

Chapter VI

WELFARISM UNDER SSP GOVERNMENT

'Welfare' is a new concept that emerged after the World War-II. Since the emergence of the concept of 'welfare' there has been hot debate and diverse interpretations regarding its meaning. However, no universally acknowledged definition of the concept of 'welfare' as well as 'welfare state' has come out till date. Therefore, in section I of the chapter, an attempt is made to understand the concept of 'welfare' as well as 'welfare state'. To some extent the historical context of the growth and development of the concept of 'welfare' and 'welfare state' in the developed and the Third World countries, especially India is also briefly discussed. It also sheds some light on the emergence of 'welfare state' in Sikkim during the monarchical as well as in the post-merger era.

Section II analyses the commitments and pledges made by the SSP led by Nar Bahadur Bhandari in the Election Manifestoes of 1984 and 1989 with regards to welfare policies, programmes and poverty alleviation schemes for the benefit and well-being of the people of Sikkim in general and upliftment of the poor sections of the Sikkimese society in particular. In section III, we discuss the various policies and programmes launched by the SSP after it came to power in 1985. It also examines as how SSP led Government performed in the state of Sikkim with regard to the welfare of people. The chapter further examines whether promises made by the SSP in its Election Manifesto's of 1984 and 1989 towards health and family welfare, social welfare, welfare of the Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste and welfare of the government employees as well as educated unemployed youths and economically backward classes of Sikkim could be achieved during its 10 years of rule in Sikkim. Lastly, section IV examines the various poverty alleviation policies as well as rural development programmes and schemes launched by the SSP led Government. It looks at whether SSP was able to make Sikkim a poverty free State and fulfilled its promises and assurance through the

launching of various programmes and schemes in the state. All these will be done in various sections of the chapter.

THE CONCEPT OF WELFARE

Ever since the emergence of the term '*welfare*', the concept of '*welfare*' has not only been the subject matter of hot debate and diverse interpretation but also there is a lack of universally acknowledged definition. In other word although the term '*welfare*' is widely used yet, rarely defined and therefore the use of the expression, '*welfare*' has not been an exact. According to Lund (2002) 'Welfare has numerous meanings but it has co-opted to refer to specific elements of public policy'.²¹⁸ The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines Welfare as 'satisfactory state, health and prosperity well-being'. In this sense welfare can be described as incorporating and embracing everything that can distinguish one social state from another. Cole (1980, p.7) views that the term 'welfare is used with or instead of repression as a way of trying to achieve social order'. The American Economic Review (1931, Vol-XXI, No-2, p. 210) conceptualises Welfare as a 'matter of standard of living and standard of living contrary to the conception of most writers on the subject is a matter not only of amount and kind of goods and services consumed but of the kind amount of labor and other sacrifice involved in their production'. Hurka (2006, p. 604) considers the term welfare as 'a very specific value-concept which does not include everything worth promoting'. Rose and Shiratori (1986, p. 3) defines welfare as 'a product of the whole society'. The author further argues that the market produces welfare; employers can provide pensions, health care and training for their workers and families can purchase education, health care and pensions. Allardt (1986, p. 118) makes an argument that the amount of welfare in a society cannot be directly equated with the activities of the welfare state or of the welfare programs. This is true whether we

²¹⁸ In America, the term is constructed narrowly as relating to the means-tested, residual, 'assistance' dimensions of state provision whereas, in United Kingdom and most of the other European countries, it has acquired a broader meaning.

define welfare by the amount of need satisfaction in a population or by individuals' possession of those resources by which they can master their own better lives.²¹⁹ Zapf (1986, p. 141) defines welfare as 'the combination of objective living conditions and subjective well-being, which, by definition and by experience implies that role of the welfare state in welfare production is limited'. A welfare concept that combines objective living conditions and subjective well-being might guard the mankind from an overestimation of the welfare state's role in providing individual welfare. Public goods and services are important part of people's welfare and are in spite of all criticism, accepted and demanded as entitlements. But overall, welfare is produced by the interaction of market, state, associations and primary goods. In the view of Overbye (1995), 'Welfare' is 'a vague and value-laden word'.²²⁰ Martin and Sue (1998) consider welfare 'as a label for a complex and unstable mixture of relationships, experiences, processes and structure'. In the opinion of Barry (2002) welfare is that concept which 'describes well-being, satisfaction, the relief of deprivation beyond the realm of almost irresolvable disputes'. Bilski (1976) regards welfare as 'a part of the government's social and economic policy, and as such it should take its appropriate place in the order of priorities'.

In a broad sense the term welfare encompasses the well-being and interests of larger number of people, including their physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and economic needs²²¹. So, while stressing upon the concept of welfare, the state or government becomes indispensable as in this front, state or

²¹⁹ Even when the welfare aims at comprehensiveness only a part of the welfare is produced by the state comprehensiveness simply means that the rights to a normal living standard are independent of market criteria and that everybody is insured against income loss and hardships. In all societies only a part of total welfare in the sense of need satisfaction or the possession of necessary resources is produced by the state.

²²⁰ In the US debate, it is customary to draw a dividing line between social security and welfare expenditure (of which the most important are public assistance, allowances for single-parent families and health assistance). In the European debate, by contrast, 'welfare' is often used as an all-encompassing concept, which besides spending on health, pensions, single-parent families and also includes labor market retraining programs as well as programs aimed at improving housing conditions.

²²¹ In general, it refers to the number of methods by which the state through the host of different services tries to raise the standard of living of the population and help people to meet their various problems through which most of human being has to pass at one time.

government is concerned with for more than needy. It is integrated into the basic structure of society in a way that influences the lives of all groups, the poor and the rich minorities and those in power. The main function and concern of welfare is to help for well-being, betterment, satisfaction etc. which would lead to the rise of living standards in the society. The people may need rehabilitative, supportive, crisis needs and curative and protective services. Thus in a nutshell, the term welfare means exemption from misfortunes, sickness, hardship, calamity or evil, enjoyment of good life, happiness as well as health and common facilities for better life. In other words, welfare implies freedom, physical well-being, economic well-being, social security and maximum opportunities for creative living.

Drawing the view from the above, it can be said that the welfare enshrines protective, creative and supportive measures to the poor and needy for their well-being and betterment in ensuring the standard of living in their lives. But those measures which are essential for the needy people are possible only through the involvement of state or government. Therefore, the use of the term 'State' along with the term 'welfare' as the suffix of the latter is an acknowledgment of the active involvement and part played by the state in the welfare spheres. So, while talking about welfare, state constitutes an inevitable and indispensable mechanism without which the former remains much seldom and far from being successful. As the matter of this fact, the 'welfare' and 'state' form the two sides of the same coin, giving to new concept so call 'welfare state' in the present democratic and socialistic as well as capitalistic pattern of society.

CONCEPT OF WELFARE STATE

The term 'Welfare State' refers to the state which looks after both the general welfare of the citizens by making adequate arrangement for their employment, housing, education, health, recreation and social security against contingencies of life as well as maintains internal law and order. The welfare state connotes not only the political and legal activities but also to the social and economic activities of the state.

The term '*welfare state*' has no precise meaning and it has been variously defined. In the view of Atherton (1989) the term '*welfare state*' does not mean the same thing to all who use it. There are different ways in which the term '*welfare state*' is used, and each has different implications for public policy. According to Concise Oxford Dictionary welfare state is 'a polity so organised that every member of the community is assured of his/her due maintenance, with the most advantageous conditions possible for all'. Piet Thoenes regards welfare state as 'a form of society characterised by a system of democratic, government-sponsored welfare placed on a new footing and offering a guarantee of collective social care to its citizens' (Robson, 1976, p. 14 & Ahmad, 1988, pp. 5-7). Myles and Quadagno (2002, p. 37) consider welfare state 'as the inevitable product of large economic forces beyond the control of policy makers and publics that compel a common response'. Gedam (1995, p. 8) regards the welfare state as 'a system in a country seeking to ensure welfare of all citizens by means of government operated social services'. Since the basic needs and satisfaction of basic needs by individual efforts is difficult, therefore, evil forces need to be controlled by the intervention of state to ensure timely satisfaction of basic needs of the poor people.

Hayek (2000, p. 90) argues that the phrase welfare state 'is sometimes used to describe any state that concerns itself in any manner with problems other than those of the maintenance of law and order'. Halldenius (1998) understands a welfare state as 'a democratic state where the inhabitants have strict claims to welfare, as a matter of legal right, against the government'. What the welfare rights entitle one to depend upon the distributive principles endorsed by the state; the distributive principle may be, for example, satisfaction of basic needs, compensation for loss of income, or socio economic equality. In the word of Briggs (2000, p.18) welfare state is 'a state in which organised power is deliberately used through politics and administration in an effort to modify the play of market forces in at least three direction-first by guaranteeing individuals and families a minimum income irrespective of market value of their work or their property; secondly, by narrowing the extent of insecurity by enabling individuals

and families to meet certain 'social contingencies'²²² which lead otherwise to individual and family crises; and thirdly, by ensuring that all citizens without distinction of status or class are offered the best standards available in relation to a certain agreed range of social services'.

Welfare state as Robson (1976, p. 18) opines is 'a state in which public policy is predominantly concerned with the welfare of the members of the society'. Bruce (1973) considers welfare state as 'a system of social responsibility for certain minimum standards of individual and community welfare, without, however, the more through political and social control of a socialist or a communist state'. In the opinion of Ahmad (1988, p. 5) welfare state refers to both the negative and positive functions of the state. In the negative function, the author identifies fundamentally the maintenance of internal law and order and defence of its territories and on the other hand positive function means looking after the general welfare such as employment, housing, education, health etc. Pierson (2006, p. 10) refers welfare state to the state measures for meeting key welfare needs.²²³ The provision may take the form of either *services*²²⁴ or *income transfers*. In the article, 'Citizenship and Welfare' (2002, p. 263) Fullinwider, conceives welfare state as 'a form of investment'.²²⁵ Blau (1989) considers welfare state as 'a vehicle for gradual reform'. The main purpose of the welfare state is poverty reduction through various programs which forms the component of welfare state as retirement pensions, workmen's compensation, invalidity benefit, child benefit and unemployment insurance etc (Atkinson, 1995, pp. 5-6).

