minister of Sikkim Lt. L. D Kazi, in the political development of Sikkim. However there are some limitations in his work. The author failed to look at the political developments in Sikkim after the merger.

Sengupta (1985) looks at the geo-political, economic and social foundations, political dynamics, electoral process, role of pressure groups and political parties and comments that the changing trends in political dynamics, political parties and pressure groups of the past and present led to the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. He also traces the cross-current of ethnic, social

and religious factors. He further argued that the purpose of the study is to correlate political dynamics to the nature and functions of the governmental organs, the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. This book though gives much information about many aspects however it fails to give a detail study on the political aspects of Sikkim.

Amal Datta's (1991) book "Sikkim since Independence" shows how a remote area like Sikkim leads towards modernisation. Within a short span of time it could make developments in all aspects –political process, social structure, economy, culture and lifestyle. It sheds light on important questions like "how Sikkim could bring rapid changes and development after it joins the mainstream of Indian Union in 1975?" Sikkim became the 22nd state under Article 371 (F) and the 36th Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution. The first two chapters deal with the educational system and social structure that existed in the pre-merger period in Sikkim. The education system during the king's rule was more monarchical than modern in character. To the author the introduction of modern educational system is essential among the new class and government servants to bring social change. The book is also an analytical study on the role of modern education among the emerging new class and the impact upon the traditional societies and social structure in Sikkim. The book also tries to focus on the social stratification and change in Sikkim after the emergence of a new class. The author has talked much about the social structure and the role of education in changing Sikkim into a modern one but it does not give an account of the role of political parties and political organisations in bringing progressive changes in Sikkim.

Manas DasGupta's (1992) book "Sikkim: Problems and Prospects of Development" discusses the problems of the region-Sikkim is facing and the measures initiated by the state and central government for the proper development of Sikkim especially after its merger with the Indian Union in 1975. The book highlights some of the major issues and their solutions which are helpful to the planners, administrators and researchers. Another section of the book covers the population and urbanisation covering Land Reforms and Development, land Revenue System, Agriculture; Problems and Prospects, mixed farming in Sikkim, Forest Management and non-cereal crops in Sikkim. The major part of the book focuses on the economic sector basically industries, natural resources, agriculture etc. The book however leaves lot of unanswered questions related to rise of political parties and the role played by these parties in Sikkim.

Kazi (1993) in 'Inside Sikkim: Against the Tide' says, Democracy is a big word in Sikkim- in many ways bigger than in any state of the Indian Union. For it was in the name of democracy that a protectorate monarchy was abolished. His focus is on how the system in Sikkim functioned in the last one and a half decades leaving people of the strategic Himalayan border state completely defenceless, insecure and exploited. He articulates in detail the struggle of the people to live in a free and democratic atmosphere, where they can live with respect and dignity and also preserve the unique and distinct identity of Sikkim within the Union. The problem with the book is that it discusses only the party politics of Sikkim since 1979 to 1992.

Lama's (1994) edited book contains articles on different topics like society, economy, environment and polity. Focussing on the polity of Sikkim, an article by Chakravorty (1994) 'Government

and Politics in Sikkim' analyses the development of party politics in Sikkim in which he shows how though there are some structural similarities between the politics and society in Sikkim and in other states of the Indian Union but to him in many respects it is also different from other states of the Indian Union. The work throws light on the question, why a regional party like the SSP in a newly emerged state has been able to win consecutive elections to State Legislative Assemblies. To him the phenomenal feature of politics in Sikkim is that opposition has been virtually non-existent in the state unlike most of the states of the Indian Union. The edited book of Lama however does not cover the political aspects of Sikkim. There is only one chapter which deals with the government and politics of Sikkim. The book does not provide much material and information which can be used for further research.

Sharma (1996) in his 'Sikkim: Past and Present' (Sikkim Hijo Dekhi Aaja Samma) provides a detailed account of the historical developments in Sikkim. In his work Sharma gives a detailed account on the monarchical set up in Sikkim and its working. He discusses how the people were dissatisfied with the rule of Chogyal and the exploitation and suppression by the Kazis, who were Zamindar's during the kingship. In the second part of his work he mainly focussed on the emergence of political parties in Sikkim like the Janata Party, National Party, Congress (I), Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) and finally the SDF. He focuses on the state Assembly elections and the Lok Sabha elections in the state and the changing governments in Sikkim. He tries to look at Sikkimese people's faith and trust on the SDF. Though the book has discussed about the emergence of political parties in the state but it does not give a detailed account of the dominance of one party in the state for a long period of time which is very important for the recent work.

Subba's (1999) book is a translated version of the book "Sikkim Bigarne Ko Ho?" It tries to explain how democracy is created to protect the rights of the people. It highlights the violation of democratic rights of the people during SSP rule in Sikkim. It expresses how the ruler violated the Rule of Law in the state and oppressed people who raised their voice against anti-government activities in the state. The book however fails to give information on the newly emerged political party, SDF and the rule of Sikkim under the SDF.

Karma Tshering Bhutia's (1999) work "Rise and Fall of a Tyrant –Resurgence of Democratic Forces under Pawan Chamling" presents the details of administration under the Bhandari government under SSP. It gives in details the wrong commitments under the regime of Nar Bahadur Bhandari in Sikkim. The purpose of the book is to bring out in public notice how the administration, bureaucracy and police force oppressed the public to no end and the corruption cases against the former Chief Minister of Sikkim. The various incidents mentioned in the book clearly show the ordeal of the common man: the poorer section of the Sikkimese people- under the dictatorial regime of Nar Bahadur Bhandari. The first part of the book is a brief profile of Nar Bahadur Bhandari and the corruptions during his time. The second part of the book highlights the pro-people policies of Pawan Chamling in Sikkim.

Gaunley's edited book (2002) contains the achievements and contributions of various personalities of Sikkim towards the democratic movement in Sikkim before the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. The book also provides an outline of the democratic movement in Sikkim with the birth of the first political party. It further explains the process of administration and the Zamindari system under the Chogyal's of Sikkim. He provides

detailed information on the events before 1950s and onwards. He highlights the first and the second phase of people's movements and political party activities. Transformation of Sikkim from Monarchy to Democracy (Rajtantra Dekhi Prajatantra Samma), the role of political parties, change in governments since 1974 are the other things discussed in this work. The second part of the book deals with the works of the Bhandari Government. To him the corrupt political activities of Bhandari led to the decline of the SSP and the emergence of the SDF. The book has failed to give a detailed study on the democratic process in Sikkim in the present day.

Gopal Gaunley and Samiran Chhetri's (2002) edited book "History of Democratic Movement" gives an outline of the democratic Movement. The Kazi's and the Thekedar's exploited the masses. The political parties in Sikkim opposed this exploitation and raised movements against the Chogyal and the Kazi's and it sought to eradicate Sikkim from the evil of the Zamindari system. The book's focus is on the contributions made by various people in the democratic movement of Sikkim. The book presents the contribution of 110 persons who had dedicated their life for the betterment of Sikkim. These leaders hailed from all the four parts of Sikkim. The book however fails to analyse the various political organisations and political parties that contributed to the democratic process of Sikkim.

On the emergence of SDF in the state, the work by Bali "Pawan Chamling-Daring To Be Different" (2003) is the most significant one. He gives a biography of the President of the party. Pawan Chamling who to him is a leader of the masses and examines how he as the Chief Minister makes an effort towards rebuilding the State of Sikkim. As a man of the masses, the Chief



Minister Pawan Chamling is closely knit together with the evolution of Sikkim as a constituent democratic state of India from an independent kingdom ruled by the erstwhile Chogyal. Pawan Chamling has been the chief architect of Sikkim's emotional integration with mainstream India. Chamling's extra-ordinary success story as a mass-based politician is popularly credited to his humility to accept and respect the people as the fountain head of all power. To him, in order to understand the performance of the party when in power one must look at the manner in which the party came into being i.e., the factors that led Chamling to start a new regional political party in Sikkim.

"Sikkim: Past and Present" (2004) by H. G. Joshi is a work on different aspects of Sikkim- its history, politics, society and economy. It contains seven chapters. The first chapter covers an overview of Sikkim's history and geography, agriculture system, industries, irrigation and power, transport, festivals and tourist centres of Sikkim. The second chapter of the book presents the abode of snow, interesting places in and around Gangtok as tourist spots, natural wealth, and mountainous adventure, Lamaism, Buddhism and Monastries of Sikkim. The third chapter discusses the historic evolution of Sikkim, cultural aspects, population, settlement pattern and economic aspects of Sikkim. It also discusses the economy of the former Kingdom, forest resources, minerals, industries, power and transport. Political aspects like internal and external political problems like that of the neighbouring countries like Bhutan, Nepal and India are also discussed. Talking about the modern state, the book sheds light on national identity, nation-building efforts, accession of Sikkim to the Indian Union and the rise of democracy in Sikkim. A large number of issues and problems had been discussed in this book but still the book has some limitations. The most important limitation is

that it fails to provide an account of the political development in Sikkim after the merger in 1975.

Shri Krishan's (2005) "Political Mobilisation and Identity in Western India, 1934-47" is a series of six volumes. The first volume is by Sucheta Mahajan, "Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India". The second volume is on "A Narrative of Communal Politics: Uttar Pradesh, 1937-39" by Salil Mishra. The third volume is on "Imperialism, Nationalism and the Making of the Indian Capitalist Class, 1920-47" by Aditya Mukherjee. The fourth volume is by Visalakshi Menon "From Movement to Government: The Congress in the United Provinces". The fifth volume by Mridula Mukherjee is on "Peasants in India's Non-Violent Revolution: Practice and Theory". And the last volume is by Rakesh Batabyal on "Communalism in Bengal: From Famine to Naokhali, 1937-47. The volumes highlight the issues on party mobilisation only in the introductory part and the rest of the book is on different issues which are not relevant for the present study. In discussing party mobilisation, the focus of the book is only on Western India and not on the other parts of India including Sikkim.

Lepcha (2008) had focussed on the achievement of Sikkimese Lepcha under the SDF government. The government under the SDF has given more importance to the development of the Lepcha Community as it is the Primitive Tribal Community of Sikkim. The SDF government implemented several programmes for the welfare of the poor section of the society. The book reveals how the government under the SDF has made progressive programmes on environment conservation and taken measures to protect and preserve the identity of Lepcha's of Sikkim. The book does not highlights the study on other communities of Sikkim and the measures taken by the government to improve the living

status of these communities. It also fails to shed light on the role played by different communities in the political development of Sikkim.

Jigme N. Kazi's (2009) "Sikkim for Sikkimese" is a book in which the author tries to discuss the hopes and aspirations of the Sikkimese people; Lepchas, Bhutias, Nepalese and members of the other Communities who have been living in Sikkim for generations. It informs the readers the efforts made by the people and their demands for restoration of their political rights and preservation of their distinct identity within the union and within the framework of the Constitution of India. The author highlights the methods adopted by the people to achieve their objectives. The people adopted peaceful, non-violent and democratic means for their purpose. The book provides an overview of the democratic movements taking place for the protection of rights in the state and the government's effort to control these movements. The author tries to raise questions related to identity issues and preservation of constitutional rights. Talking about the democratic movements and the protection of political rights of the people, the author neglects the role played by the other political parties in this movement.

The second category of literature deals with the socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects of Sikkim. Bhattacharya (1988) focuses on the inter-relationship between the indigenous Bhutia and the Lepcha Communities and the diverse collection of ethnic groups from Nepal that started migrating into Sikkim in the latter part of the 19th century. Its focus is on the critical role played by the Buddhist institutions that provided the foundation for Sikkim's political system since the establishment of Sikkim as an independent polity in the central Himalayas. The ruler

of Sikkim was from the Buddhist faith and the coronation of the first king in Sikkim was done by three Buddhist Monks from Tibet. Since then the rulers have been accepted as a religious head and the ruler. The author further stresses on the impact of Buddhism on the political process in Sikkim but fails to shed light on the democratic set up in Sikkim.

Bhadra (1992) in her 'Sikkim-Democracy and Social Change' explains the factors and forces that led to the transformation of Sikkim from a monarchy to democracy. Commenting on the political developments in a traditional society it stresses that the objective of the present study is not theory building but to explore and gain understanding of the factors of socio-political change in Sikkim. Bhadra presents the socio-economic conditions of Sikkim, the state of political parties and pressure groups. To her it is important to analyse the political process in terms of nation-building, popular participation, modernity, social mobility, identity etc. She looks at whether democracy is compatible with the Sikkimese tradition. It also tries to find out the agents of social change and what role do different social and economic classes in Sikkim play in her quest for political development since the basic issue is the standard and practices of modern democratic life in Sikkim? The book provides with much information but still it has some limitations. It fails to study the political development and the process of social change in the post- merger period in Sikkim. It focuses more on the social forces than on political organisations.

Buddha M. Subba and J. R. Subba's (1994) "Cries Unheard" presents some of the major issues like in the field of economic, social and legal problems of women in the state of Sikkim. The book is set out in six chapters. The first part of the book highlights Sikkim today, its land and people, population, communities,

constitutional status, language, religion and economic development, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes and resource mobilisation in the state. The second part deals with the sex ratio, education, literacy, health, social welfare, economic status, history of women's status, role of judiciary on women's status and women's legal status in Sikkim. Part III, IV, V and VI summarises the technological, training needs, role of women on economic development and role of Five Year Plans on the status of Women. The book gives a detailed study on Women's status in Sikkim but the drawback of the book lies on its failure to deal the political aspects of Sikkim.

"The Awakening Struggle for Survival" (2006) by Tseten Tashi Bhutia, a former legislator of Sikkim Legislative Assembly is a book that attempts to project the authentic documentation of the ongoing challenges faced by different ethnic communities such as Bhutia, Lepcha, Limboo and other Nepalese of Sikkimese origin. The rights of the people had been often hijacked by the local politicians for their party and political gains. The book tries to shed light on the major challenges faced by the Sikkimese people like over increasing influx, rights and interest of the Sikkimese people as enshrined in the Article 371(F) of the Constitution. Since this book is an effort made by one man, it discusses only various issues pertaining to Sikkim and Sikkimese people, it does not cover any political and socio-economic aspects of Sikkim. The major part of the book contains only the press releases by Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Association and senior citizens correspondence and representation made by the organisation.

"Sikkim, Feudal and Democratic" (2008) by A.C. Sinha is a book on social and political development in Sikkim. It is divided into three parts and twelve chapters which study the history of

Sikkim, it's past and present. It shows how the Tibetans, Nepalese, and the British dealt with Sikkim leading to be an autonomous entity. Part one provides the background and social history leading to emergence of ethnic plurality and their political status. It reflects how the Bhutia rulers of Namgyal dynasty ruled Sikkim. In this part of the book one gets to know about the immigration of Nepalese Sikkimese and the ethnic complexities in Sikkim, the interference of the British in the politics of Sikkim and the detail account on how Sikkim became the protectorate of India and then the 22nd state of the Indian Union. Part III describes the transformation of Sikkim from feudal set up to a democratic set up under Nepali leader. The book is informative and interesting for the readers that highlight the role played by the elite class in the democratic set up. It however does not deal with the role and contribution of other social groups in the society.

The third category of literature being reviewed is on the socio-cultural aspects of Sikkim. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya's (1981) book "Aspect of Cultural History of Sikkim: Studies of Coinage" contains only five chapters. The chapters gives a brief background on the historical geography and further elaborates the geographical location of Sikkim, its close neighbours, passes, mountains, rivers, lakes, landscapes, flora and fauna, climate and so on. Chapter II is a study of the population which reflects the origin and existence of different ethnic groups and their culture, traditions, religion, language and social status. The third part of the book is on the political history of Sikkim. It provides the history of Namgyal Dynasty which was established in 1642 and its rule since then. It also discusses the relationship with the neighbouring countries like British India, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. Chapter IV sheds light on the socio-economic condition of Sikkim during the Namgyal dynasty. In the last chapter, the author writes

about the tradesmen in Sikkim and the description of the coins and identifies the coins as *Doli Paise* and *Chapte Paise*. The author however does not talk about the political organisations in Sikkim during the Chogyal's Rule.

"Sikkim- The Prayer Wheel and Scriptre" by Aparna Bhattacharya is a study of socio-political system in Sikkim which has largely focussed on the inter-relationship between the indigenous Bhutia and Lepcha communities and the diverse collection of ethnic groups from Nepal that started migrating into Sikkim in the later part of the 19th Century. The second part of the book is on the critical role played by the Buddhist institutions in the foundation of Sikkim's political system in the mid 17th century. Bhattacharya has made an important contribution to our understanding of the impact of Buddhism on the political process in Sikkim. The author is however analysing the impact of Buddhism in the politics of Sikkim and not the other factors, which had contributed in building Sikkim as a 22nd state of the Indian Union.

Singh's (1985) edited "People of India: Sikkim" is a work on bio-cultural and linguistic profile of all the 25 communities of Sikkim and their history, culture, custom, religion, faith and belief, languages, art, crafts, food habits, agriculture, settlement pattern, festivals, socio-economic and political organisations. Its focus is mainly on the interrelationship between the indigenous culture and Buddhism and other ethnic cultures of Sikkim. In the political development of Sikkim, he criticises the role of Buddhist institutions in the foundation of Sikkim's political system since the establishment of monarchy in Sikkim in 1642. It sheds light on the influence of Buddhism in the governing system, administration and law making process. This book especially gives emphasis to the

governing process, administration and law making processes in Sikkim during the Chogyal's rule and Sikkim as an independent kingdom. Singh however fails to discuss the important aspects of political process and administration after the fall of the Namgyal dynasty in Sikkim which could have made his book more useful.

Kharel's (2002) work "Socio-Economic Condition of Sikkim under Colonial Domination (1889-1947)" has five chapters. The first chapter highlights the socio-economic, political culture, educational and administrative condition of Sikkim during the British Colonial Domination from 1889-1947. John White Claude was appointed the first political officer of Sikkim in 1889. The book is thus a study of the developments since 1889. The author sheds light on British penetration after 1814 Anglo-Nepalese war on the pretext of handing over territory. The author gives two reasons for the war; i) the British wanted to trade with Tibet through Sikkim and ii) the British realised that the establishment of sound relations with Sikkim would make their way easy in operating its activities in Tibet without any disturbance. The author talks about the socio-economic condition of Sikkim but neglects the political condition and processes in Sikkim.

Subba's (2008) book provides the history of existence of the Himalayan Kingdom. Its focus is on the disintegration of ethnicity, culture and customs of the people of Sikkim. The author elaborates the history and culture of various groups and communities of Sikkim like the Lepcha's, Bhutia's, Limboo's and the Nepalese. There are sub-groups amongst the Nepali community and the author has done a good work in explaining and elaborating the various cultures and traditions of the sub-groups as well. The landscape, agriculture, food, dress culture, religion, social transformation, language and literature had been well presented.

The book gives a detail account of the folk culture, festivals, art and culture of different communities of Sikkim. The political aspect of Sikkim is however not much covered in the book.

Chettri's (2008) thesis on "Women's Empowerment" mainly studies the aspect of women participation, empowerment and Panchayat in Sikkim. It tries to study the implementation of the 73rd Amendment Act, 1993 in Sikkim and provides a historical background of Women's participation in Panchayati Raj. The Act has been implemented in the state and 33% seat reservation for women in the Panchayats is given. The women have been empowered more by the Act and this has resulted in raising their status in the society. They have been able to take decisions at the grassroots level. The thesis gives a detail account of the Balwantrao Mehta Committee (1957), Committee on the status of Women in India (1975), Ashok Mehta Committee (1977), National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000), the Constitution's 73rd Amendment Act 1993. At the end of the thesis, suggestions are also provided as to how improvements on the condition of women can be achieved.

The third category of literature is on the socio- cultural aspects of Sikkim which also includes the education section. Baldev, Srilekha and Agnihotri's (1995) book "Educational Administration in Sikkim-Structure, Processes and Future Prospects" is the outcome of the survey conducted by the All-India Survey of Educational Administration covering all the states and union territories. The book is based not only on the information collected from primary sources in the state but also from the latest data from secondary sources. It gives the present status of educational administration right from the institution to the state level, with a focus primarily on administration of school education.

The book provide selected indicators of educational development which further gives a comparative picture of the state vis-a-vis the all- India position at different points of time. The book provides a critical analysis of various functions of educational planning and administration with suggestions for future development of the administrative system. It outlines the task ahead for educational planners and administrators. It also studies the activity profiles of educational administrators, particularly at district and institutional levels. The book is a series of publication on educational administration in the various states and union territories of the country and is a valuable reference material for researchers, educationists, educational planners and administrators as well as all those interested in the development of education.

The fourth category of literature is on the historical perspective of Sikkim. Maitreyee Choudhary's (2006) work "Sikkim; Geographical Perspective" covers the physical and human geography of Sikkim. It also deals with traditional subjects like physical landscape, demography, economic profile, urbanisation, modernism and post-modern developments such as human development, infrastructure and quality of life. In the physical features topics like mountains, rivers, peaks, passes, glaciers, lakes, hot springs and climate of Sikkim is discussed in details. Human population trends, ethnic diversification and urbanisation process in pre and post merger periods are discussed. Human development is given importance and side by side education, health care, employment, economic profile and tourism are highlighted. The book is confined to only geographical aspects of Sikkim and it does not cover other aspects like social, political and economic.

A brief history of Sikkim is provided by Pema Wangchuk and Mita Zulca in "Kanchendzonga Sacred Summit" (2007). The book provides an account of the history, culture, tradition, faith and belief, language, literature and social way of life of the original inhabitants of Sikkim such as Lepcha's, Limboo's and Bhutia's. The author attempts to demarcate the boundaries of Limbuwan (Land of Limboos) that existed before the birth of Sikkim in 1642 A.D. The book gives an account of the spread of Buddhism in Sikkim and the coming of the three great Tibetan Monks, Gyalwa Lachen Chempo, Katok Rigzing Chempo and Ngadak Sempo Chempo to Sikkim in the 1640's. There was a conversion of Lepcha's and Limboo's to Buddhism from their ancestral faith. The book however fails to study the socio and political structure of Sikkim.

The fifth category of literature review is on the article on the political development of Sikkim. The second article "Spotlight on Sikkim" is an article by Jigme N. Kazi (1983). The first part of the article is entitled "Sikkim Down the Ages" which gives the history, cultural identity, geographical and topographical aspects, religion and social reforms in Sikkim. The second part is entitled "Political and Administration development" which talks about the consecration of the first Chogyal Phuntsok Namgyal at Yoksom, West Sikkim in 1642. The third part discusses the formation of first popular ministry under the Chief Ministership of Tashi Tshering Bhutia on 9th May 1949. It also traces the appointment of the first Indian Dewan, J.S Lall in Sikkim in August 1950 and the formation of Advisory Committee with representations from political parties like Sikkim State Congress and the Sikkim National Party. The article highlights the first general election of the state Council of Sikkim based on the parity system; seats equally distributed between the Bhutia- Lepcha and Nepali of Sikkimese origin. It also talks about the creation of the Sangha seat (monk) in 1958 and

seat for Limboo and Scheduled Caste in Sikkim Council in 1966. The political parties in Sikkim made demands for the abolition of landlordism, formation of Interim government and merger of Sikkim with India. The other chapters presents an account of the May 8 Agreement 1973, Tripartite Agreement between Chogyal of Sikkim, leaders of political parties of Sikkim and the Indian Government on the 8th May 1973. It also talks about the constitutional provision given in article 371F. The article tries to present the major issues that took place in Sikkim. But it gives account of only the issues and problems prior to 1982 and not after 1982.

Another article is on "Seat Reservation in Sikkim Assembly" (2001) by B.B Gurung in "Sikkim Perspective –A 25 Year Recap from Sikkim Express -1976-2001". The article's focus is on the issue of seat reservation in Sikkim Legislative Assembly for different communities of Sikkim. The article gives an account of the promulgation of Sikkim Subject Regulation. It also discusses the Tripartite Agreement of 8th May 1973 and the seat provisions i.e. 16 seats for Sikkimese Bhutia- Lepcha, one Sangha seat and 16 seats for the Sikkimese Nepalese. The article studies the ordinance passed by the Governor of Sikkim in 1979 which abolished the 16 seats reserved for the Nepalese and the same seat was declared as General seats in the Assembly. The article has the shortcoming of dealing with only the reservation issue and ignoring the other issues confronting Sikkim.

"Sikkim: Darjeeling Compendium of Documents" (2004) is a compilation and collection of treaties, agreements and conventions entered between India, China, Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim. The article contains memorandums, petitions of various organisations and notifications of state and central governments compiled and

edited by R. Moktan in 2004. It contains 20 treaties, 6 Amendment Bills, 12 Memorandums, 2 petitions, 1 resolution, 3 letters, 1 speech of Ladenla, 2 debate papers and 10 articles by various writers. The article contains Tripartite treaty, "Lho-Men-Tsong-Sum" signed between the Bhutia's, Lepcha's and Limboo's in 1641-42 A.D during the time of coronation of the Bhutia king in Sikkim. Part IV contains ten articles by different scholars and writers. The article by J. R. Subba highlights the historical aspects of Lepcha's and Manger communities of Darjeeling and Sikkim. It also highlights on "Sikkim; history of Annexation". The article does not cover all the political issues and problems of Sikkim and Democratic movement in Sikkim.

"Panchayati Raj Institution in Sikkim: Participation and Development" is an article by R.R Dhamala (1994) where she discusses the importance of participation of the people in the Panchayat Raj Institution in the state. To him participation of the people is an important element in the development process of the state. To him, participation means (i) voluntary contribution to the public programme, (ii) the initiative and involvement of the people in any development programme of the area, and (iii) involvement of the people in the decision making process. In this article Dhamala talks about the development of Panchayati Raj Institution's in Sikkim and how far it has been successful in the participation of the people. The article is about the grassroots democracy of Sikkim, it fails to write about other aspects like political and socio-economic.

The literature that we have analysed above focuses on the historical development of politics in Sikkim and the factors that led to the formation of regional parties in the state and its role in the democratic process in the state. The problem with the literature is

that it provides only general ideas and information about the establishment and growth of democratic politics in Sikkim (Das 1983, Dutta 1991, Bhadra 1992). The works of Sengupta (1985), Kazi (1993), Lama (1994), Sharma (1996), Gaunley (2002) and Bali (2003) all provides detailed information and ideas on party politics to some extent. It covers the issues and topics like party-politics, origin of political parties (regional and national), party strategies, defections, rule of political parties and pressure groups etc. But it can be stated that these literature is simply not enough and do not shed light on democratic process and the working of democratic institutions in Sikkim. Questions like, why it is so that there is a domination of one party in Sikkim from 1994 till the present in every sphere of political life even though in most of the Indian states there is competitive party politics either a multiparty system or a two party system? This is a question that is hardly dealt with in any of the works.

The books by Sengupta (1985), Lama (1994) Sharma (1996), and Gaunley (2002) deals with the emergence of new political parties but fail to deal with the problem, i.e., the question of dominance of one party in Sikkim since 1979 till date, the emergence of SDF, its strategies, objectives achievements, continuance of SDF in government since 1994, people's acceptance of SDF as a regional political party, their faith and trust upon the party and also the kind of stability that we witness in the state. The present work has addressed the gaps in the performance of the regional political parties in the state, especially the role played by two regional parties; Sikkim Sangram Parishad and Sikkim Democratic Front, which has ruled Sikkim for more than a decade and half. The study is based on how the two regional political Parties has been able to win the Assembly Election for consecutive terms and maintain its hold in Sikkim. it looks into the support

base of the party and governance in the state by one party, i.e. by the SDF since 1994.

The primary objective of the study had been to analyse the reasons behind the "dominance of one party in Sikkim" and other related questions. The study has particularly focussed on the emergence, expansion and growth of SDF since 1993 in the state. The study also focuses on the strategies adopted by the party, its main objectives, support base and its performance as a ruling party which is ruling Sikkim for a long period of time. The study has tried to provide an understanding of party politics in the state since 1994 and the support base of the party in the state.

METHODOLOGY

The study required data collection for answering the research questions. Considering the objective and the research questions the data used are of two types: primary and secondary. The data collected through field survey belongs to the primary category. The first four chapters use secondary as well as primary sources. The primary sources used are government documents, official reports, party documents and biographies. The last two chapters is completely based on field surveys conducted in four different constituencies, one from each district.

The selection of the constituencies was done in such a way that it covers both urban as well as rural areas. The constituencies of the north, south and west districts constitute purely rural areas and the Gangtok constituency in the east district covers both rural and urban areas. The main purpose behind the selection of these constituencies is that since its formation in 1993, the party has been able to win all the Assembly elections (1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009) in the state. The study, therefore tries to find out the

reasons for the consecutive success of SDF in the elections, the dominance of the SDF in the state politics and the support base of the party in the state since 1994 -2004.

At least four gram panchayat's were selected from each constituency for conducting the survey. The survey was carried randomly in the villages. In the Damthang constituency of south district the survey was conducted in the five panchayat blocks; Maniram Singithang Block, Maniram Block, Salleybung Block, Singithang Block and Boomtar Block. In Geyzing constituency the survey was conducted in Geyzing Block covering middle lower Kyondsa, Omchung Block covering upper Omchung and lower Omchung, Lungzik Block covering Lower Lungzik and Upper Lungzik and Tikjya Block covering Lower Tikjya and Upper Tikjya. In the Lachen- Mangshila constituency of North district, the survey was conducted in Lachen, Lachung, Tshungthang and Mangan. In the East district the survey is conducted in Gangtok constituency. The areas where survey was conducted were the town area and the surrounding areas.

The survey was conducted among all the caste groups and all categories of people with different occupations. The survey was also conducted among the party supporters and activists. There were some obstacles in discussing party based questions especially among the employed groups. The respondents were reluctant in answering the questions. At least 100 to 150 persons were surveyed from each constituency covering at least three Gram Panchayat's. It is from these responses attempt was made in order to get an understanding of the manner in which the party mobilise support at the grassroots and the support base of the party.

Organisation of the Study: The Chapters

The entire research work is divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the questions related to the genesis, initial growth, the success of the Sikkim Democratic Front as a regional political party and the dominance of one party rule under SDF since 1994. It begins with a brief political history of Sikkim and the foundation of democratic movements in Sikkim in the 1940's and the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union in 1975. The chapter gives a detailed account of the rise of Nar Bahadur Bhandari and his success in the three consecutive Assembly elections of 1979, 1985 and 1989. The chapter covers the reasons for the downfall of Bhandari under SSP and the emergence of SDF as an alternative government in 1994. The SDF President and the founder of the party, Pawan Chamling applied different means and measures for gathering support of the people against Nar Bahadur Bhandari and his government in Sikkim. The chapter further discusses the success of the party and the performance of the party in the Assembly Elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004.

Chapter II is on the promises which the SDF use as an important strategy for winning and maintaining its dominance in the politics of Sikkim. The promises are divided into political, social, economic etc. Political promises include the promise of democracy and decentralisation in Sikkim under the SDF. The first part of the chapter also discusses the shifts in the party and how it tried to mobilise the people by its pro-people policies. Part II of the chapter has studied the populist promises and measures of the party. It discusses how the SDF uses populism in the state to keep its support intact and remain in power.

The third chapter is on the economic policies of the SDF government. It studies what policies the party has adopted and

how far the party has been able to implement these policies and the consequent development brought as per the policies mentioned. The economic policies of the party are categorised into Agricultural sector, Industrial sector, Tourism and service sector. In the Agricultural sector the SDF led government has provided with many facilities and incentives to the farmers for better agricultural production. Similarly in the industrial sector the government revived old and sick industries in the state and introduced modern and scientific technologies for the improvement in industrial production. The government also gave importance to the development of service sector and tourism as it leads to economic development in the state. We analyse the policies since it helps the party to muster support for itself.

The fourth part of the study deals with the governance of the SDF government. The chapter deals with the status of democracy in Sikkim. The chapter studies how democracy was established in the state and how far the SDF tried to restore democracy in the state after it came to power. The chapter looks at how far the SDF has been able to establish "Janta ko raj ma jantai raja". It also looks at the status of substantive democracy under the SDF regime.

Chapters V and VI both taken together analyse the success of the SDF in consecutive Assembly elections in Sikkim and the support base of the party. This chapter is based on a field survey that has been conducted in four constituencies of Sikkim. Damthang constituency in south district, Geyzing constituency in the west district, Lachen-Mangshila in the north district and Gangtok constituency in the east district were selected for this purpose. The field survey included questions on the occupation, income, religion, economic background and more importantly on

the support to the political parties in the state and performance of the party in the constituency. After the field survey it was found that the people support the SDF as it is the only party in the state that has brought development in the state. The people are happy and satisfied with the party. It is also clear from the election results of 1994, 1999 and 2004 that the party gets support from the majority of the people in the state. It is also found that the main support base of the party is the rural masses who have benefitted from the SDF led government.

CHAPTER I

SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT: ORIGINS AND ITS INITIAL SUCCESS

In the first chapter of the thesis we attempt to answer the question, what were the objective conditions that gave birth to the Sikkim Democratic Front (hereafter SDF) and what factors contributed to its initial success in Sikkim. We answer this question in three different sections in this chapter. In this chapter, section I looks in brief the political developments in Sikkim since its merger with the Indian Union in 1947 till 1994. In section II we deal with the emergence of Sikkim Sangram Parishad (hereafter SSP) as a regional political outfit in 1984 that continues to rule the state uninterruptedly. Section III analyse the conditions or factors that were responsible for the birth of the Sikkim Democratic Front as a regional political party and we also focus on the factors that contributed to its initial success.

SECTION I Political Developments in Sikkim (1947-1994)

Democracy as a new political system in Sikkim began its journey in the 1940's but the historians believe that real Democracy was experienced by the people only after 1975 when Sikkim became the 22nd state of the Indian Union on 16th May, 1975. But before we deal with the post merger period it is essential to look into the political developments in Sikkim in the pre-merger period. Sikkim

was ruled by the Namgyal dynasty for over 333 years.¹ Phensok Namgyal was coronated as the first Chogyal of Sikkim at Norbugang now called Yoksum, West Sikkim in 1642 A.D. Since then Sikkim came under the Namgyal dynasty and remained so till 1974. In the years Sikkim as a tiny Himalayan Kingdom had to face both external and internal uprisings. Externally, repeated invasion from Nepal (Gorkhas) in 1717 and by Bhutan in 1700 and 1718 was always a great threat to Sikkim.² For its protection, Sikkim approached the East India Company for assistance. The help came from a combined force of the Britisher's and the Sikkimese people. During the time of Chogyal Chakdor Namgyal in 1700-1706, Sikkim was invaded by Bhutan which was repulsed by the combined forces of Sikkimese Lepcha's, Bhutias, Limboo's and Nepalese.³

British showed interest in Sikkim as Sikkim is a border state between India, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and China. The Britisher's had to pass through Sikkim to carry out their trade and political activities in Tibet.⁴ On February 10th, 1817 Sikkim signed a treaty of Titaliya with the East India Company surrendering all her rights to deal with any foreign power and the right to free access to the British to the Tibet border. With this Sikkim became a de-facto protectorate in 1861 (Das, 1983, pp. 6-7).⁵ The ethnic composition of Sikkim also underwent a rapid change with the advent of the Britisher's in Sikkim.

¹ Before the establishment of the Namgyal dynasty in Sikkim, Sikkim was a vacant land inhabited by the primitive tribe—the Lepcha's.

² The first Bhutnese invasion of 1700 A.D occupied the entire area of Sikkim except Chumbi valley, Ilam and Limbuwan area of Greater Sikkim. Bhutan ruled Sikkim for eight years.

³ Disintegration of Sikkim started during the third Chogyal Chakdor Namgyal with the invasion of Bhutenese in 1700 and the process continued till it finally disintegrated into a constituent state of India in 1975.

⁴ The Britisher's saw Sikkim and Bhutan as possible gateways to Tibet but Sikkim was an easy access to them.

⁵ After signing the treaty of Titaliya, the British played a dominant role in Sikkim.

During Tashi Namgyal's period from 1914, the political history in Sikkim took a new turn. The Chogyal was under the influence of the Kazi's. Kazi's were the members of the Royal Parishad and they were also the Zamindar's. They often claimed that they were the members of the royal family and have every right to exploit, to tax and to adjudicate the cases of the king's subjects. In short they exploited the rural masses. The king was aware of these exploitations but no passive solutions were meted out. The exploitations took various forms like-Kalobhari, Jharlangi, Theki-Bethi and Kuruwa.

Kalobhari: the British sold arms and ammunitions to Tibet. To save it from terrain weather, rain and snow, it was wrapped in cardboards and put inside gunny bags coated with tar. The black colour gave the local name kalobhari or black load. Potters were fixed to carry this transport. For the potters the British depended upon the Kazi contractors. For the transport of each bag they paid 50 paisa but the Kazi contractors kept the whole amount for themselves. They did not pay the potters and forced them to carry the load through the difficult Tibetan terrain. This system of carrying on trade and transport was called Kalobhari.

Jharlangi: The Britisher's maintained the trade route to Tibet for which they depended upon the contractors for labourers and were paid, but the Kazi contractors used their peasants to work without paying their wages, this system of labour without wages is called Jharlangi system.

Theki-Bethi: In Sikkim, below the Zamindar's there was a class of people called Mandals or Karwari. Their function was to collect the rents of the Zamindar's. They too as middlemen exploited the masses. On festive occasions they were supposed to be welcomed by gifts. These gifts were packed in special receptacle called the

Theki, which contained meat, curd, bananas and other items. Along with theki, the peasants also offered the Mandals and Zamindar's their wage less labour. This wage less labour was called Bethi. There was no limit to the amount of time and labour and no special place for performing it.

Kuruwa: means a long wait. At times people sent to transport the kalobhari had to wait for several days for the arrival of the commodities. During such wait they survived on their own supplies, this process of long waiting is called Kuruwa.

The Zamindari System: From every house the Zamindar's collected Rupees 6/-, out of which Rupees 5/- was kept by him and Rupee 1/- was transferred to the government. Later, the Zamindar's collected taxes similarly from all the subjects of the king. The rent paid by the subjects was fixed according to the productive capacity of the land, for equally productive land the Nepalese peasants paid 14 annas and the Bhutia's 8 annas. ⁶

The Kazis used the system of kalobhari, kuruwa, theki-bethi and rents of the masses. They monopolised control over the agricultural land where the people simply worked. Many Sikkimese families left Sikkim and took refuge in Nepal, Assam, Darjeeling and Siliguri due to the ever increasing suppression of the Kazis. During those days the peasants were made to pay Rs 6/- as rent for their dwelling space (Dhurikhajana) and this amount was equal to the price of a set of oxen.

The suppression in Sikkim during that time reached the highest point. The masses rose against the suppression of the Kazis. The first underground movement began at Namthang

⁶ The Council meeting of 5th September 1898, it decided that those lands where Lepchas, Bhutias and the Nepalese were settled together, unequal rate of taxation was imposed (Subba, 2008,p,63)

followed by a secret meeting held in the forest of Tendong Hill, Damthang under the leadership of Dhan Bahadur Tewari and Gobardhan Pradhan of Temi Tarku. In 1947, villages of Temi Tarku opened a political party called Praja Sammelan. The party submitted a memorandum to the Maharaja requesting him to bring an end to the suppression of the Kazis. But there was no positive reaction on the part of the Maharaja. Another political party; Rajya Praja Mandal was formed at Chyakhung under the leadership of Kazi Lhendup Dorjee, Birkhabahadur Gurung, Narbahadur Gurung, Maitabahadur Gurung, Narbir and Sangay Lama. Meantime another political party, The Praja Samaj Party was formed at Gangtok on 7th December 1947. These three political parties met at the polo ground, now Palzor stadium, Gangtok and decided to amalgamate their organisations and form a political party–The Sikkim State Congress (SSC), which was a much stronger force than the earlier ones. The main aim of the party was to end the autocratic rule of the monarch.

On December, 9th, 1947, the Sikkim State Congress as the only political party in Sikkim demanded the abolition of Zamindari system and also demanded the establishment of a responsible government and merger of Sikkim with India. On receiving this, the Chogyal assured them that the demand for the abolition of the Zamindari system will be met and land will be divided among the poor peasants. On the question of establishing a responsible government he agreed to take in his secretariat as advisors, the representative of Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali community. Chogyal however refused to accept the third demand put forward by the party on the issue of merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union.

On February 16th, 1949, the Sikkim State Congress launched "No Rent Campaign" to protest against the Chogyal of

Sikkim and the Zamindari system at its annual session held at Rangpo. The peasants would not pay their rents to the Zamindar's. This campaign was held against the Maharaja's proclamation to hold such meetings in any part of Sikkim. In this campaign Chandra Das Rai was arrested for violating the proclamation.

In 1950 abrogating all former treaties between India and Sikkim, a new agreement was signed between the Government of India and Sikkim, making Sikkim a protectorate of India. The Indian Government agreed to pay Rs 3 lakhs per annum to Sikkim as rent. The Indian government slowly took the administration of the state under its control. Political leaders like C.D Rai of State Congress Party opposed the agreement signed between the Government of India and Sikkim which made Sikkim a Protectorate of India.

During the reign of Chogyal Tashi Namgyal, Sikkim became politically weak because of several political problems within the state. During his reign Sikkim witnessed a rise in political consciousness among the people which led to the bloody revolution of 1973. In March 28, 1973 there was an uprising in Gangtok when people raised anti-Chogyal slogans and riots broke out. Several demands were raised by the political parties and demanded in unison a written constitutional system of one-man one vote, reforms in the electoral process, land reforms and changes in the administration. The revolutionaries took over the Government Administration and in such a situation the king had to seek help from the Indian Government. On April 9, 1973, B.S. Das formally took over the administration of the state as the representative of the Government of India. Peace was established in Sikkim when a Tripartite Agreement was signed between the political parties of Sikkim, the Chogyal and the Foreign Secretary of India. As per the

terms of the agreement responsible government was to be established, fundamental rights and freedom of the people was to be guaranteed and in every four years elections were to be held in Sikkim. This agreement took away all the powers of the Chogyal.

The first historic election in Sikkim was held in April 1974. The Sikkim Congress swept the poll and Kazi Lendup Dorjee emerged as the first Chief Minister and the undisputed leader of Sikkim. The table that follows shows the party position in the Assembly Election of 1974 excluding the Sangha seat.

Table 1

Seats won by Political Parties in the Assembly election of 1974

Serial No.	Name of the party	Number of seats
1	Sikkim Congress	30
2	Sikkim National Party	01
3	Independent	01(Supported by State Congress)

Source: Sikkim Herald, Vol.15.no.3, April 14, 1974.

On May 16th, 1975, the three hundred and thirty three year old monarchy came to an end as Sikkim was merged with the Indian Union and it became the 22nd state of India.⁷ May 16, 1975 also marked the fulfilment of a quarter century long struggle of the people of Sikkim. Sikkim acquired the status of full democracy by joining the political, economic and social mainstream of the Indian Union by giving up the three hundred year old feudal traditional Monarchical systems. The tricolour flag replaced the erstwhile

⁷ The integration of Sikkim with the Indian Union in 1975 gave the status of a Special Category State of India, with the provision of providing 90% of plan funds as grant and 10% as loan.

Chogyal regime and B.B. Lal took the office of the first Governor of Sikkim (Sikkim Herald, Aug 15, 1975).⁸

With the establishment of democracy several political parties emerged in Sikkim's political scenario. There was a great difference in the role and performance of the political parties in the process of democratization and economic development before and after 1975. Out of all the parties, the Sikkim State Congress became the most popular party amongst the Sikkimese. The party stood for the democratic rights of the people with popular government and accession of Sikkim to India. It was for the first time in the history of Sikkim, the people of Sikkim voted in 1974. Among the National Political Parties, the Indian National Congress contested the election.⁹ In the Assembly Election of 1974, the lone Sikkim National party representative also joined the Congress party.

Following Sikkim's merger with India, Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa was sworn in as the first Chief Minister of Sikkim. The new government in 1974-75 depended upon the Central government funds to bring rapid socio-economic development in various sectors of the newly born state. There was some visible progress in the state but not to the extent it should have been. During Kazi's government Anti-Corruption branch was set up in Gangtok and Frontier Railway Passenger Out Agency was opened at Sikkim Nationalised Transport Office, Gangtok on September 1, 1975. Foundation stone of Temi Tea Factory in south Sikkim was laid down by L. D Kazi on December 21, 1975 and Governor B.B

⁸ The integration of Sikkim with the Indian Union brought tremendous development in socio-economic and literary fields. But this could not satisfy the high expectation of the people.

⁹The Indian National Congress is the oldest political party which has been functioning in Sikkim since its merger with the political party of L.D Kazi's Sikkim Congress in 1974. Since then it has been functioning as a state Unit of the party.

Lal inaugurated Gangtok Water Treatment Plant at Selep, East Sikkim. Gangtok–Chungthang Bus Service, Divisional Telegraph Office at Gangtok, Industrial Training Institute at Rangpo, Tashiling Secretariat and Kendriya Vidyalaya at Deorali were established during the Kazi's rule. The languages like Lepcha, Bhitia and Nepali were recognised as the official languages of Sikkim in 1977.¹⁰ (Information and Public Relations, Govt. of Sikkim, 2000).

But soon after the merger, large inputs of aid and implementation of new schemes within a short period of time created several ethnic, political and economic problems which the new government failed to handle. The local bureaucracy was inadequate and weak to handle the situation. Kazi had fought against feudalism and corruption for over two decades but when he finally succeeded and came to power he failed to satisfy the aspirations of the people. Moreover there was a split in the ruling party –Sikkim State Congress in 1977. Nar Bahadur Khatiwada along with three sitting M.L.As left the party and formed a temporary party called Provisional Unit for Congress for Democracy in 1977. Later in the same year this party was transformed into a new regional political party–Sikkim Prajatantra Congress under Nar Bahadur Khatiwada.

In October 1979, election to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly was held. This was the first elections in Sikkim under the direction of the Election Commission of India and Indian election rules. Altogether seven political parties and Independent candidates contested the election. National parties such as Indian National Congress, Janata Party, the CPI (M), several Regional Parties, Viz; Sikkim Janata Parishad, Sikkim Congress

¹⁰ During the Namgyal dynasty (1642 – 1974) Tibetan was the official language of the country (Subba,2008,p.69).

(Revolutionary), Sikkim Prajantantra Congress, Sikkim Scheduled caste League and other independents contested the election (Lama, 2003, p.100). In the election, the total number of voters were 1,17,157 and the total number of votes cast was 76,299 votes; i.e. 65.13%.

The election was won by the Sikkim Janata Parishad. Sikkim Janata Parishad was formed in 1977 by Nar Bahadur Bhandari.¹¹ Democracy and Socialism were its main objectives. The party brought into limelight the drawbacks of the Kazi government. The party promised three important things:

- Establish real democracy in Sikkim,
- Undertake all-out development of the state,
- Curb corruption (Election Manifesto, Sikkim Janata Parishad, 1977)

The results of the election gave Sikkim politics a new turn. The following table shows the position of the political parties in 1979.

TABLE: 2
STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 1979

Sl. No.	Name of Party	No. If candidates contested	No. Of seats won	% of votes secured
1	Sikkim Prajatantra Congress	32	04	15.76
2	Janata Party	30	nil	13.18
3	Sikkim Janata Parishad	31	16	31.49
4	Sikkim Congress (R)	27	11	20.58

¹¹ Before forming Sikkim Janata Parishad in 1977, Nar Bahadur Bhandari was arrested under Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) during L.D. Kazi's government and was kept in Behrampur Jail from 1976-1977.

5	Indian National Congress	12	nil	2.04
6	CPI [M]	02	nil	0.33
7	Sikkim Schedule Caste League	02	nil	0.12
8	Independents	108	01	16.50

Source: Statistical Report, Sikkim Legislative Assembly Election, 1979, Election Commission of India.

Sikkim Janata Parishad under Nar Bahadur Bhandari formed the government in 1979 with new hopes and aspirations. Before the party could complete its first term of office, the government was dismissed by the Governor in May 11, 1984 under Article 164 (1) of the Constitution of India. Bhandari was levelled with corruption charges by 13 legislators of his party including his four cabinet ministers and expressed their lack of confidence in him (Sikkim Government, Gazette, No. 58, 11-5-84).

B. B. Gurung, the Finance Minister in the Bhandari cabinet became the third Chief Minister of Sikkim but the government could survive for just 13 days.¹² As a result of the failure of the constitutional machinery, Sikkim was brought under presidential rule by the Centre once again. In the meantime, Bhandari formed a new political party, Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) and returned back to power on March 11th, 1985 ending 10 months of Presidents rule securing 30 out of 32 seats. Political parties like the Congress (I), Janata Party, and the CPI, CPI (M) and two regional parties viz SSP and Sikkim Prajatantrik Congress and some unregistered party contested the elections. For contesting the Assembly election of 1985, R.C. Paudyal's Rising Sun Party made

¹² B.B Gurung worked under L.D Kazi's Sikkim National Congress in 1972 and was elected in 1974 Assembly election of Sikkim.

an alliance with the National Front and the Left Front. It was for the first time that national political parties like the Indian National Congress, Communist party of India, Communist party of India (Marxist) participated in Sikkim's Lok Sabha Election in 1991. The Assembly election went in favour of the SSP which won 30 out of the 32 seats in the state.

TABLE: 3

The following table shows the party positions in the Assembly of 1985.

Sl. No.	Political Parties	No. of Candidates	No. of elected	No. of votes	%
1	Communist Party of India	2	0	25	0.03
2	Communist Party of India [M]	1	0	336	0.35
3	Indian National Congress	32	1	23440	24.15
4	Janata Party	20	0	913	0.94
5	Sikkim Prajatantrik Congress	14	0	438	0.45
6	Sikkim Sangram Parishad	32	30	60371	62.20
7	Independents	94	1	11534	11.88
	Total	195	32	97057	

Source: Statistical Report, Sikkim Legislative Assembly Election, 1985, Election Commission of India.

The party (SSP) was able to mobilise the people easily as there was no other political party which could be an opposition to the SSP. There was the domination of a single party in the state. This proved to be an advantage to the party in the next state Legislative Assembly and the 9th Lok Sabha election of 1989. Political parties like the Indian National Congress, Rising Sun Party, Denzong Peoples Chogpa (DCP) an unrecognised party and

20 independent candidates contested the election. The election results went in favour of the SSP which won all the 32 seats and the lone Lok Sabha seat from the state.

TABLE: 4

Assembly Election 1989

Sl. No	Political party	No. of Candidates	No. of elected	Votes polled	Votes polled in %
1	Indian National Congress	31	0	24121	18.05
2	Rising Sun Party	31	0	11472	8.59
3	Sikkim Sangram Parishad	32	32	94078	70.41
4	Denzong Peoples Chogpa (unrecognised)	4	0	298	0.22
5	Independent	20	0	3650	2.73

Source: Statistical Report, Sikkim Legislative Assembly Election, 1989, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

However, Bhandari and his party (SSP) which ruled Sikkim for eleven years soon started facing many problems and challenges from within and also outside the party. Corruption charges were levelled against him by the C.B.I., there were also charges of anti-party activities by the S.P.C.C. (I) and there were dissident activities within the party and all this led to the formation of factions in the ruling party.¹³ Bhandari lost vote of confidence in May 1994 in Sikkim Legislative Assembly and resigned from the government. Sanchaman Limboo became the next Chief Minister of Sikkim on 18th May, 1994. His ministry lasted for only six months when the general election was declared to be scheduled in

¹³ According to press reports, the 32 SSP MLA's were divided into three major groups: the first one was led by Bhandari himself with 12 members, the second was led by Pawan Chamling who had the support of 12 members and the third was led by N.Chamla Tshering who had the support of 8 members.

December 1994. He remained the caretaker Chief Minister from September 1994 to 11th December 1994.¹⁴

In such a situation, the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), a new regional political party under Pawan Chamling was formed on March 4th, 1993; with the aim of establishing real democracy and safeguarding the right and interest of the Sikkimese people.

SECTION II

Emergence of the Sikkim Sangram Parishad

In this section we deal with the emergence of the SSP as a regional political party and its rule in Sikkim. Sikkim Sangram Parishad was formed by Nar Bahadur Bhandari in 1984 with a promise to protect and preserve the interests and rights of the Sikkimese people and to work for communal harmony, national integration, secularism and the development of Sikkim with a focus on 'safeguarding freedom and democracy'. The party (SSP) contested the Sikkim Legislative elections of 1985 mainly on the following issues:

- Restoration of seat reservation: To restore and preserve, and maintain reserved seats for Sikkimese Nepalese as originally contained before the merger under article 371 F (f) of the Constitution of India.
- Citizenship: The Party promised the grant of Citizenship to those people whose names were not included in the electoral roll of 1979 General Assembly election in Sikkim. The party promised to declare the cut off year to 1970 and grant

¹⁴ During the rule of Sanchaman Limboo, the central Act of OBC was enforced in Sikkim.

30,000 people citizenship those were left out from the list of electoral roll. (Sengupta, 1985).

- A son of the soil policy: To preserve local identity, to give all government jobs and trade licence to the Sikkimese people only.
- Constitutional recognition: Constitutional recognition to Nepalese language in the VIII schedule of the Indian constitution. Nepali language is commonly spoken by the majority of the people in Sikkim.
- To alter centre-state relations: For demanding more financial and political freedom for the states of the Indian Union and to extend support for constitutional amendment to materialize the concept that the state government should continue in power at the pleasure of the Governor (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1984).

After its formation, the Bhandari government had brought reforms in the socio-economic condition of the Sikkimese people. During his tenure many changes took place in Sikkim in all the fields. Developmental activities took a new shape. Various incentives and infrastructural developments were carried on under the SSP government. Secretariats of District and various State Govt. Departments, Rural Electrification Scheme at Singyang-Singdrang village in West Sikkim, RDD complex at Jorethang, State Bank of Sikkim at Pakyong and Soreng, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Bridge at Melli, Akar Bridge at Jorethang were built during the Bhandari Government.

The government followed policies for the development of the society. It promised to safeguard the freedom and democratic rights of the people. It promised to improve the living standard of

the people through poverty alleviation programmes, through improvement in agriculture, by providing educational facilities, health care, social welfare schemes, safe drinking water facilities, rural electrification and rural housing schemes (Sikkim Herald, Jan. 21, Vol-27, No-2, 1984).

To improve the educational system in the state the government promised free education, upgrade existing schools and mid day meals for the children up to class V. Pre-matric and post-matric scholarships to ST and SC candidates were to be provided. In the health sector it promised to increase the number of hospitals, primary health centres, sub-centres, and free medical facilities. The government also promised the establishment of Old age Homes, Disabled and Destitute Homes in the state. Roads and bridges were to be constructed to give people easy and fast access to communication. It promised housing loans at highly subsidised rates and promised to impart training for capacity building and promised skill development programmes to the unemployed people (Sikkim Herald, Jan. 19, 1985).

The party also promised to look into matters like development in communication (roads and bridges), health care, education, agriculture and solving the unemployment problems by creating different facilities in different sections. The party focused its attention on the agricultural sector as well. It also gave much attention to the grassroots (Sharma, 1999, p.279).

During the course of its rule, the government under the SSP made attempts to fulfil the promises which it has laid down in its party manifesto issued during the elections. The main achievement of the government was the recognition of the Nepali language as one of the national languages in the Eighth Schedule of the

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Constitution in 1992.¹⁵ An attempt was also made for reservation of seats for the Nepalese, but no solutions could be reached. Some improvements in the agriculture sector were made in the period from 1985-1990. Tools and fertilizers were provided which resulted in the increase in food grains production like rice, wheat, maize and other products. Similarly by the end of the year 1991, 22 hospitals and 37 primary health centres were established in different villages. Free education up to college level was provided. The number of schools in the state went up to 1286. The government invested 27,00 Crore rupees in the field of education. Scholarships were provided to the students studying outside the state. Literacy rate was increased from 17.74 percent in 1971 to 34.05 percent in 1981 and 56.94 percent in 1991 (Sikkim Pragati Paathira, Gangtok, 24th May, 1990).

TABLE: 5

LITERACY RATE IN SIKKIM 1971-1991

YEAR	Literacy rate in %
1971	17.74
1981	34.05
1991	56.94

Source: Census of India, 1991

¹⁵ Limboo language was recognised as one of the official language of Sikkim in 1983.

Table: 6**COMPARATIVE FIGURE OF NUMBER OF LITERATES IN THE FOUR DISTRICTS OF THE STATE**

		Persons	Male	Female	Total %	Male %	Female %
SIKKIM	TOTAL	188940	117226	71714	56.94	56.94	46.76
	RURAL	163092	101430	61662	44.4	51.94	35.4
	URBAN	25848	15796	10052	69.85	74.69	63.4
NORTH	TOTAL	13255	8690	4565	42.43	50.85	32.26
	RURAL	12738	8336	4400	41.85	50.27	31.76
	URBAN	517	352	165	64.38	69.29	55.93
EAST	TOTAL	96279	58672	37607	53.95	61.13	45.6
	RURAL	73802	45028	28774	50.35	57.83	41.87
	URBAN	22477	13644	8833	70.52	75.28	64.25
SOUTH	TOTAL	43254	26923	16331	43.87	51.67	35.12
	RURAL	41473	25813	15660	43.19	34.46	43.19
	URBAN	1781	1110	671	68.50	63.42	68.50
WEST	TOTAL	36152	22941	13211	36.82	44.77	28.16
	RURAL	35079	22251	12828	36.39	44.29	27.79
	URBAN	1073	690	383	60.90	68.93	50.33

Source: SIKKIM STATISTICAL PROFILE 1991-1992.

The SSP swept the assembly elections for three consecutive terms. Several political parties existed and functioned but these parties were engaged in solving their own problems instead of standing as a strong opposition to the ruling party. There were defections and dissidents in the political parties. National Political

parties like the CPI and the Congress (I), tried to establish their hold in Sikkim and took an active part in the elections. Political parties like the Rising Sun Party under R. C. Poudyal formed an alliance with the National Front and the Left Front. Bharat Basnett contested the election as the candidate of Indian National Congress. For the first time in 1991, the CPI (M), a National political party entered the electoral fray in the Lok Sabha elections in Sikkim. The poll was won by SSP candidate D.K Bhandari with 103970 votes. Nearest to SSP was the Independent candidate Sri Phur Tshering Lepcha with 3759 votes and the CPI (M) candidate Duknath Nepal with 3372 votes. Out of a total of 201704 electorates, 118502 voted in the poll with 115373 valid votes and 3129 votes were rejected. It is clear from the election results that not only in the Legislative Assembly election but also in the Lok Sabha Elections the regional political parties have become dominant and prominent in the state.

SSP was successful in maintaining its strong hold from 1984-1989 as it was the only regional political party in the state which represented the people of all sections of society. But after his victory in 1989 Bhandari became quite different than what he was earlier. He was more powerful and confident and somewhat authoritative and autocratic. He wanted complete submission to his authority and did not tolerate any kind of dissension and criticism from both within and outside the party. The right to Press was curtailed, there were assaults, threats and constant pressure on press and the media and there was use of force and commandos to suppress the opposition in the state.¹⁶ In June 1993, the leaders of the Opposition Political Parties like Biraj

¹⁶ In October, 1994, Amnesty International Report entitled "India" and sub-titled "Sikkim: Torture of an opposition politician" highlighted the details on how Bhandari government tortured political leaders in the state.

Adhikari was illegally detained and tortured. According to newspaper report of Sikkim Express, dated November, 3, 1990, Hem Lall Bhandari, Convener, Citizens for Democracy, was physically assaulted by a group of persons allegedly belonging to the ruling party. In October 12, 1991 the state unit of the Congress (I) alleged that the judiciary in the state is thoroughly corrupt and functions under the dictates of the Chief Minister, Nar Bahadur Bhandari. The party unit presented a memorandum to Human Resource Development Minister, Arjun Singh during his visit to Sikkim. A. K Subba, President of the SPCC (I) said that justice is being denied to the people as the judiciary is completely dominated by the government. The Bhandari government ruled Sikkim in an undemocratic manner due to the fact that in Sikkim there was an absence of strong and effective opposition.

One of the main reasons for a setback to Bhandari government was that it failed to implement the recommendation of the Mandal Commission to include various communities like Rai, Bhujel, Manger, Gurung etc. in the list of Other Backward Classes. Pawan Chamling, one of his cabinet colleagues strongly opposed Bhandari on the OBC issue. He blamed Bhandari for not taking interest in implementing the OBC system in Sikkim. Objecting the move made by the ruling government regarding the implementation of Mandal Commission Report, Pro- Mandal Commission Body headed by Chandra Das Rai was formed. The body opposed as it feels that the government rejected the report as Newars, Bahuns and Chettri were excluded from the list (Sikkim Observer, Oct, 13, Vol. V, No. 12, 1990). Despite the fact that the SSP ruled the state and certain progress was made, certain developments and achievements in the state fractions erupted in the party. The Bhandari government was levelled with corruption charges. The decision to register criminal cases against Bhandari came during a

meeting held in the former Chief Minister B. B. Gurung's residence on May 19th, 1984 (Gaunley, 2002). Many cases against Bhandari were registered. Several corruption cases against Bhandari were registered in February, 1986. For example, the case relating to contract of water supply in rural areas was registered. In this Bhandari gave the contract to his party men and not to the people at the lowest level. The second corruption case was against the construction of houses in Gangtok and Ranipool, East Sikkim.

The Denzong Sherpa Association was dissatisfied with the state government regarding the transfer of land belonging to the Sherpa's in the state. Association President Passang Sherpa said that the Sherpa's were declared Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution (Sikkim) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1978 but they do not enjoy the same privileges enjoyed by the Bhutia-Lepcha Tribal's regarding transfer of land. Besides this, the Sherpa's are also feeling aggrieved over non-representation of their community in the state Legislative Assembly even though 12 of the 32 seats in the Assembly are reserved for the tribal's. The Association challenged the Sikkim Transfer of land (Regulation) Bill, 1989, stating that the provisions of the Bill is inconsistent with the 1978 Scheduled Tribes Order. (Sikkim Observer, Oct, 8, 1990. The Bhandari government was accused by the state unit of Congress (I) of inflicting communal tensions and dividing the Sikkimese people on ethnic lines. James Basnet, Member of Sikkim Pradesh Congress Special Committee (I), "the SSP government is spreading communal and casteism trend among a handful of Sikkimese people who had lived for ages.

In the press release in April 13, 1991, the Congress(I) which was a strong opposition to the ruling SSP in the state demanded the resignation of the CM, Nar Bahadur Bhandari as the ruling

party failed to maintain law and order in the state. A Joint Action Committee was formed by the leader of all the opposition political parties against SSP rule in Sikkim. Considering the complete failure of constitutional machinery in the state and because of the series of repressive measures adopted by the SSP government, the leaders of the opposition political parties unanimously constituted the Joint Action committee (JAC) in June 1993, consisting of several political parties and organizations functioning in the state for the restoration of democracy, preservation of the constitution and for rule of law. The parties and organisations were the following:

- Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), a registered and recognized opposition party.
- Congress (I)
- Communist party of India (Marxist)
- Citizens for democracy, Sikkim
- A Human rights organisation in Sikkim. (Gaunley, 2002, p. 423)

The JAC mobilised public opinion and tried to seek the support of the people and democratic organizations for the realisation of the following demands:

- Unconditional release of all the opposition leaders and workers of the aforesaid parties and withdrawal of illegal warrants issued by the government against the prominent leaders.

- The Joint Action Committee demanded the immediate withdrawal of political leaders and persecution of the leaders of the opposition political parties and other organisations.
- Restoration of democracy and the preservation of the Constitution and the rule of law.
- Imposition of President's rule in Sikkim by invoking article 356 of the Constitution.

The Joint Action Committee resolved to launch a peaceful movement for the realization of these demands both inside and outside Sikkim. The Committee issued a press release in June, 1993 and declared that the government led by the SSP has been ruling Sikkim in an undemocratic manner for the past thirteen years. It has persistently denied the political and democratic rights of the people and suppressed the voice of all opposition parties in the state and also the mass media (Gaunley, 2002).

JAC appealed to all the democratic organisations and associations in Sikkim to join hands with the JAC and cooperate in the struggle for the restoration of democracy in Sikkim. Describing the N. B. Bhandari's ministry as a "Dictatorial Regime" the party leaders said the people had been denied the rights to form trade unions, hold public meetings and rallies to express their resentment over the misrule (Gopal, 2002, p. 425).

Pawan Chamling, a cabinet minister strongly opposed Bhandari in the Assembly mainly on the OBC issue and the mal-administration of the state. On 16 July, 1992, Chamling was dismissed from the cabinet. The political climate dramatically changed in Sikkim with the dismissal of Chamling from the cabinet as well as from the party. For the first time in many years an alternative to Bhandari was seen. Chamling was seen as a man of

good rapport with the masses and was able to capture the imagination of the people and make the right moves. He was a man able to become a leader in his own making.

SECTION III

The Initial Success of the Sikkim Democratic Front

In this section we analyse the origin and growth of the SDF as a regional political party. The section also looks at its initial success in the state after its formation.

In 1993, as we have stated earlier a new political turmoil took place in Sikkim. Pawan Chamling was dismissed from the party and the cabinet. Chamling was a Minister in the Bhandari Government.¹⁷ He was dismissed on the ground that he opposed the ruling government for its misgovernment and anti-people activity in the state. Meanwhile the opposition groups in the state charged the government with many corruption cases, anti-democratic and anti-people activities in the state. Dismissal from the (SSP) was a blessing in disguise for Chamling. In a conversation with the party workers Chamling said that he wanted to be free from the ruling party (Bali,2003).

After his dismissal, Chamling travelled to different parts of the state and met people from different walks of life. After meeting the people, he claimed that the people felt that there was a need for a new leader and new party which would be an alternative to Bhandari. He further felt that it was the people those who wanted

¹⁷ Pawan Chamling was a Minister for Industries, Printing and Information and Public Relations under Bhandari led SSP Government.

a new leader who would drive Sikkim into a new progressive dimension. With the aim of establishing democratic principles, Pawan Chamling formed a new political party- "SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT" on March 4th, 1993, with the following aims and objectives. These objectives were spelt out in the constitution of the party

The party declares that the SDF is a political party within the meaning and provisions of the Representation of People's (Amendment) Act, 1988 and states that the aims and objectives of the party shall be as follows:

- a) SDF shall bear true faith and allegiance to the sacred constitution of India as by law established and to the principles of Socialism and Democracy and shall uphold the Sovereignty, Unity and Integrity of the Indian Union.
- b) It shall fight to uphold the political, social and economic rights and privileges of the Indian constitution.
- c) It shall strive hard for the uplift of the socially and economically backward sections of the people of Sikkim.
- d) Sikkim Democratic Front shall ceaselessly work to promote peace, progress and communal harmony among the people of Sikkim and shall make utmost endeavour to promote fraternity tolerance and harmony with all other communities of our country.
- e) The party is committed to give equal opportunity to all Sikkimese people and shall ceaselessly work for the emancipation and uplift of Sikkimese women and other sections of the oppressed people.

