

Chapter IV

GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE UNDER THE SSP REGIME

The concept of 'good governance' is very much interlinked with the institutionalized values such as democracy, observance of human rights, accountability, transparency and greater efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector as well as aid organizations of developed as well as underdeveloped countries. Therefore, the concept and meaning of 'good governance' implied or meant many different things in different contexts. In view of the above observation, the chapter has been divided into three sections. In section I attempt has been made to understand the concept and meaning of 'governance' as well as 'good governance' and then the basic elements of 'good governance'. Section II deals with 'good governance' during the SSP led Bhandari's reign in Sikkim. It seeks to look at whether Bhandari was able to ensure good governance in Sikkim. In section III attempt has been made in order to analyse the status of democracy and social justice under SSP led Government by Bhandari.

I

CONCEPT OF GOVERNANCE AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

The word 'good governance' is a term opposed to 'bad or inefficient governance' and is used to describe as how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to guarantee the realization of human rights and promote welfare of the people. In other word, 'good governance' is a new concept used against 'mal-governance' or 'failure of governance' or 'mis-governance' or 'mis-management' in the affairs of the public administration, performance of government, maintenance of law and order, execution of power, management of resources, observance of human rights and interests, assurance of social justice, democratic values and individual dignity. While the adjective term 'good' is added to the term 'governance' as prefix to denote or identify the quality

or degree of governance in ensuring welfare for the better quality of human life. Therefore, the term 'good' signifies the degree of performance and function that any institution or government renders for the well-being or goodness of human life. In view of the above concept, it is indispensable to define the term 'governance' alone and thereby, to measure the quality or degree of governance, it is also essential to define the concept of 'good governance' and differentiate the same from the concept 'governance'.

The term 'governance' is generally used to describe the art of governing the political, economic and social institutions. In simple language it is the matter of 'what the government usually does?'.¹⁰² Therefore, the term governance denotes as how people are ruled and how the affairs of a state are administered and regulated by the authority. It also refers to a system of politics of a nation and how political system as mechanism functions in relation to public administration and rule of law.¹⁰³

The word 'governance' is the derivation of the Greek verb 'kubernáo' which means to steer and was used for the first time in a metaphorical sense by Plato. Therefore, the origin of the word 'governance' can be traced back to the age when Plato lived. However, later on, it passed on to 'Latin' and then on to many other languages. 'Governance' as art of governing, relates to decisions that define expectations, grant power or verify performance. It consists of either a separate process or part of management or leadership processes. These processes and systems are typically administered by a government. So

¹⁰² The government might be a geo-political government (nation-state), a corporate government (business entity), a socio-political government (tribe, family etc.), or any number of different kinds of government. But governance commonly means the practical exercise of power management and policy formulation, while government is the instrument through which the power is exercised, executed and managed, the policy is formulated, implemented and decision is taken.

¹⁰³ However, the jurisdiction of the governance is confined not only to the administrative and political affairs of the nation and state, but also encompasses even the concepts which are beyond the government and not included in the political dimension of the state and civil society.

'governance' commonly means the exercise and execution of power to manage the affairs of the nations.¹⁰⁴

The World Bank defines the term 'governance' as 'the exercise of authority, control, management, and power of government'. It further defines it as '...the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development' (Cheema, 2002, p. 516). Here, the World Bank is concerned more with the economic reformation and control of social resource.¹⁰⁵ The World Bank emphasizes more on the formulation and implementation of policies, execution of the power for the proper management and utilization of both economic as well as social recourse of the country. It focuses more on the socio-economic development of the country and as well as development of civil society. As a condition for lending aids as development assistance, the Bank requires the recipient government to show effective performance and to promote further reforms. Cheema (2002, pp. 513-543) defines governance as 'the theme giving more coherence and focus to a variety of social, economic and political development activities which have hitherto been conducted in isolation from one another'. He further describes the term governance as 'a condition that ensures security, participation, co-operation, equity and sustainability'. In the notion described by Cheema, there are three facets: social, economic and political which are inter-connected in the spheres of governance. The governance in the economic setting includes the processes that affect the economic activities of a country and the relationships with the economies of other nations.¹⁰⁶ Governance in the political setting is the process of decision-making and formulation of policy and law which in turn has ramifications

¹⁰⁴Here management of nation's affairs means the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are executed and implemented in the affair relating to the public administration. It also implies to corporate, international, national, local governance or to the interactions between other sectors of the society.

¹⁰⁵ In 1992, it also underlined three aspects of society which will affect the nature of a country's governance: (i) type of political regime; (ii) process by which authority is exercised in the management of the economic and social resources, with a view to development; and (iii) capacity of government to formulate policies and have them effectively implemented.

¹⁰⁶ From the economic point of view, governance has major implications for economic equality, poverty eradication and quality of life.

for security, equity, participation and cooperation, allocation and management of resources to respond to the collective problems; it is characterized by participation, transparency, accountability, rule of law, effectiveness and equity. Governance in the social setting is the process of creating productive employment opportunity and social integration, improvement of basic services in the health, nutrition and education sectors, implication of equity and alleviation of poverty and quality of life (Cheema, 2002, p. 526).

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines governance as 'the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs at all levels'. It further defines 'it is the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights and obligations and mediate their differences' (UNDP, 1997). The main focus of attention is three dominions of governance: the state, the private sector and the civil society.

Similarly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) too defines governance as 'a process whereby citizens' needs and interests are articulated for the positive social and economic development of the entire society and more than the government: it refers to a political process that encompasses the whole society and contributes to the making of citizens active contributors to the social contract that binds them together. The sense of political efficiency is one of the indicators of democratic governance' (Cheema, 2002, p.517). For both UNDP and UNESCO, governance means management of nation's affairs at all levels by the authority for the socio-economic development of the entire state and civil-society and articulation of the interests and rights of the citizens and groups to ensure the democratic values for individual development.

In view of the above explanation, the concept of governance encompasses a broader range of areas, the area concerning about efficient

government, including accountability and transparency, to human rights, social cohesion, equity, democracy, participation, corruption, military expenditures, countries in crisis and last but not the least, political thought, culture and discourse. The number of organisational capacities that have an impact upon or are else associated with governance is equally broad, extending from the public sector,¹⁰⁷ the legal framework, governing institutions,¹⁰⁸ to the democratic process,¹⁰⁹ civil society organisations¹¹⁰ and the private sector.¹¹¹

CONCEPT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

The concept of 'good governance' is of recent origin among scholars. It emerged in relation to state-society relations; management of the affairs of the public administration, function of government, maintenance of law and order, execution of power, management of resources, foster of human rights and interests, assurance of social justice, democratic values and individual respect and dignity.

Down the ages, the absence of good governance has proved as the damaging factor to the performance and role of the government. The development of the nation in both socio-economic and political spheres had been undermined by a lack of proper management of the affairs of the nation, public accountability, transparency and active participation of the citizens in the political and administrative spheres, suppression of democratic values, misrule, corruption and capture of public services by the elite class of the society. The funds allocated for the poor was misused and directed to the benefit of special interest groups and the poor had inadequate access to legal remedies. Corruption tended to weaken the ability of government to carry out their functions efficiently. Bribery, nepotism, red-tapeism, formalism and favouritism crippled administration and

¹⁰⁷ The public sector includes Government organisation-civil service-public economic/financial management-local government-public enterprises.

¹⁰⁸ Here governing institutions are Legislature and judiciary.

¹⁰⁹ The democratic process involves Election.

¹¹⁰ The civil society includes NGOs, political parties, labour unions, social movements.

¹¹¹ The private sectors are for-profit organisations and business associations.

diluted quality from the provision of government services and determined the social cohesiveness.

As a backdrop of such poor performance of the government in the affairs of governance in the state, the concept of good governance emerged against what is called '*mal-governance*' or '*mis-management*', '*bad*' or '*inefficient governance*' used to describe as how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to guarantee the realization of human rights and promote welfare of the people for the betterment of mankind. In other words, '*good governance*' is a new concept used against '*failure of governance*' or '*mis-governance*' in the affairs of the public administration, function of government, maintenance of law and order for peace and security, execution of power, management of human as well as non-human resources, observance of human rights and dignity, protection of interests, assurance of social justice and democratic values. In the view of Nanda (2006, p.269) good governance as 'a term came into vogue with the World Bank leading the charge and has assumed the status of a mantra for the donor agencies as well as donor countries for conditioning aid upon the performance of the recipient government'.

In the word of Hye (2002, pp. 1-31) good governance is 'more importantly about the quality of governance which expresses itself through such attributes like accountability, transparency, efficiency, empowerment, participation, sustainability, equity and justice'. In the wake of globalization where a new era of sovereignty and a particular 'human rights culture' is emerging, the notion of good governance is commonly described as a style of governance that includes democracy, the rule of law, effective bureaucracy, discretion and decentralization which is being internationally promulgated and has become a core focal point of discourse in international affairs.

In the account of Agere (2000, p. 1) good governance is a concept that has recently come into regular use in political science, public administration and

more particularly, development and management. The concept is like that of the term democracy, civil society, popular participation, human rights, social and sustainable development. Gunapala, (2002, pp. 204-215) conceives good governance as a political process that attempts to raise the living standard of the people to create an environment for them to enjoy the benefits of the freedom equally.¹¹² To Cyril congenial atmosphere is very much essential for the betterment and development of the individual in the civil society. Here congenial atmosphere refers to peace and stable environment ensured by the proper maintenance of law and order.

To Shelley (2002, pp. 165-182) good governance is more than mere sound and efficient public administration. He further conceptualises good governance as the process of building enduring and consistently used bridges between the state and society at large through an effective and people-oriented mechanism of administration. In the account of Shelley good governance, thus, is a mechanism of the people which is effectively used and dedicated for the achievement of the three great objectives of the mankind. Those three great objectives include (i) Alleviation of poverty (ii) Creation of productive employment and (iii) Social integration.