²²² The sickness, old age and unemployment are the example of social contingency.

²²³ Key welfare needs is often confined to health, education, housing, income maintenance and personal social services.

²²⁴ Service provided by or funded by the state.

²²⁵ Such investment, in the opinion of the author, has both negative and positive aims. Investment to secure for as many as possible the conditions and opportunities for legitimate work conducive to social peace and has the negative aim of minimizing crime and disorder without resort to draconian police-state measures. Investment in education, health, and opportunity has the positive aim of increasing social production

Whatsoever may be the view of the different scholars, philosophers and thinkers on the concept, definition and component of welfare state but generally it is accepted that welfare state is that state which is concerned about the welfare, well-being, goodness, happiness, and satisfaction of the people. It is through the active involvement of the state, the welfare policies, programmes and schemes can be adopted, formulated, and implemented for the benefit and betterment of the needy people in the need of the hour. Therefore, the state is the mechanism through which various reformations take place in the democratic and socialistic as well as capitalistic pattern of society. However, for the success of welfare, the state has to be more democratic. In other words the government must be freely chosen by the citizens and change it peacefully through democratic means if the citizens are dissatisfied with its performance. But on the other hand, the government must be tolerant and unrestricted of public criticism against its undemocratic activities, policies and programmes.

Etymologically, the term 'Welfare State' is a derivative of the German terminology, 'Wohlfahrtstaat' which was very much in vogue in Germany for a long time. The German socialist, Lassalle is regarded as the originator of the idea of the welfare state although he did not coin the term (Ahmad, 1988). Thereafter, in writing, William Temple used the term 'Welfare state' for the first time when Archbishop of York published 'Citizen and Churchman'. In that 'Citizen and Churchman' he contrasted the 'power' states of the dictators with the 'welfare' states emerging in democracies (Pierson, 2006, p. 105). Eventually in 1955, the word 'welfare state' entered the Oxford English Dictionary aptly describing as 'a polity so organised that every members of the community is assured of his/her due maintenance and the most advantageous conditions possible for all' (Lund, 2002, p. 107). Lassalle regarded state as merely 'the night-watchman state' and asserted that 'if not made use of the state as an instrument' for promoting the cause of general welfare, 'will confront it as an obstacle', had become the precursor of modern welfare state (Ahmad, 1988, p. 7 & Pierson, 2006, p. 107). Hence, the concept of welfare state for the first time emerged in Germany, then

in other European countries like Great Britain, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, Denmark, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, France, Belgium, Norway, United States of America and over the time in Eastern and Third World countries.

Prior to World War II in 1870s, the German Socialists adopted and developed the concept of welfare state which became more visible when welfare programme was introduced by Bismark of Germany in 1880s and implemented the first system of compulsory social insurance for the workers in 1883.²²⁶ In Sweden, too, prior to the World War-II, the mitigation of extreme need and suffering was the part of welfare policy. But in the post-war period, major pension reform was implemented, indexing its program of demogrants and making it universally available, then adding a family allowance system in 1947 (Quadagno, 1987, p. 111). In New Zealand, relieving of destitution, abolition of poverty and social security was component of welfare policy and programme. The USSR has made substantial and sustained progress in many spheres of social welfare, including health, education, leisure, greater equality of remuneration and social security in the post-World War-II (Robson, 1976, pp. 12-16).

By 1911 every country in Western Europe had some form of workers' compensation scheme. In 1913, Sweden was the first country to introduce a pension insurance scheme covering the entire population. Thereafter, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, New Zealand and Great Britain also had made some provision for pensions. By 1913 Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and Britain all had some form of sickness insurance which financed both cash benefits and some medical care services. Membership of the schemes was compulsory for certain categories of workers in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Britain; elsewhere

²²⁶ By 1900, sickness insurance, industrial accident insurance and old-age pensions had already been introduced and implemented in Germany (Zapf, 1986, p. 128). In the post-war era, in Germany, social programs were transformed into more comprehensive systems of universal benefits, guaranteeing workers a basic standard of living.

membership was voluntary but with subsidisation from the state (Johnson, 1987, p. 5).

In Great Britain, the concept of '*welfare state*' remained unaltered until 1940s. It embodied a British tradition in political philosophy born in the nineteenth century. For centuries, the term '*needy*' in the society was major concern (Bruce, 1973, pp. 1-21) and state was regarded as the embodiment of the '*common good*' with specific welfare programs which had to be in the interest of the citizens (Lund, 2002, p. 1).²²⁷

Under Elizabethan Poor Law, the government designed to provide relief for the lame, impotent, old and blind and such other being poor and not able to work, to set to look the able-bodied without occupation, to apprentice or find work for the children who had no one to care them and established places of inhabitation for impotent poor- all within the framework of a stress on family responsibility and on the punishment of those menaces to society, idle and vagrant who would not apply themselves to honest labour (Bruce, 1973, pp. 1-2). In 1911, Great Britain introduced unemployment insurance. Later on, the same was introduced and implemented in Germany in 1927, United States of America in 1937 and Canada in 1944 (Johnson, 1987, p. 5). However, in the post-war era, in the Great Britain, number of socio-economic problems relating to the Public Health, Public Housing, Unemployment, Old Age, Poor Law, Insurance, Contributory Pension, Old Age Pensions, Family Allowance and Child Care etc increased unprecedentedly. These circumstances eventuated for the amendment of number of legislations by the British Parliament as well as number of reformation and

²²⁷ Historically, in Great Britain, the welfare state originated in two separate spheres of action. One of them comprised the social services which Parliament initiated during the nineteenth century to deal with public health, education, factory conditions and housing. The other was the action taken in the twentieth century to relieve or to prevent destitution. The aims of these two streams of policy was; initially to prevent destitution and poverty; to prevent and cure disease; to protect employees against sweating, bad or unhealthy working conditions, and other forms of exploitation; to abolish slums and squalid living quarters; to eliminate ignorance and illiteracy; and to remove the grosser forms of inequality and privilege. These very purposes were accepted necessary and desirable (Robson, 1976, p. 15).

transformations. The Family Allowance Act (1945) for the benefit of the family as a whole, A New Policy for the Deprived Children Act (1948) to assure care of children, treatment of children under the care of local authorities, National Insurance (1946) for couple living together for a single adult, for employment, sickness, widows, pensions and retirement pensions, for the dependent, children allowance, for the first child in the family and other family allowance etc. The National Insurance Act (1946) for providing pecuniary payments by the way of unemployment benefit, sickness benefit, maternity benefit, retirement pension, widow's benefit, guardian's allowance and death grave etc, National Health Services (1945) for general epidemiology, maternity and child welfare, food and nutrition; National Health Service 1948.

The Beveridge Report of 1942 which proposed a national minimum benefits to guarantee freedom from want for all citizens, stimulated legislation for family allowances, old age pensions and health insurance in Great Britain (Bruce, 1973, pp. 1-288). In the United States of America, however, the beginning of large scale federal involvement in welfare services came only after the New Deal of 1930s, although states and localities had been involved from much earlier date (Johnson, 1987, p. 5). The introduction of Social Security Act (1935) was sort of welfare programme under National welfare system. Under this programme, only old age insurance was implemented and unemployment insurance, old age insurance, old age assistance, and aid to dependent children were all joint federal-state programs, which left the determination of eligibility criteria to the states. Most of the states maintained traditional relief requirements, including local administration, means test, and family responsibility clauses (Quadagno, 1987, p. 111). In other words, the welfare program could not take concrete shape even in USA until 1950s. It was in the 1950s, when Clement Attlee adopted the phrase 'welfare state' as a campaign slogan in the General Election and became

widespread in use (Lund, 2002, p. 107).²²⁸ In America, the programs that today constitute welfare measures are Medicaid, Medicare, Food Stamps, public housing, student loans, and a variety of veterans' programs in addition to the New Deal programs. Many programs, such as Social Security, distribute money; many others, such as Medicare, provide aid in kind. Some programs are means-tested; others are not. Programmes aimed at low-income families constitute a small proportion of federal spending on social welfare i.e, about 1/5 in 1980. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) probably the single program was often identified with 'welfare' in the United States which accounted for less than 2% of federal spending on social welfare in 1983 (Lund, 2002, p. 1).

In the Scandinavian countries like Finland and Iceland, the welfare state has been seen as natural and normal; the state intervened in order to guarantee a modicum of welfare and social security for all (Allardt, 1986, p. 107). In Japan, the social policy developed only after the industrialisation.²²⁹ The development of welfare state in Japan, appeared in three phases; firstly, the health insurance and national pension schemes for the working class was enacted before World War-II, secondly, the development of welfare state in Japan began after World War-II with the enactment of antimonopoly law, abolition of traditional class distinctions, organisation of trade unions and establishment of joint consultation systems between employers and employees in the large private companies and thirdly, the progression towards welfare in Japan began in 1973 which was named '*Fukushi Gannen*'.²³⁰ However, the social security which included both pension and health insurance in Japan are comprehensive, in the sense that all Japanese are covered.

²²⁸ Between 1934 and 1939, the American Congress passed the measures: unemployment compensation, old-age and disability insurance, aid to dependent children. The welfare state in the United States emerged since the New Deal in both cost and complexity.

²²⁹ No welfare legislation was enacted before World War-I and very little between the two wars. Contemporary Japanese welfare state programs principally reflect legislation since 1946.

²³⁰ '*Fukushi Gannen*' means *first year of the welfare age* in Japanese version. During this time the expenditure on social security expanded remarkably under the new cabinet headed by Prime Minister, Tanaka (Maruo, 1986, pp. 64-68).