- f) The party shall be ever ready to fight against all forces that threaten to disrupt the unity and integrity of the nation.
- g) While giving due recognition to the principle of human dignity, this party shall pledge to fight against all kinds of injustice and inequality perpetrated on the ground of caste, creed, religion and gender.
- h) The party shall specially not yield back from working for the interest and welfare of the backward and depressed communities, constitutional rights of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes and security and prosperity of the entire Sikkimese people.
- i) The party is committed to uphold, preserve and promote the age old traditions, customs and rich cultural heritage of different ethnic communities of the state who have been living in perfect communal harmony down the ages.
- j) The party holds enduring faith in the "Son of Sikkim" policy and sincerely safeguard the interest of the Sikkimese people.
- k) SDF shall tirelessly wage a struggle against poverty, illiteracy and internal backwardness in the state and work justly for the poor and depressed people of Sikkim.
- l) The party is predetermined to bring upon improvement in the existing situation in Sikkim and will resort to all possible means to raise the average condition of Sikkimese of all levels so as to make them educationally, socially and above all, economically self-reliant and self-sufficient (SDF, Constitution, 13 May, 1993).

The Sikkim Democratic Front born on March 4th, 1993, aimed mainly at changing the social and political life of Sikkim. Its main

objective was to fight against the anti-people policies pursued by the SSP government and replace it by a pro-poor policy and programmes (Bali, 2003). The first priority in Chamling's political agenda was to restore the lost identity of the Sikkimese people and the economic and political development of the OBC's in Sikkim. The party was committed to restoring and strengthening the principles of democracy in the state. It also committed itself towards eradicating poverty in all forms. It also promised decentralisation and also promised for safeguarding the economic interest and well being of the deprived sections. Freedom of the press was also a promise of the new party. The party promised to safeguard the cultural, social and constitutional law of the Sikkimese people (Bali, 2003).

For the peaceful co-existence and friendly relations with the centre, the party promised to promote national and emotional integration of the Sikkimese people. The issue of women empowerment was raised for the first time which gave due honour and dignity to the women. With the pro-democracy and pro-poor policy of the party, it started getting support from all parts of the state. In the Party Literature, Part I, Sikkim Democratic Front, 1993 it mentioned the need for party education and the worker to understand that the party is a new form of party which enjoined upon its workers to be active and develop a sound moral character (Bali, 2003).

After its formation on the 1st of May, 1993, the party celebrated the Labour Day at Maniram Bhanjyang, South Sikkim. The party promised to stand for labourer's right, welfare and safeguard of the working people because these working people earned their living by labour. It was able to hold public meetings in different parts of Sikkim. The first public meeting was held at Jorethang, a

gateway to south and west Sikkim in April 18, 1993. Despite the ruling party's effort to stop the SDF meeting large number of people attended the meeting. Subsequently public meetings were held at Rabongla, Soreng and Rhenock in the three districts of the state.

The party formed several frontal organisations and Committees within the party for its functioning. The party (SDF) formed and had the following committees:

- All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee.
- Central Working Committee.
- District Committees.
- Constituency Level Committees.
- Block Level Committees.

To the party, the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committees shall have sixteen hundred members including the members of Central Working Committee. As per the Constitution the committee shall meet at least once a year and such meetings will be convened, conducted and presided over by the party President. The meeting can also bring necessary amendment or improvement in its policies as per the need of the changing time. It is compulsory that all concerned members should attend the meeting. The party President may call for an emergency meeting of the committee.

The Constitution provides for that there shall be 1600 members of the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee including the President, Vice President, General Secretary, Office Bearers, and 50 members each from different constituency besides Office Bearers of the Central Working Committee.

The Central Working Committee is constituted of the following office bearers:

i. President	01
ii. Vice President	08
iii. General Secretary	10
iv. Joint Secretary	10
v. Publicity Secretary	05
vi. Treasurer	01
vii. Asst. Treasurer	01
viii. 2 Representatives from each district	08
ix. Executive members	14
Total	58

The central Working Committee consists of the representatives from among the members of All Sikkim Democratic Front Committees. The committee is headed by the party president who has the special power to nominate members for the Central Working Committee. All the meetings of the Central Working Committee shall be convened and presided over by the President and in his absence by the Vice-President (Party Constitution, Sikkim Democratic Front, 1993, p.6). The committee shall meet at least once in three months and the President may call for an emergency meeting under special circumstances by giving 24 hour notice to each members. The Central Working Committee takes the decision to hold the party convention and makes all necessary arrangements.

The Central Working Committee has some important powers and functions. The following are its powers and functions:

- The committee has the responsibility of formulating all policies of the party and accomplishment of its aim and objectives.
- The committee, by following the party policies, can make necessary amendments and changes to the prevalent customary rules and regulations.
- The committee shall prepare the annual report of Sikkim Democratic Front and present it for the approval of the front committees.
- The committee shall have the responsibility of conducting day-to-day affairs of the party and smooth functioning and maintaining discipline within the party.

District Working Committee: As per the Constitution each district of the state shall have the District Working Committee with the following office bearers:

One (1) District President

Two (2) District Vice Presidents

One (1) District General Secretary

One (1) District Joint Secretary

One (1) District Publicity Secretary

One (1) District Treasurer

Twenty-five (25) District Executive members

The District President is appointed by the party President. The other office bearers are appointed by the President of the party in consultation with the Central Working Committee and District

President. The District Working Committee holds office for a period of three years and the party President shall have the power to dissolve the committee before its term.

The District Working Committee has the following powers and functions. It is stated that:

- The committee shall look after the working and organisation of party within the district.
- With the consultation of the Central Working Committee, the District Committee shall constitute the Block Level Committee in all the districts of the state.
- It shall prepare and safely keep the district level documents of the party.
- The committee will follow the orders and advice of the Central Working Committee and the Constituency level Committee.
- It shall submit applications for the party membership to the president for its approval.
- It shall renew the party membership in consultation with the Central Working Committee and collect annual membership fee by issuing proper receipts.
- The District Working Committee shall meet once in every two months. It is compulsory for one-third members to attend the meeting.

The party also has Constituency Level Committee. The Constitution of the party (SDF) 1993 lay down that the party shall have Constituency Level Committees. The president shall be appointed by the president of the party in consultation with the respective

district Presidents. The total number of members will be based on the number of Block Level Committees in the constituency. The lowest Level of committee is the Block Level Committee. The constitution lay down that all the rural areas in Sikkim shall have Block Level Committee with the following office bearers:

- i) One President
- ii) Two vice-President
- iii) Two Secretary
- iv) Four Joint Secretaries
- v) One Treasurer
- vi) Twenty executive members.

These office bearers are appointed with the consultation of the Central Working Committee; District Working Committee is given the power to constitute Block Level Committee with the consent of the Central Working Committee for the term of two years.

The Sikkim Democratic Front has frontal organisations which are directly under the control of the party President. These are Women Wing, Youth Front, Labour Front, Students Front, Cultivators Front, Schedule Tribe Welfare Front, Ex-Service Front and Schedule Caste Welfare Front. The party was able to make a direct contact with the people through these fronts. The Constitution of the party lay down that these frontal organisations will serve to represent the Sikkimese people who live below the poverty line. The power and functions of all these frontal organisations are determined by the Central Working Committee from time to time. The President of the party has the power to dissolve any frontal organisation to safeguard the interest of the party (Party Constitution, SDF, 1993, pp.19-20).

The inspiring leadership of Pawan Chamling who claimed that his principal objective was to develop Sikkim and uplift the poor, deprived and the disadvantaged section of the society was the main factor behind the party's initial success in Sikkim. SDF came to power in December 1994 after receiving an overwhelming support from the people who had laid their complete faith on the new party. The party established frontal organisations like women wing, youth wing, schedule tribe fronts etc. which helped the party in conducting party meetings in different parts of the state and more precisely these organs helped in the election campaigning's during the Assembly elections in the state.

The earlier government had deprived the rights of some sections of the society. The communities like Rai, Mangar, Gurung, Bhujel etc, were not included in the OBC list as per the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. SDF promised in its election manifesto that it would safeguard the rights of the people and include these groups in the OBC list. The new party was successful in convincing the people that the party will strive to uplift socially and economically backward sections of the society.

As an opposition leader, Chamling was successful in exposing the failures and weaknesses of the ruling party and its leaders. With Chamling's opposition in between 1992-1994, the Assembly was a forum of debate. He said that, 'Till today Bhandari spoke and the Sikkimese people listened. Now it is the time that Sikkimese people spoke and Bhandari listened' (Bali, 2003, p.125). He relentlessly worked towards educating and training the people to stand, speak and safeguard their freedom and democracy. These included training the people for participation in the democratic system and make the people conscious of their democratic rights and duties.

Chamling became the first politician in the state to coin the slogan "Janta ko Raj ma Jantai Raja". The slogan gave the people the feeling of empowerment. He was successful in getting massive support to stand against the ruling government. In its first election manifesto of the Assembly election of 1994, the SDF promised to safeguard the democratic rights of the people and promised to give political, social and economic justice to the people. The party claimed that in Sikkim freedom of press and media was under the control of the Bhandari government so the party promised to restore the constitutional rights of the press and restore back the freedom of speech and Rule of Law.

The party in its initial stage was successful in conducting party meetings in all the four districts of the state. After its formation the first party meeting was held at Jorethang in 1993. Then party meetings were held at Rabongla in the South district, Soreng in the west district and Rhenock in the east district. The party was able to establish strong party offices in all the four districts of the state. The party formed Committees at the district level, constituency level and at block level in the four districts of the state. Right from the beginning the party could maintain frontal organisations like Youth wing, Women's wing of the party which helped in convincing the people and enabling party policies and messages reach the rural people in the state. The committees paved the way for greater participation of the people at all levels from district to the rural level. The Committee system was absent in the organisation and functioning of other political parties in Sikkim.

The Bhandari government was charged with various corruption cases by the C.B.I and the government was challenged by the opposition political parties for its anti- democratic and anti-

people activities in the state. The Joint Action Committee (JAC) was formed in June 1993 under the leadership of SDF. The JAC mobilised public opinion and tried to seek the support of the people to end the long and undemocratic rule of Nar Bahadur Bhandari in Sikkim. The SDF promised to replace the anti-people policies of SSP with its Pro- people policy and programmes. And with this despite the fact that the party (SDF) was only one and half year old, it could win support of the people which helped it in capturing 19 seats out of a total 32 seats in the Assembly election of 1994.

After its formation the party for the first time participated in the Assembly elections of 1994 in the state. There were six political parties that competed. Among the national political parties it was the BJP, Congress (I), and CPM and the regional political parties like Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) and the newly formed registered (unrecognised) party, Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) contested the election.

As per the report BJP contested 3 seats but won none, CPM contested 2 seats and also won no seats, Congress (I) contested 31 seats and secured only 2 seats from Dzongu constituency in north district and the Sangha seat. Among the regional parties, RSP contested 11 seats and won no seats, SSP contested 31 seats and secured 10 seats from Tashiding constituency and Soreng constituency in west district and Rakdong Tentek in north district and the rest seven constituencies from east district. These constituencies are Rehnock, Pathing, Martam, Rumtek, Assam-Lingjey, Ranka and Gangtok constituencies. There were 76 independent candidates who contested the election, out of which only one from Yoksum constituency in west district won the

election. Except for three seats won by Congress (I) and Independent, and two seats in west district by SSP, all the remaining constituencies in west district and all south district was won by the SDF. The SDF won from two constituencies in north district namely; Lachen- Mangshila and Kabi Tintek and won from three constituencies in the east district; Central Pendam- East Pendam, Regu, Loosing Pachekhani and Khamdong constituencies. Thus, it is clear that the newly born political party-SDF won the elections and formed the government in December, 1994.

The following table shows the performance of the party in the election of 1994.

Table: 7

Assembly Election 1994

Political Party	No. of Candidates	No. Of Elected	No. of Votes secured	% of votes secured
Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	03	00	274	0.16
Communist Party of India (CPI) M	02	00	270	0.16
Indian National Congress	31	02	26045	15.02
Revolutionary Socialist party	11	00	2906	1.68
Sikkim Democratic Front	32	19	72856	42.00
Sikkim Sangram Parishad	31	10	60851	35.08
Independents	76	01	10255	5.91
Total	186	32	173457	

Source: Statistical Report, Sikkim Legislative Assembly Election, 1994, Election Commission of India.

CHAPTER II

THE ELECTORAL PROMISES AND POPULISM OF THE SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT

The Chapter seeks to answer the question, what are the different promises which the party has made for winning elections since 1994 and maintaining its dominant position in the politics of the State? We look into the promises of the SDF because the party has used promises as an important part of its strategy for the purpose of winning elections and remain in power. The chapter also looks at whether the promises are a part of electoral populism which the party has used in order to mobilize support. The chapter is divided into two sections. Section I discusses the promises of the SDF as a part of its electoral strategy for winning elections and maintaining its dominance in the state and Section II looks at how populism is used by the SDF as a part of its strategy to come to power and be in power. The sections are further divided into sub-sections.

SECTION I

Electoral Promises of the Sikkim Democratic Front

We have seen in the first chapter that the SDF as a regional political party in Sikkim arose as a reaction against the Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) government, which was in power in Sikkim since 1984. The SDF was formed as a sole opposition and was of the opinion that the SSP government was ruling in an

undemocratic manner. The arrest and torture of political leaders like Biraj Adhikari, Dhan Raj Tamang, Dharma Dutta Sharma and temporal closures of some of the newspapers like "The Observer" shows that freedom of speech and expression did not actually prevail in Sikkim (Kazi,1993).

SDF felt in the beginning that the people of Sikkim were in search of an alternative to the Bhandari (SSP) led government with a new leader and a new party who would lead Sikkim into a new progressive dimension. The SDF started with the slogan that it is interested in making Sikkim a "New Sikkim and Happy Sikkim". This was its initial slogan and the party was able to win people's trust and won the Assembly election of 1994 with 19 seats out of a total of 32 seats in the state.

The political parties like the Congress (I), Rising Sun, Communist party of India (CPI), Bharatiya Janata Party, and Revolutionary Socialist Party contested the election of 1994 but the main contest was between the SSP and the SDF. The Sikkim Sangram Parishad government was charged by the opposition parties namely the Congress 'I', Sikkim Democratic Front, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and by Organizations like the Citizens for Democracy, Sikkim and A Human Rights Organisation in Sikkim, that the state was being ruled in an undemocratic manner. The arrest and torture of political leaders like Biraj Adhikari, Dhan Raj Tamang on 8th December, 1993, Duknath Nepal a member of the CPI(M), Sikkim state organizing Committee on 24th October, 1992, Dharma Dutta Sharma, a local Congress (I) activist on February, 1988, Hem Lall Bhandari, practicing Sikkimese lawyer, Rajender Baid, editor of a Hindi daily- "Janpath Samachar" in November 1991 all proved that the government of the Sikkim Sangram Parishad under Nar Bahadur Bhandari used

repressive measures and curtailed democratic rights of the people (Gaunley, 2002).

The "Amnesty International" article entitled 'India' and subtitled "Sikkim", 'Torture of an opposition politician', dated October, 1994 published from London made an inquiry into how opposition leaders and politicians were tortured and humiliated by the government led by N. B. Bhandari. The article stated that the SSP rule was undemocratic and many treason, atrocities, killings torture of opposition leaders was taking place. The press went for temporary closures from time to time due to the pressure put by the government. Mal-administration and communalism was the common criticism against the ruling SSP government. As a result of all these CBI cases were initiated against the Chief Minister N. B. Bhandari regarding his house at Ranipool, New Delhi, Land at Tadong, NamNang, Mini palace at Church road, Arithang houses at Gangtok Bazar, Sangram Bhawan, Pines Printer established in 1980 at his residence and many other private companies owned by Bhandari which were registered in different people's names (Gaunley, 2002, p. 19). All these factors led to the urgency for the formation of a strong opposition political party which could change the political scenario of Sikkim. A Joint Action Committee (JAC) was formed by political parties like the Sikkim Democratic Front, Congress (I), Bharatiya Janata Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and organizations like Citizens for Democratic Human Rights Organization in Sikkim which opposed the ruling government under Sikkim Sangram Parishad. Faced with opposition from all sides, the Sikkim Sangram Parishad ultimately lost its long preserved position of fourteen (14) years in Sikkim.

SDF as a new regional political party aimed at restoring rights and privileges of the people and fight against the unjust

regime. The party felt that even though democracy was implanted in Sikkim since its merger with the Indian Union in 1975, many of the basic democratic rights, values and principles had been eroded. The party, therefore, wants to strengthen the democratic principles enshrined in the Constitution of India. It claimed that the Sikkim Democratic Party is interested in re-orienting the economic and social policies in the state.

To make Sikkim 'New and Happy Sikkim' the party promised certain things which can be categorized into Political Promises, Economic Promises, Social Welfare Promises and Educational Promises. In the sub-sections below we discuss this.

POLITICAL PROMISES

The Political promises which the SDF made can be further divided into two sub categories. There were in fact two components of this; the promise of democracy and the promise of decentralization.

Democracy: The first election contested by the party was the Assembly Election* held in December 1994. In its party manifesto the party claimed that the party's first and foremost aim was the safeguard of democracy. Adding to it, the party promised to give political, social and economic justice to the people (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994).

Criticizing the SSP rule, the party said that democracy was absent in Sikkim under the government of Nar Bahadur Bhandari. The Chief Minister of Sikkim was accused of corruption charges by B.B Gurung in 1984. B.B Gurung was from the Indian National Congress. In this he sought the help of the Congress government at the centre. As a result, the democratic set up was disturbed in the state. Political and economic rights of the people were denied

and the voice of all the opposition parties in the state was also suppressed by the government (Kazi, 1993, pp.173-175).

The party felt that the fourth estate of democracy, freedom of press and media were under the control of the government. Right to "Freedom of Speech" was not allowed under the ruling government (Kazi, 1993). The party thus, promised to restore the constitutional rights of the press and restore back freedom of Speech and Rule of Law as far as the views and opinions were constructive. The party unlike SSP supported more freedom of expression and opinion.

On 21st July, 1993, the Chief Minister N. B. Bhandari emphasized on imposing central income tax rule in Sikkim (Sharma, 1996). The Sikkim Democratic Front opposed the extension and enforcement of Central Direct Tax laws in Sikkim because the extension and enforcement of such laws was in violation of the merger agreement enshrined in Article 371(f).¹⁸

¹⁸ The provisions of article 371(f) relating to Sikkim reveal the following noteworthy features:

1. Allotment of not less than 30 members which should have been according to article 170 of the constitution of India, not less than 60 members.
2. The members of Legislative Assembly elected in 1974 to continue after the merger till 1979.
3. Maintenance of party/reserved seats for the three ethnic communities in Sikkim Legislative Assembly.
4. The Governor of Sikkim vested with special responsibility for the maintenance of peace and for equitable arrangement form ensuring social and economic advancement of different sections to the population. The Governor of Sikkim is subject to such direction as the President of India from time to time deem fit to issue.
5. Property and assets previously vested in the government of Sikkim or any authority under it within and outside Sikkim came to be vested with the Government of Sikkim.
6. While the existing laws of Sikkim will remain in force, they will subject to such modification and amendment as the president of India may deem necessary to introduce by order issued within 2 years from the date of merger. Similarly he may by public notification extend to Sikkim with necessary modifications any enactment which is in force in other states of India.
7. These provisions were made effective in Sikkim with effect from 26th April, 1975 (Lama, 1994)

The party also promised for the complete safeguard of Sikkimese rules and traditions and Rule of Law (SDF, Election manifesto, 1994, p.3). After the state's merger with the Indian Union in 1975, many people from the surrounding states like West Bengal and Nepal started entering into the state as traders and in search of employment. The party, thus, felt that it was necessary to maintain the identity of the Sikkimese people and protect its long cherished traditions and rule of Law. The party also felt that the earlier government (SSP) adopted a hostile attitude towards the Central government and other regions of the country. The party in this regard promised to promote national and emotional integration with the center (Gaunley, 2002).

The SDF promised the inclusion of Limboo and Tamang community in the Tribal list and Rai, Gurung, Manger, Bhujel, Sunwar in the OBC list (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994, p.3.) The SDF stated that the government under Sikkim Sangram Parishad had refused to implement the recommendation of the Mandal Commission regarding the inclusion of Rai, Gurung, Manger, Bhujel and Sunwar in the OBC category in 1987. Therefore the Sikkim Democratic Front promised to grant the right of these communities of the society which was denied by the government of Nar Bahadur Bhandari.

Sikkim mainly constitutes of three ethnic groups- Bhutia, Lepcha, Nepali. The languages of these three groups are mainly spoken in Sikkim.¹⁹ The party in order to protect and promote the languages of the two ethnic groups; Bhutia and Lepcha promised to forward proposals to the central government for the inclusion of

¹⁹ Nepali language received the constitutional recognition and is included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution on 20th August 1992.

these languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution (SDF, Election manifesto, 1998, p.6 & 1999, p.7).

Referring to article 371(f) and the 8th May Agreement, the party promised to preserve the rights of the Nepali and Tsong in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994, p.3; SDF, Election Manifesto, 1999, p.2; SDF, Election Manifesto, 2004, p.8).²⁰ The party also promised that it will safe-guard the constitutional rights of all Sikkimese tribal's and Schedule Castes in the state. The party felt it necessary to protect their rights as these sections of society are the minority groups in the state (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994 & 1998).

Till date Sikkim has only one representative in the Indian Parliament, so to increase the number of representatives in the parliament from one to two and to have more representative of Sikkim the party in its election manifesto of 12th Lok Sabha Election, 1998 promised to make and raise the proposal in the parliament. For greater participation at the national level the party promised more integration of the state with central government (SDF, Election Manifesto, p.4, 1998; SDF, Election Manifesto, 2004, p.5).

The party pledged to include Gurung, Rai, Manger, Sunwar, Thami, Jogi, Dewan in the tribal category.²¹ The party promised reservation of seats for the Tamang and Limboo communities in the state Legislative Assembly. And it also promised to include Chettri, Bhaun, Newar, Sanyasi in the OBC category (SDF, Election Manifesto, 2004, p.6-7).

²⁰ The seats for Nepali and Tsong were reserved till 1979. It was removed by Bill No.79, Act No.8, 1980.

²¹ Tamang and Limboo were included in this category in 2003.

Referring to Article 371 (f), the party promised to protect the identity of the ethnic groups in the state. The party promised to give preference and first priority to the Sikkimese people who are Sikkim subjects in the government jobs and other fields. It also promised to protect the rights and welfare of the employees in Sikkim from outside Sikkim (SDF, Election Manifesto, p.25, 1999 & SDF, Election Manifesto p.4, 2004). In its election manifesto of 1994, the party pledged to protect old laws of Sikkim and Revenue Order No.1 (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994, p.3.)

The Old Laws of Sikkim includes:

- The registration of land belonging to Bhutia and Lepcha of Sikkim cannot be transferred to other communities of Sikkim and outside Sikkim, except the land can be given under the lease system.
- Reservation of seats in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly. The old laws include the preservation of one Sangha seat (seat reserved for monks of different monasteries in Sikkim).²² It also promised twelve Bhutia- Lepcha seats belonging to the Bhutia and Lepcha Community.
- In Sikkim there are restricted areas like Dzongu in north Sikkim meaning the Land of Lepchas. No Sikkimese other than Lepchas can enter this particular area without inner line permit from the concerned authority.
- The old laws also include the restriction upon the purchase of land and property in Sikkim by a non-local in his/her name directly.

²² Sangha seat is the seat reserved for the Buddhist Lamas (monks) and nuns in which only they have the right to elect their representative in the 32 member Assembly in the state. The monks can cast their vote from their respective assembly constituencies in a separate ballot box.

- On the basis of Sikkim Domicile, the local Sikkimese people are given job opportunities in the state. Non-local people from other states who do not possess Sikkim Domicile are not entitled to sit for the interview in regular government jobs in Sikkim.

Politically the SDF promised to restore democracy in the state. To it the earlier government had failed to safeguard the democratic rights of the Sikkimese people. The SDF, thus pledged to restore democracy and protect the old laws and traditions of Sikkim. The party claimed that the identity of the ethnic groups in the state was in danger and hence it promised to protect the identity of these groups by promoting their language and script.

THE PROMISE OF DECENTRALISATION OF POWER

In examining the evolution and role of Panchayati Raj institution in Sikkim, it can be said that Local Area Panchayat was introduced in 1950. This enabled the formation of village Panchayats at the local level on election basis but this failed in its functioning. The second attempt was made in 1965 by passing the Sikkim Panchayat Act, which implemented the Block Panchayat at village level. This Block Panchayat continued till 1981. The Block level Panchayats were vested with the responsibility of looking at the development of agriculture, agricultural farms, food campaign, dairy farming, minor irrigation, promote of cottage industry, welfare works like construction of public toilets, sanitation, health, women and child welfare, maintenance of school, water supply and organization of community program in the village.

Despite these long listed functions, Panchayats actually did not perform such functions. Their role was confined to placing of demands to the government and nominating the contractor for the

implementation of minor schemes. The Panchayat institution served as a facade of democracy rather than effective popular participation. Hence, it was clear that developmental role of Panchayats was more on paper than in practice.

The Panchayat Act 1982 introduced the two tier Panchayati Raj System with Gram Panchayat at the block level and Zilla Panchayat at the district level. The Panchayat Act of 1982 provides the panchayat's with the functions like sanitation, drainage, supply of drinking water, welfare etc. A study was conducted in the year 1985 on Local Self Government and Democratic Decentralization in Sikkim. In the report of the study it stated that the Panchayati Raj institution in Sikkim is still lagging behind in taking up the responsibilities of development and popular participation. The panchayat's should be involved not only in identification of problems but also in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evolution of the state plan.

The Sikkim Democratic Front regarded Panchayati Raj Institution as the basis of democratic decentralisation and promised to take steps for strengthening these institutions and establish institutions where they don't exist and provide necessary administrative and financial resources for their functioning. To make Panchayati Raj Institutions more effective, the Panchayat elections were held on party lines and a provision of honorarium to the Panchayat members was made. Chamling also promised the appointment of Panchayat Assistants to advice the Panchayat's to conduct local survey, collect data for village plan and for overall socio-economic development of Sikkim were promised (SDF, Election Manifesto, Panchayat Election, 1997).

The Sikkim Democratic Front alleged that though Panchayati Raj Institutions prevailed in the state since 1950's, the actual

decentralisation of power was not done. It alleged that the Sikkim Sangram Parishad government had minimized the powers and functions of the Panchayat's and other local self institutions. The Sikkim Democratic Front, therefore, promised that decentralisation of powers will be done in Sikkim. It promised that in all gram Panchayat's the Panchayat's will be empowered to decide and implement plans. The Zilla Panchayat's will be enabled to debate on the district plans and programme's the works of villages to be done by the villagers themselves. For this, the party further stated that, the public works of Rs. 5 lakhs will be given to the Panchayat's and it will be raised to Rs. 10 lakh on recommendation of Gram Sabha (Election Manifesto, Panchayat Election, SDF, 2002, p.12).

The party also promised that it will give responsibility to the Panchayat's over ruling and maintaining all government institutions like-Primary Schools, Primary Health Centers, Public Libraries, Community Information Centre, grounds for sports, rural tourism and giving recommendation for the issuance of domicile and trade license (Election Manifesto, SDF, 1997, p.6, 2004, P.3). Following its promise, the Panchayat election was held on party lines for the first time in Sikkim in 1997. It held that in order to guide and help the Panchayat's public libraries will be opened in each gram Panchayat. It was promised that in villages, contracts will be given to the villagers up to Rs 10 lakhs, 5 lakhs work will be under the Gram Panchayats (SDF, Election Manifesto, Panchayat Election, 2004, p.12).

The party President, Pawan Chamling stated that the party had decided to hold elections on party lines because the main objective was to restore democracy. It wanted to restore the rights and privileges as well as the responsibility of the people to the people.

It further stated that the Panchayat election of 1997 based on party lines was a success. So following 1997 election, the Panchayat election of 2002 was also based on party lines. The party in its Panchayat election manifesto 2002 promised the following:

- All Government decisions will be made after due consultations with the panchayat's. This is done so to bring the voice of the people with the mainstream of thinking in the decision making for rural development.
- In every gram panchayat and ward the panchayat's will be empowered to decide on the plan as well as to implement and to maintain it.
- To enable the panchayat's to debate on the district plans and programme, the panchayat's at the Zilla level will participate in the District committees.
- The party strives to strengthen the panchayat's who look after the villages and village people, so 10 percent of the government budget is being devolved to the panchayat's and it will be raised to 30 percent in due course.
- The panchayat's shall have the power to identify and issue domicile certificate to the Sikkimese who do not possess Sikkim subject certificate but have receipt of dhuri khajana land revenue receipt, dada parcha etc.
- The party stated that the Gram panchayat's have the function of running and maintenance of all government institutions like the Primary schools, Primary Health centers, library, Community Information centers, rural tourism, minor irrigation works, community centers, grounds for sports etc.
- Restoration of democracy was the primary concern of the party. Therefore, the party states that the panchayat's will

play an important and active role in fighting the forces of exploitation, suppression and corruption.

- The panchayat's shall have the responsibility to educate and enlighten the people and make them aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- For the upliftment and empowerment of women, the party promised 33% seat reservation in Panchayat elections and 30% in job reservation to the women in Sikkim. The party shall abolish the social, political and economic discrimination of women.
- As a representative at the local level the panchayat's acts as a link between the administration and the people especially in the area of development. The panchayat's will be directly responsible to the people.
- The panchayat's shall facilitate the production and increase of productivity of vegetables, fruits, flowers and other cash crops by promoting marketing linkage. This will make people more self-reliant, self-sufficient and sustainable. The party further stated that this will also help the young people in starting their own business to make them self-employed and self-reliant.
- Agro-based industry will be started in villages; the panchayat's will play the role of bringing such new thinking into the villages.
- Panchayat's shall have an important role to play and be responsible for government initiated development policies and programs. The programs include huge opportunities to set up industries in their respective areas.
- Agriculture will be given the status of industry. The panchayat's ensures that villages will produce market and

distribute all kinds of agriculture produce in a scientific and profitable manner (Election manifesto, 2002, p. 1-16).

In the election manifesto 1994, the party pledged to give full facilities, privileges, responsibilities and power to the panchayat's and decentralization of power with the establishment of Panchayati Raj Institutions in all parts of Sikkim. In the 1999 Election Manifesto, the party talked about giving power to the panchayat's. The major difference between the 1994 promise and 1999 promise was that in 1999, the party also promised reservation of seats for women in panchayat's. The party also alleged that by giving more powers and responsibilities to the Panchayat's there has been decentralization of powers at the local level.

SOCIAL WELFARE PROMISES

The Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) declared that Sikkim was a backward state. It dreams of making Sikkim and Sikkimese people self-sufficient and equally competitive with the other states of the Indian Union. The party gave importance to women's empowerment in the state. In this regard the party pledged to give them due place in society encouraging women power in democracy and protect rights, privileges and status in all fields of work. The party promised to grant 30% benefits in social, political and economic fields to women (Election manifesto, 1998, p.7 & 2004 p.70). The party appreciated and promoted women's participation. The party promised 33% of seats for women in panchayat's and 30% job reservation (SDF, Panchayat Election Manifesto, 2002, p.13).

The party feels that senior citizens should be respected and protected by the state. It had promised that provisions will be made for their better livelihood. Therefore, the party holds and

promised old age pensions of Rs 200 per month for the old people above the age of 65 yrs. It further promised that pension will be raised to Rs 400 per month to help and give medical treatment to the handicapped and orphans. The party also promised to open orphanage and old age homes (SDF, Election manifesto, 1998, p.9).

The following table shows the total number of beneficiaries under Old Age Pension Schemes, Disabled Persons Schemes during the year 1997 to 2004.

Table 1
OLD AGE PENSION (1997-2004)

Sl. No	Year	No. of beneficiaries
1	1997-1998	3855
2	1998-1999	6835
3	1999-2000	6835
4	2000-2001	10104
5	2001-2002	10104
6	2002-2003	10104
7	2003-2004	13429

Source: Department of Social Welfare, Govt. of Sikkim, 2005

The party promised that it will establish and maintain the historical and cultural sites of Sikkim. In addition, the party promised to preserve the age old traditions, culture, history, language of the ethnic groups of Sikkim namely, Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali for maintenance of communal harmony (SDF, Election manifesto, 1998, p.13 & 2002 p.19).

Sikkim is composed of different races or ethnic groups. These groups have different languages, cultural patterns and have become the central point of socio-economic and political problems in Sikkim. Thus, the party keeping in mind the cultural, social background of these groups and to retain their identity provisions to preserve the scripts and history of the languages like Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Sherpa, Manger, Newari promised to declare all these languages as state languages. The party also pledged to give educational and employment facilities to the Sikkimese Scheduled Castes (SDF Election manifesto, 1994, p. 20).

The party declared itself a pro-people party. It is the party of the poor people with this notion, the party promises social upliftment of the poor people and grant land, forest land to built house to the landless (SDF, Election manifesto, 1994, p.7). It also promised 50% job reservation for Sikkimese candidates in offices under central government in Sikkim. As peoples party, it promised 23% seat reservation for ST (Scheduled Tribes) and 6% for Scheduled Caste and 21% for Other Backward Classes. It promised to increase age limit from 30-35 for government jobs. Grant allowance to unemployed people, help the poorest family by helping with up to Rs 500 in case of birth, marriage and death. This shall be granted by recommendations made by the concerned ward panchayat's, gram panchayat's and Zilla panchayat's (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994, p. 24). The party also alleged to grant 20,000 as grant in aid to property less, landless poor Sikkimese people. For the protection of forest and to prevent deforestation, the party provided L.P.G. gas cylinder to the people living below the poverty line (SDF Election Manifesto, 1999, pp.48-49). The Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) promised to grant rice at cheaper rate to the poor families (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994, p.8)

In the section on health, a high child mortality rate, low immunization rate for children and high death rate for rural women of child bearing age have been recorded in Sikkim (Sikkim, The Peoples Vision, p.17, 2001). This gives clear indication that family health needs attention. Due to poor rural health infrastructure, the patients are referred to big hospitals outside the state which costs high expenses for the poor people. The Sikkim Democratic Front, thus, promised to establish health centers and medical facilities making Sikkim diseases Free State by 2015. This is a new vision of Sikkim Democratic Front. The party promised to launch hepatitis 'B' vaccination programme free of cost to the children (SDF Election manifesto, 2004 p.53). The party holds that there shall be hospitals in all the four districts of Sikkim with maximum tools and modern scientific infrastructure for treatment of diseases. Further it lays down in the election manifesto that open health centers with doctors, medicine and ambulance would be provided in each village of Sikkim (SDF, Election manifesto, 1999, pp.33-34 & 2004 pp.53-54).

The party promised during the 2004 elections that along with the treatment of the disease, the disease will also be diagnosed for which the people do not have to go outside the state for treatment. The party also promised that it will give more attention towards the health of the old aged, children and women. To make people health conscious and aware, there shall be health exhibition cum conference every year.

The party stated that in the past five years, 10,000 youths were given employment and promised that in the next five years, employment will be given to 25,000 youths, covering each year, 1000 persons. The party strives to increase the age limit in government jobs from 30-35 years. The Scheduled Castes will be

given justice by reserving 6% seats in the panchayati raj institutions. It also promised relaxation in job, education for SC like Kami, Damai, Sarki and Majhi (SDF, Election manifesto, 1999, p.28).

It promised to set up State Women Commission for the development and protection of Rights of Women in Sikkim (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1999, p. 40). It also promised issue of ration cards to all the people of Sikkim. The ration card holders would get Rs 10 per kg rice at Rs 5 only. The state government would bear the remaining Rs. 5.

ECONOMIC PROMISES

Following restoration of democracy in the state, the party aimed at development and re-orientation of the economy of the state. Sikkim Democratic Front claimed that during the earlier regime, the state's economy was in a miserable condition. The government borrowed loans from the centre and other financial institutions up to Rs 500 Crores. This money was not utilized for the development in the state instead loans were granted to the party supporters. The state revenue was only Rs 40 Crores when the SDF took over in 1994. Within a span of 6 years, the revenue situation improved to a total of Rs 125 Crores (Gaunley, 2002).

The party promised to make the Sikkimese people self-reliant by uplifting the economic conditions of the poor and it promised the development of the rural areas which will help in alleviation of poverty. The party also promised to set aside 70% of its annual budget for economic development (SDF, Election Manifesto, Assembly and Lok Sabha election, 3 Oct, 1999, p.11).²³

²³ Sikkim Democratic Front pledges to remove corruption from its roots. To it the SSP government and the Chief Minister Nar Bahadur Bhandari faced CBI charges in the late 80's and early 90's this led to mal-administration of the state. The

The party promised to solve the problems of the labourer's and low wage earning employees. The party promised that it would make an effort to regularize the employees who were working as muster roll for three years and increase their daily wage up to Rs 50/- (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994, p. 16).

The party promised the constructions of roads to connect all the villages. It promised that it will provide Bus services in all parts of Sikkim. The party pledged to maintain an air service through helicopter and an air plane having capacity of 20 passengers in the state (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1998, p.6; 1999, p.30 & 2004, p.34).

The party talked about road infrastructure as roads and highways are not well maintained in the state. The topography and climate of the region makes it prone to landslides and erosion. Several roads have not been repaired for long periods. The main means of transport is only roads. It is the only life line of the population. Thus, the party promises to link every village by roads to the main town. There is absence of a rail network or commercial air services in Sikkim. The only depending factor is on single Highway- National Highway 31A (NH 31A).²⁴ Any major disruption to NH 31A, mainly when bandhs are called in Darjeeling, Kalimpong areas of West Bengal, cuts Sikkim's link with other parts of the country. The party therefore had demanded for an alternative highway for Sikkim (SDF, Election manifesto, 1998, p.6, 1999, p.29, 2004, p.34).

The Sikkim Democratic Front promised in its election manifesto the reopening of the Nathula trade route-Indo-China

opposition political parties in Sikkim like the Congress I, Bharatiya Janata Party, Rising Sun, Communist party of India also demanded Presidential rule in Sikkim.
²⁴ NH 31A the only linking line of Sikkim with the rest of the country.

trade route. The route would improve the relation with China and more it would increase market and export state products to the national and international market. This would benefit both the government as well as small scale industries in Sikkim (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994, p.6, 1999, p.6, 2004, p.34).

Industrial development is very low in Sikkim. There can be a number of factors reasons for this under development, like physical remoteness, difficult terrain, lack of raw materials and markets, high transport and marketing costs. Apart from this, the Sikkim Democratic Front was of the view that the Bhandari government had failed to solve these problems faced by the industries. The industries in Sikkim are mainly small scale industries and cottage industries which if given care would contribute in the increase in state's revenue. Realizing this fact, the Sikkim Democratic Front also promised to arrest the sickness of the industries and revive them. It had reiterated that it would demand funds from the central government for its maintenance (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1998, p.8; 1999, pp. 31-32; 2004, pp.21-22).

PROMISES FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Sikkim is an agricultural land. More than 75% of the people live in rural areas with only agriculture being the source of income. Agricultural production is very low in Sikkim due to many factors like-cultivation cost being very high because of outdated farming practices, high cost and inadequate supply of inputs like seeds, seedlings etc. There is a shortage of well trained, specialized staff on government farms to give information on good farming practices and modern techniques. The farmers depend on middle man for credit and making outlet due to poor marketing structure and lack of wholesale market (Sikkim People's Vision, 2001). Thus,

the necessity on the part of the government is to make arrangement for the establishment of agriculture based industries, providing high yielding variety seeds, modern technological approaches, scientific knowledge and education in Sikkim.

The SDF before coming to power in 1994 analyzed the agricultural condition in Sikkim and it promised to give more attention to the agricultural sector. For this it promised in its election manifesto of 1994 that 70% of the budget will be set for rural development which also means agriculture. The party promised that agriculture will be given the status of an industry. For this steps will be taken up by the Panchayat's to ensure that village produces market and distribute all kinds of agriculture produce in a scientific manner. The progressive farmers will be given necessary inputs (SDF, Election Manifesto, 2002, p.15).

For better agricultural production in the state, a study of Progressive cultivation of maize, ginger, cardamom, pears, tea leaves and herbal plants was promised by the party. Establishment of new industries, training programmes to the farmers for better agricultural knowledge were also promised. It also promised that the government would take the responsibility for the sale of cash crops like cardamom, ginger, and oranges. Cultivation of vegetables and flowers especially Sunakhari was encouraged²⁵ (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1999).

It promised that there will be a rural library in each gram panchayat to give information regarding farming and cultivation. 13% of the total land area of the state is for agricultural purpose, Sikkim lacks resources. So the party promised to use central aid for its development purpose (SDF, Lok Sabha Election manifesto, 1998, p.5). It further promised that in order to boost agricultural

²⁵ Sunakhari is the local species of flower found only in Sikkim.

production, a separate budget over and above the prescribed allocation of state fund from the centre will be arranged by the party (SDF Election Manifesto, 1998).

The party in order to make Sikkim more developed in the agricultural field and to give it more importance made many promises in the Assembly Election of 1999 (p. 19-22).

- Each village shall have one industry on ginger, fruits, cardamom, bamboo etc.
- Tea garden in all the four districts of Sikkim shall be provided with information in the cultivation of tea and mini-infrastructures.
- To guide the farmers, the government (SDF) shall appoint an assistant in each gram panchayat and provide scientific techniques of cultivation of crops and vegetables.
- Floriculture will be encouraged and necessary arrangements will be made to sell products outside the state.
- Like in other states of the country, state Krici Bima Yojana with the help of the central government will be started in Sikkim.
- The party shall come up with new programmes in the field of providing better opportunities to the farmers.

In the election manifesto of 1999, the party stated that the government under its banner has contributed much in the development of agriculture in the state. It further stated that it will do more towards agriculture if it is voted to power. For this it promised in the Election Manifesto 2004, that:

- To increase productivity the progressive farmers will be given all necessary inputs.

- The government shall make arrangements to sell the agricultural products in the market at a profitable price.
- An exhibition will be held and shall grant award to the farmers who produce maximum and this will encourage and help the farmers to increase the productivity and increase healthy competition among them.
- The government shall encourage tea cultivation and mushroom cultivation in the state and provide with seeds, manure, information, training, tools etc.
- Shall make Sikkim purely an organic state. For this the state shall make arrangements for the provision of making natural manures for agricultural production.

The party further promised that a programme will be arranged for the farmers who intend to learn and know new agricultural techniques from other states. To it the government shall make provisions of soil conservation and soil erosion.

The government gave importance to tea, mushroom, orange, passion fruits, guava, banana, papaya, and apple cultivation and facilities will be provided for its cultivation. To help the farmers with facilities, Co-operative banks will be opened in the state to provide with loans. It will help the farmers and encourage them in poultry farming, Dairy farming, Piggery, Fishery etc.

PROMISES FOR THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

Sikkim's Literacy rate as per the 2001 census was 69.68 percent, which was much above the national average of 62 percent. In Sikkim, educational system has improved with the increasing literacy rate and growing school enrolment but still the educational achievement is relatively low in Sikkim. This can be due to lack of

access to schooling and low level of school competition. There can be other factors too which are responsible for poor performance of education like-absence of transport to and from school, poor school infrastructure and largely untrained teachers etc.

The party promised to make a provision for starting its own state school board and University in Sikkim.²⁶ Sikkim also lacks technical and vocational institutions. It also promised to open up Polytechnic schools, Rojgar Mulak and business oriented education to make people self-reliant. The party also promised the establishment of Degree colleges in each district of Sikkim and a University of its own in Sikkim to bring all educational institutions in the state under its aegis (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1999, p.17-18; 1998, p. 5; 2004, 48-49).

To encourage education in the state, the party promised that government schools would not charge any tuition fee from the students and distribute free text books and exercise books. All students up to class V were to be provided free uniforms and mid-day meals (Election Manifesto, 1994, p.15; 1999, p.15-16). It also held that:

- The party also dreams of making Sikkim a fully literate state by 2015 (Election Manifesto, 2004, p.15)
- The party also promised to grant scholarships and quota reserved for Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled caste candidates opting higher studies outside the state. The scholarship will range from Rs 500-1000-1500 per student (Election manifesto, 1994, p.17).

²⁶ Sikkim lacks state educational board of its own and a State University. For further studies the students have to get admission to the Universities outside Sikkim.

- The party promised a separate pay scale for school teachers in the state. It also held that medical leave with full salary would be provided. In case of retirement of teachers, the job would be given to his/her children (Election Manifesto, 1994, p.15).
- In order to help in the education of the orphans the party promised to set up a separate educational institution under the Govt. of Sikkim (Election Manifesto, 1994, p.19).
- In the election manifesto of the Assembly Election, 1999, the party stated that the government under the SDF granted free education which includes free tuition fees, provided text books and uniforms to the students up to class eight. The party further holds that the government shall take steps to make education free up to college level so that all the poor students can avail higher studies. The party also laid down that free school bag shall be given to the students up to class V in all government schools (SDF, Election Manifesto, General Assembly Election, 1999).
- In all the gram panchayat's, the party said that there shall be Madhyamik School.
- The party promised to include subjects like environmental studies and computer education as a compulsory subject at the lower level of education.
- It also promised to start vocational education in 40 senior secondary schools in the state.
- The party promised that after coming to power, it would increase the information centers from 40 to 60 within five years of its term (SDF, Election manifesto, 1994, p.17; SDF Election manifesto, 1999, p.17; SDF Election manifesto, 2004, pp.51-52).

Apart from the promises laid down by the party in the election manifestoes, the party President Pawan Chamling made certain declaration and promises to the people on various occasions in the state. After its major victory in the State Assembly election of 1994, the new Chief Minister stated that "first priority will be given to the restoration of democracy in the state". The government will concentrate more on the various needs of the people, particularly the poor and the downtrodden instead of building his own image and the image of the party. In an interview to free Press Journal (8th January, 1995) the party president Pawan Chamling stated that, in its task of restoring democracy in the state, the press will be given freedom and it will allow to re-establish newspapers destroyed by the earlier government. Teachers and government employees will be given association and Trade Union rights. The State Human Rights Commission will be formed and the labour Act will be implemented very soon.

In January 2003 he announced to distribute 3000 milch cattle's, 3000 piglets to the people living below poverty line as animal husbandry is one of the important sectors of rural economy. He also announced that a financial development Corporation will be set up for the economic development of the backward communities like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). A new industrial policy was announced which would promote agricultural products and handlooms and handicrafts industries and tourism related industries. The new government enforced the new Sikkim Panchayat Act 1992 and Nagar Palika Act to ensure peoples' participation in democratic process so that democracy takes firm roots in the society.

On the occasion of the celebration of 48th Independence day on 15th August 1995 in Gangtok, Pawan Chamling talking about poverty Alleviation programmes announced new schemes. He announced that the government shall provide houses to 15,000 poor people in a phased manner over the next five years. He also announced that the government would provide a 2-point electricity connection free of cost to 30,000 houses over the next five years.

He announced to increase the number of beneficiaries under the old age pension scheme in order to lower the scale of poverty in the state. He announced to introduce maternity allowance at the rate of Rs 300 for the people and a scheme of providing Rs. 3000 to the poor families to enable them to perform the social and religious rites for the dead. He further announced that the government would take the major decision to develop the core sectors of economy by increasing agricultural production and industrial growth. Higher priority to education and health will be given. The apex cooperative bank would be set up to avail financial assistance for the farmers.

According to the newspaper reports of 'Sikkim Express' March 20-26, 1995, celebrating 100 days of SDF rule in Sikkim, the SDF government promised to uplift the downtrodden and alleviate the suffering of the weaker sections of the society by meeting the challengers with courage. Earlier the government focused on how to bring development in the state and now its focus was shifted to the

At the state level Panchayat meet held in June, 1995, at Namchi, South Sikkim, Pawan Chamling promised to fulfill every promises made by him. He expressed that Sikkim will be made free income tax state, all Nepalese would be included in the OBC list, Limboo, Gurung and Tamang would be declared as tribals,

restriction area permit would begin, helicopter service to be continued from September, 2005, which had stopped functioning and construction of Airstrip for small planes would be completed.

During the grand celebration of the Anniversary of the SDF government in December 12, 1995 in Gangtok, the party members put forward different suggestions. Political and economic resolutions were passed in the open session on December 12. All together 15 resolutions were passed. The party in its resolution resolved to:

- Include all Nepalese in the OBC category
- Declare Limboo, Tamang, Gurung and Manger as Tribal community in the state.
- The party strives for the inclusion of the languages of ethnic groups like Bhutia, Lepcha and Limboo in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution.
- The party resolved to give full security to the old laws in accordance with the Revenue Order No.1.
- It pledged to make Sikkim Income tax free state.
- It resolved to reserve seats for the Limboo, Bhutia and Lepcha and Nepalese in the State Legislative Assembly.
- The party resolved to declare Sikkim as the backward state as no significant development in the state was seen during the past 20 years.
- The party passed a resolution to make demands to the central government for developmental schemes like Airport facility, establishment of University in the state, financial aid for further growth of industries, power, transport, establishment of cultural center, language, developmental fund, and construction of alternative

highway to Siliguri and make Sikkim a transaction centre in relation to trade with Tibet.

- It pledged to make Sikkim a self-sufficient state by implementing schemes for the upliftment of poor people.
- It resolved to stop the spread of Communal feelings in the state.
- The party would strive for women self-respect and justice for women.
- The party would coordinate the people of different communities for the development of languages in the state.
- The party promised to build competitive attitude among the students and give more importance to education.
- The party resolved to proceed further in making the women and youths self-reliant and self-employed.
- It passed in the resolution that the party and the people of Sikkim will always support the centre to fight against corruption and terrorism in the state.

In August, 1997 at a Rally held at Temi bazar before the Panchayat election which was scheduled to be held on September, 1997, Pawan Chamling, the party President declared that his government has planned to spend one third of the state's total plan outlay of Rs 1600 Crores towards the development of the panchayat's. He stressed that every village would get a school, electricity for every houses and 'roti, 'kapda our Makan' for every citizen in the ninth five year plan. It also promised to provide job opportunities to 2000 people. It also promised that 1000 contractors were to get opportunities when the Teesta Hydel Project phase will be implemented.

On the occasion of the Foundation Day of the party at Gangtok in January, 1999, the party decided to grant an amount of Rs twenty thousand and distribute 30 GCI sheets to the people living below poverty line. A constituency level campaign committee was to be constituted to carry the political campaign for the next election. The meeting also resolved to constitute a disciplinary committee and Zonal committee in each and every market zone to speed up its political campaign.

Observing the Labour Day on May 1st 1999 the party President Pawan Chamling made commitments to uplift the proletariat sections of the society and to bring about a revolutionary change in their condition. A year before the next General Assembly Election, in a public meeting held at Pakyong, East Sikkim, Pawan Chamling, the Chief Minister of Sikkim declared financial assistance of Rs. 20,000/- each for families whose landed properties and houses have been damaged by natural calamities which was to be free and not to be repaid back (Sikkim Express, 7-13 November, 1998). To make the state self-sufficient the government under the SDF would utilize the hydel power and tourism potentials of the state. Every village would be marked to make it a tourist attraction.

On June 27, 2000, at the meeting at the conference hall of the Tashiling Secretariat, Gangtok, Pawan Chamling declared that a model village in each of the 30 constituencies will be created to improve the living condition of the rural poor. Pawan Chamling, the party President of Sikkim Democratic Front assured the people after winning the Assembly election for a second term in 1999, that, the government is committed to provide "good governance and accelerate the pace of development" to attain the Sikkim vision of 2015. He further added that he would work towards

making Sikkim a model state (Sikkim Express, 16-22 October, 1999).

Pawan Chamling dreams of transforming Sikkim into an ideal state where all round development including political, social and economic development is secured. Quality of life of the people will be improved. He further stated that every citizen in the state gets a roof over his head, three square meals a day and basic amenities like education, health and social justice. He also dreamt of making Sikkim the most eco-friendly state in the country (The Statesman, Wednesday, 16th May, 2001).

On the eve of the Third Millennium and the 21st century on 1st January 2000, Pawan Chamling delivered a speech in Gangtok where he declared that it is necessary to develop Sikkim's own potential to accelerate the development process and this would free Sikkim from economic slavery. To him Sikkim's natural resources should be explored and transform the natural beauty into eco-tourism.²⁷ For this, he declared that tourist spots be developed in each gram panchayat unit with the involvement of panchayat's and the people at large (Sikkim Express, 2, January, 2000).

To keep the pace with the fast moving 21st century world, the government decided to fully computerize the administrative system. He declared to make the state's administration more organized, smooth and effective through computerization. The farmers in Sikkim are following the old methods of farming.²⁸ There is an absence of allied industry to provide a centre for agricultural output. Thus, the rural farmers are compelled to sell out their agricultural product in raw form. The government

²⁷ Sikkim is rich in natural resources; therefore, tourism can be developed as an industry for economic growth.

²⁸ Till date, Sikkim's main economy has been traditional agriculture.

promised to establish such industries to process the manufacture products and also negotiate the sale of such finished products at national and international markets. For strengthening the economic growth further, the government declared to enrich the quality production of various agricultural products and orchids, flowers which are unique in the country (Sikkim Express, 2, January, 2000).

Along with the utilization of natural resources, the government declared to promote education as an industry in itself. By establishing elaborate educational centers, Sikkim would be a place of immense educational interest, Pawan Chamling declared to make Sikkim an ideal state by freeing the state from serious epidemics like illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and environmental pollution. Pawan Chamling promised that by the end of the first decade of the new century, Sikkim will be a 100% literate state. The government will make Sikkim poverty free, pollution free and clear the state of the drug menace.

On the occasion of being honored as the greenest Chief Minister by the Centre for Science and Environment on 20th September 1999 at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi, Pawan Chamling delivered a speech that Sikkim is giving more emphasis on eco-tourism. Along with economic tourism, hydro power potential will be developed by bringing out comprehensive state environment policy and use the NGO movement as a valuable resource in the development of this sector. The state government would make proposal to introduce Himalayan Ecology in the awareness about the environment to promote eco-tourism in the state.

Shifts in the Nature of Promises

Analyses of SDF promises reveal that it had changed over time. Shifts in the nature of the promises are noticed. The party promises were not the same in all the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. The party in its initial stages had promised to restore democracy, safeguard the rights of the Sikkimese people and gave importance to agricultural growth in the state. The same promises are absent in the later elections in the state as the party was able to fulfill its promises and hence came up with new promises to attract voter's.

The SDF has been ruling Sikkim since 1994. Till 2004, there have been 6 (six) elections which includes State Assembly elections, Parliamentary elections and Panchayat elections in the state. The party laid down many promises in its election manifestoes. We notice that there are some similarities and differences in its promises. Here in this part we will focus on the shifts in the promises. These can be divided into categories like, political, social, economic, education etc. Let us have a brief look at all this.

POLITICAL: In the political promises adopted by the party there are similarities as well as differences. Similarities can be found in the promises like restoration of constitutional rights of the Sikkimese Bhutia's and Lepcha's. This is mentioned (promised) in the election manifestoes of 1994 and also in 2005. The election manifestoes of 1994 and 1999 lays down that the party shall oppose the extension and enforcement of Central Direct Tax in Sikkim which the earlier government (SSP) had welcomed. The party had repeatedly emphasized this because it aims at making Sikkim a tax free state.

In 1984, the Bhandari government (SSP) deprived the rights of the people by refusing to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission which included some sections of communities like Rai, Gurung, Bhujel, Manger, Sunwar in the OBC category. Therefore, the Sikkim Democratic Front repeated its promises in 1994, 1998 and 1999, to protect the right of these sections of the society and include them in the OBC list. It had also consistently demanded the inclusion of Limboo and Tamang in the list of Scheduled Tribes.

However, in the election manifesto of 2004, we can see a shift in this strategy. In the Manifesto of 2004, the party did not talk about including Rai, Manger, Sunwar, Gurung and Bhujel in the OBC list and then include Limboo and Tamang in the ST list. We find this because it has promised to include Rai, Manger, Sunwar, Gurung, Bhujel, Thami and Jogi in the list of Scheduled Tribes.²⁹

The demand for inclusion of Bhutia and Lepcha languages in the eighth schedule of the constitution is found in the two election manifestoes of 1994 and 1998. But the same promise was not laid down in the election Manifesto of 2004. This is so because, Bhutia and Lepcha languages, like Nepali is not a language spoken by the majority of the people in Sikkim and outside Sikkim. There are some difficulties in its implementation. Thus, in the later phase of its rule the party came up with new promises.

Nepalese and Tsong had their seats reserved in Sikkim Legislative Assembly till 1979. It was removed through Governor's Ordinance in 1979.³⁰ SDF, thus, feels that the Nepalese and Tsong seats should be retained in the State Legislative Assembly. The party therefore, strives to retain the reservation of seats for these

²⁹ These groups/communities had already been included in the OBC list.

³⁰ The removal of these seats was not passed through the procedure in the Legislative Assembly as the government was dissolved.

communities and promised for the same reservation in the election manifesto of 1994 and 1999 General Assembly Election.

The party does not promise the reservation of seats for Nepalese and Tsong in the General Assembly election of 2004. This is so because the Tsong which belongs to Limboo community are included in the list of Scheduled Tribe in 2003. The party further promised to increase the reservation of ST seats for the inclusion of Limboo and Tamang in the Assembly. For the increase of representation in the parliament, the party once again promised to make the proposal in the union parliament in the party election manifesto to Lok Sabha election in the state of 1998 and 2004. The party in the beginning was busy and focused in restoring democracy and safeguarding the rights of the Sikkimese people.

Politically, looking we find similarities rather than differences. Similarities can be seen in the promise for the protection of old laws, Article 371(f), Revenue Order No. 1 (SDF, 1994; SDF, 1999 & SDF 2004), inclusion of Sikkim in the North East Council (SDF, 1999; SDF, 2004), Sons of Soil Policy (SDF, 1994 & SDF, 1999). The election manifesto of 1994 solely promised to restore democracy in the state, grant, social economic and political justice to the people. A shift can be seen in the political promises in 2004. It included that the party strives to include Chettri, Bahun, Newar, Sanyasi in the list of Other Backward Classes.

SOCIAL: Social welfare was the area where the party tried to give much emphasis. The party aim's to uplift the society and alleviate poverty and make the Sikkimese people self-reliant. It has promised to make Sikkim a poverty free state by 2015. Hence, almost in every election, the party had laid down different social welfare strategies. In the election manifestoes of the party to the

Assembly Election of 1994, 1999 and 2004 in the state, the party lays down different social welfare strategies like empowerment of women and upliftment of women in social, economic and political fields by giving 30% reservation of seats in government jobs, 33% seat reservation in the Panchayat elections and establishment of State Women Commission. This shows that the party wants more participation of women in all the fields of work.

In the assembly election manifesto's of 1994, 1999 and 2004, the party declared to set aside 70% of the budget for rural development. The party realizes the fact that Sikkim is a backward state as compared to other states of the Indian union; therefore, for the development of Sikkim it is necessary to develop rural areas. This is because more than 80% of the people in Sikkim live in the rural areas and it is important to grant benefits and facilities to the rural people to keep the base intact in the rural areas of the state since it gets majority support from the rural areas.

In the year 1994 and 1999, the party strived for social upliftment by reserving 50% seats in jobs for all Sikkimese, 23% for the STs, 6% for the SCs and 21% for OBCs. It increased the age limit from 30-35 so that maximum youths can get employment. In the election manifesto of 1999, the party laid down that to help the poor families during births and deaths in the family, the party promised to give Rs 500 to the family. It also pledged to preserve old traditions, culture, language and history of the three ethnic communities; Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali in Sikkim. It also resolved to preserve the scripts and history of other communities like Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Manger, Newar and declare the languages of these communities as state languages. The same promises were absent in the next assembly election i.e. in 2004. The party has been able to form the governments with absolute majorities in the past ten years. The government under

the SDF succeeded in fulfilling its promises and aspirations of the people which we will see in the next chapters.

Health was also given priority by the party. For better health facilities the party repeatedly promised to establish hospitals in all the four district of the state. In 2004, the party came up with new health strategies. It lay down that by 2015, Sikkim will be a disease free state. For this, medical facilities like, hepatitis 'B' vaccination would be provided free of cost to all the children below 10 years. The hospitals will not only undergo treatment of diseases but will also diagnose the disease so that the poor people will not have to go outside the state for treatment. The hospitals will be provided with machinery infrastructures. All the villages shall have one health center with doctors, medicines and ambulances. The new strategies also include medical insurance for all the people in the state and decreasing the death rate of the Child from 38-30 per year.

In the earlier elections the party pledged to improve the living standard of the people by giving them social, economic and political justice and benefits. But in the election manifesto of 2004, a new type of promise was made that by 2015 all Sikkimese shall be lakhpati and by 2025 a Crorepati. It was a continuation of the promise that all the poor people will be self sufficient and self reliant which was promised earlier in 1994 and in 1999.

ECONOMY

Right from the beginning, the party strived to make Sikkim and the Sikkimese people economically self-reliant. Re-orientation of the economy was its main concern. It wanted to alleviate poverty right from its roots. Therefore in all the election manifestoes, the party pledged to make Sikkim economically a developed state. We find similar pledges in the 1994, 1999 & 2004 election

manifestoes. The party promised to solve the problems of labourer's, low wage earning employees, regularize those working on Muster roll and increase the daily wage up to Rs 100. It further promised to reopen the closed industries to give employment to the people, scrap sick industries, demand funds from the central government, establish agriculture based industries, provide high yielding variety seeds to farmers, promise modern technologies, apparatus and scientific knowledge to the farmers.

In the year 1999, SDF came up with a promise of expanding the NH 31A for better connectivity and communication as it is the only national highway that connects Sikkim with the rest of the country. Each farmer was promised Rs 2000/- to maintain dung pit for natural manure dung. It promised to demand for central aid for the establishment of new industries, training for farmers, cultivation of ginger, cardamom, maize, tea leaves, herbal plants, fruits etc. Cultivation of ginger, cardamom, maize etc are given importance by the party because the climatic condition of Sikkim is suitable for the cultivation of these cash crops which can increase the income of the state by its production. A public library in each gram panchayat will be opened to enable the farmers to gather information regarding technical cultivation and farming, tea gardens in all four districts of Sikkim and provide the people with information in this regard and provide mini-infrastructure needed for tea cultivation.

EDUCATION

In the overall development of the society, education plays a vital role. The party lays great emphasis on the education of the Sikkimese people. Knowing the fact that Sikkim lacks a School Board and a University of its own, it pledged to maintain and open its own school Board and a University in the election manifestoes

of 1994, 1999 and 2004. This is so because the party is giving its level best in fulfilling the promise each year. Free text books, exercise books, uniforms, mid-day meals, scholarships for the students opting higher studies outside the state, reservation of quota etc. are the common promises of the party.

However, a major shift can be seen in its promises in the election manifesto of 2004. The shift is not only in the educational line but in several other fields as well. In 2004 the party came up with a new vision - 'A New Vision of New Sikkim'.³¹ Within a span of ten (10) years the Sikkim Democratic Party promised to strive in making Sikkim:

- ❖ A poverty free state by 2015
- ❖ Fully literate state by 2015
- ❖ Pollution free state by 2015
- ❖ Corruption free state by 2015
- ❖ Fully organic state by 2015
- ❖ To make Sikkim a tourist centre In South-East Asia
- ❖ To make Sikkim a culture based modern state
- ❖ To make it an unemployment free state
- ❖ To make it a producing state
- ❖ To make it a peaceful and protective state
- ❖ To raise the state revenue up to Rs 100 Crore
- ❖ To reduce Child death rate to 20%.
- ❖ To increase the per capita income up to 1 lakh.
- ❖ To see that all children between 5-10 years go to school.
- ❖ To reduce BPL percentage to 0%.
- ❖ To allocate 80% of the state budget for rural development.

³¹ The new vision of new Sikkim strives to make Sikkim, New and Happy Sikkim by 2015.

- ❖ To make Sikkim the eco-tourism capital of India by 2015.
- ❖ To provide sustainable livelihood to each household by 2015.
- ❖ To make it a major trade centre of Eastern India by 2015.

(Source: Election Manifesto-General Assembly and Lok Sabha Election, 2004, p.6).

The adoption of forest, environment and wildlife policy by the state government in 1999 marks a shift in government's policy focusing on the development process.³² The party strives to promote tourism in the state; every village shall have one tourist spot because only 15% of land in Sikkim is agricultural land.

We see a major shift in the year 2004 because the Sikkim Democratic Front government realized that the conventional thought, process and concept of development would not be enough to solve the new problems and challenges of the contemporary world. In this regard, the government (SDF) initiated new idea to identify the problems and search their possible solutions. M.P. Lama of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, was entrusted with the work of preparing the Sikkim Human Development Report and Ashok Lahiri the then Director of National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi was asked to prepare Sikkim People's vision (Government of Sikkim, Thirty years of Statehood, Department of Information and Public Relations, 2005).

³² Sikkim perhaps is the first state to adopt such a policy relating to forest environment and wild life.

SECTION II

ELECTORAL POPULISM

In the first section of the chapter we dealt with the promises of the Sikkim Democratic Front that helped it to win consecutive elections in the state. The second section deals with the question of electoral populism of the SDF, which to us had been a part of the party's strategy. We look at how far the SDF had used populism in order to come to power and maintain power. We focus mainly on the electoral populism of the party. While we do that we will focus on the promises of the party during elections and elsewhere already analysed in the previous section. Before we come to the electoral populism of the SDF in Sikkim, it is important and necessary to arrive at the meaning of Populism and the conditions under which a populist party arise and succeed.

Populism is best defined as a political strategy. Political strategies are characterized by the power capability that types of rulers use to sustain themselves politically. Under populism a leader is an individual, a personalistic leader and not a group organization. Populism rests on the power capability of numbers and not special weight. Populism emerges when personalistic leaders are there to rule on massive yet mostly uninstitutionalised support from large number of people.³³ According to some populist cycles typically occur during periods of political and economic transition that shift or loosen the social moorings of the party systems. Populist leadership thrives when working and lower class groups are detached from existing parties and available for electoral mobilization by political new comers. This detachment

³³ Populism remains a widely used but heavily contested concept in the field of comparative politics.

may be attributed to the emergence of new groups who have never been politically incorporated or bond between voters and established parties (Roberts, 2006, p.127).

The first such transition occurred with the demise of the oligarchic era and the rise of mass politics during the early stages of industrialization. The growth of urban working and middle classes forced traditional oligarchic parties to share the political stage with new mass-based competitors, as populist figures employed charismatic appeals to wield together multi-class conditions for reform.

The concept of populism is used in helping us understand how new identities are constituted. Ionescu and Gellner (1970) define populism as "any movement and political formation that is characterized by an ideological referent to the 'people'; as a homogeneous entity with exclusive positive and permanent values." More broadly, populism refers to social and political movements which seek to go beyond traditional ideological definitions by identifying with the essence of the people. Populism presents self as a transversal political philosophy defying traditional ideological dichotomies such as working class, bourgeoisie and left/right (Woods, 1995).