There are number of perspectives which have been emerging in the international affairs in relation to good governance. These structures of perspectives can be looked at any of the following relationships: (1) between governments and markets, (2) between governments and citizens, (3) between governments and the private or voluntary sector, (4) between elected officials and appointed officials, (5) between local institutions and urban and rural

¹¹² The political philosophy and objectives of different government, the economic policies, the internal and external security of the nation and the relationships with other nations are important aspects that shape the type of government.

dwellers, (6) between legislature and executive branches and (7) between nation states and institutions.¹¹³

Mahathir Mohamed, then the Prime Minister of Malaysia, defines good governance as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage the affairs of the nation. This includes the complex area of mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens manage affairs involving public life. The Ministerial Symposium of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) held on the topic 'Public Service' in Paris in March 1996, defined 'good governance' in terms of relationships which covers more than public administration and the relationships, methods and instruments of relationships between government and citizens, acting both as individuals and as part of institutions, e.g. political parties, productive enterprises, special interest groups and media (Agere, 2000, p. 2). The symposium regarded the term 'good governance' as a degree and efficiency of the governance for the proper management of the state of affairs for the prosperity of the nation and civil society. The International American Bank focused the modernisation of public administration in the modern context. Here modernisation more or less means development and advancement of people and the nation in all respects. The Department for International Development (DFID) of United Kingdom emphasised the normative aspect of good governance. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has greater emphasis on sustainable development (Agere, 2002, p.3). To Martin Minogue (1998) as Rahman, quotes (2002, pp. 231-246) good governance is both a broad reform strategy and a particular set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open, transparent and more democratic. On the agenda of Annual Development Economic Conference (ADEC) of World Bank 1991 'good governance' appeared as one of the themes. The Bank therein conceptualized the concept of 'good governance' as a mechanism to

¹¹³ The aforementioned perspectives which have emerged as new paradigm, locate good governance as the procedure and process which the government adopts to bring remarkable achievement in the administration and public service.

indicate the manner in which power and authority are exercised for the development and management of a country's economic and social resources.

In the purview of International Monetary Fund (IMF) good governance occupies more or less like an instrument for ensuring the implementation and adjustment of various programmes.¹¹⁴ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) declared in 1996 that 'promoting good governance in all its aspects, including by ensuring the rule of law, improving the efficiency and accountability of the public sector and tackling corruption, as essential elements of a framework within which economies can prosper'.¹¹⁵

The World Bank's emphasis has been on the economic dimensions of good governance and the state's capacity to effectively use the development assistance. It also continued to reiterate its apolitical approach to governance reform in the allocation of developmental aid by focussing effectively in public administration, rule of law, transparency and accountability as the major elements to ensure economic growth and development (Panda, 2006, p.274).

For African contributors, good governance relates to the larger issues of state-society relations and not just to the technocratic transparency-accountability mode that it eventually assumed in the international financial institutions. The actual use of the concept of good governance sidestepped the central concerns of the Africans and rendered the notion purely administrative (Mkandawire, 2007, p. 681).¹¹⁶ In the context of India, the objective of good governance according to

¹¹⁴ This means to say that good governance is an important democratic institution which is essential for the economic growth and development.

¹¹⁵The IMF feels that corruption within economies is the result of the ineffective governance of the economy, or either too much regulation or too little regulation and to receive loans from any of the financial institutions of the countries have to formulate certain good governance policies in relation to economy. In this way IMF accounts good governance more on the economic policies of the government rather than on any other aspects of the country.

¹¹⁶ It often, looked like a fallback position for failed policies. But later, the approach to good governance and economic policy that finally became dominant differed radically from that of the African contributors who were strongly opposed to adjustment policies because not only were they deflationary and thus not developmental, but also because they were externally imposed,

Pandit Nehru's soul-stirring speech in the midnight of August 14-15th 1947 is meant of '*ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity*' (Bandyopadhyay, 1996, pp. 3109-3111).

In the light of the above opinions and arguments, it is understood that definition on the concept of the good governance varies from one organization to the other and person to person, although general ideas and focus on issues are the same. However, it can generally be conceptualized that the concept of good governance emerged as a part of development process in view of bringing goodness in the nation as well as civil society. It encompasses mainly three sectors: government, civil society and corporate sector including transnational corporations. As such, the concept of good governance not only attributes to accountability, both financial and political, transparency, easy access to information, popular participation in decision-making and implementation of policies, responsiveness, efficient delivery system of goods and services, enforcement of rule of law, supplanting the rule of whims and caprices of rules whether stipendiary or elected, citizen satisfaction and an overall caring and humane ambience promoting an egalitarian and equitable social and economic order as Bandyopadhyay records (1996, pp. 3109-3114) but also means combating corruption, nepotism, bureaucracy and mismanagement or mal-governance and adaptation of proper procedures so that aid and allocated funds are effectively used to achieve the objective of reducing poverty.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

From the above discussion, we note that '*good governance*' meant for ensuring participatory, empowerment, transparency and accountable, effective and equitable government and create congenial ambience for the promotion of rule of law to foster individual as well as personal development. It ensures that political, social and economic priorities which are based on broad consensus in the

weakened the state and undermined many of the post-colonial 'social contracts' (Mkandawire, 2007, p.681).

society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of developmental resources. In its report, 'Governance for Sustainable Human Development', the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) acknowledged the following as fundamental elements of good governance such as: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic vision (Mehta, 2002, pp. 317-334).

The United Nations Organization (UNO) emphasizes on reformation through human development and political institution. According to the UNO, good governance has eight characteristics such as consensus oriented, participatory, rule of law, effective and efficient, accountable, transparent, responsive and equitable and inclusive. For achieving the best way of good governance, Agere (2000, pp. 1-21) accords the following key elements: accountability, transparency, combating corruption, participatory governance and legal and judicial framework.¹¹⁷ Kumar¹¹⁸ recognizes participation, legitimacy, accountability, competence and open and transparent. Similarly, the Commission's White Paper on European Governance published in July 2001, identifies five principles of good governance: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. Sivaramakrishnan, (2002, pp. 291-303) conceives alleviating poverty, developmental infrastructure, maintenance of sanitation transport and environment as tasks of the government. While Shelley, (2002, pp. 165-182) considers alleviation of poverty, creation of productive employment and social integration as three important objectives of good governance.

¹¹⁷ Apart from the key elements of good governance stated above, Agere further highlights the efficiency and effectiveness as requirement primarily placed on managers. Decentralisation, devolution, pluralism and strengthening of checks and balances focus more on structures for which responsibility rest with politicians. Participation, partnership, poverty alleviation, empowerment, ownerships, human rights, free speech and free association and democracy require the active co-operation of all.

¹¹⁸In his article, 'Local Government for Good Governance: Experience in Andhra Pradesh'(2002, pp.247-267).

II

GOVERNANCE IN SIKKIM UNDER SSP LED GOVERNMENT RULE

In the context of Sikkim, where democracy and development had been taking root after Sikkim's merger to the Indian Union in 1975, the concept of 'good governance' was very new. As such in Sikkim, key elements of good governance could extend beyond what the scholars of other countries of both developed and underdeveloped have identified and thereby good governance could be judged in terms of the performance of the government, policies it formulates and implements and the manner in which law and order is maintained. This is because Sikkim had different experiences than those of the other states of India and developing countries of the world. Sikkim under Chogyal regime remained economically underdeveloped and politically undemocratic. So later, it merged with India for the sake of democracy and development. In due recognition of Sikkim's experience and evolution of democratic values, poverty alleviation, infrastructures, sanitation, decentralisation, popular participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, combating corruption, responsibility, freedom of press and effectiveness and efficiency can be taken into consideration in the context of Sikkim. So far as the degree of governance in Sikkim during the regime of SSP led government is concerned, it can be judged in the light of quality, efficiency, accountability, transparency and responsibility the government could maintain in the state. The performance of the government could be identified from the way it ensured human rights and dignity, democratic values, popular participation, rule of law, maintenance of infrastructures and sanitation, quality of human life, health and education, implication of poverty alleviation policies and productive employment opportunity of educated unemployed youths and management of resources and the way it dealt with the issues of the linguistic and religious minorities in Sikkim. The degree or quality of governance can be accepted from the steps taken against the mis-management, mis-governance, corruption, nepotism and red-tapeism in the state during that period of time.

In order to understand the degree of governance during the SSP led government regime, each key elements of good governance can be discussed under sub-heads:

(1) Poverty Alleviation: Poverty means the 'state of being poor' while poverty alleviation is a measure or strategy of combating 'poverty'.¹⁹ Sivaramakrishnan, (2002, pp. 291-303), argues that alleviation of poverty is one of the tasks of the government. Shelley (2002, pp. 165-182) also notes that alleviation of poverty is one of the major elements of good governance. So, on the light of the above argument of Sivaramakrishnan and Shelley poverty alleviation too, can be considered as one of the major components of good governance in the state or nation where most of the people live Below the Poverty Line.

In Sikkim, until 1974, 50.86% of the total population lived Below Poverty Line. However, in 1984, the figure of Below Poverty Line declined to 39.71% with the margin of 11.15 %. But in 1994, poverty again climbed up to 41.43% i.e, by 1.59 %. This means, in Sikkim, at the time when SSP led government came to power in 1985, 39.71% of the total population still lived Below Poverty Line. Therefore, in Sikkim, poverty alleviation measures became one of the prime concern of the planning strategy of the SSP led government.

For poverty alleviation, the state government started implementing centrally sponsored programmes and schemes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA), Integrated Rural Energy Planning Programme (IREP), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) etc.