France is one of the leading examples of welfare state. The organisation of social security, welfare facilities and benefits extended to the French citizens, the care of the old aged and establishment of hospitals and other specialised institutions for the management of mental illness, cancer, tuberculosis, correction of maladjusted children and juvenile offenders are some of the reasons for making France a welfare state.²³¹ In the Netherlands, the welfare state emerged in the late forties of the 20th century and main area upon which the state focussed was minimisation of unemployment, overcoming the housing shortages and expansion of social insurance. In addition to these, enactment of Compulsory Education Act was another initiative towards the establishment of social welfare of the Dutch state (Ahmad, 1988, pp. 54-56).²³² The Third World Countries have also adopted and launched various social security programmes and social services. For instance, public assistance programme, old age and widow pension and assistance schemes and family allowance schemes have also been introduced in the Third World Countries. Special attention has also been given to the health, education, housing and welfare of the workers.

During the time when India became a sovereign country in 1947, there prevailed massive problems like poverty, want, unemployment, literacy, disease and squalor. The shortage of housing, filthy slums and squalid abodes with extreme depressed sanitary conditions and dirty surroundings in some of the villages, metropolitan cities, industrial towns and state capitals, the problem of ill-health, epidemics, malnutrition etc. and illiteracy, ignorance and obscurantism had and have been the gravest problems. Such circumstances set new threshold for India to establish itself as a welfare state with the goal to proceed for planned

²³¹ In France, the social security covers all the employed and provides insurance for sickness, maternity, disability, industrial accident, and old age. Since 1961, it is also extended to cover the farmers and self-employed. Apart from these, family allowances are also implemented and paid to both earners and others (Ahmad, 1988, pp. 50-54).

²³² Under this, the children after attaining the age of 5-6 years are supposed to join schools and remain in the schools till 16 years of age. The state has set up 20 types of special schools for the children with the following handicaps; the deaf, the partially hearing, those with severe speech defects, the blind, the partially sighted, the physically handicapped, those in convalescent homes, the dedicate, the mentally handicapped and the maladjusted.

economy and development. In 1950, the Planning Commission was set up by the Government of India to prepare Five Year Plans. The main aim of planning in India was to raise the living standard of the citizens, open opportunities to them for more richer and varied life, accelerate developmental process, provide social justice to all the citizens particularly to the weaker and down-trodden sections of the society, reduce inequality of income, wealth and opportunities etc. These directives made India a country having democratic and socialistic pattern of society. It adopted and launched various measures relating to social services, social welfare and welfare for the weaker sections of the Indian society and social security (Ahmad, 1986, pp. 66-79).²³³

The idea underlying the welfare state has been drawn from different sources. In the account of Robson, (1976, p.11) different sources from which the idea of welfare state has been conceived are the concept of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity from the French Revolution (1789), the idea of greatest good and happiness of the greatest number of the people from Utilitarian philosophy of Bentham and Mill, concept of social insurance and social security from Bismark and Beveridge, the principle of public ownership of basic industries and essential services from Fabian Socialists, doctrine for the control of trade cycle and avoiding mass unemployment from John Mynard Keynes and Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission and the idea of abolition the causes of poverty and clearing -up the basic society from Webbs. Above and beyond the specific contribution from these sources, many great thinkers like Leonard Hobhouse, Richard Titmuss, Dickens, Ruskin, William Morris, Lord Shaftersbury, Chadwick, Charles Kingsley, General Booth, Cardinal Manning, Canon Barnett, Henry George etc also contributed to the share of idea flowing into the concept of welfare state.

²³³ Under social services; housing, health and education, social welfare and welfare; social defence, corrections, social and moral hygiene, after-care and welfare of the needy, underprivileged and weaker sections of society such as women, children, workers, the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, the physically and mentally handicapped, the aged, the beggars etc. provision of full employment and anti-poverty measures and under social security; social insurance against sickness, unemployment, interruption of income, industrial mishaps and other contingencies of life had have been major concern in the Five Years Plans.

In Sikkim, the welfare state emerged during the time of Tashi Namgyal (1914-1963), the eleventh Chogyal of Sikkim (Sikkim Darbar, 1963, pp. 22-27). During this time, the Darbar of Sikkim devoted its energies towards welfare projects like improvement of transport and communications, extension of medical and health facilities and educational programmes for which the biggest allocation of Budget had been made in the Development Plan (Sikkim Darbar, 1963, p.9). Housing for the Government employees and financial assistance for house construction in the form of loans for the people were other welfare schemes upon which the Darbar had have given stress during this time (Sikkim Darbar, 1963, p.19). For the first time in 1917, hospital named Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial (STNM) Hospital was established (Lama, 2001, p. 21). Initially, it was equipped with 50 beds and three doctors.

The Darbar also set up various schools in Sikkim to disseminate modern education.²³⁴ The education system was free and the needy students were further assisted in the form of scholarships and boarding facility. Besides, vocational training was also imparted in India and other countries. For the impartment of Buddhist Scriptures, Enchey School which could accommodate 300 students was established (Sikkim Darbar, 1963, p. 18). There were altogether 5 Hospitals and 16 Dispensaries for free medical services. The Hospitals and Dispensaries were staffed with 10 Doctors, 34 Compounders, and 36 Nurses and Mid-wives. The programme relating to the public health such as Malaria Eradication Programme (MEP) was conducted according to the standard of National Malaria Eradication Programme (NMEP). Extensive and intensive campaign for the control and eradication of Small Pox, Tuberculosis, Venereal and Helminthic disease was also undertaken with the assistance of the Government of India (Sikkim Darbar, 1963, p. 9).

²³⁴ By the 1960s, in Sikkim, there were 4 High Schools, 6 Junior High Schools, 12 Middle Schools and 164 Primary Schools providing nearly 10,000 children education of whom about one-sixth were girls.

For adequate water supply in the Villages and Bazaars, the provision was made under Public Health Programme. The Darbar of Sikkim also acquired certain amount of land at Tadong for the development of Housing Colony for the Government employees (Sikkim Darbar, 1963, pp. 19-20). The Sikkim Darbar also introduced Sikkim State Transport (SST) in 1944 and constructed roads for transport and communication, established Power Plant, Sichey, 1927 for generation of electricity, set up Government Institute of Collage Industries (GICI), 1957 for the employment of youths [girls and boys] (Sikkim Darbar, 1963, pp. 22-27). All these activities initiated by the Darbar of Sikkim were more concerned for the welfare of the people in that period.

During this, the modern type of Chief Court with full time judge and separate Judiciary with Executive was established by a Charter of April, 1955. Indian Code and Criminal Code (1953-1954) were introduced and Indian Penal Code was adopted, provision relating to capital punishment for murder during life sentence was deleted, provision about marriage offences being not in conformity with the customary laws was also deleted. The Judicial and Magisterial functions of landlords were completely abolished (1948). The social evils and inequality such as public gambling was declared illegal (1921), use of unpaid labour was prohibited (1924), the personnel of the landlords' court was abolished (1937), form of conscripted labour for government work on payment called Jharlangi was curtailed (1945-1946). The Khuruwa, obliged labour is attendance at staging points in anticipation of officials and tourists and landlords' court and their power of registration of lands and deeds were abolished in 1947 and Home Tax was totally remitted in 1950. It is worth mentioning here that all these judicial and legal reformation measures taken by the monarchical state were the starting point of welfare policy in Sikkim as in those days there was no 'Rule of Law' and the Chogyal was the final authority. Therefore, establishment of Judiciary in Sikkim and judicial reformation through the abolition of evil social practices was sort of relieving and easing the life of the common people against the social injustice in some way. Therein, services rendered and measures adopted by the state in that

period were rehabilitative, supportive and protective. So, in the context of Sikkim, the concept of welfare was the component of social right, justice and equality as well as fulfilling of basic needs, improvement of living standards and exemption from sickness and hardship in the pre-merger era.

From the above it can be said that the concept of welfare state was not born all of a sudden but it evolved in due course of time and though the genesis and evolution of welfare state in the world have similar story of gradual evolution yet, is not simultaneous. The welfare state emerged over time as the consequences of compulsion, stresses, strains, pressure of certain socio-economic and political events from both outside and inside, industrialisation, capitalist civilisation, and growth of monopoly, mass poverty and unemployment, periodical depressions and new dimensions in social policy. Therefore, the growth and development of welfare state bears multidimensional historical records and long series of socio-political as well as economic events and woes its origination both in the socialist and capitalist society.

II

WELFARE AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN SSP MANIFESTOES

Welfare policy and poverty alleviation programme are two fundamental facets of the welfare state. 'Welfare Policy' is a course of action adopted by the government or state or any organisation in relation to public welfare. Such welfare policy concerns with the social service, social welfare for the underprivileged and weaker sections of society such as women, children, workers, the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, the physically and mentally challenged, social security, social insurance, health and medical care, child and family welfare and care, basic education, provisions for full employment, pension of retired, aged old and disabled, housing scheme for the squalor, social assistance for

sickness, accident, work injury, maternity, proper management and arrangement of basic public need.

While, on the other hand, poverty alleviation programmes are those which are formulated and initiated by the government to combat poverty and there is greater intervention of state or government through various beneficiary-oriented programmes and area development programmes.²³⁵ In India, such poverty alleviation programme includes 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 and Programme (IREP), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) etc.

In most of the Western countries, USA, England, Germany, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, etc welfare policy includes insurance and compensation for industrial or any sort of accident, sickness, disability, unemployed, old age, national insurance for couple, a single adult, widow and retired person, pension for retired person, widow, age-old, family aid and allowance for dependent and children, allowance for the first child in the family, social security, major insurance scheme for entire population, relieving of destitution, abolition of poverty and workers' compensation scheme etc. The public health, education, public housing and housing allowance, child care, guaranteeing workers a basic standard of living, mitigation of extreme need and suffering, student loans, insurance for the farmers and self-employed and family allowance for both earners and others and caring of handicaps such as deaf, partially hearing, with severe speech defects, blind, partially sighted, physically handicapped also come within the fold of welfare policy.