A diverse literature by (Dwayne Woods, 1995, p.187) on social movements has attempted to explain the sudden rise of new political and social forces. This literature has sought to explain the emergence of politically engaged groups such as anti-war, feminist, environmentalists and peace activists whose ideological focus and demands separated them from traditional social movements, which tend to concentrate on issues of economic distribution and redistribution.

Under populism an individual leader seeks to exercise government power based on support from large number of followers. Thus, elections, demonstrations and mostly recent opinion polls are the crucial instruments with which populist leaders mobilize and demonstrate their individual power capability. The popular leader gets support from largely organized masses to win office. Populist chief executives constantly invoke their broad mass support to boost their own influence and overpower their opponents.

In Latin America the scholars defined populism as a concept that encompassed several attributes from different domains. There was a close connection between populist politics and its social roots, socio-economic background conditions etc. In Latin America, authors like Vicente Palermo (1998) has observed that a charismatic individual wins and exercises power by maintaining direct, unmediated contact to a largely unorganized mass of followers. Many authors refers populism historically in certain developmental stages, such as the transition from tradition to modern society, the rise of mass society after the fall of oligarchic rule (Weyland, 2001).³⁴ Under populism the ruler is an individual, the connection between leader and followers is based mostly on direct quasi-personal contact, not on organizational intermediation (Weyland, 2001.p.1).

In populism mass support comes through formal institutional structures. The ruler should have an organized party. The follower's loyalty can vanish quickly if the leaders fail to fulfill popular expectations. Such a decline in popularity threatens the foundation of populist rule and can trigger its collapse. The

³⁴ A political definition of populism is seen as a specific way of competing for and exercising political power. In populism mass support can have different levels of organization and institutionalization.

populist leaders for the mass support seek to create a particularly intense connection with their followers. The leaders represent and lead the people, rescue them from adversity and lead them to progress. Therefore, populist leaders constantly demonstrate their closeness to common people and stimulate popular identification with their leadership. They seek frequent face to face contacts with the masses, often through television, act in ways that embody and line out dreams of the common man, promise to include the line neglected populace in the mainstream of development and protect it from sinister forces. The relationship between the people and the leader remains as long as the party shows personal concern for the followers and a supernatural capacity for problem solving. Political success thus transforms populism into a different type of rule that rests on non-populist strategies (Weyland, 2001.p.11). Populist leadership rests on mass support of a collective, public character or consists of a dispersed set of private individuals. Populist leaders appeal to the people (Roberts, 2006).

In April 1992 National election in Italy, the ground shook and long standing political formation moved. Out of this political earthquake a new political formation arouses. The Lombard League, the main component of the Northern League won 8.6 percent of the popular vote making it the second largest party in Lombardy. In local elections of June 1993 in northern cities like Milan and Turin the Lombard League received more than 35% of the vote; making it the largest political force in these cities. Traditional political parties such as the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) disappeared from the political map altogether, even in Milan where the party had been the dominant political force for decades. In the social basis of the Lombard League, the League's initial basis of support is similar to the Piyhadust movement's in the 1950's; shopkeepers businessmen in small industry, artisans and

commercial agents. In cities as Milan, Bergamo it drew support from a cross-section of society (Woods, 1995).

In Western European countries like Germany, Sweden, Italy and Switzerland, populist parties like Radical Right Wing reject the establishment of socio-cultural and socio-political system. These parties do not emphasize on individual achievement, free market place and a drastic reduction of the role of the state. They mobilize the people and combine individual and economy with the socio-political agenda and appeal to the common people (Betz, 1993, p.43).

Studies of the social basis of support for various radical right-wing populist parties show that these parties attract voters across the social spectrum. However, in a number of cases political support is concentrated in particular social groups for example the Norwegian Progress Party. A brief survey of the social basis of the radical populist right shows that these parties, which have been most successful at the poll have forged an electoral alliance between segments of the working class and segments of the new middle class. The rise and success of radical right-wing populism in Western Europe is thus interpreted as the result of the increasing social and cultural fragmentation and differentiation of advanced western societies (Betz, 1993, pp.421-422).

Thaksin's Populism in Thailand can be cited as the most developed populism in contemporary Asia. Thaksin Shinowatra achieved massive personal popularity in general election of 2005 and 2006. No previous Thai elected political leader has achieved such popularity. This support was stronger in rural areas of the north, north-east and cultural regions and among rural migrants to the capital. During Thaksin's time in office the term populism was applied to Thai politics for the first time and rendered into Thai for

the first time to describe this novel cultivation of popular support and the mechanisms that lay behind it. In Thaksin's populism there was the projection of a relationship between political leaders and context. His populism was not mere opportunism but the response to social demand. He later broadened his political mission to include reforms that would modernize Thailand especially the bureaucracy and the political system. The slogan chosen for his party "The New, act New for every Thai"- reflected the image he projected as a Modernist and reformer. In the statement of his political ideas at this there is no social agenda except for one brief general commitment- "To bring happiness to the majority of the country." The single minded focus is on "enabling Thailand to keep up and be competitive with other countries" (Walaya, 1999, p.211).

Thaksin's speeches of this era do not make use of the term "the people" and do not imagine any social change other than the triumph of business over bureaucracy. For the 2001 elections, the initial party platform focused on measures to help small and medium business and the centre piece of the media campaign was a dramatization of Thaksin's own life in which he was cast as a poor boy who made good as a rich businessman. In December, 2000, he was leveled with corruption charges by the National Counter Corruption Commission. He was banned for participating in politics for five years.

For becoming a populist leader he first, manufactured a public presence significantly greater than that attempted by any previous Thai Prime Minister, primarily by using state-owned media which was under his control. He launched weekly radio show in which he talked to the nation for an hour about his activities and his thought on issues of the day. He dominated the daily television news and

also appeared in several special programmes. Secondly, his government implemented the three-point electoral program with extraordinary speed. For the health scheme, a workshop was held in February, a pilot scheme launched in April and the agrarian debt relief scheme was made available to 2.3 million debtors by the same month, while by September the scheme of villages funds was extended to most of the country's 75,000 villages and 5.3 million loans approved. He announced a new and leading feature of his political mission: "Nothing will stand in my way. I am determined to devote myself on politics in order to lead the Thai people out of poverty" (The Nation, 23 December, 2000).

He launched a series of tours covering every region of the country. He listened to reports on local problems and petitions for budget assistance. In many cases, he then gave instant approval for projects. Prior to election in February 2005, Thaksin made further tours mainly in rural areas of the North and North-East. Thaksin announced a much more elaborate programme of election promises than in 2001, including an extension of the village funds, land deeds for every landholder, a government pond dug for anyone prepared to pay a small fuel cost, four new cheap loan schemes, free distribution of cows, training schemes for the poor, cheaper school fees, special payments for children forced to drop out of school because of poverty, an educational gift bag for every new mother, care centers for the elderly, more sports facilities in urban areas, cheaper phone calls and an end to eviction from slums, more cheap housing, lower taxes, more investment in the universal health scheme, a nationwide scheme of irrigation and a deadline for the end of poverty- "Four years ahead, there will be no poor people" (The Nation, 18, 19, Oct. 2004; Bangkok Post 7 Nov 2004).

After the election of 2005, he toured less but made increasing use of a practice begun in 2001 of holding occasional "mobile cabinet meeting" in an upcountry location. These events created occasion for local people and officials to present petition to Thaksin. Thaksin's Government had launched three major schemes of social provision and promised many more. The distinctive characteristic of most of these schemes was that they were available to all. Previous governments had promised cheap or free health care for the poor by distributing cards. Villages benefited from Thaksin's populist programs. They felt empowered because they were responsible for putting him in power. Thaksin's populism was a response to the social demand with roots in the social structure molded by Thailand's strategy of outward-oriented economic development.

Leaders with many similarities to Thaksin have appeared in many other countries in recent years. In Turkey in 2004, for example a new Prime Minister, whose party's base of support comprised of small-scale producers and the informal sector, launched a party of populist schemes and stood aggressively against the country's political tradition going back to Ataturk in the 1920's. But Thaksin's populism is unique but follows in broad outline a pattern that was dominant in Latin America. The content of his populism began with a simple raft of redistribution policies which responded to the needs and aspirations of the informal mass that constituted around two-thirds of the work force and the electorate.

CAUSES FOR THE RISE OF POPULISM

Now let us come to the question under what condition does populism arise in modern democracies? There are crucial permissive causes, the weak intermediary organizations especially

not established parties, where parties are highly institutionalized, they control recruitment and prevent outsiders from rising. Strong parties make their cadres climb a long ladder of positions before they reach national office. Newcomers can attract popular support without joining established organizations by appealing to voter's who lack loyalties to existing parties. The very weakness of parties leads to constant conflict within the party. Their frequent party switching makes they face the problem of building a stable populist party. Thus, party weakness allows populist outsiders to emerge. The only way populists can rise in countries with strong parties is by capturing an established populist organization. Since in populist parties, such as Argentina's Peronists Organizational Commitment is always mitigated by loyalty to personal leaders, populist aspirants find sufficient space inside these organizations and can use them to their personal will after reaching top position (Weyland, 1999).

Populist leaders emerge under only two conditions: if parties are not stable and established or if populist aspirants can take over an existing populist party. By contrast, where parties are strong, populist politicians remain marginal, thus party weakness or the presence of a populist party is a necessity. After taking office, populist leaders have a distinct relationship to parties. Besides weakening opposition parties they often refuse to join and strengthen the organization that helped them win power and support their government. The main reason is populist's desire to retain wide personal latitude.

Neo-liberal populists have indeed kept parties at bay, or if they emerged through an old populist party, subordinated them to

personal will and weakened their institutional strength.³⁵ In the eyes of neoliberal experts, lobbying organizations allow vested interests to hinder economic restructuring. Therefore, populist and neo-liberals coincide in keeping many sectors of business, labour and professionals at bay. These however reflect the market reforms. Populist leaders thus seek and find stronger mass support among unorganized sectors, such as Latin American white collar employees, shopkeepers and entrepreneur. These segments which lack institutionalized participation in national politics see personal leaders as their main channels of access to government. Populist leaders who did not rise through old populist organizations, unorganized sectors are more likely to support contemporary populists.³⁶

ELECTORAL POPULISM IN SIKKIM

This part of the chapter deals with the electoral populism in Sikkim, especially the electoral populism of the SDF. Before studying the electoral populism of SDF it is also necessary to see whether Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) under Nar Bahadur Bhandari used populism to mobilize the people and also it is necessary to see that on what conditions SDF emerged as a Populist Party?

Nar Bahadur Bhandari ruled Sikkim from 1979 to 1994. When the party was in power it followed certain policies through which it could get the support of the people. It promised to protect the rights and interest of the Sikkimese, maintain communal harmony,

³⁵ Populist leaders resent the efforts of intermediary organizations to restrict their personal latitude through ceaseless demands and forceful pressure.

³⁶ In Argentina, Peru and Venezuela leaders' mass following came from poorer segments, especially the urban informal sector and the rural poor. Populist leaders mobilize these unorganized sectors and integrate them into politics (Weyland, 1999, p.386).

maintain national integrity and safeguard freedom and democracy in the state. The party (SSP) promised to uplift the standard of living of the people by implementing poverty alleviation programmes, improvement in Agriculture, education, Health care, Social Welfare schemes, Safe drinking water, rural electrification, and rural housing schemes (Sikkim Herald, 21, Jan 1984, vol-27, No-2)

To improve the educational system in the state it promised free education, upgrade existing schools and colleges, promised mid-day meals to the children up to class V and promised free education up to class XII, and free text books. In the health sector it promised to increase the number of hospitals, sub-centers, free medical aid and social welfare schemes like establishment of Old Age Homes for the Disabled and the Destitute institutions in the state (Sikkim Herald, Jan, 19th 1985, Vol-29, No.5). To make the lives of the common people more easy the party promised the construction of roads and bridges as to improve means of communication, build canals for irrigation. It promised the establishment of Veterinary and Animal husbandry centers, Panchayat Ghars, Public libraries, Multi-purpose cooperative societies and grant loans to the educated unemployed youths and farmers.

To generate employment avenues, the party promised the development of industries, small-scale industries, handlooms and handicrafts and other small industrial units. It also promised to give financial assistance to the needy people like artisans, entrepreneurs and businessmen as well as unemployed youths through Sikkim Industrial Development and Investment Cooperation, Financial and Sikkim Khadi and Village Industrial Road (Sikkim Herald, 5th July 1989, Vol.27, No.23). It promised

Pre-matric and post-matric scholarships to Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste candidates, grant housing loans at a highly subsidized rate, provide home for homeless and impart training for capacity building and skill development (Sikkim Express, Jan 26th 1984).

The party (SSP) could mobilise the masses easily with such promises and policies as in Sikkim there existed no other group or political parties which could stand as a strong opposition to the SSP. Moreover, the political activities was dominated and controlled by only one political party, i.e. the SSP. The party was at an advantage and could win the Legislative Assembly election in 1985 with 55.04% of votes. Out of the 32 seats the party won 30 seats and also won the lone Lok Sabha seat. In the General Assembly election of 1989, the party (SSP) won the 32 seats in the Legislative Assembly.

However the promises and policies laid down by the party in the party manifesto was a repeated one like, the reservation of seats for the Sikkimese Nepalese, Son of the Soil policy, Constitutional recognition of the Nepali language etc, except the promise of granting Citizenship. The change in the attitude of Nar Bahadur Bhandari in his later phase of his rule in Sikkim made him unpopular amongst the people of Sikkim. His misgovernment, corruption charges against him and the formation of opposition groups in Sikkim led to his downfall and brought an end to his autocratic rule in Sikkim.

The Bhandari government failed to keep his pledges. It promised to establish real democracy in Sikkim and undertake all round development of the state. Development was brought by his government in the state but not to the extent that it satisfied the aspirations of the people. It promised to bring real democracy in

the state but in the later phase of its rule, the opposition parties like Indian National Congress charged the government with anti-democratic and anti-people activities in the state. The party also had pledged to remove corruption in the state but the Chief Minister himself was charged with corruption cases. The Bhandari government failed to live up to the expectation of the people. All this made Nar Bahadur Bhandari and his party unpopular among the people.

Pawan Chamling, a minister in the earlier government under SSP was expelled from the ministry as well as the party. He opposed the government/party in power in the Legislative Assembly for its misgovernment and anti-people political activities in the state. In the General Assembly election, 1994, SDF secured 19 seats out of a total 32 seats and formed government bringing to an end to a long established SSP rule in Sikkim. Chamling's success in this was because of his capability to convince and mobilize the rural masses, the unorganized sections of the society.

Like in Latin America, it is also noted in Sikkim that the leaders are charismatic individuals and exercise powers by maintaining direct contact with the large unorganized mass of followers. There is a connection between the leaders and followers. The leader for this mass support creates intense connection with the followers and be a guide and lead the people in progress. There is a connection with the followers and be a guide and lead the people in progress. There is face to face contact with the masses through different ways. In Sikkim the people can meet the Chief Minister personally and put their grievances directly. For this the Chief Minister has fixed a day in a week only to meet the public.

Like other populist leaders, Chamling also promised for the development of some sections of the people and give their rights. Chamlong promised that Limboo and Tamang were to be included in the Scheduled Tribe's list and Rai, Gurung, Manger, Bhujel, Sunwar in the OBC list which was neglected and denied by the earlier governments. Chamling promised to secure and grant the rights of these communities by including them in the Scheduled Tribe and OBC lists.

Chamling claims the party to be a pro-people party which stands for social upliftment of the poor people in the state. For the development and preservation of the identities of the ethnic groups like Lepcha, Bhutia, he promised to safeguard and develop the languages of these ethnic groups by making a proposal to include it in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution. Chamling granted land to build house to the landless Sikkimese people. The focus was also on women empowerment, environment and peace activities. In this context, Chamling received an award and was declared as the Greenest Chief Minister by the Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi on 24th September 1999. Chamling gives importance to Women's Empowerment in the state. There is a separate Women's Wing in his party who are active supporters and party activists. Certain reservations are made in different fields for women.

In western countries, the populist leaders support base is mainly shopkeepers, businessmen in small industry, artisans and commercial agents. In Sikkim, Chamling's support base is mainly the agricultural rural masses. These unorganized groups are mobilised and integrated into politics.

The most important comparison of Chamling's populism can be made with Thaksin's populism in Thailand. Like Thaksin, Chamling

achieved massive personal popularity in the General Assembly Election in 2004. Out of 32 seats he secured 32 seats. His support was largest in the rural areas. The slogan chosen for his party was "Janta Ko Raj Ma Jantai Raja" (in popular regime, people are sovereign). This reflects his view of giving people power. Initially the party (SDF) focused on safeguarding democracy and guarantee the political, social and economic justice to the people. Chamling promised complete safeguard of Sikkimese rules, traditions and rule of law. Re-orientation of economy of the state was also one of his initial focus. Chamling announced to set aside 70% of annual budget for economic development in the 1999 assembly election.

Chamling made a commitment to make Sikkim a "New Sikkim and Happy Sikkim" by making it a self-sufficient and self-reliant state. Chamling travelled to all the four districts meeting people and listening to their grievances and understanding their problems. He toured more and held public meetings during the election period and became a more popular figure amongst the masses.

At the State Level Panchayat Meet which was held on June 1995, he announced to exempt Sikkim from income tax and make Sikkim income tax Free State, which the earlier government had failed to do. Prior to the Panchayat election of September 1997, Chamling declared a grant of Rs 1,600 Crore for development of Panchayats. He stressed that every village would get a school, electricity and "roti, kapda aur makaan" for every citizen. He promised job opportunities for 2000 people and 1000 contractors at Teesta Hydrel Project in Sikkim.

The party in its election manifesto of 1999 promised old age pension of Rs 200 per month for the old people above the age of 65 years and promised to increase the pension up to Rs 400 per month. He also promised to give financial assistance for medical

treatment to the handicapped and orphans. In the same year Chamling announced to give free tuition fee in all government schools, distribute free text books and exercise books. All students up to class V were to be provided free uniforms and mid-day meals. On the occasion of 48th Independence day, 15, August, 1995, at Gangtok, Chamling announced to issue ration card to all the people and give 10 rupees per kg rice at Rs 5 per kg to all the ration card holders. Chamling announced new schemes of providing houses to 15,000 people in a phased manner over next five years, providing 2-point electric connection free of cost to 30,000 houses over the next five years and increase the number of beneficiaries under the Old Age Pension scheme in order to lower the scale of poverty in the state. He announced that he will introduce maternity allowance at the rate of Rs 300 for the people. He introduced a scheme of providing Rs 5,000 to the poor families to enable them to perform the social and religious rites for the dead. He further announced to develop the core-sectors of economy by increasing agricultural production and increase industrial growth.

At a public meeting at Gangtok in January 1999, Chamling announced to grant Rs 20,000 to each poor family in the state. On the eve of Labour Day on May 1st, 1999, he made commitments to uplift the proletariat section of society for the revolutionary change. Chamling announced the establishment of a model village in all constituencies of Sikkim to improve the living condition of the rural poor. Thus in many respects SDF resemble the form of electoral populism of Thaksin's TRT party in Thailand. Like TRT, SDF held an annual Conference, Janta Mela and occasional regional meetings.

SDF came up with a new vision in 2004 Assembly Election of "New Vision of New Sikkim. In the Election Manifesto of 2004, General Assembly election, the party strived to make Sikkim new and happy Sikkim. Within a span of ten years, the party promised to make Sikkim a poverty Free State, fully literate, corruption Free State, fully organic state, unemployment free state, a producing state and a peaceful state in the country. It also promised to raise the state revenue up to Rs 100 Crore and increase the per capita income up to one lakh. It also pledged to reduce Below Poverty Line percent to 0% and use 80% of the state budget for the rural development. The party promised to make Sikkim the eco-tourism capital of India and major trade center of Eastern India by the year 2015.

Chamling had proved to be a populist leader. Prior to his coming to politics he was engaged in social activities and his works revealed his concern and interest in the rural society. The content of his populism began with his initial policies of restoring democracy and re-orientation of economy, which responded to the needs and aspirations of the unorganized masses mainly the rural agricultural masses which constitutes 75% of the total population of Sikkim. The people supported Chamling because he gave them the feeling of empowerment. Chamling appealed to the people by setting himself as an enemy of the "old politics" represented by the SSP. Chamling's populism like Thaksin's Thailand is not just a platform policy but matches the three points of Robert's definition namely mass mobilization, personalized leadership and a challenge to established life.

Chapter III

ECONOMIC POLICIES OF THE SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT (SDF) GOVERNMENT 1994-2004

The Chapter analyses the economic policies of the SDF government after it came to power in 1994 till the year 2004. We look at the performance of the government since policies pursued by the SDF government helped the party in order to construct a base more particularly a rural and OBC base and this had helped the party in a further increase in its support since its formation. The economic policies, which the party pursued was because in its initial stage, the party gave much emphasis on the economic development of the state, since development in the economic sector brings over all development in the state. We analyse these policies of the SDF led government in the major sectors of the state; the Agricultural sector, the Industrial Sector, and the Service Sector.

The Agricultural Sector

In Sikkim more than 65% of the population is engaged in agriculture and therefore, agriculture is the backbone of the state's economy. The party thus gave more importance to the development of agriculture. For this the party promised to grant land in the beginning in 1994, particularly waste land to the landless Sikkimese to raise their standard of living. The SDF promised to open Cooperative banks for granting agricultural loans to the farmers and support the rural people in the increase of production and productivity of vegetables, fruits, flowers and other cash crops in the state.

In 1994, in its election manifesto the party promised, to give agriculture the status of industry. It also ensured that the villages would produce market and distribute all kinds of agricultural products in a scientific and profitable manner. It promised that to increase productivity the progressive farmers will be given all necessary inputs.

In the year 1999, the government came up with new progressive programmes for the agricultural sector to provide better opportunities to the farmers. The Programme included the appointment of an advisor (gram sevak) to the farmers in every gram Panchayats. The government decided to provide the farmers with scientific technologies, variety of seeds, organic manure, training and tools for better productivity. The government in its new Progressive Programme's decided to organize an exhibition show based on agriculture to encourage and help the farmers. The Programme's also included tea cultivation in all four districts of Sikkim and mushroom cultivation was also highlighted. The government decided to help the farmers with dairy farming, rabbit farming, poultry farming, piggery and fishery.

To increase production of food grains and agriculture as a whole there has been a major shift in the policy of the government under the SDF. The inputs like, seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, implements, tools etc. are now being dealt with by SIMFED; Sikkim Marketing Federation since 1996. The production of quality seeds in government farms as well as in farmer's fields is being encouraged. Agriculture has been developed through appropriate practices of soil and water conservation.³⁷

Within a period of three years of coming to power, the Sikkim Democratic Front helped the people through various schemes to make them self-reliant. Scientific agriculture with improved seeds and seedlings were distributed. More than 400 quintals of ginger seeds were distributed to poor farmers. To encourage floriculture, horticulture, fruit, flower saplings were distributed free of cost. The government distributed milch cows and piglets to the poor agriculturalists to increase their purchasing power and make them self-reliant. It distributed fertilizer subsidy to all the farmers in Sikkim. The government also took up various measures to increase forest cover in the state and for this the year 1995 was declared as 'Green Revolution Year". Various measures

³⁷ The production of quality seeds on a large scale was emphasized by the SDF government in the discussion held during the visit of Parliamentary study group on seeds in the month of August, 1996.

were taken to increase forest cover in the state. The year 1995 was declared as "Green Revolution Year". The achievements made in the food-grains production side during three years of its tenure was 1,05,000 tones in 1994-1995, which increased to 1,08,000 tones in 1995-1996, and then to 1,07,000 tones in 1996-1997 (Govt. of Sikkim, Department of Information and Public Relations, 1997, p.25).

After coming to power in 1994, the party made efforts for maximum utilization of the rabi fallow for double and multiple cropping in order to raise the foodgrains production in the state. In manures and fertilizers, the emphasis is given on the production of balanced use of fertilizer nutrients. The high yielding varieties of seeds has replaced the local varieties for improvement in production. The management of pest problems in crop has been playing an important role. The achievement in terms of area covered and the consumption of technical grade materials are 50,000 hectare and 20 tones in 1994-1995, 30,000 hectare and 30 tones 1995-1996 and 30,000 hectare and 32 tons in 1996-1997. Besides a total of 330 plant protection equipments were distributed from 1995-1997 (Govt. of Sikkim, Department of Information and Public Relations, 1997, p.27).

From 1994-1997, the Sikkim Democratic Front organized regular Training Programmes under the FIC-Farmer Training Centre and training workshops were organized in which 6000 farmers were trained in 1994-1995, 5000 farmers in 1995-1996 and 8000 farmers in 1996-1997 (Department of Information and Public Relations, Govt. of Sikkim, 1997, p.27).³⁸

According to the survey conducted by the Department of Agriculture many improvements and developments were noticed in the agricultural sector. The production of oil seeds has been enhanced with the oil seed production programme was organised and following this programme the oil seeds production increased to 1050 quintals in 1994-1995, 989 tons

³⁸ In the first three years of SDF rule (1994-1997), the Agriculture Education and Research scheme where varietal screening and the fertilizers response trials were undertaken.

in 1995-1996 and 1000 tons in 1996-1997. The programme also included a new bio-laboratory-Integrated Plant Protection Laboratory which is in operation since 1994-95. ICDP-the Integrated Coarse Cereal Development Programme- a new programme was taken up in the eighth plan where large number of mini-kit trials was conducted in the farmer's field to make it possible for the farmers to exercise their choice in the crop varieties.

A new board- Agriculture Department and Farmers' Welfare Board was established in 1995 with a Chairman and seven Directors. This board as an advisory body concentrates on guiding the agriculture department to accelerate the newly oriented programme for the farmers to improve their living. With these improvements made in the state it is clear that to some extent the Sikkim Democratic Front made an effort towards the development of economy of the state, particularly agriculture within a span of three years of its coming to power.

An analysis of the developments in the agricultural sector shows that the SDF led government made certain changes in the 1990's than the SSP led government in the 1980's. We can see rapid growth in food grains production. During the tenure of the earlier government infrastructure in agriculture was increased by establishing soil testing laboratory, VLW-village level worker, circles were increased and more land was purchased for research study and land development.³⁹ We cannot deny the fact that the earlier government also made developments in this sector. However, the government under the Sikkim Democratic Front gave more impulsive attention towards development of agriculture. In the mid 1990's, the Department of Horticulture was created realizing the potential of horticultural crops in Sikkim. And since 2003-2004 Sikkim has also been laying importance on organic farming. For this, the Department of Agriculture declared to convert two government farms as organic farms- Nazitam (East district) and Melli

³⁹ VLW- Village Level Workers are trained in State Institute of Rural Development, Karfector, by providing 2 years Diploma Course. VLW centres have been established in 163 Gram Panchayats of the state.

Dara (South district). The department also selected 100 villages by using E.M compost package.

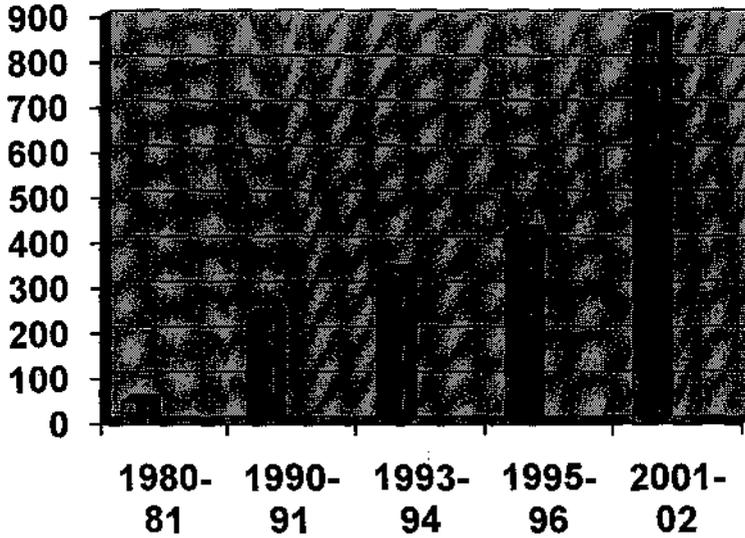
Economic growth under the SDF government has been rapid. After 1995-96 the Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) and per capita income have recorded a very steady growth. The NSDP at current prices increased from Rs 426 Crore in 1995-96 to Rs 891 Crore in 2001-2002. The per capita income also increased from Rs 8905 to Rs 16143 during 1995-1996. This shows a high growth rate of 18.19 percent and 13.53 percent per annum respectively (Govt. of India, Economic Survey, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi, 2002-2003, p. 12). For economic growth the government under the SDF has developed the state's rich potentials in agro-based industry like horticulture, medicinal plants, food processing, tea, animal husbandry, handloom and textiles, forest resources, eco-tourism, information technology and education. By providing all the above incentives, the government is trying to give agriculture the status of an industry.

After 1995-1996 both the Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) and per capita income have increased. The NSDP increased from Rs 426 Crores in 1995-1996 to Rs 891 Crores in 2001-2002. The following chart shows the increase in NSDP and Per Capita Income.

Chart:1

Net State Domestic Production

(At current prices in Rs Crore)



Source: Government of India, Economic Survey 2003-2004, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi

The Department of Agriculture and Horticulture have adopted measures to discourage the use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. Most of the crops in Sikkim grow in organic manure for commercial and non-commercial items like cardamom, orchids, sweet orange, cherry, pepper and buckwheat as unique pulses. With the initiative of the Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling, the President of SDF Sikkim has become the first state to opt for organic farming in the country. The Department of Agriculture and Horticulture under the SDF government adopted new agricultural schemes to improve the agricultural food production in the state. The total food production has increased from 58.56 thousand tons in 1980-1981 to 1.30 lakh tons in 2000-2001.

Table: 1

The following table shows the growth in food production from 1980-2001(in Tones)

CROPS	1980-1981	1990-1991	2000-2001
Maize	28,930	57,600	59,612
Rice	10,630	22,040	21,358
Wheat	10,300	13,080	10,104
Finger Millet	3,840	4,620	4,323
Barley	460	1,180	1,210
Buck Wheat	1,380	1,420	1,530
Pulses	3,020	5,430	5,165
Total	58,560	105,370	103,211

Source: Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Sikkim- Economy Survey & Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India, Department of Planning and Development 2003.

Table: 2

The following table shows the horticulture production in the year 1975-76 to 2001-2002.

HORTICULTURE PRODUCTION (1975-76 TO 2002-2002) in TONNES

CROPS	1975-76	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	2001-02
FRUITS	4800	6350	8200	10500	65300
VEGETABLES	2000	3400	13900	15000	26000
POTATO	5000	6646	16400	18000	23715
LARGE CARDAMOM	2300	3500	3900	2600	4200
GINGER	2000	3200	10900	16000	23000
TOTAL	16100	23296	53700	62790	86465

SOURCE: Department of Horticulture, Govt. of Sikkim, Annual Plan, 2003-04.

After the SDF assumed power in 1994, Sikkim has made progress in poultry production and mild (diary) production. Growth in the horticulture sector has increased.

During the period 1995-1999-2000, the state recorded an area coverage of 71,869 hectares and production of 97,228 tones with average yield of 1,353 kgs per hectare for cereals like rice, wheat, maize, finger millet, barley and buckwheat. 870 Kgs per hectare was recorded for the pulses like urd, rice, bean, rajmah, field pea, and cluster bean. And oil seeds like rapeseed, mustard, soyabean and sunflower had a area coverage of 9,786 hectares and production of 7,136 tones. The state achieved the highest over productivity level in rice with average yield per hectare of 1,473 kgs in 1999-2000 with the introduction of high yielding variety like Pant Dhan 10 (Govt. of Sikkim, Information and Public Relations, 1997). The productivity of Cereal crops has gone up from 1408.33 kg per hectare to 1508.66 kg per hectare even with the decrease in the area cereals.⁴⁰

The Sikkim Democratic Front government increased the number of watersheds in the state from 12 (4 in south district, 3 in west district, 2 in east district and 3 in north district) to 24 in 1997-1998 which included 8 in south district, 7 in west district and 6 in east district and 3 in north district (Govt. of Sikkim, Department of Information and Public Relations, 1997, p.6).

The government has started new centrally sponsored schemes like Macro-management in Agriculture and Women in Agriculture from 2000-2001 to provide support to agriculture development and to encourage women's participation in agricultural activities. For the growth of agriculture the areas like genetic engineering, bio-insecticides, integrated nutrient management, integrated pest management and agri-business management are being incorporated in the field of research of

⁴⁰ Total food production in the state has increased from 105.69 thousand tonnes in 1994-95 to 109.11 lakh tonnes in 2006-07. However, the area under cultivation has reduced from 78.85 thousand hectares to 74.67 thousand hectares.

agriculture (Department of Information and Public Relations, Government of Sikkim, 1997). The government allotted more budgetary grants for the improvement in the Agricultural sector.

The table below shows the revenue generated in the agricultural sector from 1999 to 2003.

Table: 3
REVENUE GENERATED (1999-2003)

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2003
Denzong Agri. Co-operative Society	678	1270	1891
Hide and Skin Livestock Checkpost	-	-	-
Others	737	232	149
Total	1415	1502	2040

Source: Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gangtok, Sikkim, 2004-05

Table: 4

Annual Credit Plan 2003-2004 AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED ACTIVITIES

Name of the bank	Target		Achievement		% Achievement	
	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.
State Bank of India	831	33727	520	7974	62.6	23.6
Central Bank of India	318	14949	67	1415	21.1	9.5
U.C.O Bank	65	1849	1	40	1.5	2.2
Canara Bank	7	386	0	0	0.0	0.0
Vijaya Bank	6	409	0	0	0.0	0.0
Bank of Baroda	6	424	0	0	0.0	0.0
Bank of India	6	507	5	125	83.3	24.7
Union Bank of India	84	2113	25	473	29.8	22.4

Punjab National Bank of India	25	981	20	263	80.0	26.8
S.I.S.C.O Bank Ltd.	0	11000	128	1598	0.0	14.5
U.T.I Bank Ltd.	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Total	1348	66345	766	11888	56.8%	17.9%

Source: Sikkim: A Statistical Profile, 2004-2005, p.46

The Industrial Sector

Industry is the key sector from where the economic growth in the state can be accelerated. The SDF claims that the economic condition in the state as a whole was in total distress when it came to power in December 1994. The SDF also claimed that the industrial activity in the state was given low priority by the earlier government. Thus, the new government under the SDF gave much emphasis on the development of Industries in the state.

During the 12th Lok Sabha election, 1998 the SDF in its election manifesto promised to reconstruct and revive the sick industries in the state and provide full impetus to the industries that are in good shape. To generate much needed employment opportunities to the youth, the government promised to approach the centre to finance the infrastructure for industries. The table below shows that the Plan allocation in the industrial sector has undergone major changes under the SDF led government.

Table: 5**Sikkim Plan Allocation: Industrial sector (1954-2007)**

Sectors	I Plan	II Plan	III Plan	IV Plan	V Plan	VI Plan	VII Plan	VI Plan II	IX Plan	X Plan
Industries	4.3	0.5	6.7	3.5	6.6	4.2	3.38	3.48	2.48	1.8
Total Plan (Rs crore)	3.24	6.637	9.71	20.36	40.10	147.8	216.67	770.36	1091.32	1655.74

SOURCE: M.P Lama, Sikkim Human Development Report 2001, Social, Science Press, New Delhi, 2001. Computed from Draft Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), Government of Sikkim, 2002.

Even after Sikkim's merger with the Indian Union industry in Sikkim was still in an immature stage. Before the SDF took over power in 1994 the industrial units were providing employment to only over 4,000 persons which was hardly about one percent of the state's population. Certain reasons are responsible for poor industrial performance and industrial sickness, like; default in loan repayment, lack of management of units and lack of technical tools and scientific methods. The units lacked management and technical tools and methods. Sikkim Khadi and Village Industries Board is running 13 cotton production-cum-training centers and 6 woolen centers and 7 sales centers providing employment opportunities to about 250 persons. But still 50% of the centers are sick. According to Sikkim Human Development Report, 2001, the main constraints are-lack of knowledge of the entrepreneur regarding manufacturing activities, lack of raw material, absence of proper manpower, poor marketing network, inflexible land laws and lack of enabling laws, under developed infrastructure facilities, shortage of credit and finance.

Therefore, considering these factors as constraints in its development, the SDF government implemented certain measures and policies towards the development of the industrial sector in Sikkim. At the eve of the Panchayat election scheduled for the 9th of October 2002,

the party president, Pawan Chamling promised- to help the villagers and young people to stay in the village instead of migrating to urban areas in search of better livelihood. He promised to provide better employment opportunities to the people by starting a village level agro-based industry.

The SDF government promised to reopen and maintain the sick and closed industries in Sikkim. This can be a source of employment to the unemployed people. At least one industry was to be established in every village. The government further promised the promotion of cultivation of tea in all the four districts of Sikkim, opening ginger and cardamom factory.⁴¹ It was promised that the government would open hydro projects in Sikkim and promote dairy farming and renew khadi and small scale industries which were closed during the earlier government under the Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SDF, Election Manifesto, 1994, p.12).

Following its promise towards industrial development a long term industrial policy was adopted by the government under the SDF rule. The development in this field was the revival of Government Food Preservation Factory (GFPPF).⁴² The government took over the management of units. Today, the products are famous and in high market demands including fruit juice, orange squash, pickles etc. with the brand name of "Sikkim Supreme".

In 1996, to speed up industrial development and generate employment opportunities, a new industrial policy was formulated. The policy envisaged- the creation of an atmosphere conducive to industrial growth taking into consideration the availability of natural resources and the local socio-economic environment. Maintenance of the Green State image while promoting industrial activities. It also included the rehabilitation of sick industries with comprehensive assistance and

⁴¹ These are the two cash crops which the climatic condition of Sikkim favour's its cultivation.

⁴² The industrial unit was handed over to one private party during the earlier government, which was closed due to mismanagement.

guidance from the Department of Industry and privatization of selected state public sector undertakings. Link between agriculture and agro-based industries to develop the agricultural sector, promotion of Khadi, village, cottage, small and ancillary industries to balance regional development was emphasised. Providing adequate support in the form of common facilities like service centers, cheap raw material, technical inputs, marketing network, skill development for promotion of the traditional handloom, handicrafts and artisan sector. Development of tourism as an industry, making Sikkim developed as major center for manufacture and marketing of tea was stressed. Rapid development of basic infrastructure to promote industrial growth, encouragement of self employment and identification of such areas were undertaken. Human Resource development through appropriate skill and entrepreneurship development programme's, behavioral training at district, sub-division and block levels was given emphasis. Promotion and protection of interest of the local people was to be encouraged. Joint venture was to be encouraged between local entrepreneurs and industrialists from outside Sikkim. It stressed the need for attraction of both internal and external investors and formation of suitable mechanisms for attracting and encouraging the growth of capital formation in Sikkim.

The government seeks to achieve these objectives by pursuing the following strategies- identification of thrust areas and effective promotion of industries in these areas, announcement of attractive package and fiscal incentives, special promotional measures for rural and traditional industry, establishing industrial estates and growth centers to facilitate integrated development of industry. Development of a rehabilitation package for the sick industries, revamping the public sector undertakings, creation of appropriate organizational arrangements, development of marketing support systems and development of appropriate training facilities.

For the development promotion of the old traditions in handloom and handicrafts the government has been facilitating the people to participate in various local fairs and festival exhibitions within and

outside the state. The artisans are deputed in different market need programme, craft bazaar etc. which is sponsored by Development Commission For Handicrafts, Govt. of India, New Delhi. The government has been conducting workshops for development of different technical and traditional arts.

Table: 6

**ACHIEVEMENTS IN HANDLOOM AND HADICRAFTS FOR THE
LAST FIFTEEN YEARS 1985-2000**

YEAR	No of Branch Centre created	No. of Trainees admitted	Rate of Stipend	No. of paid workers under production FLO	Budget allotted (Rs in lakhs)	Production value (Rs in lakhs)	Sale Production (Rs in lakhs)
Existing Branch Centre	5						
1985-86	1	305	Rs.125pm	514		15.64	13.86
1986-87	-	350	Rs.125pm	400		14.37	11.67
1987-88	2	400	Rs.150pm	400		18.51	10.83
1988-89	-	302	Rs.200 pm (For 1 st year & Rs. 250 for 2 nd year)	430		-	12.82
1989-90	-	331	-do-	450		-	16.49
1990-91	1	365	-do-	500		33.23	18.42
1991-92	-	403	-do-	545		37.35	-
1992-93	3	459	-do-	600		34.26	29.64
1993-94	-	427	-do-	625		42.28	32.22
1994-95	-	519	-do-	650	149.00	54.71	35.00
1995-96	7	563	Rs.300 pm (For 1 st year & Rs. 350 for 2 nd year)	-	198.50	49.78	35.35
1996-97	-	602	-do-	620	237.00	59.17	49.46
1997-98	-	519	-do-	700	270.35	59.16	42.45
1998-99	-	578	-do-	720	362.41	-	50.62
1999-2000	-	368	-do-	750	341.95	-	54.44
2000-01	-	463	-do-	-	305.61	-	-

Source: Department of Handloom and Handicrafts, Govt. of Sikkim, 2005

The state government in 1996 declared certain state schemes or incentives for industries. These incentives were state capital investment subsidy, subsidy on interest on working capital, concession on state and

central sales tax, price preference, subsidy in captive power consumption, subsidy in consultancy service, subsidy in study tours and implant training, exemption of security deposit or earnest money, international standard institute certification, subsidy on registration fee of promotion council, Indian standard institution, commodity board, chamber of Commerce, Deferment of excise duty and exemption from payment of income tax (Department of Information and Public Relations, Govt. of Sikkim, December, 1994).

In 1997, the department under the present government granted 96 numbers of permanent legislation to small scale industries and tiny industries. In 1997-1998, Temi Tea recorded the highest production, i.e. 1,16,000 kg tea leaves.⁴³ Sikkim Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Ltd. (SIDICO) was established in March 1997 in collaboration with State Financial corporative and small scale industries Development Corporation. It provides long term loans for cottage, tiny, small scale industries, hotels, hospitals, nursing homes and taxis. The Sikkim General Food Industries situated at Singtam, East Sikkim has been handed over to the Swiss party (Red Orchid) as a joint venture company with the state government on 1st August 1996. A medium scale industry especially in the power intensive sector like Ferro Alloys showed interest and another unit Akshay Input has begin project activities at Mamring, south Sikkim. Trainings for the rural artisans and small scale entrepreneurs with the help of professionals from outside have been provided by the Government of Sikkim.

The Sikkim Precision Industries Ltd (SPIL) Namchi was conceived in March 1998. It was established for industrial development of South and West Sikkim to provide employment to the people of these districts. A new high technology project was identified and the government decided to establish new public sector company to undertake the project. The Department of Industry provides consultancy services to the aspiring industrialist/entrepreneur for setting up self-venture unit through Small

⁴³ Temi Tea was conferred a certificate by IMO Control Pvt, Ltd Bangalore declaring it as Black Orthodox Tea as Organic Conversion in 2005.

Industries Services Institute (SISI) Government of India, Tadong and Sikkim Consultancy Services (SICON), Gangtok and Sikkim Consultancy services at district level industries, keeping center at East and North districts. Free consultancy services provided to employed youths for setting their own unit and establishment for self-employment (Govt. of Sikkim, Information and Public Relations, 2001).

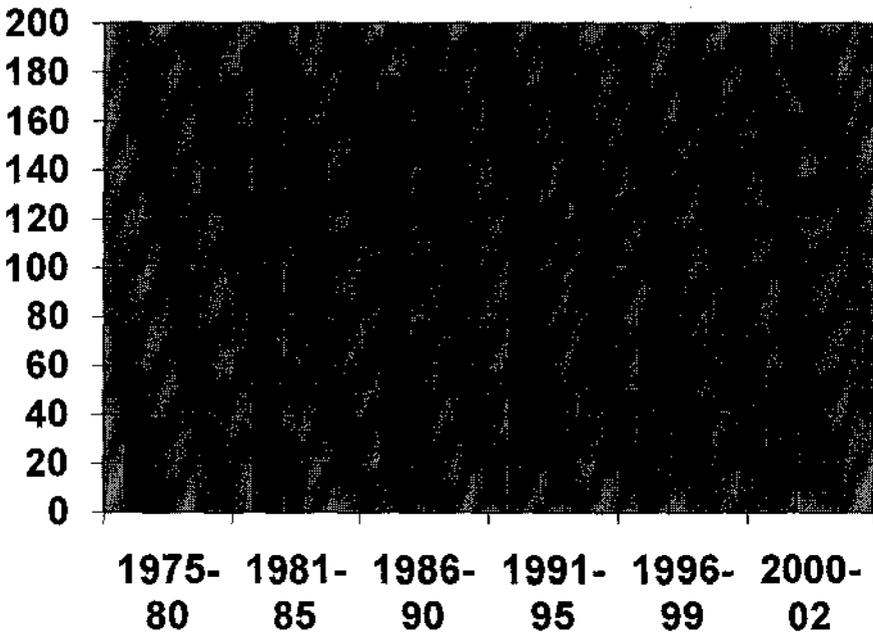
The government under the SDF has been able to provide training for rural artisans and small scale entrepreneurs by the department within four districts in collaboration with SISI-Small Industries Service Institute, SICON-Sikkim Consultancy Services, SIDBI-a nationalized bank working in cooperation with the state banks. Provisional and permanent registration to small scale industries and tiny industries is being provided. SIDICO (Sikkim Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Ltd.) was set up in 1997 has been engaged in promoting financial development of small scale industries, cottage, small and medium sectors in Sikkim. Recently the corporation has started giving financial assistance for fixed assets such as land, building etc. with the aim of setting up an industry. During the last five years from 1995-96 to 1999-2000, it has sanctioned loans amounting to Rs 10,35 Crores to 2147 beneficiaries. Training centers numbering seven in total has been opened since the party has come to power where training in various traditional arts and crafts was imparted. The rate of stipend for the farmers has been increased from a grant of Rs 200 per month to Rs 300 per month and Rs 250-350 per month. Printing of various multi crafts items is going on with the opening of a new Block Printing section. Annual Crafts Fairs and Handloom Fairs are being organized to promote production in these sectors. The sales revenue increased from 35.35 lakhs in 1996 to Rs 60.00 lakhs in 2000-2001 (Govt. of Sikkim, Information and Public Relations, 2001).

The Union Government extended the new industrial policies for the state of Sikkim on the line of the existing North- East Industrial and

Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIP) in 2003.⁴⁴ The policy included exemption of excise and income tax to all new industrial and expansion of existing unit for a period of ten years from the date of commencement of commercial production. The policy granted financial concessions to 12 identified thrust areas in industries. These areas are identified for the promotion of eco-tourism, handicraft and handloom, floriculture, mineral based industry, agro-based industry and pharma-products in the state (M P Lama, 2003, p.50).

Chart: 2

Sikkim: Companies Registered



Source: Department of Land Revenue, Govt. of Sikkim, 2002

According to the survey carried out by a leading national magazine 'Business Today' in 1997-2000 Sikkim is an investor friendly state. The survey showed that the quality of electric power, social infrastructure and state government support have improved in the perception of the

⁴⁴ After the announcement of NEIIP IN 2003, many reputed companies mostly pharmaceutical units have set up factories in Siikim.

investors. The table shows the rank of Sikkim in these sectors among the 28 states and union territories of India.

Table: 7

Sikkim: Perception Ranks out of 26 states and Union Territory

	Rank 1995	Rank 1997	Rank 1999	Labour	Rank 1995	Rank 1997	Rank 1999
Physical Infrastructure	13	14	14	Labour availability	16	16	18
Power available and cost	15	11	12	Cost of Labour	14	16	11
Quality of Power	16	14	15	Labour relation	13	11	13
Proximity to posts	12	23	9	Work culture of state	18	17	14
Presence of Industrial zones/belts	17	16	18				
Quality of Governance				Social infrastructure			
State Govt. support	20	23	16	Proximity to markets	11	20	15
Flexibility of State Govt. policies	17	20	9	Availability of raw materials	22	24	18
Policy implementation	11	16	11	Degree of urbanization	20	16	9
Quality of local administration	16	9	14	Social infrastructure	21	20	15
Law and Order	12	16	12				
Political stability	17	12	11				

Source: Business Today, Delhi, December, 22, 1977- January 6, 1998, p. 134 and December 22, 1999- January 6, 2000.

The state government has set up the Board of Investment under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister to implement a SINGLE WINDOW POLICY. It is an apex body with an objective of providing efficient services to the prospective investors, grants of facilities and coordination among government agencies. The government has further designed a

new investor friendly policy with all the enabling laws and procedural manual for investment. The government has declared some areas of the state as industrial belt.

At the first Sikkim Investor's Forum meeting held on 22 February 2001 at India International Centre in New Delhi under the chairperson of Dr. George B. Arsaf, Representative and Regional Director for South Asia, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Chief Minister Pawan Chamling led a delegation to the forum. The objectives of the Forum's meeting were:

- i. To introduce the investors to various development activities in Sikkim and provisions led out by the state for the potential investors and
- ii. To invite the investors to participate in the potential identified areas like power, software, education, health, horticultures and tourism (M.P Lama, 2003, p.53).

According to Sikkim Human Development Report, 2001, similar investment promotion meetings were organized at Kolkata in collaboration with the confederation of Indian Industry. As a result of all these policies a number of investors have formally applied for setting up industrial units in the state.

In May, 1999, the government made some recommendations in the policy interventions in the industrial sector of the state. The recommendations were:

- In order to reach the incentives and subsidies extended under the new industrial policy, 1996, adequate budget provisions and effective disbursement is needed.
- Estimation that Sikkim needs to generate about 6500 jobs per annum in order to solve the unemployment problem. This will be achieved by a mix policy of generating 2000 jobs in agriculture

and service sectors, 1000 in animal husbandry and 1500 in the industrial sector.

- Clear and investor-friendly policy for the investors.
- Relaxation of land laws in order to allow entrepreneurs to acquire land to set up industrial units.
- To facilitate lowest and transportation, up gradation of Bagdogra Airport as National and International Airport.
- For availability of financial benefits to the industrial units, commercial Banks were to be established.
- Setting up of central Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) to strengthen the existing state PSUs.
- Attraction of new industrial units by industrialists from outside as well as non- Resident Indians to improve industrial and social infrastructure.
- Development of tea industry in the state.
- To encourage self-employment set up yarn bank providing woolen and cotton yarns to the weavers at a reasonable price.
- Training institutes to set up to provided training facilities in various technical fields (Sikkim Human Development Report, 2001).

The table below shows the physical Targets and Achievements in the Industrial Sector during the year 2001 to 2004.

Table: 8**Physical Targets and Achievements 2001-2004**

Sl.No	Subject	2001-2002		2002-2003		2003-2004	
		Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
1	Tea (Temi)N.P						
2	Deptt of Handicrafts & Handloom	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Incentives for new industries	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	E.D.P	10 Trg	10 Trg	10 Trg	10 Trg	65 Trg	65 Trg
5	Inf. and Publicity	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Training to rural artisans	4Trg	5 Trg			6 Trg	6 Trg
7	Khadi and Village industries	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	CMRY			2001 Nos	2011 Nos	1286 Nos	1286 Nos
9	Sorajri Yodug Yojna			402 Nos	402 Nos	1000 Nos	1000 Nos
10	Assistant to Zilla Parishad	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	GPPF	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	Tea Development	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	Investment in PSU	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Incentive to SIDICO	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	Incentive to Public sector	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Sikkim: A Statistical Profile, 2004-05

To accelerate industrial expansion and urban domestic and rural needs, unreliable and inadequate power supply has been a major reason for attractive private investments in Sikkim. The government views that the alternative power sources have to be explored and developed. The

state government has given top priority to industrialisation and has created conducive environment for investors.⁴⁵

Table: 9

Annual Credit Plan 2003-2004 (Industrial sector)

Name of the bank	Target		Achievement		% Achievement	
	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.
State Bank of India	258	29641	3	3324	1.2	11.2
Central Bank of India	91	13563	2	203	2.2	1.5
U.C.O Bank	19	1934	0	0	0.0	0.0
Canara Bank	5	1679	3	390	60.0	23.2
Vijaya Bank	5	1021	1	57	20.0	5.6
Bank of Baroda	7	1107	0	0	0.0	0.0
Bank of India	8	1345	0	0	0.0	0.0
Union Bank of India	32	4491	4	1150	12.5	25.6
Punjab National Bank of India	9	1621	0	0	0.0	0.0
S.I.S.C.O Bank Ltd.	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
U.T.I Bank Ltd.	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Total	434	56402	13	5124	3.0	9.1

Source: Sikkim: A Statistical Profile, 2004-2005, p.46

⁴⁵ Sikkim was given Best State Award among the 10 smaller states for most favourable investment climate by India Today media group in 2005.

Tourism

Under the Sikkim Democratic Front rule for the first time in Sikkim a fifteen year Master Plan perspective on tourism was prepared in 1997. The plan covered a period from 1997-1998 to 2011-2012. The plan emphasized on the development of three independent tourist destinations within the state to speed up economic growth in the rural areas. The plan focused mainly on eco- tourism based on natural scenic resources. This would probably bring development in the rural sector. For implementing the tourism policy in the state a draft tourism legislation was prepared by the department to promote tourism. Taking the advantage of natural scenic resources which promotes tourism, quality tourism must be maintained. For this there was a need for further permit relaxation from the Government of India. The proposal by the state government was made at New Delhi on the 30th September, 1997. Proper management of hotels, lodges and trekkers' hut was under the department of tourism. But the department could not take up too much burden of management hence the responsibility was given to the Tourism Development Corporation (Govt. of Sikkim, Information and Public Relations, 2010). Construction works have been taken up under the CSS schemes. Tourist Lodges at Singhik, Wayside amenity at Borong Hog Spring, Wayside amenity at Gangyap Hot Spring, Trekkers' hut at Aritar are some of the constructions undertaken for facilitating tourism.

With all these efforts by the government under the Sikkim Democratic Front, tourism has been developed leading to increased tourist arrivals by over 60 percent as against 1994 arrivals. In the period between 1994-2000, the annual growth of tourism has increased to 10 percent.

Table: 10

Increase in Tourist Arrivals

Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
1981	19,115	2,739	21,854
1991	61,360	6,187	67,547
1994	92,435	6,888	99,323
1997	11,6,500	8,068	12,4,568
2001	14,6,923	7,757	15,4,680

Source: Government of Sikkim, Department of Tourism, Gangtok

The SDF government dreams of making Sikkim the "Number One Eco-tourism Destination in India". With this objective, the government makes efforts to develop tourist villages, trekking routes, adventure activities, bio- diversity parks, hotels and cultural centers. To attract more tourists in the state, the government has been able to lay the foundation of airport at Pakyong East Sikkim. This would give a regular connection between Bagdogra and other neighbouring airports. Helicopter flights are on operation for tourists. To avail more tourism, a rope-way at Gangtok linking Deorali with the Tashiling Secretariat has been constructed. Promoting pilgrim tourism, old temples, monasteries, churches, gurudwaras and mosques and other shrines in Sikkim have been maintained. The state government has proposed to maintain at least one tourist center in each Gram Panchayat Unit in the state. The government proposes for the establishment of Himalayan Center for Adventure Tourism at Chemchey village by investing Rs 50 lakhs. A new adventure tourist complex- The Rangit Water World (RWW) at the NHPC Dam at Legship has been started for the first time.

Many development activities in tourism have been taking place as per the Master Plan for tourism adopted by the party (SDF).⁴⁶ Sikkim,

⁴⁶ In the year 2000, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, awarded the National Award for the best Tourism performing state in the North East.

for the second consecutive year took the title in 2001 also as Tourism in Sikkim is developed with a vision of peace and tranquility. The local people too appreciated the importance of tourism and development made by the government in this sector. Programme's were being organized to put tourism as an industry with an objective of providing employment opportunities to the people. In this respect, the government celebrated World Tourism Day on 27th September 2001 to create awareness about tourism in the state.⁴⁷ In August 2000, Tourism and Travel Fair (TTF) was held at Calcutta in which the Department of Tourism from Sikkim participated. Festival on North- East was held at Silliguri, Kanchen Dzonga stadium from 1st December to 7th December, 2000, the main objective of the Fair was to focus tourism as an industry and create awareness in the North- Eastern states, West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Teesta- Tea Tourism Festival was held in Sikkim from 24th December to 10th January 2001. The main objective of the festival was to create awareness of winter attractions to Sikkim both at the national and international level and also to increase the number of tourists during the winter season. For this street carnival, religion festivals and archery competition were the main attractions. Water Sports in Teesta and Rangit at national level was also held.

The Tourism Department of Sikkim participated in the Tourism and Travel Fair at Mumbai in January 2001. It also participated at London in November 2000. For the promotion of tourism in the state the Government held orientation programmes for transport operators, taxi drivers, hoteliers and tour operators and travel agents association of Sikkim at Gangtok on 18 – 20 August, 2000. The programme was organized to motivate them as these people have a key role in promoting the tourism industry. Following this programme, the same programme was organized for the same kind of people of South and West Sikkim on 8th and 9th February, 2001 at Pemayangtse in west Sikkim. Sikkim is also known as adventure destination. Adventurous

⁴⁷ The World Tourism Day was sponsored by STDC for the disadvantaged children.

activities like White Water Rafting at river Teesta from Bardang to Tarkhola and river Rangit were conducted. During the year 2000-2001, many projects were completed to encourage tourism. Statue of Guru Padma Sambhava at Samdruptse, Namchi has been constructed. Artificial lake at Uttarey as a new tourist destination in West district has been created. In 1998-1999, a Tourist Information Center, at Namchi was established to facilitate the tourists with tourism information. The Department of Tourism under the SDF rule initiated several schemes and projects like Dugling, Computerization, Wayside Amenity, Refurbishment of Monastries, Tourist lodge, Lake Development, Development of waterfalls, Trekking route, improvement of old heritage Bungalows, Tourist toilets etc.

The opening of the Nathula route in 1999 has benefited the tourist to visit Nathula as one of the tourist destinations. The issuing of permits to the tourists has been simplified. Package tours are being arranged generating opportunities for income and employment (Govt. of Sikkim, Information and Public Relations, 2001). As a result of these policies of the SDF Government, the Tourism Department as claimed by the government is making profit which was incurring terrible losses earlier.

Service Sector: Communication

One of the major factors for the overall development of a state is a good transport communication network through which trade will flourish and will bring economic development in the state. Thus, the total communication service depends upon road network. The government has some objectives in this sector and these are as follows; (a) to upgrade the non standard roads constructed prior to 1975, (b) up gradation of existing bridges to allow the loaded trucks to pass through it. The government also aims at constructing new roads covering as many as villages as possible. Following its objectives the government had been able to connect 360 villages out of 453 in the state by March, 1997 (Government of Sikkim, Information and Public Relations, 1997, p.55).

To promote development in this particular area programmes and new schemes have been undertaken by the Government. The narrow and steep roads were to be widened so that a higher load vehicle gets access to it. The Government's objective in this sector included the strengthening of old suspension bridges by new street and cemented bridges. The government under its new scheme replaced the old and weak roads and bridges in the state. We can point out here that the new government under the SDF has brought some development within a short period of time. The developmental works of the government included the construction of 29 Kms new roads in 1994-1995, 72 Kms road in 1995-1996 and 60 Kms road in 1996-1997. In 1997-1998, the government constructed a total of 161 Kms new roads connecting different villages in the state. The government targeted of covering 248 Kms new road by the year 2001. In 2001, 127 kilometres of road carpeting was completed.

Sikkim is a state; a land locked Himalayan State with no air, train, and water transport facility and hence it has to depend totally on road transportation. Knowing the fact that communication and transport have a vital role in the life of people and their development, communication has a direct impact towards economic growth and social upliftment, the government under the SDF sees that there is a continuous, regular services maintained in the state. The government gives the responsibility to Sikkim Nationalised Transport for providing better transportation facilities to the public as well as transportation of material goods mainly from Siliguri. Till 2001, the number of buses has increased to 123 and 134 trucks/ tankers. A computerized rail reservation service at Gangtok for the whole country has started since, 1997. The government takes the initiative of having reservation quota of Sikkim in the North-East Frontier Railways to three fold in the near future. In 2000-2001, the government promised to add seasonal busses to provide transport facilities to tourists during tourist seasons in Sikkim. The seasonal busses were provided to tourist places like Pelling, Yoksum, Gangtok and Tshongmo. The government also provided with additional interstate bus

services from Gangtok to Siliguri, Darjeeling and Kalimpong with additional schedule during tourist seasons. In addition to this, Sikkim Nationalised Transport shall provide city busses for providing economical transportation system at Gangtok.

Road transportation, being only the means of transportation the government undertakes the construction of helipads at remote areas of Sikkim. This helps during the time of emergencies when there are natural calamities, epidemics road blocks etc. This will also help to promote tourism in the state. The helipads at Lachung, Dalapchen, Rabongla, Dodak, Yoksum, Pelling are same which have been constructed in 2001.

Environment

"We will safeguard our environment as in this lies the very essence of our survival and our future." This was the promise made by Pawan Chamling, the party President of the SDF after assuming power in 1994 (Government of Sikkim, Information and Public Relations, 2001, p. XV). As per the survey in 1998, forests area constituted 44.9 percent of the total area of Sikkim, as compared to 19.4 percent for the country as a whole. Forests are an important source of livelihood for the Sikkimese people and important source of revenue to the government. It covers an area of 978 sq. km of dense forest, 75 sq. km of degraded or blank forest area and area and 31 sq. km of Alpine/ Pasture/ Scrub barren and snow land. Forests are an important source of revenue for the Government because of the implementation of strict forest laws. The forest department has fixed the rates of royalty of different forest produce depending on the importance of the produce and its market value.⁴⁸ Thus, the SDF government has become conscious of protecting the nature of Sikkim's environment and eco-systems.

The SDF Government has taken recent measures to conserve forest and environment which includes:

⁴⁸ The medicinal plants and herbs like Ipecac, Ranwoulfia Serpentine and Lycopodium has been a source of revenue to the government.

- It has adopted and enforced forest environment and wild life policy in 1999. It was a step towards the protection of its environment and consumes forest and wild life. Among the Indian states Sikkim has become the first state in the country to adopt such a policy.
- The Chief Minister's concept of "Smriti Vans" has become a real concept after the introduction of "Smriti Vans."⁴⁹
- Another measure adopted by the government is ban on grazing by all domestic animals in reserve forest areas in the state to protect plantations.
- It has banned the use of non-biodegradable products like plastic bags to protect environment. Following this measure, Sikkim becomes the first state in the country to effectively implement this ban. The government has further decided to adopt "Green Road" scheme by undertaking extensive plantation on the road sides within five years period from 1999.
- It has taken measures for the protection of cultural ecology of the Mount Kanchenjunga by banning climbing expeditions.

Further the SDF government declared to make Sikkim a "Total Organic State". With his efforts in preserving the environment, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling has been awarded the "Greenest Chief Minister of India" by the Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi in 1999.

With these schemes, programmes and policies adopted by the SDF Government since 1994 in various fields of economy like, agriculture, horticulture, industries, tourism, communication and transport services and forests and environment the Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) and per capita income has recorded a steady growth. The NSDP has increased from Rs 426 crores in 1995-1996 to Rs 891 crores in 2001-

⁴⁹ Memorial Forest at various places of social religious, educational institutions, defense, police, tourism, NGO's and government agencies who have come forward with plantations in memory of their near and dear ones.

2002. The per capita income has increased from Rs 8,905 to Rs 16,143 during the same period (Government of India, Economic Survey 2003-2004, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi).

Policies of Social Welfare

The SDF Government from the very beginning has a dream and purpose in investing in human resource development to make Sikkim a poverty free-state.⁵⁰ In Sikkim the weaker sections mainly comprises of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes. Most of these people depend mainly on agriculture as their source of income. According to the Planning Commission based on the expert Group Recommendations in 1993-1994, 45.01 percent of the rural population in the state lived below the poverty line, while in urban areas only 7.73 percent of the population lived below the poverty line.

The Government of Sikkim, the Department of Rural Development, based on the ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, estimated the percentage of families below the poverty line. The State Bureau of Economics and Statistics estimated that 71 percent of the total families were still below poverty line in 1995 (Government of Sikkim, Sikkim Human Development Report, 2001).

⁵⁰ Prior to the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union, its political and economic conditions did not allow it to develop. Only after 1975 growth, development and self-reliance have been achieved.

Table: 11

State wise (North East States) Poverty rank (1983-1994)

States	1983 – 1984		1987 - 1988		1993 – 1994	
	Per Capita Rank	Poverty Rank	Per Capita Rank	Poverty Rank	Per Capita Rank	Poverty Rank
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

SourSource: Government of Sikkim, Human Development Report, 2001

For alleviating poverty in Sikkim, the state Government under the SDF has taken up the task of carrying poverty survey in the state and checking the per capita income growth rate and distribution of income. Sikkim ranks 12th in the country in terms of per capita which is an indication that poverty rate is high in the state. The table cited above shows the ranking of the Hill States (out of 25 states) in the terms of per capita net state, Domestic Product and poverty.

For the socio-economic development and alleviation of poverty in the state, the Government has been providing grants of Rs 20,000 to the

homeless people in the state assisting them to construct houses under rural housing schemes since 1995-1996 (Govt. of Sikkim, IPR, 1997, p.24). In addition to this, the scheme of Indira Awas Yojna providing shelter to the homeless rural people who are below poverty line is being implemented. Till 2003, under the Indira Awas Yojna scheme, 758 physical achievements have been reached and 417 up-gradation (Sikkim- A Statistical Profile, 2004-2005, p.145).

The following table shows the year wise physical achievements of the scheme- Indira Awas Yojna.

Table: 12
Indira Awas Yojna, Physical Achievements (2001-2003)

Name of the scheme	Year	Physical Achievements	Financial (Rs. in Lakhs)
Indira Awas Yojna	2000-01	872	206
Indira Awas Yojna	2001-02	762	167
Indira Awas Yojna	2002-03	758	117.37
Up-gradation	2000-01	667	66.7
Up-gradation	2001-02	404	40.44
Up-gradation	2002-03	417	37.8

Source: Sikkim- A Statistical Profile, 2004-2005, p.145

Identification of the households below poverty line and assisting them with the distribution of piglets with pig feed, milch cow, black-smithy tools and accessories, sewing machines, ginger seeds, potato seeds and fruit seedlings. The government provided the people with the advance course in computer science, hotel management, typing and stenography. The government has provided pre-matric and post- matric scholarships for children of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe's living below poverty line (Govt. of Sikkim, Social Welfare Department, 2004-2005).