Under IRDP, house to house survey was conducted and 10,430 families who were identified to be Below Poverty Line were assisted with ginger,

¹⁹ In other words poverty alleviation can be termed as a 'process' seeking to reduce the level of poverty in a community or amongst a group of people of the country.

cardamom, potato, orange plantation, milch cow, bullock, goattory, piggery, poultry, pisciculture and financial support in running small business and carpet, handloom, weaving, and black smithy. 3-12 months training was reported to have imparted to the rural youths belonging to Below Poverty Line in different trades like carpet, handloom, rari weaving, cutting and tailoring, knitting, carpentry, black smithy, cane and bamboo work etc under TRYSEM in between 1986 to 1989. The trainees belonging to BPL were also paid the monthly stipend @ Rs 150/- per month. The raw material along with tool kits allowance was provided. From 1985 to 1990, 1039 youths were trained in different trades out of which about 50% were provided loans with subsidy for starting self-wage employment (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, p. 119). Under DWCRA, the women and children between the age group of 18-35 years were assisted to generate income for self-reliance and self-employed. The finished products produced by them were marketed to Central Cottage Industries, Delhi. Rural Agent of marketing centre was opened in Gangtok for marketing outlet. A group consisting of 10-15 women members was constituted. Each group was provided one time grant of Rs 15000/- as revolving fund. The fund could be drawn for the purchase of animals for Animal husbandry and also raw materials for weaving carpet, handloom, raris, etc.¹²⁰

Under NSREC, beneficiaries were given 2 numbers of 3 inch diameters ACC pipes of 6 feet length and a chimney cowl at free of cost under Improved Chulla Scheme. By 1992, 4130 families were benefited by the Improved Chulla Scheme. Community size chullas were also constructed in school Hostels, Hospitals, Temples and Monastery kitchens under the same scheme. Under Biogas Energy Scheme, a biogas plant providing facilities to generate gas for cooking and lighting from animals, human waste of biomass was introduced. Families having 3-4 cattle was provided 2 Cu. m capacity gas plant to meet up

¹²⁰ In Sikkim, so far as implementation of DWCRA is concerned, it received tremendous response by 1990. More than 125 groups under various trades were formed of which 10 were from south and 115 from west Sikkim and total 2211 (40%) women were assisted and 30% was implemented for smokeless chulla, water supply etc under DWCRA of IRDP. Health camps for women were also organized in collaboration with the State Health Department under this scheme.

cooking requirement of 4-5 family members.¹²¹ The state government has also stalled 70 solar street lights and domestic lights in Panchayat Ghars, Bhawans, Hostels, Schools, Temples and Monasteries under Solar Energy Scheme (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 122-123).

In 1987, State Social Housing Scheme (SSHS) was launched under which 24 numbers of 8 feet long Galvanized Corrugated Iron (GCI) sheet were distributed to every families belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) to help them to build and roof their houses. In between 1987-1991, about 12,999 families belonging to Below Poverty Line were said to have been benefited under State Social Housing Scheme (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 115-117). Housing Schemes, 4132 families belonging to ST and 592 to SC were said to have been benefited and 658 houses for those belonging to Below Poverty Line were constructed under Indra Awas Yojana (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 123-125).

From 1989-1992, the state government, under Seed Multification and Distribution Programme has distributed high yielding varieties of seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, manures and implements at free of cost for the benefit of the poor and rural farmers. In the villages, 26 government farms meant for multification of seeds and planting materials, conducting various adoptive research and demonstration of vegetables, fruits and crops and modern techniques of cultivation were established. Oilseed Production Programme¹²² and National Pulses Development Project¹²³ to meet the internal requirement of edible oil and to explore the production potentials was launched. During that period of time, 10500 farmers were trained and 60 village level workers were sent for 2 years diploma courses. Under Livestock Scheme, piglets, crossbred cows and poultry birds were distributed to 2500 families of economically disadvantaged

¹²¹ Family, installing biogas plant was given only substantial subsidy of Rs. 6000/- to Rs 8000/- per plant.

¹²² Oilseed Production Programme Funded by the Government of India and state Government on 75:25% share basis.

¹²³ National Pulses Development Project Funded by the Government of India and state Government of Sikkim on 75:25% share basis.

groups. In between 1989-1991, Special Livestock Breeding Programme for small, marginal and landless farmers was also launched. This scheme has benefited just 855 farmers (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 5-7).

(2) Infrastructure: Infrastructure is a basic physical and organizational structure essential for the operation of a civil society and there from infrastructural development is possible only if the government takes the concern of it and devotes its resources towards its development.¹²⁴

Sivaramakrishnan (2002, pp. 291-303) conceives infrastructure as a component of good governance. Whatsoever may be its kind or form and nature, infrastructural development in any state or country constitutes the major element of good governance and indicates the degree and quality of performance of the government. Since infrastructural development provides framework supporting an entire structure of development, hence, economic growth and development of the state or nation fully depends upon it. Infrastructure generally includes transport infrastructure, energy infrastructure, water management infrastructure, economic infrastructure, social infrastructure, cultural, sports and recreational infrastructure etc.

In Sikkim, an existence of steep and sloppy land structure with narrow gorges permanently determined the development of infrastructure. Moreover, at the time when SSP government led by Bhandari came to power in 1985, Sikkim was only ten years old that had joined the mainstream of Indian Union. So there was a need for the infrastructural development in all the sectors in Sikkim. Henceforth, Bhandari government during its first regime concentrated on infrastructural development which undertook for several years in various sectors in Sikkim. Such infrastructural development which was accomplished during Bhandari's regime can be categorized under several sub-heads for discussion.

¹²⁴ From the economic point of view, infrastructural development facilitates all sorts of services that accelerate the economic function and growth as well as well-being of the society.

(i) Transportation Infrastructure: Transportation infrastructure as part of infrastructural development forms one of the key elements of good governance. It constitutes lifeline of progress and development of the state or nation in all spheres. However, its accessibility and possibility has close connection with the governance or performance of the government.

In Sikkim, transportation infrastructure includes road and highway networks; bridges, tunnels, culverts, retaining walls, electrical systems; street lighting and traffic lights, computerized rail systems and bus transportation, flyovers, pedestrian walkways, including pedestrian bridges, pedestrian underpasses and other specialized structures for pedestrians.

After the SSP led government assumed power in 1985, initiatives were taken to make the possibility of vehicular transportation in far flung areas of Sikkim. The village roads and bridges were constructed on the basis of population, tourist potential, economic development and social welfare schemes being extended in the rural areas. In the rural areas, roads and bridges were made accessible to provide basic facilities, transport of food-grains, easy transport of patients from villages to different Health Centres, attending district and other offices as well as to transport the agricultural products to the marketing centres etc. From 1985-1992, total road increased to 2243 kilometers against 1292 of 1980 with the increased margin of 951 kms. The steep and narrow roads were widened and upgraded. Old and weak bridges were replaced by higher load capacity bridges.¹²⁵ Besides, 16 other old and weak steel bridges were replaced by permanent ones with high load and carrying capacity and altogether 21 suspension bridges were reinforced and upgraded (BESPDD, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 59-63).

¹²⁵ Among those number of replaced bridges during this particular period (1985-1994) were: Cable Stayed Akkar bridge over Rangit River at Jorethang connecting south and west district of Sikkim (1989), Legship Pre-Stressed bridge over Rangit River at Legship, connecting south and west district of Sikkim, Singshore Suspension Bridge in West Sikkim (1993) and Mamring Pre-Stressed bridge over Teesta River at Rangpo connecting east and south district of Sikkim.

Two regional motor vehicle offices, one at Gangtok for north and east districts and another at Jorethang for west and south districts were set up. New number of SNT buses and trucks were added in subsequent years to the fleet strength with the objective to provide better, cheaper and comfortable mode of transport to the general public. Within 1984-1985 to 1991-1992, number of buses increased from 18 to 148. Standard bus services were introduced within the state and for Siliguri, Darjeeling and Kalimpong of West Bengal state. Operation of direct bus service between Gangtok and Calcutta was also launched from 29th December 1991. It was claimed by the Government that Trucks and Tankers owned by Sikkim Nationalist Transport for transporting essential commodities in Sikkim have increased from 128 in 1984-1985 to 184 in 1991-1992 (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 131-136).

The Railway Out Agency at Gangtok and Jorethang for passengers travelling to Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai, Trivandrum, Bangalore, Mumbai, Cochin and other connecting routes from Sikkim was set up. One special luxury bus service was introduced between Gangtok and Bagdogra. A bus service plying between Gangtok to New Jalpaiguri was launched (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 131-136)

The pedestrian fly-overs were constructed at Gangtok to help the pedestrians to easily cross the National Highway. The town like in Gangtok and other rural marketing centres were provided streetlights along the streets and roads. Under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) scheme 1988.33 Kms village roads and jeepable roads and 519 bridges were constructed (No-94/Home/90, Gangtok, Tuesday, 19th June, 1990, No-83).

(ii) Energy Infrastructure: Energy infrastructure constitutes one of the components of good governance in Sikkim. It includes electrical; generation plants, electrification of the state especially the rural areas, provision of LPG and mode of distribution of electricity.

Until 1985, there were 405 habitable revenue blocks that needed speedy implementation of electrification schemes for which supply of more electric power was required. For that more power plants were established to generate more and more electricity to meet the demand. Realizing the acute shortage of electric supply, the government took up implementation of Rongnichu Hydel Stage-II Scheme (500 MW) and Lingbit Hydel Stage-II (500 MW) in 1985. Two schemes were subsequently commissioned in 1988-1989. In 1986-1987, two more Hydel Schemes, viz. Mayongchu (66 MW) and Upper Rongnichu (4x2 MW) were taken up and both were fully commissioned in 1991-1992 (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 98-108).

Under Transmission and Distribution Programme, improvement works and remodelling of system at important load centres was taken up. Capacity of every transformer was augmented to meet the increasing loads. The 11 KV and LT lines were upgraded which ultimately reduced the cost of Transmission and Distribution by augmenting capacity of distribution transformer to avoid overloading. Out of 405 habitable Revenue Blocks, 400 Revenue Blocks in the state were reported to have electrified by 1992. Extensive Intensification Scheme in the already electrified villages was also taken up to cover 100% household. Under Free Electrification Programme, free electricity connection to the households who were Below Poverty Line was provided. By 1994, only 3,104 households were electrified. But 3100 households still remained uncovered (IRP, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, p. 104).

The LPG connection which was started in 1976 also improved. From 1986-1992, branch offices of State Trading Co-operation of Sikkim (STCS) were opened at Jorethang, Singtam, Rangpo, Rhenock and Pakyong to extend facility of LPG connection to those places. A new godown for the storage of LPG was set up at

Tadong Industrial Estate, Gangtok to meet the increasing demand of the consumers (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 147-148).¹²⁶

(iii) Water Management Infrastructure: Water management infrastructure forms one of the most important elements of good governance in a developing civil society or state. Water management infrastructure includes safe drinking, including water sources, system of pipes, tanks storage reservoirs, pumps, ponds, valves, filtration and treatment equipment. It also includes buildings and structures to store the equipment, used for the collection, treatment and distribution of drinking water, major irrigation systems; reservoirs, irrigation canals, major flood control systems; protection walls or dikes and floodgates as well as the use of soft engineering techniques in Sikkim (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 68-70).