²³⁵ The programme includes the strategy to promote (i) economic growth and overall development (ii) human development with emphasis on health, education and minimum needs (iii) eradicate poverty through employment generation, training and building up asset endowments of the poor and (iv) protect the poor from inflationary pressures and provide them with access to essential foods at affordable prices (Chelliah & Sudarshan, 1999, p.105).

In India, welfare policy of the government is concerned with raising the living standard of the citizens, and launching of various social services, social welfare and welfare for the weaker sections and social security measures like housing, health and education, social welfare and welfare; social defence, corrections, social and moral hygiene, after-care and welfare of the needy, underprivileged and weaker sections of society such as women, children, workers, the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, the physically and mentally handicapped, the aged, the beggars etc, provision of full employment and anti-poverty measures and under social security; social insurance against sickness, unemployment, interruption of income, industrial mishaps and other contingencies of life.

In the case of Sikkim, in the pre-merger period, the component of welfare policy was more inclusive and comprehensive of social right, justice and equality apart from fulfilling of basic needs, improvement of living standard and exemption from sickness and hardship. But in the post-merger period, the welfare policy extended to family and health welfare and care, basic education, social defence, social assistance, social housing, day care centre and recreation centre, destitute homes, integrated education, scholarship and subsistence allowance for disabled, old age pension, welfare of the needy, disadvantaged sections of society such as women, children, workers, Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, physically and mentally handicapped, age old, provision of full employment, social insurance against sickness, accident, natural calamities so on and other anti-poverty measures. However, though the basic education comes within the fold of welfare policy and activities of the government yet, it is not being discussed in this chapter as it has already been discussed in detail in the fifth chapter under section II of the thesis.

Sikkim was still the youngest one amongst the Indian states; it became the part of Indian Union in 1975. For such newly emerging state within the fold of democratic and socialistic pattern of Indianism, the term, 'welfare' sounded very

new. The SSP, when formed in 1984, Article 4 clause (f) of the Constitution (SSP) stated, 'It shall strive for all-round development of the people of Sikkim by giving priority to the socially, economically and educationally backward communities including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes'. The clause (i) of the same article further read, 'It shall give priority to the welfare of youth, women and children' (Constitution of SSP, 1984, p. 1). In the context of Sikkim, all-round development meant fulfilment of basic needs of those days like health, education, housing and provision of safe drinking water, massive electrification, improvement of rural transport and communication, management of sanitation and increase in agricultural productivity.

Along with this, on the eve of general election to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly, SSP, in its Election Manifesto (1984, p.2) it appealed to the people of Sikkim that if voted to power, then it 'executes the plans and projects which had come to a grinding halt, for the betterment of the people of Sikkim' and 'affirm the solidarity of the Sikkimese people to the Sikkim Sangram Parishad and support its policies and programmes'. Such statement of the party indicated the sympathy towards the interests of the people (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1984, p. 2). The SSP laid more stress on vocational education reoriented to meet the needs of the country as a whole. It promised to give emphasis on quality rather than quantity in the educational sphere and establish University, more schools, colleges, Polytechnic Institutes, Engineering College and a Medical College in Sikkim. It also was determined to fight for more seats for Sikkimese students in educational institutions outside the state (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1984, p. 6). Providing free education to attain the goal of all round development of Sikkim was another promise of SSP. Along with this, it assured to create special opportunities and provide Higher Education to raise the standard of Education of Sikkim to the level of other Indian states (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1989, p.12). The purpose of giving priority to education was to eradicate poverty and injustice from the society and for strengthening all round development of the state (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1989, p.10).

Better health care occupies an important place in the welfare policy of SSP. So, in its election manifesto, it was determined to make Sikkim an ideal state by giving topmost priority to family welfare. For the extension of health services, SSP pledged to set up the health Sub-Centres at the Panchayat levels, a Central Health Centre to meet the need of quality health provisions for the people to treat all kinds of disease with the help of modern technology (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1989, p.9). It also gave stress for greater medical facilities in terms of more beds, more qualified doctors and better nursing care, mother and child care in the state. It called for specialized and sophisticated treatment in capital hospitals, Gangtok and provided more facilities in district hospitals and dispensaries (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1984, p. 6).

The welfare of Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and Backward Classes had also been an important plank of SSP's policies and programmes. For the welfare of Schedule Tribes, Schedule Castes and Backward Classes, it promised to demand more financial allocation for the welfare of the STs, SCs and other weaker sections of the society. It committed to provide pre-matric and post-matric scholarship and increase the amount of the same for the school going children of scheduled caste and Tribe, grant housing loans at highly subsidised rate and launch various scheme and programmes for their welfare (Sikkim Express, 16th January 1985). In the general Election of 1989, it committed to make special provisions for the lower castes and communities in order to make them balanced with other communities. To acquire this, it assured the formulation of various schemes and works to be accomplished in accordance with the programmes laid down by the SSP (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1989, p. 7).

For the welfare of female, the SSP assured to make provision for the preservation of honour and permanent security of the female section by executing the Hindu Marriage Act. The SSP was determined to implement the aforesaid Act in the fullest possible means and ensure security and special provisions for the female section. Devise and execute schemes to provide special

privileges according to the need of the female folk to uplift their status and to preserve their interests; discussion and consultation will be done with the senior female citizens of the state to propagate the right and justified schemes. To give genuine sympathy towards all the employers of the state starting right from the wage labourers, the SSP promised to fulfil their demands (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1989, pp. 7-10).

For creating full employment opportunities and avenues for educated youths, SSP pledged to establish small and Cottage Industries like handicraft and handloom, carpet weaving, tanka painting and wood carving work in Sikkim (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1984, p. 6).²³⁶ It also promised to launch various schemes and programmes to benefit the educated unemployed youths and impart training for capacity building and skill development to make them self-help and self-reliance. For an individual unit, hoteliers, taxi operators, artisans, entrepreneurs, businessmen and unemployed youth, it promised to provide financial assistance in the form of loans through various financial institutions at highly subsidised rate (Sikkim Express, 16th January 1985, Vol-29, No. 6).

In Sikkim, rural development which formed the bedrock of the society had more or less close connection with the concept of welfare. Therefore, apart from the welfare programmes and schemes, SSP pledged to launch various poverty alleviation programmes for Rural Development and combating poverty in Sikkim. For Rural Development, it promised to launch various programmes in main areas like Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture and Poultry farming. The SSP promised for the demand of regular supply of better seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, agricultural implements and implementation of irrigation projects, promote self dependence to the farmers by executing modern technologies in agriculture and provide more aid for the cultivation of mushroom, ginger, sunflower, cardamom, orange, apple and flowers (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1984,

²³⁶ Large industries and factories in Sikkim is not feasible, therefore, SSP made commitments to set up small industries along with some domestic industries in almost all part of Sikkim to resolve unemployment problems (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1989, p.8).

p. 4 & 1989, p. 9). In the same way, programmes have been devised to focus much on agriculture and animal husbandry in order to uplift the financial status of our people (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1989, p. 12). To increase the production of milk and milk products, better breed of cattle was felt necessary. In a nutshell the objective of the SSP's rural development programme was to make every village self-sufficient in its basic needs. Besides, the Parishad, in its Election Manifesto (1984, p.7) laid stress on Rural Electrification Programme. It pledged to electrify each and every village in Sikkim in the shortest possible time and to give top priority to the supply of safe drinking water to the people all over the state. It made a time-bound programme to supply safe drinking water to all villages in the state. It also accorded top most priority to family planning. It ensured for good houses in place of the weak houses by distributing free tin sheets for roofs to the poor people and devised a poor oriented programme which would help in eradication of poverty from entire Sikkim. To meet the present need and facilitate domestic cooking and domestic electrification, SSP committed itself to launch Solar Energy Schemes. The provision for the Drinking Water and Domestic Electrification was also to be made possible to facilitate each and every houses of every village. To safeguard the interest of Sikkim and the Sikkimese people and ensure security in Sikkim, SSP, promised to formulate more laws and rules (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1989, pp. 6-12). The family planning and sanitation, state social housing scheme were some other welfare agendas of the party. To give speedy legal remedies particularly to the poor people, SSP also promised to set up mobile courts (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1984, pp. 6-8).

III

WELFARE POLICIES OF THE SSP GOVERNMENT

After the landslide and windfall victory of SSP led by Bhandari in Sikkim Assembly election of 1985, various welfare as well as poverty alleviation programmes were launched. The government also made some commendable achievements in the

spheres of welfare activities. These are discussed briefly under sub-heads as below-

1. Health and Family Welfare

Health and family are two significant contributors of human capital formation. Investment in health and family has direct returns in terms of longevity and improvement in the physical and mental development of the people. Better health and family status of the population leads to reduced mortality, higher life expectancy, decline in infant and child mortality.

Health improvement and nutritional status of the family has been one of the major thrust areas of the social development programmes in the country. This can be achieved through improvement and utilization of Health, Family Welfare and Nutrition Services. As such the provision for the preventive, curative and promotional services for health is essential. This can be ensured by the way of health service such as medical institutions, providing curative services and a series of disease-specific campaign, programmes targeted towards prevention, eradication and control of diseases.

Better health care and family welfare occupied an important place in the welfare policy of the SSP. In its election manifesto (1984, p.6 & 1989, p.9) it determined to make Sikkim an ideal state by giving topmost priority to family welfare. For the extension of health services, SSP pledged to set up the health Sub-Centres at the Panchayat levels, a Central Health Centre to meet the need of quality health provisions for the people to treat all kinds of diseases with the help of modern technology. It also gave stress for greater medical facilities in terms of more beds, more qualified doctors and better nursing care, mother and child care in the state. It called for specialized and sophisticated treatment in capital hospitals, Gangtok and provides more facilities in District Hospitals and Dispensaries.

After the SSP came to power, an effort was made to reach the basic health needs to the doorsteps of the rural mass.²³⁷ The government strived to reduce the infant and maternal mortality in the state and aimed at reaching the goal of 'Health for All by 2000 AD' (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 50-54).²³⁸ For this very purpose, establishment of medical institutions were indispensable in Sikkim.