Table: 13

Pre-Matric scholarships to ST and SC students (1997-1998 to 2001-2002)

Year	Scheduled Tribe	Scheduled Caste
1997-1998	3569	2758
1998-1999	3569	598
1999-2000	568	1645
2000-2001	2385	1614
2001-2002	4132	1974

Source: Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Sikkim, 2004-2005

Table: 14

Post-Matric scholarships to ST and SC students (1997-1998 to 2001-2002)

Year	Scheduled Tribe	Scheduled Caste
1997-1998	216	113
1998-1999	260	72
1999-2000	132	96
2000-2001	142	98
2001-2002	493	101

Source: Social Welfare Department, Govt. Of Sikkim, 2004-2005

The percentage of population below poverty line has gone down steadily after the SDF came to power in 1994. The following table shows the decrease of BPL percentage in the state since 1973-74.

Table: 15

Population Below Poverty Line

Year	Percentage of BPL
1973-74	50.86
1977-78	55.89
1983	39.71
1987-88	36.06
1993-94	41.43
1999-2000	36.55

SOURCE: Planning Commission, Draft Tenth Five Year Plan,(2002-2007), New Delhi, Vol III, 2003, p.40.

In Sikkim two Assembly constituencies has been declared as Scheduled Caste constituencies based on the Scheduled Caste population. These constituencies are Khamdong and Rateypani. This is done mainly for development and upliftment of scheduled castes in the state. The government under the Welfare Department and Social Welfare Wing implemented policies and programmes for the upliftment of the poor and needy handicapped persons and old aged people.

Table: 16

Schemes (Scheduled Caste) implemented under SCP 1999-2000

Department/ sector	Schemes implemented	No. of Beneficiaries
SIMFED	Distribution of Blacksmithy tools to SC	75 families
STCS	Distribution of sewing machines to SC	40 families
Welfare department	Distribution of piglets to SC of Mangshila	63 families
Welfare department	Distribution of piglets to SC of Khamdong	220 families

Welfare department	Distribution of piglets to SC of Ralong, Sangmo Gram Panchayat	46 families
Welfare department	Distribution of piglets to SC of Nandok	30 families

Source: Source: Social Welfare Department, Govt. Of Sikkim, 2004-2005

Table: 17

Schemes (Scheduled Caste) implemented under SCP 1999-2000

Department/ sector	Schemes implemented	No. Of Beneficiaries
SIMFED/STCS	Distribution of sewing machines to SC of east and south sikkim	287 families
SIMFED/STCS	Distribution of knitting machines to SC of east, west and south district	153 families
SIMFED/STCS	Distribution of 110 sets of agricultural tools to SC families of Khamdong constituency	183 families
SIMFED/STCS	Distribution of 200 sets of agricultural tools to SC families of Rateypani constituency	243 families
SIMFED/STCS	Distribution of 100 sets of agricultural tools to SC families of south and west district	153 families
SIMFED/STCS	Distribution of 100 sets of agricultural tools to SC families of east district	146 families

Source: Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Sikkim, 2004-2005

In the year 1997, the Government of India launched a scheme for providing financial assistance to the families living below the poverty line to whom girl child is born, the scheme is known as Balika Samridhi Yojna

which covers a child born on or before 15.8.1997. The government of Sikkim implemented the same scheme in the state for the upliftment and empowerment of women. The state government also launched a small family scheme in April 1997 for a girl child under which all girl child gets economic incentives and at the age of 13 years gets the financial benefit of Rs 25,00/ which is deposited in the bank for a fixed period of eight years. This is done to encourage girl child to get married at the age of 21 years or after and not before that (Govt. of Sikkim, Social Welfare Department, 2004-2005).

Following the poverty alleviation programmes, the SDF Government directed the welfare division of Social Welfare Department with the schemes of vocational training for the educated unemployed scheduled castes and scheduled tribes from 1995-1996 and other backward classes youths from 1998-1999. The state government made an arrangement from 1.7.1995 for reservation of seats for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and OBC's in government posts and services. Allotment of seats in educational institutions for professional courses was 6 percent to scheduled castes, 23 percent to scheduled tribes and 21 percent to other backward classes.

Under the direction of the Central Government, the Government of Sikkim has set up Sikkim Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes Development Cooperation Ltd. for providing cheap financial assistance to all the backward sections of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes population of the state at low rate of interest. The cooperation has financed activities in agriculture for the purchase of agricultural machinery and implements goatary, poultry, dairy, piggery, cardamom plantation and ginger cultivation. It has provided assistance to the artisans and traditional occupation such handicrafts, carpet weaving, tailoring etc. (Govt of Sikkim, Sikkim: A Statistical Profile, 2004-2005).

Welfare schemes for the old persons includes old age pension scheme who are 65 years and above and who fall in the below poverty

line and have no regular service of income gets the amount of Old Age Pension of Rs 100 per month. It was increased to Rs 200 in October, 2000 and from April, 2007 the old age pension has been increased to Rs 400 per month (Government of Sikkim, Social Welfare Department, 2008).

Table: 18

Table showing the number of persons receiving pensions year wise

YEAR	No. of BENEFICIARIES
1995-1996	1,976
1996-1997	1,613
1997-1998	3,855
1998-1999	6,835
1999-2000	6,835
2000-2001	10,104

Source: Department of Information and Public Relations, Government of Sikkim, 2001.

For the disabled poor persons, the Government has allotted subsistence allowance of Rs 100 per month. The allowance benefited many poor people in the state and there was an increase in the number of beneficiaries each year. In 1995-97 the beneficiaries were 150 persons; it was increased to 200 persons in 1997-1999 and then increased to 400 persons in 1999-2001 (Govt. of Sikkim, Social Welfare Department, 2002).

The welfare department runs a sheltered workshop for disabled poor persons at Jorethang, South Sikkim where 15 disabled persons are engaged receiving monthly stipend of Rs 1200/-, Rs 600/-, and Rs 400/- as per their skills.

The state government under the SDF has made arrangements for providing financial assistance to voluntary organizations like National Association for Blind, Spastic Society in Gangtok and Association for

social health in India, Sikkim Branch etc. to undertake welfare works for the under privileged sections of the society. The government is providing its full effort in the upliftment of the weaker sections of society to make Sikkim a poverty free state. In the election manifesto of 2004, the party declared that it has a vision of making Sikkim a Poverty Free State by 2015.⁵¹ In the achievement of this target, the government has made arrangements for providing 35 kg of subsidized rice at Rs 4 per kg per month to a family living Below Poverty Line (BPL). Till 2003, September, 9,994 poorest of the poor families from BPL category are getting benefits of Mukhya Mantri Antyodaya Annadan Yojna scheme. Under this the senior citizens above the age of 65 years who are eligible for old age pensions get rice at Rs 3 per kg. (Govt of Sikkim, Sikkim: A Statistical Profile, 2004-2005).

The following table shows the State's economy at a glance under SDF government.

Table: 19

INDICATORS OF STATE ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

Sl no	Particulars	1993-94	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02*	2002-03**	2003-04**
1	Gross State Domestic Product	(In lakhs)								
	At current prices	37743	55262	65106	78184	84003	97634	113925	125135	135818
	At constant prices	37743	45630	52002	57983	59583	64213	69635	-	-
2	Index Number of GDP									
	At current prices	100.00	146.42	172.50	207.154	222.57	258.68	301.84	331.54	359.85
	At constant prices	100.00	120.90	137.78	153.63	157.87	170.13	184.50	-	-
3	Per Capita GDP(In Rs)									
	At current prices	8457	11141	12644	14652	16343	18352	20639	22466	23786
	At constant prices	8457	9200	10099	10866	11592	12070	12615	-	-
4	Index Number of Per Capita									

⁵¹ As per the Socio- economic census of the state conducted in 2005 the poverty ratio has gone down to 19.2 percent in 2005.

	GSDP									
	At current prices	100.00	131.74	149.51	173.25	193.25	217.00	244.05	265.65	281.26
	At constant prices	100.00	108.79	119.42	128.49	137.07	142.72	149.17	-	-
5	Net State Domestic Product	(In lakhs)								
	At current prices	33694	49111	58308	70209	75818	88623	103899	113942	123258
	At constant prices	33694	40851	46984	51575	52683	56941	62002	-	-
6	Index Number of NSDP									
	At current prices	100.00	145.76	173.05	208.37	225.02	263.02	308.36	338.17	365.82
	At constant prices	100.00	121.24	139.44	153.07	156.36	188.99	184.01	-	-
7	Per Capita (In Rs)									
	At current prices	7550	9901	11324	13158	14751	16658	18822	20456	21586
	At constant prices	7550	8236	9125	9666	10250	10703	11232	-	-
8	Index Number of Per Capita NSDP									
	At current prices	100.00	131.14	149.99	174.28	195.38	220.64	249.30	270.94	285.91
	At constant prices	100.00	109.09	120.86	128.02	135.76	141.76	148.77	-	-

Source: Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gangtok, Sikkim, 2004-2005.

To sum up, the chapter analysed the economic policies pursued by the SDF led government in the state. The economic policies analysed included the policies in the agricultural sector, industrial sector and the service sector. The main focus of the government in the agricultural sector is the improvement of agricultural productivity by implementing various measures and schemes. The government provided the poor farmers with incentives like better variety of seeds, manures, fertilizers and other facilities like agricultural loans, scientific and modern tools and equipments. These incentives helped the farmers in the better production of agricultural products.

The government came up with new industrial policies to accelerate the industrial sector and promote economic growth in the state. It pointed out the reasons for the poor industrial growth in the

state. An agro-based industry in all the villages' was to be set up by the government in the near future which would generate employment facilities to the rural people? Under the new industrial policies the old and sick industries were to be revived and small scale and dairy farming was to be promoted. The policy attracted both the internal and external investors in the state. Many small scale industries got permanent registration and loans from both state and nationalized banks were provided for this purpose.

For the promotion of tourism in the state, the government prepared a fifteen year Master Plan in 1997. The plan focused on eco-tourism based on natural scenic resources. Promotion of tourism in the state was followed by transport and communication network. New roads were constructed connecting villages with the towns. For poverty alleviation in the state the government under the SDF implemented various schemes like Indira Awas Yojna- centrally sponsored schemes, distribution of agricultural tools, and other necessary items to the poor people. The government under the SDF implemented various measures and schemes in developing the state and making the people of Sikkim the real producers in the state.

CHAPTER IV

DEMOCRACY IN SIKKIM UNDER SDF REGIME

Traditionally Democracy means people's rule. The origin of the term democracy can be traced back to Ancient Greece. Democracy is derived from the Greek word 'kratos', meaning power or rule. Democracy thus means 'rule by the demos', the demos referring to the 'people'. In modern times democracy is treated as a single, unambiguous phenomenon. It is assumed as a system of regular and competitive elections based on universal franchise.⁵² Most conception of democracy is based on the principle of 'government by the people'. This means people govern themselves—that they participate in the making of the crucial decisions that structure their lives and determine the fate of their society. The word Democracy is understood differently by different people. Amongst the meanings that have been attached to the word 'democracy' these are as follows:

- A system of rule by the poor and disadvantaged.
- A form of government in which the people rule themselves directly and continuously, without the need of the professional politicians or public officials.
- A system of welfare and redistribution aimed at narrowing social inequalities.
- A society based on equal opportunity and individual merit, rather than hierarchy and privilege.

⁵² In Bernard Crick's (1993) words 'democracy is the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs'.

- A system of decision-making based on the principle of majority rule.
- A system of rule that secures the rights and interests of minorities by placing checks upon the power of the majority.
- A means of filling public offices through a competitive struggle for the popular vote.
- A system of government that serves the interests of the people regardless of their participation in political life.⁵³

Therefore it is clear that democracy links government to the people (Heywood, 2007, p. 71).

The party President, Pawan Chamling had claimed that real democracy in Sikkim was restored by the Sikkim Democratic Front. The chapter basically deals with the question that "how far the Sikkim Democratic Front government has been successful in restoring real democracy in Sikkim?" The party stands for "Janta Ko Raj Ma Jantai Raja"- (In a popular regime, people themselves are sovereign)". The chapter basically analyses the status of democracy in the state under the Sikkim Democratic Front government. We analyse the status of democracy because the SDF as it claims arose against the undemocratic practices of the SSP led government. One of the principal aims of the SDF in 1994 was to restore democracy if it comes to power in the state. Restoration of democracy had therefore been an important aim and slogan of the party, which helped the party to achieve initial success in the state, thus it helped the party to mobilise support for itself. Hence we look at this aspect of SDF rule to see how far this had contributed to the building of support for the party.

⁵³ The starting point of the nature of democracy was given by the American first President Abraham Lincoln in Gettysburg Address delivered in 1864 at the height of American Civil War. He called 'democracy' a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people".

The chapter is divided into four sections; Section I deals with the restoration of democracy in Sikkim under SDF. It is important to discuss restoration of democracy here because SDF came to power with the promise of restoring democracy in Sikkim. Section II deals with the theme that 'Janta ko Raj ma Jantai Raja' because the Party feels that the people of Sikkim should be the real ruler. The third section deals with the democratic decentralisation in Sikkim as democratic decentralisation was absent during earlier government and it is a necessary condition for the existence of democracy. Section IV, deals with the question of substantive democracy. The section tries to discuss how far the SDF led government has been successful in implementing policies in the state and has been able to improve the living conditions of the people.

Section I

Restoration of Democracy under SDF Government

Democracy in Sikkim came up with different stresses, strains and long uprising against the ruler i.e., Chogyal.⁵⁴ Different political parties and groups emerged in Sikkim which challenged feudalism and the monarchical rule in Sikkim. These political groups were influenced by India's struggle for freedom movement. The intention of these groups was the abolition of the system of feudalism and hence monarchy and to bring democracy in Sikkim. Political parties like Sikkim State Congress and Sikkim Janta Congress emerged during this time. These parties also had common demands like abolition of landlordism and establishment

⁵⁴ The Namgyal dynasty in Sikkim was established in 1642 and survived till 1974.

of popular government. A new political party the Sikkim National Congress in late 1960's also opposed the Chogyal rule and the Zamindari system in Sikkim. The main objectives of the party were the establishment of responsible government, written constitution and universal adult franchise based on joint electorate. The party claimed that the majority in Sikkim wanted restoration of democracy and responsible government. Among all the political parties in Sikkim, the Sikkim State Congress was the only party which represented all the three ethnic groups in Sikkim.

Confrontation broke out on 4th April 1973 when hundreds of demonstrators from all parts of Sikkim came to Gangtok against the administration. Law and order completely broke down in Sikkim and the situation went out of control. The Chogyal requested the Indian Government to take the charge of law and order. The Indian army took over the charge of law and order and the administration was taken over by the political officer. A tripartite agreement was signed on 8th May 1973 between the Foreign Secretary of Chogyal, Government of India and the representatives of the three political parties for the establishment of responsible government in Sikkim with a democratic constitution, fundamental rights, and rule of law, independent judiciary and greater legislative and executive powers for the representatives of the people. Chogyal was made the constitutional head. On the basis of this agreement, the first general election was held in April 1974.

There was conflict between the ministry and Chogyal and it became difficult to continue with Chogyal as the head of the state. So on 10th April 1975 a unanimous resolution was passed for the abolition of the institution of the Chogyal and demanding the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. Ultimately Sikkim was merged with the Indian Union and it became the 22nd state of the

Indian Union on the 16th of May 1975, bringing an end to the 333 years old Chogyal rule in Sikkim.

Although the merger of Sikkim in 1975 marked the beginning of Parliamentary democracy in Sikkim, yet the general masses remained isolated from the mainstream as fruits of democracy failed to reach the grassroots who constituted the bulk of the population.

The first Assembly election in Sikkim was held in April 1974, two political parties; Sikkim National Party and Sikkim Congress contested the election. The Sikkim Congress swept the poll securing 31 seats. Lendup D. Kazi was sworn in as the first Chief Minister of Sikkim. But soon constitutional crisis broke on 17th August with the resignation of Kazi along with his colleagues and this led to the failure of the constitutional machinery and President's rule was imposed for the first time in Sikkim on August 18, 1979. Within this span of time not much democratic developments was visible. There are several reasons behind this. At the time of merger the state did not have a properly planned communication network, it lacked comprehensive infrastructure for light and heavy infrastructures. The geography of the state was also at a disadvantage for its development as it was a backward state surrounded with mountains and inaccessible terrains. Democracy was established as the governing machinery of the state but it failed to reach the base of the society. Many leaders left the Kazi Ministry and formed a new political party. Democracy was in the initial stage and people were not much aware of the spirit of democracy. Hence, the grassroots remained practically isolated from the fruits of development. People saw no other option but to fight for people's right and replace him. The party claimed that the people were happy and satisfied with the new government formed by Sikkim State Congress under Kazi Lhendup

Dorjee, as it was the only political party which united the Sikkimese people for the attainment of democracy in the state. Under the guidance of the party, democracy was attained and for the first time the people exercised their democratic rights. But soon there was a split in the party and the government could not continue in power for long.

After Kazi Lendup Dorji, the government was formed by Nar Bahadur Bhandari of Sikkim Janata Parishad after he won the Assembly election held on 12th October 1979. Since then Bhandari ruled Sikkim till 1993. The party formulated different policies in the political, social and economic fields. He promised to restore the seats of Sikkimese Nepali which was removed by the 1979 Act and 1980 Representation of People's Act. The Act not only abolished seat reserved for the Sikkimese Nepalese, it also scrapped seats reserved for the original Bhutia and the Lepchas of the State. He also promised to include Sikkim in the North East Council. Many social welfare schemes were carried on by the Bhandari government like drinking water facilities, transport and communication maintenance. It is said that 94% of the villages in the state got electric connection during his term. Importance to health, education and agriculture were given and facilities and incentives were provided in these fields. For the educational development, new schools were established in different parts of Sikkim. Many schools were upgraded, free text books were provided for the students of the Government schools. In the field of health, new primary health centres and sub-centres were set up in each village and awareness camp and programmes were held on diseases like Leprosy, tuberculosis and cancer. In the agricultural field, the farmers were given High Yielding Variety seeds, irrigation channels were made and training centres and farms were opened. After coming to power in 1984, the Bhandari government provided

books at subsidised rates and mid-day meals were provided to promote education and raise literacy rate in the state.

But after his victory in the 1989 Assembly Election he became quite different than what he was earlier. Opposition political parties were not well organised and hence not powerful; they became prominent only during the eve of elections. The opposition political parties in Sikkim criticised Bhandari on the grounds that he had become more powerful, confident and authoritative in his later phase of his rule. There was a complete suppression of the press and the media. The opposition leaders were tortured by the police. Bhandari used coercion and physical torture to those who opposed him and suppressed all the anti-government movements in Sikkim. He tried to establish hegemony of one reign, one leader, one party, and one language in Sikkim. With this one-party, one-man rule reign of terror began in Sikkim (Kazi, 1993). The other political parties could not survive. The right to press was curtailed. There was constant pressure over the press-media. This led to absence of a strong and effective opposition, ultimately leading to the absence of real democracy in Sikkim. During the SSP's sixth anniversary celebrations on May 24, 1990, Bhandari claimed in his public address at Gangtok that he had the support of every section of people in the state, including the press. He wanted everyone and every organisation in Sikkim including the press to acknowledge his rule. The journalists were the victims of torture during his government. In January, 1993, Jit Raikia, editor of a Nepali weekly; 'Sikkim Samachar' was brutally attacked. In the same year Frank Krishner of Sikkim Express and correspondent of the 'Telegraph' was beaten up for releasing the anti-government news in the state (Kazi, 1993, pp.255-257).

Sikkim Democratic Front, which was a new regional political party, in its initial stage pledged to restore democracy in Sikkim

and promised to strive for the democratic rights of the Sikkimese people. In the press release to the 'Hindustan Times' on March, 7-13, 1993, the party President, Pawan Chamling declared that the party stands for the democratic rights of the Sikkimese people as enshrined in the Constitution of India. Criticising the former government of SSP led Nar Bahadur Bhandari, Pawan Chamling pointed out that people were fed up with the politics of corruption, confrontation and division amongst people during the earlier Bhandari government. He further, urged to unite the people and revive democracy in the State. Thus the SDF was avowedly formed with the aim and objective of restoring real democracy in Sikkim.

The party was formed when Pawan Chamling left the Bhandari government. As such Pawan Chamling was against the Bhandari since he was not implementing the recommendation of the Mandal Commission Report. The Commission had listed all the communities of Sikkim as economically and educationally backward. The Chief Minister, Nar Bahadur Bhandari who belonged to the Chettri caste then did not responded positively to the demands of OBC's. The SDF thus criticised the ruling government under Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) and held that the government had failed to safeguard the democratic rights of the Sikkimese people.

In its election manifesto of 1994 for the Assembly election, the party promised to safeguard Sikkimese rule, traditions and Rule of Law. Real democracy will be restored with freedom of speech and freedom of Press. The party promised to grant freedom of Press and check yellow press in the state. It further assured that there will be strict maintenance of law and order and restoration of peace and security in the state. The SDF

government also promised to provide social justice for all the sections of the society.⁵⁵

Pawan Chamling speaking to the reporters of Sikkim observer, on the 12th of December 1994 informed in his first press conference that the SDF party manifesto has now become a "Statement of Policy and Pledges" of the new government. He declared that "My government's first priority is the restoration of democracy in the State". In its first election manifesto, 1994, it had promised to grant the rights of the backward classes by implementing the recommendation of the Mandal Commission Report if it wins the election. This will give justice to the people. After forming the government, as promised earlier, the party recommended the Union Government for the inclusion of seven Communities from among the "Sikkimese Nepali Origin" as socially and educationally Backward Classes. These communities were; Bhujel, Gurung, Limbu, Mangar, Rai, Sunwar and Tamang (Sinha, 2008, p. 283).

Earlier the opposition political parties and other political groups, mainly the Joint Action Committee formed in 1993 had criticised Nar Bahadur Bhandari's rule in Sikkim as "Divide and Rule" policy which exploited the relation between the centre and the state. Under the Bhandari government it was charged that the democratic set up in Sikkim deteriorated. Pawan Chamling always moved with the policies and programmes that focused on the upliftment of the poor people. He was not comfortable with some of his colleagues who had no feeling towards backward classes and weaker sections of the society which left him sick and disgusted.

⁵⁵The General Assembly election of 1994 was won by SDF with 19 seats out of a total 32 seats. Pawan Chamling, the party president was sworn in as the next Chief Minister of Sikkim.

The business of the government turned from bad to worse as time passed. Differences arose between Chamling and the leadership of the Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP). The difference was on the issue of principles and ideology (Bali, 2002, p. 103). In 1993, before coming to power, Pawan Chamling criticised the faults and failures of the ruling government at different public meetings held at different places of Sikkim. He also got the support from his ministerial colleagues and MLA's in the party and declared Bhandari an autocratic master who was anti-people and undemocratic. The ruling party he claimed was a party with double standards and policies. He charged that the government had no concern and was insincere in its attitude to the welfare of the masses (Kazi, 1993).

Thus, on March 4th 1993, the SDF was born with clear and open commitment to uphold democracy, justice and development aspirations of the people. The party President Pawan Chamling stated and promised to change the social and political life of Sikkim and fight against the anti-people policies pursued by the Bhandari government. The party also promised for more decentralisation of power to make people stronger and practice democratic rights in real sense.

The press and media during the earlier government had lost its freedom of expression and speech. The party promised to maintain free and fair media in the state. During the earlier government the political rights of the people were non-existent; the opposition parties were prohibited from assembling for any purpose. The people could not reach the government and present their grievances. Therefore, the party resolved to safeguard the democratic rights of the people. The party sought to restore the constitutional rights of the press which was curtailed by the earlier government. Another instance where the Bhandari government

turned to be irresponsible towards its people was that on September, 29, 1993 Bhandari sent a letter to then Finance Minister of India, Man Mohan Singh for the imposition of central income tax rule in Sikkim. After the establishment of democracy in Sikkim in 1975, the state was kept outside the purview of the central income tax. There was opposition against this anti-people act of inviting income tax in the state. Responding to this the people of Sikkim called a three-day Sikkim Bandh (Bali, 2002, p. 133).

The Information and Public Relations Department plays a vital role in keeping the general public informed with the day to day events and activities of the state government. An environment has been created where the press can enjoy the freedom of speech and expression. Press Accreditation Committee has been constituted in 2001 to facilitate correspondents and editors of qualified registered newspapers and agencies. Under Media Initiative Programme, the IPR department provided computers, printers and fax machines to more than 60 local journalists to help them build their infrastructural development. For the protection of the rights of the journalists 'Press Club of Sikkim' was established in the year 2001. Annual grant of Rs 1.5 lakh is also provided by the government to the Press Club of Sikkim. In order to encourage educated unemployed youth, the department has organised a number of training programmes especially in the field of photography, videography and journalism. As a token of appreciation of the contribution made by the media personnel, the government instituted the Positive Journalism grant of Rs 5000/- in the year 2005-2006. The national Press Day is observed on 16th November every year in Sikkim. The journalists were also sent for orientation tour for interaction with their counterparts in India and abroad (Govt. of Sikkim, Department of Information and Public

Relations, 2005). The SDF criticises the earlier government for its failure and misgovernment and for curtailing freedom of press and media in the state. But it will be worth to point out here that the SDF government which once assured the people to grant freedom of the press and media is keeping away from its promise. The government gives various facilities and help in the development and promote free and fair press media in the state but in reality it is indirectly trying to curtail the right of press to function openly and freely.

Democracy seems to be at work in Sikkim. Free and fair elections are held at all levels of government and people take active part in electing their representatives. To ensure justice in the state and make justice readily available for the masses, Lok Adalats have been constituted in all the nine sub-divisions of Sikkim. In addition, Atrocity Court, Human Rights Court, Family Court and Consumer's Court have been constituted to ensure free and prompt justice to the people.

SDF claims that it is a party of the people and for the people. SDF government is the government where people are the rulers and there is maximum participation of the people in political activities. Democracy in the state brings social justice and communal harmony. The state government under SDF promise to maintain social justice from the grassroots level. It initiated steps to bring social justice.⁵⁶ Sikkim Commission for Backward Classes was reconstructed in 1998 to examine the request for the inclusion of any class of citizen as a Backward Class in the Scheduled and address complaints of wrong inclusion or non-inclusion of any backward class in the list. The communities which the earlier government failed to recognise as OBC- Bhujel, Gurung, Limboo,

⁵⁶ The communities like Limboo and Tamang are included in the list of Scheduled Tribes in 2003.

Manger, Rai, Sunwar and Tamang were included in the OBC category on 25th May 1995. On December 6th, 1999, Sanyasis and Thamis were also given OBC status. Similar status was given to Chettri, Bahun and Newar communities on 17th September 2003 (Govt. of Sikkim, IPR- 2009, p. 60).

However, the Electors Data Summary of the Assembly Elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004 shows that participation of the people in election, i.e. vote cast by voters, is decreasing. In 1994 out of total 2,17,743 voters, the vote cast was only 1,78,023, which means 39,720 voters did not cast their vote. Similarly, in 1999, the total number of voters were 2,55,377 out of which only 2,08,983 voted, i.e., 46,394 did not vote and subsequently in 2004, out of 2,81,937 voters only 2,48,959 voted and remaining 32,978 did not vote (Election Commission, Statistical Report, State Election, 1994, 1999, 2004).

This electoral participation however is more as compared to the earlier government. During Bhandari led period in 1979 total voters were 1,17,157 out of which only 76,299 cast their vote and the remaining 40,858 did not. In 1985, total voters were 1,55,041, out of which 99,435 cast their vote while remaining 55,606 did not. This shows that the electoral participation increased with the coming of the new government. The table below shows the electoral data summary.

Table: 1

**ELECTORS DATA SUMMARY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS
IN SIKKIM**

YEAR		TOTAL ELECTORS			ELECTORS WHO VOTED		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1979	GEN	39,999	29,493	69,492	26,107	19,801	45,908
	SC	4,047	3,357	7,431	2,923	2,391	5,314
	ST	21,849	18,394	40,234	13,596	11,481	25,077
	TOTAL			1,17,157			76,299
1985	GEN	53,022	44,784	97,806	34,791	26,749	61,540
	SC	5,867	4,907	10,774	4,162	3,001	7,163
	ST	24,917	21,544	46,461	17,559	13,173	30,372
	TOTAL			1,55,041			99,435
1989	GEN	99,370	85,027	1,78,697	71,131	58,249	1,29,380
	SC	7,272	6,650	13,922	5,743	4,104	9,847
	ST	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL	1,00,942	91,677	1,92,619	76,874	62,353	1,39,227
1994	GEN	66,578	58,274	12,485	55,022	46,704	1,01,726
	SC	7,998	7,620	15,518	6,975	5,743	12,718
	ST	39,739	37,634	77,373	33,709	29,870	63,579
	TOTAL			2,17,743			1,78,023
1999	GEN	77,177	69,503	1,56,680	63,927	54,765	1,18,694
	SC	9,306	8,693	17,999	8,223	6,856	15,079
	ST	46,108	44,590	90,698	39,705	35,505	75,210
	TOTAL			2,55,377			2,08,983
2004	GEN	84,072	76,789	1,60,861	70,458	63,588	1,34,016
	SC	10,608	10,161	20,769	10,608	10,161	20,769
	ST	51,058	49,249	1,00,307	48,093	46,051	94,144
	TOTAL			2,81,937			2,48,959

Source: Election Commission of India- State Elections- Legislative
Assembly Election of Sikkim.

On June 6th, 1995, when the ruling party was about to complete six months in power, Chamling, at a press conference in his official residence at Mintokgang, while referring to the controversial 30 MW Rathong Chu hydel project, said those who opposed the project would be "construed" as opposing the government itself. His justification being that the people had given SDF the mandate to rule for five years and anyone opposing the government on "any" issue would be going against the mandate. This according to critics was not only a great blow to the anti-people project activists in the state but by this very act Chamling waged war on the democratic process he had sworn to establish. This was exactly how Bhandari functioned while he was in power to ensure support of the people. This style of functioning is not only undemocratic but also leaves little room for free speech and movement that are essential parts of the democracy (Hill People, October, 1995).

SDF had promised to give political rights to the people but on October 12, 1999 there was a 12 hour hunger strike by representatives of the three ethnic communities at the 'B.L. House' in Gangtok for restoration of political rights. Four members of the Sikkim Bhutia-Lepcha Apex Committee (SIBLAC), including its convenors, Nima Lepcha, and former secretary, Pintso Bhutia along with Vice-Convenor, Tenzing Namgyal represented the minority Bhutia-Lepcha community, former minister K.C. Pradhan represented the Sikkimese Nepali Apex Committee (SNAC), the Organisation of Sikkim (OSU) represented by its chairman, Jigme N. Kazi during the hunger strike (Sikkim Observer, October 13-15, 1999).

Opposition parties and groups were however not happy the way SDF was working. They felt the need for a strong and united organisation in view of the prevailing political situation and restore

democracy in the state. Thus, in February 2003, Sikkim United Democratic Alliance (SUDA) was formed with the objective to strengthen democratic process, ensure freedom of expression /movement and fight for restoration of the political rights of the Sikkimese people as safeguarded under Article 371F of the Constitution. The Alliance consisted of the BJP, Congress (I), Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad Party, Organisation of Sikkimese Unity (OSU) and Nebula /National Liberation Front. The SUDA passed some resolutions in its first meeting at Gangtok with the following aims and objectives:

- To strengthen the democratic process, to secure freedom of expression and movement, justice and the rule of law.
- To fight for restoration of political and democratic rights of the Sikkimese people.
- To maintain peace, unity and communal harmony.
- To eradicate corruption and ensure rapid and genuine economic development.
- To work for national unity and integration and to safeguard national security interest in the region (Common Cause, April 2003) (Kazi, 2008, p. 333).

In July 1997, nine SDF leaders resigned from the party as they were dissatisfied with the non-implementation of some of the promises in the party manifestoes. They claimed that whatever commitments were made in the party manifesto were not fulfilled and the party has been working against the interests of the people. The leaders who resigned from the party were- Chairman of the Land use Board and Central Working Committee member, Dawa Sherpa, two other CWC members and one of the political secretaries of the Chief Minister, P.K. Chamling, T.M. Rai, the ex-political advisor to SDF and the others who were active members of the party (Sikkim Express, July 30-2, 1997).

In the same year, in August, 1997 a new political party- Sikkim Ekta Manch was launched by the former state power secretary, Laxmi Prasad Tiwari with the view that the administration in Sikkim was deteriorating day by day, while the political standard was going downhill and he urged for "political reform in Sikkim" (Sikkim Express, August 26- September-01, 1997). The indication is clear by the above events that there are opposition parties and groups in the society who still think that real democracy is yet to come in Sikkim.

Jigme N. Kazi, the editor of Sikkim Observer feels that the fourth estate, one of the main pillars of democracy has been under seize in Sikkim for a long time. The vast majority of the people, the main beneficiaries of a Free Press continue to remain silent spectators and helplessly watch the press being suppressed (Kazi, 1993, p. 312).

A new political party called the "Sikkim United" was launched in 2008, which committed to strive for the following issues and objectives- political, social and economic, good governance and democratic principles. This party believes that freedom, justice and rule of Law are the fundamental values in a democracy and should be preserved (Party leaflet, Sikkim United, 16, Feb, 2008).⁵⁷The organisation demanded the settlement of a long pending reservation of seats in the Assembly.

⁵⁷ The organisation of Sikkim Unity which was formed in 1994 with the sole objective of protecting the rights and interests of the three ethnic groups of Sikkim was revived in September - October 1999.

Section II

“Janta Ko Rajma Jantai Raja”

The restoration of democracy under SDF is followed by the its promise to establish “Janta ko Rajma Jantai Raja”. The section studies how far the party has been able to fulfill its promise? Democracy in one sense means people’s power to rule and making the people the real ruler. Sikkim Democratic Front was formed with the objective of restoring democracy in Sikkim. In the restoration of democracy, the party assured “JANTA KO RAJMA JANTAI RAJA”- In a Popular Regime People are Sovereign. This means that the party believes in the people’s power and people’s rule.

The SDF was voted to power in 1994 with the slogan that “Janta Ko Rajma Jantai Raja”, i.e. In people’s regime, people are sovereign. It means that the government respects for peoples’ power, peoples’ effective empowerment and their capabilities and choices. On 12th December 1994, SDF swept the elections based on the principles of law, spirit of democracy and good governance. In a state like Sikkim the overwhelming majority are poor people with handful of rich people. The party thus, feels that the real rulers are the poor majority and hence the process of marginalisation of the poor has to be stopped.

The SDF had claimed that one of the biggest achievements of the SDF government is the restoration and institutionalization of democracy in Sikkim. For the first time in the history of Sikkim the poor people of this tiny state realised their power as a ruler; “Janta Ko Rajma Jantai Raja” (Government of Sikkim, IPR, 2005, p. 141). Fear psychosis which existed in the previous regimes no longer

existed. The party in government have been able to restore freedom of speech and the rule of law. Everyone has been given ample opportunities to express them freely. The infrastructure requirement of the judicial system is completely met. Lok Adalats have been constituted in all the nine sub-divisions of Sikkim with a view of bringing justice to the door of the poor people. The Chief Minister meets the public every Monday and Tuesday to listen to the grievances of the people and is sent to different departments through the Grievance Cell for immediate address of the problems of the people. Similarly he meets Government employees, Panchayat's, Ex-MLA's various associations and students every Friday of the week. People's participation is seen to be greater in the SDF led government. A policy has been formulated by the government and as per this policy the local rural people of that particular area are given the construction and maintenance contracts in those areas where the work is to be implemented. The work of Rs 10 lakhs is given to the Panchayat level, Rs 20 lakhs at the Block level, Rs 50 lakhs at the Sub-Divisional level and Rs 100 lakhs at the District level. Housing being an essential element for socio-economic development of the society, the Government under the SDF have been providing grant of Rs 20,000 to the homeless people of the state to assist them to construct houses under the Rural Housing Scheme launched since 1995-1996. Indira Awas Yojna scheme is being implemented to provide shelter to the homeless rural people who are living below the poverty line. Economic programmes are formulated with an aim to create initiative among the poorest of the poor (Govt. of Sikkim, IPR, 2001).

Table: 2

DISTRICT WISE NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES FAMILIES (as on
30.6.2007)

District	Mukhya Mantri Antyodaya Yojna(MMAAY)	Mukhya mantri Khadya Suraksha Abhiyan (MMKSA)	Annapurna Scheme	Extended Antyodaya Annadan yojna (EAAAY)	Below Poverty Line (BPL)
NORTH	994	2048	226	671	2682
EAST	3531	10885	880	2645	11397
SOUTH	2528	65914	514	1522	6614
WEST	2860	5954	654	1760	6220
STATE	<u>9913</u>	<u>25478</u>	<u>2274</u>	<u>6598</u>	<u>26913</u>

Source: Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department, Govt.
of Sikkim, 2007.

Table: 3

DISBURSEMENT OF HOUSING LOANS (as on 31st March 2002)

YEAR	CATEGORY	No. of Loans	Amount of loan (in lakh)	Rate of interest	Recovery rate (%)
1998-99	Upto Rs 50000	312	109.64	14.50 %	65%
	Rs 50001 -100000	484	291.68	16.00%	
	Rs 100001-200000	92	138.60	18.00%	
	Rs 200001-300000	1	3.00	18.00%	
	Rs 300001-500000	-	-	-	
	Rs 500001 and above	-	-	-	
1999- 2000	Upto Rs 50000	204	65.68	14.50%	
	Rs 50001 -100000	243	183.60	15.00%	

	Rs 100001-200000	177	249.54	18.50%	71%
	Rs 200001-300000	3	8.00	19.00%	
	Rs 300001-500000	-	-	-	
	Rs 500001 and above	-	-	-	
2000-01	Upto Rs 50000	20	6.84	14.50%	86%
	Rs 50001 -100000	6	4.08	15.00%	
	Rs 100001-200000	4	7.00	18.50%	
	Rs 200001-300000	2	6.00	18.50%	
	Rs 300001-500000	1	4.50	18.50%	
	Rs 500001 and above	-	-	-	
2001-02	Up to Rs 50000	5	14.50	14.50%	85%
	Rs 50001 -100000	17	15.00	15.00%	
	Rs 100001-200000	24	37.95	18.50%	
	Rs 200001-300000	4	11.50	18.50%	
	Rs 300001-500000	-	-	-	
	Rs 500001 and above	-	-	-	

Source: Sikkim Housing and Development Board, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok, 2002

For the protection of the women and women's empowerment the government formed the Sikkim Women Commission on 12th November 2001. The government under the SDF initiated steps towards gender equality and empowerment of women by being the first to appoint a women minister Rinzing Ongmu from Ranka constituency during the first term of SDF Government in 1994. Kalawati Subba from Yoksum constituency was appointed in the most prestigious post of the Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly in 1999. For the protection of women 33% seats in the

Panchayati Raj is reserved for women. Women have got the opportunity to assert themselves because of the emergence of the SDF government. In the Panchayati Raj Chandramaya Subba was elected as Zilla Adhaksha from west district in 2004 and Nimkit Lepcha was elected as Zilla Adhaksha from south district in 1999 Panchayat election in Sikkim. Lassey Doma Bhutia from Assam Lingzey constituency was elected as Zilla Adakshya in 2004. In Sikkim, according to the Panchayati Raj update ISS Information and Documentation Centre, Bangalore 2003, there were 293 women in Gram Panchayat, which was 32.44% and 37 elected women in Zilla Parishad, which was 37% of the total. Table (2) shows women's representation in the PRIs in Sikkim.

Table: 4

Women Representation in PRIs in Sikkim

Local Body	Women	SC	ST	OBC	Others
Gram Panchayat	293	40	186	200	184
Zilla Panchayat	37	05	33	30	32

Source: Durga, Chettri, Sikkim Academi, Gangtok, 2007.

Table below shows the details of the number of post occupied by women representatives as; a) President, Vice President and Secretary in Gram Panchayats and b) Adhakshaya and Up Adhakshaya in Zilla Panchaya (as on September 2007).

Table: 5

District Wise Women Representation in Gram Panchayat as President, Vice-President and Secretary.

Gram Panchayat	South	West	East	North	Total
President	13	10	08	02	33
Vice-President	11	20	21	09	61
Secretary	09	09	10	01	29

Source: Sikkim Government Gazettee, 2002.

Table: 6

District Wise Women Representation in Z illa Panchayat, Adhakshya and Up- Adhakshaya.

Zilla Panchayat	South	West	East	North	Total
Adhakshaya	01	-	-	-	01
UP-Adhakshaya	-	01	-	-	01

Source: Sikkim Government Gazette, 2002.

Since 2000, the government has made the provision of reservation of seats to all the categories of people in all government jobs. For the Scheduled Caste seat reserved is 6%, Scheduled Tribe up to 33%, 21% to the Most Backward Classes and 14% seats are reserved for the Other Backward Classes. Reservation of seats for women in government jobs has been extended up to 30%. The provision also includes 3% seat reservation for ex-servicemen, 3% for physically handicapped and 2% for the sportsmen and artists.

For speedy and smooth functioning of administration at the grassroots level, 24 administrative centres were opened. People's Administration system is introduced where the power has been transferred to villages through panchayat's. To ensure greater role of Panchayat's in planning and administration, Gram Panchayat Administrative Centre has been made operational from 1st July, 2003 in all the Gram Panchayat Units (Lama, 2003).

The Government in the budget session (1995-1996) passed the Municipal Corporation Bill, Motor Vehicles Bill and the Language Bill. The party President Pawan Chamling stated that it was obligatory for the SDF government to produce a white paper and prevent misconduct and misrule.

Language being an important factor for the development of the society, the regional languages like Bhutia, Limboo, Lepcha are being taught at the college level also and the government claims that it is working towards the inclusion of these languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Languages like Tamang, Gurung, Rai, Sherpa, Manger, Newar and Sunwar have been recognised as state languages for its protection. Separate Welfare Boards for ST, SC and OBCs/MBCs have been constituted in 2000 by the government for the development and implementation of various programmes for the weaker sections of the population.⁵⁸ Various schemes for the welfare and development of women, SCs, STs, OBCs and handicapped and aged people are being implemented in the state which includes Indira Mahila, Balika Samridhi Yojna, small family scheme to delay marriage etc. A total 803 beneficiaries are covered under Balika Samridhi Jojana (Government of Sikkim, Sikkim: A Statistical Report, Directorate of

⁵⁸ Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 have been extended and enforced in the state to prevent atrocities against the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.

Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2004-2005, p. 1810). The women in Sikkim are being encouraged by offering attractive incentives, widow remarriage scheme, and granting pensions to widows of ex-servicemen.

In Sikkim the weaker sections mainly comprises of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Most of the population belonging to the weaker sections live below the poverty line and are mostly dependent on agriculture.

Table below shows poverty ratio in Sikkim in various years:

TABLE: 7

YEAR WISE POVERTY PERCENTAGE IN SIKKIM

	1973-74	1987-88	1993-94
Rural	52.67	39.35	45.01
Urban	36.92	9.94	7.73
Total	50.86	36.00	41.43

Source: Department of Information and Public Relation, Govt. of Sikkim, 2001.

TABLE: 8

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF BPL AND APL HOUSEHOLD WITHIN DISTRICT, 2006

DISTRICT	BPL HOUSEHOLD	APL HOUSEHOLD	TOTAL HOUSEHOLD
NORTH	18.65	81.35	100
EAST	13.53	86.47	100
SOUTH	24.38	75.62	100
WEST	26.54	73.46	100
TOTAL	19.33	80.67	100

Source: Census of India, State Socio- Economic Census, 2006.

It shows that when the SDF came to power in 1994, the poverty percent in Sikkim was 41.43%, out of which 45.01 was in the rural areas and 7.73 in urban areas. In the district wise distribution of BPL persons, the west district had the highest percent of people living below the poverty line with 26.54% of households living below the poverty line. The south district had the second highest percent of households-24.38% living below the poverty line. The north district had 18.65% households living below poverty line and the east district had 13.53% households living below poverty line. The table below shows that 19.33% households are below poverty line in the state. The government under the SDF has given prime importance to poverty alleviation programmes in Sikkim by providing financial aids and subsidies under health, education, agriculture, animal husbandry and horticulture etc. to enable the weaker sections to stand on their own feet and fight against their economic hardships. The social welfare wing under the welfare department in keeping with the government policies, implements programmes for the upliftment of the poor and needy handicapped persons, old and the aged, destitute and orphan children.

The government under the SDF implemented BPL schemes under BPL and Antodaya Anna Yojana from April, 1999 and distributed rice, Sugar and oil at subsidised rates to the people belonging to below poverty line. Under Antodaya Yojna 6711 beneficiaries were benefited and under Annapurna Scheme 2411 beneficiaries were benefited. Annapurna beneficiaries got their entitlement directly from 24 food go-downs. The BPL and Antodaya beneficiaries receive food grains through Fair Price Shops, MPCS and CCS approved by the department in each panchayat ward. In the east district the total number of beneficiaries under the BPL schemes are 17621 persons, the south district has 10951 beneficiaries, the west district has 10802 and the north district has

4077 beneficiaries under the scheme. Under this scheme the beneficiaries get 35 kg Rice per month per family @Rs 9/- per kg, 700 gms sugar per head per month @Rs14/25 PER KG, 1.25 litres Oil per unit per month in rural area and 1 litre per unit per month in urban area.

Table: 9

TOTAL LIFTING OF RICE AND SUGAR w.e.f April 1999 to March, 2003.

Item	Period	Quantity lifted (in qtls)	Amount (in Rs.)
Rice	April, 1999 to March 2000	7,95,100	67,28,27,900
	April, 2000 to March 2001	84029	6,26,22,899
	April, 2001 to March 2002	1,85,281	12,29,24,610
	April, 2002 to March 2003	193758	4,41,176,681
Sugar	April, 1999 to March 2000	20,230	2,45,63,000
	April, 2000 to March 2001	29,800	3,88,15,000
	April, 2001 to March 2002	31,215	4,14,20,375

Source: Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gangtok, Sikkim, 2004-2005, p. 78

Table: 10

DISTRIBUTION OF RICE UNDER VARIOUS SCHEMES DURING FINANCIAL
YEAR 2001-2002

SL.NO.	SCHEMES	UNIT	QUANTITY DISTRIDUTED
1	Below Poverty Line	Quintals	113730.00
2	Above Poverty Line	Quintals	5579.93
3	Annapurna Scheme	Quintals	1722.00
4	Antodaya Scheme	Quintals	10080.00
	TOTAL		131111.93

Source: Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation,
Gangtok, Sikkim, 2004-2005, p. 79

To promote economic and development activities for the benefit of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes and handicapped persons, the government recognised 89 revenue blocks having a majority of scheduled tribes population and 64 blocks having scheduled caste majority. The government launched three pronged strategy for the development of SC and ST comprising of

- a) Development measures for education and economic development.
- b) Protection measures through Civil Rights Act and SC, ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 and protective discrimination in matters of employment and other facilities.
- c) Intensive and integrated development of areas having majority of scheduled castes and scheduled tribe population.

Table: 11

Schemes implemented for the welfare of Scheduled Caste during
1998-1999

S L	Department / Sector	Name of the Scheme	Physical and Financial Achievements	
			No.of Beneficiaries	Expenditure
1	Education	Stipends to SC students for undergoing one year Computer Course at CCCT.	11	Rs. 26,400
2	-do-	Stipends to SC students for undergoing Shorthand & Typing Course	10	Rs. 21,000
3	-do-	Stipends to SC students for undergoing six months computer Course at CCCT.	20	Rs.18,000
4	-do-	Winter Coaching Classes	30	Rs. 15,000
5	Animal husbandry	Distribution of piglets at Khamdong, east Sikkim.	100	Rs.,2,12,020
6	Other expenditure	Distribution of Sewing Machine at different villages	87	Rs. 3,20,421
		Total	258	Rs. 6,12,841

Source: Department of Social Welfare, Govt of Sikkim, 2005

During the Eighth Five Year Plan period emphasis was given on family oriented schemes and income generating schemes (Government of Sikkim, IPR, Sikkim, 2001). In order to encourage the students from the backward section of the society scholarships has been granted to students according to the guidelines of the

Government of India.⁵⁹ The Welfare department has also constructed a 50-bedded hostel at Palzor Namgyal Girls Senior School, Gangtok for OBC student's in 1999-2000. A 50 bedded hostel at Chakung Destitute Home had also been constructed. Residential school cum hostel for boys and girls at Kamrang, Namchi, South Sikkim and SC girls hostel cum vocational training centre at Tadong, east Sikkim has been constructed in the year 1999-2000.

Table: 12

District wise number of Welfare Institutions/Destitute Homes
Beneficiaries

District	Welfare Institutions/Destitute Homes	Number of beneficiaries
North	5	171
East	16	1212
South	7	185
West	5	681
state	33	2109

Source: Department of Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs,
Govt. of Sikkim, 2006-07

The motive behind these constructions is to facilitate and benefit these weaker sections of the society. Stipends are provided to disabled students studying outside the state in special schools and

⁵⁹ The state government has worked towards the implementation of these programmes and Sikkim Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes Development Corporation (SABCCO) under the Social Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim was established under the Companies Act (Sikkim) 1961 on 29th February 1996.

scholarships for those studying in government schools and government colleges in Sikkim. Subsistence allowance at the rate of Rs 500/- pm is being given to identify disabled persons. Old and needy persons of 65 years and above who have no regular source of income are provided old age pension. The pension which was Rs 100/- pm before 1994 had been increased to Rs 400/- per month since April, 2007 (Government of Sikkim, Social Welfare Department, 2008).

A special school was established for the Hearing impaired children on 1st June 2004 at Sichey Busty, Gangtok. The Sikkim State Commission for Women Act has been extended to the whole of Sikkim and the Commission has been functioning from 24th November 2002 with eight members including the Chairperson. The Commission studies the economic, social and health situation of women in the state with particular emphasis on the tribal areas, which are underdeveloped.

In the year 1999-2000, the state government implemented the central schemes like (HYV) High Yielding Variety seeds, chemical fertilizers for maintaining soil health and promoting crop production in the fields. From 2002-03 the state government schemes includes use of organic manures such as farm-yard manure, composts, vermi-composts, green manure etc. as well as bio-fertilizers as micro-organisms like Rhizobium, PSM, Azotobacter, Azospirillum etc. The main idea is to avoid intake of chemical residues with food, to preserve and maintain soil ecology with living activities and in good health and to minimise expenditure on agriculture inputs. From 2003-04 the farmers are being given technology training and demonstrations at all the selected Model villages. The government also provided centrally sponsored schemes like Integrated Cereals Development Programme, National Pulses Development Programme, and

Oilseeds Production Development Programme. The state government has implemented the programme of centrally sponsored schemes on National Watershed Development Programme for Rain fed Area (NWDPA) and comprehensive package of agriculture development activities.

The SDF government in order to help the poor farmer's exempted the farmer's from paying toll tax for their products brought to bazaar for sale. The poor rural masses are helped by the state government who is distributing free LPG to families living below the poverty line. 50% rebate is being granted to rural household on electricity and a Janta Bhawan has been constructed at Gangtok for the poor.

"Janta Ko Raj Ma Jantai Raja"- whether the SDF government has been successful in making the janta the ruler will be more clear when an in depth study is made on the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Sikkim. Decentralised governance is a part of democracy since it ensures popular participation in decision making. We will look at the working of these decentralised bodies with an emphasis on the devolution of power and financial resources. This is what we are going to do in the next section of the chapter.

Section III

Democratic Decentralisation

It is important to discuss democratic decentralisation in Sikkim under the SDF because Pawan Chamling, SDF party president, claims that democratic decentralisation an important aspect of democracy was completely absent before the SDF came to power

in 1994. We note that Democratic decentralisation for development through the establishment of Panchayati Raj Institutions is one of the main concerns of the Sikkim Democratic Front government. The government gave attention to strengthen these institutions where they existed and provided necessary administrative and financial resources to these institutions so that they acquire the capacity for planning and implementation of development programmes which are important for economic development in the rural areas.

The concept of Panchayat Raj is not alien for the society in Sikkim. In the past the state was exclusively concerned with the urban affairs and neglected the rural poor, who had to run their affairs on their own. But Sikkim had their own councils called "Gyeme" (village elders) in Sikkimese Bhutia language and "Panchayat" in the Nepali Language. The head of the Gyeme was called the Khyomee. The traditional panchayat's were mainly concerned with the trial of petty village cases which were referred to them by the judicial authorities. They were not concerned with the welfare activities of the areas. The number of members of the Panchayat's was not fixed and not permanent. They usually consisted of five people or "Panch".

Panchayats was reorganised by the Sikkim government for the first time in January, 1948 by constituting an Elakha Panchayat Tribunal in every estate consisting of the Landlord and a government recognised Panchayat consisting of four villagers of the estate elected by the people with the powers to hear suits up to a value of Rupees one hundred only. The criminal jurisdiction extended to petty offences, breach of law and order simple hurt, wrongful restraint, criminal force, assault, theft and misappropriation and criminal breach of trust of money amounting to less than rupees ten only, mischief to property and person,

insult and abuse, and misconduct by a drunken person. The panchayat's were empowered to impose a fine of twenty five rupees only.⁶⁰ The establishment of well constituted panchayat's was further strengthened on 21st May 1950 and immediate steps were taken to institute village panchayat's by holding elections.⁶¹ Panchayat elections could not be held in 1954 owing to strong political opposition. Attempts were made to institute village Panchayat's on an elective basis during the period till 1965. Major attempt was made to strengthen panchayat's throughout Sikkim in 1962 but it failed to do so.

The Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1965 came into force from December, 1965 which constituted 213 block panchayat's, 68 in East Sikkim, 66 in South Sikkim, 60 in West Sikkim and 19 in North Sikkim. The Block Sabha consisted of adults who were Sikkim subjects, 21 years of age and those who paid land revenue as local tax to the government in their names. The election was not contested on a party or political platform. The first Panchayat election was held in 1966 under the supervision of the Chief Election Officer and the Land Revenue Secretary to the Sikkim Government. The election was conducted in 142 panchayat units. The second panchayat elections was held in April 1969 in 105 units of the total 213 as panchayat's of 108 units were declared uncontested. In 1982, a new Act was enacted which introduced the constitution of the Zilla or District Panchayat. Since its inception in

⁶⁰ This was the first recorded attempt to establish panchayat's in Sikkim which was made in 1948 under Notification No. 3052-254/PS dated 24/01/1948.

⁶¹ On 15th August, 1951 the Sikkim Government issued a notification in the Sikkim Darbar Gazette superseding the earlier notification of 1948 which stated that the Panchayat's were to be elected for a term of three years and render welfare services like to establish primary schools in conformity with the government regulation and set up amenities like traveller's rest houses, wayside benches, repair village paths, set up cattle ponds etc. and jurisdiction in civil cases up to a value of rupees one hundred only.

1982, three elections from gram panchayat's were held viz. 1983, 1988 and 1993 prior to the coming of the SDF government.

The Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1993 (Act, No, 6 of 1993) was enacted and notified on 18/10/1993. This Act follows the guidelines laid down by the Constitution's 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 for the constitution of panchayat's in the State.⁶² The Act for the first time accords constitutional status to the local government institutions and ensure the reservation of seats for women in Panchayat's. The Act constituted a three tier structure at Panchayati Raj Institutions- all states to have uniform three tier Panchayati Raj structure.⁶³ At the base is Gram Panchayat. Gram Panchayat covers a village or group of villages. The intermediary level is the Mandal or Block level. At the apex is the Zilla Panchayat covering the entire rural area of the district. The amendment also made a provision for the mandatory creation of the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha would comprise of all the adult members registered as voters in the Panchayat area. All the levels of PRI are elected directly by the people. The term of each panchayat body is five years.

Twenty- nine subjects which were earlier in the state list were identified and listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution. These subjects are to be transferred to the PRIs. These subjects were mostly linked with the development and welfare at the local levels. The actual transfer of these functions depends upon the state legislation. Each state decides how many

⁶² The 73rd Amendment Act came into force on 24th April.

⁶³ The following provisions were ensured by the Act:

Reservation of one third of the total number of seats to women in all the levels of Panchayat's.

Reservation of one third of seats for women STs and SCs from the total number of seats reserved for STs and SCs in all the three tiers.

c) Reservation of one third of offices of Chairpersons of Panchayat's at all levels for women including women from SCs and STs.

of these twenty nine subjects would be transferred to the local bodies. The Act thus paved the way for the exercise of political rights in local self government and participation of the rural people in grassroots politics.

Keeping in view the new Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act of 1992, the state government of Sikkim enacted a new legislation; the Panchayat Raj Act 1993. The new Act incorporated all the mandatory provisions of the Act including the reservation of seats for SCs, STs and women in Panchayat's. The reservations were introduced accordingly in 157 (presently 166) village panchayat's and four district Panchayat's of Sikkim. In 1997 the first election was held under this Act. The PRIs have been reorganised as per the 73rd and 74th Amendment Act 1992 accordingly the Sikkim Panchayat Act 1993 was enacted which emphasized on reviving of Gram Sabha's, direct election for seat in Panchayat's at villages and other level, reservation of seats for weaker sections SC, ST and OBC women, devolution of power to the grassroots level.

TABLE: 13

Details of Fund transferred to Zilla Panchayats During 2006 -07.

Sl .No	Departments	EAST	WEST	NORTH	SOUTH	TOTAL
1	Administrative Expenses	53.14	43.67	33	48.77	178.58
2	Development fund for Repair / maintanence (state plan)	56	56	56	56	224
3	Develpoment fund (T.F.C)	9.75	9.75	9.75	9.75	39
4	Local area Development fund	4	4	4	4	6

Source: Rural Management and Development Department, Govt. of Sikkim, 2006-07

TABLE: 14

Details of fund transferred to Panchayats during 2006 -07

Sl. No	Departments	EAST	WEST	NORTH	SOUTH	TOTAL
1	Administrative Expenses	40.84	20.3	14.69	24.82	100.65
2	Development fund for Repair / maintenance (state plan)	65.67	64.57	31.67	59.99	221
3	Develpoment fund (T.F.C)	510	500	200	450	1660
4	Local area Development fund	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Rural Management and Development Department, Govt. Of Sikkim, 2006-07

In the observation made under Rural Management Development, Govt. of Sikkim, that in the working of Panchayati Raj Institution in Sikkim it is found out that the 73rd Amendment Act and 74th Amendment Act has been implemented in the state of Sikkim. 33% seats have been reserved for women, which had been increased to 40%, 24 administrative centres have been opened for speedy and smooth functioning of administration at the grassroots level. Panchayat's have the jurisdiction over primary schools, primary health centre, subsidiary health centres, V=VLO centres, library, community information centres, village tourism, small scale-irrigation projects and community buildings.

One of the remarkable achievements of the SDF government is the degree of decentralisation of power in the rural areas. The villagers got more powers through Panchayat's to make the people partners in finalising schemes and implementing them at the grassroots level.⁶⁴ The Sikkim Panchayat Act 1993 has been

⁶⁴ Under Article 243 G of the Constitution of India, the Panchayati Raj Institutions Of Sikkim are empowered to function as " institutions of self government", enhancing their powers to plan and implement programmes of economic development and social justice.

amended to bring more participation of people in the village development of the society. On the basis of this for the first time in the state party based panchayat election was held in October 1997. By holding this party based election in 1997, democracy was broadened in Sikkim. There was devolution of functions and decentralisation of power. Panchayat's were vested with powers and adequate manpower to assist them in the administration and technical works. Funds were transferred to the Panchayat's both from the centre and state governments. In addition to this the state government transferred funds for the development purpose, for the establishment of Panchayati Raj. During 2003-2004 the state government transferred Rs 3600.00 lakhs to the Panchayat's for development works only (Govt. of Sikkim, Department of Information and Public Relations, 2005, p 125).

Table: 15

DETAILS OF FUND TRANSFERRED TO PANCHAYATS DURING 2002-03
AND 2003-04 TO ZILLA PANCHAYATS

SL. No	Departments	2002 -2003 (ZILLA PANCHAYATS)				
		East	West	North	South	total
1	Rural development					
a)	Administrative expenses	24	23.8	23.2	23.8	94.8
b)	Developmental fund	15	15	15	15	60
c)	Developmental funds for repair/maintenance(state plan)	5.7	19.32	9.35	5.7	40.07
	Total (RDD)	44.7	58.12	47.55	44.5	194.5
2	Indusries Deptt.	0.5	2.75	2.1	0.75	6.1
3	Health and Family Welfare	8.75	20.6	8.8	0	38.15
4	Irrigation deptt.	0.49	0.39	0.3	0.4	1.58
5	Agriculture deptt	1.8	1.5	1.5	0	4.8

6	Horticulture deptt.	2.5	2.5	2.5	1.25	8.75
7	Fisheries	1.1	0.4	1.1	0.95	3.55
8	A.H.V.S.	7	22	6	22	57
9	Tourism	0	0	12.5	0	12.5
10	Social Welfare	0	0	11.5	0	11.5
11	Education deptt.	1.41	3.46	0.96	2.17	8
12	Urban development	30	0	0	0	30
	Total (other deptt.)	53.6	53.6	47.26	27.52	181.9
	Grand total	98.3	111.7	94.81	72.02	376.8

Source: A Statistical Profile, DESME, 2004-2005.

Table: 16

DETAILS OF FUND TRANSFERRED TO PANCHAYATS DURING 2002-03
AND 2003-04 TO GRAM PANCHAYAT'S

SL. No	Departments	2002 -2003 (GRAM PANCHAYATS)				
		East	West	North	South	total
1	Rural development					
a)	Administrative expenses	15.13	15.03	5.35	14.13	49.0
b)	Developmental fund	15	15.3	6	13.5	49.8
c)	Developmental funds for repair/maintenance(state plan)	0	0	0	0	0
	Total (RDD)	30.13	30.33	11.35	27.63	99.4
2	Indusries Deptt.	-	-	-	-	-
3	Health and Family Welfare	-	-	-	-	-
4	Irrigation deptt.	-	-	-	-	-
5	Agriculture deptt	-	-	-	-	-
6	Horticulture deptt.	-	-	-	-	-

7	Fisheries	-	-	-	-	-
8	A.H.V.S.	-	-	-	-	-
9	Tourism	-	-	-	-	-
10	Social Welfare	-	-	-	-	-
11	Education deptt.	-	-	-	-	-
12	Urban development	-	-	-	-	-
	Grand total	30.13	30.33	11.35	27.63	99.4

Source: A Statistical Profile, DESME, 2004-2005.

Sikkim follows a two-tier system of Panchayati Raj with the Zilla Panchayat at the district level and the Gram Panchayat at the village level. State is divided into four Zilla's or districts presently consisting of 95 Territorial constituencies and 163 Gram Panchayat units comprising of 891 wards. The traditional institutions of Lachung and Lachen known as the Dzumsas were deemed to be Gram Panchayat units for the purpose of the Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1993 and exercise its traditional powers and functions.⁶⁵

The table below shows the district wise number of Zilla panchayat, Gram panchayat, and panchayat ward in Sikkim.

⁶⁵ At the District level, the Dzumsas were recognised as Territorial Constituencies of the North District Zilla Panchayats.

TABLE: 17

DISTRICT WISE NUMBER OF ZILLA PANCHAYAT, GRAM PANCHAYAT, AND PANCHAYAT WARD, PANCHAYAT GHAR, PANCHAYAT MEMBER.

District	No. of Zilla Panchayat Members		No. of Gram Panchayat		No. of Panchayat Ward		No. of Panchayat Ghar			No. of Panchayat members	
	2002-07	2007-12	2002-07	2007-12	2002-07	2007-12	constructed	Under construction	Not constructed	Zilla Panchayat	Gram Panchayat
WEST	25	25	51	53	274	283	29	12	10	25	274
SOUTH	24	23	45	45	255	257	42	4	0	24	255
NORTH	20	20	20	21	103	108	13	7	0	20	103
EAST	31	26	50	44	273	243	29	11	37 to go under municipalities	31	273
STATE	100	94	166	163	905	891	113	34	13+7=20	100	905

Source: Sikkim: A Statistical Profile, DESME, 2006-07.

Table below shows the proportional reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes in accordance with the population of the state and the Sikkim Panchayati Raj update in Sikkim.

TABLE: 18

Proportional representative for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in panchayat election 2006-07

1	SCHEDULED CASTE (SC)	7 %
2	SCHEDULED TRIBE (ST)	38%
3	MOST BACKWARD CLASS (MBC)	23 %
4	OTHER BACKWARD CLASS (OBC)	23 %
5	UNRESERVED	9 %
	TOTAL	100 %

SOURCE: Panchayat Raj in Sikkim, Rural Management and Development Department, Govt. of Sikkim

TABLE: 19

SIKKIM PANCHAYATI RAJ UPDATE

Sl. No	District	Territorial Constituencies	GPU Nos	Total No of GPU members
1	WEST	25	53	283
2	SOUTH	23	45	257
3	EAST	27	44	243
4	NORTH	20	21	108
	TOTAL	95	163	891

SOURCE: Panchayati Raj in Sikkim, Rural Management and Development Department, Govt. of Sikkim

TABLE: 20**GRAM PANCHAYAT UPDATE**

District	Sc (w)	SC	ST (W)	ST	MBC (w)	MBC	OBC (w)	OBC	UR (w)	UR	Total
WEST	7	8	53	77	30	49	21	34	1	3	283
SOUTH	6	10	34	48	35	54	27	37	4	2	257
EAST	8	11	33	50	22	31	32	46	1	9	243
NORTH	1	1	41	63	-	-	-	-	-	2	108
TOTAL	22	30	161	238	87	134	80	117	6	16	891

SOURCE: Panchayati Raj in Sikkim, Rural Management and Development Department, Govt. of Sikkim

NB. Inclusive of the two Dzumsas in north district, Lachen and Lachung, total number of Panchayat members including Zilla panchayat members is 891.

Table: 21**NUMBER OF WOMEN PANCHAYAT ELECTED FROM**

Sl No	Zilla Panchayat	
1	West	11
2	South	9
3	East	11
4	North	7
	Total women panchayat in Zilla Panchayat	38

Table: 22

Sl No	Gram Panchayat	
1	West	112
2	South	106
3	East	96
4	North	42
	Total women panchayat in Gram Panchayat	356

Total Women Elected Representatives in Sikkim 397

Source: Panchayati Raj in Sikkim, Rural Management and Development Department, Government of Sikkim.

While talking about decentralization in Sikkim, it is also right to talk about Dzumsa-traditional institution in Sikkim. The traditional laws of Sikkim have been upheld by the Supreme Court, the traditional system of governance which prevailed in the villages of Lachen and Lachung in North Sikkim, known as the Dzumsas were continued without any changes. This system of governance is traditional and follows the tribal social organisational set, which is a unique feature that is different from other parts of the state. This traditional village level body consists of the elders of every household of the village including women and Lama's of the religious sect. Two persons are elected from amongst the members of the Dzumsa and are known as the senior and junior Pipon. The Pিপনs are assisted in their work by the representative of the religious sect (Lamas) called the Chutimpa. The Pipon have extensive powers in accordance with the customary laws practices.

The Dzumsa performs all the powers for trials of cases in their respective villages. The term of office is for one year. No office is nominated to these Dzumsa's. All office bearers are directly elected by the village community.