In Sikkim, 440 villages were identified as problem villages which needed immediate supply of safe drinking water. The government, in between 1985-1992, a total of 958 Water Supply Scheme at a total cost of Rs 4,700.00 lakh was sanctioned. Out of 440 villages, only 369 villages were fully covered by the end of 1992. (Ibid).¹²⁷ The work of water treatment was also undertaken to ensure safe drinking water. Quality water testing was carried out in the stationary laboratory of Micro and Geology Department, Gangtok. By 1991, altogether 400 test works was done in the villages of Sikkim (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 124-125).

Under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) scheme, 17 water ponds, 83 irrigation channels and 355 village tanks were constructed by 1992. Besides, 42 flood protection work and 62 soil conservation work were done (No.94/Home/90, Gangtok, Tuesday, 19th June, 1990, No-83). The concrete Hume pipes and HDPE pipes in the damages of the open channels due to landslides and sinking areas

¹²⁶ Two DCM Toyota trucks were purchased by the state for the distribution and replacement of old gas tanks

¹²⁷ Remaining 71 villages were assured to be covered by the government during Eight Five Year Plan (1990-1997).

were extensively used. Under Seventh Five Year Plan, additional irrigation potential of 6359 hectares was created and corresponding to 5530 hectares of potential was utilized. Nearly 375 numbers of channels totalling approximately 455 Kms in length was also created (Sikkim Herald, 26th January, 1993, Vol-37, No-4). The river bank protection works to various towns and bazaar like Melli, Singtam, Jorethang, Rongli, Kalej Khola, Sirwani, Dikchu, Reshi, Legship and Sumbuk Kartikey was done (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 69-70).

Major works in the town of Gangtok and other rural marketing centres was also taken up. In Gangtok, on the basis of estimated population forecast at 45,000 heads, augmentation water supply was done by laying three numbers of 6" dia GI pipes to increase the capacity from 1 MGD to 3 MGD. By 1992, the government sanctioned Rs 4.12 crores for the augmentation of further 5 MGD. The work of augmentation of 2 MGD and filtration plant of equal capacity was also taken up at Selap. With the expansion of the town in Gangtok, the government expanded the supply of safe drinking water in the areas of Sichey, Syari, Tathangchen, Chandmari, Tibetology, Deorali during the period from 1985-1990. A tank of 1 MGD capacity at Selap for the distribution of safe drinking water was constructed in between 1985-1990. At Singtam, first water treatment plant was started with the augmentation of safe drinking supply in 1985. The water source from Rungdung side was tapped on Naya-Bazar Legship roads. The augmentation of water supply at Rongli, Pakyong, Ranipool, Yangyang, Melli and Dikchu was also done by the government during the period from 1980-1991. The government sanctioned Rs 5 crores for taking the work laying of pipe for 45 kms and supply of drinking water at Namchi Bazar, South Sikkim from period 1985-1986 (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 111-114).

(iv) Economic Infrastructure: Economic infrastructure has close connection with economic development and growth which is possible only with the implementation of proper economic policies by the government. Economic infrastructure includes manufacturing industries, basic materials used as inputs in

industry, industrial activity and industrial production agricultural and fisheries infrastructure, including specialized food and livestock transportation and storage facilities, major feedlots, agricultural price support systems,¹²⁸ agricultural health standards, food inspection, experimental farms and agricultural research centres, system of licensing and quota management, financial system, including the banking system, financial institutions, financial regulation as well as accounting standards and regulations etc.

Until 1985 there were 23 small scale Industrial Units registered with the Directorate of Industries. The performance of those Industries was also very poor. The five prominent Industrial units, Government Fruit Preservation Factory (1954), Sikkim Distilleries (1956), Sikkim Jewels Limited (1972), Temi Tea Estate and Sikkim Time Corporation (1976) functioning under public undertaking sector and 23 small scale Industries were the avenues for unemployed educated youths in Sikkim at that period of time.

So, at the outset, financial assistance was extended to these industrial units in Sikkim in the form of state loans at a subsidized rate. Apart from the financial assistance from the state, other Central Industrial Units like Small Industrial Services Institute (SISI) under the Ministry of Industry also provided technical inputs and assistance like the preparation of project report, consultancy, references and training facilities. The National Bank for Agriculture and Development (NABARD) established (1985) also started financing agriculture and other allied sectors. All India Handicraft Board (AIHB) was set up for the promotion of the Handloom and Cottage Industries. In between 1980-1989, the government also made provisions for the central investment subsidy applicable to the industrial units and hotels. Under the provisions, the units were entitled to get 15-25 % as outright subsidy not exceeding Rs 2.5 million. In Sikkim, the various units received Rs 61.1 million (Lama, 2001, p. 72). Similarly, under the Central Transport Subsidy Scheme (CTSS) the industrial units in Sikkim had reimbursed the cost of

¹²⁸ Agricultural price support includes agricultural insurance.

transportation of raw material and finished products to the extent of 75-90%. From 1985-1990, this amounted to Rs 63.11 million. Till 1985-1986, only 17% of the investment subsidy was utilized by the entrepreneurs. In 1991, the Government adopted liberal policies to attract entrepreneurs and investment in the industrial units in Sikkim (Notification No 27/DI/89-90 (III) 7452 dated March 13th 1991). Any Industrial unit in Sikkim under the schemes could avail subsidy on captive power generating set, cost of transformer and power line, consultancy services, power, interests on working capital, registration fee of promotion council, Indian Standard Institution, Commodity Boards, Chamber of Commerce, Publicity and Advertisement, Study Tour and Implant Training, price preference, concession on sale tax, determent of excise duty, special incentives for high value and Low Volume Production Units and units utilizing local raw materials (Lama, 2001, p. 73). The government in the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) allocated an amount of Rs 4.0% for industrial units out of Rs 2824 million of the total Plan outlay and in the Eighth Five Year Plan (1990-1997) Rs 3.85% was allocated for the industrial sector out of a total Plan outlay of Rs 7245 million respectively (Lama, 2001, pp. 69-71).

In 1986, a branch office of Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) was also set up at Gangtok to provide financial assistance exclusively to small scale and tiny industries under various schemes. District Industrial Centre was established at Gangtok to provide all the required services, support and assistance to the entrepreneurs and artisans of all small scale units of north and east districts under one umbrella. The Directorate of Handicrafts and Handlooms at various places of Sikkim like Kewzing, Okhrey, Lachung, Lachen, Chungthang, Lindong, Pelling and Namchi were established (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 59-63).

An agreement between the government of Sikkim and Indian Telephone Industries Limited, Bangalore was signed for setting up a unit for the manufacture of Microwave Integrated Circuits at a project cost of Rs 1.5 crores. The scarce

materials like paraffin wax, palm fatty acid distillate iron and steel material etc were provided to the industrial units. The government also launched various schemes and programmes to motivate and encourage the entrepreneurs and investors. In between 1985-1993, about 1200 entrepreneurs were trained and 75 rural artisans were sent outside Sikkim to study, tour and implant training for skill development and capacity building (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 59-63).

From 1986-1991, the Industry Department provided financial assistance amounting to Rs 80 lakhs to 409 artisans and entrepreneurs through various Financial Institutions and Sikkim Khadi and Village Industries Board. The Sikkim Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Limited also provided financial assistance to more than 1000 industrial units, hoteliers and taxi operators. Composite loans, term loans, loan under single vehicle operation scheme amounting to Rs 24 crores were sanctioned and disbursed. Under self-employment scheme, 267 educated unemployed youths were provided financial assistance amounting to Rs 50.00 lakhs for starting their self-employment ventures in business, services and industrial ventures (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 59-63).

In between 1985-1994, the government has established about 185 Small Scale Industries (SSI) or Tiny Industrial Units which in return, have contributed Rs 5.2 million to the income of the state in 1985-1986. However, in between 1990-1996, there was a slight decline of industrial production. In 1990-1991, the contribution of industrial units to state's income was recorded at Rs 3.7 million and Rs 2.2 million in 1995-1996. Thus, the figures indicate the poor performance of SSP led government in the industrial sector.

For the benefit of the weaker section, the government launched various schemes. Piglets, crossbred cows, poultry birds were distributed to 2500 families of economically disadvantaged group. In 1989-1991, another programme, Special Livestock Breeding Programme for small, marginal and landless farmers was also

launched as a result of which 855 farmer got benefit within 2 years. Under Livestock Scheme, 2,500 Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste families were distributed piglets, crossbred cows, poultry birds. The Frozen Semen Station, Veterinary Hospitals, Veterinary Dispensaries, Stockmen Centres, Livestock Farms, Poultry Farms; Disease Checkpost and Laboratory of diseases and Nutrition, Stockmen Training Centres etc were established. Sikkim Milk Unions and Fluid Milk Plants were formed in Sikkim to sustain and increase productivity of livestock (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 5-7).

The government also adopted uniform pricing policies considering the benefit of the consumers irrespective of location and for the control of market monopoly, black marketing and hoarding. For the storage and maintenance of regular supply and buffer stock of essential commodities, godowns in various places of four districts of Sikkim were constructed. From 1985-1993, 14 new food godowns with a total storage capacity of 5273.5 Metric Tonnes; 4500 Rice, 600 Wheat and 173.5 Sugar were constructed (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 39-41).¹²⁹

(v) Social Infrastructure: Social infrastructure as a kind of infrastructure constitutes one of the elements of good governance. It is concerned more with the social welfare and social well-being of the society. In Sikkim, administrative buildings meant for public use, health care system,¹³⁰ educational institutions¹³¹ and social systems¹³² can be included within the purview of social infrastructure.