In between 1985-1992, altogether 07 Family Health Centres, 23 Primary Health Centres and 141 Primary Health Sub-Centres; ie, 01 Primary Health Centres for 2000 population and 01 Primary Health Sub-Centres for 3000 population were established. By the end of Eighth Five Year Plan (1990-1997) it was expected to have hundred percent of the PHCs and eight percent PHSCs functioning in the Government Buildings. The Central Referral Hospital at Gangtok was upgraded to a 300 bedded from 250 beds (BESPDD, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, p. 112).

For better diagnostic and treatment facilities, modern sophisticated equipments for all the specialities had been provided. Specialised services in the field of medicine, surgery, anaesthesia, orthopaedics, Radiology, Pathology, Pediatrics, ophthalmology, Gynaecology, Dental, Dermatology and Psychiatry were added. Super speciality in cardiology with intensive coronary care unit with modern sophisticated equipments was also introduced. State Level Blood Bank and Transfusion Unit with facilities for HIV Screening were set up. In 1992, number of patients treated and beds available increased tremendously. The availability of beds has increased from 630 of 1970-1980 to 795 of 1991-1992.²³⁹ Similarly, the treatment of indoor patients and outdoor patients also went up to 12237 and 315863 in 1991-1992 against 8928 and 207447 of 1979-1980 respectively.

²³⁷ Rural masses formed the major component of the state population.

²³⁸ In 1978, an international conference on Global Health Rights was organised by WHO and UNICEF in Alma Ata (USSR). In so called 'Alma Ata Declaration' 134 countries subscribed to the goal of 'Health For All' by the year 2000 and India was one of them. The main goal of the Declaration was 'Health for All' through 'Primary Health Care' which included promotion of proper nutrition and an adequate supply of safe water, basic sanitation, maternal and child care, including family planning, immunization against the major infectious diseases, prevention and control of locally endemic diseases, education concerning prevailing health problems and the methods of preventing and controlling them and appropriate treatment for common diseases and injuries. India was one of the founding members (Gupta, 2008, p. 202).

²³⁹ Out of which 445 in East district, 110 in West, 80 North and 160 South district.

In addition to this, by the end of 1992, a new 75 bedded hospital at Singtam, East district and 100 bedded hospital at Namchi, South district with specialised services in the field of surgery gynaecology, ophthalmology, medicine and orthopaedics were constructed. For providing temporary hospitalisation for the leprosy patients, a 20 bedded Pt. G.B. Pant Leprosy Hospital at Sajong, East Sikkim was set up. More than 512 leprosy cases were detected and were given treatment (Sikkim Observer, 10-16th October 1987, Vol-2, No-81). For the treatment of Tuberculosis patients, 60 bedded District Tuberculosis Centre at Namchi and 10 bedded mini District Tuberculosis Centres in other three districts of Sikkim were constructed (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, 50-54). Proposal for the construction of 100 bedded district hospital at Geyzing and 60 bedded hospital at Mangan was made in Eighth Five Year Plan (1990-1997). During this time, the number of beds also increased to 445 in 1992 against 380 of 1980.

Free medicines to the District Hospitals, Primary Health Centres and Primary Health Sub-Centres and free diet to the District Hospitals, Primary Health Centres and Primary Health Sub-Centres were provided. During this, the provision for free medical facility had considerably increased over the year and in 1991-1992 it stood at one crore of rupees.²⁴⁰ The treatment of ailments for which facilities were not available in the state was referred for further treatment outside Sikkim and financial aid at different scales was provided to the patients (Sikkim Observer, 10-16th October 1987, Vol-2, No-81).

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) survey report of 1976, the people suffering from goitre in Sikkim were estimated to be 56%. To scrap the goitre, sale of non-iodised salt throughout the state was banned under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954 with the effect of 11th Sept. 1985.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Amji system of medical treatment also co-existed during this time.

²⁴¹ State Laboratory for the attainment of iodine in the iodised salt in sample basis was set up at Namchi for diagnosis, treatment and research in Iodine Deficiency Diseases (IDD).

Various Programmes; Family Welfare Programme, Family Planning Programme, Tuberculosis Control Programme, National Programme for the Control of Blindness, National Malaria Eradication Programme, Health Awareness Camp and Orientation Training Programme, Diarrhoeal Disease Control Programme etc. relating to health care and disease control were initiated by the government (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 50-54). In 1990-1991, under Family Welfare Programme, immunisation for infants against the killer diseases such as tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, whooping cough, and measles was carried out covering 77% of the total infants of Sikkim. Under Family Planning Programme, a team of doctors and paramedical staffs were trained for Leprosy operation and teams were catered to all four districts of Sikkim. From the year 1989-1990, 7990 sterilisation and 10348 Intra-Uterine-Devices (IUD) insertions was done and eligible couple protection rate went up to 20% from 2% (Sikkim Herald, 26th January 1993, Vol-37, No-4).²⁴²

The Government also launched state-wide Tuberculosis Control Programme in Sikkim. In between 1985-1992, 11,029 Tuberculosis cases were detected and given treatment (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 50-54). Under National Programme for the Control of Blindness, 553 cataract operations was done and similarly under National Malaria Eradication Programme, fortnightly domiciliary visits were made by Surveillance workers to detect fever cases and given treatment for the same.²⁴³ Under Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), 482 Anganwadi Centres were established in the villages by 1992.²⁴⁴ Under

²⁴² To provide basic health service, 293 indigenous Dhies, 345 Health guides and Host of other paramedical staffs were trained.

²⁴³ Blood samples were also collected from fever cases to detect the causes. Over the year the incidence of malaria was brought down during 1991-1992, 17 positive cases were detected as against 57 of 1979-1980.

²⁴⁴ Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) was a centrally sponsored scheme was launched in India in 1975 with the following objectives (i) Improve the nutritional and health status of children below the age of 6 years, pregnant and lactating mothers (ii) Lay the foundation for the proper psychological, physical and social development of the child (iii) Reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school drop-outs and (iv) Enhance the capability of the mother to look after the health and nutritional needs of the child through proper health and nutrition education. In Sikkim the same scheme was launched by the state government with the target to set up at least 405 Anganwadi Centres.

Nutrition Programme, mid-day-meal and supplementary nutrition was provided in Sikkim for better health status among the mothers and children (Sikkim Herald, 26th January 1993, Vol-37, No-4). Under School Health Programme, Age-wise Immunisation Programme was initiated to cover the school going children from class-I to class-V. All Health Programme was also implemented through regular Health Education Activities like Health Awareness Camp and Orientation Training Programme to educate and motivate the people for better care and small family norms through mass media, like films, literature exhibition etc (Sikkim Herald, 11th June 1985, Vol-28, No-53). Under the Diarrhoeal Disease Control Programme, medical as well as paramedical workers including mothers were trained on oral Rehydration, Therapy and Diagnosis of Dehydration case caused due to server diarrhoea (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 50-54).

2. Social Welfare and Social Security

Social Welfare encompasses a host of measures which fall within the ambit of social security. The social welfare groups include persons with disabilities,²⁴⁵ social deviants who come in conflict with law²⁴⁶ and the other disadvantaged groups.²⁴⁷ While, social security is the protection which society provides for its members, through a series of measures against the economic and social distress caused by the substantial reduction of earning, from sickness, maternity, employment injury, invalidity, old age and dead.²⁴⁸ In India, social security includes legislations, various

²⁴⁵ Disables includes loco-motor, visual, hearing, speech and mental, disabilities etc.

²⁴⁶ Social deviants who come in conflict with law are those juvenile delinquents or vagrants, drugs addicts, alcoholics, sex workers, beggars etc.

²⁴⁷ Disadvantage groups are older persons, children in distress such as street children, orphaned/abandoned children etc.

²⁴⁸ The social security is important for both promotional and protection measures. The promotional social security refers to the expansion of basic human capabilities of the population and include measures at two levels: (a) the provision of basic needs, education, health and nutrition (EHN) programmes including public distribution system (PDS), which improve the capabilities of the population as a whole and (b) improvement of the economic security through implementation of asset and employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes. Protective social security includes entitlements to those affected by old age, disability, sickness, maternity, employment injury etc. and includes contributory benefits in the form of pensions and retirement benefits to Government employees, provident funds and other benefits for workers in the factories and other commercial establishments, pensions for vulnerable groups and marriage and maternity or other social assistance for women and others.

Schemes and Programmes relating to the public life. The several legislations includes Maternity Benefit Act (1961), Employee's State Insurance Act (1948), Payment of Gratuity Act (1972), Employee's Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provident Act (1952) and schemes and programmes includes Employees' Provident Fund Scheme, Employees' Deposit-Linked Insurance Scheme, Employees' Pension Scheme, Life Insurance Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme, National Social Assistance Programme and Annapurna National Social Assistance Programme, Annapurna Scheme, National Old Age Pension Scheme, Indra Gandhi Old Age Pension Scheme, Aam Admi Bima Yojana, Rastriya Swasthya Bima Yojana etc. Similarly, social welfare includes various Legislations, Schemes and Programmes such as Welfare and Development of Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Disabilities²⁴⁹ Act, 1995, Integrated Scheme to Promote Voluntary Action for Persons with Disabilities Scheme, Deen Dayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme and Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchasing Fitting Aids and Appliances Scheme etc (Gupta, 2008, pp. 317-329).

In Sikkim, Social Welfare Department is responsible for looking after the welfare of the women, destitute and neglected children, physically handicapped, old age persons and juvenile delinquents.²⁵⁰ Under the Social Welfare Department, various social welfare schemes and programmes like Old Age Pension Scheme, Subsistence Allowance to Disabled, Award of Scholarship to Disabled, Supply of Aids and Appliances to the Disabled, Integrated Education for Disabled, Grant-in-aid to other Destitute Homes, Day Care Centre and Recreation Centre, Hostel for Working Women, Assistance to Voluntary Organisations, Training Centres for Women, Social Defence Programme etc were initiated by the government.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Disabilities Act envisages Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation.