Pipon: The highest office bearers in the administrative hierarchy and are directly elected by the village community.

Gyapon: The next in the administrative hierarchy. They are also elected.

Thimpeon: are the jury members elected during the time of disputes or settlement of cases.

Mong-Khim or Dzumsa house: is the place where people meet to discuss their problem or to transact important business of the welfare of the community.

Dzumsa Meeting: the meetings are called to conduct public business (Government of Sikkim, RMDD,)

Out of 166 Gram Panchayat Units 105 units have been provided with self-contained pucca panchayat ghars. In accordance with the Constitutional 73rd amendment Act, the state government constituted the State Finance Commission. The commission assessed the financial position of the panchayat's and made specific recommendations to the government on measures needed to improve the financial position of the Panchayati Raj institutions in the state. Since 1997, the state government had made the provision of granting honorarium to the panchayat's and had enhanced the annual grants from 10,000 to 15,000 rupees per annum. Panchayat Assistants (PA's) were appointed to advice the panchayat's and conduct local survey, collect data for village plan for greater panchayat role and overall socio-economic development of the society.

Sikkim Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) an autonomous apex level training institute for Panchayat's was established which is involved in the skill developmental needs for rural development programmes. During 1995-1997, 100 numbers of panchayat assistants and 200 numbers of elected panchayat members were trained on different on-going schemes of the Department, which included rule awareness and rural management crash courses for the elected Panchayat's (Government of Sikkim, IPR, 1997, p. 34).

After coming to power in 1994, the government had set aside 70 percent of the state's annual budget for rural development. Reservation of seat for women in Panchayati Raj Institution was increased from 33% to 40%. The government opened 24 Block Administrative Centres for speedy and smooth functioning of administration at the grassroots level. The decentralisation process in the state is fast enough for which Sikkim has been graded as a leading state of the country in power decentralisation. To introduce the system of "Peoples Administration" power has been transferred to villages through Panchayat's. Policy has been framed for award of construction and maintenance of contracts to the people of the area where work is to be implemented. This has been done in order to generate employment in the rural areas. For rural development 10 percent of the plan budget is channelized through the Panchayat. Gram Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat's directly receive Rs 10 lakhs and Rs 60 lakhs for developmental works. The Adhyaksha's and Upa-Adhyaksha's of Zilla Panchayat's have been given status of ministers of state and Deputy Minister, respectively. Policy has been implemented which allows Gram Panchayat's to plan developmental activities of their area. To encourage rural people's representatives to work for the people the government has introduced "Pachayatshri" awards. Libraries

have been established to keep Panchayat members in touch with the latest happenings and knowledge.

With the increase in powers and functions of the panchayat's, local problems are resolved through Panchayat's and NGOs at the local level. To build peoples' confidence, the government has adopted a strategy that mixes decentralisation of power and people's involvement. Suchna Kendra's have been set up in all 163 Gram Panchayat's and training, workshops to the Panchayat's under State Institute for Rural Development are organised regularly to increase the rural people's participation (Govt. of Sikkim, Sikkim: A Statistical Profile, 2004-2005).

All the 29 subjects as per the XI schedule have been transferred to the Panchayt's for enhancing their capacity to work. Computer training programs to the panchayat members are being imparted. Policy initiatives are being undertaken for empowering panchayat's through power decentralisation. 27 GPUs of Sikkim were awarded the prestigious 'Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP)' by the President of India, Abul Kalam on 4th May 2007 at New Delhi. The NGP was awarded to these GPUs for having achieved 100% sanitation in the villages (Government of Sikkim, Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Revolution, 2004-05).

Delivering a speech at India- Bangladesh workshop on " Democracy, Development and Participation" on 13th October, 2003, the Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling stated that the SDF government's core intent is to make each village unit in the state a self-sustainable entity (Govt. of Sikkim, Sikkim in South East Asia and Europe, IPR, 2007). Sikkim has been one of the few states of the country to devolve and decentralize in a very comprehensive manner. This is done by devolving the financial and institutional powers, empowering, re-skilling and retraining the able-bodied

rural mass and by broadening their choices. The Pachayat's at the village level have been adequately empowered to undertake all development works including community services. This, Pawan Chamling calls as the "rule of the rural people". He further stated that in order to strengthen the institution of Pachayati Raj, the process of power decentralization shall be further expanded and broadened. To ensure greater participation of general public in state administration, Sikkim will be divided into thirty administrative blocks and establish Block Development Office in each of them. Moreover, the Panchayat members shall be further empowered and make more accountable. More powers need to be given to the Zilla Panchayat's for taking up various schemes in public interest.

The Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1993 was passed with passage of the Constitution 43rd and 74th Amendment Act which provided for the involvement of people in the formulation, planning and execution of programmes of economic involvement and social justice. It is primarily aimed at restructuring society towards participatory democracy and laying the foundation for democratic decentralization in Sikkim by transferring all functions listed in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution. Following the Sikkim Panchayati Act, 1993, two tier Panchayati Raj System has been set up in the state. Delimitation of state has been carried on with 100 Zilla Panchayat Territorial Constituencies and 166 Gram Panchayat Units represented by members from 905 panchayat wards, including two traditional local self-governments called Dzumsas at Lachen and Lachung in North Sikkim (Govt. of Sikkim, IPR, 2007, p. 202).⁶⁶

⁶⁶ In 2005, the Sikkim Panchayat Act was amended to insert a provision for one-third reservation for women in the quorum of Gram and Ward sabha to ensure active participation of women in all decisions making.

Women in Sikkim are enjoying greater role and responsibility. 33.113% of total Panchayat strength constitutes of the women. The seats of Zilla Adhyaksha and Zilla Upa-Adhyaksha are reserved for women in every Panchayat election. The state government has given the administrative control of all government institutions like Primary schools, Primary Health Sub-Centres, VLO Centres, Libraries, Community Information Centres, Rural Tourism, Minor Irrigation Works, and Community Centres etc. to the President of Gram Panchayat Unit.

The importance of this type of devolution of power to the panchayat's and the rural people is that the rural people can be the best judge and make each village unit a self-sustainable entity and bring Rural Renaissance.

Section IV

The SDF Government and Substantive Democracy in Sikkim

It is also important to analyse how far the SDF led government has been able to improve the living conditions of the people by implementing policies in the state, and thus improving the underprivileged and poor (weaker) sections of the society. For fulfilling the promise of restoring democracy, bringing socio-economic justice to the rural people and promise to give important and transparent government based on the principles of justice to the people, the SDF government claims that it had aimed at taking development to the villages whereas during the regime of the earlier government most of the developmental projects were Gangtok- centric.

The government under the SDF introduced rural housing scheme which entitled the poor to get a grant of Rs 20,000 who were Sikkim subjects. It promoted and expanded environment friendly venture in horticulture, floriculture and tourism. As compared to earlier governments, centre-state relation has improved and the central government have given a positive response to a long awaited demand for the inclusion of Sikkim in the North East Council

Sikkim Democratic Front Government has provided direct assistance and improved the lives of the needy sections of the population by:

- Exempting poor farmers from paying toll tax for their products brought to bazaar for sale.
 - Providing housing grants of Rs 20,000 each for needy families.
 - Providing GCI sheets free of cost to needy families for house construction.
 - Distributing LPG gas free of cost to families living below the poverty line.
 - Granting 50 percent rebate on electricity to rural households.
 - Constructing a Janta Bhawan at Gangtok for the poor people who visit Gangtok for various purposes.
 - Providing safe drinking water to 100 percent of the population both in rural and urban areas.
 - Achieving 100 percent electrification in rural and urban households in Sikkim.
 - Simplifying the licensing system for rural traders and businessmen desirous to start business in rural areas,
- The government has included all sections of people as beneficiaries.

Table: 23

Physical and Financial Performance Report on Rural Sanitation
Programme for the year 2000-Oct 2003.

Sl.No	District	year	SCHEME (PHYSICAL)					
			HHL	ACH	ISL	ACH	BC	ACH
1	EAST	2000-01	100	30	30	-	1	1
		2001-02	200	200	45	45	-	-
		2002-03	1000	625	300	218	5	2
		2003-04	1500	327	110	25	-	-
	TOTAL			1182	485	228	6	3
2	NORTH	2000-01	50	50	15	15	1	1
		2001-02	83	83	15	15	-	-
		2002-03	100	75	100	70	1	-
		2003-04	500	105	71	8	-	-
	TOTAL			313	201	108	2	1
3	SOUTH	2000-01	109	109	100	10	1	1
		2001-02	35	35	60	60	8	7
		2002-03	35	35	34	34	4	-
		2003-04	11	11	6	6	-	-
	TOTAL			190	200	110	13	8
4	WEST	2000-01	125	125	100	100	1	1

		2001-02	75	75	70	70	4	-
		2002-03	30	30	20	20	-	-
		2003-04	15	15	15	15	-	-
	TOTAL			245	205	205	5	1

Source: A Statistical Profile, Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gangtok, 2004-05.

HHL- Household Latrine

ISL – Institutional Sanitary Latrine

BC –Bathing cubical

ACH – Achieved

Table: 24

STATUS OF THE COVERAGE OF THE PROGRAMME

SL. No	Programme	unit	Coverage status			
			2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04 (upto september)
1	Rural water supply	No. Of Habitation partially covered	0	0	0	0
		No. Of Habitation fully covered	130	126	130	27
		No. Of Habitation not covered	0	0	0	0

2	Rural connectivity	Length in KM	0	0	0	0
3	Rural housing	No. Of houses	0	9600	7250	6000

Source; A Statistical Profile, Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gangtok, 2004-05

People's participation was more in the democratic and political development process. Zigme Sherpa, a resident of Soreng in West Sikkim said that "the Sikkim Sangram Parishad under Nar Bahadur Bhandari, never brought any development work for the villages. She said at least SDF government under Pawan Chamling is doing something for the poor. Suman Gurung of Jorethang in South Sikkim feels the same, "the SDF has always helped the poor people through housing loans and in other ways" The SDF has a strong hold in the villages as other political parties do not have a close connection with the villages as they hardly visit the rural area and interact with the rural mass. Sikkim Democratic Front, thus, a well organised party has done the grassroots work very strong. It can be said that it is a Cadre-based political party like the Communist party of India (Marxist) in West Bengal. The party have made the rural areas very strong through the devolution of power to the Panchayat's. Out of the total 873 wards in rural Sikkim, the SDF controls around 850 wards.

However there are criticisms as well on the government's policies. Biraj Adhikari, an opposition leader had criticised that the SDF leadership is visionless, directionless and full of publicity stunts. Democracy in Sikkim under SDF can be called participatory Democracy where the grass roots are enabled to take part in the working of state administration through panchayat's, though the

final decision is from the top most level. The people are given chance to participate in the democratic process by different means and measures. The panchayat's are directed to conduct meetings with the public and discuss the problems faced by the villagers. Panchayat Bhawans, offices are maintained. People can meet panchayat leaders for different works. This has made the life of people easier. Verifications of many official papers are done at panchayat level so that people do not face any hardship in processing their works. This has made PRIs more responsible.

The State Government has implemented the central schemes under PRI's in order to make peoples' life easy. The schemes like

- 1) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) was launched in the year 2000. The core objective of PMGSY is the rural road connectivity and rural development by promoting access economic and social services and generating productive employment opportunity which also helps in poverty alleviation.
2. Rural Water Supply. The primary objective of the scheme is to provide safe drinking water to the rural people where water supply has not yet been provided. The state government is giving importance to this so as to provide drinking water to all the people in the villages.

The Table below shows the year wise Water Supply Schemes sanctioned under Sikkim Democratic Front.

Table: 25

Year Wise Break Up of Water Supply Schemes Sanctioned

Sl. No..	YEAR	No. Of SCHEMES	COST IN CRORES
1.	1994-95	247	9.76
2	1995-96	448	18.36
3	1996-97	183	9.98
4	1997-98	59	0.82
5	1998-99	594	25.88
6	1999-2000	417	19.46
7	2000-01	103	3.16
8	2001-02	309	16.68
9	2002-03	1	9.02
10	2003-04	476	37.58
11	2004-05	2	1.54
12	2005-06	482	25.82
13	2006-07	2194	9.44
14	2007-08	194	13.22
15	2008-09	156	12.00
	total	3693	212.72

Source: Panchayati Raj in Sikkim, Rural Management and Development Department

3. Model Villages: Construction of Modern Villages is a scheme which has been implemented since 2001-2002 with an objective to encourage village tourism in rural areas and to provide rural shelter to the financial weaker sections in rural areas. The government has sanctioned Model Villages at

- a) Assangthang in South District
- b) Phenzang in East District
- c) Rangang in South District

4. Total sanitation campaign: is being implemented in Sikkim through the sanitation wing of the Rural Department, Government of Sikkim. It has covered at large the sanitation aspect in schools individual households, Anganwadis in rural areas, institutions and public places with sanitation facilities and promoted hygiene, education and proper sanitary habits among students and public in general.

The other schemes being National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Sikkim (NREGAS) which was implemented is 2006 in North District and 2007 in South and East Districts with the objective of providing 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment to each rural household. With the decentralization of power the panchayat and Gram Sabha's have been directed to take up schemes and programmes at villages.

Democracy however simply does not mean the implementation of schemes and policies of the government. Free and fair participation of the people in the decision making ensures successful democratic set up in the state. But there has been an ideological and political debate in the contemporary world regarding democratic rule. Political equality is the core feature of democracy which means political power should be evenly distributed. But here it is not very clear to whom or to what body or persons the power should be distributed. Democratic system which is known as the best form of peoples' rule sometimes restricts political participation which means under the Indian democratic condition the act of voting.

CHAPTER V

MOBILISATION OF THE SUPPORTER'S AND THE ELECTORAL BASE OF THE SDF IN THE STATE I

The chapter analyses the support base of the party among different groups including classes in the state. This chapter and the following one (chapter IV) are based on a field survey conducted in four different constituencies in the four districts of Sikkim. In Sikkim there are 32 constituencies, out of which 17 (seventeen) are general constituencies, 12 (twelve) are reserved for Scheduled Tribe's, 2 (two) for Scheduled Caste's and one seat is reserved for the Sangha (monk). Delimitation of the constituencies was done in 1972 under the Indian Delimitation Act 1972. The number of Assembly Constituencies and Parliamentary constituencies in Sikkim has remained the same since it's first division in 1972. In Sikkim next delimitation of constituencies took place for the general election of 2009. But the current survey is conducted on the basis of the earlier 32 constituencies. The 32 constituencies in different districts are:

WEST DISTRICT

1. Yoksum
2. Geyzing
3. Dentam
4. Bermiok
5. Rinchenpong (ST)
6. Chakung

7. Soreng
8. Daramdin
9. Tashiding (ST)

SOUTH DISTRICT

10. Jorethang – Nayabazaar
11. Ralang (ST)
12. Wok
13. Damthang
14. Melli
15. Rateypani – West Pendam (SC)
16. Temi – Tarku

EAST DISTRICT

17. Central Pendam (East Pendam)
18. Rhenock
19. Regu
20. Loosing – Pacheykhani
21. Pathing (ST)
22. Khamdong (ST)
23. Martam (ST)
24. Rumtem (ST)
25. Assam Lingzey (ST)
26. Ranka (ST)
27. Gangtok

NORTH DISTRICT

28. Dzongu (ST)
29. Lachen – Manshila (ST)
30. Kabi Thingda (ST)
31. Rakdong Tentek (ST)
32. Sangha (Monk)⁶⁷

The survey was conducted in all the four districts of Sikkim. The constituencies covered were; Lachen– Mangshila in the north district, Geyzing in the West district, Damthang in the south district and Gangtok in the East District. Amongst these four constituencies, Gangtok is the only constituency which is urban and the rest are rural constituencies.

The chapter is divided into two sections and several subsections. Section I covers district wise distribution of population, with subsections which covers distribution of population town wise, social category, literacy rate, religion, language, occupation –land holders, agricultural farmers, voters and revenue blocks. Section II, deals with the base of the party in the Damthang constituency of the state. In the next chapter, the chapter that follows we look at the support base of the party in the remaining three constituencies that we have surveyed in the state.

SECTION I

THE PEOPLE IN SIKKIM

⁶⁷ The Sangha constituency is not a territorial constituency; it is reserved for only the monks of all the monasteries in Sikkim.

The study of the support base of the party in the four constituencies surveyed can be better understood when we have an idea regarding the population, literacy rate, linguistic composition, religious composition, social category, occupation of the people, cultivators and land holders, voters and revenue blocks of the state. Hence we in the beginning of chapter in this section look at the distribution of population, literacy rate, language, religion social category, occupation, cultivators and land holders, voters and revenue blocks in Sikkim with a focus on all the four constituencies where the survey was conducted.

District Wise Distribution of Population

Sikkim, with a total area of 7096 Square kilometres constitutes 0.22 percent of the total geographical area of India. According to the regional divisions of census of India, the state is one of the four micro-regions of the North-Eastern Himalayas, other being Darjeeling, Dooars areas of West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh.⁶⁸ The state is divided into four districts – North, South, East and West districts. Namchi is the headquarters of south district, Geyzing of the west district, Mangan of the north district and Gangtok of the east district.

As per the provisional census, 2001, the total population of Sikkim is 5,40,493 persons, consisting of 2,88,217 male and 2,52,276 female in the state. District wise population of Sikkim indicates that the East district has the largest population with 2,44,790 persons, 1,32,745 male and 1,12,045 female population and the North district is the least populated with 41,023 persons out of which 23,410 are male and 17,613 female population. The south district has a population of 1,31,506, out of which 68227 are

⁶⁸ The state is surrounded by Bhutan in the east, Nepal in the west, Tibet in the north and West Bengal in the south.

male and 63279 are female. The population of west district is recorded as 1,23,174, out of which 63835 are male and 59,339 are female (Census of India, 2001). Though the North district occupies the largest area of 4,226 square Kilometres of the state, it is the least populated district due to various factors like hostile geographical conditions, high altitude mountains, glaciers, rugged topography and difficult accessibility.

The table below shows the inter-causal change in population in the four districts of the state in the period from 1981 to 2001.

Table: 1
Inter-Censual change in population- district wise

STATE/ DISTRICTS	1981	1991	2001	2001 MALE	2001 FEMALE
SIKKIM	3,16,385	4,06,457	5,40,493	2,88,217	2,52,276
NORTH	26,455	31,240	41,023	23,410	17,613
EAST	1,38,762	1,78,452	2,44,790	1,32,745	1,12,045
SOUTH	75,976	98,604	1,31,506	68,227	63,279
WEST	75,192	98,161	1,23,174	63,835	59,339

Source: Census of India, 2001, Sikkim Provisional

As per the Census report of 2001, there has been decadal increase in the population in all the four districts of the state. The maximum rise is seen in the East district followed by South, West and the North districts. The rise of population in East district, especially in Gangtok is recorded as the most populated town in Sikkim. Gangtok is the headquarters of east district and the Capital of the state. All the important departments and offices are located at Gangtok. The facilities like easy transportation and communication and job facilities in both government and private

firms have attracted the people from other parts of the state and outside the state.

Distribution of Population: Town Wise

The total number of towns in Sikkim is 8 (eight). North has one town- Mangan, South with two- Jorethang and Namchi, East has three towns- Gangtok, Singtam and Rangpo and West district has two towns- Nayabazar and Geyzing. The population of Mangan is recorded as 1,248 persons out of which, 768 are male and 480 female populations. In the East district, Gangtok comprises of a total population of 29,162 persons out of which 15,816 are male and 13,346 are female. Singtam has a total population of 5,431 persons, with 3,049 males and 2,382 females. Rangpo comprises of a total population of 3,724 persons, with 2,044 male and 1,680 female populations.

The two important towns in south district are Namchi and Jorethang. West district has two towns, Geyzing and Nayabazar. Geyzing has a total population of 828 persons out of which 489 are males and 339 females. Nayabazar comprises of a total population of 996 persons with 537 males and 459 females (Census of India, 2001).

Table: 2.

Population of Town- 2001

DISTRICT	TOWN	MALES		FEMALES		TOWN	
		1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
NORTH	MANGAN	508	768	295	480	803	1248
EAST	GANGTOK	14189	15816	10835	13346	25024	29162
	SINGTAM	2259	3049	1609	2382	3868	5431
	RANGPO	1676	2044	1304	1680	2980	3724

SOUTH	NAMCHI	389	573	241	405	630	978
	JORETHANG	1128	1571	811	1397	1939	2968
WEST	GEYZING	441	489	276	339	717	828
	NAYABAZAR	560	537	485	459	1045	996

Source: Census of India 1991, Sikkim Provision, Population Totals
(Paper 1,2,3 of 2001)

Distribution of Population as Per Social Category

In Sikkim there are mainly three ethnic groups; Bhutia's, Lepcha's and Nepali's. Out of a total population of 5,40,493, the total ST population is 1,11,405.⁶⁹ The scheduled tribe population includes Bhutia's, Lepcha's, Tamangs, Limboos, Sherpas, Tibetans and Yolmos. The Scheduled Tribe's comprises of a total of 1,01,909 persons in the rural areas and 9496 persons in the urban areas. Among the four districts in the state, the north district records the highest percent; 22.33% of ST population in the state. The male population is 56,940 and the female population is 54,465. Bhutia and Lepcha community constitutes the majority of the scheduled tribe population. The Bhutia population is 70,308 in total persons out of which 62,662 are in rural areas and 7,646 in the urban area. In terms of sex wise distribution of population, 35,770 are males and 34,538 are females. Lepcha's are the original scheduled tribes in the state comprising of 40,568 of the total population with 38,757 in the rural areas and 1,811 in the urban areas. 20853 persons comprises of a male population and 19715 female population (Bhatt and Bhargawa, 2005, pp. 48-53).

⁶⁹ Scheduled Tribe population was 20.6% as the two communities –Limboo and Tamang were recognized as Scheduled Tribe only in 2003 and were not enumerated as Scheduled Tribe in 2001 census.

Scheduled Caste Population: The total population of scheduled caste in Sikkim is 27,165 persons, where 1,3807 are males and 13,358 are females i.e. 5.93 percent. The scheduled castes belong to Damai, Majhi, Sarki, Generic caste and Kami. The Damai's are 7,448 in total persons, 3,749 are males and 3,699 females. Kami is the highest among the scheduled caste with a total population of about 17,950, out of which 9,139 are males and 8,811 females. Majhi is probably the group having the least population of 345 persons with 179 males and 166 females. The Generic castes population are 499 in total, 273 males and 226 females.

District wise, the East district has the highest scheduled caste population comprising of 4,405 persons, followed by South district with 2,254 and the West district which has the least number of scheduled caste population with only 288 persons.

Nepalese/Nepali: The remaining category are Nepali's comprising 71, 74 percent of the total population. This category is further divided into OBC (Other Backward Classes), MBC (Most Backward Class), and General groups. OBC includes caste groups like Chettri, Bahun, Pradhan, Bhujel, Jogi and Sanyasi. MBC includes Rai, Gurung, Thapa (Manger) and Sunwar. The general class are the Marwaris, Biharis, Bengalis who have resided in Sikkim before 1975 and whose names are included in the voter list.

Literacy Rate

The Literacy rate in Sikkim has increased steadily since 1971 among both male as well as well as female population.⁷⁰ To raise the literacy rate education has been given priority by the state

⁷⁰ Since Sikkim's merger with the Indian Union in 1975, the literacy rate increased from 34.74% in 1981 to 69.68% in 2001 (Census of India, 1981,1991 and 2001).

governments. Education has been given much priority and free tuition fee, school uniforms, school bags and stationeries' up to class V has been provided by the state government. The provisional census report, 2001 shows that the literacy rate in Sikkim has increased to 69.68 percent in 2001.

Table: 3

Increase in Literacy rate from 1971-2001

YEAR	PERSONS	MALE	FEMALE
1971	17.74	25.35	8.90
1981	34.05	43.95	22.20
1991	56.94	65.70	46.76
2001	69.68	76.73	61.46

Source: Census of India, Provision 2001.

The table shows that the literacy rate in the state has increased rapidly. The total literate persons in the state is 3,22,828 (69.68%) out of which 1,91,326 are males and 1,31,500 females. Literacy rate in the urban areas is much higher than the rural areas. The total number of literate persons in the urban areas is 45,951 persons, out of which 26,407 are males and 19,544 are females, (84.82%). The total number of literate persons in the rural areas are 2,76,877 persons out of which 1,64,919 are female and 1,11,958 are male population (67.07%).

In the district wise distribution of literacy rate, the North district has 69.11% literacy rate comprising of 23,177 persons out of which 15,673 are females and 8,360 males.⁷¹ The total percent of literacy rate in the rural areas is 68.78% and the total percent of literacy rate in the urban areas is 79.41%. According to the 2001 census the east district has the highest literacy rate in the state with 75.57%, 72.89% in the rural area and 84.86% in the

⁷¹ North is the only district where female literacy rate is higher than the male literacy rate.

urban areas. The total number of literates are 1,62, 069, out of which 96255 are males and 65,814 females.

The literacy rate in the south district is 68.12%, comprising of a total 75,400 persons, out of which 43,251 are males and 32,149 are females. The rural area has 72,230 literate persons i.e. 67.43% of the total and 88.92% of the literates is in the urban areas. West district comprises of 61,326 literate persons, out of which 36,147 are males and 25,179 are females.

Table: 4

District wise Literacy Rate- 2001

		PERSONS	MALE	FEMALE	PERCENT
S I K K I M	TOTAL	3,22,828	1,91,326	1,31,500	69.68
	RURAL	2,76,877	1,64,919	1,11,958	67.07
	URBAN	45,951	26,407	19,544	84.82
N O R T H	TOTAL	24,033	8,360	15,673	69.11
	RURAL	23,177	8,059	15,118	68.78
	URBAN	856	301	555	79.41
E A S T	TOTAL	1,62,069	96,255	65,814	75.57
	RURAL	1,21,387	72,974	48,413	72.89
	URBAN	40,682	23,281	17,401	84.86
S O U T H	TOTAL	75,400	43,251	23,149	68.12
	RURAL	72,230	41,441	30,789	67.43
	URBAN	3,170	1,810	1,360	88.92
W E S T	TOTAL	61,326	36,147	25,179	59.31
	RURAL	60,083	35,386	24,697	59.02
	URBAN	1,243	761	482	77.98

Source: Census of India, Provisional 2001

In the East, West and South districts, the male population is higher than the female population. As per the distribution of literacy rate district wise in the state, the Bhutia community has the highest literacy rate with 67.90% followed by the Lepcha's with 65.67%. The literacy rate among the Scheduled Caste is 67.14% (Bhatt and Bhargawa, 2005).

Religion Wise Distribution of Population

The history of religion and socio-religious transformation in Sikkim moved with time and people. According to the 2001 census the believers of Hinduism were more than others with 68.37 % of population, Buddhism with 27.15% and Christians with 3.3%.⁷² The Hindus constitute a great majority in three districts except North. Buddhism is the religion followed by 60.20% of population in the North district. About 26% population in the East district are Buddhist. In the South and West districts more than 71% of the population are Hindus and more than 22% are Buddhist, the Christian's are sparsely distributed in all four districts of the state.⁷³ The Muslims, Sikhs and Jain's constitute a very low share in the population (Census of India, Provisional 2001)

Language

The three major languages spoken in the state are Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha. But due to the overwhelming presence of the Nepalese, Nepali language has become the lingua franca of the state. Officially English and Nepali are used for all purposes. The communities like Bhutia, Lepcha, Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Newari etc

⁷² The spread of Hinduism in Sikkim is traced back to the Gorkha invasion and the Gorkha rule in parts Sikkim for many years before the merger.

⁷³ Influence of Christianity in Sikkim has its background in the Treaty of Titaliya in 1817 A.D when Sikkim became British Protectorate through this treaty.

use their mother tongue as a means of communication within their own communities. For the preservation of the languages and scripts of the ethnic groups the state government have promised to take steps for its promotion.⁷⁴ At the college level languages like Bhutia, Lepcha and Limboo were also introduced as an elective subject under the newly established Sikkim University.

Occupation

Sikkim being an agricultural land, agriculture and allied activities has been the mainstay of the majority of the Sikkimese people.⁷⁵ The economic activity of Sikkim is primarily mix-farming-agriculture, horticulture and livestock rearing. The mixed farming system of agriculture, horticulture and livestock rearing practices are common in Sikkim. The climate of Sikkim is favourable for growing a large number of high- value cash crops such as cardamom, seed potato, ginger, variety of fruits, off-season vegetables and numerous other horticultural crops (Subba, 2008).⁷⁶ The People are mainly depended upon government jobs as there is less employment opportunities in the private sector. Moreover, Sikkim being a non-industrial state, the establishment of industries is expensive as it has to important raw materials from outside the state, which is also a great reason for minimal employment and income generation.

⁷⁴ Raj, Tamang, Gurung scripts and languages had been introduced at the school levels as one of the core subjects.

⁷⁵ About 89% of the population of Sikkim is living in the rural areas (Census of India 2001).

⁷⁶ The cropping patterns of the state have undergone changes since the merger with India in 1975.

Land Holders and Agricultural Farmers

Despite the fact that Sikkim is a hilly and mountainous region, land has been central to the political economy of the state.⁷⁷ Agriculture contributes to nearly 50% of the State's income. Land distribution among the three ethnic groups- Lepchas, Bhutias, and Nepalese in the state is uneven. The Nepalese own more than 50% of the cultivable land, Bhutia's own the second largest and Lepchas the least. ⁷⁸

The total land holding in Sikkim is recorded as 99.36% which is divided into the three ethnic groups- Lepcha's, Bhutia's and the Nepalese. Out of this 58.66% is owned by Nepalese, 20.38% by Lepcha's and 30.32% by the Bhutia's.

Table 5

Ethnic distribution of land in Sikkim

Ethnic Group	Total Paddy Field	Total Dry Land	Waste Land	Cardamom (large)	Total Cultivated Land
Bhutia	27.12	16.13	24.18	27.05	20.32
Lepcha	14.97	-	17.53	32.72	20.38
Nepali	57.19	64.95	62.00	22.37	58.66
Total Public	99.28	99.56	99.60	82.15	99.36
Grand Total	11727.1	64739.8	11734.4	21761.7	109963.0

(Source: Sikkim, Human Development Report, 2001)

⁷⁷ Like other mountainous areas of the world, in Sikkim land is a scarce commodity. Out of total geographical area of 709,600 hectares (13.67%) of land is available for cultivation.

⁷⁸ According to Revenue order No. 1 of 1917, the land belonging to the two mainly Bhutia and Lepcha communities of the state have remained unaffected and un-alienated (Sikkim, Human Development Report, 2001, p.42)

Much of the land in Sikkim is distributed among the small and marginal farmers. The small and marginal farmers were 59.53% during 1976-77. It had increased to 68.71 in 1980-81, and 70.76 in 1990-91. This category were holding 21% of operational area in 1976-77 which increased to 28.20% in 1980-81, and again decreased to 28.00% in 1990-91 of the total operational area. The semi-medium, medium and large category farmers were 40.47% in 1976-77, it declined to 31.29 in 1980-81, and to 29.24% in 1990-91. They were holding 79% of the operational land in 1976-77, which declined to 71.80% in 1980-81 and 72% in 1990-91 of the total operational area (Subba, 2008, p.81).

Table: 6

Distribution of land holdings and area in % by size classes (1976-91)

Category	1976-1977				1980-1981				1990-1991			
	No %	%	Area %	%	No %	%	Area %	%	No %	%	Area %	%
Marginal	34.30	59.53	6.84	21.0	45.43	68.71	10.97	28.20	49.56	70.76	10.30	28.00
Small	25.23		14.17	79.0	23.27		17.23		21.19		17.70	
Semi-medium	23.92	40.47	26.44		19.44	31.29	27.97	71.80	17.19	29.24	23.68	72.00
Mediu	13.79		31.66		10.30		30.77		9.68		28.11	
Large	2.75		20.90		1.55		13.06		2.37		20.20	

Source: Agri. Census 1976-77, 1980-81, 1990-1991.

District wise, the East district has the largest number of holdings whereas the North district has the lowest. In terms of area, North district has 7.71 hectares, east has 1.70%, West 2.66% and south 2.28% hectares respectively (Lama, 1994, p. 137). The total numbers of cultivators in Sikkim is 95,078. The total number of

agricultural labourers constitutes 12851 in Sikkim, 12756 in the rural area and 95 in the urban area. The total number of cultivators and agricultural farmers in the west district constitutes the highest number with 33,676 cultivators. The north district has the lowest number of cultivators with 6,198 persons. The east district records 26027 cultivators and the south district 290177 cultivators.

East district has the highest number of agricultural labourers constituting 5,566 persons, followed by West with 3,171, South with 2,111 and North with 2003 (Government of Sikkim, Sikkim Human Development Report, 2001).

Table 7

Distribution of cultivators and Agricultural Farmers

SIKKIM	CULTIVATORS	AGRICULTURAL LABOUR
Total	95,078	12,851
Rural	95,039	12,756
Urban	39	95
NORTH-Total	6,198	2,003
Rural	6,193	1,992
Urban	5	11
CHUNGTHANG- Total	800	190
Rural	800	190
Urban	-	-
MANGAN- Total	5,398	1,813
Rural	5,393	1,802
Urban	5	11

EAST- Total	26,027	5,566
Rural	25,998	5,483
Urban	25	83
GANGTOK- Total	15,523	3,175
Rural	15,494	3,092
Urban	29	83

Source: Government of Sikkim, Sikkim Human Development Report, 2001

Voters

The total number of voters in the state as recorded is 2,55,377 voters, out of which 1,32,591 are male voters i.e. 48.8%. In 1979-1980 the total number of voters were 1,18,224 (64,616 male voters and 53,608 female voters). It increased to 2,62,445 in 1999-2000. In the State Assembly election, 1999, the total number of voters in east district was recorded the highest with 1,13,107 voters. In south district 57,588 voters were recorded, the west district recorded 66,278 voters and the north district with 18,404 voters respectively. The North district comprises of a total of 18,404 voters, where 9,061 (49.23%) are male voters and 9,343 (50.73%) female voters. East district has the total number of 1,13,107 voters where 33,612 are male and 32,666 female voters. South district has total 57,588 voters where 29,658 male and 27,930 female voters (Census of India, Provisional 2001).

Revenue Blocks

There are a total 453 revenue blocks in the state. Revenue block has been taken as the lowest enumeration block. Revenue block is

not a single agglomeration of habitation.⁷⁹ It consists of several hamlets, for census purpose the village (revenue block) has been the ultimate unit area in which the country is divided for the purpose of collection of land revenues in the state.

The revenue blocks in the state are divided into categories of different population ranging from– viz. (1) less than 200, (2) 200 – 499, (3) 500 – 999, (4) 1000 – 1999, (5) 2000 – 4999, (6) 5000 – 9999 and (7) 10,000 and above. In Sikkim no revenue block in any district or sub-division falls under the population range of 10,000 and above. Only three revenue blocks in Gangtok sub-division of East district fall under the category of 5000-9999 population. Majority of revenue blocks (160) are having population ranging from 500-999. A small proportion of population (1.26%) is living in revenue block falling in the population range of less than 200. The revenue block comprising the population range of 2000-4999 is occupied by the 20.71% of the total rural population and 5.08% of total rural population live in the revenue blocks in population range from 5000-9999.

Among the sub-divisions in the population range of less than 200, Soreng sub-division of West district has recorded the lowest percentage (0.53) where as Chungthang sub-division of North district recorded the highest proportion (5.47%). Out of a total 453 revenue blocks, 411 are the actual revenue blocks, 39 are forest blocks, 2 monasteries and one tea estate. The total number of inhabited revenue blocks is 447. The North district has total 53 revenue blocks, the East district has 130 , South district has 144 and West district has 120 inhabited revenue blocks (Census of India, Sikkim, 1991, series 22, p. 100-125).

⁷⁹ In Sikkim revenue Block is the co-terminous of revenue village.

TABLE: 8

Number of inhabited revenue blocks in each census (1961-1991)

State/ district	1961	1971	1981	1991
Sikkim	460	215	440	447
North	45	21	51	53
East	155	68	126	130
South	260	66	144	144
West	-	60	119	120

Source: Census of India- series 22, Directorate of Census Operation, Sikkim, 1991, pp.100-101.

SECTION II

Support Base of the Party (SDF) in Damthang Constituency of South District

After having discussed certain general features on Sikkim let us now come to main section of the chapter where we look at the support base of the party. In this section we look at the support base of the party in Damthang Constituency of South District. It deals with the distribution of population, literacy rate, language, religion social category, income and occupation, cultivators and land holders, economic background, political participation and performance of the party in this constituency.

The survey was conducted in the month of April 2008 covering five out of nine panchayat blocks. The panchayat blocks include:

- 1) Maniram Singithang G.P -which covers villages like
 - a) Phalidara b) Phalipongdara.
- 2) Maniram Block –covering
 - a) Maniram and b) Bhanjyang Alley
- 3) Salleybung Block – covering
 - a) Upper Salleybung and b) Lower Salleybung
- 4) Singithang Block – covering Singithang
- 5) Boomtar Block which covers Lower Boomtar.

The section is further sub-divided into sub-sections which deal with the distribution of population caste/community wise in the constituency, occupation and income of the people, in terms of distribution of land of holders and cultivators, economic background, religion and language. The section further studies questions like why do the people support the party (SDF) and do not support other political parties. And whether the people are satisfied with the performance of the government under the Sikkim Democratic Front?

Caste/Community in Damthang Constituency

In terms of caste/community Damthang constituency consists of mainly Nepalese and some Scheduled Tribe's like Sherpa and Bhutia and Scheduled Castes. The Nepali community mostly belongs to the Most Backward Class (MBC) category. In Sikkim the Nepali's are divided into MBC (which includes Rai, Gurung, Thapa, Manger, Sunwar, and Bhujel). The Other Backward Classes (OBCs) includes Chettri, Bahun, Newar, Jogi and Sanyasi. General Class includes Marwaris, Biharis whose names are enrolled in the election voter list. The majority voters belong to Nepali

community, mostly Rai, Gurung, Manger and some scheduled tribe groups like Bhutia, Sherpa and Tamang. Among the surveyed population in this constituency out of a total 140 persons, 110 belonged to the MBC category, 15 belonged to Sherpas (ST) community, 10 belonged to the Bhutia category and the rest belonged to the OBC. The survey report shows that in Damthang constituency the majority belong to the MBC category.

Occupation and Income

As mentioned earlier South district falls under the rural area which means most of the people are agriculturalists. It is found that out of 100 persons 60 are agriculturalists/farmers cultivating paddy, maize, millets, pulses, cardamom, ginger and vegetables. The remaining 40 are government servants, private employees and landless labourers. The average income of the rural people ranges from 3000-10000 per month and those of employees begin from Rs 6000 per month and above. In this part of the state there are also people working on muster roll (temporary basis) with their monthly income (salary) ranging from Rs 3000 per month and above.⁸⁰

Out of a total 140 surveyed population 80 were found to be agricultural holders who cultivate or who are engaged in different agricultural activities and their income ranges from Rs 2000-8000 per month. Their income increases slightly during the production season. Around 25 persons surveyed were employees, in both government and private institutions whose income ranged from Rs 2500 and above. Around 2% of the population surveyed run small shops in the villages itself.

⁸⁰ The people working in muster roll are government servants but in temporary basis.

Land Holders and Cultivators

Being a rural area most of the people are land holders owning large, medium, semi medium and small land holdings. South district stands second among all four districts of the state in terms of total number of cultivators. There are a total 29,177 cultivators, 29,176 in the rural areas and one (1) in the urban area. Namchi had 18,484 cultivators and 1,325 agricultural labourers. It means that in this constituency marginal and small farmers form the bulk of the total land holdings. The food grains produced in this constituency are; wheat, maize, millet, pulses and vegetables. Among the cash crops ginger and large cardamom are produced here. Among the surveyed population 80 persons i.e., around 60% of the people surveyed are engaged in agriculture, they either own land or work as agricultural farmers.

Economic Background

The people in Damthang constituency are mostly rural people. Most of the houses are old type houses built up with tin sheets. Tin sheets are GCI sheets distributed by the government led by the SDF.⁸¹ The houses are mostly pucca houses. Few kutcha houses are seen in some remote areas. Some houses are built with the help of centrally sponsored scheme, Indira Housing Yojna Model houses (worth Rs 3 lakhs) were also found in some villages. These villages are called Model Villages. Model houses are a cemented brick house with tin roofs, built for the poor people who are homeless and landless. The people in this area use furniture made with woods and bamboo's which are common and simple. Pucca houses are also built mainly in Namchi and its surroundings which fall within semi-urban areas. To improve the standard of

⁸¹ The SDF government distributed the GCI sheets as the party had promised to give every people of Sikkim, Roti, Kapda and Makaan.

living of the people it is found out that the state government has distributed GCI sheets (tin roofs), gas cylinders, blankets, and pressure cookers, water tanks (Sintex), toilets, drinking water provision etc. The people in this part of the state wear simple clothes. In the survey conducted, the economic conditions of the people are comparatively lower than the economic condition of the people in Gangtok constituency as the people in this constituency mostly depend on agriculture.

Religion

Hinduism is the common religion of the people in this constituency. Approximately 75% people follow Hinduism, 15% Buddhism and remaining are Christian and others. For the propagation and practice of their faith temples are built in the village. Churches belonging to various groups of Christianity are built. The villages have Buddhist monasteries and mosques have been maintained for the conduct of Islam in the area. As per the survey conducted in this constituency, out of 100 persons, 75 people were Hindus, 15 were Buddhist, 7 were Christians and the remaining 3 belonged to others category.

Languages

Nepali is the common language spoken in Damthang constituency. Nepalese constitute around 75% of the population so Nepali is spoken by almost all the people and all communities. Other languages like Bhutia, Sherpa, Rai, Tamang, Limboo, and Lepcha are also spoken but it is spoken within only their communities and family members. The communities like Bhutia, Sherpa and Lepcha give more importance in preserving their language and script. Thus their own language is proudly spoken among their family members and their community. Since Nepali is the main language

spoken among the people in this area, it was found out that all the people belonging to different communities speak the language very clearly.

Organisation of the Party

In south district, Namchi which is the district headquarter also is the District Working Committee of the party. Under the District Working Committee, Constituency Level Committee is formed. The members of the Constituency Level Committee are nominated by the party president in consultation with the President of the District Working Committee. The party also has block level committees in each Gram Panchayat Unit. The party has well established party office in each Gram Panchayat. All the meetings of the Gram Panchayat's are held at the Gram Panchayat office and the party meetings are held in the Party office in each block. The party office is maintained with party flags, notice board, party calendar's and photograph of the party President.

Performance of the Party

The table below shows the performance of the SDF at the Damthang constituency in the Assembly Elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004. The political parties which contested the General election to Legislative Assembly in 1994 in this constituency were SDF and it could secure 70.27 % votes; Sikkim Sangram Parishad which secured 26.33 % of votes; National political parties like the Indian National Congress which secured only 2.45 % votes and Independent candidates secured 0.95 % votes. It shows that the party was able to secure the majority of votes though it was its first election in the state. In 1999 General Legislative Assembly Election only three political parties contested the election, viz. the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP)

and the Indian National Congress (INC), in which the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) won the election with 72.26 % of votes. In the year 2004, the election results of Damthang constituency was in favour of SDF as the election was uncontested in favour of Pawan Chamling. No political parties contested the election from this constituency.

TABLE: 9

Constituency: Damthang

ASSEMBLY ELECTION - 1994 - PERFORMANCE OF THE PARTY (SDF)

Name of the candidate	Political Party	Votes secured	Percent %
Pawan Chamling	Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF)	3904	70.27%
Kumar Subba	Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP)	1463	26.33%
Anand Lama	Indian National Congress	136	2.45%
Buddha Raj Rai	IND	53	0.95%

Source: Election Commission of India, State Elections, 1994.

TABLE: 10**ASSEMBLY ELECTION (1999) PERFORMANCE OF THE PARTY (SDF)**

Name of the candidate	Political Party	Votes secured	Percent %
Pawan Chamling	Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF)	4952	72.26 %
Kamal Kumar Rai	Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP)	1866	27.23 %
Hom Nath Rai	Indian National Congress	35	0.5 %

Electors -8425, Voters-6937, Poll %-82.34.

Source: Election Commission of India, State Elections, 1999

The 2009 election was held after the delimitation of the constituencies in 2009. The SDF won the election from this constituency. Pawan Kumar Chamling, the Party president won the election. The number of political parties contesting the election was six. The following table shows the total number of political parties participating in the Assembly election of 2009.

TABLE: 11**ASSEMBLY ELECTION (2009) PERFORMANCE OF THE PARTY (SDF)**

Name of the Candidate	Political Party
Pawan Chamling	Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF)
Anjana Tamang	NCP
Khush Bdr.Rai	Indian National Congress
Arjun Kumar Rai	SGPP
Basant Kr. Rai	SJEP
Sheela Rai	IND

Source: Election Commission of India, State Elections, 2009

Support Base of the Party

The question that arises is why do the people support the SDF? Are they satisfied with the performance of the government under the SDF? Why don't they support other political parties in the State? To answer this question it is essential to discuss the history of party competition in the constituency from 1994 onwards. The party after its formation in 1993 contested the Assembly election in 1994. The political parties that contested the election in the constituency was; Sikkim Democratic Front, Sikkim Sangram Parishad, Indian National Congress and several Independent candidates. The candidates contesting the election were Pawan Chamling from SDF, Kumar Subba from Sikkim Sangram Parishad, Anand Lama from Indian National Congress and Buddha Raj Rai as an independent candidate. The Sikkim Democratic Front won the election in the constituency securing 3904 votes which was 70.27 percent votes. Sikkim Sangram Parishad candidate secured a total of 1463 votes, the Indian National Congress candidate secured 163 votes and the independent candidate secured 63 votes.

Pawan Chamling was the party candidate contesting the election for the Sikkim Democratic Front for the next term election held in 1999. The other political parties contesting the election were Sikkim Sangram Parishad and Indian National Congress. Kamal Kumar Rai was the candidate from Sikkim Sangram Parishad and Hom Nath Rai from the Indian National Congress. The Sikkim Democratic Front candidate Pawan Chamling won the election with a total of 5492 number of votes which was 72.26 percent of the votes. The Sikkim Sangram Parishad candidate Kamal Kumar Rai secured 1866 votes and the Indian National Congress candidate secured only 35 votes. In this constituency in the Assembly election of 2004 not a single political parties

contested the election against the SDF. This left the room for the SDF candidate Pawan Chamling to be declared as uncontested winner.

Now let us look at the supporters of the party in the constituency. To answer the support base of the party in the constituency, the supporters can be categorised into three groups- Government Employees, rural people (layman) and businessmen/self employed.⁸² The government employees who are regular don't have indirect benefits and their support is for SDF. This section of people have benefitted indirectly as a member of the society. The total number of government employees surveyed was 40 in number, out of which 9 Government Employees were working on temporary basis. The employees who work on muster roll on a temporary basis have benefitted personally from the government. The government has helped these people by giving temporary jobs and by raising the daily wage from Rs 50 to Rs 100 per day. Moreover the families have benefitted with governmental schemes like distribution of grant in aid of Rs 20,000 to needy families, distribution of GCI sheets, gas cylinder, drinking water facilities, toilets etc. The Government Employees working on temporary basis supported the party as they directly benefitted from the government.

SDF being the only political party in the state which is permanent in nature and character, the party gets more support from the people than the support which the other political parties get in the state. The party promises the people to ensure the principles of liberty, equality and safeguard the rights of the Sikkimese people. The government under the SDF rule has carried

⁸² Among the government employees there are government employees who are regular government servant and employees working on Muster roll.

many developmental works in the state like transport and communication, roads and bridges, eco-tourism, educational infrastructure, public playgrounds, libraries, community halls etc. More importantly, it has been able to maintain peace, order and security in the state.

The support of the people of the constituency is mainly towards the party and less to its candidates. They support and vote for the candidate because he/she belongs to the party. The employees both regular government employees and those working on temporary basis support and are satisfied with the performance of the party. The people support the party as they feel that the government under the SDF has been able to fulfil the needs of the common people and provided the people with various provisions and benefits for the betterment of the people. The party has been able to maintain communal harmony and equality among the various castes and communities in the society. The government is stable and safeguards the rights and privileges of the Sikkimese people under (Act 371 (f)). The party gets the support of the Government employees as they are satisfied with the government on the exemption from Income Tax which the earlier government has implemented in the State.

Common people think that the government has been able to bring developmental changes in many sectors like education, industry, tourism, health and agriculture. For the improvement in the educational system large numbers of teachers were appointed in the government schools and many schools were upgraded. Health Centres and hospitals had been increased with facilities for diagnosis and treatment of chronic diseases. The government also encouraged the traditional medicinal treatment in the state. Above

all, the SDF government has articulated and represented regional identities and aspirations based on common language and culture.

Another category of population in this constituency is the farmers. The farmers are of three types: the big land holders who cultivate cash crops and other vegetables; the second type of farmers is the marginal and small land holders who also cultivate crops and vegetables but in small amount, and the third type of farmers are the landless farmers, these farmers work for the other land-holders and in return they get wages. We found that the big landholders and the marginal and small landholders who are the owners of the land and who cultivate various crops and vegetables have benefited from the agricultural schemes of the government. The government have provided them with facilities and infrastructures for promoting the growth of horticulture, by helping them with the market facilities and transport facilities for the sale of their products like orange, ginger, large cardamom, cereals and seasonal vegetables. The people are given facilities like market infrastructure, transport carriage distribution of variety of seeds and seedlings, pesticides, tools and equipments and also training to the farmers regarding the use of new technological equipments and tools. Floriculture and horticulture is encouraged for the creation of more employment opportunities in the state. The government has been able to provide unemployment loans to the unemployed youths to start their own business.

During the course of the survey it was found that the landless farmers, labourers and above all the rural people are satisfied with the performance of the government led by the SDF for many reasons. Large number of households in the villages still depends on the rivers and spring water. The government has made provision of safe drinking water, improvement of the

environment, sanitation and water tanks to each household those who hold Sikkim subjects. The common rural people are happy with the educational system in the state. The Government has provided educational facilities to all, access to schools within walking distance of each villages, improvement in school infrastructure, encouragement of education to the weaker sections of society, widening scope of vocational education, establishment of technical colleges, mid-day meals to the students up to the 5th standard, distribution of free uniforms, books and free tuition fees from primary level to class XII. The government has provided training in the engineering and professional areas like computer software and information technology, accountancy, chemistry, physics, medicine, business management, rural development and tourism, which has benefited the education pursuing students in Sikkim. In the constituency at least twenty students are sponsored by the government for the attainment of such trainings. The students are getting an opportunity to study in the specified fields. The government under the SDF has granted loans to the landless, granted one acre land to build the house (model house) and implemented the central schemes like Indira Housing Yojna, financial and medical assistance in case of severe treatment of diseases referred outside the state, GCI sheets, gas cylinder, water tanks etc. RCC cemented footpaths in all the villages have been constructed. All these schemes have given a better living to the rural people. Among the surveyed persons 4 have benefitted with the Indira Housing Yojna, 20 families were granted GCI sheets, 20 families were provided with Cylinder gas stove and 8 families were given water tanks.

The next category of people surveyed is the businessmen, government contractors, and the self employed people. Five businessmen were surveyed and they were of the view that SDF is

the only party in the state which can lead Sikkim to prosperity. The business groups are allowed to carry their business without any disturbances. The business group consists of mostly the Marwaris and the Biharis who have been residing in Sikkim since 1975. The party has also assured the business group to be exempted from paying the income tax.

The contractors are also satisfied with the government led by the SDF and hence support the party. For the proper distribution of the construction of works in the state, the government has made the provision of granting contracts to the contractors in their own districts and areas. The contractors are satisfied that they are getting opportunities to work in their own respective areas. One of the contractor responded that they have to pay a percentage of the amount as party fund and some share to the unemployed youth of the area, which he said is not a right way of raising the party fund.

Unemployment is one of the serious problems that people face in the state today. The SDF government to help and satisfy unemployed groups has made the provision of granting loans to begin their own business and be self employed and self-reliant and not to depend only on government jobs for their livelihood. Unemployment loans has been granted; Rs 50,000 to class xii Pass and Rs 1 lakh to the graduates and Master Degree holders. Three youths had received the loan from the government and has set up their own business. Boys are exempted with 2 years interest and there is an exemption of 3 years for girls. The government has made the provision for providing driving course for one month for boys, beauty parlour course of six months for girls and computer training and capacity building courses. In each

gram panchayat ward twenty five men and twenty five women has benefited from the above training courses.

Most of the people in Damthang constituency support the SDF as it is the only permanent regional party in the state. It means that the people do not support other political parties in the state. Political parties like the Congress (I) under the leadership of former Chief Minister Nar Bahadur Bhandari, Himali Rajya Parishad under the leadership of A. D Subba, National political parties like Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) are also active during the election time which means it is not popular among the people, especially among the rural masses. These political parties also lack the organisational structure like the SDF in the rural areas. People have trust and faith in the Sikkim Democratic Front which the other political parties lack in Sikkim. The leaders of these political parties are not favoured by the common people as they are visible only during the election time and come for campaigning for their party. The reason behind the success of SDF's retaining political power in Sikkim for the last fourteen years is most probably due to the fact that the party has been able to reach the rural people and has helped the poor and needy people in all aspects of life. Party meetings are held in different blocks where interactions between the public and the leaders take place more frequently. The common people can meet the Chief Minister once a week, i.e. every Wednesday. One of the respondents from Kamrang met the Chief Minister and was able to put forward his grievances to the CM.

As mentioned earlier, Damthang constituency comprises of people mostly belonging to the Most Backward Class (MBC). Generally it is found that in politics people prefer leader from their own caste and community. A farmer at Damthang told that he

supports the party because the leader belongs to MBC. So it can be said that the people support the party because of the fact that they belong to caste to which their leader belongs. It was also found that even though the leader belongs to MBC category, but people belonging to Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward classes are also the supporters of the party as the party has not neglected to include these groups in its schemes and policies. The party has promised to include Tamang and Limboo in the Scheduled Tribe's list in the 1994 election which was fulfilled in 2003. Likewise, the other caste groups are also included in the category of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) like; Chettri, Bahun, Newar and Most Backward Class (MBC) like; Rai, Gurung, Manger, Bhujel, Thami. All these caste groups in Sikkim are put in the reserved category. The economic policy of re-orienting and restructuring the economic sector has been well implemented by the government. All these have contributed in the expansion of the support base of the party.

CHAPTER VI

MOBILISATION OF THE SUPPORTER'S AND THE ELECTORAL BASE OF THE SDF IN THE STATE II

This chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter which dealt with the support base of the party in Damthang constituency. The Chapter analyses the support base of the party in the remaining three constituencies; Geyzing, Lachen Mangshila and Gangtok. The chapter is divided into sections, with subsections. The subsections of each of the sections covers the composition of population in the constituency, occupation and income of the people, distribution of land holders, farmers and cultivators, economic background, religion and language, organisation of the party office, performance of political parties in the constituency, and finally the support base of the party in the constituencies that we have surveyed. On the basis of these surveys in four different constituencies a general observation on the support base of the party is made in last section of the chapter.

SECTION I

Geyzing Constituency: West District

Section I of this Chapter deals with the support base of the party in the Geyzing constituency of West District. Geyzing is the district head quarter of the West district. The total population of the West district constitutes of 1,23,147 persons, out of which 63,835 are male and 59,359 are female. The West district records the least

growth in the inter censal change in population. The two main towns of West district are Nayabazaar and Geyzing comprising of a total population of 828 persons out of which 489 are males and 339 are females (Census of India, Provisional, 2001).

According to the notification number 8/RM and DD/P dated 13/08/07, No. 359 published by Rural Management and Development Department, Government of Sikkim, the Geyzing constituency comprises of 4 (four) Gram Panchayat Units: (a) Geyzing Omchung Gram Panchayat, (b) Yangthang Gram Panchayat Unit, (c) Lingchom- Tikjya Gram Panchayat Unit and (d) Sardong- Lungzik Gram Panchayat Unit.

- (a) Geyzing Omchung Gram Panchayat comprises of three blocks-
 - i. Geyzing block covering middle lower Kyonsa
 - ii. Omchung block covering upper Omchung and lower Omchung.
- (b) Yangthang Gram Panchayat comprises of only one unit covering Lhangjang, Toyang, and Laugang, Upper Yangthang and Gyaba Naya Busty.
- (c) Lingchom-Tikjya Gram Panchayat comprises of two blocks-
 - i. Lingchom block covering Upper Lingchom, Middle Lingchom and Lower Lingchom.
 - ii. Tikjya block covering Lower Tikjya and Upper Tikjya (Sang Choling Gumpa)
- (d) Sardong- Lungzink Gram Panchayat consists of two blocks-
 - i. Sardong block covering Lower Sardong, Upper Sardong and Sardung

- ii. Lungzik block covering Lower Lungzik and Upper Lungzik.

Composition of Population

Looking at the distribution of caste and communities, Geyzing consists of a majority of Limboo's followed by Bhutia's, Chettri's, Bahun's (Sharmas), Scheduled Caste's mainly Sunwar's and other communities like Rai's and Gurung's. Under the Geyzing Omchung Gram Panchayat, Geyzing (middle and lower) and Omchung comprise of mostly chettri's and Bahun's (Sharmas) and Langang's consists of mostly Bhutia's followed by Limboo's. Guruthan comprises mostly of the Gurung community. Lingchum- Tikjya Gram Panchayat is the Unit which comprises 90% of Limboo's. Sardong- Lingzik Gram Panchayat consists of Sardong (upper and lower) comprises of Rai in Sardong, and Subba's (Limboo's) and Gurung's in Upper and Lower Sardong. Lungzik (lower and upper) consists of Limboo's and Chettri's and Bahun's. Geyzing as one of the town of West district mostly comprises of Bhutia's and general class of Bihari's and Marwari's who have settled in Geyzing as businessmen and are voters of Sikkim. This general class i.e. Bihari's and Marwari's have settled in the town and semi-urban areas. They comprise of 8-10% of the population approximately.

In terms of voters, the West district has a total number of 66,278 voters, out of which 33,612 are male and 32,666 are female voters. The total revenue blocks in West district is 121 which is also considered as total number of village blocks which is an ultimate unit area in which the country is divided for the purpose of collecting revenues. Geyzing constituency has a total number of 70 revenue blocks.

Occupation and Income of the People

Geyzing is a rural constituency except for the two towns –Geyzing and Nayabazar. Geyzing comprises of a total 828 persons and Nayabazar with total 996 persons respectively (Census of India, Sikkim Provisional, 2001). The other parts of the constituency purely fall under rural area with agricultural land. The main occupation of the populace is agriculture. And the people are agriculturalists. The main crop cultivation is paddy (rice), maize, millets, cereals, oranges, ginger, vegetables and to some extent cultivation of large cardamom. The farmers who own large land holdings cultivate Ginger and large Cardamom in large quantities which is the main cash crop in Sikkim. It was found out that out of the 100 persons surveyed 20 are employees and the rest are agriculturists. Thus, agriculture is the main source of income of the people. Some people are engaged in self-employed activities like; poultry farming, piggery etc. The average income of the rural people ranges from Rs 2000 to Rs 8000 per month. The average income of the employees ranges from Rs 3000 and above. It is also noted that the employees getting Rs 3000 per month are the people working in muster roll basis which is purely temporary.

Distribution of Land Holders, Farmers and Cultivators

District wise, west district constitutes the highest number of cultivators and agricultural farmers. The total agricultural farmer's in Geyzing itself is 15,782 out of which 15778 are in the rural areas and 4 in the urban areas. The total number of agricultural labourers is 1837, all in the rural areas whereas in the urban areas the number of agricultural labourers is zero. In this constituency medium and small land holders form the bulk of the total land

holdings. Approximately 35-38% are big land holders. About 10 percent are Kutiyadars;⁸³ landless farmers who cultivate the land of big land holders and pay according to the agreement made between the land holders and the Kutiyadars. Out of a total 225 surveyed people 105 are found to be land holders and cultivators. Some of these land holders are also employees. About 71 are farmers holding small area of land whose main occupation is agriculture. About 15 percent in this constituency were Kutiyadars.

Economic Background

The people in this constituency are basically engaged in agricultural activities like cultivation of crops like paddy, oranges, ginger etc, so the economic activity of the people is agriculture based.⁸⁴ Among the surveyed population out of 225 around 190 are engaged in agriculture, i.e., 84%. The houses in the remote areas are built with straw, bamboo splits and mud. But now the condition has improved and now it has been replaced by a tin-roof and bamboo splits. In the rural and semi-urban areas the houses are still kutcha built with wooden planks and tin roofs (GCI sheets) distributed by the SDF government. In the urban areas and town areas the houses are mostly RCC (cemented) buildings which are pucca houses. These pucca houses are also seen in the road side areas. The houses consist of more than three rooms depending upon their economic condition. The furniture is mostly wooden.

Religion and Language

In this constituency Limboo's are the dominant population followed by Bhutia's and the general classes like Chettri, Bahun and to

⁸³ Kutiyadars are usually the Landless people who are mostly non- Sikkimese people.

⁸⁴ As per the Planning Commission Report and the State Bureau Statistics and Economics in 1995, about 71 percent of the population living below poverty line are mostly the poor farmers and landless labourers.

some extent Pradhan's. The Bhutia's follow Buddhism and the general class are mostly Hindus. Limboo's are one of the ethnic groups of Sikkim and have a distinct religion of their own which is known as "YUMA SAMYO". They believe that God is Almighty and a benevolent deity who does good for the people.⁸⁵ The common language spoken by all communities is Nepali. Bhutia's and Limboo's communicate in their own language amongst their communities.

Organisation of the Party Office

Geyzing has a District Working Committee of the party. Under this committee, a constituency level committee is formed. The members are nominated by the party President in consultation with the President of the District Working Committee. The constituency level committee works under the District Level Committee. Party office is established in each Gram panchayat which is mostly in rented buildings. The Office is well maintained and the party members are nominated to look after the office. The party office is maintained with party flags, boards, party calendars, photographs of the party president and party weekly and monthly magazines. Once a month a party meeting is held which is attended by active party supporters, panchayat's and members of Cheli Morcha (women's wing) of the party.

Other political parties do not have a permanent party office where the party members can meet and carry forward party activities. Temporary party offices are maintained only during the time of the election. Sikkim Democratic Front is the only party in the state which has a permanent party office with nominated

⁸⁵ YUMA SAMYO (YUMANISM) of Limboo community has its own way of performing rituals, healing diseases and illness and preventing befalling misfortunes (Subba, 1999).

members who are given honorarium for the service they render towards the party. Block Level office at Middle Gayzing, Omchung and Legshep is maintained which consists of nominated party members. This Block Level committee has the following office bearers;

1. President - 1
2. Vice President -2
3. Secretary -2
4. Joint Secretary -4
5. Treasurer -1
6. Executive Members -20

This Block level committee works under the District Level committee. All the works and functions of this committee are coordinated by the District level Committee.

Performance of Political Parties in the Constituency

In the 1994 General Election to the Legislative Assembly in the state three National political parties, viz. Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (Marxist), Indian National Congress (INC), and State parties like; Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP), registered (unrecognised) party Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) and independent parties participated in the elections. Amongst the National political parties; Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) contested three seats but won no seats; CPM contested two seats and won no seats and INC contested thirty one (31) seats and won only two (2) seats. Amongst the state parties; Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) contested eleven (11) seats but won no seat; Sikkim

Ssngram Parishad (SSP) contested thirty one (31) seats and won ten (10) seats. Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) contested thirty two (32) seats and won Nineteen (19) seats. 76 independent candidates contested the elections and out of a total 76 only one independent candidate won the election.

Now coming to the Gayzing constituency the parties contesting the election were; SDF, SSP, Indian National Congress (INC) and Independents. The total number of voter's was 4642 and the valid votes were 4562. The result of the party went in favour of the SDF with 2893 votes which was 51.2%, SSP secured 1412 votes which was 25.02%, Indian National Congress (INC) secured 930 votes which was 16.48 % and three independents secured a total of 408 votes.

Table: 1

Table below shows the performance of the party in the 1994 Legislative Assembly Election 1994

Name of the candidate	Sex	Political Party	Votes secured	% of votes
Dal Bahadur Gurung	M	Sikkim Democratic Front	2893	51.2 %
Dal Bahadur Karki	M	Sikkim Sangram Parishad	1412	25.02%
Bhim Narayan Tewari	M	Indian National Congress	930	16.48%
Nar Bahadur Dahal	M	IND	319	5.65%
Devi Prasad Chetri	M	IND	80	1.42%
Bhagirath Gautam	M	IND	9	0.16%

Source: Election Commission of India–State Election, 1994 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

In the General Election to the Legislative Assembly 1999 the political parties that contested the election in this constituency

were Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP), and the Indian National Congress (INC). Sher Bahadur Subedi from Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) won the election with 3316 votes which was 54.57% out of a total 6249 casts. Pushpak Ram Subba from SSP secured 2504 votes, i.e., 41.20% and Man Bahadur Dahal secured 257 votes, i.e., 4.23%.

Table: 2

Assembly Election Result -1999

Name of the candidate	Name of the party	Votes secured	% of votes secured
Sher Bahadur Subedi	Sikkim Democratic Front	3316	54.57%
Pushpa Raj Subba	Sikkim Sangram Parishad	2504	41.20%
Man Bahadur Dahal	Indian National Congress	257	4.23%

Source: Election Commission of India -State Election, 1999 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

In the General election to the Legislative Assembly 2004 the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), Indian National Congress (INC) and Independent candidates contested the elections in this constituency. Sikkim Sangram Parishad did not contest the election as it got merged with the Indian National Congress. The election was swept by the SDF candidate Sher Bahadur Subedi who secured 4227 votes. The INC candidate Dal Bahadur Gurung secured 2410 votes, and the independent candidates Chandra Bahadur Katwal secured 64 votes and Dhan Bahadur Gurung secured only 69 votes.

Table: 3

Result of the Assembly Election 2004

Name of the party	Name of the candidate	No. of votes secured
Indian National Congress	Dal Bahadur Gurung	2410
Sikkim Democratic Front	Sher Bahadur Gurung	4227
IND	ChandraBahadur Katwal	64
IND	Dhan Bahadur Gurung	69

Source: Election Commission of India–State Election, 2004 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

In the Assembly election of 2009 the political parties participating in this constituency were four in number. Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad and Sikkim Gorkha Peoples' Party entered the poll for the first time in the election. The results of the elections show that Man Bahadur Dahal from the SDF won the election.

Table: 4

Assembly Election 2009

Name of the party	Name of the candidate
Indian National Congress	Youa Raj Rai
Sikkim Democratic Front	Man Bahadur Dahal
SHRP	Laxmi Prasad Tiwari
SGPP	Yam Lall Dangal

Source: Election Commission of India–State Election, 2009 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

Support Base of the Party

The Sikkim Democratic Front has been successful in winning the assembly election in the state for four consecutive years, 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009. For the people of this constituency it is the only stable party which has brought overall development of the state. During our survey we found that the party has provided better living and facilities to the rural people than the former government. The party which formed the government today has a good vision of making Sikkim a "New Sikkim".