¹²⁹ The government introduced uniform rate and policy for the distribution of rice and wheat in December 1985. The areas under Schedule Tribe reserved constituency and Tribal predominant revenue blocks were covered under the distribution programme (ITDP). About 2.04 lacs of consumers living in 197 revenue blocks were benefited with subsidised rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene under ITDP. The rationing system was implemented for maintaining equitable distribution in ITDP areas. From 1985-1992, 35,000 ration cards were issued covering 197 revenue blocks and two towns; Gangtok and Jorethang respectively. With the view to protect the consumers from unscrupulous, traders and hoarders, the Government of Sikkim constituted State Consumers Protection Council on 1st July 1987 and State Commission and District Forums and enforced Consumers Protection Act 1990 (Ibid).

¹³⁰ Health care system includes hospitals, Family Health Centres, Primary Health Centres and Primary Health Sub-Centres, financing of health care, including health insurance, systems for regulation and testing of medications and medical procedures, system for training, inspection and professional discipline of doctors and other medical professionals, public health monitoring and regulations, coordination of measures taken during public health emergencies such as epidemics.

The government undertook a number of developmental works for the development of infrastructure in Sikkim. The Krishi Bhawan and College Building at Tadong, Police Head Quarter, Yata Yat Bhawan, STCS Building, OPD ward in STNM, New Sikkim Legislative Assembly Building, Civil Engineering Department, Mechanical Workshop Complex for PWD, Yatri Niwas, MLA Hostel at Gangtok, Forest Secretariat Building at Deorali, Modern Jail Complex at Rongay and New Sikkim House at Delhi were constructed. The government also constructed quarters at Gangtok and Sub-Divisional Offices and quarters at Soreng, Pakyong and Ravangla, District Administrative Centres at Namchi, Geyzing and Mangan, Administrative Office for SNT at Ranipool, Police Housing at Jorethang, Melli and Pangthang, Community Hall at Geyzing and 14 more food godowns having the capacity of 5273.5 metric tonnes in various places of Sikkim.

For health care and welfare, the government is said to have constructed just hospitals, Family Health Centres, Primary Health Centres and Primary Health Sub-Centres in the state. In between 1985-1992, a new 75 bedded hospital at Singtam and 100 bedded Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital at Namchi with specialized services in the field of surgery, gynaecology, ophthalmology, medicine and orthopaedics and another 100 bedded district hospital at Geyzing and 60 bedded hospital at Mangan, 07 Family Health Centres, 23 Primary Health Centres and 141 Primary Health Sub-Centres were constructed. The Central Referral Hospital was upgraded to 300 bedded from 250 beds. For providing temporary hospitalization to the leprosy patients and for the treatment of Tuberculosis patients, 20 bedded Pt. G.B.Pant Leprosy Hospital at Sajong and 60 bedded District Tuberculosis at Namchi were established. Mini District Tuberculosis Centres with 10 bedded were also constructed in other three districts of Sikkim (Ibid). Under (ICDS), 482 Anganwadi Centres were established by 1992 at the village level.

¹³¹Educational Institutions including elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, research institutions, systems for financing and accrediting educational institutions.

¹³² Social System includes both government support and private charity for the poor, for people in distress or victims of abuse.

The Sheltered Workshop for Disabled was set up to impart training in cane and bamboo works to disabled trainees. By 1992, 528, Pre-Primary Schools, 266 Lower Primary Schools, 246 Primary Schools, 127 Junior High Schools, 53 Secondary Schools and 15 Senior Secondary Schools were set up. During this period, College Building at Tadong was constructed and various streams like Arts, Science and Commerce was introduced in the college. Other institutions such as Sikkim Law College, District Institute for Education and Training (DIET) and Teachers' Training Institute (TTI) for teachers' training, Polytechnic Institute and Industrial Training Institute for the vocational education were also established by the government.

(vi) Cultural, Sports and Recreational Infrastructure: Cultural, sports and recreational infrastructure forms a part of good governance. This includes sports and recreational infrastructure such as parks, sports facilities etc. cultural infrastructure includes concert halls, museums, libraries, theatres, studios, and specialized training facilities, business travel and tourism infrastructure, convention centres, hotels, restaurants and other services that cater mainly to tourists and business travellers etc.

For cultural, sports and recreational infrastructural development, playgrounds, Community halls, Panchayat Ghars, Play Fields, Swimming Pools, Gymnasium, Youth Hostels and Stadium were constructed and made accessible to all in between 1985-1992. Youth Hostels and Hostels for the working women, Girls Hostels, Guest House at Bagdogra and Tourist Lodge at Rangpo and Recreation Parks at Baluakhani and Paljor Stadium, car parking in and around Gangtok Bazar and near Rajya Sainik Board, MG Marg, Lall Market, Development Area and West Point School were developed. The shopping centres and parking facilities in four of the districts, Destitute Homes, Day Care Centres and Recreation Centres for nursing and caring of infants of working mothers, Creches for the children of working mothers and Blind School for the blind children were also established (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 137-142).

(3) Sanitation: Sanitation is related to public health and hygiene. As a part of good governance, it promotes human health through prevention of human contact with the hazards of wastes. Hazards can be physical, microbiological, biological or chemical agents of disease. Wastes that can cause health problems are human and animal faeces, solid wastes, domestic wastewater,¹³³ industrial and agricultural wastes.

Sikkim lacked the systematic disposal and management of wastes, human and animal faeces, solid wastes, domestic wastewater etc. This was a threat and problem to public health. In view of this threat and problem, sanitation measures were taken both in the urban and rural areas. Massive Rural Sanitation Programme (MRSP) was launched in 1985-1986 under which single seater latrines for each family belonging to Below Poverty Line were constructed at the cost of Rs 1200/- including fitting and fixing of pass and water seal. Under Minimum Needs Programme (NWP) and Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) a total of 7898 rural sanitary latrines were constructed at the total cost of Rs 93.57 lakh by the end of 1992 (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, p. 126).

In the towns, sewerage system was maintained. The work for laying of main trunk from Hospital junction, Gangtok to Adampool and construction of sewerage treatment plant at Adampool was carried out. In most of the congested areas,¹³⁴ work for the construction of main and sub-mains trunk of sewerage was also carried out. As the treatment plants the capacity to cater 1.26 MGD, branch trunk line was laid along the Indra Bye Pass to cater the sewage of Upper Sichey, Development Area and TNHS complex. So far as the sewerage scheme is concerned, government had covered 30,000 heads by 1993 (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 111-114).

¹³³ Domestic wastewater includes sewage, sullage and greywater.

¹³⁴ Like Lall Bazar, New Market, Old Market, Kazi Road, Nam Nang Road, Arithang, Deorali, DPH and Housing Colony and Tadong.

(4) Decentralisation: Decentralization is the process of dispersing decision-making governance closer to the people. It is the transfer of responsibility for the planning, financing and management of public functions from the central government or regional governments and its agencies.¹³⁵ Generally, it aims to give people or their elected representatives more power in public decision-making and there is the flow of decision-making power from bottom-to-top as well as active involvement and empowerment of the grassroots people.

In order to ensure democratic decentralisation in Sikkim, the SSP government firstly aimed at strengthening the people through 'Panchayati Raj Institutions'. In 1982, Sikkim Panchayat Act was enacted and in the same year Sikkim Panchayat Election Rules was framed. Under the proviso of the Act, 1982, two-tier system of Panchayati Raj Institution¹³⁶ was introduced for revitalizing the Panchayati Raj Institutions. On the basis of the Act, 1982, Panchayat Elections were held in 1983 and 1988. After the enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1982 was re-amended in 1993 (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, 2001, pp. 206-208). Under this Act, two-tier system of Panchayati Raj Institution in Sikkim was further strengthened. But, no reservation of seats for the women and ST and SC was made by the state government to ensure their representation in the Panchayati Raj Institution. The government only nominated women members in the Gram Panchayat during International Year for Women in 1990-1991. In between 1985-1990, reorganization of Gram Panchayat was carried out. Thereby 153 Gram Panchayat units were reduced to 148. Each Gram Panchayat units were given wider area of operation. An annual grant of Rs 10,000/- was allocated to all the Gram Panchayat units to carry out their day to day functions. The Zilla Panchayats were provided developmental funds to carry out the developmental works in the districts and to formulate district plans covering

¹³⁵ Agencies include to local governments, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, or area-wide regional or functional authorities.

¹³⁶ Gram Panchayat at the village level and Zilla Panchayat at the district level was introduced.

all the departments. Zilla Bhawans at Geyzing and Mangan were constructed beside 51 Panchayat Ghars (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 115-117).¹³⁷

(5) Political Participation: Political participation is a kind of participation in the process of governance whereby the citizens exercise influence over public policy formulation and decision-making. In other words, political participation means involvement of people in the process of decision-making and policy formulation and implementation either directly or through legitimate intermediate institution that represents the interest of the citizens. It mainly focuses on the empowerment of citizens in the governing process. According to Birch 'political participation is participation in the process of government and the case for political participation is essentially a case for substantial numbers of private citizens to play a part in the process by which political leaders are chosen or government policies are shaped and implemented' (2001, pp.104-118). Therefore, political participation not merely is confined to the opportunity to vote in periodic competitive election but goes beyond the scope of this limitation. The main forms of political participation are: (i) voting in local or national elections, (ii) voting in the referendums like in Switzerland, (iii) canvassing or otherwise campaigning in elections, (iv) active membership of a political party, (v) active membership of a pressure group, (vi) taking part in political demonstrations, industrial strikes with political objective, rent strikes in public housing and similar activities aimed at changing public policy, (vii) various form of civil disobedience, such as refusing to pay taxes or obey a conscription order, (viii) membership of government advisory committees, (ix) membership of consumers' councils for publicly owned industries, (x) client involvement in the implementation of social policies and (xi) various forms of community action, such as those concerned with housing or environmental issues in the locality (Birch, 2001. pp. 104-118).

¹³⁷ Besides, 100 Black and White Television sets and 20 Colour Television sets were distributed to all Gram Panchayat units to view TV programmes and films relating to various developmental schemes.