²⁵⁰ Initially the Social Welfare Wing under the Health Department was established in 1976 and later formed a part of Rural Development Department. In 1991 January, it was however, once again, reverted back to the Health Department until when it started functioning as a full-fledged Department.

²⁵¹ But in order to implement these schemes and programmes, the Department of Bureau of Economics and Statistics foremost conducted Sample Survey of Disabled Persons in Sikkim and

The Old Age Pension is one of social welfare schemes launched from April, 1981. In Sikkim, this scheme was implemented with the amendment of Sikkim Old Age Pension Rules, 1981. One hundred beneficiaries were selected each year for Old age Pension. By 1992, the total number of selected beneficiaries was 1154.²⁵²

Under Subsistence Allowance to Disabled Scheme, the helpless disabled persons having no one to look after them were provided with a monthly monetary grant. Initially, grant was of Rs 50/-per month. But later, the amount was increased to Rs 100/-. In between, 1985-1994, 83 helpless disabled persons were benefited.²⁵³ The disabled students studying in general schools were also awarded scholarship and altogether 46 disabled students were benefited with the scholarship by 1992.

The Sheltered Workshop for Disabled was also set up at Jorethang, South Sikkim to impart training in cane and bamboo works to disabled trainees on daily wages basis as to provide means of their livelihood. By 1991-1992 there were 12 production workers and 10 trainers. Under 'Supply Aids and Appliances' Scheme, the government provided wheel chairs, crutch axilla, crutch elbow, hearing aid, calliper, spectacle to 30 disables at free of cost (Sikkim Herald, 26th August 1989, Vol-32, No-18). The government also sent orthopeadically challenged persons to Calcutta, Jaipur and Pune for medical treatment and correction and fitting of artificial limbs in its own expenses sent.²⁵⁴

identified 4825 disabled persons in the state. Thereafter, the government launched and implemented various social welfare schemes and programmes.

²⁵² Initially, each beneficiary had been paid the sum of Rs 50/- per month. But later the amount was enhanced to Rs 60/-per month and then to Rs 100/- per month.

²⁵³ Subsistence Allowance to Disabled was the new scheme which had been implemented in 1981 with an observance of 'International Year of the Disabled'.

²⁵⁴ More than 17 persons were benefited at free of all cost under this scheme.

Grant-in-Aid was extended to the Destitute Homes of Chakung, Kaluk, Gangtok, Pelling and Mangan, womens' organisations,²⁵⁵ 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). Day Care Centre and Recreation Centre for nursing and caring of infants of working mothers were established in Gangtok and Blind School in Namchi. More than 115 Creches for the children of working mothers were also established (Sikkim Herald, 20th January 1988, Vol-33, No-5). At an estimated cost of Rs 18.32 lakh, Hostels for the Working Women were established at Namchi and Gangtok in 1991, with the accommodating capacity of 50 working ladies. Training in cutting, tailoring, knitting, embroidery, weaving, pickle making, chips and wafer making etc. was imparted to the women.

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, the Sikkim Children Act 1982 was enacted under this programme. But later on Sikkim Children Act 1982 was replaced by the enactment of Central Law i.e, Juvenile Justice Act 1986.²⁵⁶ The Act 1986 provided for the establishment of 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. For the implementation of the Act, the Sikkim Juvenile Rules 1990 under the Juvenile Justice Act 1986 has been notified (No.15 (84) 88-89/SW/6 Dated: 17th April 1990, Tuesday, Govt. of Sikkim).

The government made a provision of 3% job reservation in the government services for the disabled. The conveyance allowance @ 10% of their

²⁵⁵ Like Sikkim Womens' Council, Samiti and other Organisations of Sikkim, Geyzing and Lingchom for conducting training in different vocations.

²⁵⁶ According to the Act 1986 '*no child under any circumstance shall be put in police lock up jail*'. This implementation was the direct result of the Supreme Court of India's direction.

basic pay per month was also provided (Sikkim Herald, 15th March 1986, Vol-29, No.1). Free travelling facility for the blind along with the escort in the Sikkim Nationalized Transport (SNT) buses was also provided by the government (Sikkim Herald, 26th January 1993, Vol-37, No.4).

3. Welfare of Schedule Tribes and Schedule Castes

The important plank of SSP's policies and programme in its election manifesto was the welfare of Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and Backward Classes. The SSP was determined to demand more financial allocation and committed to provide housing loans at highly subsidised rate. It also promised to launch various schemes and programmes for the skill development of ST and SCs and provide pre-matric and post-matric scholarship to the school going children of Schedule Castes and Tribes (Sikkim Express, 16th January 1985). It further committed to make special provisions for the lower castes and communities in order to bring them at par with other communities (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1989, p. 7).

For the extension of economic benefit and welfare of the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Castes, various welfare schemes were implemented. The schemes like Scholarship Scheme, Housing Assistance and Economic Grant Scheme, Tools and Implements Scheme and other various programmes were launched. Educational Development for the students of the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste was the most important concern of the government and lion share of the state plan fund was spent on Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste students. Two types of Scholarship Scheme; pre-matric and post-matric scholarship were implemented by the Government through the Department (Sikkim Observer, 14-20th February 1987, Vol-1, No-22).

Under pre-matric and post-matric scholarship scheme, 3511 Schedule Tribe and 2735 Scheduled Caste were benefited respectively by 1992.²⁵⁷ Under Housing Scheme, 4132 ST and 592 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). For the economic betterment of poor ST and SC families, the government also distributed, piglets, bullocks, milch cows, and under Tools and Implements Scheme, sewing machine and black smithy tools were distributed to the SCs (Sikkim Observer, 14-20th February 1987, Vol-1, No-22). By the end of 1991 about 738 SC and 776 ST families were covered under this scheme and in the Eighth Five Year Plan (1990-1997) government set target to cover 300 ST and 250 SC families under the same scheme. For encouraging and promoting the professional skill of the SC people, government established Iron Workshop-Cum-Training Centre at Nagi, South Sikkim to undergo skill development training for SC young youths. Training Programme on knitting, tailoring, carpet weaving, cane and bamboo work and blacksmith under TRYSEM, NREP, and RLEGP was also imparted to the STs and SCs (Sikkim Herald, 28th May 1985, Vol-28, No-48).

On the recommendation of Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste Department, Government of Sikkim, the Government of India sanctioned Rs 7.61 lakhs for the establishment of Model Tribal Village under Eighth Financial Commission at Ray Mindhu, East Sikkim, Chojo Thingling, West Sikkim and Hee-Geythang, North Sikkim. Under this scheme, six classroom, three staff quarter, an approach road, two water supply units, one unit of medical equipment and a water seal latrine at Ray Mindhu, three class-room and one water supply unit for Chojo, Thingling and one water supply unit and one medical equipment for Hee-Geythang were constructed.

²⁵⁷ In the Eighth Five Year Plan (1990-1997) the government made physical target to cover 19,000 ST and 12,350 SC under pre-matric scholarship scheme and 1125 ST and 230 SC under post-matric scheme respectively.

The government of India sanctioned another amount of Rs 10.32 lakh for the establishment of Seed Potato Farm at Shipgear, Dzongu, North Sikkim in 1992. Under Twenty Point Programme (TPP) various schemes were launched for the economic assistance of the Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste families. By the end of 1992, 13662 Schedule Caste and 28617 Schedule Tribe families were given economic assistance (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 128-130). Besides, the government also constructed 2 Girls Hostels for the Schedule Caste²⁵⁸ and 5 Girls Hostels for Schedule Tribe.²⁵⁹

4. Welfare of Educated Unemployed Youths and Economically Backward Classes

For creating full employment opportunities and avenues for educated youths, SSP in its Election Manifesto (1984, p. 6 & 1989, p. 8) pledged to establish Small Scale and Cottage Industries like handicraft and handloom, carpet weaving, tanka painting and wood carving work in Sikkim. Large industries and factories in Sikkim was not feasible, therefore the SSP made commitment to set up small industries along with some domestic industries in almost all parts of Sikkim to resolve the unemployment problem (Sikkim Express, 16th January 1985, Vol-29, No-6).²⁶⁰

In order to fulfil its commitments the government launched various programmes such as training of educated youths on wiring, knitting, tailoring, carpet weaving, cane and bamboo work, training on chalk, candle and soap making, training on sanitary filling, carpentry, mosaic mansion, marble stone, fitting and fixing and iron grill making etc, training on mushroom plantation, vegetable cultivation, training on cutting and tailoring, training on various trades

²⁵⁸ 50 bedded Girl Hostel for SC was constructed at Khamdong and 25 bedded at Rhenock.

²⁵⁹ 50 bedded Girl Hostel for ST was constructed at Chungthang, 50 bedded Hee Gaythang, 25 bedded Ravangla, 25 bedded Tingbong and 50 bedded at Phodong.

²⁶⁰ It also promised to launch various schemes and programmes to benefit the educated unemployed youth and impart training for capacity building and skill development to make them self-help and self-reliant. For an individual unit, hotels, taxi operators, artisans, entrepreneurs, businessmen and unemployed youth, it promised to provide financial assistance in the form of loan through various financial institutions at highly subsidised rate.

and industrial units, small scale and cottage industries for the educated unemployed youths and rural unemployed youths (Sikkim Herald, 8th October 1985, Vol-28, No-81/30th July 1988, Vol-31, No-65/16th February, 1989, Vol-32, No-13/ Sikkim Express 1-7th March 1987, Vol-4, No-9). Entrepreneurship Development Programme, Rural Artisan Training Programme, Entrepreneurs Motivation Programme, Motivation Programme for self-confidence, self-reliance and self-stand were conducted for the educated unemployed youths under, Training of Rural Youths for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Integrated Rural Employment Programme (IREP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), (Sikkim Herald, 19th June 1985, Vol-28, No-55/12th July, 1985, Vol-31, No-60/30th April 1988, Vol-31, No-36/15 October 1988, Vol-31, No-88).