P. L Subba, one of the respondents, who is also a first class government contractor, a member in Constituency Level Committee (CLC) of Sikkim Democratic Front Youth, Convenor of West district is of the opinion that the promises of the party is being implemented. The government under the SDF is always working for the benefit and upliftment of the weaker sections of the society. It works in a democratic way and has been able to integrate different communities of the society. The support is for the party and the party President for his good visions towards the state. People have benefitted personally and socially from the SDF led government. To him people have morally, socially, educationally, economically and politically benefitted from the government. The government claims that it has been able to maintain peace and harmony in the state. Government aids to maintain greenhouse, organic manure pit in horticulture and agricultural sector, rural housing scheme, free education up to primary level, free school uniforms, GCI sheets (tin roofs), old age pension scheme, unemployment loans, all these have changed the face of the state from good to better. The people in general are satisfied and support the party for supporting the people and making their life easier and self-reliant. Upliftment of women is

encouraged by the government, 40% seats is reserved for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Women are given priority in all the fields. The government promised the expansion of tourism for generating employment facilities and opportunities for the educated unemployed youth. Decentralisation of power is implemented which reflects implantation of democracy in the state.

A party activist, a CLC member of the party and a contractor whose income is 5000-8000 per month supports the party because the aims and objectives of the party is good. To him the society has benefited from the SDF led government. The general people mainly the farmers, agricultural labourers, cultivators support the party. The farmer's have benefited with agricultural aids and facilities. The daily wage earners have benefited as the daily wage has been raised from Rs 50 per day to Rs 100 per day. The party supporters mainly the party activists help the party during the election in holding party meetings and campaigning for the candidates during the election.

Among the surveyed households in all the four Gram Panchayat units, people directly support the party. Out of 100 respondents seven respondents were reluctant in supporting the party as they are not satisfied with their leaders.⁸⁶ The leaders meet them only during elections who promise them many things like giving employment to one member in each household etc. but never keep their promise.

The other political parties in the constituency contesting elections are not supported by the majority of the people. They do not have a party office and party meetings are rarely held to share the ideas and aims of the party with the people. The people of

⁸⁶ The seven respondent are Employees of the constituency.

Sikkim believe that the SDF is the only political party which can bring development in the state. The people had similar faith in the SSP earlier, it had assured the people that it would establish real democracy and safeguard the rights of the people. But unfortunately the faith of the people was crushed by Bhandari's autocratic rule. But the people now have the same faith and hope in Sikkim Democratic Front that it would take Sikkim into the new height of prosperity. The other political parties play an opportunist game during elections and disappear after the election is over hence these parties do not have future in the state.

SECTION – II

Lachen Mangshila Constituency in North District

The North district has four constituencies, Djongu, Lachen Mangshila, Kabi Tingda and Rakdong Tintek. All the four constituencies are ST constituencies (reserved for the Scheduled Tribes). North district is predominantly inhabited by Bhutia's and Lepcha's (Subba, 2008). Other communities also reside in this part of the state but the majority belong to Bhutia and the Lepcha communities. The highest concentration of Bhutia population is in the Lachen Mangshila and Kabi Tingda constituencies in north Sikkim.⁸⁷ The scheduled castes constitute only 288 persons. The total population of North district is 41,023, out of which 23,410 are male and 17,613 are females. The Scheduled Tribe (ST) population is highest in the North with 55.38%.

⁸⁷ According to voter list of Election Commissioner of Sikkim, the Bhutia population in Sikkim was 74,164 of the total population. In 1891 during the Chogyal period Bhutia had the second highest population next to the Lepchas, but in 2004 it was reduced to the third highest population amongst the communities of Sikkim. The first is Khambu Rai's, the second is the Chettries. The Lepchas who are the original inhabitants of Sikkim are reduced to the sixth position with only 8.16% of population.

North district has only one town, Mangan with a total population of 1,248 persons, out of which 768 are male and 480 are females. It is the least populated district due to the high altitude and topography and hostile geographical conditions. The north district has a total of 53 Revenue Blocks. The total number of voter's is 18,404, out of which 9061 are male which is 49.23% and 9,343 which is 50.73% are females. It is the only district in the state where the female voter's percentage is higher than the male voter's (Government of Sikkim, Election Department, 1999).

Lachen Mangshila constituency comprises of seven (7) Gram Panchayat Units.

- a) Ramthang Tangyat Gram Panchayat
- b) Namok Sheyam Gram Panchayat
- c) Tingchim Mangshila Gram Panchayat
- d) Seutam Gram Panchayat
- e) Toong Naga Gram Panchayat
- f) Tshungthang Gram Panchayat

a) Ramthang Tangyat Gram Panchayat Unit constitutes of two blocks:

- i. Ramthang Block covers Ramthang Khyongu, Ramthang Phyagu and Ramthang Gongkha.
- ii. Tangyek Block covers Tangyek and Lungchok Saugam.

b) Namok Sheyam Gram Panchayat Unit constitutes two blocks:

- i. Sheyam block covers Sheyam, Deythang Tikpu.
- ii. Namok block covers Namok and Rabi-Chongthang.

- c) Tingchim Mangshila Gram Panchayat Unit constitutes three blocks:
- i. Upper Mangshila blocks covering Tingzey and Ralak.
 - ii. Lower Mangshila block covers Lower Jhusing, Upper Jhusing and Tibuk.
 - iii. Tingchim block covers Upper Tingchim and Lower Tingchim.
- d) Ringchim Nampatam Gram Panchayat Unit Constitutes three blocks:
- i. Nampatam block covers Nampatam and Kalow.
 - ii. Ringchim block covers Ringchim. (Ringchim Rikzing Choling Gumpa).
 - iii. Singhik block covers Upper Singhik, Maling and Lower Singhik.
- e) Sentam Gram Panchayat Unit constitutes three blocks:
- i. Pakshep block covering Pakshep.
 - ii. Kazar block covering Kazor.
 - iii. Seutam block covering Seutam (Seutam Thisung Gumpa), Bhi-Tingbook and Lingding Ringdong.
- f) Toong- Naga Gram Panchayt Unit constitutes four blocks:
- i. Singchit block covers Khimrong (Singchit Madak Gumpa), Naday and Manul.
 - ii. Meyong block covers Meyong.
 - iii. Naga Manger block covers Reland, Naga and Namgor.
 - iv. Toong block covers Toong.

- g) Tshungthang Gram Panchayat Unit constitutes of Mangshila Tshungthang block covering Teng Pegong Choten, Tshungthang and Bop which now comes under Lachen jurisdiction.

Distribution of Population

According to the survey conducted in the Lachen-Mangshila in the month of June, 2008, it was found that Lachen and Lachung is totally a Bhutia dominated area. Mangshila is the area dominated by the Subba community. Rangthang Tangyat Gram Panchayat is also dominated by Bhutia's. The Gram Panchayats like Namok Sheyam, Toon-Naga, Tshungthang are totally dominated by the Bhutia's. In Mangan, along with the other communities the market is dominated by the Bihari's and Marwari's.⁸⁸ Some Muslim population who are usually the small businessmen and daily wage earning labourer are also the residents of Mangan.

Occupation and Income

The main occupation in this region is agriculture. The Bhutia's mostly depend on agriculture. Their agricultural activities include dairy farming, pastoralism and cultivation of vegetables and cash crops like Cardamom. In summer people go to higher altitude to graze the animals where the land is covered with grass and stay there till the snow falls. When winter starts they come down to the lower altitude with their animals and practice cultivation mainly for potato, wheat, barley, large cardamom and cabbage. In this constituency there are some servicemen but agriculture is the main source of income of the people in this constituency. The

⁸⁸ The Bihari's and the Marwari's have settled there and run many Grocery shops and other shops.

climatic condition of this part is suitable for the cultivation of cash crop like large cardamom. Almost all the household own cultivatable land. But agricultural production is less as compared to other parts of the state due to unsuitable climate conditions and mountainous region.

The main source of income of the people is agricultural activities and the income ranges from Rs 3000-12,000 per month. During the harvest season of large Cardamom the income goes slightly higher, that is it ranges from Rs 3000 to Rs 50,000 per month. About 25% of the surveyed population are government employees whose income ranges from Rs. 3000-15000 per month. According to the survey conducted in this constituency it is found that about 80% of the population depend upon agriculture for their source of income.

Distribution of Cultivators and Agricultural Farmers

As mentioned above North district has a total number of 6,198 cultivators, 6,193 in the rural areas and five (5) in the urban areas. The total number of agricultural labourers is 1,992 in the rural areas and 11 in the urban areas. The constituency has large land holdings where large Cardamom is cultivated. Large part of land holdings are non-cultivated lands covered with forests. Unlike in Geyzing constituency Kutiyadars (one who cultivate the land for the land owners) are absent in the North district. The land is cultivated by the land owners themselves.

Tshungthang which comes under the Lachen-Mangshila constituency has a total 800 cultivators and 190 agricultural labourers. Mangan has a total 5,398 cultivators and 1,813 agricultural labourers (Statistical Report, Govt. of Sikkim, 2002). As mentioned above about 80% of the population is engaged in

agriculture. Amongst the total 110 surveyed people about 75 are found to be the land owners and cultivators, and about 50 are employees too. 25-30 persons are agricultural farmers possessing very little land.

Economic Background

The Bhutia's of this region own landholdings; big, medium and of small size. The living style of the Bhutia's is different from that of other communities in the state. Though a small section of the Bhutia's are employees working in both government and private sectors, the bulk of the population depend on agriculture for income and livelihood. The houses are mainly two storied buildings with cement blocks and wooden planks and tin roofs (GCI sheets). The structure of the house of the people were constructed in a typical Bhutia style, two storied house built with cemented blocks and sometimes wooden planks are used to support the roof. The roof is made up of tin sheets and in the interior part of the constituencies the people still use straw as roof. About 20 houses were cemented modern type houses. The water and sanitation in each house was properly maintained as the government under Sikkim Democratic Front has provided them with resources under various schemes. The government implemented both central and state schemes like Indira Housing Yojna, disbursement of Housing loans, unemployed loans, training and distribution of High Yielding Variety Seeds and fertilizers etc. The majority of the households still rely on wood for cooking purposes though the government had made the provision of distributing gas stoves with cylinders to the villagers.

Lachen and Lachung being the tourist spot and Tshungthang is in the midway to Lachen and Lachung many cemented bricks buildings are seen on roadsides. Hotels, guest houses and tourist

lodges are the main source of income of the people of this place. These hotels and shops are mostly owned by the local people. Out of ten only two are owned by other people who are not originally local. Tshungthang the mid-point of Lachung and Lachen has contributed to urban development with job opportunities, business and education. In the rural areas the houses are mostly kutchra houses build up with wooden planks. The furniture includes locally weaved carpets made out of yak wool and fur. The dress worn is the traditional Bhutia dress by both men and women.

Religion and Language

The population of Lachen-Mangshila constituency is mainly Buddhist. 60.20% of population follow Buddhism in the North district.⁸⁹ The people of north Sikkim basically follow the religious tradition of worshipping Buddha and the guardian deities, including local deities, family deities. These deities are worshipped in the traditional temple called Gumpa (monastery). Most villages have their own Gumpa. Grand prayer in the Gumpa are organised on certain occasions and festivals.⁹⁰

Among the surveyed population 104 are Buddhist by faith, 5 Hindu and one Christian from Mangan. Prayer services are conducted in each household once a year for peaceful and prosperous life. In each Buddhist house a separate prayer room is allocated. Besides Buddhism, there are few Hindus and Christian families mainly in Tshungthang and Mangan. But these people are not originally from the place; they have come from other places and settled there. Bhutia is the common language spoken amongst

⁸⁹ The introduction of Buddhism can be traced to the establishment of a political institution in Sikkim in the seventeenth century. Three monks from Tibet came to Sikkim and propagated Buddhism and built monasteries in Sikkim.

⁹⁰ The lamas (Buddhist Monks) perform all the religious rituals and ceremonies in the Gumpa.

the Bhutia community.⁹¹ Since other communities also reside side by side, apart from Bhutia, Nepali is a commonly spoken language by all the communities.

Performance of the Party in the Constituency

Since the formation of the SDF in 1993 as a regional political party in the state it has been contesting election in the Lachen-Mangshila constituency in all the three Assembly Elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004. The candidate of SDF belonging to Scheduled Tribe, the political parties like the Indian National Congress, Sikkim Sangram Parishad, and Independent candidates contested the election but the result went in favour of the SDF candidate. In 1994 the party candidate Hissey Lachungpa could secure 2316 votes. The other political party contesting was the Indian National Congress which secured only 1420 votes. In the 1999 Assembly election Hissey Lachungpa from SDF won the election with a total 3772 votes, i.e.59.55%. Sikkim Sangram Parishad candidate Nedup Tshering Lachenpa secured 2540 votes and the independent candidate Topden Lepcha secured only 22 votes. Again in the 2004 Assembly Election the same SDF candidate Hissey Lachungpa won the election with a total 4906 votes. The other candidate was Anil Lachenpa from the Indian National Congress. In 2009 the SDF candidate was Tshering Wangdhi Lepcha.

The table below shows the performance of the political parties in the three legislative Assembly elections, 1994, 1999 and 2004 in Sikkim.

⁹¹ Bhutia is the oldest language spoken in ancient times by the 'Bhomp'u' or the 'Bon' people. The language was not in a written form. The language is different from Tibetan language (Subba, 2008).

Table: 5**RESULTS OF ASSEMBLY ELECTION 1994**

Name of the party	Name of the candidate	Total votes secured
Sikkim Democratic Front	Hissey Lachungpa	2316
Indian National Congress	Tseten Lepcha	1420

Source: Source: Election Commission of India –State Election, 1994 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim.

Table: 6**ASSEMBLY ELECTION 1999**

Name of the Party	Name of the candidate	Total votes secured	Votes secured in %
Sikkim Democratic Front	Hissey Lachungpa	3772	59.55%
Indian National Congress	Topden Lepcha	22	0.35%
Sikkim Sangram Parishad	Nedup Tshering Lachenpa	2540	40.10%

Total electors: 7378.

Total voters : 6477

Poll % : 87.79%

Source: Election Commission of India –State Election, 1999 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim.

Table: 7

ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2004

Name of the party	Name of the candidate	Total votes secured
Sikkim Democratic Front	Hissey Lachungpa	4906
Indian National Congress	Anil Lachenpa	1587

Source: Source: Election Commission of India–State Election, 2004 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

The Lachen Manshila constituency has been renamed as Lachen-Mangan as per the delimitation of the constituencies in 2009. A new candidate from the SDF, Tshering Wangdi Lepcha won the election with the opposition parties like INC and SHRP [(Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad).] Like in the Geyzing constituency SHRP entered the election for the first time.

Table: 8

ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2009

Name of the party	Name of the candidate
Sikkim Democratic Front	Tshering Wangdi Lepcha
Indian National Congress	Anil Lachenpa
Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad	Chewang Jigme Lepcha

Source: Source: Election Commission of India–State Election, 2004 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

Support Base of the Party

The Lachen Mangshila constituency has a different political history than the state. The contesting candidates in this area usually belong to ST category. The people in this area favour a ST candidate since the candidate belong to their own caste and community. This constituency has been reserved for B.L seat (B-Bhutia, L-Lepcha). The people of this area vote and support their leaders as the candidate belongs to their own community and speaks in their own Sikkimese language, i.e. Bhutia. It is evident from this that in all the three General election to the Legislative Assembly of 1994, 1999 and 2004, the people voted for Hissey Lachungpa who belongs to the Bhutia community and is a resident of Lachung which falls in Lachen-Mangshila constituency.

A 62 year old Bhutia farmer of Sokothang, Lachung responded that he supports the party (SDF) not because the leader is good but the party President Pawan Chamling is "Garib ko Neta"- The leader of the poor. The leaders get people's support only because the party is good. It means that the vote is for the party and not the candidate of the area. From the survey it was found that the people are not satisfied with their leaders. The people expressed that the party leaders seldom come to the villages and meet the villagers. Their visit to the rural area is more during the election period and very less during other times. Many things are promised on the eve of the election which is rarely fulfilled after the election is over. The rural people have to travel a day long journey of 5 to 6 hours to meet their leaders. The leaders leave in capital and the people have difficulty in approaching them to put forward their problems and grievances.

In Lachen and Lachung, a section of the employees are not satisfied with the performance of the leaders. They come only

during the election time. The benefit is brought to the society through the Dzumsa system (traditional panchayat system) which is still prevalent in Lachen and Lachung of North Sikkim. It is a unique institution of Democracy.

The Dzumsa is the traditional administrative system of the village of Lachen and Lachung in north Sikkim.⁹² It was free from central authority to follow rules applicable to other regions of Sikkim. The Dzumsa is headed by village chief called the Pipon. Dzumsa is a General Council of Lachenpa and Lachungpa villages, directed by a group of people elected or designated by the villagers depending on the period, to represent them and manage village affairs. This council was officially recognised in 1985 and continues to function till date. This council of representatives are now known as the panchayat's composed of two Pipons, six Gembos, two Tsipos and two Gyapons. This council is responsible for the application and respect of the community's law and regulation and for the organisation of the main village events. It organises the meetings of the village General Council. Dzumsa functions as an effective local self-government for all purposes in the villages (Sabatier, 2004). The head of Dzumsa (Pipon) has enormous powers and functions. It works under the state government.

A 54 year old party activist responded that he supports the party as the SDF is the only people's party in Sikkim. The party has supported the people through many schemes for development like connection of Cemented footpaths in all the villages, sanitation, Mukhiya Mantri Antyodaya Yojna (MMAY) Mukhiya Mantri Khadya Suraksha Abhiyan, (MMKSA), Annapurna Scheme

⁹² This system of self-governance was initially established during the first half of the 19th century in order to provide structure and cohesion for these societies and their activities.

(AS) in the society. There are no other political party, which comes in comparison with the SDF. Other political parties are not very popular amongst the rural masses. The candidates of other political parties who contest the election in this constituency do not belong to the Lachen–Mangshila constituency, which is the most important criteria for a candidate to contest the election in this constituency. In Mangshila, the Subba community it was found are the main supporters of the SDF.

Organisation of the Party

Lachen and Lachung have the traditional Dzumsa system. All party meetings are held at Dzumsa office headed by the Pipon. In Mangshila, the party has been able to establish a party office functioning throughout the year. The party has District Level Committee in North Sikkim. The headquarters of this committee is at Mangan where the committee members are nominated by the party President. Under the District Level Committee the party works through Constituency level committee and Block level committees. It is the Block level committee which carries the proper functioning of the party at the villages. The members of this committee frequently keep in touch with the people of the area and act as a bridge between the people and the party. It was found that the youth wing and the women's wing actively participate in the activities of the party. They attend party meetings and represent the area/constituency at the state level meetings and party conferences.

Other political parties lack this kind of organisational structure. Temporary party offices are opened during the election time only for the purpose of interacting with the people for the distribution of party pamphlets, batches, banners and election manifestoes of the parties. These political parties fail to organise

public meetings at large. Their visit to the rural lot is not convincing so the people fail to understand them. Distribution of pamphlets and manifestoes is not enough to attract people's vote, it is necessary to understand peoples mind and feel their heart. Only the state unit of national political parties like the Indian National Congress has district party offices where the President, Vice President and other members are nominated by the state party President.

SECTION -III

GANGTOK CONSTITUENCY-EAST DISTRICT

East district has the largest number of constituencies. There are eleven in total; five Scheduled Tribe (ST) namely, Martam, Rumtek, Assamlingjey, Ranka and Pathing constituencies. There is one Scheduled Caste constituency (SC)-Khamdong constituency. And the remaining five constituencies are general constituencies. These are Central Pandam, Rhenock, Regu, Loosing Pachekhiani and Gangtok.

In the east district the survey was conducted in Gangtok constituency in August, 2008. Gangtok is the largest populated town in the state with 29162 persons, out of which 15816 are male and 13346 are female. The other two towns are Singtam with a population of 5431 and Rangpo with a population of 3724 respectively. The total number of revenue blocks in east district is 134; Gangtok has a total 87 revenue blocks. The total number of voters is also the highest with 1,13,107 persons; 60260 are male and 52847 are female voters.

Distribution of Population

Gangtok is the constituency where the population belongs to diverse castes and communities. These communities are from within and outside the state. The major town area is dominated by the general class group of Bihari's and Marwari's who are old residents of Sikkim. Arithang, Sichey busty, Nam Nang and in Development area the population is of varied types. There is no fix or any particular community dominating the area. There are people belonging to different communities and caste groups like Pradhan, Chettri, Bahun, Rai, Manger, Tamang, Subba, Lepcha, Bhutia and also Scheduled Caste groups. Market (bazaar) area is dominated mostly by the general class like Marwari's, Bihari's and some Bengali's as the business is carried by these groups only. Bhutia's own some restaurants and hotels. Tibet road area which also comes under urban area is resided by Bhutia's the Sikkimese people. There are certain reasons for this. Firstly, it is the capital and all the headquarters of different governmental departments are located. Gangtok being the largest populated town in the state, job opportunities and other facilities are more than the other parts of the state. Secondly, there are a good number of educational institutions both government and private in and around Gangtok. In Gangtok the transport and communication is more developed. Influx of immigrants from other parts of the state like Calcutta, Siliguri, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Nepal is greater than other parts of Sikkim. Lastly, Gangtok is the centre of business and tourist attractions. There are a number of tourist spots in and around Gangtok.⁹³

⁹³ The development of eco-tourism in Sikkim is the key economic strategy of the ruling SDF government.

Occupation and Income

The Majority of the population in Gangtok are employees, working in both private and government firms and businessmen. The employee group can be categorised into the following groups:

- i. Gazetted class I employees
- ii. Gazetted class II employees
- iii. Office assistance
- iv. Third grade workers
- v. Fourth class workers

Business in Gangtok constituency is generally carried by the general class of Bihari's and Marwari's. Only the bazaar area is thickly populated and is an urban area. The surrounding areas are rural with agricultural lands. The total cultivators in Gangtok are 15,523, out of which 15,494 are in rural areas and 29 are in urban areas. There are a total 3,175 agricultural labourers, out of which 3,092 are in the rural areas and 83 in the urban areas (Population census, 2001). The land holdings are mostly marginal, medium land holdings.

The income of government employees ranges from Rs 3,000- 5, 00,000 per month. The income of the business groups (both small and big businessmen) ranges from Rs 2,000- 1,00,000 and above per month. As per the survey report the income of the employees in private firms varies from Rs 2,500 to Rs 25,000 per month. Among the population surveyed 10 are 1st class Gazetted officers whose income ranges from Rs 18000-40000 per month. 50 persons are grade III government employees whose income ranges from Rs 7000-13000 per month. About 20 persons from among the surveyed are working in private firms and private institutions whose income range from Rs 2500- 8000 per month.

About 15 business persons were surveyed whose income range from 5000 to 50,000 per month. The business group also includes people owning small tiny shops.

Amongst the cultivators/farmers, Bahun's are mostly small and marginal farmers.⁹⁴ Land is their major resource, owned and controlled individually by them. Traditionally Bahuns are entrusted with priesthood. The primary occupation is terrace cultivation and horticulture crops, livestock rearing and other service. They have a direct link with the market and depend on it for their daily needs. They are also employed as school teachers, engineers, doctors, government employees, and defence services etc. The cultivation of vegetables, cabbage, potato, radish, cauliflower, maize, millets, ginger, paddy and cardamom to some extent are the main agricultural products. The income of agricultural cultivators and labourers range between Rs 1000- 5000 per month. The unemployed youths have started self-employment programmes like poultry farming, fisheries, cattle farming etc. from among the surveyed population, 27 were agricultural land holders; both big and small land holdings, whose income depended upon the cultivation and production of agricultural products. There is no fix income of this group.

Religion and Language

In Sikkim, especially in Gangtok diverse religion and faith started visiting after 1975 when Sikkim became the 22nd state of India. many religious Guru's started religious practices and religious institutions such as Hindu Temples, Sikh Gurudwars, Churches, Islam Masjids etc. The people are thus, mixed into a diverse form

⁹⁴ The total number of cultivators in Gangtok is 15523, 15494 in the rural area and 29 in the urban area. Total agricultural labourers are 3175, out of which 3,092 in the rural areas and 83 in urban areas.

of religious practices and faith. Hinduism remains the religion of the majority followed by more than 60% of the population followed by Buddhism and then Christianity and others. The language commonly spoken is Nepali. The communities like Bhutia, Lepcha, and Sherpa speak and communicate in their own mother tongue among their community. English and Nepali are the official languages of the State.

Economic background

Most of the areas of Gangtok constituency fall under the urban area with big shops, hotels, and travel agencies. The living style and pattern in this part is quite different from that of the rural part of the constituency. The main town area is well maintained and the houses are pucca houses. These houses are taken in rent by various business groups. The surrounding areas are rural areas where the main occupation is agriculture. There are people who are employees in different private and public sectors. As compared to other parts of Sikkim, Gangtok constituency is in a better position in terms of economic development and growth. Most houses are pucca houses, i.e. cemented buildings which is well furnished. About 10% houses are kutchra, i.e. old style (type) of house built with wood and tin roofs.

The living standard of the people in Gangtok, mainly in the urban areas is quite high. Among the surveyed population, i. e., the economic condition of the employee group is quite sound. Some of the employee group also own some shops and hotels.

Performance of the Party

The Sikkim Democratic Front contested the Assembly Election for the first time in 1994. The party secured a total of 19 seats out of 32 in the General Assembly election. But most interestingly in

Gangtok constituency the party lost the election. The winning party was Sikkim Sangram Parishad with 2,798 votes. The total number of candidates who contested the election were 11 (eleven) male and 1 (one) female. Total number of electors was 7,945 (5,376 male and 4,569 female).

In this constituency, the party has failed to win the two general elections of 1994 and 1999. The winning party is Sikkim Sangram Parishad and the candidate was Narendra Kumar Pradhan. But look at the overall performance of the party in the general election, 1994, 1999 and 2004. The party has been able to secure 19 out of 32 in 1994, 24 out of 32 in 1999 and 31 out of 32 in the 2004 Assembly Election. The tables below show the performance of the party in the Gangtok constituency over the years.

Table: 9

ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS: 1994

Name of the party	Name of the candidate	Total votes secured	Votes secured in %
SSP	Narendra Kumar Pradhan	2798	39.55%
INC	Dilip Prasad Dhungel	2070	29.26%
SDF	Sher Bdr. Subba	1253	17.71%
IND	Bal Chand	617	8.72%
IND	Penzo D. Namgyal	60	0.85%
IND	Krishna s. Basnett	55	0.78%
IND	Gokul Singh Cintury	52	0.72%
BJP	Kiran Chettri	46	0.65%
IND	Prem Prakash Goyal	42	0.59%
IND	L.B Pradhan	33	0.47%

IND	Norden Gyalpo Kalim	33	0.47%
IND	Dhan Maya Giri	15	0.21%

Source: Source: Election Commission of India –State Election, 1994 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim.

Table: 10

ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS: 1999

Name of the Party	Name of the Candidate	Total Votes Secured	%
Sikkim Democratic Front	K.B Gurung	3835	43.52 %
Indian National Congress	Anand Lama	548	6.22%
CPM	Bhumeriall Sirohiam	86	0.98 %
IND	Thenduo Dorjee Bhutia	35	0.40%

Source: Source: Election Commission of India –State Election, 1999 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

In the 2004 Assembly Election a major shift in the party candidates is seen. The earlier SSP candidate Narendra Kumar Pradhan defected from the party and joined the SDF and contested the election, and could also win the election. And the earlier party President of the SSP Nar Bahadur Bhandari left his own party and joined the state unit of the Indian National Congress and contested the election as a INC candidate securing 2829 votes.

Table: 11**ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS: 2004**

Name of the Party	Name of the Candidate	Total votes Secured
Sikkim Democratic Front	Narendra Kumar Pradhan	5952
Indian National Congress	Nar Bahadur Bhandari	2829
Sikkim Sangram Parishad	Devi Prasad Dahal	90
Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad	Bhim Chettri	54

Source: Source: Election Commission of India –State Election, 2004 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

Table: 12**ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS: 2009**

Name of the party	Name of the candidate
Sikkim Democratic Front	Dorjee Namgyal Bhutia
Indian National Congress	Tshering Gyatso kaleon
SGPP	Mingma Topden Sherpa
Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad	Uttam Lepcha
IND	Delay Namgyal Barfungpa

Source: Source: Election Commission of India –State Election, 2009 to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

Support Base of the Party

Gangtok is a general constituency with diverse caste and communities who are engaged in different kind of occupations. The candidate in this constituency who won the election in 1994, 1999 and 2004 belongs to the Nepali community. The support base of the SDF is thus the Nepali community. Amongst the Nepali's, Pradhan, Chettri and Bahun constitute the major support base of the Party. The Tribal minority Bhutia and Lepcha, supported the Sikkim Sangram Parishad in 1994 and 1999 General Assembly election and Congress I in 2004. This is so because the Party President of the Sikkim Sangram Parishad, Nar Bahadur Bhandari joined the Congress (I) in the 2004 election. It is found that respondents mainly from the employee group are not in close contact with the leaders and the employees. The leaders seldom visit them and this group hardly attend party meetings. This group does not benefit directly from the government led by the SDF but they are of the view that though the Party has not reached the urban class, it has been able to reach the rural masses which constitute 80% of the population.

A group of employees belonging to the Nepali community mainly Chettri and Bahun support other political parties like the Congress (I) under the former Chief Minister, Nar Bahadur Bhandar. Thus, the support base of the Congress (I) is the upper caste of Nepali community. SDF is usually seen as the party of the OBC's because the party president belongs to the OBC category. Among the Nepali community about 70% of the population belong to the OBC. Thus, the support base of the SDF is the OBC group.

The rural masses are satisfied with the performance of the government led by the Sikkim Democratic Front. There are other political parties which contest elections and have support from

some section of society however, they have failed to win any seat in the election. The main factor behind their failure is that these parties are active only during the election time and disappear after the elections like mushrooms in rainy season. These parties lack strong vision and policies like the Sikkim Democratic Front.

Party Office and Party Structure

Like in all constituencies, there is a party office at different blocks and Gram panchayat units. The Head office of the party is situated at Tadong, Gangtok. All party meetings and activities are carried on from the head office. The Central Working Committee has the responsibilities of formulating the party policies, rules and regulations, membership of the party and office portfolios.

The block level committee's in the rural areas are created to look after the working of the party for mass participation also representing women participation. There are Youth Wing and Cheli (women) Morcha to promote more participation of women and youth in the party activities.

Sikkim Democratic Front has party offices in each Gram Panchayat unit which is established in a rented house and buildings. Public libraries are maintained by the party. These libraries are small but the panchayats can utilise it for reference works. The public hardly visit these libraries. Apart from Sikkim Democratic Front, the state unit of the Congress I head office is at Gangtok, Development area. All the party works are carried out at the head office. Sikkim Gorkha Pranjatantrik (SGP) has its headquarter at Gangtok and also Sikkim National Congress Party under the leadership. Ashok Chong also has its head office at Gangtok. Sikkim National Congress Party has emerged as a regional political party since the last election i.e. 2004 General

Assembly election. Since then it has been acting as an opposition to the ruling party.

Section IV

Party and the Panchayat Elections

In the earlier sections of the chapter we have focussed on the electoral performance of the SDF in the Assembly constituencies let us now turn to the performance of the party in the Panchayat elections in brief in the state and then we arrive at a general understanding of the support base of the party in the state. The first panchayat election in Sikkim under the Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1993 was conducted in 1997.⁹⁵

Since its formation in 1994, the SDF has consistently stressed on the importance of forming institutionalised panchayat's in gram sabha's and at the Zilla level. Perhaps, this is the main reason why the party was determined to hold panchayat elections on party basis for the first time in the state. The party held a central committee meeting on 20th December, 2000. In the meeting the Party President emphasized upon grassroots consolidation of his party, increase in membership and village level meetings and propagate the pro-people policies of the party at the grass roots level.

To increase peoples' participation in the party meetings at the village level, the party held panchayat elections on party basis in 1997. The 1997 panchayat election was based on party lines for

⁹⁵ In 1992, the constitution passed two Amendment Acts: Seventy Third and Seventy fourth Amendment Acts which came into effect on 24th April 1993. The Seventy Third Amendment Act provided guidelines for the states in drafting their Panchayat Acts. The Seventy Fourth Act provided similar guidelines for drafting the Municipal acts and constitution of the municipalities.

the first time in Sikkim. The old Panchayat's were dissolved and fresh election was conducted.⁹⁶ The government decided to hold Panchayat election based on political parties. Though there were some objections by the opposition political parties, the conduct of the election was successful. The panchayat's and parties finally agreed with the government's decision of holding election on party basis.⁹⁷

The party claimed that for the first time since Sikkim became the 22nd state of Indian Union, the party has been able to give respect to the contribution of the rural masses. Democracy has been brought at the rural level and the Zilla Panchayat's are invited to participate in the state level policy meeting. Under the banner of the SDF government, State Planning Commission was set up in the state and Cabinet Sub Committee report on Decentralisation of powers was set up. The party for the first time empowered the rural people with funds and powers to the panchayat's right up to the gram panchayat level.

In the 1997 Panchayat election, the total number of Gram Panchayat Units was 159, Panchayat Wards were 873 and 92 territorial Constituencies of Zilla Panchayat. The following table shows the district wise distribution of Gram Panchayat Units, Panchayat Wards and Territorial constituencies of Zilla Panchayat in 1997 Panchayat election.

⁹⁶ After the Amendment of the Panchayat Act, State Election Commission was formed in 1997.

⁹⁷ The panchayat's earlier had few functions and were not treated as the lowest democratic body in the state. The panchayat's had very little participation in implementing the programmes. The concerned department implemented all the programmes and policies of the government.

Table: 13

The following table shows the number of seats for the panchayat's in 1997

District	No. of Gram Panchayats	No. of Panchayat Wards	No. of Territorial constituencies of the Zilla Panchayat
West	49	263	22
South	42	243	23
East	48	269	27
North	20*	98*	20*
Total	159	873	92

*Includes the two Dzumsas of Lachen and Lachung

Source: Rural Management and Development Department, Gangtok, July, 2008.

In this term the panchayat's did not have much responsibilities entrusted to it and merely functioned as implementing agencies, primarily for identification of beneficiaries for various departmental programmes. Though on 27.3.98, the government had decided to allocate 15 percent of each department's budget to the Panchayat's but this was not implemented properly by all the departments. The second panchayat election based on party basis was held in October 2002. Delimitation of panchayat area was conducted before this election. The number of seats in the Gram Panchayat Unit, Panchayat Wards and Zilla Panchayat was increased so as to give more participation of the people in decision making.

The people are seen to be more interested in contesting the panchayat election than before. More than this the people are supporting the party so that they may be nominated as party candidates in the panchayat election. In Sikkim, since 1997 the

panchayat election has been mostly won by the party candidates. The candidates who contested the election as independents either withdrew their nominations before the election or those who have won the election as independent candidate joined the party after the election. This is so as the panchayat's under the SDF government are given more powers and responsibilities.

In the election manifesto of Panchayat election of 2002, the Party promised to empower the rural masses in both instruments of decentralisation and devolution of power. The party further promised to give maximum funds to the rural areas and give the administrative and financial powers to the rural masses to run all the primary schools, health centres and other development projects at the grassroots level.

The following table shows the increase in number of seats for the panchayats, 2002.

Table: 14

District	No. of Gram Panchayats	No.of Panchayat Wards	No. of Territorial constituencies of the Zilla Panchayat.
West	51	274	25
South	45	255	24
East	50	273	31
North	20*	103	20*
Total	166	905	100

*Includes the two Dzumsas of Lachen and Lachung.

Source: Rural Management and Development Department, Gangtok, July, 2008.

After the election there was decentralisation of powers and more funds, functions and functionaries to the panchayat's. For rural

development 10% of the budget has been allotted to the panchayat's. The Gram Panchayat's and Zilla Panchayat's received Rs. 10 lakhs and Rs. 60 lakhs for the development works directly to the Gram Panchayat's and Zilla Panchayat's. The Adhyakshas and Upa- Adhyakshas of Zilla Panchayat have been given the status of Ministers of state and Deputy Minister, respectively. There has been transfer of powers in 2003- 2004 and 2006-2007. Primary schools, primary health centre, subsidiary health centres, VLO centre, Library, community information centre, village tourism, small scale irrigation projects, community building and ground have been transferred to Panchayats units.

In the election manifesto of panchayat election 2002, the party promised that all government decisions will be taken and implemented after due consultation with the panchayat's. The party wanted to introduce participatory approach in order to bring the voice of the people into the mainstream. In every gram panchayat and ward panchayat, the panchayat's was to be empowered to decide on the plan as well as to implement and maintain the plan. The party also promised the participation of Zilla Panchayat's in the District Committees. This would enable them to debate on the district plans and programs which directly affect the people both at the district and wards.

The transfer of grants to the panchayat's provided them the opportunity to decide their own priorities for development. Meetings of gram sabha began to be held regularly to identify the priorities of the village. The panchayat's are satisfied with the performance of the government as many powers had been transferred to them. 70% of the annual budget of the state has been given to the panchayat's for rural development. Sikkim has a total of 873 panchayat wards, out of which 850 panchayat wards

are under the SDF. The state level panchayat meetings are held where the panchayat's are made aware of their responsibilities and functioning.⁹⁸.

The main reason why the party introduced panchayat election on party basis is to give opportunity to the villagers to learn the lesson of election system and facilitate them to directly elect their candidates of their choice at ground level.⁹⁹To encourage the rural people's representatives to work for the people panchayatshri awards are being given.

The party has been able win all the panchayat elections in the state, though other political parties contest the elections. We have found out in chapter V, in the support base of the party that the other political parties in the state have weak link between the rural people and the party. The party during the elections do not address to the question of rural development or come up with a popular slogan like the SDF does. The SDF, in order to restore democracy came up with the slogan "Afnai gaon afai banaaon", the people must decide how they would like their future to be built.

In the context of participation of political parties in the panchayat elections, the opposition parties in the state opposed the party basis panchayat elections of 1997. In spite of this the election was based on party lines. The next panchayat election was held in October 2002. In this election all the seats went uncontested in favour of the Sikkim Democratic Front. The other political parties like Congress (I), Sikkim Sangram Parishad, and

⁹⁸ First State level panchayat meeting was held in Namchi in June 1995

⁹⁹ The system of panchayat election on party lines was initially not introduced in the constitution of the panchayat act of 1992. But it was removed by an Amendment Act before the panchayat election in 1997.

BJP did not field any candidate. The following table shows the position of Panchayat elections in 2002.

Table: 15

Panchayat Election 2002: Gram Panchayat

District	Contested seats	Uncontested seats	Total
West	33	241	274
South	78	177	255
East	138	131	269
North	22	79	101
Total	271	628	899

Source: The Glory of Sikkim, edited by M.P Lama, 2003, p.24.

Table: 16

Panchayat Election 2002: Zilla Panchayat

District	Contested seats	Uncontested seats	Total
West	3	22	25
South	12	12	24
East	20	11	31
North	7	11	18
Total	42	56	98

Source: The Glory of Sikkim, edited by M.P Lama, 2003, p.24.

The next election was held in October 2007. In this election the total number of Gram Panchayat Units, Panchayat wards and territorial constituencies of Zilla Panchayat has been changed as the area and number of panchayat's has changed due to the demarcation of the municipal areas.

Table: 17

Number of seats in the Panchayat election 2007

District	No. of Gram Panchayats	No. of Panchayat Wards	No. of Territorial constituencies of the Zilla Panchayat.
West	53	283	25
South	45	257	23
East	44	243	27
North	21*	108*	20*
Total	163	891	94

*Includes the two Dzumsas of Lachen and Lachung.

Source: Rural Management and Development Department, Gangtok, July, 2008.

In the Panchayat election of 2007, reservation was provided to the Most Backward Class in proportion to their population. The reservation for women was increased to 40%. The party in the election manifesto promised to strengthen the Gram Sabha's. The Gram Sabha's will take all decisions pertaining to the village and the villagers. The Gram Sabha's were to be transparent, people centric and this would further deepen the root of democracy. In this election apart from SDF, the other political parties that contested the election was the Congress (I). The Congress (I) has been able to win few of the panchayat's seat in the state.

Thus, it is seen that in Sikkim the political parties take less interest in contesting the Panchayat elections as compared to State Assembly Election and Parliamentary elections. Most of the panchayat's go uncontested in favour of SDF which is not there in the Assembly elections in the state. Hence it becomes easier for the SDF to win the panchayat level elections.

V

Support Base of the Party in the State: An Analysis

The Himalayan state since its merger with the Indian Union in 1975 has a 32 member house of which 12 seats are reserved for the tribal- Bhutia, Lepcha communities, while two seats reserved for the scheduled castes and one for its unique Buddhist Monastic seat called the "Sangha". The remaining 17 seats are general seats. In Sikkim, the two districts, West and South are dominated by Other Backward Classes of the majority Nepalese community. The ruling SDF is considered to be a party of the OBC's. The opposition SSP and now Congress (I) has its support base among the upper caste Nepalese and a section of the state's tribal minority. The Sikkim Sangram Parishad now the Congress (I) has got the support mainly from the East district.

Sikkim is the state where individuals rather than parties dominate elections, a battle between Chief Minister Pawan Chamling and former Chief Minister and Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee President Nar Bahadur Bhandari.¹⁰⁰ The population is divided into three separate ethnic groups; the Nepalese constituting about 75%, the Bhutias and the Lepchas. Among the Nepalese, around 70% belong to the Other Backward Classes (OBC) and the remaining belongs to the Upper Caste. Pawan Chamling and the SDF who belongs to the OBC community get votes mostly from this section of the population. Nar Bahadur Bhandari and his party's support base is among the upper caste Nepalese; the Newari's, Bahun's and Chettri's. The Sikkim Bhutia

¹⁰⁰ Nar Bahadur Bhandari joined the Congress (I) to become the lone opposition member in the Assembly in 2004.

Lepcha Apex Community (SIBLAC) which represents the indigenous Bhutia-Lepcha community in the state supported SDF earlier and now backs the Congress (I) because according to them Congress (I) is the party which will be able to protect Article 371 (f) which accords special status to Sikkim. SIBLAC is also opposed to the opening of Nathula Trade until the "Rights of the ethnic communities of Sikkim are protected".¹⁰¹

The Assembly Election results of 1994 indicate that the backward OBC and the tribal communities fully support the SDF whereas the Upper caste Nepali Communities supported the Bhandari led SSP. The results further indicate that the Sikkimese voters elected a relatively new comer SDF into power. It shows that the Sikkimese people were fed up with "dictatorial tendencies of SSP and the opportunism of Congress (Times of India, December, 13, 1994). The prime reason for the SDF's victory is that the OBC constitutes the majority vote bank of the SDF. There was a disenchantment of the electorate with the 15 years Bhandari government, and the weak opposition in Sikkim. Hence they supported Chamling (The Telegraph, December 12, 1994). For getting the support of the people' Chamling went for a state wide padyatra and carried on a door to door campaign of creating awareness among the people focussing on the omission and commissions of the Bhandari government (Sikkim Express, December 1-8, 1993).

The people of Sikkim favour the SDF and support the party with full enthusiasm and will. Bishnu Rai, a resident of Damthang in South Sikkim responded that the former government under the leadership of Nar Bahadur Bhandari did not bring any development

¹⁰¹ SIBLAC is a non political organisation of the Sikkimese Bhutia and Lepcha community which has always been working for safeguarding the rights of the people. The member of the SIBLAC are not allowed to contest any election in the state.

in the villages. Sikkim Democratic Front has done well for the poor people. The party has helped the people by granting loans and through several schemes of development. The Congress (I) leaders had never visited villages, even though the party claims to be strong opposition party in the state. SDF has been able to retain its power for the past fourteen years as it is a well organised regional political party in the state. Like the Communist party of India (Marxist) in West Bengal, it is a cadre-based political party which works at the grassroots level. The party (SDF) claims that they have made the rural areas very strong through the devolution of power to the Panchayat's. 70% of the annual budget of the state has been given to the Panchayat's for rural development. Out of the total 873 panchayat wards in rural Sikkim, the SDF controls around 850 wards. This is how the party has been able to win people's support and confidence. Other political parties lack in the organisational front. SDF has well organised party machinery like; youth wing, Cheli morcha (women wing) etc. The opposition political parties lack this. The financial condition of these parties is also very poor hence they cannot run well established party office at all levels.

The SSP had earlier mobilised the people by promising many things like the protection of the rights of the Sikkimese people, educational facilities, agricultural infrastructure and rural development. The Sikkim Janata Parishad and Sikkim Sangram Parishad under Nar Bahadur Bhandari unlike the Sikkim Democratic Front under Pawan Chamling tried to get people's support and mobilised the people not by directly providing personal facilities like grants of monetary support in different fields. The Government under the SDF had got the support of the voters it had directly benefited the people personally. The people were provided with monetary aid and grants for different causes

like financial grant of rupees 20000 to each household living below poverty line, medical aid, unemployment loans, agricultural loans at low interest and other benefits like distribution of GCI sheets, pressure cooker, cylinder gas stove, blankets to the poor people and organising Janta Mela in each district. The party mobilised the people by supplying rice at a cheaper rate at half the rate. In the year 2000 the government under SDF granted 30 model houses in each constituency to improve the living condition of the rural poor. Model houses are chosen from the most backward areas of the respective constituencies. It further mobilised the people by directly keeping in contact with the people through various party frontal organisations like Cheli Morcha, Youth Wing etc. To keep in close contact with the people and make them feel their voice in the decision making the party held CWC (Central Working Committee). CWC meeting was held in Visitors Bungalow at Mingtokgang on 16, March 1997. In the meeting the party passed the resolution of opening Sanskrit college at Geyzing, West Sikkim, dissolving present panchayat and conducting election of the new panchayat under Panchayat Act, Anti- election act, establishment of Sahitya Sangit Kala Academy in Sikkim etc. It also decided to get 100% financial help from the centre and to get Sikkim declared as Direct Tax free zone state. The party later broadened its policies to include various reforms in the agricultural sector, industrial sector, eco-tourism and rural development.

The SDF gained popularity after coming to power in 1994 and more people joined the party. In November 1995 more than 60 Sikkim Sangram Parishad party activists from Chakhung and Soreng constituency joined the SDF. They submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling and said that they have helped SSP and Bhandari for 15 years and no progress

was seen towards the upliftment of the downtrodden. The memorandum further stated that the true leader of the poor is Pawan Chamling and the SDF. In the same year more than 30 members from the SSP and the Congress (I) of Rumtek constituency joined the party.

Finally on the question why the regional political party like SDF in a newly emerged state has been able to win consecutive elections of the state Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary elections. Even though it is true that the SDF has attained popularity in the state because of a number of reasons, the policies of the government, strategies of mobilisation, its organisational structure all has helped but one of the reason is that the opposition parties are "Non-Existent" both regional as well as national political parties. People are left with no choice but to support the Sikkim Democratic Front during the time of elections.

CONCLUSION

In the last part of our thesis we come to the conclusion which includes a brief summarization of the chapters and then we arrive at a conclusion. The first Chapter covers the political developments of Sikkim since 1940's till its merger with the Indian Union, the political developments after the merger and the initial success of the SDF as a regional political party. We have seen that Sikkim, a small Himalayan kingdom was ruled by the Namgyal dynasty and had to face many threats and attacks from Nepal and Bhutan. Nepal in 1717 made repeated attacks and in 1700 Bhutan invaded Sikkim. The Chogyal had to seek help from the East India Company in India in order to push back the invaders from Sikkim. The combined forces of the Sikkimese people also supported the Chogyal to save the Himalayan Kingdom. British interest in Sikkim was the trade route to Tibet and their political interest in Tibet. Sikkim was the possible gate pass to Tibet. For this, a treaty was signed with East India Company on February 10th, 1817.

Sikkim became a de-facto protectorate in 1861 which changed the ethnic scene of Sikkim. A new turn took place during Tashi Namgyal's period as the exploitation under the Kazis was at its peak. The Kazi's were the Zamindar's and members of the Royal Parishad. They exploited the people through several ways and means. The exploitation took various forms like Kalobhari, Jharlaugi, Theki-Bethi and Kuruwa. There was a Zamindari system under the Chogyal and the Chogyal was under the influence of the Kazis, who were also the Zamindar's. The Zamindar's suppressed the rural masses to the extent that they had to take refuge in the neighbouring places like Nepal, Bhutan, Siliguri, Darjeeling and Assam. Unable to tolerate the suppression of the Kazi's and the

Zamindar's, the people rose against the suppression. Underground meetings and movements were held by different political groups and a new political party was formed called Praja Sammelan in 1947 by the villagers of Temi Tarku. The party was formed to oppose the suppression of the Kazi's on the people. In the same year new political parties Rajya Praja Mandal was formed at Chakhung and Praja Samaj Party was formed at Gangtok. The three parties came together and a new party, the Sikkim State Congress was formed on December 7th, 1947. The party demanded the abolition of the Zamindari system, and for responsible government and merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. The State Congress launched a "No Rent" campaign at Rangpo and the leaders like Chandra Das Rai was arrested for violating the proclamation of Chogyal.

Sikkim witnessed many political uprisings during the reign of Chogyal Tashi Namgyal. There was opposition against monarchy in Sikkim and demand for written constitution, system of voting, electoral reforms, land and administrative reforms. Anti-Chogyal riot at Gangtok took place on March 28th, 1973. Chogyal had to seek help from the Indian Government which led to a tripartite agreement between the political parties of Sikkim, the Chogyal and the Foreign Secretary of India, Kewal Singh. The agreement made the monarch a constitutional head and in April 1974 the first democratic election was held in which political parties like Sikkim Congress, Sikkim National Party and Independent candidates contested the election. A new historical development took place on May 16th, 1975 when Sikkim was merged with the Indian Union and was made the 22nd state of India. B. B. Lall became the first Governor of Sikkim whereas Kazi Lhendup Dorji Khangsarpa was sworn in as the first Chief Minister of the state. Kazi Lhendup Dorji

ruled Sikkim for only a short period. With central aid and grants many developmental works were carried on during his rule.

We also note that the Sikkim Legislative Assembly election was held in October 1979 which was the first election conducted under the direction of the Election Commission of India and the Indian election laws. Apart from the regional political parties like Sikkim Janta Parishad, Sikkim Congress, Sikkim Prajantantra Congress, Sikkim Scheduled Caste League, National political parties like, Indian National Congress, Janta Party, the CPI (M) participated in the election. Nar Bahadur Bhandari of Sikkim Janata Parishad won the election and became the second Chief Minister of the state. Various developments in the field of infrastructure were carried on by the new government. It brought several reforms in the socio-economic condition of the Sikkimese. But the Government was dismissed on May 11th, 1984 since corruption charges were levelled against Nar Bahadur Bhandari by 13 members of his party and four other cabinet ministers. B. B. Gurung became the next Chief Minister but the government survived for only 13 days. Presidential rule was imposed as a result of breakdown of the constitutional machinery.

Nar Bahadur Bhandari came up with a new regional political party, SSP in 1984 which contested the Assembly election of 1985. The new party was able to win the election and formed the government. The Assembly election of 1989 was also won by the SSP.

In the second section of the chapter, we looked at the emergence of the SSP as a regional political party which had ruled Sikkim for more than a decade. Its focus was on the protection of the interest and rights of the Sikkimese people, and safeguarding freedom and democracy of the Sikkimese people. The party

contested two Legislative Assembly elections, in 1985 and 1989. The party won both the elections and formed the governments.

There were developments in many fields like roads and bridges, health care, education, agriculture and economic sectors. The main achievement of the government under SSP was the recognition of the Nepali language as one of the national languages in the eighth schedule of the constitution in 1992. However, it was seen that after the 1989 assembly election Bhandari's attitude changed. He became an autocratic and authoritarian ruler. There was a total suppression of freedom of the press and the state was under one man's rule. The political parties in the state were not in a stable condition to stand as a strong opposition against the ruling party. The Parties like the Rising Sun made an alliance with the National Front and the Left Front to stand against Bhandari's rule. Another important development was that Pawan Chamling, a cabinet member opposed Bhandari on the OBC issue on the grounds that the government deprived the rights of the people by not implementing the OBC system as per the report of Mandal Commission. Many criminal and corruption cases against Bhandari were registered. Joint Action in Sikkim against the government was made. Demands for restoration of democracy and preservation of the rule of Law in Sikkim were raised. Pawan Chamling was dismissed from the Cabinet on the OBC issue. Chamling emerged as an alternative to the long established Bhandari rule in Sikkim.

In the third section we have studied the origins and growth of the SDF and its success in Sikkim. Pawan Chamling came to power in 1994 with his new regional political party, SDF. It formed the government with the objective of upholding the principles of Socialism, Democracy, Sovereignty, Unity and Integrity of the

Indian Union, political, social and economic rights of the people and promotion of peace, progress and communal harmony in the state. The SDF government made various promises and policies were formed after it came to power for the development of the state. The party had various Committees and Fronts like; All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee, Central Working Front Committee, District Committees, Constituency Level Committees and Block Level Committees. These committees act as a link between the party and party supporters by the conducting party meetings at all levels. The party (SDF) won 19 seats out of 32 legislative Assembly seats in the Elections of 1994. The other political parties contesting the election were; Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (Marxists), Indian National Congress, Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Sikkim Sangram Parishad.

In chapter II we made a study of the promises and electoral populism of the SDF. SDF was born as a reaction against the Bhandari government. SDF acted as a sole opposition in the state and was against the undemocratic rule of the SSP. SDF come up with the slogan of making "New and Happy Sikkim". The party (SDF) was able to win people's trust and won the Assembly election in 1994. As a result SSP under Nar Bahadur Bhandari lost the election and with this his long established rule in Sikkim also ended. Behind Bhandari's failure was the corruption charges levelled against him and his anti-people policies. Political leaders of other political parties were arrested and tortured. The press from time to time was closed and there was pressure from the government. Anti- people activities was the common issue of the ruling government. All these factors led to the need for the formation of a strong opposition political party in the state. Joint Action Committee was formed by political parties like the SDF,

Congress (I), Bharatiya Janta Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and organisations like Citizens for Democratic and Human Rights Organisation in Sikkim and the forces opposed the ruling government for its mal-administration in the state.

SDF aimed at restoring the rights and privileges of the people and committed itself to fight against the unjust and indecent regime. Democratic rights, values and principles in Sikkim had been eroded. The party pledged to re-orient the economic and social policies in the state. For fulfilling its dreams and desires of making Sikkim a "New and Happy Sikkim "it worked on certain principles and adopted different strategies.

The SDF promised to decentralise and safeguard democracy in the state. It promised to give political, social and economic justice to the people. During the earlier regime the fourth estate of democracy, freedom of press and media were under the control of the government. Freedom of speech was forbidden. The SDF thus promised to restore the constitutional rights of the press and restore back freedom of speech and Rule of Law. The party unlike the earlier government promised to promote national and emotional integration with the centre. It also promised the inclusion of Limboo and Tamang Community in the list of tribal's and include Rai, Gurung, Manger, Bhujel, Sunwar in the OBC list.

The party promised to promote and protect the languages of the three ethnic groups of Sikkim and make proposals to the central government for the inclusion of the Bhutia and Lepcha language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. It promised reservation of seats for Nepali and Tsong in the legislative Assembly. It promised in its election manifesto that the party will safeguard the rights of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes as they are the minority groups in the state. It promised to make a

proposal to the central government for realignment of the existing constituencies of the state and to send at least two representatives to each House of the Parliament. The party also pledged to include the left out communities; Gurung, Rai, Manger, Sunwar, Thami, Jogi, Dewan in the tribal category and include Chettri, Bahun, Newar, Sanyasi in the OBC list.

Decentralisation in the state was promised. The party promised to give more powers and functions to the panchayat's so that there would be more participation by the panchayat's in the decision making of the government. It promised to take steps for strengthening the Panchayat Raj Institutions and make the institutions more effective. Provision of honorarium to the Panchayat members, appointment of Panchayat PA's was promised. For decentralisation of powers at the local level, it promised that in all Gram Panchayat's, the Panchayat's will be empowered to decide and implement the plan. The party also promised to give responsibility to the Panchayat's over ruling and maintaining all government institutions like; primary schools, primary health centres, public library, community information centres, grounds for sports and rural tourism. Following its promise, the panchayat election was held on party lines for the first time in Sikkim in 1997. It promised that all government decisions will be made after due consultation with the panchayat's to bring the voice of the people into the mainstream of thinking in the decision making for rural development.

SDF dreamt of making Sikkim and Sikkimese people self-sufficient and equally competitive with other states of the Indian Union. It promised to give 30% benefits in social, political and economic fields to women for promoting women's participation. It promised 33% of seats for women in Panchayat's and 30% in jobs.

Senior citizens to the party were to be respected and protected by the state. Old age pension was to be increased up to Rs. 400 per month to help and give medical treatment. The party also promised to protect the culture and traditions of the three ethnic communities of Sikkim. As a pro- people party it promised social upliftment of the poor and grant land, forest land to built house to the landless. It promised to establish health centres and medical facilities making Sikkim a disease free state in 2015. The party promised to provide employment facilities to the unemployed youths. The people living below poverty line were promised ration cards.

Economically the state was not in a good condition when the SDF came to power. For uplifting the economic conditions of the poor, it promised to make Sikkim self-sufficient and promised the development of the rural areas for alleviating poverty. It also promised to set aside 70% of the annual budget for economic development. It pledged to remove corruption from the state and solve the problems of labour and low wage earning employees. Road connections and transport availability would be provided and it promised to link every village by road with the main town. To improve the industrial sector, it promised to scrap the sick industries and revive them. It promised that it would demand funds from the central government for its maintenance.

As an agricultural state, for better agricultural production and improvement of the agricultural sector, it promised to set aside 70% of budget for rural development. It promised to give agriculture the status of an industry. The party promised the study of progressive cultivation of maize, ginger, cardamom, pears, tea leaves and herbal plants. To give information on farming and cultivation of crops it promised to set rural library and to assist

farmer's assistant in each gram panchayat. Scientific techniques for cultivation of crops and vegetables and necessary inputs were to be provided. Dairy farming, poultry farming, piggery and fishery were given more importance and for these cooperative banks were to be opened to help the farmers.

For progress and development of the educational system in the state the party give priority to education. It promised to open technical institutions for better opportunities to the students and establish more degree colleges. To encourage education it promised to make tuition fee free, distribute free text books and uniforms in all government schools. It also promised to grant scholarships and quota reserved for ST and SC candidates opting for higher education. Schools were to be upgraded and provision was to be made for starting its own school board and university in the state.

Populism is best defined as a political strategy. Under populism leader is an individual, a personalistic leader and not a group or organisation. Populism rests on the power capability of numbers and not special weight. Populism emerges when personalistic leaders rule on massive yet mostly un-institutionalised support from large number of people. A political definition of populism is seen as a specific way of competing for and exercising political power. In populism mass support can have different levels of organisation and institutionalisation. Thaksin's Populism in Thailand can be cited as the most developed populism in contemporary Asia. He launched a series of tours covering every region of the country. He listened to reports on local problems and petitions for budget assistance. In many cases, he then gave instant approval for projects.

Nar Bahadur Bhandari ruled Sikkim from 1979 to 1994. When he was in power he pursued policies through which he could get the support of the people. He followed populist policies to mobilise people. He promised to protect the rights and interest of the Sikkimese, maintain communal harmony, maintain national integrity and safeguard freedom and democracy in the state. The party (SSP) promised to uplift the standard of living of the people by implementing poverty alleviation programmes, by improvement in Agriculture, education, health care, social welfare schemes, safe drinking water, rural electrification and rural housing schemes.

We have found that like in Latin America, it is also noted in Sikkim that the leaders are charismatic individuals and exercise power by maintaining direct contact with a large unorganised mass of followers. There is a connection between the leaders and followers. The leader for this mass support creates intense connection with the followers and be a guide and lead the people towards progress. There is face to face contact with the masses through different ways. In Sikkim the people can meet the chief minister personally and put their grievances. For this the party has fixed a day in a week only to meet the public. Like other populist leaders, Chamling also promised for the development of some sections of the people and safeguard the rights of the people.

In Western countries, the populist leader's support base is mainly shopkeepers, businessmen in small industry, artisans and commercial agents. In Sikkim, Chamling's support base is mainly the agricultural rural masses. These unorganised groups are mobilised and integrated into politics. The most important comparison of Chamling's populism can be made with Thaksin's populism in Thailand. Like Thaksin, Chamling achieved massive personal popularity in the Assembly Election in 2004. Out of 32

seats he secured 32 seats. His support was largest in the rural areas. The slogan chosen for his party was "Janta Ko Raj Ma Jantai Raja" (in popular regime, people are sovereign). Which reflects his view of giving the people power. The content of his populism began with his initial policies of restoring democracy and re-orientation of economy, which responded to the needs and aspirations of the unorganised masses mainly the rural agricultural mass which constitutes 75% of the population in Sikkim

Chapter III of the study is on the economic policies of the SDF government since 1994. We have seen that Sikkim is an agricultural land where agriculture is the main occupation of the people and it is the main backbone of the state's economy. More than 65% of the population are agriculturalists. The party promised to improve the agricultural sector and give it the status of an industry. This is to increase agricultural productivity. In 1999 it came up with a new progressive programme of providing better opportunities to the farmers. Gram sewak as an advisor was to be appointed in every gram panchayat to provide the farmers with the information on scientific technologies, variety of seeds, organic manure and training on better farming. The party promised to make Sikkim purely an organic state by helping the farmers in soil conservation, prevent land from soil erosion and help them in the cultivation of orange, passion fruit, guava, banana, papaya, apple, and some other fruits and vegetables. For better outputs, the SIMFED has been providing inputs like seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, and tools since 1996. Various measures were taken to increase forest cover in the state. The year 1995 was declared as "Green Revolution Year. " Balanced uses of fertilizer nutrients were given emphasis. In three years time the party in government organised regular training programmes through FTC (Farmers Training Centre) and workshops for 6000 farmers in 1994-1995, 5000 in

1995- 1996, and 8000 in 1996-1997 (Department of Information and Public Relations, Govt. of Sikkim, 1997, p.27). The production of oil seeds has been enhanced with the Oil Seed Production Programme. The oilseed production was 1050 quintals in 1994-1995, 989 tonnes in 1995 -1996 and 1000 tonnes in 1996-1997. The Integrated Coarse Cereal Development Programme was launched during the Eighth plan in which the farmers were allowed to exercise their choice on crop varieties. A new Board; Agriculture Department and Farmers Welfare Board was established in 1995 as an advisory body which concentrates on guiding the Department of Agriculture.

The government under the SDF turned the negative economic growth rate into positive growth. After 1995 -1996 both the Net State Domestic Product and Per Capita income have increased from Rs. 426 Crores in 1995-96 to Rs. 891 Crores in 2001-2002 (Govt. of India, Economic Survey, 2002-2003). The government under the SDF increased the number of Watersheds in the state from 12 to 24 in 1997-98. The government has started new centrally sponsored schemes like Macro-Management in Agriculture and women in Agriculture from 2000-2001 to provide support to agricultural development and encourage women's participation in agricultural activities.

Industry is the key sector from where the economic growth in the state can be accelerated. The government in the year 1998 12th Lok Sabha election, in its election manifesto promised to scrap and revive the sick industries. There are certain reasons for poor industrial performance in Sikkim. The main constraints are-lack of knowledge of the entrepreneur regarding manufacturing activities, lack of raw materials, absence of proper manpower, poor marketing network, inflexible land laws and lack of enabling laws,

under developed infrastructure facilities, shortage of credit and finance. The government implemented certain measures and policies towards the development of the industrial sector in Sikkim. The SDF government promised to maintain and reopen the sick and closed industries in Sikkim. This can be a source of employment to the unemployed. The government under the SDF also implemented long term industrial policy for industrial development and to revive the Government Food Preservation Factory (GFPP).

For effective promotion of industries the government made strategies of identification of thrust areas. Attractive package and fiscal incentives, special promotional measures for rural and traditional estates and growth centres to facilitate integrated development of industries, revamping the public sector undertakings and development of marketing support systems and development of appropriate training facilities were provided by the government. It provided long term loans for cottage and small scale industries, hotels, hospitals, nursing homes and taxis. The Sikkim Precision Industries Ltd., Namchi was conceived in March 1998. The government has been able to provide training for rural artisans and small scale entrepreneurs. It has been able to provide provisional and permanent registration to small scale industries and tiny industries. SIDICO (Sikkim Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Ltd.) was set up in 1997 and it has been engaged in promoting financial development of small scale industries, cottage, small and medium sectors in Sikkim. In the years 1995-96 to 1999-2000, it has sanctioned loans to 2147 beneficiaries amounting to Rs 10,35 Crores (Government of Sikkim, Sikkim-A statistical Profile, Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2004-05, p. 132). The Union Government has also launched new industrial policies for the state

on the line of the existing North-East Industrial policy. The policy included exemption of excise and income tax to all new industrial and expansion of existing units for a period of ten years from the date of commencement of commercial production. The policy granted financial concessions to 12 identified thrust areas in industries. In May, 1999, the government made some recommendations in the policy interventions in the industrial sector of the state. To accelerate industrial expansion and urban domestic and rural needs alternative power sources have been explored and developed (Govt. of Sikkim, Department of Information and Public Relations, May, 2008, p.70).

In Sikkim the total communication service depends upon road network. The government has constructed 29 Kms of new roads in the year 1994-1995, in the year 1995- 1996, 72 Kms was constructed and 60 Kms was constructed in 1996-1997. Total 161 Kms was constructed in 1997-1998. For providing better transport facilities to the public as well as transportation of material goods mainly from Siliguri, the government gave this responsibility to Sikkim National Transport. Till 2001, the number of buses has increased to 123 and 134 trucks/ tankers.

Construction of helipads at remote areas of Sikkim has been promised which will become useful during the time of emergencies when there are natural calamities, epidemics, road blocks etc. This will also help to promote tourism in the state. The helipads at Lachung, Dalapchen, Rabongla, Dodak, Yoksum, Pelling are some which have been constructed.

The SDF government has taken measures to conserve forest and environment. It adopted and enforced forest environment and wild life policy in 1999 to protect environment and preserve forest and wild life. To conserve forest the government implemented ban

on grazing by all domestic animals in reserve forest areas in the state to protect plantations and ban on the use of non-biodegradable products like plastic bags in the state. Following this measure, Sikkim becomes the first state in the country to effectively implement this ban. The government has further decided to adopt "Green Road" scheme by undertaking extensive plantation on the road sides within five years service 2003. The SDF government declared to make Sikkim a "Total Organic State". With his efforts in preserving the environment, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling was awarded the "Greenest Chief Minister of India" by the Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi in 1999.