In the case of Sikkim political participation under the regime of Bhandari led government could apparently be witnessed not only in the form of voting in the local and national elections but also in the form of active involvement of the people in election campaigning, party meetings, enrolment of oneself in the party as a member, contesting in the Panchayat elections through the affiliation of various political parties, demonstrations, procession and rallies shouting slogans for both SSP and opposition parties during the elections and mass rallies.¹³⁸

In the Eighth Lok Sabha election of December 1984, there were eight contestants.¹³⁹ Bhandari was one of the independent candidates. During this, the voter's turnout was recorded at 86094 [57.64%] of 149256 total votes in the state. Bhandari secured 56614 [68.50%] of the total votes casted. His nearest rival, Pahalman Subba of the Indian National Congress secured 21324 [25.81%] of the total votes polled. Similarly in the Lok Sabha election of 1989 altogether 04 candidates had contested the election.¹⁴⁰ In this election, 138698 [72.06%] voters out of 192619 had voted. Amongst, 91608 [68.52%] voted for SSP, 28822 [21.56%] for INC, 12858 [9.62%] for RIS and 411 [0.31%] for the Independent candidates. Likewise, in the Fourth Assembly election of March 1985, there were 195 contestants¹⁴¹ to contest the election.¹⁴² In the voting, 99435 [64.73%] voters had exercised their franchise in 290 polling stations. The SSP secured 60371 [62.20%] votes out of 99435 valid votes polled. Similarly in the Fifth Assembly election of 1989 too, 1 National Party, 2 Regional Parties, 4 unrecognized parties and 20 Independent candidates had contested the election. In the event, total number of 139227 [72.28%] had voted of which INC captured 24121 [18.05%], RIS 11472 [8.59%], SSP 94075 [70.41%], 4 unrecognized political parties 298 [0.22%] and 20

¹³⁸ An eminent journalists, Kazi (1993, p. 161) accused Bhandari of using both muscle and money power during elections to comeback to power.

¹³⁹ Among which 3 were from National parties- INC, CPM and JNP and 5 Independent candidates participated in the election

¹⁴⁰ Out of these 2 were from the regional parties, 1 from National party and 12 Independent candidates.

¹⁴¹ There were 94 independent candidates including 11 women.

¹⁴² In the election, 04 National political parties - CPI, CPI (M), INC and JNP and two state political parties; SPC and SSP participated in the election.

Independent candidates 3650 [2.73%] (Election Commission of India, New Delhi, 1985, pp.1-45 and 1989, pp. 1-45). During the elections, there was no report of any major party clash, booth capturing and break down of law and order in Sikkim. Free and fair election was ensured.

(6) Accountability and Responsibility: In a democratic set up, both accountability and responsibility constitutes the most important part of the good governance. Accountability means holding responsible by the elected politician or appointed civil servant of government whoever is charged with a public mandate to account for specific actions, activities or decisions to the public from whom they derive their authority.¹⁴³

So far as accountability of Bhandari led SSP government is concerned, there were only developmental works in the spheres of agricultural, industrial, services, educational and health sectors. But all these achievements do not indicate the seriousness and accountability of the government towards the fulfilment of aspirations of the people or state. Simply making education free, universal and accessible to all, upgradation of existing schools, setting up more schools and colleges in Sikkim, providing safe drinking water to the people, electrification of rural areas, extension of basic health care and social welfare, establishment of hospitals, Primary Health Centres, Sub-centres, free medical facilities and mid-day-meals for school-going children up to class V and launching various schemes and programmes for old Aged, Disabled, Destitute, minorities and educated unemployed youths alone do not fulfil the criteria of accountability of the government. Accountability in democratic set up also means the protection of rights and interests as well as fulfilment of commitments of the government and inner hopes and aspirations of the people.

¹⁴³ It is often used synonymously with such concepts as responsibility, answerability, liability and other terms associated with the expectation of account-giving in relation to the public administration, governance of state or national affairs and legislative bodies such as State Legislative Assembly and State Legislative Council in the state and Parliament at the Union level in India.

(7) Transparency: Transparency is another element of good governance. Transparency means public knowledge of the policies of government and confidence in its intentions.¹⁴⁴ In common word transparency is an understanding or knowing about what the government does and functions in relation to the public administrative affairs.

So far as transparency of affairs of the public administration is concerned, during two consecutive tenure of SSP led government, there were news dailies, journals and other forms of printed and electronic materials brought out by Information and Public Relation, Government of Sikkim and private institutions that had record and report. Those materials usually highlighted the performance of the government regarding its day to day function and various policies, programmes and schemes launched by it. There were also government circulars and government Gazette Notifications brought out by the Home Department, Government of Sikkim which notified various policies formulated and implemented and decisions taken by the government. Besides, there were other local and national news papers owned by the private individuals and radio, televisions which reflected the policies, programmes and decisions of the government in that particular period of time.

(8) Effectiveness and Efficiency: As an element of good governance, effectiveness and efficiency have more importance and relevance. The two words effectiveness and efficiency denote competence or proficiency in relation to the work culture within the administrative process. In other words both effectiveness and efficiency means the capability or ability to formulate and implement effective policy and take decisions as per the need of hour and demand of the situation with regards to the administrative affairs of the nation or state and achieve the efficient delivery of public services.

¹⁴⁴ It implies that the governed shall have access to all the information and records of public importance. Also there should be a proper forum for discussing the issues wherein public interest is involved.

With regards to the effectiveness and efficiency of the government during the period from 1985-1994, it can be judged from the performance and achievement made by the SSP government during its two consecutive tenures. In each and every sector under which the study is being carried out, we find some achievements and fulfilment of the promises and assurance the party made in its manifestoes (1984 & 1989). Had the government not been effective and efficient, infrastructural development in economic, social, energy, transportation, cultural, sports and recreational, education, agricultural and industrial spheres could not have been achieved.

(9) Rule of Law: Rule of law commonly means the restriction of power by well-defined and established laws of a country. In any country, law is pre-eminent and can serve as checks against the abuse of power under the rule of law. As such, rule of law is considered as one of the key elements for determining the quality and good governance of a country. It is rule of law that ensures peace and order in the society, state and nation by avoiding anarchy.

During the first term of SSP led government (1985-1989), there was no report of communal riots and ethnic conflicts and tension in the state. The government is reported to have maintained peace and harmony. However, after 1990 due to the continual loss of democratic value; Sikkim witnessed strikes, agitations, protests and resentment of the people and growing political tensions. The political situation under Bhandari regime after 1989 Assembly election was accused of being '*worse than during the Chogyal regime*' by L D Kazi (Kazi, 1993, pp. 18-36). It is reported that in Sikkim there was violation of rule of law and loss freedom after 1989. It is alleged that the people lived in constant fear. There was a suppression of democratic aspiration of the people by the ruling party politicians.

(10) Combating Corruption: Corruption generally means abuse of public office or fund for an individual or a private gain while combating corruption is a key

indicator of commitment of government to good governance. Therefore, for promoting the spirit of good governance in the management of the public administrative affairs, anti-corruption policies of the government plays a very important role. Strong and powerful government policy to fight against corruption contributes to an effective, efficient, responsible and transparent public administration and enhances good governance.

So long as combating corruption and anti-corruption policy during SSP led government is concerned, Bhandari himself could not remain clean against corruption. One of the reasons for Bhandari's dismissal on 11th May 1984 was on the corruption charges and possession of disproportionate properties. Soon after the ouster of Bhandari from chief ministership,¹⁴⁵ the cabinet unanimously passed a resolution asking the CBI to investigate against Bhandari. The CBI raided his residence and made detailed inventory of articles recovered in his building, Arithang, Church Road, Gangtok. On 15th June, 1984, he was granted anticipatory bail by the division bench of Calcutta High Court comprising of Justice P C Borooah and Justice Sukumar Chakraborty. Although Bhandari came to the Assembly after the 1985 election with majority, the CBI continued to investigate corruption cases registered against Bhandari in connection with the imported cement, allotment of contract works relating to water supply schemes in rural areas without calling tender for his monetary gains, issue of licenses to cigarette manufacturers to set up dummy factories in Sikkim to dodge tax and the building of a palatial building in Gangtok during his tenure as Chief Minister since 1985.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ The decision to register criminal cases against Bhandari came in a meeting held in the former Chief Minister, B. B. Gurung's residence at 8.30 P M in May 1984. In the meeting it was alleged that Bhandari had acquired properties disproportionate to his known sources of income in his name and in the name of his second wife, Dil Kumari Bhandari.

¹⁴⁶ He was also accused to have involved in many other corruption cases relating to Health Department, Power Department, Forest Department of Sikkim, gift racket and acquired land at Ranipool, Tadong, Nam Nang, Daragoan, Tadong, building at Arithang Church Road, properties in MG Marg and market areas and flats in Delhi and Gangtok. He is reported to have had shares with the firms and companies such as M/s Pines Printers situated at Arithang, Gangtok, M/s Lila Tea Company Private Limited, M/s Aaj Ko Sikkim, M/s Saya Patri Private Limited, M/s Sikkim Film Company Pvt. Limited, M/s Trinetra International Pvt. Limited etc (Bhutia, 1999, pp. 1-45).

Even today one can find Bhandari attending the High Court of Sikkim and sometimes being imprisoned for his corruption charges.

(11) Freedom of Press: The press is a watching-dog of democracy and good governance. Therefore, the role of press in a country is vital and wields tremendous power in safeguarding the fundamental rights of the people and building public opinion. But until freedom of press is assured, the freedom of speech and expression remains silent. So, if freedom of press is maintained then public opinion grows stronger and fundamental rights receive significance. But this is possible only in the atmosphere where government can assure democracy and good governance in the state.

During SSP led government, the freedom of press and media was reported to have been curtailed. It is alleged that the press and media had to face threat of life and property. They were asked to behave properly otherwise have to face consequences. There was assault, threats, constant pressure, ransack, arrest and use of commandos over the press and media.¹⁴⁷ The people had lost the sense of freedom of expression and had to live in constant fear. The press which did not function according to the government directives was called as '*anti-sangrami press*'. While the press which worked in favour of the government was '*sangrami press*'. Bhandari dubbed '*anti-Sangrami press*' as '*anti-people elements*' or '*anti-government elements*'. The government authorities through various agencies and individuals kept a watchful eye on anyone who was associated with the press and media. To cite some example; The Editor of '*Janpath Samachar*' Rajendra Baid was kidnapped by the Sikkim police in Siliguri on 6th November, 1991 and brought to Gangtok and detained at the Sardar Thana police station and was tortured to no end unless hospitalized at STNM hospital and referred to AIIMS hospital, Delhi on the ground that the pamphlet was printed in the press owned by him.¹⁴⁸ On 26th

¹⁴⁷ Subba (1999, p. 90) reports that circulating of any paper which was against Bhandari government was equal to inviting death.