New Schemes for financial assistance such as National Equity Fund Scheme (NEFS) to assist the entrepreneurs in establishing industrial units and Single Window Scheme (SWS) to provide loans and working capital to the educated unemployed youths who are interested in establishing industrial units was initiated (Sikkim Observer, 25th October 1985, Vol-1, No-10). In 1986, scheme, '*State Scheme of Incentives for Small Scale Industries*' was also launched in Sikkim to provide raw materials at highly subsidised rate, consultancy service, and power interest, interest on working capital and exemption on security deposited to benefit the educated unemployed youths (Notification No.27/DI/86-87/1052 dated: 27th October 1986). New provision of loan for educated unemployed youths under Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) and Provision for the Relief Fund in case of natural calamities and other accidental cases were also initiated by the government (Sikkim Observer, 27th September, 1986, Vol-1, No-8).

For the upliftment and welfare of the economically weaker sections of the society, schemes like economic assistance scheme, social housing and group housing scheme, construction financial assistance scheme were launched by the state government (Sikkim Herald, 20th January 1989, Vol-32, No-7). The centrally

sponsored programme such as National Rural Employment Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, Development of Women and Children in Rural Area, Rural Fuel Wood Plantation Scheme, Improved Chula Scheme, Biogas Energy Plantation Scheme, Solar Energy scheme, Wind Energy scheme, under New and Renewable Energy Sources and Integrated Rural Energy Planning Programme were implemented by the government (Sikkim Herald, 20th January 1988, Vol-31, No-5/Sikkim Herald, 20th February 1988, Vol-29, No-12 & 15th July 1988, Vol-1, No-6).

5. Welfare Policy of SSP towards Government Employees

The SSP in its Election Manifesto (1989, p.10) promised to fulfil their demands and give all possible and genuine sympathy towards all the employees of Sikkim starting right from the wage labourers. The government after coming to power, a new set of Conduct Rules, Disciplinary and Appeal Rules and rules defining and streamlining the system of filling up of post in Government Department was framed. The Pension Rules relating to pensionary benefits was revised with the view to streamline and simplify the procedure of payment of pension and gratuity to retired government servants in time. Rates of pension and gratuity had been revised w.e.f 1.4.1985. Rules for commutation of pension were introduced from 2.9.1985 enabling the pensioners to commute a portion of his pension and draw a lump-sum amount. The commute value of pension was restored to the pensioners after 15 years of commutation provided if the pensioners were alive at that time. Leave Rules had been revised and elaborate provisions for various kinds of leave admissible to Government servants had been made. The Earned Leave was raised from 180 days to 240 days. Provision for encashment of leave was also introduced in those rules.

During this time, Pay Commission was also constituted to consider the pay structure of the government employees. On the recommendation of the commission, the pay scale of the government employees was revised w.e.f 1.4.1985. To rationalise the pay scale of the government employees in view of the

revision of the scale of the Central Government employees, the state government revised the pay scales w.e.f 1.1.1987 thereby enabling a government servant in the lowest scale to draw a minimum of Rs 1000/- per month plus DA sanctioned by the Government from time to time (Notification No. 67/Gen/East, Establishment Department, Govt. of Sikkim, Dated: 23rd May 1987, NO-65). During this, House Rent Allowance was fixed at 12.5% of revised pay for the government servant drawing the pay scale above Rs 1600/- and 15% for those drawing pay scale upto Rs 1600/-, Hill Compensatory Allowance at 8% of revised pay subject to minimum of Rs 55/-, Difficult Hill Allowance at 10% of revised pay subject to minimum of Rs 125/- and Hill Altitude Allowance at Rs 150/- altitude rising from 800 to 1200 and Rs 200/- from 1200 and above respectively (Notification No.26/GEN/EST, Government of Establishment (Pay Cell) Department, Dated: 29th January 1986).

IV

POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UNDER THE SSP LED GOVERNMENT

In India, eradication of poverty has been the greatest challenge since it became a sovereign state. As such poverty alleviation has been a part of the planning strategy. In the early 1970s, various direct poverty alleviation programmes such as 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 were launched to combat poverty. The Public Distribution System (PDS) was a part of these programmes.²⁶¹

²⁶¹ These programmes include the strategy to promote (i) economic growth and overall development (ii) human development with emphasis on health, education and minimum needs (iii) eradicate poverty through employment generation, training and building up asset endowments of the poor and (iv) to protect the poor from inflationary pressures and provide them with access to essential foods at affordable prices.

Even in Sikkim, poverty was one of the social problems during the Chogyal period. In 1974, 50.86% of the total population lived Below Poverty Line. In 1984, poverty declined slightly to 39.71%. However, the SSP in its Election Manifesto, 1984 did not mention its stand against poverty but simply had rural development strategies. So, for the rural development, the government launched various schemes under centrally sponsored programmes like IRDP, TRYSE, DWCRA, NRSE, NREP, RLEGP and JRY. Besides, state government launched State Social Housing Scheme, Economic Assistance Scheme, Social and Group Housing Scheme, Financial Assistance Scheme for the benefit as well as upliftment of economically disadvantaged people.

1. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

Integrated Rural Development Programme which was the largest of the entire poverty alleviation programme was started in 1978 and it effectively came into operation on 20th October 1980. It was also called as '*Food for Work Programme*' and was designed mainly to provide gainful employment to the families belonging to Below Poverty Line (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, p. 123).²⁶² In Sikkim, this programme was launched in 1980-1981 and was continuously carried out even after the SSP led government came to power in 1985. Under this programme, the state government, carried out house to house survey to identify Below Poverty Line families on the basis of annual income not more than Rs 6400/- and having less than 5 acres of land. The target group of the programme consisted of small farmers, marginal farmers, agricultures labourers, rural artisans and other whose annual family income was below the cut of line on the basis of survey conducted by State Rural Development Agency (SRDA). According to the survey, the cultivator having land holding of 5 acres or below was identified as small farmer. Similarly a person holding 2.5 acres or below were marginal farmer and a person having no land but deriving more than 50% of income from agriculture wage was identified as agricultural labourer. Under this programme, 10430 families

²⁶² Generally the landless, marginal and small farmers were covered under this programme. This project was implemented by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) of the states (Bhowmik, 2007, p.107 and Chelliah & Sudarshan, 1999, p.106).

belonging to BPL were provided loans for the plantation of ginger, cardamom, potato, orange and establishment of small business, piggery, poultry, pisciculture, carpet weaving and handloom centres and black smithy. The milch cow, bullock, goats, pigs and chicken were also distributed to the BPL families. The State Rural Development Agency (SRDA) released Rs 34.83 lakh against credit mobilisation of Rs 112.28 lakh in subsidy for the benefit of BPL families.

2. Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment is a part of IRDP and was started in August 1979. The main aim of the programme was to provide technical and basic managerial skills to the rural men and women of 18-35 years of age belonging to BPL enabling them to take up income-generating activities for self-employed and self-reliance (Chelliah & Sudarshan, 1999, p. 109). Under this scheme, the period of 3-12 months training was 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. The trainees belonging to BPL were paid the monthly stipend @ of Rs 150/- per month and provided raw material along with tool kits allowance. Within the duration of five years (1985-1990) 1039 youths were trained in different trades out of which about 50% were provided loans with subsidy for starting self-wage employment (Sikkim Herald, 26th January 1993, Vol-37, No-4).

3. Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA)

Development of Women and Children in Rural Area was started in 1987 as a result of intermediary evaluation of IRDP but a pilot project consisting of 50 districts was launched in 1978 and was implemented in all the states of India in 1982-1983 (Chelliah & Sudarshan, 1999, p. 110).²⁶³

²⁶³ The main aim of the project was (i) Self-employment along with various training facilities was to be given to the women who are below the poverty line. (ii) Party activities to be increased and organised so that women benefit economically and there is social self-reliance. (iii) The income of the rural poor through increase in output had to be encouraged, (iv) Production oriented

The scheme was started in Sikkim in between 1983-1984.²⁶⁴ Since this scheme was mainly for the women and children between the age group of 18-35 years for assisting them 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. Under DW CRA, group consisting of 10-15 women members was constituted. Each group was provided one time grant of Rs 15000/- as revolving fund.²⁶⁵ More than 125 groups under various trades were formed of which 10 were from south and 115 from west Sikkim and total 221 (40%) women were assisted and 30% was implemented for smokeless chulla, water supply etc under DW CRA of IRDP.²⁶⁶

4. New and Renewable Energy Source Cell (NSREC) Rural Development

New and Renewable Energy Source Cell (NSREC) Rural Development was another scheme which was introduced in the beginning of 1985-1986 financial years. The cell was launched essentially for the development and propagation of energy options and conservation strategies. Under this scheme various sub-schemes such as Improved Chulla, Biogas Energy Plantation, Wind Energy, Solar Energy and Energy Plantation were launched in Sikkim by the Government in between 1985-1986 to 1991-1992 (Sikkim Herald, 26th January 1993, Vol-37, No-4).

programme had to be formed and (v) Additional facility was to be given to the benefited women and children about proper environment, food and nourishment (Bhowmik, 2007, pp. 115-116).

²⁶⁴ To begin with, Soreng sub-division of west district was taken up. Then in 1989-1990 it was extended to Gezing, West Sikkim and then in 1990-1991 in Namchi, south district of Sikkim.

²⁶⁵ The fund could be drawn for the purchase of animals for Animal husbandry and also raw materials for weaving carpet, handloom, raries, etc. In Sikkim, so far as implementation of DW CRA is concerned, it received tremendous response by 1990.

²⁶⁶ Health camps for women were also organised in collaboration with the State Health Department under this scheme.

(i) **Improved Chulla Scheme (ICS):** Improved Chulla Scheme which had been launched under NRSE had multi-benefits.²⁶⁷ Under this scheme each beneficiary were given 2 number of 3 inch diameter ACC pipe of 6 feet length and a chimney cowl free of cost and by 1992, 4130 families were benefited.²⁶⁸ Community size chullas were also constructed in school Hostel, Hospitals, Temples and Monastery kitchens. Numerous training was conducted to create cadre of trained self-employed workers in solving unemployment problems.