In Chapter IV we have looked at the status of democracy in Sikkim in the period of our study. Democracy in Sikkim was implanted in 1975 but the SDF claims that real democracy was restored under the rule of the SDF. Democratic movements in Sikkim began with the anti-Chogyal protest against the exploitation and suppression of the rural masses during the Chogyal period. In the 1940's many political parties developed, like the Sikkim State Congress and Sikkim Janata Congress as against the feudal domain of the king. The main aim of the newly formed parties was to abolish the system of feudalism and bring democracy in Sikkim. On 4th, April 1973 Law and order completely broke down in Sikkim when hundreds of demonstrations from all parts of Sikkim came to Gangtok against the Chogyal and demanded the establishment of Responsible government in Sikkim. A tripartite agreement was signed on the 8th of May 1973 between the Chogyal, Foreign Secretary, Govt. of India and the representatives of three political parties for the establishment of responsible government in Sikkim with a democratic constitution,

fundamental rights, rule of law, independent judiciary and greater legislative and executive powers for the representatives of the people. Chogyal was made the constitutional head. The first general election was held in April 1974 and Kazi Lhendup Dorjee was sworn in as the first Chief Minister of Sikkim. Sikkim was made the 22nd state of the Indian Union in May 16th, 1975 and with this the long established Chogyal rule in Sikkim came to an end.

There was a failure of constitutional machinery in Sikkim and President's rule was imposed for the first time in Sikkim on 18th August 1979. Democracy was in its initial stage during the Kazi L. Dorjee time and not much development could take place. On 12th October 1979, the government was formed by Sikkim Janata Parishad under Nar Bahadur Bhandari. Since then Bhandari ruled Sikkim till 1993. He promised to restore democracy and bring all round development in Sikkim. Importance was given to Education, Health, Transport and communication, social welfare schemes, safe drinking water facilities etc. After the 1989 assembly election Bhandari was charged with corruption cases and opinions was raised against the mal-administration, anti-people policies and autocratic rule in Sikkim since there was the hegemony of only one political party and one man rule in Sikkim. Right to press was curtailed and there was constant pressure over the mass- media. This led to absence of a strong opposition leading to absence of real democracy in the state.

We found that after Nar Bahadur Bhandari, the government was formed by SDF under Pawan Chamling. He promised to restore real democracy with freedom of speech and freedom of press in Sikkim and promised to provide social justice for all sections of the society- in religion, language, gender, profession

and culture. The government recommended the inclusion of seven communities; Bhujel, Gurung, Manger, Rai, Sunwar and Tamang from among the Sikkimese Nepalese origin as socially and educationally backward classes.

For better working of press and the media the government constituted Press Accreditation Committee to facilitate correspondents and editors of qualified registered newspapers and agencies. Under Media Initiative Programme the IPR Department provided computers, printers and fax machines to help them build their infrastructural developments.

Free and fair elections are held at all levels of government and there is more participation of the people in selection of the representatives. Justice is provided readily for the masses, lok adalats have been constituted in all nine sub- divisions of Sikkim. To bring social justice, Tamang's and Limboo's are included in the category of Scheduled Tribe's in 2003 and it reconstructed Sikkim Commission for Backward Classes in 1998 for the inclusion of any class of citizens as a Backward Class in the Schedule and to address wrong inclusion or non-inclusion of any backward class. The earlier government had rejected to include Bhujel, Gurung, Rai, Sunwar, and Tamang in the OBC category but it was done on 25th, May, 1999. The government under the SDF included Sanyasi, Thamis, Chettri, Bahun and Newar in the list of OBC on 17th September, 2003.

However, there has been some criticism against the SDF democratic policies. Pawan Chamling at a press conference had given a statement of anti-people policies when he said that "people had given SDF (govt) the mandate to rule for five years and anyone opposing the government on any issue would be going against the mandate. In 1999, 12 hour hunger strike by

representatives of the three ethnic communities at B.L House in Gangtok for restoration of political rights was held. In February, 2003, Sikkim United Democratic Alliance (SUDA) was formed with the objective of strengthening democratic process, ensure freedom of expression and fight for the restoration of the political rights of the Sikkimese people. The Alliance consisted of BJP, Congress (I), Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad, Organisation of Sikkimese Unity (OSU) and NEBULA (National Liberation Front). In 1997 a new political party Sikkim Ekta Manch was launched under L.P Tewari with the view that the administration in Sikkim was deteriorating and they intended to bring political reforms in Sikkim. According to the Sikkim Observer editor Jigme N. Kazi, the Fourth estate, one of the main pillars of democracy has been seized in Sikkim for a long time.

The SDF gained its popularity with the slogan "Janta ko Raj Ma Jantai Raja". It means that in a popular regime people are the rulers. It means the empowerment of the poor and the downtrodden and making them the real ruler of the state. For the SDF, the people of Sikkim tasted real democracy under the SDF government. The party in government has been able to give people freedom, justice, and power to rule themselves. The participation of the people in the state affairs has increased. Through the Panchayati Raj system power has been decentralized and there is an involvement of the people in decision making. The party gave importance to women empowerment and seats are reserved for women in the Panchayati Raj system.

For the smooth functioning of the administration at the grassroots level, 24 administrative centres have been opened throughout the state. For the upliftment and safeguard of the weaker sections of the society separate Welfare Boards for STs,

SCs, OBCs and MBCs have been constituted. Many developmental schemes were carried on like the construction of new schools and its maintenance, implementation of central schemes like distribution of high yielding variety seeds to the farmers, training and capacity building course for the unemployed youths, medical facilities, educational facilities, drinking water facilities, grants in aid to the poor people and construction of model houses for the homeless poor people of the state. All this has improved the living standard of the people and has made their lives better.

We found that the SDF has provided necessary administrative and financial resources to PRIs for better planning and democratic decentralization in the rural areas. The origin of panchayati raj was in the council called "Gyeme" which means village elders in Sikkimese language and panchayat in Nepali language. Panchayat's was recognized by the Sikkim Government in January, 1948 by constituting an Elaka Panchayat Tribunal. The first Panchayat election was held in 1966 under the supervision of the chief Secretary, the ex-officio Chief Election Officer and the Land Revenue Secretary to the Government of Sikkim. The election was conducted in 142 panchayat units. The Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1993 was enacted following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. The Act for the first time accords constitutional status to the local government institutions and ensure the reservation of seats for women in Panchayati raj. The act also constituted three tier panchayati raj structure; at the base is the Gram Panchayat, the intermediary level is the Block level and at the apex is the Zilla Panchayat.

In the observation made in the working of Panchayat Raj Institutions in Sikkim, it is found out that the 73rd and 74th Amendment Act has been implemented in the state. 33% seats

have been reserved for women, which had been increased to 40%, 24 administrative centers have been opened for speedy and smooth functioning of administration at the grassroots level. The panchayats now have the jurisdiction over primary schools, primary health centre, subsidiary health centers, public libraries, community information centers, village tourism, small scale irrigation projects and community buildings. The rural people have been able to participate in the decision making of the government through panchayats. For the first time in Sikkim panchayat election was held on party basis in 1997. The panchayats were vested with more powers and adequate man power to assist them in the administrative and technical works.

Sikkim follows a two-tier system of Panchayati Raj with Zilla Panchayat at the district level and Gram Panchayat at the village level. The state is divided into four Zillas or districts consisting of 95 Territorial Constituencies and 163 Gram Panchayat Units, and 891 wards. The traditional institution of Lachung and Lachen, known as Dzumsa are deemed to be Gram Panchayat unit and exercise its traditional powers and functions. Out of 166 gram panchayat units, 105 units have been provided with self-contained pucca panchayat ghars. State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) an autonomous apex level training institute for the panchayats has been established. After coming to power, in 1994 the government under the SDF set aside 70% of the state budget for rural development.

With the increase in powers and functions of the panchayats, local problems are resolved through Panchayats and NGO's at the local level. To build people's confidence, the government has adopted a strategy that mixes power decentralization, people's involvement and benefit centric

activities. Suchna Kendra has been set up in all the 163 Gram Panchayat's, training workshops are organized regularly to increase the rural people's representation. The enactment of the 73rd Amendment Act has enabled the people's involvement in the formulation, planning, and execution of programmes of economic involvement and social justice. Women are enjoying greater role and responsibility.

Through the devolution of power, the government under the SDF has been able to take development to the villages whereas in the earlier period of the government most of the developmental work was Gangtok-centric. There was a criticism of the government's policies particularly on the non-merit and indiscriminate subsidies by the Congress (I) spokesperson Biraj Adikari. Therefore we have found that Democracy in Sikkim is a participatory democracy where the grassroots are enabled to take part in the working of state administration.

In the fifth and sixth chapters of the thesis we analysed the support base of the party in the state and we see how the party mobilises its support through different means. We do this with the help of a survey conducted in four constituencies of the state out of the 32 constituencies. Altogether west district has nine constituencies, south district has seven, east district has eleven and north district has four constituencies and there is one Sangha (monk) seat. The survey was conducted in Lahcen Mangahila in the north, Damthang in the south, Geyzing in the west and Gangtok in the east. The three constituencies of north, south and west are rural constituencies; Gangtok in the east is urban though some part falls under the rural areas.

In Sikkim east district has the largest population in the state, followed by south, west and the north. North district occupies the

largest area of land but due to unsuitable climatic and hostile geographical conditions it is sparsely populated. The rise in population is seen in the east district because of a number of reasons which we have discussed earlier in the chapter. Town wise, there are total eight towns in Sikkim. North has one town; Mangan. South has two towns; Jorethang and Namchi. West district has two towns; Geyzing and Nayabazar. East district has three towns; Gangtok, Singtam and Rangpo. The three ethnic groups of Sikkim, Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepalese are the main ethnic groups in Sikkim. Lepcha and Bhutia (including Tamang, Limboo, Sherpa) constitute the Scheduled Tribes in Sikkim. The north district has the highest percentage of ST's with around 22.33 percent of total population of Sikkim. Among the STs Lepcha's are the original inhabitants of the land. The Nepalese communities like Damai, Majhi, Sarki, and Kami are the Scheduled Caste groups. The remaining Nepalese group is categorized into OBC (Other Backward Classes) comprising of Chettri, Bahun and Pradhan (Newar) Bhujel, Jogi, and Sanyasi. MBC (Most Backward Classes) comprises of Rai, Gurung, Thapa (Manger), and Sunwar. General groups include Marwari's, Bihari's and Bengali's residing in Sikkim before 1975.

Sikkim basically is an agricultural land and agriculture is the main occupation of the Sikkimese. Agriculture contributes nearly 50% of the state's income. Land in Sikkim is unevenly distributed among the three ethnic groups; Lepcha's, Nepali's and Bhutia's. The Nepalese own more than 50% of the cultivated land followed by Bhutia's and then Lepcha's. Out of total 99.36% cultivated land in Sikkim, 58.66 are owned by Nepali, 20.38 by Lepcha and 30.32 by Bhutia's. The marginal and small farmer's form the bulk of the total holdings, which makes up to 67.86% of the total land holdings. The medium groups holding land between 2 to 4

hectares and 4 to 10 hectares constitute 19.64%. The big farmer's who own more than 10 hectares of land are less than 2% but cultivates about 13% of the total land area. East district has the largest number of holdings and the north district has the least holdings. But in terms of area, north has the largest area of 7.71 hectares, east with 1.70, west with 2.66 and south with 2.28 hectares. The total cultivators in Sikkim are 95078. The agricultural labourers are 12851. The west district constitutes the highest number of cultivators and agricultural farmers. North district has the lowest number of only 6198 cultivators. East district has 26027 and South district has 29177 cultivators. East has the highest number of agricultural labourers, west with 3171, south with 2111 and north with 2003.

So far as voters are concerned Sikkim has the record of total 255377 voters out of which 132591 are male voters and 122786 are female voters. District wise, north has a total of 18404 voters, east has a total of 113107 voters, west has a total of 66278 voters and south district has a total of 57588 voters in 2004.

Revenue blocks in Sikkim is the co-terminous of revenue village and is been taken as the lowest village block. It consists of several hamlets and has been the ultimate unit area in which the country is divided for the purpose of land revenue. There are a total 453 revenue blocks in Sikkim classified into seven population groups ranging from; 1) less than 200, 2) 200-499, 3)500-999, 4)1000-1999, 5) 2000-4999, 6) 5000-9999, 7) 10000 and above. In Sikkim no revenue blocks in any district or sub-divisions fall under the population range of 10000 and above. Three revenue blocks in Gangtok sub-division of east district fall under the category of 5000-9999 population. Majority of revenue blocks are having population ranging from 500-999. Out of a total 453

revenue blocks, 411 are the actual revenue blocks, 39 are forest blocks, 2 monasteries and one tea estate. Total number of inhabited revenue blocks is 447. North district has a total 53, east district 134, south district 145, and west district has 121 revenue blocks.

In section II of the chapter we have dealt with the survey conducted in the Damthang Constituency which covers the villages of Damthang, Kamrang, Singithang, Boomtar, Maniram Bhanjyang, Dambu Dara and Namchi town and parts of Saleybong block. The main objective of the survey was to find out the support base of the party. Damthang constituency as a whole comprises of mostly Nepalese belonging to MBC (Most Backward Class) comprising of Rai, Gurung, Manger and some Scheduled tribes like Bhutia, Sherpa and Tamang.

In this constituency it was found that out of 100 persons 60 are agriculturalist farmers cultivating paddy, maize, millets, pulses, cardamom, and ginger. The average income of these people ranges from 3000-10,000 per month and those of the employee's ranges from 6000 and above. In Namchi the total number of cultivators is 18484 in number and 1325 agricultural labourers. Marginal and small farmers form the bulk of the total land holdings.

It was found that Damthang constituency is a rural constituency and the people are mostly rural. The houses are made of wooden bamboo and tin roof. Some houses have been built with the help of centrally sponsored schemes like Indira Housing Yojna. Model house are also built worth Rs 3 lakh by the state government to the landless and homeless Sikkimese people. Pucca houses are seen in semi-urban areas of Namchi and the surrounding areas. The state government has distributed GCI

sheets, gas cylinder, blankets, and water tanks drinking water facilities to the villagers to improve their standard of living.

We found that religion wise approximately 75% of the population of this constituency are Hindus, 15% Buddhist, and the remaining Christians. Monastries, Temples and Church are built in almost each village. In Namchi a Mosque for the Muslims has been built. We also found that around 75% of the population are Nepalese; the common language spoken is Nepali by all the communities. Languages like Bhutia, Lepcha, Rai, Limboo, Tamang, manger, Gurung, are spoken amongst their own communities and family members.

We found that in this constituency the support of the people is for the SDF and the people of this area are satisfied with the performance of the party and the quality of governance under the party. The survey was conducted among various category of people like, employees, rural people, businessmen and unemployed groups. Almost all the categories of people are satisfied and happy with the performance of the party as the people have directly and indirectly benefited by the government under the party. The rural people reported that they have been provided with the basic facilities of safe drinking water, toilets, free education, medical facilities, and loans to the unemployed educated people, and grant in aids etc. The SDF received support from the people as it could reach the people and fulfil peoples' aspiration. Moreover the opposition leaders in Sikkim are not very strong to stand against the SDF rule. The party has been able to built strong organisational structure for better working of the party in the state.

Chapter VI is a continuation of chapter V in which we continue to analyse the support base of the party. In section I of

the chapter we looked into the support base of the party in Geyzing constituency. The constituency comprises of four Gram Panchayat units; Geyzing Omchung Gram Panchayat Unit, Yangthang Gram Panchayat Unit, Lingchom –Tikjya Gram Panchayat Unit, Sardong- Lungzik Gram Panchayat Unit.

The Geyzing constituency comprises of Limboo's followed by Chettri, Bahun, Bhutia and scheduled caste mainly sunwar's. Other caste groups like Rai and Gurung are also found in this area. Omchung GPU comprises of mostly Chettri and Bahun and small groups of Rai. Yangthang GPU comprises of Bhutia's, Limboo's and Gurung. Lingchom-Tikjya GPU comprises of 90% of Limboo's. Sardung-Lungzik GPU comprises of Rai, Limboo, Gurung, Chettri and Bahun.

Except for the two towns, Geyzing and Nayabazar, the constituency is mainly rural with agricultural land. The main occupation of the people of this area is agriculture. We found that out of 100, 20-25 are employees and the rest are rural people. Their income ranges from Rs 2000- 12000 per month. The average income of employees ranges from Rs 5000 and above. Those who work on temporary basis and private firms their monthly income ranges from Rs 2500- 50000.

Geyzing has the highest number of cultivators and agriculturalists farmers. Medium and small land holders form the bulk of the land holdings. Approximately 15-18 % is big land holders and 6% are Kutiyadars. Kutiyadars are the landless labourers who cultivate the land as per the condition/agreement made between the land owners and themselves. The economic activity of the people of this area is mainly the cultivation of crops like paddy, oranges, ginger and vegetables. Agricultural labourers live below poverty line. Kutcha houses made of wood and straw

are seen in the remote areas. The distribution of GCI sheets by the state government has replaced the straw roofs. In the urban and semi urban areas many cemented buildings and pucca houses can be seen. The government has provided better facilities to the people like safe drinking water, sanitation, distributed gas cylinder, water tanks and other subsidies.

Limboo's are the dominant population followed by Bhutia's and then the general classes like Chettri and Bahun who are mostly Hindus. Bhutia's are Buddhist by faith and Limboo's, one of the ethnic communities of Sikkim have a distinct religion known as "YUMA SAMYO", which believes that God is Almighty and a benevolent deity who does good for the people. "Yuma Samyo" of Limboo community has its own way of performing rituals, healing practices of diseases and illness. The common language spoken however is Nepali by all the communities. Bhutia and Limboo communicate in their own languages.

During our tours we found that the party has established a permanent district party office at Geyzing with constituency level office and Block level party office at each Gram Panchayat Unit. The members are nominated by the party president. Party meeting is held once a month which is attended by the party supporters, panchayat's and the women supporters. The party office is well maintained with party flags, board's party calendars, photographs of the Party President and party monthly and annual magazines. During the election time, the party activists help in conducting party meetings, explaining the aims and objectives of the party to the people and help in election campaign by guiding the party youths and workers. We also noted that the other political parties in the constituency do not have permanent party offices. The

opposition political parties maintain temporary party office's only during the election time.

SDF has been winning the election in this constituency since 1994. For the people it is the only political party in the state which is stable and leads the people to peace and prosperity. For the rural people the party has provided better living facilities than the former government. The party has good vision of making Sikkim a "NEW SIKKIM". The policies of the party are appreciated and the government under the SDF has been working for the benefit and upliftment of the weaker sections of the society. It has been working in a democratic manner and has been able to integrate different communities of the society. The people support the party because for its good vision towards the development of the state. The political parties like Sikkim Sangram Parishad, Indian National Congress, Communist Party of India, Bharatiya Janata party and others contested the elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004. But the SDF won all the elections in the state.

In section II of the chapter we concentrated on the Lachen Mangshila constituency. It is one of the four constituencies of north district, it comprises of seven GPUs; Ramthang Tangyat GPU, Namok Sheyam GPU ,Tingchim Mangshila GPU, Ringchim Nampatam GPU, Sentam GPU, Toong Naga GPU and Tshungthang GPU. As per the survey conducted in June 2008, Lachen and Lachung is totally inhabited by the Bhutia's. Mangshila is a Subba (Limboo) dominated area. Ramthang-Tangyat GPU is also a Bhutia dominated area. Namok Sheyam, Toong-Naga Tshungthang are totally Bhutia dominated areas. Mangan, which is the only town in north district, is the place where other communities like Bihari's and Marwari's reside.

It was found that agriculture is the main occupation of the people of this region. Bhutia's mostly depend on agriculture, dairy farming and other pastoral activities. Potato, large cardamom, cabbage, barley are some of the cultivated crops of this area. The main source of income is agriculture and the income ranges from Rs 3000- 12000 per month. During the season of large cardamom the income increases slightly and ranges from 10000 -50000 per month. The land holdings are large with cultivated lands. Unlike Kutiyadars in Geyzing constituency the land is cultivated by the land owners themselves. Tshungthang has 800 cultivators and 190 agricultural labourers. Mangan has 5398 cultivators and 1813 agricultural labourers (Directorate of Census Operation, Sikkim, 2001, series 22).

The lifestyle of the people in this region is different from other communities of the state. Small section of people are employed, the bulk of the population depend on agriculture for their income and livelihood. Their source of income is also depended upon the tourists during the tourist season. Many hotels and rest houses have been built for the same purpose. In the rural areas, the houses are traditional houses built of wooden planks and tin roofs. The furniture's are wooden and woollen carpets made out of yak wool and fur is common. Since the constituency is Bhutia dominated, the religion they follow is Buddhism. Monasteries or Gumpas are built in almost all the villages where rituals and festival prayers take place. In Tshungthang and Mangan small section of people of other communities also reside who are Christians and Hindus. The common language spoken is Nepali but in the Bhutia dominated area the common language is Bhutia.

The constituency is reserved. It is a B.L seat (Bhutia, Lepcha). It was found that people/voter's support the candidate who belongs to their community rather than those candidate belonging to other communities. In all the three General elections of 1994, 1999, 2004, the candidate who has won the election has been from their own community and from their region. The rural people support the party because they feel that the leader of the party is good and is "Garib ko Neta".

It was found that a section of people mainly the employees are not satisfied with the performance of the party leaders as they seldom visit the villages and like other political parties in the state they come only during the election time. The development is brought through the Dzumsa system; a traditional panchayat system which still exists in Lachen and Lachung. It is a unique institution of democracy. Dzumsa is headed by the village chief called the Pison. Dzumsa is a General Council of Lachenpa or Lachungpa villagers which was recognized in 1985 and continues to function till date. It was found from the survey that the SDF gets its main support from Mangshila, the Subba community.

It was also found that the all the party meetings in Lachen and Lachung are held at Dzumsa office headed by Pison. Party office in a rented building and has been maintained at Mangshila, Mangan and Tshungthang which functions throughout the year. Committees at the district level, constituency level and block level are functioning and the members keep in constant contact with the villagers and the party. Other political parties lack this kind of organizational structure. They become active only during the time of election.

In the Gangtok constituency the survey was conducted in August 2008. Amongst the three towns in east district Gangtok is

the largest populated town with a population of 29162 persons (Census of India, Sikkim Provisional, 2001). The total number of voters is also the highest with 113107 persons. As per the Census of India, 2001, the total number of voters is also the highest with 113107 persons. The people of this constituency comprises of different castes and communities from both within and outside the state. The town area is dominated by the business class like the Bihari's and Marwari's who are the old residents of Sikkim. Varied caste groups and communities like Pradhan, Chettri, Bahun Rai, Manger, and Bhutia also run small business and hotels and restaurant at the market place. One reason for the existence of these varied groups at Gangtok is that it the centre of all government headquarters, educational institutions, business activities as well as job opportunities.

Most of the people in Gangtok are employees working both in government and private firms. Their income varies from Rs 3000 and above per month. Business groups income ranges from Rs 2000-1,00000 per month. Business includes small as well as big shops. The surrounding area is a rural area with agriculture as the main occupation of the people and their income ranges from Rs.1000 to 4000 per month.

In Gangtok constituency there are diverse communities living and the religion they follow is of diverse kind. Among the Scheduled tribe the religion they follow is Buddhism. Among the Nepali community the religion is Hinduism. There are small section of society who follows Islam and Sikhism. There are monasteries, temples, churches, mosque and Gurudwara's built in and around Gangtok. The common language spoken by all the communities is Nepali. The lifestyle of the people in Gangtok is little different from other parts of Sikkim. The standard of living of the people is quite

high as compared to other parts of the state. It is in a better position in terms of economic development and growth. The houses are pucca houses and well furnished. Only very few houses in the rural areas are old and traditional.

Gangtok is a general constituency with diverse population from different walks of life. The rural people are satisfied with the performance of the SDF as many developmental works have been carried on in the state. In this constituency a section of employee group is not satisfied with the party. Like the rural people, the employee group has no direct link with the party leaders and this group has not benefited directly from the party.

Party office is maintained at the district level, constituency level and at block level. The head office is situated at Tadong, Gangtok where all the party meetings and the party activities are carried out. The formulation of party policies, party rules and regulations, membership, office portfolios are looked after by the Central Working Committee of the party. It is the responsibility of the block level committees to look after the working of the party system in the rural areas. The party has frontal organisations like the women's wing and youth wing which acts as a bridge between the masses and the party. The party has party office maintained in every gram panchayat block.

After summing up the chapters let us arrive at a conclusion. Historically political parties have played a crucial role in the political development of Sikkim and implantation of democracy in the state. The concept of Democracy means collective decision making. Democracy, in other words, entails the twin principles of "popular control" over collective decision-making and "equality of rights" in the exercise of that control. In the context of Sikkim this aspect of democracy was absent during the Chogyal's rule. The

people of Sikkim in an organised form with political associations revolted against the autocratic rule of the King and the Zamindar's of Sikkim. The struggle for democracy in Sikkim can be traced back to the 1940's when political parties in Sikkim came up as a protest against the monarchy and its administration. Ultimately the various revolts gave way to the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union in 1975. SDF claims that real democracy in Sikkim was brought by the party. But the fact remains that the way to democracy was paved by the earlier revolutions and revolutionaries in Sikkim. Without their efforts the people of Sikkim would not have been enjoying the fruits of democracy now. The political parties in Sikkim aimed at putting an end to the rule of the Chogyal. They put forward the demands of abolition of the Zamindari system, establishment of a responsible government and demanded the merger of Sikkim with India even though the rule under Chogyal Tashi Namgyal was a different one as compared to the rule of earlier Chogyals of Sikkim. During his time administrative reforms took place. Schools and hospitals were established in Sikkim. The only major difference in the pre-merger and post-merger period is that the people of Sikkim for the first time got the opportunity to exercise their political rights of choosing their leader. Democracy was absent in the first few years of the merger period though post merger period was often said to be a democratic period.

The new government formed in 1979 by Sikkim Janta Parishad under Nar Bahadur Bhandari came with the promise of establishing real democracy in Sikkim. The political parties in Sikkim talks of real democracy, however they failed to explain the real concept of democracy to the people. People always expected that real democracy be implanted in Sikkim. Many development works were carried on by the Bhandari Government during its

tenure but it could not fulfil the aspirations and expectations of the people of Sikkim of realising the establishment of democracy.

The Chief Minister himself was charged with corruption charges and misgovernment in the state. Nar Bahadur Bhandari had promised to give security to the people in the state but his misgovernment and corruption charges against him shows that he failed to safeguard the peoples' rights and provide security to the people. Though the party under Bhandari could win consecutive elections of 1979, 1984 and 1989, in terms of establishing democracy the party failed to fulfil its promise. SSP vote percent in all the three consecutive elections has always been above 50%. Even though he failed to reach the aspirations of the people, he was able to secure majority votes in the Assembly elections in the state. The main reason behind Bhandari's success is due to his overshadowing position of his party and weak opposition political parties in the state. The democratic process in the state weakened and hence the people were not able to exercise their democratic rights.

A Joint Action Committee was formed by all the political parties in Sikkim to protest against the Bhandari government. The political organisations were in favour of dismissing the government. In this situation there was split in the party and a new group led by Pawan Chamling under SDF was formed in 1993. After coming to power in 1994, SDF as a new party focused on societal interest. SDF could maintain stability in the electoral competition as the party could control the voter's choices by working on good political and economic strategies. It is widely accepted that the people take economic conditions into consideration when they decide for whom to vote. It means the economic factors influenced people's decision. It is important to

see here how SDF tried to fulfil the promises which it had laid down in its election manifestos. Criticising the earlier government which failed to satisfy the aspirations of the people, it promised to establish real democracy in Sikkim and restore the constitutional rights of all sections of people. The fourth estate was at stake and the press and media were under the control of the party. In order to restore the Freedom of the Press in the state, the SDF gave much emphasis to free press and media so that people get the opportunity to express their opinion. The freedom of the press though has been restored by the new government under the SDF, the press is not free in the sense that it can not go against the government. It is also important to note that like the earlier governments, the local TV channel is controlled by the government. It is seen that the party which stands for protecting and safeguarding the rights of the people is itself standing on the way of the rights of the people. The activities and work of the party in this regard shows that it is trying to follow the same path as the earlier government.

The party's performance and stability depends on the support base of the party. The results of the Assembly polls of December 1994, Lok Sabha Polls of 1996 and 1998 shows that the SSP's hold among the upper caste Nepalese vote bank has remained intact. In the upper caste dominated district of the East, SSP won 8 out of 12 seats, leaving the ruling party with only four seats. However, the Assembly results of 1994, 1999 in the south and west districts shows that the SDF has the support base of the Most Backward Class which includes Rai, Gurung, Manger etc. and the other communities like Tamang, Limboo, Bhutia etc. The election report of 1994 clearly indicates that the backward OBC and Tribal communities fully supported the SDF and the upper caste Nepali communities supported the Bhandari led SSP.

SDF is a cadre based political party which is well organised at the grassroots level. Panchayat Wards in rural Sikkim is 873 in total, out of which SDF controls 850 wards. This is possible because the panchayat level election in Sikkim is based on party line since 1997. This however, seems unfit in the democratic setup. Free and fair election is absent. The candidates contesting for panchayat election do not freely contest the election. The fear of not being selected as party candidate always occupies their mind. The candidates contesting as independents always come to a compromise at the end of the day. And not to forget the panchayat's gets elected from the ruling party leaving less choice to the people.

In recent years attention has been given more on people's participation by ensuring direct involvement of the citizens in the matters of governance. It is seen as an attempt of empowering the people to fight for day to day struggles for better life of the people. The same attempt has been made by SDF by the slogan "Janta Raja in Janta Raj". The party came up with the slogan of "*JANTA KO RAJ MA JANTAI RAJA*"- In popular regime people are sovereign. The party president Pawan Chamling believes in involving the people directly so that the ordinary people can have a greater say and a decisive voice. This is a democracy not from top to bottom but from the bottom to top. He calls this as grassroots democracy. He considers participatory democracy not as just desirable but necessary for making a responsive and accountable government.

The SDF got mass support though the SSP was an organised party in the state. The loyalty of the followers of SSP slowly faded as the leaders failed to fulfil their aspirations and expectations. This threatened the SSP's hold in the state. The other party SDF had intense connection with their followers, and face to face

contact with the masses are made. A Study of the support base of the SDF shows that it attracts voters across the social and economic spectrum. Nar Bahadur Bhandari was considered to be the most popular political leader in Sikkim but Pawan Chamling achieved massive personal popularity in the Assembly elections of 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009. Chamling's support was stronger in rural areas of mostly south and west district. Chamling's response to popularity and support base was due to the broadening of his schemes and policies that would make Sikkim more developed and modern. The slogan "Khali Khutte Sarkar"(Bare footed government) projected him as the leader of the poor. When we look at the reasons for the emergence of new political parties, the new parties attract popular support by appealing the voter's who do not have loyalties for the existing party. In the same manner the SDF has been able to mobilise and appeal the voters to support the party.

Despite the fact that the SDF government has made many developmental achievements during its reign but we cannot ignore the fact that it has some loopholes. We have talked about corruption among the politicians and bureaucrats during the earlier government. Similar corruption is now to be found in the Zilla Panchayat's, Gram Panchayat units, youth and women organisations as well. The SDF government claims that it has been able to decentralise power and transfer more funds to the panchayat's but the party fails to realise that the decentralisation of power and the transfer of funds has widened the base of corruption and the public funds meant for pro- poor people are being misused due to the party base Zilla and Gram Panchayat elections.

The SDF government in the name of development of different communities of Sikkim recognised six dialects spoken by six Nepali ethnic groups as official languages of the state: Mangar, Rai, Gurung, Sherpa, Tamang and Newari in May 1995. The government decided to grant Rupees 50,000 to each language for further development. This was criticised by the former Chief Minister who held that the government is trying to disintegrate the Nepali community since efforts of this kind will further split these groups on ethnic lines. He further added that Chamling has created divisions among the people.

Hence, it can be finally assumed that the people of Sikkim always preferred a regional party in Sikkim. However, the former Chief Minister, President of the State Unit of the Congress (I), Nar Bahadur Bhandari feels that the people are tired of a regional party. The people are fed up with the regional political parties, which is involved in corruption and casteism. Though Pawan Chamling belongs to the MBC category, there are some members in his party who belongs to the Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste and Upper Castes. However, the Sikkim Bhutia-Lepcha Apex Committee (SIBLAC) earlier supported the SDF but now backs the Congress (I). Tsheten Tashi Bhutia, former Convenor of SIBLAC and a SDF member said that the committee is supporting the Congress (I) because the party alone will be able to protect Article 371(f). SIBLAC is also opposed to the opening of Nathula Trade on the Chinese border, until "the rights of the ethnic community of Sikkim are protected".

Pawan Chamling also worked for the inclusion of two Nepali group's viz. Tamang and Limboo into the list of Scheduled Tribes. There was resentment among the Bhutia and Lepcha's, the ethnic tribe's of Sikkim. Lepcha's are the original inhabitants of Sikkim

but with the establishment of monarchy in Sikkim, Bhutia's became the second ethnic group in Sikkim. These two groups (tribal's) were not ready to share their rights and privileges with the other two new tribal groups-Tamang and Limboo's. Despite this the party did not fail to get the support from the tribal's who constitute about 20% in the state who had been traditionally supporting the Congress (I).

The SDF had worked for the development of the agricultural sector and opened Cooperative banks for granting agricultural loans to the farmers and support the rural people in the increase of production and productivity of vegetables, fruits, flowers and other cash crops in the state. The party gave agriculture the status of industry. It also ensured that the villages would produce market and distribute all kinds of agricultural products in a scientific and profitable manner. The achievements made in the food-grains production during three years tenure of SDF rule was 1,05,000 tones in 1994-1995, it increased to 1,08,000 tones in 1995-1996, and 1,07,000 tones in 1996-1997 (Govt. of Sikkim, Department of Information and Public Relations, 1997). The government under the SDF established a new board- Agriculture Department and Farmers' Welfare Board in 1995 which guided the agriculture department to accelerate the newly oriented programme for the farmers to improve their living.

The government also gave importance to industry as the key sector from where the economic growth in the state can be accelerated. SDF government implemented certain measures and policies towards the development of the industrial sector in Sikkim. The party helped the villagers and young people to stay in the villages instead of migrating to urban areas in search of better

livelihood. Village level agro-based industry was started to give employment facilities to the people.

In 1996, it formulated a new industrial policy to speed up industrial development and generate employment opportunities. In 1997, the Department under the present government granted 96 numbers of permanent legislation to small scale industries and tiny industries. Fifteen year Master Plan perspective on tourism was prepared in 1997 which covered a period from 1977-1978 to 2011-2012. The plan emphasized on the development of three independent tourist destinations within the state to speed up the economic growth in the rural areas.

The party promised to make Sikkim 'A happy Sikkim and New Sikkim' by restoring democracy in the state, provide basic freedom to the people, give wider choices to the people in the decision making of the state and make Sikkim a self-sufficient and a producing state. From the mass following which the SDF have achieved in the state it appears that despite of its limitations the SDF government had been able to fulfil many promises which it had made during the time of elections or otherwise for which people had continuously supported it.

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Annexure 1

Schedule (Party Supporters/Voters)

1. Age
2. Sex: Male/ Female
2. To what Community, Caste, Tribe do you belong?
3. Total family members:
4. Are you literate?
5. Occupation:
6. How many earning members are there in your family:
7. Do you possess any land?
8. If yes, what is the size of your landholding?
9. What do you produce in the piece of land?
10. What is the source of Income and how much do you earn per month?
11. Why do you support the SDF?
12. How have you benefited from the SDF and the SDF led government?
13. What have the party/SDF government done for you?
14. Are you satisfied with the performance of the government in the state? Why?
15. Why don't you support the other political parties in the state?
16. How good are the leaders of the party?
17. Do the leaders and the activists of the party meet you frequently or do they come only during elections?
18. During the elections what do the leaders tell you? What promise do they make?

Schedule

(Party Activists/Members)

1. Age
2. Sex: Male/ Female
2. To what Community, Caste, Tribe do you belong?
3. Total family members:
4. Are you literate?
5. What position do you hold in the party?
6. Occupation:
7. How many earning members are there in your family?
8. Do you possess any land?
9. What do you produce in the piece of land?
10. What is the source of Income and how much do you earn per month?
11. Do you earn anything from the party?
12. Why do you support the SDF?
13. How have you benefited from the SDF and the SDF led government?
14. What have the party/SDF government done for you?
15. Are you satisfied with the performance of the government in the state? Why?
16. Why don't you support the other political parties in the state?
17. Have you ever contested the elections for the party? If not do you want to contest elections?
18. How are your leaders?
19. What work do you do throughout the year for the party?
20. What work do you have and do during the elections?

SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT
Constitution

1. NAME

The name of the Party organisation shall be "SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT" hereinafter referred to as S.D.F.

2. REGISTERED HEAD OFFICE

The registered Head Office of the S.D.F. shall be at GANGTOK, SIKKIM.

3. FLAG

The flag of S.D.F shall be a tri-colour and of rectangular size. The colour of the flag shall be Sky Blue at the Top, Golden Yellow at the middle and Blood Red at the bottom which will all be of equal size.

4. SYMBOLIC MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FLAG

- (a) The Sky Blue at the top symbolises determination, progress and national integration.
- (b) The Golden Yellow symbolises purity, sacrifice and humanity.
- (c) The Blood Red symbolises auspiciousness, social change, courage and liberty.

5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

S.D.F. is a Political Party within the meaning and provisions of the Representation of Peoples' (Amendment) Act 1988 and the aims and objectives of the Party shall be as follows:-

- (a) S.D.F. shall bear true faith and allegiance to the sacred Constitution of India as by law established and to the principles of Socialism and Democracy and shall uphold the Sovereignty, Unity and Integrity of the Indian Union.
- (b) It shall fight to uphold the political, social and economic rights and privileges of the people of Sikkim as provided under the Indian Constitution.
- (c) It shall strive hard for the uplift of the socially and economically backward sections of people of Sikkim.
- (d) S.D.F. shall work ceaselessly to promote peace, progress and communal harmony amongst the people of Sikkim and shall make utmost endeavour to promote fraternity, tolerance and harmony with all other communities of our country.
- (e) The party is committed to give equal opportunities to all Sikkimese people and shall ceaselessly work for the emancipation and uplift of Sikkimese women and other sections of oppressed people.
- (f) The Party shall be ever ready to fight against all forces that threaten to disrupt the unity and integrity of the nation.
- (g) While giving due recognition to the principle of human dignity, this Party shall pledge to fight against all kinds of injustice and inequality perpetrated on ground of caste, creed, colour, religion and gender.
- (h) The Party shall specially not yield back from working for the interests and welfare of the backward and depressed communities, constitutional rights of the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes and security and prosperity of the entire Sikkimese people.
- (i) The Party is committed to uphold, preserve and promote the age-old traditions, customs and rich cultural heritage of different ethnic

communities of the State who have been living in perfect communal harmony down the ages.

- (j) The Party holds endudring faith in the "Son of Sikkim" policy and sincerely safeguard the interests of the Sikkimes people.
- (k) S.D.F. shall tirelessly wage a struggle against poverty, illiteracy and internal backwardness in the State and work justly for the poor and depressed people of Sikkim.
- (l) The Party is predetermined to bring upon improvement in the existing situation in Sikkim and will resort to all possible means to raise the average conditions of Sikkimese of all levels so as to make them educationally, socially and, above all, economically self-reliant and self-sufficient.

6. ADMISSION INTO PARTY

The membership of the Sikkim Democratic Front is open to:-

- (a) Any Indian citizen who is a Sikkimese and has attained the age of 18 years and who is not guilty of any kind of social, political or economic offence or associated with crime.
- (b) Persons who are not enlisted members of any other Political Party, and who believe in the policies and objectives of the S.D.F. Party and respect its rules and regulations and proclamation.

7. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARTY

Two types of membership forms have to be filled up viz:

- (A) Primary Membership and (B) Active Memembrship
- (a) Persons having firm faith and belief in the rules and regulations, policies, aims and objectives of the Sikkim Democratic Front and who fulfill conditions as stipulated under 6(a) and (b) above shall be considered eligible for Primary Membership of the Party irrespective of sex, caste, creed and religion.
- (b) Interested persons fulfilling the following conditions shall be considered eligible for Active Membership:-
 - i. He/She must have been a Primary Member of the Party for a period of at least one year.
 - ii. He/She must have been actively involved in the implementation of the policies and programmes of the party.
 - iii. The President of the Party can, in the interest of the Party, use his discretionary power to confer Active Membership to such Party wokers who are committed to the objectives of the Party and who are working sincerely as per the directives of the President.

8. MEMBERSHIP FEES

Those qualifying for Primary Membership of the Party shall have to pay membership fee of Rs. 5/- (Rupees Five) only per year and have to renew their membership by 31st January every year.

- 9. Active Members of the party shall have to pay a membership fee of Rs. 151, (Rupees one hundred fifty one) only per year and have to renew their membership by 31st January every year.

- 10. The Central Working Committee can also make alternative arrangements to exempt those members who are economically weak from paying the Active Membership Fees.

11. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- (a) The President of the S.D.F. Party on his own or the Central Working Committee can terminate the membership of a person if he or she is found engaged in anti-party activities or guilty for serious breach of discipline.

- (b) Any member can resign from the Party membership by giving the President of 30 days' prior notice in writing to make his intention known.
- (c) Those who fail to pay the membership fees will also lose their membership of the Party.

12. EXPULSION PRECEDURE

On receipt of any complaint against any member, Primary or Active, or Office Bearer/bearers of various Committees of the S.D.F. Party of their involvement in anti-party activities or breach of discipline, the President on his own can initiate investigation or constitute an Enquiry Commission to look into the complaint. President shall have power to initiate action on his own and it is not mandatory for him to set up an Enquiry Commission. If the Enquiry Commission or the President finds the person or persons guilty of the offence reported upon after going through his explanation the President will have the power to place the member under suspension or demand resignation or terminate him from the Party membership.

13. COMMITTEES

S.D.F. shall have the following Committees:-

- (a) All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee
- (b) Central Working Committee
- (c) District Committees
- (d) Constituency Level Committees
- (e) Block Level Committees

14. FRONTS

S.D.F. Party shall have the following frontal organisations which shall be under the direct control of the Party President. Each frontal organisation must have a Convenor to be appointed by the President himself and all these frontal organisations shall work directly under the President:-

- (a) Women's Wing
- (b) Youth Front
- (c) Student's Front
- (d) Labour Front
- (e) Cultivators' Front
- (f) Scheduled Tribe Welfare Front
- (g) Ex-Servicemen Front
- (h) Scheduled Cast Welfare Front

15. These frontal organisations will act as the bridge between the masses and the Party and present the demand and views of public before the Party and convey the policies and programmes of the Party to the people.

16. All Sikkim Democratic Front Committees will have sixteen hundred members including the members of the Central Working Committee. The Committees shall meet at least once in a year and such meetings will be convened, conducted and presided over by the Party President. The meeting, besides self-analysing the role of the Party, can also bring necessary amendment or improvement in its policies as per the need of the changing time. Attending this meeting by all concerned members should be deemed compulsory.

17. The Party President may convene an emergency meeting of the Front Committee.

18. There will be 1600 members in the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee including the President, Vice President, General Secretary, Office Bearers, 50 members each from different constituency besides Office Bearers of the Central Working Committee.

19. CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE AND OFFICE BEARERS

The Central Working Committee shall have the following Office Bearers:-

- (a) President - 01
- (b) Vice-President - 08
- (c) General Secretary - 10
- (d) Joint Secretary - 10

(e)	Publicity Secretary	-	05
(f)	Tresurer	-	01
(g)	Assistant Treasurer	-	01
(h)	2 Representatives each from each district	-	08
(i)	Executive members	-	14
	Total	-	58

The Central Working Committee shall consist of representatives from among the members of the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee. The President shall head the Committee and shall have the special power to nominate members for the C.W.C.

20. All the meetings of the Central Working Committee shall be convened and presided over by the President and in his absence by the Vice President.
21. The Central Working Committee shall meet at least once in three months. However, under special circumstances the President may convene an emergency meeting of the Committee at any point of time giving only 24 hours notice to each member.

GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE PARTY

22. The General Convention of the Party shall be the highest assembly body of the Party which shall take various important decisions and also elect the President of the Party. The General Convention is held once in every five years.

THE PARTY CONVENTION

23. The Party Convention is held once in every two years. The Central Working Committee takes the decision to hold the Party Convention and makes all the necessary arrangements.

POWER AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CWC

24. The responsibility of formulating all policies of the Party and accomplishment of its aims and objectives shall rest on the Central Working Committee.
25. C.W.C. shall make necessary amendments to the prevalent rules and regulations in pursuance of the policies of the Party.
26. C.W.C. will be responsible in providing necessary guidance to the entire working of the Party and maintenance and enforcement of discipline within the Party.
27. It shall prepare the Annual Report of the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee and present the same for the approval of the Front Committee and keep a strict watch on the functioning of the party.
28. C.W.C. shall be responsible for the conduct of the day-to-day affairs of the Party besides ensuring smooth functioning and maintenance of necessary discipline within the party.

DISSOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE

29. The Central Working Committee shall hold office for a term of 5 years. The President can also make additions and alteration or prematurely dissolve the Committee in the greater interest of the Party.

PRESIDENT – POWER AND FUNCTIONS

30. The President shall convene and preside over all the meetings of the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee and Central Working Committee.
31. The President shall cast a vote in case of a tie in the meetings of the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee and Central Working Committee.

32. He shall nominate all the Office Bearers of the Central Working Committee and also decide the number of such Office Bearers of the Party if necessary.
33. He shall appoint the Office Bearers of the District Committees.
34. The President shall have power to appoint or withdraw appointment of Office Bearers of the Central Working Committee, District Working Committee or any other Committees as and when occasion demands.
35. The President shall have the power to remove or suspend any Office Bearer of Bearers of the Central Working Committee or District Working Committees to safeguard the interest of the Party.
36. In order to give precedence to the interest of the Party, the President can also constitute any Committee or Committees in addition to the existing ones.
37. The President shall have the power to bring any District or Block Level Committees under his direct control and supervision to achieve certain positive goals that warrant such action on his part.
38. The President shall give proper direction to all the Sikkimese people through various positive activities embodied in the policies and programmes of the Party. The President can express his views on national issues by remaining within the framework of declared policies and programmes of the Party.

RESIGNATION OF THE PRESIDENT

39. In keeping with the norms and spirit of democracy, the President shall be at liberty to tender his resignation without assigning any reason whatsoever. In the event of such situation he shall hand over his resignation to the Vice President of the Party. The President shall, however, always be eligible for reelection to his post if he so desires.

REMOVAL OF THE PRESIDENT

40. The President may be removed from his office by the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee by tabling a motion of no-confidence by two-third of its members present at the voting.
41. A month's prior notice must be served upon the President by at least one-third of the members of the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee in this connection.

Vice President

42. In the absence of the President of the Party, the Vice President/Vice Presidents shall perform his duties and exercise all the powers due to the President. Vice Presidents are appointed by the President.

GENERAL SECRETARY

43. The President shall nominate or appoint General Secretaries for the Party who shall supervise the affairs of the Party as per the directives of the President of the Party.
44. General Secretary/General Secretaries shall have the custody of all the relevant documents pertaining to the Party. It shall be the responsibility of the General secretaries to conduct all the Party meetings in consultation with the President besides preparing of minutes and proceedings of all meetings and dealing with all correspondences and communications of the Party. The General Secretaries are vested with the power to inspect, supervise and, if occasion demands to protect the interest of the Party, even intervene, in consultation with the President, all activities pertaining to the affairs of the District, Constituency and Block Level Committees of

the Party. There shall be one General Secretary in the head office of the Party.

45. JOINT SECRETARY

The President shall appoint Joint Secretary/Secretaries for the Party who shall function as Assistants to the General Secretary of the Party. There shall be one Joint Secretary in the head office of the Party.

46. PUBLICITY SECRETARY

The President shall appoint Secretary whose supreme task shall be to publicise the policies and the programmes of the Party to the fullest extent possible. It shall be the responsibility of the Publicity Secretary/Secretaries to keep the general public posted and informed of all Party activities aimed at advancing the cause of the people as envisaged in the Manifesto of the Party.

47. ADVISORY BOARD

The President shall constitute an Advisory Board consisting of senior politicians, intellectuals and retired bureaucrats which shall have 7 to 15 members and function as a part and parcel of the Party to advise and counsel the President in all matters related to the Party. The Board of Advisors shall, however, under no circumstances, seek to impose their views on the President.

48. THE PARLIAMENTARY BOARD

The President of the Party reserves the right to function as Chairman of the Parliamentary Board. He can also appoint any other member of members but its is not mandatory for him to appoint more members in the Parliamentary Board and his decision shall be final.

LEGAL CELL

49. A Legal Cell shall be constituted to look after all aspects of legal matters pertaining to the party. The President shall appoint a qualified lawyer as the Legal Secretary of the Party.

50. TREASURER

The Treasure shall be the custodian of the Party Fund and shall be responsible for maintenance of its accounts. He shall have the power to open Bank account in respect of the Party Fund with any nationalised bank of Sikkim. The Treasurer shall prepare annual statements of accounts of the Party in consultation with the President and place the same before the All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee and the Central Working Committee for their information and persual. He shall have the power to keep cash in hand not exceeding Rs. 2000/- (Rupees Two Thousand) only to meet the day to day expense of the Party. The Treasurer will be solely responsible for the maintenance of the Party Fund.

51. DISTRICT WORKING COMMITTEES

There shall be District Committee for each distric of the State with following Office Bearers:-

(a)	District President	-	1
(b)	District Vice President	-	2
(c)	District General Secretary	-	1
(d)	District Joint Secretary	-	1
(e)	District Publicity Secretary	-	1
(f)	District Treasurer	-	1
(g)	District Executive Members	-	25

DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

52. The President shall appoint the District President. The other Office Bearers of the District Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Party

in consultation with the Central Working Committee and the District President. The District Working Committee shall hold office for a period of three years. The President shall have the power to prematurely dissolve the District Committees without assigning any reasons thereof.

DISTRICT WORKING COMMITTEE- POWER AND FUNCTIONS

53. District Working Committee shall look after the functions and organisation of the Party falling under its jurisdiction (district).
54. It shall constitute Block Level Committees throughout the district in consultation with the Central Working Committee.
55. It shall prepare and safely keep the District Level documents of the Party.
56. District working Committee will carry out the orders and directives of the Central Working Committee and maintain and adhere to the Party discipline in the district.
57. It may, in consultation with the President of the Party, constitute Town or Constituency Committees to facilitate the management of Party affairs.
58. It shall submit all the applications seeking membership of the Party to the President and solicit his approval.
59. It shall renew the membership of the Party in consultation with the Central Working Committee and also collect the annual membership fees by issuing proper receipts.
60. District Working Committee will meet once in every two months. Attending such meetings by one-third members of the District Working Committee should be deemed compulsory.

CONSTITUENCY LEVEL COMMITTEE

61. There shall be Constituency Level Committee in the Party. The President shall appoint the head of this Committee in consultation with the respective District Presidents of the Party. Since the total number of members of this Committee will be based on the number of Block Level Committees of each constituency. The District Committees shall present picture before the Party President.

BLOCK LEVEL COMMITTEE

62. There shall be Block Level Committees throughout the rural areas of Sikkim. Each Block Committee will have the following Office Bearers:-

(a)	President	-	1
(b)	Vice President	-	2
(c)	Secretary	-	2
(d)	Joint Secretary	-	4
(e)	Treasurer	-	1
(f)	Executive Members	-	20
63. The District Working Committee shall constitute the Block Level Committee in consultation with the Central Working Committee. Block Level Committee will hold office for a term of 2 years unless dissolved prematurely by the District Committee for valid reasons.
64. S.D.F. Party will bring out periodicals and other publications besides weekly Party mouth piece to apprise the people about the policies and programmes of the Party and also to educate and inform the masses about a number of things.

AMENDMENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION

- 65.** The Constitution can be amended with the consent and approval of the report of the Review Committee, constituted by the Party President, and shall be approved by the Central Working Committee.

(ADOPTED AND APPROVED DURING THE MEETING OF CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE INCLUDING MEMBERS OF SDF LEGISLATURE PARTY HELD ON AUGUST 23, 1996)

**12th LOK SABHA ELECTION MANIFESTO (SDF)-
1998**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PARTY PRESIDENT

As the S.D.F Party, since its inception, has been waging a relentless battle against repression and subjugation perpetrated against the Sikkimese people and have since succeeded in commendable measure to guarantee all democratic rights and privileges to the people, I am extremely confident that the people's valued mandate, as in the past, will surely tilt heavily in favour of the SDF Party to make our opponents eat the dust. Since the very beginning, the S.D.F. Party has stood steadfastly for the underdogs and has relentlessly fought against injustice, corruption and fascism that once had taken a deep root in the State. I, therefore, strongly believe that the S.D.F. Party will come out on top once again with a massive victory at the Hosting. UMBRELLA, the Party Symbol, stands for justice and equality and hence a symbol that is dear to the Sikkimese masses. Once again, the time has come for the Sikkimese people to stand solidly behind the Party Lead which stands for justice, equality and fraternity. Our former M. P., Shri Bhim Dahal - a truly dedicated party worker who is highly competent for the post - is once again our candidate for the ensuing 12th Lok Sabha election. We are fully confident that the Sikkimese People will send their lone MP to the Lok Sabha with a massive mandate to easily surpass the previous one by dropping their precious votes in favour of the symbol, "UMBRELLA" to ensure complete victory for the Sikkimese people. With heartiest greetings for the New Year 1998.

Pawan Chamling President

SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT

1. Reservation of seats in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly for all Sikkimese of the State will be obtained. Provisions will be sought in Parliament for realignment of existing Constituencies of the State to ensure that the State of Sikkim as of 2000 AD. is entitled to send at least TWO (instead of one that is allotted now) representatives to each of the two Houses of Parliament namely, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, with a view to seeking more meaningful integration of this sensitive border state with the nation and to reaffirm our commitment to the institution of the Indian Republic.
2. Concrete steps will be taken to ensure that the identity of each of the three ethnicities of the State viz, Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepalese is fully protected by resorting to means that are both legal and constitutional.
3. All caste-communities of Sikkimese Chhetri, Bahun, Newar, Jogi, Sanyasi and Thami so far excluded from the list, will be brought in the States mainstream with the rest by including them in the State list of OBCs in order to ensure that equitable justice is done to all sections of the State populace in equal measure. Thanks to the incessant efforts made by the then sitting MP of the State in Parliament, the Central Commission for the OBCs have already made three separate enquiries in this regard to clinch the issue in favour of the principles involved.
4. Protection to the minority Sikkimese Bhutia and Sikkimese Lepcha and their social, educational and economic upliftment to always remain an

article of faith with the S.D. F Party, while their constitutional rights and cultural aspirations will be fully appreciated, respected and safeguarded. The centuries old customs and traditions that are in themselves distinctly unique and peculiar to the Tribals of the North District will be preserved and safeguarded at all cost.

5. The constitutional rights and privileges that accrue from it to all Sikkimese tribals and the Scheduled Castes in the State to remain fully protected and safeguarded.
6. All efforts will be made on the floor of the Parliament to prevent the extension of Direct Central Taxes to the State of Sikkim in that Sikkim has its own Tax Laws formulated in 1948, which, in the spirit and text of May 8 Agreement of 1973, has a right to remain recognized under the aegis of Article 371F of the constitution that was inserted at the time of Sikkim merger to make some special provisions relating to the administration of Sikkim.
7. Since only 13% of the total land area of the State is arable for agricultural purposes, Sikkim is permanently faced with the prospect resource crunch on the food front. To compensate for this daunting disadvantage, massive Central aids for an all-round development of tourism and its infrastructures to be expeditiously sought from the benign government at the Centre.
8. A University of its own to be set up in Sikkim to bring all educational institutions in the State under its aegis.
9. Sikkimese Limbu, Tamang and the Gurung to be included in the State list of Tribals while ensuring their own set of seat reservation in the State Assembly by suitably raising the issue on the floor of the Parliament for consideration and suitable action.
10. The Bhutia, Lepcha and the Limbu languages to be further developed and steps to be taken to ensure their inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, Concrete steps to be taken to set up appropriate institutes for research and development of literatures related to all recognized languages at the State level like Newari, Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Mangar, Sunuwar and Sherpa.
11. The existing Centre for research on Buddhism in the State to be provided with fullest scope and facilities for intensive research work, with all financial help coming from the benign Centre, so that it may emerge as the major centre of authority on Buddhism in the country.
12. Air-link with the rest of the country to be established by setting up an airport and air service to be regularized to link the State with all important airports of the country. The unreliability of the existing National Highway 31 A, particularly during the rains has been recognized on principle by the Government at the Centre. Based on this, the Centre will be persuaded to concede our demand for an alternative route linking Sikkim with the neighboring West Bengal without let or hindrance.
13. The quota of seat reservation allocated for the students of Sikkim aspiring to pursue higher studies both academic and technological in institutions located in the advanced States of the country to be sought for suitable enhancement wherever such facilities exist. 50% Job reservation for Sikkimese candidates in all offices and establishments under the Central Government in Sikkim to be sought with a view to providing jobs for our educated unemployed youths of the State.

14. Sikkimese women from all sections of the populace will be given their due place in society while their rights, privileges and status will be protected and justice will be brought to them in all spheres of activities social, political and economic. The rights and privileges of employee fraternity to be fully protected and promoted; rights, privileges and function of the Panchayats and their members to be respected, protected and promoted. The rights and privileges due to all business communities in the State will be given due weightage to promote their wellbeing and interests.
15. Request will be made to the Government at the Centre to totally stop sending IAS, IPS and IFS deputationists to Sikkim as we are trying our level best to raise the rank and file of the above cadres inside Sikkim itself. Meaningful steps have already been taken in this direction with gratifying results in the offing as we have succeeded in reducing the prescribed quota to some extent.
16. Sikkim as an underdeveloped State will be brought under a special category because of its late entry into the comity of States in the Republic of India. Under this special category, the Government at the Centre will be requested to provide development funds for the State in such a manner that the annual allotment for every successive year is increased in volume for the duration of next 50 years. Owing to Sikkim's late entry into the mainstream, the demand that Sikkim should be facilitated with more funds for development than those allocated to the North-Eastern States shall be driven home with increased vigor and determination.
17. Sick industries will be scrapped or revived as the case may be deemed fit, those in health to be provided with full impetus for their growth, while the Centre will be approached to finance the infrastructures for viable industry / industries to generate much needed employment opportunities.
18. The rich heritage of Sikkim's varied culture vested in her ancient monasteries, temples, churches and other sacred institutions like the "Mang-Him" and other places of historical as well as mythical significance will be duly protected and preserved by obtaining suitable assistance, both financial and technological, from the Archaeological Department of India.
19. The task of setting up a State Television Centre for featuring Sikkim's own independent programmes to be expedited.
20. In order to boost agricultural production, a separate budget over and above the prescribed allocation of State fund, will be had from the Centre. "
21. An academy for games and sports for the youths of Sikkim to be established along with a Recording Studio equipped with the latest gadgets and know-how to facilitate those who are musically and artistically inclined.
22. An orphanage centre at the State level for Sikkimese destitute and orphans will be set up along with 'Home for the old and the decrepit' with the help of suitable grants obtainable from the Centre.

Panchayat Manifesto 2002

MANIFESTO

We have the following resolutions which will be the corner stone on which our true democracy will flourish - on which you the people of Sikkim will have a full say in which way you will make our future wonderful for us all. We now seek your cooperation and your vote- your mandate will ensure that we have the right to make the Government for the people and of the people work for you - day in and day out.

1. All Government decisions will be done after due consultations with the Panchayats. This participatory approach is all about seeking to bring the voice of the people into the main stream of thinking when it comes to taking decisions for rural development.
2. In every gram Panchayat and ward the Panchayats will be empowered to decide on the plan as well as to implement and to maintain. This responsibility will have to be shouldered by the Gram Panchayats.
3. At the Zilla level the Panchayats will participate in the District Committees. This will enable them to debate on the district plans and programs, which directly affect the people - both at the District and the wards. The SDF party's principle is to involve the grass root people's need and thinking and this and this will enable them to have their voice heard in the planning and development process.
4. SDF party always wanted to strengthen the Panchayats who look after the villages and the village people and so 10 percent of the Government Budget is being devolved to the Panchayats - this will continue to be strengthened and will be raised to 30 percent in due course.
5. The Panchayats will help and identify those marginalized true Sikkimese people who are not in possession of Sikkim Subject certificate but have other genuine means of identification like receipt of Dhuri Khazana, land revenue receipt, Dada Parcha etc -for them domicile certificate or identification certificate will be issued. .
6. SDF party wants all work of villages to be done by the villagers themselves and it to be of good quality and timely execution of the same. In order to achieve this aim all public works of Rs. 5 Lakhs was being decided and work done by the Panchayats in the villages and wards. This will be raised to Rs. 10 Lakhs and will be done only on the recommendation of the Gram Sabhas.
7. All Government institutions like the Primary schools, PHSC, VLO centre, library, Community Information centres, rural tourism, minor irrigation works, community centres, grounds for sports etc will be handed over to the Gram Panchayats both for their running and maintenance.
8. Restoration of democracy has been the greatest achievement of our party. But in order to institutionalize this process we have to accelerate the same at the grassroots level through the Panchayati Raj institutions. The Panchayats will play an active and proactive role in this by fighting forces of exploitation, suppression and corruption. And in order to achieve this they will educate the rural people and masses to make them aware of their rights and responsibilities.

9. The grass roots people of Sikkim had never really recognized their own strength - our party has been able to deliver this to them and enlighten them about their own strength and indeed their ability. The Panchayats will be responsible to the people and to further educate and enlighten them about their intrinsic strength and capabilities. Trusting their wisdom has been our centrepiece in our development strategy. Hence our own initiative in fostering the Panchayat election on party lines.
10. Women upliftment and empowerment is a key to development and recognized by our party. We will ensure that they will get reservation as well as the opportunity to perform many of the critical functions in the running of the Panchayats. We have given them 33 percent reservation in the Panchayat elections and 30 percent in job reservations. All facilities will be further extended to them. Our party has been able to abolish the social, political and economic discrimination of our women - and this campaign will be further strengthened by the active cooperation of the Panchayats.
11. The voice of the people will be brought to the mainstream administration by the Panchayats. They are the link between the administration and the people especially in the area of development. The Panchayats will be directly responsible to the people. The SDF's President's thinking about the people being the masters must be played out by the Panchayats in this fashion.
12. The rural people will be fully supported in production and in the increase in productivity of vegetables, fruits, flowers and other cash crops. This will be facilitated by the Panchayats, which will include the element of marketing linkage. In this way they will be made to be more self-reliant, self sufficient and sustainable. Then there is this issue where our goal is to make every person a producer of goods and services. We have to make everyone productive - they should be producers and not consumers. When every Sikkimese becomes a producer with high levels of productivity then and then only will Sikkim truly become self-sufficient. In this the Panchayat member will be the key catalyst to ensure that there is increase in the production of village produce like fruits, vegetables, flowers and other cash crops. Panchayats will come forward and help the cultivators and our rural producers to increase their productivity and make them self-reliant. Further, they must also help them find the marketing channels and seek to make such services a part of their daily routine.
13. There is a growing tendency toward urbanization and that is that villagers and especially the young people are moving toward the cities. This trend has had an adverse impact to the rural economy and the healthy growth of the village. It has also exacerbated the unemployment problem as well as leading to congestion of the cities. There is an urgent need to reverse this trend and one way is to create the right opportunity at the village level as well as to embark on a proactive approach to helping youth to stay in the village. Panchayats must play the stellar role that this action demands.
14. One of the ways to help the villages and young people to stay in the villages is to start village level industry. Agro based industry is one which can easily find a place. Hence the Panchayats will play the role of bringing such new thinking into the villages and ensure that more such industry are set up in the villages. The Government will continue to support such initiatives.
15. Panchayats will now play an important role and be responsible for Government initiated development policies and programs. The villages

through these programs will get huge opportunities to set up industries in their respective areas. Poultry & piggery farming, fisheries, rearing of livestock like cattle, goats, bee-keeping and rabbits are some of the projects which can be taken up by the villagers with the help and guidance of the Panchayats.

16. Agriculture will be given the status of industry. Steps will be taken up by the Panchayats to ensure that villages will produce, market and distribute all kinds of agriculture produce in a scientific and profitable manner - this will ensure that most farmers can go for such profitable ventures. The progressive farmers will be given all necessary inputs so that productivity can be increased. Once agricultural production is maximized then this can be given the status of industry. The Panchayats must help the farmers realize this and go for farming in this way. Panchayats will be responsible for selecting the beneficiaries.
17. The Gram Sabha as an institution is going to play a key role in the decision making process of the villages and in village level work. The recommendation of the Gram Sabha will be necessary for all work to be carried out including choosing of beneficiaries for Government programs and schemes. No development work can be started without the permission of the Gram Sabha - and in the gram Sabhas the Panchayats will ensure that women, elderly people and people from weaker sections are well represented.
18. In order to develop the village economy the cooperative movement and its underlying principles will play a key role. The Panchayats will make this a integral part of the planning and execution process in the villages. For this the village level cooperative movement and collective leadership will be fostered and strengthened by the Panchayats.
19. Collection of land revenue will be the responsibility of the Panchayats.
20. During any form of land transaction like buying and selling the panchayats will ensure full vigilance and their recommendation taken. They will safeguard the land of the village and see that the purchase transaction is done between local people only.
21. The Panchayats will have the responsibility of giving recommendation for the issuance of domicile and trade license. This is to safeguard the innocent villagers from exploitation.
22. A Janata Bhawan will be constructed in Gangtok for the benefit of the rural poor who have to visit the capital to carry out their personal work. This will provide clean and cheap accommodation for our rural poor.
23. The Panchayats are going to be proactive in the harnessing of our youth power and use their youthful energy for the building of a strong village centric economic and social base. Their creative, innovative talent in music, art, drama, handicrafts, literature, sports and in science and technology will have to be exploited and encouraged. A regional board will be set up to spot talent of this nature so that the Government can provide them stipends, scholarship and sponsorship.
24. In order to enhance our manpower development program a capacity building fund will be established and the Panchayats will play a key role in this.
25. Panchayats will foster more discussion and debate on a variety of issues at the village level. They will conduct meetings for general discussion on key issues facing the village or people. This way they can come up with

innovative solutions to day to day problems and other issues. This will enhance the knowledge base and thinking power of the villagers and the village in general.