¹⁴⁸ Actually the pamphlet was published nowhere but at the very press owned by Dil Kumari Bhandari, wife of Bhandari (Subba, 1999, pp.94-95).

June, 1993 (7.30 am) the press owned by Bhim Chettri was ransacked with rods and hammer (Subba, 1999, pp. 105-109).

III

DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE UNDER SSP REGIME

The term '*democracy*' is the most popular concept and honorific word used to denote the form of '*government*' in the present political context. The term '*democracy*' is derived from two classical Greek words '*demo*' (people) and '*kratia*' (ruling) meaning 'the government in which the ruling power resides in the hands of the people'. In such a system of government, the people are the supreme and sovereign. They make decisions, amend and execute laws, formulate and implement policies and control the government either directly like in Switzerland or indirectly through their elected representatives like in other countries where representative democracy prevails. Hence, in a democracy, the citizens have an equal say in the decision and law making policy formulation and implementation.

Commonly, it is believed that the term '*democracy*' had its genesis in the '*polis*' the city-state of ancient Greece and there from democratic ideals had have been handed down to us from that time. In ancient Greece, democracy involved periodic meetings held by citizenry to discuss the problems of the '*polis*' and decide on a solution by voting directly on alternatives. So, it was a sort of political way of life of the Greek people in the '*polis*'. However, the Greeks only coined the word '*democracy*' for granting the right of direct political participation in decision-making in the small city-state of Greece but did not provide what exactly should be the model of democracy like it exists today in the modern world. As such, ever since its inception, the term '*democracy*' has changed its meaning from '*way of political life*' to '*a form of government*' down the ages of the history with the change of time and circumstances.

To Gettle, 'democracy is that form of government in which the mass of the population possesses the right to share in the exercise of sovereign power' (Dhal, 2002, pp. 1-9). In such kind of government, the people have the voice and weight which is articulated through the accredited and elected representative of the people sitting in the assembly or Parliament. In the word of Abraham Lincoln democracy is 'the government by the people, for the people and of the people'. Sorensen (1991, p. 18) defines democracy as 'a way of organizing government and people's participation in it'.¹⁴⁹ Gupta, (2008, pp. 1-48) conceives that the state is called 'democratic' if its government is accountable to the people through competitive election to the public office, where all the adults have an equal right to vote and to stand for election and where civil and political rights are guaranteed.

On the basis of the discussion we arrive at the conclusion that present democracy is representative democracy where people elect their representatives through whom decisions are made and taken, laws are amended and executed and policies are formulated and implemented for the people. So, such kind of democracy is characterized by the following features: (i) the rulers are elected by the people (ii) formation of the government is based on a free and fair election where those currently in power have a fair chance of losing (iii) each adult citizens have one vote and each vote has one value (iv) the government rules within the limitation set by the constitutional law and rights of the citizens and (v) the people will be encouraged to have a freedom of speech and expression. However, in such context, it does not mean that the interests and rights of minorities are not protected and valued. The majority of votes are valued and the opinion of the minority will highly be valued and protected as well.

In Sikkim, democracy, as we know evolved through the interaction of several factors such as the revolt against the tyranny of the monarch, desire for

¹⁴⁹ To Sorensen, the democratic way of organizing government and participation involves competition for the major position of the government power, participation in the selection of leaders and it involves a number of civil and political liberties.

sharing power, the need to delegate authority and facilitate administration through representation, abolition of landlordism, desire for security of life and property inherent in a society, fundamental rights, one-man-one-vote based on Universal Adult Franchise, establishment of independent judiciary and responsible government and desire for satisfying and fulfilment of urges for human dignity and well-being.

During the SSP regime, democracy remained under threat and suppression. After 1985 Assembly election, Bhandari became an undisputed leader. He grew more powerful, authoritative and tyrant. There was an absence of strong opposition political parties in Sikkim. In the Assembly, there were only two non-sangrami MLAs; one belonging to Indian National Congress Party and other Independent. Such political situation led to the continual erosion of democracy in the state. Opposition parties and social organizations were not allowed to function independently in ventilating the interests and rights of the people. They either had to join or face serious consequences. It is alleged '*the rule of Bhandari after 1985 was of bad type*'. He was accused of being more arrogant and corrupted. There was a loss of democratic value even within the cabinet and party functioning. The elected representatives had to remain faithful and loyal '*yes man*' of Bhandari for their existence.

The political situation of Sikkim under the 1st SSP led Bhandari regime, after 1985 Assembly election was accused of being of bad type while the 11nd regime, after 1989 Assembly election was '*worse than during the Chogyal regime*'. It was said that the people had lost the sense of freedom and they were living in constant fear. There was a suppression of democratic aspiration of the people by a handful of politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen (Kazi, 1993, pp. 18-36). Freedom of speech and expression were curtailed. There was rampant corruption

and victimization of the opposition.¹⁵⁰ The press which did not function according to the government directives was called as 'anti-sangrami press'. The press which supported the government was 'sangrami press'. Bhandari dubbed 'anti-Sangrami press' as 'anti-people elements' or 'anti-government elements'. The government authorities through various agencies and individual kept a watchful eye on anyone who was associated with the press and media. The press and media had to face threat of life and property. They were asked to behave properly otherwise will have to face consequences.¹⁵¹ There was assaults, threats, constant pressure and ransack over the press and media. Circulating political paper in Bhandari's regime was equal to inviting death (Subba, 1999, p. 90). The administration, bureaucracy and the police force were used to torture the public to no end. Bhandari wanted to control all the people by coercion and physical torture. He tried to establish hegemony of one reign, one leader, one party and one language in Sikkim. Bhutia (1999) accused Bhandari of being a tyrant, seditionist, intolerant, dictator and corrupted leader.

Since the 1990s, Sikkim witnessed the loss of democratic values and suppression of democratic aspirations. Several prominent leaders of the opposition parties¹⁵² were arrested in connection with the publication of scandalous pamphlet entitled 'Barrel Saaf'. In the pamphlet it was alleged that Bhandari was suffering from AIDS.¹⁵³ On 21st October 1991, K C Pradhan (former Minister), Dawa Gyalpo Kazi, Aitasing Tamang and Chhakanlal Sardar were arrested and put in prison charging them of reading the pamphlet. On 24th October 1991, Duknath Nepal, State Secretary CPI (M) was arrested and detained in the Sardar Thana by the police. On 25th October 1991, Hem Lall Bhandari on false

¹⁵⁰For instance, government employed staff who supported the opposition parties either were transferred to the remote areas or called for explanation. Similarly, the people who supported opposition parties were deprived of social benefits such as housing etc.

¹⁵¹For instance, on 26th June, 1993 (7.30 am) the press owned by Bhim Chettri was ransacked with rods and hammer.

¹⁵² The leaders were Duknath Nepal, State Secretary of CPI (M), Hem Lall Bhandari, Lawyer and Convener, Citizens for Democracy, James Basnet, Joint Secretary, SPCC (I) and Major Tashi Wangdi Fonpo, General Secretary of Denjong Peoples' Chogpa.

¹⁵³ AIDS stands for Acute Integrity Deficiency Syndrome.

charges of anti-national activity was handcuffed, paraded along the Gangtok town barefoot and preceded to the court. Thereafter Tashi Wangdi Fenpo was arrested and detained in the Sardar Thana.¹⁵⁴ Those detained in the Sardar Thana were physically tortured and harassed by the police (Kazi, 1993, pp. 1-7 & Subba, 1999, pp. 90-91). The Editor of '*Janpath Samachar*', Rajendra Baid was kidnapped by the Sikkim police in Siliguri on 6th November, 1991 and brought to Gangtok and detained at the Sardar Thana police station and was tortured to no end until hospitalized at STNM hospital and referred to AIIMS hospital, Delhi. He was arrested on the ground that the pamphlet was printed in the press owned by him.¹⁵⁵ On 13th December, 1991 Shiv Sankar Dhakal,¹⁵⁶ was kidnapped from his residence at 2.30 pm by a gang of boys and plastered his mouth with both his hands tied together. His clothes were stripped in the Gypsy car (SK-02/2332) in which he was picked up and pushed out of the car in the middle of the market in Gangtok, naked (Subba, 1999, pp. 96-100).

It is alleged that Bhandari targeted everyone who dared to oppose his autocratic regime, arrested and tortured by the police under his personal instruction and supervision. On 24th June 1993 at 6 pm, Biraj Adhikari¹⁵⁷ was arrested by the Sardar police without any warrant and detained in the Thana on the ground that he violated the basic human rights and disturbed the constitutional rights of the people. In the locked up room at 1.20 pm tied down by the bed with his heels facing the ceiling and was thrashed in his heels with a rod with a L-shaped nail fitted at the end of the cane.¹⁵⁸ He was tortured so much so that he was admitted in AIIMS hospital, Delhi. Bhandari alleged that the people

¹⁵⁴ While Fenpo was in prison, his house was raided and a licensed pistol and *pattang* were seized. His father was arrested for possessing explosive materials in his house (Subba, 1999, p. 91).

¹⁵⁵ Actually the pamphlet was published nowhere but at the very press owned by Dil Kumari Bhandari, wife of Bhandari (Subba, 1999, pp. 94-95).

¹⁵⁶ Dhakal once upon a time was a close friend of Bhandari and got separated over petty differences and joined the CPI (M).

¹⁵⁷ Biraj Adhikari had joined the newly formed SDF as a General Secretary at the time when he was arrested.