26. Much of the investment which will come from within India and abroad in the form of help and grant from INGOs or NGOs will be Channelised through the Panchayats. They will be consulted and be responsible for proper utilization and setting up of the development schemes or industries for the benefit of the people and the creation of jobs and employment.
27. Since Agricultural Export Zone has been notified for Chillies, flowers, cardamom and ginger for our State the Panchayats will go all out to help the farmers derive the maximum benefit out of this. The value chain involves the pre and post harvesting investment and would be a fine example of how the farmers can benefit. In all this the Panchayats will play a key role.
28. All Panchayats will identify in their areas genuine Sikkimese people who are marginalized and who do not have any land. They will ensure that these people will have access to all the facilities that the Government provides such as land, rural housing.
29. All Panchayats will ensure that young educated people get access to Government support for getting into meaningful jobs or business in such promising and potential areas like tourism and services. They need to be weaned away from bad habits like drugs, gambling, smoking, drinking, exploitation of women and other social evils. They will ensure that they have access to schemes like the Chief Minister's Self Employment Scheme. All forms of gambling like Majong, pool, cards etc would not be encouraged. Youth is our future and hence our future must be protected at all costs. Here also they will ensure that good parenting is invoked at the grassroots level and seeking to address the root cause for the alienation of our youth will be addressed. Audio visual publicity and such tools for dissemination of information would be used widely.
30. A Welfare centre for workers would be established to ensure full dignity and respect for labourers. The Panchayats will ensure that the quality of life of the labourers are improved in all respects.
31. All Panchayats will identify all genuine old people who are not getting old age pension. They will ensure that the old age pension is made available to these identified people in their wards and districts.
32. Panchayats will have to take on the responsibility of rooting out corruption. Corruption is an evil and our enemy and a campaign to mitigate corruption will be taken up expeditiously.
33. Panchayats will disseminate Government policy and programs and all other relevant information to the villagers and other rural folk. They will take this as a challenge to ensure that the rural people are fully empowered.
34. All family welfare programs will be grass root centric and this means that the Panchayats will play a very special role in the coordination of these programs in association with grass root people.
35. Grass roots people will be educated on the values of social responsibility, which will be the plank on which village level development must stand. The strength of Sikkim is our communal harmony as well as the peace and tranquility of the state. This is so important in the context of our development objectives as well as our vision. All Panchayat members will encourage communal harmony - and the best way is to make every

transaction transparent. They must celebrate diversity in every thing including decision making. All Panchayats must therefore work toward a hundred percent Sikkimese unity.

36. Preserving our environment is a major responsibility. All Panchayats will work diligently toward this end. They will ensure that their gram Panchayat is pollution free.
37. Panchayats will open registers to register every species in their area - as to the kind and the usage especially of the medicinal variety. This way they will also undertake to protect the biodiversity - our flora and fauna as well as our traditional knowledge base. All of this will be done on a war footing.
38. All Panchayats will have to preserve the traditional culture, folklore and heritage of all segments of our society. In our tradition there is tremendous wisdom and intelligence embedded. We must recognize this and also take action to document this. A clear cut action plan will have to be worked out by the Panchayats for this very important task. Our social traditions and knowledge are also built into our Jhankris, Bijuwas, Bungthungs, Yebas, Phedangmas, Bonpos, Paos, Nezums, Mangpas, homes, Baidangs, Janapas etc -all of them are very important components of our society and will need to be protected and documentation done. Since most of this kind of practice is still very much prevalent in the rural areas it is the bounden duty of the Panchayats to see and recognize their usefulness and to do all that would be necessary to protect and preserve this art and culture.
39. Panchayats will indeed also need to protect and preserve our Chautaras, Pauwas, Deoralis, Gufa (caves) and other holy and socially valuable places. These are part of tradition and serve the people very effectively even today and so they will need to be protected and also their efficacy enhanced.
40. Panchayats will carry out tree planting in Smriti vans - there is going to be one in every gram. They will make environmental plans and plans for plant protection of species that grow specifically in their geographical location. Plantation of a Argeli and bamboo species will also be taken up in full.
41. The Panchayats in the villages will provide the marginalized, homeless, landless and poorest of poor people all the Government facilities on priority - these would also include children and pregnant women.
42. Those young people who are educated and unemployed will be helped by the Panchayats to set up businesses and industry in their villages. They will be so helped that they would weaned away from bad habits.
43. Afno Gaon Afai Banaon is a slogan of SDF and this will be carried out in letter and spirit by the Panchayats whose duty is to carry out this task diligently.
44. The Panchayats must utilize all benefits and help given by the Government very well and effectively. To this end the Panchayats will be responsible to the people of Sikkim and more so to the village level people whom they represent.
45. Those who do not fall under the category of OBC or SC/ST have been given 10 percent reservation in higher education. We will continue to strengthen this and resolve to make more facilities available especially to the weaker sections within this class.

46. They will look after the Khasmal and Gaucharan land and take necessary action to protect it.
47. The Panchayats will also be empowered to take action against any new faces who may be suspicious who descend and start operating out of their wards. Our people are very innocent and this is being taken advantage of by many people. The identity as well as the background check will be done and they will have to report such cases to the authorities and police immediately.
48. The Government has over the last seven years and with a lot of effort have made roads, school buildings, power plants, colleges and water supply and all other kinds of infrastructure. In fact much more work in this direction is going on. So this has the necessary result of making new opportunities possible. Today these very opportunities are being missed by our people and are going to those who come from outside the state. It is time that our people learned that Government is not in a position to make them take these opportunities through spoon feeding. The young people have to themselves compete and be competitive and take these opportunities. The Government will provide all help and support. The Panchayats must take this message to every ward and debate. They must then take proactive steps in line with this. They can then advise our youngsters and encourage them to seize these golden opportunities which will not wait forever.
49. Every gram Panchayat will have a community centre, a playground. The building plans, building it and finally maintaining it will be the responsibility of the Panchayats.
50. To provide safeguard and protection to the womenfolk of Sikkim the Govt. will formulate the Marriage Registration Act with consultation of Panchayats.

Panchayat Manifesto 2002

What do we want?

1. To empower and build the capacity of the villagers socially, politically and economically.
2. In every development activity that will be carried out in the villages the grass root people should be able to participate in full.
3. In order to build the state and the country all the grass root talents and resources will be harnessed.
4. Traditional knowledge of the villagers regarding identification and use of herbs and medicinal plants will be encouraged and the protection of the environment will be endured.
5. Traditional social customs of the villagers will be protected and the idea of community living will be encouraged.
6. To provide all the facilities to the villagers.
7. To institutionalize democratic governance.
8. To decentralize administrative powers.
9. The people themselves will exercise rights and powers of the villages.
10. To provide women with all facilities so that they can enjoy human rights.

11. Panchayats members will be given all necessary powers so that they will build their capacity to exercise these powers.
12. Every effort will be made to make the people aware of their political and democratic rights.
13. The difference that exists between the village and the city will be reduced as much as possible.
14. All the modern facilities will be provided to the villages.
15. The people will be responsible to protect the rights of the people and they will also be responsible to defeat and destroy the known traditional enemies and establish the government of the poor people.

What have we accomplished?

1. We have restored democracy and established rule of law.
2. We have totally erased the "fear psychosis" created in the minds of the people throughout Sikkim by the erstwhile Government.
3. We have give tot the people freedom of expression and writing. We have also ensured full freedom of the press and also instituted a Press Club for expansion and improvement of the press.
4. We have ensured social justice to all in Sikkim.
5. Revenue Order No. 1 has been fully protected.
6. We have been trying our best not to agree to the implementation of the Central Direct Tax Laws. These laws are not yet enforced in the State.
7. We have fully protected the Article 371 F of the Constitution of India.
8. Panchayat Elections were successfully held and more powers were delegated to the Panchayats. Village administration will be the sole responsibility of the Panchayats.
9. Corruption has been kept under a tight leash and corruption free society is our Aim and the process has begun form the No 1.
10. Every opportunity has been provided to persons holding diverse views to express them so that various thoughts and ideas would blossom.
11. A Cooperative Apex Bank has been established in Sikkim.
12. Sikkim Government held meetings with National and international Industrial agencies and non-governmental organization in New Delhi and Kolkata, in order to establish viable industries in the State. In this connection Sikkim Government has promised to extend necessary facilities to these industrial houses when they want to establish industrial units in Sikkim.
13. Economic survey in Sikkim has been completed.
14. A high powered State Planning Commission has been constituted.
15. We have succeeded in making Sikkim a full-fledged member of the North Eastern Council.
16. Sikkim Women Council has been established.
17. We have been demanding that our senior personalities should be appointed as Union Minister, Ambassador, Governor and Justice of the High Court.

18. Sikkim has now found a place in the Internet Website. We have also formulated a plan to go for Information Technology on priority basis.
19. In the telecom sector Sikkim finds itself as foremost in the country in terms of connectivity.
20. We have also started the tradition of naming roads and schools in the names of our senior and respected personalities.
21. In order to remember our great personalities we have started to write history, highlighting their contributions to Sikkim and the people of Sikkim.
22. We have formulated and implemented the plan of eradicating poverty on priority basis.
23. We have also helped the poor and helpless people by implementing various poverty alleviation schemes and programs.
24. In every scheme or work we are according highest priority to the poor people.
25. BPL families in Sikkim are getting rice at Rs. 4 per kg. The wage of the Mazdoor Labourer has been increased by hundred percent and presently it has been increased from Rs. 50 to Rs. 75.
26. We have distributed land to the landless every year and started constructing houses for them.
27. Under housing scheme, every year we are giving Rs. 20,000/-as grant to 6000 families. This year the Government has formulated a plan to construct houses at the cost of Rs. 1 Lakh for every house and create model villages in Sikkim.
28. In every constituency old age pension has been given to more than 200 old persons. Now old age pension has been doubled. Those persons who were not entitled to get old age pension are being provided with 10 kgs of rice free of cost every month.
29. In order to make the poor people capable the government has distributed milk cows, piglets and improved varieties of seeds so they don't have to depend on the government. Besides they are given training in different trades and occupation.
30. In order to establish a shop in the villages, the poor Sikkimese traders do not have to obtain a license.
31. The poor people who bring their vegetables or other produce will not have to pay total tax.
32. All poor women employees will receive maternity leave and maternity leave and maternity allowance.
33. All widows will receive Rs. 10,000 as grant.
34. Ex service personnel and the handicapped persons will be entitled to be employed on the basis of reserved quota.
35. We have drawn up plan and programme on health and education on priority basis. Sikkim has been the first state in the country to introduce Hepatitis B vaccination. In every village primary health sub centre has been established.
36. Our Government has taken historic steps in the field of education. We have established engineering college, medical college and degree college

- at Namchi and Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya at Geysing. We have also made a plan of establishing a Science College and Agriculture College in Soreng.
37. Primary education has been made free in Sikkim. Besides students are provided with free uniforms. book and exercise books.
 38. Computer education is being introduced in all secondary schools.
 39. Merit scholarships have been introduced in the schools, with a view to create competitive attitude in the minds of the students.
 40. In our regime, the literacy percentage on education has registered a top position.
 41. All school buildings are converted into Pucca RCC buildings.
 42. More attention is being given to improve the quality of education.
 43. Sikkim Academy has been established in order to preserve and propagate and develop our languages and literature, culture, art and folk songs and dances.
 44. We have also started to write on history, our tradition, religion and cultural heritage, in order to preserve our distinct identity.
 45. The sanctity of the Serbang system has been protected.
 46. We have made Guru Rimpoche's birth anniversary as a 'gazette holiday.
 47. We declared a 'gazette holiday' on Tendong Lho Ramfat.
 48. We have declared a 'gazette holiday' on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Sirijunga.
 49. May Day has been declared a gazette holiday.
 50. We have succeeded to introduce Bhutias, Lepcha and Limboo languages up to college-level.
 51. We have recognized the languages, such as Tamang, Gurung, Rai, Sherpa, Mangar, Sunwar and Newar as State languages of Sikkim.
 52. Respecting the religious sentiments, we have scrapped the Rathongchu Hydel Project and in its place we have decided to establish a Cultural Centre.
 53. Half of the revenue collected from the Gumpa Estates will be returned to the Monasteries for their better upkeep and maintenance.
 54. We have succeeded to place Tamang and Limboo in the list of Tribal.
 55. We have established "Srijungha Mangheem" at the Burmoik and Limboo Cultural Bhawan at Tharpu.
 56. We have started the work of installing a great statue of Guru Rimpoche at Samdupchi in Namchi. Similarly a 108 ft. high statue of Shivaji will be installed at Solaphuk in Namchi.
 57. A rest house at Bodh Gaya was completed.
 58. A very sincere effort is being made to enlist left out communities of Nepalese in the list of OBC. Meanwhile, they were provided with 10 percent reservation in the higher studies.
 59. We have already enlisted Jogi, Thami and Sanyasi in the list of OBC.
 60. In government service and the higher studies, the reservation quota are as follows: scheduled tribe- 23%, scheduled castes- 6%, OBC- 21 % and

10% has been provided to Bahun, Chettri and Nevar communities of Sikkim.

61. A traditional festival has been started where Dharmi Jhankri, Bijuwa, Fedangma, Bumthing and Janapa will participate, displaying their culture identities.
62. We have strengthened judicial system and established the rule of law. Human rights court, Family court, Atrocity court and Lok Adalat courts have been established
63. We have started building necessary infrastructure in order to start all round development of Sikkim.
64. All old roads are being widened and carpeted.
65. Airport will be constructed at Pakyong. Foundation has already been laid and the construction work has been started.
66. Helipads were constructed in different parts of Sikkim.
67. We have started Helicopter service.
68. Construction of Ropeway has been started.
69. All Gram Panchayats have been connected with a network of roads.
70. All Panchayat Bhawans are converted to Pucca buildings.
71. Community Bhawans are constructed in different parts of the districts.
72. A stadium is being constructed at Gangtok.
73. Community Bhawans and government bhawans are housed in Pucca buildings.
74. We have started the generation of hydel power on a big scale. Construction work on 510 MW Teesta Stage V has already been started. Construction and repair and renovation works on small hydel projects, such as Rolep, Rongnichu and Rabonchu are started.
75. We are working on the plan and program of making Sikkim self-reliant, capable to run the government on its own steam.
76. We have appreciably increased the revenue of the State.
77. We have stabilized the economy of the State.
78. We have greatly increased the pay-scale, of our officers and employees. Similarly, we have given fast positions to our officers.
79. We have protected the environment of Sikkim. We have banned the use of plastics in the State. We have also banned the grazing of the cattle in the forests. We have planted trees in a large scale throughout the state.
80. We have established a library in every Gram Panchayat.
81. We have published Human Development Report, Sikkim Vision Document. In order to document the history and other affairs of Sikkim, studies series are being prepared.
82. We have given Man-Samman to the prominent persons of the villages, in recognition to their contributions to development and progress of Sikkim.
83. We have introduced the main actors of Prajatantra to the people of Sikkim.
84. Village leaders' contributions to the development of Sikkim were not recognized in the past. We have succeeded to search and bring them in

the limelight for the benefit of our intellectuals and officers and administrators.

85. For the first time, our SDF government set aside 70% of the budget for the development of the villagers and villages.
86. We have constituted the State Planning Commission and made arrangement to invite Zilla Adhyakshas to participate in the planning meetings.
87. During our regime, the Panchayat Act was introduced and we have started implementing the Panchayati Raj in accordance with the provisions of the Act.
88. After comprehensive deliberations we have decentralized the powers that are delegated to the Panchayats.
89. We have introduced austerity measures by minimizing the government expenditure.
90. Serving of alcoholic drinks has been totally prohibited in Mintogang and other official parties.
91. We have recognized the village women power and enabled them to participate actively in the affairs of the State.
92. Our government provided opportunities to village youths to display and improve their talents in various fields.
93. Our government has established Lok Adalat Courts and Family Courts, which enabled the villagers to get justice at their doorsteps.
94. SDF Government introduced the Panchayat system elected on the basis of party system. This system has given opportunity to the villagers to learn the lessons of election system and also they gained the facility of directly electing the candidate of their choice.
95. We have established the system of payment to the Panchayat.
96. We have constructed Taxi and Car parking stand to facilitate the movement of vehicles.
97. We have reserved 33% seats for our women in Panchayats and 30% in government services.
98. In every constituency, one model village will be established.
99. We have constructed houses for the village people
100. We have reduced 50% electricity rent in the villages. We are making arrangement to distribute free LPG cylinder to the rural people. Let us think before we cast our precious vote!

During the period in which the popular SDF Government has been in power no citizen of Sikkim has lost anything, instead all have gained substantially spiritually, socially, economically and politically. The rights and privileges enjoyed by an individual and the state are intact and rather they have acquired more rights and privileges. It would be advisable to remember the self-respect and safeguards enjoyed by you during this period of stability and indeed prosperity-a period which we call the golden period brought for you by the SDF Party and Government. And hence we commend you to think a while and ponder and then cast your precious vote.

MISSION & AMBITIONS

**14th LOK SABHA AND 7th ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS,
2004**

Before we place our Manifesto an Appeal from Party President Dr. Pawan Chamling

Respected Sikkimese citizens,

Today we stand at the threshold of 7th Assembly elections and 14th Lok Sabha elections. Among the pledges and announcements that we made in 1994 and 1999, all of them falling under the State subject have been accomplished. Many crucial issues falling under central subjects have also been sorted out in the last nine and a half years of our government. On the strength of our sincerity thus conveyed and the wide-ranging promises thus delivered, we present ourselves before the people for the forthcoming elections. In the last many years, we have conducted ourselves with full commitment, zeal and with a sense of utmost dedication to liberate our people and establish a system where freedom and equality reigned supreme. In the next government, we shall continue to uphold the SDF party's pro poor democratic principle and work with equal zeal and commitment. In 1994, you gave a new turn to the political history of Sikkim by establishing people's rule through your decisive mandate in favour of the Sikkimese party- the Sikkim Democratic Front party. Today we come before you, yet again, with humble appeal to lend continuity to this great tradition of yours to nurture people's victory all these years. We do not intend to claim to have established a completely new era in Sikkim during the last nine and a half years. Still we have brought about an unprecedented change and developmental interventions both in terms of conceptual novelty, their volumes and their interpretations. This truth prevails today as clear as the broad day light. We inherited a government mired in bankruptcy and a Sikkim burdened by loan of ten thousand each on every Sikkimese people. Our government has overcome this dreadful situation and salvaged our people to attain near self sufficiency. In a clear departure from the past, we have established a democratic society based on freedom of expression and profession. We have fulfilled every promise that we made at the time of party formation and during subsequent elections. We introduced a new culture in Sikkim's politics- to respect words with deeds. We have promoted the political principle to respect positive criticism and opposition's views, to maintain moral integrity and honesty, transparency and to abjure double standard in state's politics, and to fulfill the aspirations of the people. Our government has built all necessary infrastructures needed to make Sikkim ultra modern and prosperous. We are no longer the backward and undeveloped state, but a model state, a progressive state, and a leader in many sectors across the country and the world. Our government has worked consistently to transform our state from the dreadful past and to link it with a new future, filled with brilliant possibilities and prospects. Every working man, every law-abiding man, every honest Sikkimese has experienced this revolutionary transformation, development and enduring freedom brought about by the SDF government. We need not invest words to count our achievements. Our actions speak louder than words.

Many anti-people leaders in different garbs and colours have descended upon electoral arena, whose sole aim is the 'chair'. They will go to any extent to grasp power and undermine the interest and welfare of the people. Their character is

defined in their vicious campaign to divide people on the basis of caste, colour and communities and thereby fulfill their selfish end. Therefore, many anti-people politicians are scrambling around in the garb of the proverbial saintly cats. These feudal forces, these anti-people leaders who exploit people, who oppress people, are our proclaimed enemies. We will never yield or submit before these anti-people forces. We will further unite people and strengthen people's fort. In Sikkim there is no place for such politics which is based on casteism and communalism. The Sikkimese people have established this truth many times in the past. We cannot afford to lead Sikkim into the dark and narrow lane. Instead, we would like to lead Sikkim along the broad highway of peace and harmony and where all Sikkimese coming from different castes and communities can move ahead, hand in hand, towards the goal of overall development.

Respected fellow Sikkimese

We would like to take pride and claim that the SDF party is the party committed to the interest and welfare of the majority Sikkimese people. Our politics is dedicated to the welfare of the majority working people and the law-abiding people. Numerous fulfilled promises in the last nine and a half years go to show who we favour. We will continue to move ahead with our revolution until we establish a system that guarantees complete peace and prosperity for our people. After you have chosen us to lead the government, we have not frittered away a single day, a single moment at our disposal. We have fully dedicated our energy, zeal and enthusiasm for the prosperity of the Sikkimese people and their progress. I request you to consider all these seriously in the overall interest of the state. You are once again poised to give the Sikkimese politics a decisive course. The greater concern regarding the future of Sikkim and your own future squarely rest in your own hands. I seek to appeal that before you exercise your franchise, you will clearly identify your enemies and your friends.

On the one hand is the SDF, the party of the masses. On the other is the parties led by Congress. And the Sikkimese people are well aware that the Congress in Sikkim is the conglomeration of all the anti-people political leaders who betrayed the Sikkimese for so long in the past. The Sikkimese people know them and their ways and are aware of these anti-national forces. Every single vote of yours shall add on to the strength of the democratic foundation and master the cause of justice and equality. The issue of overall security and development of the state shall be determined by your precious votes. Before you cast your vote, may you ponder over these issues and reflect on the historical works accomplished by the SDF government in your favour. I am confident that you shall cast your vote in favour of 'umbrella' – a symbol of development, peace, justice and democracy.

The people shall surely triumph. Saying in all consciousness that I shall not shrink back but continue to offer a gentle and promising leadership to the Sikkimese people in the future, I now present our party's Manifesto to you all.

Jai Sikkim! Jai Sikkimese Janta!!

To forever uphold democracy, justice and equality.....With a firm conviction thus
2nd April, 2004' Gangtok.
(Pawan Chamling)
President

Sikkim Democratic Front

Our Vision: 2015

1. We shall make Sikkim as the best performing state
2. We shall make Sikkim poverty-free state.
3. We shall make Sikkim a fully literate state
4. We shall make Sikkim Corruption Free State
5. We shall make Sikkim a total organic state
6. We shall make Sikkim a cradle of traditional practices with modern Institutions
7. We shall make Sikkim a cradle of traditional practices with modern Institutions
8. We shall make Sikkim as the zero unemployment zone of India
9. We shall make Sikkim a biodiversity knowledge centre of eastern Himalayas
10. We shall make Sikkim the best welfare state in the country
11. We shall make Sikkim the land of opportunity
12. We shall make Sikkim a producer state
13. We shall make Sikkim the state of peace and security
14. We shall make Sikkim Naya and sukhi and a model state in the Country
15. We shall make Sikkim a society based on knowledge, science and Technology
16. We shall transform Sikkim into an ideal state free from communal, anti-constitutional and other anti-national elements. We shall mobilize Rs. 1000 crores revenue by 2015. Rural economy shall be made self-contained. This way, we shall make Sikkim into the most competitive and efficient mountain economy.
17. We shall bring down the Infant Mortality rate by less than 20
18. We shall endeavor to raise the net state domestic product to Rs. 2400 crores.
19. We shall endeavor to raise the per capita income to Rs. 1 lakh
20. We shall achieve total literacy in the state
21. We shall ensure compulsory enrolment of children between 4-10 Years of age in the schools
22. We shall set up 166 Community Information Centers in the state
23. We shall make Sikkim a zero poverty state
24. We shall focus on the initiation of second generation reforms
25. We shall allocate 80 per cent of the development fund for rural economy. This means all the rural sectors will be totally reoriented and reinvigorated.

Our Mission: corruption-free Sikkim

In the context of present national development scenario, corruption has become a real threat. Without containing or abolishing corruption, we can not think of

attaining the targeted goal of overall progress. This has become a menace and a formidable challenge. Therefore, the first task of our administration is to contain and abolish corruption. We want to wipe out corruption completely from Sikkim.

After assuming power, we have set in motion an unmistakable process of overall cleansing right from the top and the legal process to punish the corrupt, one after another. We will see to it that the corrupt who misuse public money are shown the place that they deserve. Although corruption is immediately discernible on economic front, it is actually multi-dimensional affecting multiple areas. It has penetrated into the deeper recesses of overall mindset, thinking, people's attitude and behavior in the society. We must uproot this. Unless we contain corruption in its multiple forms, we can not successfully tackle or abolish economic Corruption. Our revered party President has maintained that economic corruption, almost always, prompts depravity which in turns degenerate our society. Therefore, we want to make Sikkim corruption-free and make it healthy and strong. We can not create a clean and healthy society with a group of feeble men. Hence, our aim is to create a generation of Sikkimese people who are indeed healthy in their moral and inner being. Together with the development of present society, we are investing in equal measure in the creation of a new set of ideal Sikkimese who are outward looking, tolerant and morally uncompromising.

ASSEMBLY MANIFESTO 2004

For building a healthy society, we need citizens who are morally upright and uncompromising. Therefore, our mission is one that of making every Sikkimese morally strong. Our programs and policies have been designed to meet this mission. We have many ideological and pragmatic reasons to carry out our campaign against corruption in the state:

- 1) Corruption is an impulse against the poor and is anti-national.
- 2) In a corrupt society, democracy cannot flourish
- 3) Corruption stimulates an individual to misuse public office and institution for his selfish motive
- 4) Studies and survey have established corruption as the biggest and most critical problem in the country
- 5) Corruption dampens the spirit of hard work and industry.
- 6) It limits the pace of development and decimates one's energy.
- 7) Corruption destroys one's self respect and ruins one's character.
- 8) Corruption induces unethical practices in every area and subdues quality and merit.
- (9) Corruption undermines the very foundation of strong and resilient society. We shall uproot the class of social parasites and power brokers who thrive on bribery, nepotism, so called political nexus and goondaism and hooliganism.

We have noticed that corruption mainly stems from weak governance manifesting itself in poor service delivery, excessive regulation, red tapism and uncoordinated and centralization of power. We have also found that corruption emanates because of poor transparency and accountability in the system. We have recorded that corruption ultimately adds cost to the public expenditure and impinge upon growth and development. Therefore we shall be increasingly replacing the traditional system of governance by effective, efficient and transparent and simple system. We shall totally mechanizes the file disposal

system and revamp the entire system of office management. To free Sikkim completely from the menace of corruption and creation of a healthy and just society is the foremost aim of our political agenda. Until we make our society free of corruption in its multiple manifestations, we will continue with our revolution and our programs. And until we transform Sikkim into a corruption-free state of the country, we will continue to stand by our programs. Our mission: poverty-free Sikkim We will uproot poverty from the Sikkimese soil and establish a prosperous society. We will liberate our people from the pangs of poverty and give them peaceful and fulfilling life. We understand that poverty is linked with production and low income. Poverty spread in the absence of gainful employment and productive works. Since majority of poor people lack necessary capacity to take advantage of various opportunities, poverty finds fertile ground to effect the people. We want to free our poor people from this condition.

We want to make our people producer by opening industry in the state, by creating income-generating schemes and by utilizing local natural resources. And for the establishment of such industrial units, we seek to support our people and provide them with other facilities. We will enlist people's participation in undertaking various productive schemes for generation of more income. We have carried out an in-depth study on the establishment of feasible industries in Sikkim and we have also encouraged our people to take up such venture. We have worked towards creation of a pool of manpower to handle such business.

Through all these exercises, we want to engage our people in productive works thereby improve their purchasing power. This will make them economically stable and resilient. We will continue with our work until we make every Sikkimese economically strong. We are working towards attaining self-reliance through utilization of our own natural resources. Some improvement is palpable in our economic condition. We will continue with this process. We are on the road to make Sikkim a poverty free state in the country. The journey is on. We will certainly reach our destination. Because we accept poverty as the root cause of all evils and we have set our target to wipe out poverty and all other evils thereby make our society capable and vibrant. Our mission: Illiteracy-free Sikkim.

In the 21st century, in the knowledge age, nothing could be more devastating than be an illiterate. Due to lack of education awareness or lack of educational facilities, many people are still languishing in ignorance, away from the light and radiance of education. We will end this situation. We have worked hard to make education accessible to and all. We have carried out a number of programs aimed at reaching education to the entire Sikkimese. We have made sufficient provision in this sector so that poor parents can also send their children to schools without any economic burden. Education up to the college level is free.

Together with easy accessibility, quality education is our main aim. We want to develop Sikkim into the new educational destination of the country. Our aim is to make every Sikkimese literate, capable and knowledgeable. When we came to power in 1994, our literacy rate was a mere 56 percent. Today the rate stands at seventy percent. This shows that we are well into our advanced journey to make our state a total literate state. For the spread of quality education, we have created all necessary infrastructures. Many new colleges have come up in the state. In the near future, the state will have its own independent University. Medical College, Engineering College and technical college have been established in the state. Some more colleges will be constructed. We want to attain 100 per cent literacy for the state of Sikkim. To achieve this, adult education will also continue and the concept of 'each one- teach one' campaign shall be launched in the state. Our mission: disease-free Sikkim Our

government is genuinely drawn towards development of health sector. We want to make every Sikkimese disease-free or at least can avail of all possible health care services in the state. Health sub-centres and health centers have been established at the panchayat level with all necessary medical facilities. Besides providing quality health facilities, we now give prevention of disease the utmost importance. We are concentrating on programs that would encourage prevention of disease rather than treatment after contracting disease. Hospitals in the state have been upgraded with procurement of modern medical gadgets. Central Referral Hospital has been opened in the state. Sir Thutop Namgyal Memorial (STNM) Hospital is being converted into an ultra modern Hospital equipped with sophisticated and the latest machinery to enable the local patients to obtain the best treatment and facilities. This hospital will now be linked with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi through Telemedicine, for both treatment and research. In the health sector, our government has made path-breaking contribution for ensuring security to human life. We will continue to work towards providing the best health care services to our people.

Until every Sikkimese in the state is healthy, we will continue with our work. Our Mission: Developing Sikkim as a Knowledge Society Twenty first century will be the century of knowledge. The world today is moving towards knowledge age from the age of information. Those nations with knowledge wealth shall prosper and any nation lacking in knowledge resource shall lag behind. At the national level, a detailed study has been carried out for transforming India into a knowledge superpower. Knowledge society will have three key drivers. The first will be driven by societal transformations for a just and equitable society and the second by wealth generation. The third will be driven by protection of knowledge, including the traditional knowledge generated by communities over the centuries.

In order to transform the state into a knowledge society, it is imperative to focus our attention on education; health care, agriculture and good governance besides, attention should be given to the development of technology and strengthening of the service sector generating opportunity in employment, industrial growth and rural prosperity. We want to develop Sikkim into a prosperous state based on equality and justice on the basis of these sectors. Our focus will be promoting Sikkim as a knowledge society in the next government. Knowledge society has the capacity to generate, absorb, disseminate and protect knowledge and create economic wealth besides enriching its people in different sectors and bringing about societal transformation. By using the native strength of the people, this transformation can be further accelerated to develop the state as a sustainable knowledge society. Our government in the state, shall further pursue a more creative, interactive and self learning process with focus on values, merit and quality. We will work towards creating solid background for transforming Sikkim into a knowledge society. Our mission: Third generation reforms in human right The French Revolution of 1789 is said to have caused a cataclysmic political and social upheaval resulting in the establishment of First Republic in the world. This inspired people the world over to view human rights issues from their own perspectives. Fundamental issues like democracy, freedom of speech and right to equality became buzz words sweeping the entire globe with new inspiration and revelation. At the second stage, Democracy offered refreshing definition of freedom and equality, defining broader parameters for their application. Today, we know that we govern and are governed through the process based on self-determination, freedom and liberty, touching almost every aspect of individual and collective life. However, with the advent of New Millennium, an opinion is steadily building up to supplement our rights and freedom so that the interest of

every individual can be taken care of. Since, progress is highly subjective in nature granting rights alone may not fully address the question of social distortion and economic disparity. Taking a leaf from this new thought process in the world, the SDF government in Sikkim shall promote and vigorously enforce what is known as Right to Development in the state. All the related development aspects like Right to Empowerment, Right to Employment and Right to Share shall be promoted in the coming government.

Indeed, we have already initiated several measures to secure right to empowerment and other crucial socio-political and economic rights of the people. Our party and government not only believe in the Right to Development but shall promote the Third generation Human Rights Reforms more intensely in the next government. Our basic concern shall continue to remain the interest and security of every Sikkimese-rich poor, leaved or a layman.

Our mission: creation of a Civil Society

Civil society is the biggest check on any unlawful deviations and actions by the government agencies and other parties in the society and the state. We shall consciously encourage the civil society members and organizations in influencing the decision making process for larger interest of the State. We shall set up Civil Society Forums in each district We shall build a well informed and resilient civil society that can voice opposition to any wrong moves or actions in the State by the Government and any other parties. We shall continue to honour our achievers in any field of public participation. We shall also recommend names and support the case of Sikkimese for a range of prestigious national and international awards.

Our mission: Creation of wholesome human being.

Our goal is to produce a wholesome human being so that each Sikkimese can confront with all trials and tribulations with poise and ease. Therefore, our endeavour will be to nurture each child in Sikkim by inculcating in them rich and secular value education, imparting in them practical knowledge and down-to-earth spirit and developing in them a total personality. We want to give each Sikkimese individual an ability to reason, capacity to interact, react and pro-act and resilience and forbearance to face the most trying situations. We want each Sikkimese individual to be "no less" in all spheres of accomplishments.

Our mission is to make Sikkim a fully literate state and the Sikkimese people fully educated, knowledgeable, capable and creative. To achieve our mission, we would make education freely accessible, qualitative, life oriented and age-oriented.

Our mission: Emotional connectivity with the advent of information technology, we have witnessed rapid development in every field of human activities. Emphasis is laid on immediate physical connectivity between nation to nation, country to, country, state to state and society to society. The concept of global village is firmly established. What is declining in the process is human intimacy, warmth and affection. The SDF government will further strive to bridge this gap and establish emotional connectivity between man to man. We will encourage people to speak the language of heart and promote love and friendship among people, societies, states and nations. WE are government that delivers, because "In the last ten years, we have proved that we have the ability to dream big and the capacity to translate them into realities." Last Ten Years of SDF Government we have fully committed, devoted and dedicated ourselves to:

- * Achieving a high growth rate in the State Domestic income
- * Re-establishing and consolidating the democratic values and practices

- * Bestowing highest priority to rule of law and self respect of each individual
- * Safeguarding each aspect of human rights
- * Promoting modern instruments of justice
- * Working for People's Supremacy
- * Originating the planning and development process from a village itself
- * Meaningfully empowering the people at the grass root
- * Making the systems of governance more efficient and effective
- * Emotionally, physically and intellectually linking Sikkim with the National mainstream
- * Creating a range of physical and social infrastructure
- * Generating a huge income and employment
- * Providing a distinct social status to Sikkimese women
- * Building a large number of multi-faceted institutions
- * Bringing a real sense of competition and efficiency in all the sectors
- * Ensuring environmental security, food security and energy security
- * Reorienting the outlook and vision of our youths
- * Revitalizing the traditional practices and institutions
- * Reinvigorating the intellectual base and capital
- * Positioning Sikkim more distinctly in the development map of the country
- * Rejuvenating the role and contribution of press and media
- * Providing Sikkimese identity a more dynamic and ebullient shape
- * Inviting a range of private sector players and national and international NGOs and Donor agencies. And refocusing on Sikkim's national and international image.

All these would not have been possible without the:

- * Blessings and good wishes of all the Sikkimese people.
- * Hard work of the people at the villages.
- * Strong ideological and political foundation of SDF Party at the grass root.
- * Single-minded devotion of party workers.
- * Unflinching support of the government officials, teachers, doctors, labourers, businessmen, entrepreneurs and other professionals.
- * Constant inspiration from the youths and students.
- * Constructive criticisms of the media.
- * Institutional back up at the local, regional, national and international levels.
- * Encouragement of large number of people from other parts of India and
- * All round support and distinct commitment of the Union Government what we cherish and what we don't?

Distinct Ideological Stance of Dr. Pawan Chamling

We cherish democratic principles and attitude. But we discard undemocratic tendencies and conduct. Autocratic tendency is our avowed enemy.

We firmly believe that in every victory, people's aspirations, dreams and future should also win. The SDF party shall not tolerate such victory which defeats people but promotes one individual or one leader. Our party shall overcome any pressure or face any opposition to make people victorious forever.

- We cherish democratic system, but we shall not tolerate people's representatives flouting democratic system through undemocratic attitude and practices.
 - We cherish Politics as the highest mean to serve the people and not any form of occupation or business. Through constructive politics, we want to lead people to the right path.
 - We cherish equality and human rights. But we do not tolerate any form of human rights violation and discriminations. We cherish people's force as supreme. But we do not tolerate such forces who use people for their selfish ends
 - We do not believe that democracy is all about elections and governance. But we cherish democracy as the complete process of overall development of the country and the essential realization of people's power as final and all abiding.
 - We cherish the view that Sikkim and the Sikkimese should be fully protected as per the constitution. We oppose all such forces that seek to misguide people on unconstitutional and undemocratic issues.
 - We cherish rule of law. We oppose people who divide people on class, group and community.
 - We cherish progress of every single individual. We oppose any form of disparity based on social, political, cultural and economic difference.
 - We cherish welfare of every single Sikkimese. But we hold the view that safeguarding of one's interest and welfare should not, in any way, impinge upon the interest of others.
 - We cherish equal rights and responsibility of women together with their male counterpart.
 - We cherish to transform Sikkim into a fully developed and modern state.
- We cherish to promote Sikkim's cause through progressive thought and deeds. We oppose people, teeth and nail, who seek to push Sikkim backward to make it backward.

Targets for the next 5 years

We shall strive to achieve over 85 per cent literacy rate in the state

- We shall cover 100 per cent infants by immunization
- We shall achieve Hepatitis 'B' vaccination cover to 100 per cent children below the age group of 10.
- We shall bring down the Infant Mortality Rate to 30
- We shall generate internal revenue of Rs. 500 crores
- We shall raise net state domestic product to Rs. 1600 crores

- We shall raise our per capita income to Rs. 28,000/
 - We shall increase food grain production to 1.3lakh tons
 - We shall increase horticulture production to 1.20 lakh tons
 - We shall achieve tourist arrival of over 6 lakhs per annum
 - We shall bring down the percentage of population below poverty line to 20 per cent.
 - We shall construct a Herbarium in the state for promotion and conservation of our natural medicinal base.
 - We shall set up a Research Institute on Water Resources on Himalayas in order to develop water resources of the Himalayan region
 - We shall establish an Institute of Bio-Diversity and Natural Resources Management Centre in the state
 - We shall undertake industrialization of Sikkim on the strength of the available natural resources.
 - We shall set up a Planning and Development Board in each district to work out people-centric and result-oriented planning at the district level.
 - We shall keep Sikkim free from casteist tendency and propaganda that may divide our compact society.
 - We shall preserve and promote our traditional handicraft and handloom in the state.
 - We have pushed our State into a stage of 'feel proud' situation through historical works and achievements. In the days to come, we shall continue to provide appreciation grant to all people who work in the interest of state and the people.
- "Development Dividend" shall be given to the selected, committed and outstanding government employees including muster roll, casual and temporary staff in the State to recognize their contribution and encourage them in the future.
- "You Have Done Well Grant" shall be given to the selected and registered NGOs in the State.
 - "Keep it Up Grant" shall be given each to the selected and registered tourism and travel agents in the State.
 - "Creative Performance Grant" shall be given to selected writers and intellectuals to enable them to consult libraries, archives and visit other institutions for intellectual exchanges anywhere in India.
 - "Positive Journalism Grant" shall be given to the selected accredited journalists.
 - "We respect you grant" shall be given to all those veterans above 70 years.
 - "Sikkim State Appreciation Pension" of monthly Rs 1,000/ - shall be given to the outstanding sportspersons, the Sahitya Academy Awardees in Nepali literature from all over India and Sangeet Natak Academic and Lalit Kala Akadenil award winners of Sikkim.
 - "State Laurels Grant" shall be given to all the sportspersons who have represented Sikkim and participated in the National games.

- "Most Progressive Farmer" grant shall be given to the most progressive, committed farmer of the State.
- Kaushal Vikas Kosh (Skill Development Fund) of Rs 5 Crore shall be launched to undertake varieties of skill development trainings, vocational courses and other capacity building exercises for the youth.
- The Career Development Fund of Rs. 5 crores shall also be launched
- The Government shall announce a Health Insurance Policy for all the Sikkimese people above 45 years.
- We shall simplify the licensing system for establishment of industrial units in the state.
- Centre for career focus shall be established for the youths.
- We will keep the state free from drug trafficking and abuse. We have ensured that no one is treated lower because of the accident of his/her birth. All Sikkimese shall continue to live with due respect and enjoy their rights unhampered. The tenets of social justice shall be further consolidated. We shall further consolidate on our improved environment of social and political justice whereby the marginalized people shall join the social mainstream and move ahead shoulder to shoulder with fellow citizens. We have created an environment for the people to live as a proud Sikkimese as per the constitutional provision- and this has to continue in the future. We will introduce a basic shift in our traditional way of farming and our trade to encourage our people towards a more innovative and productive occupation. Many new schemes shall be undertaken in each household to generate more income for our people. We will make every Sikkimese hardworking, skilled, competent and talented and encourage them to undertake productive works.

In the next five years. We will:

- intensify our campaign to make Sikkim poverty free
- raise our internal revenue to Rs. 500 crores
- electrify each household. We will continue with our policy to provide free electricity to all BPL families up to 100 units
- connect all GPUs with all-weather road
- launch the 'one family-one job' policy in the state
- allot one acre of land to the landless Sikkimese
- Completely abolish child labour in the state. No one need to live unclothed and hungry.
- All children shall attend schools
- Each district will have one degree college and the state shall have a Science College, one technical college and one Agriculture College
- groom 5 outstanding sportspersons of the national standing
- Ninety percent of our work shall complete towards promoting Sikkim as the total organic state
- increase our forest coverage by another five percent
- make Sikkim as the most developed state of the country by achieving the target of annual economic growth rate of 10 percent

- Further improve our literacy rate to 85 per cent.
- Every Sikkimese will get the opportunity, the facility and the means to excel in life
- Fully safeguard the political freedom of our people, economic equality, culture and tradition, communal harmony, peace and unity and we claim and commit that We have the best plans and strategy to protect Sikkim
- We shall make Sikkim the land of means and opportunity
- We shall prevent our farmers and tillers from falling prey to black marketers. We will earmark a regulated price for their products
- We shall support just and proficient institutions in the state
- We shall explore various other sources to make every Sikkimese the master of his own destiny
- We shall prevent social behavior from getting corrupt and instead make it stronger and capable

The entire image of Sikkim has undergone an overwhelming transformation because of Pawan Chamling's vision, firm commitment, positive guidance and innovative policy decisions. Many path-breaking works have been accomplished, unprecedented in the history of Sikkim. The many outstanding achievements of the SDF government were made possible by Dr. Chamling's these many attributes. By achieving a steady decline in poverty indices, productive employment avenues, by smoothing out development disparities, we are on our advanced journey to make Sikkim, new, prosperous and self-contained state in the country.

Our demands with the Centre

- All the rights and protections of the Sikkimese people as guaranteed under Article 371F of the Constitution of India should be kept inviolate.
- The minority Bhutia-Lepcha community should continue to enjoy all protections as provided under the constitution.
- Giving due honour to Sikkim's history and tradition, seats should be reserved for the Nepalese of Sikkimese origin in the State Assembly.
- The number of seats in both Houses of Parliament should be increased to 2 each from the existing 1 each for the state of Sikkim. Similarly, the number of State Assembly seats should be increased from the existing 32 to 40.
- Seats should be reserved for the Limbus and Tamangs in the Assembly at the earliest.
- Bhutia-Lepcha and Limbu languages should be included in the eighth Scheduled of the Constitution.
- Chettri-Bahun-Newar-Sanyasi should be included in the OBC list at the centre.
- Rai, Manger, Gurung, Sunuwar, Thami, Jogi, Dewan and Yakha communities should be accorded the tribal status.
- Nepali community in India should be declared as minority at the national level.
- Sikkim should be declared as a Tribal State.

- A special economic package of Rs. 3000 crores should be released for the development of Sikkim.
- The centre should write off all loans borrowed by the previous government.
- Central Direct Tax Act 1961 should not be enforced in Sikkim keeping the State out of the purview of Wealth tax, Income tax and Gift tax.
- Sikkim should be kept out of the purview of Excise Tax.
- Sikkim should be linked with the Golden Quadrilateral under the National Highway Development Project.
- An alternative Highway should be built for the state of Sikkim
- Eminent Sikkimese public figures should be appointed in the National Commissions including in the Planning Commission and other high Constitutional offices like that of Governors, High Commissioners, and Judges and Ambassadors.
- For complete emotional integration of Sikkimese into the national main stream, more Sikkimese people should be absorbed in central administrative posts.
- For the development and conservation of entire Himalayan belt, National Institute of Himalayan Research and Development should be established in Sikkim.
- For conservation and promotion of medicinal plants available in the state, an Advanced Centre for Medicinal Plants and Bio-technology shall be set up in Sikkim.
- The Centre should grant approval for establishment of a State University in Sikkim

ADDENDUM/CORRIGENDUM

Answer/Comment on Query A

The thesis as observed is probably more descriptive than analytical. However the last three chapters are based on field surveys and hence analytical. I will keep the point in mind while revising the thesis for publication or taking up any other research work in future. In this addendum I attempt an analysis of regionalism in India and the regionalist discourse in Sikkim and note how the regionalist discourse is similar or different from the nationalist discourse.

The growth of regionalism in Indian Politics after independence can be traced to the 1960's after the re-organization of the states in 1956. Many regional political parties and organizations emerged with the demand for separate statehood, for more autonomy within the Indian federal set up, recognition of their language etc. Thus the phenomenon of regionalism and regionalization of politics that we witness today is not new in India. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) of Tamil Nadu, formed immediately after independence was the first well organised regional political party to come to power at the state level in India in 1967. Ever since then a trend of regional politics has been evident in Indian Politics. Regional political parties are actively participating in the coalition governments formed at the national level in the country since the 1990's. It is because of the growth and expansion of regional political parties we witness a decline in the Congress dominant one party dominated political system at the state as well as at the national level.

In contemporary India Regional political parties have greater impact on national politics as these parties try to make necessary

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negotiations with the national political parties for holding important portfolios so that they can bring necessary financial benefits to their regions. While discussing about regional political parties, their growth and their intense participation in Indian politics, it is important to note that a regional political party can be a party with a regional political presence that is a party which contests and wins elections in one state on the basis of a regional agenda. For example, political parties like the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) of Assam, the Akali Dal of Punjab, the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir, the Telugu Desam Party of Andhra Pradesh and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) of Tamil Nadu contest on regional issues.

The development of regionalism in India in some cases is due to the Indian Constitution which makes it easy in breaking the existing ones for the formation of separate states. Since the re-organisation of states in 1956, there have been altogether 28 states of the Indian Union. The last time new states were created was in 2000 when Jharkhand was created out of Bihar, Uttarkhand out of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal out of Madhya Pradesh. Basically the creation of new states somehow has been the result of long established demands for separate statehood. The demand for Bodoland by the Bodo's in Assam has settled down with the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council. The recent demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland seems to have settled down with the signing of the Accord for the formation of a Gorkhaland Territorial Administration.

Regionalism in India was once treated as a great danger to national integration and unity, but this feeling has gradually disappeared as regional parties and other organizations also have an integrating role to play at the national level. In Sikkim, the concept of national integration was not the major concern of the political parties as

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they were always focusing on the ethnic-cultural issues in the state which existed even during the merger. Only very recently the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) in its election manifesto talked about national integration. The party (SDF) also claims that the former government under Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP), a regional political party, did not make any effort for national integration with the Union. Therefore, the Party has promised to work for national integration which was not done earlier. Hence it can be said that regional parties contribute to national integration.

In recent years we note that there has been a phenomenal growth of regional political parties in the Indian political system. The expansion of regional parties has brought a major change not only in the state party systems but also at the national party system in the country. As a result of the growth of regional parties the party system at the national level has shifted from a one party dominant Congress system to a 'multi-party system' which is also referred to as a 'coalition politics'.

On the emergence and growth of regional parties in Indian political system, there are different opinions among different authors. For some regionalisation of politics is due to developmental process at the state level, uneven economic development that led to the growth of regional disparity that gave rise to new classes after independence and the decline of the dominant Congress Party. One important factor can be cited and that is there was dissatisfaction among the dominant regional groups which failed to gain substantial benefits from the Congress ruling party at the centre. These factors have contributed to the emergence of regional parties in India.

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There are some other reasons which are considered as factors that had contributed to the growth and expansion of regional parties. To Paul Brass (1995)¹ the growth of regional parties is a natural growth in a country which has a diverse ethno-cultural-linguistic based and socially fragmented society. Sudha Pai (1990)² argues that the rise of regional parties is due to the complex interplay between the regional consciousness and social, political and economic developments that has taken place since independence. To writers like Bhambri (1998)³ the splits in the Congress party and decline in its organisation since 1967 contributed largely to the growth of Regional parties. He further argues that regional parties are getting prominence and have acquired significant position and strength in recent times partly because of the weakness and failures of the national party system in the country and also due to the failure of national parties in responding to the demands of the regional people.

The emergence of Regional parties is also closely linked with the process of regionalization of Indian politics. Basu and Mukhopadhyay (2003)⁴ argue that this "regionalization of Indian politics at one level is a reaction to the centralization of political power structure within the Congress party itself.. The Congress party has dominated the Indian politics for a long period of time since independence. It is understood that regionalization could be viewed as a consequence of the political ascendancy of the capitalist class. The Congress dominated government policies both at the state and the Centre fostering the rise of this

¹ Paul R. Brass, 1995. *The Politics of India since Independence*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.

² Sudha, Pai, 1990. 'Regional Parties and the Emerging Pattern of Politics in India' *Indian Journal of Political Science*, July-Sept.

³ C. P. Bhambri,, 1998. *Indian Politics since Independence*, Vol.1, Delhi: Shipra Publications.

⁴ Subho Basu & Surajit, C. Mukhopadhyay, 1998. "The Crisis of the Centralised Nation State: Regionalisation and Electoral Politics in 1990s" in Subho Basu & Suranjan Das (ed.), *Electoral Politics in South Asia*, Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi & Company

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segment of rural society which ultimately saw steady erosion in the support base of the Congress. Another factor for the rise of these parties is that some of the opposition parties like Janata Dal also contributed substantially to the regional parties. The formation and rise of Bharatiya Janata Party can be related with regionalization in India. The Bharatiya Janata Party's attempt to foster a homogenized Hindu national identity devoid of internal cleavages also strengthened the process of regionalisation of Indian Politics' (Basu & Mukhopadhyay, 2000, pp.207-208).

Harish Khare⁵ in his article discusses the reasons for the growth of Regional parties from the 1970s and their expansion since the early 1990s. Khare relates the growth of regional parties in the context of regional parties that have become successful in catching up the support of the people with local demands and issues which the Congress party have failed in some Congress ruled states. The shortcoming of the Congress party is that it has failed to deliver the goods, as a result there was a widespread sense of deprivation and frustration among the people which further created more distance with the centre. Khare comments that with the economic liberalisation in 1991, the regional parties have negotiations with the national parties for the allocation of financial benefits and regional interests in the state (Khare, 1998, p.56-57).

The expansion of Regional and state-based parties have been tremendously seen since the 1990s. Even though some of the regional parties had emerged even prior to independence, like the Akali Dal in Punjab or the National Conference in Jammu & Kashmir however, it was only in the 1967 general election that the growth and influence of these

⁵ Harish, Khare, 1998. Parties, National and Regional: Institutions of Governance, P.R., Chari (ed.) *India Towards Millennium*, New Delhi: Manohar.

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parties was greatly felt. The political parties like the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and Bengal Congress in West Bengal are some of the political parties which were formed just before the fourth general elections. It was in this fourth general elections, the Congress party suffered massive setbacks in most of the Congress dominated states. Its votes dropped by almost 5 percent. In the larger states like- Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala the Congress lost the election and failed to form governments. The election was won by the regional and state based parties either as a single majority party, for example the DMK in Madras or in alliance with other political parties. This was probably the first time in Indian politics that Regional parties contested elections but also formed governments at the state level after elections.

Though regional parties became popular and played a significant role in 1967, but the Congress party in the subsequent elections which were held in 1971 and 1972 retained back its power at the centre. It was only after 1977 election, the regional parties became more visible in various states and in coalition politics in India. For example, the Akali Dal formed the government in alliance with the splinter group of Congress in Punjab, in Jammu and Kashmir, the National Conference returned to power after almost a decade. Parties like AIADMK also became prominent in the state of Tamil Nadu. The regional parties like the DMK and the Akali Dal were partners in the Janata Party government at the national level. This was in fact the first instance when Regional parties shared power at the national level in the country.

The rise and growth of regional political parties in the 1990's changed the entire course of party politics in India. It shifted the political power from the Congress party system to regional politics and

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more importantly to a multi-party coalition politics. The regional parties have acquired importance at the national level due to the fact that they have increased their presence in the national legislature since the 1996 elections and due to this they have come to play a very crucial role in the making and unmaking of governments at the central level. Until 1991 regional parties had less number of seats in the Lok Sabha but in 1991, regional parties occupied 56 seats whereas in 1996 it increased to 137 seats, 161 seats in 1998, 188 seats in 1999 and increased to total 159 seats in 2004 elections which is slightly less than 20 percent of the total votes. In the 2011 Parliamentary elections the state parties contested 394 seats securing 146 seats with 14.30 percent of votes.

Regarding the significance and the position of these parties in state legislatures it is evident that they have increased their strength considerably and are playing a crucial role in the national politics in recent years. According to Lawrence Saez (2002), as many as twelve states of the Indian Union Regional parties (including state parties) occupied a prominent position in the state legislatures and also formed governments at the state level. The political parties like the Shiv Sena (SS) for the first time came to power in Maharashtra along with its ally, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1995 which remained in power till 1999. The Asom Gano Parishad (AGP) similarly returned back to power for the second time in Assam in 1996 by dislodging the Congress party. The National Conference (NC) came to power in 1996 with a large majority in Jammu & Kashmir. The Dravidian parties, the DMK and the AIADMK alternated power among themselves in the state of Tamil Nadu in the 1990s. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) returned to power and formed the government in 1995 and remained in office till 2004. The Akali Dal (AD) also formed a government in the state of Punjab in 1997 in an alliance with the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP). Thus, these regional parties have been increasingly successful both at the state level and in

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forming the coalition government at the national level. Hence it is noticed that these parties have been continuously playing an important role in Indian politics since 1990s and formed governments almost at the same period starting from 1995 and all the parties remained in office until the end of their term.

Regionalism in Sikkim is distinct from that of any other part of the country. The phenomena of regionalism can be better understood on ethnic-cultural lines in this state. Sikkim is predominantly inhabited by the three ethnic communities; the Bhutia's, the Lepcha's and the Nepali's. The Nepali's can be further divided into various sub-groups. The phenomenon of regionalism in Sikkim is much stronger than the other states of the Indian Union. Sikkim merged with India only in 1975. It was a small independent Himalayan Kingdom before its merger and was away from the influence of British India and the Indian Union before 1975. Since its merger Sikkim has been ruled by regional political parties more particularly by the Sikkim Janata Parishad from 1979 to 1984, Sikkim Sangram Parishad from 1984 to 1993 and Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) from 1994 onwards. Though the first government was formed by a national political party in 1974, but it could not survive for long. Sikkim, which is a plural society with different ethnic-cultural-linguistic groups right from the period of Namgyal dynasty have always witnessed confrontation between various communities regarding the issue of distinct cultural and social values. These groups often claim for separate recognition as a distinct community as well as constitutional recognition. For example, the Limboo's and the Tamang's claim that they are a separate socio-cultural community and therefore they are different from the Nepali's which can be broadly categorised into Aryans and Mongoloids (Gurung, 2011,

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p.156).⁶ The preservation of regional identity more particularly among the Bhutia's and the Lepcha's was evident even before the merger period. There are reports that the Lepcha's and the Tsoong's (Limboos) often resented Bhutia domination in Sikkim which lasted for 333 years (1642-1974). The formation of a political party- Sikkim Independent Front Party by Ruth Karthak in 1966 which concentrated in the articulation of social, economic and political grievances of the Lepchas in Sikkim also provides evidences to this. Thus, the ethnic divisions and feeling of community identity is not a new phenomenon in Sikkim. All this got accentuated after the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union after the growth of regional political parties in the state.

Taking the advantage of Sikkim which is traditionally a plural society as said earlier, the regional political parties are organised on traditional bonds and relations. These political parties use ethnic mobilisation for their support base and eventually they become successful in capturing political power. The people belonging to different communities support parties in order to attain their objectives. The fear of negligence of their community has also been one of the reasons why people always supported some or the other regional political parties in the state. Another factor also may be noted here that as in many parts of the country it is the regional political parties, which was able to bring necessary developments to the region. That is also the reason why national political parties have been functioning with a regional base.

With the inception of democracy in Sikkim in 1975 it was expected that politics based on ethnic-cultural identity would gradually disappear. But as far as political mobilisation is concerned, ethnic-cultural identities still rules the political scene in Sikkim. During the regime of Nar Bahadur Bhandari some of the Sikkimese communities

⁶ Suresh Kumar Gurung, Sikkim: Ethnicity and Political Dynamics, A Triadic Perspective, Kunal Books, New Delhi, 2011.

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like Rai, Tamang, Manger, Limboo, Gurung, Sunuwar and so on were excluded from the status of Other Backward Class category in the state. This created the feeling of alienation and discrimination among various groups. Sikkim Democratic Front, a regional political party was formed which campaigned on the issue of the identity of the left out communities from the OBC list. SDF also came up with the issue of giving the constitutional status/ ST status to the Tamang and Limboo communities. Therefore in Sikkim regional feeling is much stronger than in any part of the country except in some North East States. The existence of national political party and their survival story is seldom told as these political parties have failed to become popular among the Sikkimese people. Another important factor to be noted in the context of the national political party being unpopular in the state is that, Sikkim a young state of the Indian Union has always been away from the real state structure of India. National integration is very loose and we do not find any regional political party talking very strongly in terms of national integration. National political parties had also not tried to bridge the gap. The regional parties in the state have their focus on regional issues only.

Sikkim has witnessed demands for the recognition of ethnic languages as an official language in the state. In 1995-96 six languages of Nepali sub-groups were granted official status (Gurung, 2011, p.416). Political parties in Sikkim have always resorted to ethnic-political mobilisation. More particularly the regional parties like Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) and Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) which have ruled Sikkim for more than a decade have mobilized on ethnic lines for their electoral gain and political purposes. Many other political parties in Sikkim have also been founded on distinct regional lines. The parties like the Sikkim Congress (Revolutionary) have been formed with a distinct regional base. The smaller political parties which have not been successful in elections function more or less like a pressure group.

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The parties like the Sikkim Congress (Revolutionary) and the Sikkim Gorkha Prajatantrik party have their base on supporting the interest of a concerned community contributing for the regional bias in the state.

The demand of Sikkimese identity is a long debated issue which was presented in a different way in the pre-merger period and after the merger of Sikkim. The issue of Sikkimese identity became prominent in 1940's with the rise and the growth of many political parties and socio-cultural organisations. For political parties like Sikkim Sangram Parishad, Sikkimese identity was associated with the issue of De-merger of Sikkim with India. For the existing ruling regional political party, Sikkimese identity includes the socio-cultural and political aspects of all the three ethnic groups in the state. This has led to the concentration more on the community interest and emergence of community identity consciousness which has further led to the formation of organisations on ethnic lines. For instance, the Renjyong Mutanchi Rong Ong Seyzum (Sikkim Lepcha Youth Association) demands for separate identity for the Lepcha's who are considered to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim and their protection against the Bhutias. Akhil Sikkim Kirat Limboo Chumlung, the Limboo organisation claims that Limboos are not Nepali's and the other organisations being the Bhutia Organisation like Survival Sikkimese and SIBLAC- Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee, Sikkim Sherpa Association etc.

Therefore the identity factor in Sikkim is seen to be interwoven with various communities. It is noted that political parties operate within ethnic lines and the political parties rely on these communities for electoral support in the state. In Sikkim, regional political parties identify themselves with one or the other ethnic communities. For example, the National party, Congress (I) is always backed by the Tribal's in Sikkim, the Sikkim Sangram Parishad was the party of the Upper Caste community and the Sikkim Democratic Party is termed to

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be the party of the OBCs. Thus in Sikkim politics centers on ethnic identity and issues.

In Sikkim party politics right from its inception centers more around communities rather than on Sikkimese as a whole. Political parties in Sikkim have been operating on ethnic lines for electoral gains. Party politics on ethnic lines has further led to social divisions in the state which paves the way for the formation of various communal organisations that demand for separate cultural identity within the state. The factors that is leading the state into such social resentment can be explained in terms of the presence and demand of linguistic and cultural differences among various ethnic groups, the absence of an organised opposition political party in the state and the dominance of one regional political party for more than a decade. The regional political parties based on ethnicity- cultural identity are primarily concerned with the demands based on language, caste, community or region. These parties mainly identify itself with the interest of a particular area or community or a linguistic or cultural or religious group. Regional political parties like the SSP and the SDF has developed due to the presence of socio-economic-religious-cultural plural society.

Answer to Comment/Query No. B

In response to the second query I would like to state the following:

The SDF came to power in 1994. Before this Sikkim's electoral politics was dominated by individual leaders like Nar Bahadur Bhandari of Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP), a regional political party. SSP was a party which revolved around an individual person and the person was Bhandari. The party failed to develop and maintain a strong organisational structure at all levels in the state. This in turn indicates that the party had very little involvement of the supporters and activists in party activities. Unlike the SSP, SDF could build a strong

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organisational base. The party has set up party committees in all the four districts of the state. The establishment of party offices and committees at all block levels has ensured the involvement of people belonging to all the sections of society in the party. In fact, fronts like youth fronts, women fronts has helped the party in building its organisational structure even at the rural level.

Politics in Sikkim revolves around individuals as the leaders are personalistic leaders. In Sikkim the connection between the leader and the followers is mostly based on direct personal contact and not completely at the organisational level. The political parties in Sikkim, more importantly the SDF has direct contact with the supporters. The party organises meeting at all levels and mobilises the rural masses. The leader constantly demonstrates their closeness to the common people, face to face contact with the masses through television and other means. The leaders show personal interest in solving the problems of the people. By doing so the party stands for the upliftment and development of the rural masses. It is obvious that all these personal interest makes the leader a popular leader among the people. Thus, during the elections people vote for the leader as well as the party.

Political parties in Sikkim, more particularly the SDF plays a crucial role in the political scenario of the state. National political parties were virtually washed away in the 2004 assembly elections as the SDF enjoyed more popularity among the voters of the state. It could win 31 out of total 32 seats in the Legislative Assembly. Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) is the single largest of the state level political parties in Sikkim. It has met with success in the assembly elections of 2004 that is almost unbelievable for a state level party in India, where the national parties dominate the political scenario by and large.

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National political parties like the Indian National Congress, was the most important of all the national political parties in Sikkim which started its journey in the state with great success. Soon after Sikkim was given the status of a state within the Indian democracy, Indian National Congress in Sikkim emerged as the most prominent national party. But soon the party lost its support with the rise of regional political parties and regional issues and demands dominated state politics. This led to the success of the state level parties in Sikkim mainly the SSP and the SDF. Other national political parties in Sikkim includes the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM) which have only very little presence in the state.

With the disappearance of the SSP from the political scene in Sikkim, SDF claimed and operated as the only political party which could take the people of Sikkim into prosperity. The strong organisational structure of the party and its close relation with the common people converted the party to a "People's Party" in the state. More than the urban sector, the party gets people's support from the rural sector because about 75% of the Sikkimese population live in the rural areas and the rural people are less educated and illiterate. The lowest level of local self government, that is the rural panchayats and the panchayats wards are under the control of the party.

The support base of the SDF is the rural masses. Most of the developmental schemes and policies pursued in the state is for the rural sector. For instance, the party promised to allot 70% of the annual budget for rural development, grant financial aids, medical aids, and loans to the farmers at lower rate of interest to purchase modern technological equipments and instruments, distribution of rice at cheaper rates, more benefits to the people living below the poverty line etc. More than this in class terms the substantial support which it

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enjoys among the OBCs was the major reason for the success of the party. SDF is more dependent upon OBCs which constitutes around 70% of the Nepali population; remaining 30% are the upper caste people which backed the SSP. The party has among its supporters mostly the rural voters and the uneducated lot in the state. The SDF draws heavily on Sikkimese identity but more particularly identifies with the poorer sections of the state. It has been observed that earlier regional political parties attracted voters belonging to only a section of the Nepali community. The other regional political parties like Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad (SHRP) work in alliance with other National political parties in the state. In the 2004 assembly elections, SHRP teamed up with the BJP, INC and a few other regional parties to form the Sikkim National Liberation Front. It stood fourth in the only assembly constituency in which it fought. So it is evident from the fact that it is only the SDF that has been able to build a strong well organised political party which could gather support from the majority. Since its formation in 1993 the party has been able to win the support and trust of the people which would lead Sikkim out of disparities but it has also developed a good organisational base.

The SSP, a regional political party in the state before the rise of SDF, came up with the issue of 'De-merger', i.e., to retain the lost identity of the Sikkimese people. It was termed to be the party of the upper caste Nepalis in Sikkim. The organisational structure of the party was not very strong at different levels in the state. Pawan Chamling, the party President of the SDF was the minister in the SSP government before he formed a new party of his own. Chamling was aware of the SSP government's flaws which helped him to build his party into a strong opposition regional political party to the ruling party in the state. It also helped him to form the party and organise the party to spread its wings to the grassroots levels. Chamling was aware that the party would get more support if it stretches and reaches the rural base.

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Therefore, the party decided to catch the rural mass for his support base. Chamling, himself being a rural person realised the conditions in the rural areas and made necessary policies to uplift the rural people. He started schemes like, land Bank Schemes in 1995 whereby surplus land owned by private parties were purchased by the government and distributed to the landless and poor Sikkimese people. Land under Khasmal and waste land under forest department were acquired by the government and distributed to the homeless and landless people in the state. To make the rural base strong the government under the party initiated the process of decentralisation. Efficient implementation of the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, by the state government also enhanced the participation of the rural people at a much higher level. The policies which the party initiated like, reservation of seats to the weaker sections of the society and to different sections of population in government employment and educational institutions helped the party in building its position in the state.

SDF came to power in 1994 with a popular slogan like 'Janta ko Raj ma Jantai Raja' which means that the people are the real ruler in democracy. The party posed itself to be the real guardian of the people, mainly the rural poor. Chamling's government was termed as 'Khali-Khutte Sarkar' (barefooted government) which also projected him as the leader of the poor. The party stood for people's power and initiated many policies which enabled the intense participation of the people in the affairs of the state. Through interviewees with different walks of life in different constituencies of the state it was found that the party (SDF) is the only people's party in the state in contemporary Sikkim. Other political parties, which, raises issue of a particular community are not very active in state politics. They are prominent only during the time of elections. This means that these political parties are not very popular among the people. Thus, it would be right to conclude that the party is a cadre-based party working at the grassroots level.

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