¹⁵⁸ Mr Adhikari was also threatened to quit SDF party otherwise he would face the consequences (Subba, 1999, pp. 110-115).

supporting SDF are anti-nationals. Even Bhandari is accused of having hand in Dharmadatta Sharma's murder of 2nd February 1988.¹⁵⁹

Subba (1999, pp. 17-19) accuses Bhandari of misusing his office position to throttle the voice of the people and Independence of the Judiciary. On the strength of muscle power, money power, deceit and intrigue, the judiciary was rendered impotent, used government machinery to his own advantage and threw the state economy in a state of disarray and confusion. He strangled democracy to trample anti-sangramis. He is also accused of forcefully propagating one region, one party, one leader and one language hegemony in Sikkim to brutally suppress the existence of other opposition parties. He wanted to control all the people by coercion and physical torture. This is how the spirit of democracy was hijacked and suppressed when one-man-rule and one-man-reign under Bhandari regime.

Throughout his regime, Bhandari is noted to have suppressed democratic aspiration and inner-voices of the people of Sikkim. The Bhutia-Lepchas of Sikkim had been demanding for the (i) Restoration of 16 seats in the Assembly for the Bhutia-Lepcha communities of Sikkim, (ii) Delimitation of Assembly constituencies for the genuine tribal representatives in the House, (iii) Grant of Citizenship to the 'stateless person' based on the Sikkim Subject Resolution Act of 1961, and (iv) Extension of Inner-Line-Permit system to check influx of outsiders since 1976. The same demand was reiterated by the Bhutia-Lepchas even during SSP led government regime but was never fulfilled. The Limboos had also been demanding for their inclusion in the list of Schedule Tribe and restoration of their 'Tsong Seat' in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly since 1976, but Bhandari ignored their demand. The demand for the inclusion of communities such as Limboo, Manger, Rai, Tamang, Gurung and Bhujel in the list of Other Backward Class (OBC)

¹⁵⁹ Dharmadatta Sharma was a popular Panchayat President of Timburbung Unit, Soreng Constituency to which Bhandari belonged. He was the General Secretary of Sikkim Congress Youth Branch as well as Publicity Secretary of Sikkim Pradesh Congress at that time (Subba, 1999, pp. 24-73).

was another issue but that too was rejected by Bhandari on the ground that such recommendation among the ethnic communities in Sikkim was 'discriminatory'. Such act of government clearly proves that there was suppression of democratic values and aspirations of the people under the Bhandari regime.

Now we come to the question of social justice. Social justice generally refers to the idea of creating a society which is based on the principle of right, security, equality and justice with the aim to ensure human value, dignity, empowerment and development of personality as well as individuality. The principle of social justice also involves a degree of economic egalitarianism through progressive taxation and income distribution. It aims to achieve more equality of opportunity for the development and progress of an individual in the civil society. But social justice exists where democracy is valued, nurtured and safeguarded by the constitutional provisions and law of the land. Thus, social justice is concerned much with the promotion and development of human personality and dignity through the protection of right, liberty, equality and justice.

In the context of Sikkim, socio-economic and educational development, general welfare and upliftment of Schedule Tribes, Schedule Castes, Other Backward Communities, women and children, old persons with no family support, destitutes, orphans, children of conflict with law, disabilities¹⁶⁰ and children of conflict with law¹⁶¹ come under the purview of social justice.

The SSP led government during its regime, recorded to have ensured social justice. The various schemes like Old Age Pension scheme, Subsistence Allowance to Disabled, Award of Scholarship to Disabled, Sheltered Workshop for Disabled, Supply of Aids and Appliances to the Disabled, Integrated Education for Disabled, Grant-in-aid to other Destitute Homes, Day Care Centres and Recreation

¹⁶⁰ It includes loco-motor, visual, hearing, speech and mental, disabilities.

¹⁶¹ It includes juvenile delinquents/ vagrants, drugs addicts, alcoholics, sex workers, beggars.

The Destitute Homes of Chakung, Kaluk, Gangtok, Pelling and Mangan was provided Grant-in-Aid. On 50:50 share capital bases by centre and state government, more destitute homes for the orphans were constructed. Grants were extended to the Douglas Memorial Children Home at Namchi and Wangdi Children's Home, Mangan.¹⁶⁵ Day Care Centres and Recreation Centres for nursing and caring of infants of working mothers was established at White Hall, Gangtok and Blind School in Namchi was constructed for the blind children. More than 115 Creches for the children of working mothers were also established (Sikkim Herald, 20th January 1988, Vol-33, No-5).

The government, in 1991, established Hostels for the Working Women at Namchi and Gangtok, at an estimated cost of Rs 18.32 lakh. Grants were also extended to the womens' organizations like, Sikkim Women's Council, Samiti and other Organizations of Sikkim for conducting training in different vocations. Training in cutting, tailoring, knitting, embroidery, weaving, pickle making, chips and wafer making etc was imparted to the women. Grant was also released to the Sikkim Branch of association for the Blind, Dharma Chakra Centre, Rumtek and Sikkim Branch of Indian Red Cross Society (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 137-142).

Social Defence Programme (SDP) was another legal sanction initiated by the government for the care, welfare, protection, education, training and rehabilitation of neglected and delinquent juveniles. According to Supreme Court of India's direction and Act 1986 '*no child under any circumstance shall be put in police lock up jail*'. So to enhance the Act 1986, the Institutions like, Observation Home at Rongyek for temporary reception of juveniles, Juvenile Home and Special Home for the care, protection, education, training of neglected delinquent, competent Authorities like Juvenile Welfare Board, Juvenile Court were established (Sikkim Express, 16th -22nd August, 1991).

¹⁶⁵ From 1991-1992, the number of Destitute Homes increased to 05 against 02 of 1979-1980.

For the school going children of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe communities, only pre-matric and post-matric scholarship was awarded. No other benefits were launched by the government.¹⁶⁶ Under Housing Assistance and Economic Grant Scheme, 345 and 88 ST and 33 and 97 SC families were benefited respectively. More than 4132 ST and 592 SC families were provided GCI sheets for house roofing till the end of 1992 (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 128-130).¹⁶⁷ For the upliftment of poor ST and SC families, piglets, bullocks, milch cows were distributed and under Tools and Implements Scheme, sewing machine and black smithy tools were provided to the Schedule Castes (Sikkim Observer, 14-20th Feb, 1987, Vol-1, No-22). From 1985-1992, about 738 SC and 776 ST families were covered under this scheme.¹⁶⁸ The government constructed just Girls Hostels at Khamdong and Rhenock for the students belonging to Schedule Caste and at Chungthang, Hee Gaythang, Ravangla, Tingbong and Phodong for the students of Schedule Tribe. However, the SSP government felt only the need of the children of ST and SC but never realised the need of children of other communities who were in dire need of help from the state government. The government neither constructed separate hostels nor launched any sort of schemes for the students of other backward communities.

Despite of all the above accomplishments made in Sikkim, Bhandari also had certain loopholes in assuring social justice. He was aware that the Sikkimese Limboos deserved their inclusion in the list of Schedule Tribe but he denied them. He also failed to include Bhutia, Lepcha and Limboo languages in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution along with the Nepali language despite there being continuous request from the three communities. The communities such as Limboo, Manger, Rai, Tamang, Gurung and Bhujel had been demanding for their

¹⁶⁶ In between 1985-1992, just 3511 and 2735 children belonging to Schedule Tribes and Scheduled Castes were said to have been benefited with the scholarship scheme respectively.

¹⁶⁷ Besides, financial housing assistance along with pecuniary assistance (SCA), was provided (Sikkim Herald, 28th May 1985, Vol-28, No-48) to the STs and SCs.

¹⁶⁸ Iron Workshop-Cum-Training Centre at Nagi was also established to undergo skill development training for SC young youths. Training programme on knitting, tailoring, carpet weaving, cane and bamboo work and blacksmith under TRYSEN, NREP, and RLEGP was also imparted to the STs and SCs (Sikkim Herald, 28th May 1985, Vol-28, No-48).

inclusion in the list of OBCs but when the questions of implementing the recommendations of the Mandal Commission came to Sikkim, he rejected on the ground that such recommendation among the ethnic communities in Sikkim was 'discriminatory'. Hence, so long as Bhandari ruled Sikkim, he did not feel the inner hopes and aspirations of the socially deprived communities which indicate that there was a denial of social justice.

Conclusion

Thus what we note is that in Sikkim, democratic values and social justice was trampled under the SSP led Bhandari rule. Opposition parties and social organizations were not allowed to function independently in ventilating the interests and rights of the people. He was arrogant, tyrant and corrupt. There was a complete loss of democratic spirit even within the cabinet and party functioning. The elected representatives had to remain faithful and loyal 'yes man' of Bhandari for their existence.

In the II Bhandari regime he was more autocratic, tyrant, seditionist, intolerant, dictator and corrupt. The political situation of Sikkim under Bhandari regime after 1989 Assembly election was accused of being 'worse than during the Chogyal regime'. The people had lost the sense of freedom and they were living in constant fear. There was a suppression of democratic aspiration and curtailment of freedom of speech and expression. There was rampant corruption and victimization of oppositions. The press and the media had to face threat of life and property. There was assault, threats, constant pressure and ransack over the press and media, arrest and use of commandos over the opposition political parties. The administration, bureaucracy and the police force were used to torture the public to no end. Bhandari controlled people by coercion and physical torture. There was hegemony of one reign, one leader, one party and one language in Sikkim. Bhandari strangled democracy to trample anti-sangramis.

During his two consecutive terms, Bhandari not only suppressed democratic institutions but also failed to ensure social justice. He failed to fulfil the aspirations and inner hopes of the people of Sikkim and failed to protect the rights and interests of linguistic and religious minorities. Bhandari during his regime failed to fulfil most of the issues he raised. His government was dismissed on the charges of corruption and charges that Bhandari possessed disproportionate properties. He is accused of selling of reserved seats for the Sikkimese students to the non-locals, allotment and distribution of sites and trade licence to non-locals, discrimination regarding the grant of scholarships to the students, refusal to allot work for the local contractors on tender basis, favouritism, red-tapism and nepotism concerning jobs in the government service and back-door leverage for non-locals to share in the state's administrative and economic development plans. These are some of the activities which contradicted the principle of social justice. He also had double standard politics; projecting himself as a Congressman at the Centre and attacking the Congress unit in the State.