(ii) **Biogas Energy Scheme:** In Sikkim, agriculture and cattle keeping was the basis of livelihood of most of the people in the earlier days. Taking the advantage of this fact, the government initiated family size biogas energy scheme in Sikkim. Under this scheme, a biogas plant which provided facilities to generate gas for cooking and lighting from animals, human waste of biomass without reducing and damaging the manure value was introduced. Any family having 3-4 cattle were provided 2 Cu. m capacity gas plant to meet up cooking requirement of 4-5 family members. Family, installing biogas plant, were given substantial subsidy in the initial stage. The subsidy was Rs.8000/- per plant, in the following year it was reduced to Rs 7000/- per plant and thereafter to Rs 6000/- per plant.²⁶⁹ By the end of 1992, 272 families of those areas were benefited.

(iii) **Solar Energy Scheme:** Solar Energy Scheme as a sub-scheme of NRSE had several components like solar street and domestic light, Solar Photovoltaic modules for operation of state Television and solar radiation for solar water heater etc. Under this scheme, the NRSE Cell all together 70 solar street lights and domestic lights in Panchayat Ghars, Bhawans, Hostels, Schools, Temples and Monasteries were installed. One each solar power television was installed at Varsay Lodge, Soreng Community Centre and Gnathang Community Centre. From

²⁶⁷ Improved Chulla makes kitchen smokeless, save fuel, wood, lessens the drudgery of a house wife and improve health.

²⁶⁸ Through consumer and co-operative society shops, portable chullas were promoted at subsidised rate which had to be used in combination with fixed chullas.

²⁶⁹ Khamdong in East Sikkim and Lungchok- Salangdang in west Sikkim were the villages in which maximum biogas plants were installed.

1985-1992, the state had over 40 solar water heaters in the institutions, hospitals and some other private sectors.

(iv) Wind and Energy Plantation Scheme: Under New and Renewable Energy Source Cell (NSRE), wind energy scheme was launched and 300 Watt capacity of wind generator was installed at Thangu Police Outpost to charge wireless batteries to provide electricity supply in that area. There was altogether 86 energy plantation, under NRSE Cell and about 300 hectares of land was covered with the view of conservation and afforestation programme in relation to fuel wood need.

5. Integrated Rural Energy Planning Programme (IREP)

Integrated Rural Energy Planning Programme which was introduced in 1986-1987 financial year in the state was another scheme attached to NRES Cell. The NRES Cell was set up in Soreng-Sub Division in 1985-89 covering 7 Revenue Blocks and 43 Revenue Block in the first and second phases respectively under the suspension of one Assistant Project Officer to implement the Programme. In the third phase, Geyzing Sub-Division was covered under this IREP Programme (Sikkim Herald, 17th March 1993, Vol-37, No-6).

6. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was introduced on 24th April, 1989 intermingling National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) and continued to be in operation through the Eighth Five Year Plan.²⁷⁰ The Indra Awas Yojana (IAY) a Massive Housing Programme and Million Well Scheme (MWS), scheme of irrigation wells at free of all cost to the poor, small and marginal ST/SC farmers and bounded labourers were the two main sub-schemes of JRY (Chelliah & Sudarshan, 1999, p. 112).²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Jawahar Rozgar Yojana was 'Food For Work Programme' while was in operation in 1980-1981.

²⁷¹ The main aim of JRY was (i) to guarantee employment in rural areas because NREP and RLEGP created 55% rural employment from 1980-1981 to 1988-1989, (ii) to guarantee employment of 440

This scheme was implemented in Sikkim from 1990 onwards. During the course of implementation of this scheme, 327 number of school buildings, 53 playgrounds, 1988.33 kms village road and jeepable road, 17 water ponds, 13 Integrated Child Development Scheme Centres, 83 Irrigation channels, 44 Community and Panchayat Ghars, 519 bridges,²⁷² 355 village tanks and 658 Indra Awas Houses were constructed until 1992. Apart from these, 616 sanitation work, 42 flood protection work, 62 soil conservation work, 79 Land Development Nursery, Social Forestry work and 621 other works relating to welfare of the rural people was done (No-94/Home/90,Gangtok, Tuesday, 19th June 1990, No-83).

7. Safe Drinking Water under SSP led Government

According to 1981 census, 440 villages in Sikkim were identified as problem villages which needed immediate supply of safe drinking water and 405 habitable revenue blocks speedy implementation of rural electrification schemes. So, SSP in its Election Manifesto (1984, pp.6-7) made the supply of rural and safe drinking water as well as rural electrification two important agenda during general election to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly of 1985 and committed to complete the work within a time bound period.

After SSP led government assumed power, it strived to give topmost priority to those two thrust areas with a view to cover all the villages within 2000 AD. Water Supply Schemes under various programmes, such as Minimum Needs Programme (MNV), Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP), Technology Mission and Groom Water (TMGW) were extensively implemented in Sikkim (Sikkim Observer, 23rd August 1986, Vol-1, No-31).

lakhs families who live below the poverty line, and (iii) the central government had to spend expense 40% of total expenditure in stead of 50%. Of all, the fundamental aim of JRY was to create economic infrastructure and community social assets which would mainly add by the poverty stricken people and also it would aim at to improve the standard of living and the level of wages for which priority was to be began to the ST and SCs and 30% reservation had to be provided for women (Bhowmik, 2007, p. 109).

²⁷²The bridges included Suspension/ RCC/ Steel/ Log bridges.

During the period from 1984-1991, a total of 958 Water Supply Schemes at a total cost of Rs 4,700.00 lakh was implemented. Out of the 440 Villages, 369 Villages were fully covered till the end of 1991 (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 124-126). Remaining 71 villages which were uncovered were assured to be covered fully during the Eighth Five Year Plan (1990-1997).²⁷³ The government also undertook the work of water treatment to ensure safe drinking water. Quality water testing was done in the stationary laboratory of Micro and Geology Department, Gangtok. The Department also deployed one mobile van fully equipped with implements for all kinds of tests. By 1991, the mobile van had covered most of the villages and more than 400 test work was done (Sikkim Herald, 26th January 1993, Vol-37, No-4).

8. Rural Electrification under SSP led Government

During the earlier days, electricity was available only in the urban areas. Rest of the areas throughout Sikkim were spelled with black mask. There were only three power plants; Rongnichu Stage-I (1962), Lingbit stage-I (1970) and Lower Lagyap Hydel Power (1979-1980) and Manual Diesel Power Houses at Mangan, Gangtok, (1958-1982) and Ranipool (1979-1980) that supplied power to the main towns of Sikkim (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp.98-110).

When the SSP led government came to power in 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 to be established to generate more and more electricity to meet the demand. Realising this acute shortage of electric supply, the government took up implementation of Rongnichu Hydel Stage-II Scheme (500MW) and Lingbit Hydel Stage-II (500MW) in 1984-1985 and were subsequently commissioned in 1988-1989. Though these schemes could reduce

²⁷³ Though the government attempted to cover villages and houses fully in one time but remained partially covered in the subsequent year due to the emergence of new houses and separate hamlets. Therefore, the implementation of Water Supply Scheme became a continuous process even after all the villages and houses were fully covered.

the shortage, the demand could not fully be met. Therefore, two more Hydel Schemes, namely Mayongchu (66MW) and Upper Rongnichu (4x2MW) were taken up during 1986-1987 and both were fully commissioned in 1991-1992.

The programmes such as Transmission and Distribution Programme, Free Electrification Programme, System Important Scheme etc. were launched in Sikkim to meet the speedy implementation of electrification.

(i) Transmission and Distribution Programme (TDP): Under Transmission and Distribution Programme greater emphasis was given to lay an extension of distribution network to cover as much areas as possible. System improvement works and remodelling of system at important load centre 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 loss of Transmission and Distribution²⁷⁴ (IRP, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 104-105).

With this initiative of the government the power supply and energy in the state improved tremendously. Of 405 habitable Revenue Blocks, 400 Revenue Blocks in the state were electrified by the end of 1990-1991 with the financial assistance from the Rural Electrification Corporation. The remaining five (5) Revenue Blocks were targeted to electrify during 1991-1992, thereby achieving 100% village electrification in the state. Extensive Intensification Scheme in the already electrified villages was also taken up during 1990-1992 with a view of covering 100% household to achieve the target of beneficiaries to 100%. An amount of Rs 450 Lakh was to be spent on the ongoing schemes during 1991-1992 (BESPDD, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 57-58).

(ii) Free Electrification Programme: The rural and house to house electrification in the villages was still a mere dream for the government as some of the people

²⁷⁴ Through (i) Capacity augmentation of distribution transformer to avoid overloading. (ii) Replacement of conductor with higher sizes, (iii) Erection of 66KV Transmission lines for bulk transfer of power and (iv) Identification and location of various load centres in the state.

could not effort to obtain connection in their houses. So, the government launched Free Electrification Programme and provided free connection of electricity to the households who were Below Poverty Line. Under this programme, 3,104 households were electrified. A sum of Rs 900/- was spent for each households for providing free electrification connection.²⁷⁵

(iii) **System Important Scheme (SIS):** Under the guidance of the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC), System Important Scheme was formulated by the Power Department for the improvement of reliability, Transmission and Distribution (TD), loses and strengthening of the existing installation. Fund for such schemes were provided under State Plan, Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). Major share came from Rural Electrification Scheme (RES) assisted by the Rural Electrification Corporation on loan. With the increase of departmental work in the power sector, the strength of the employment also increased to 1595 excluding temporary field workers. The revenue collection out of sale of electrical energy also increased from 15 lakh of 1979-1988 to 216.00 lakh in 1991-1992 (Sikkim Herald, 26th January 1993, Vol-37, No-4).²⁷⁶

9. Home for Homeless Policy of SSP

'Home for Homeless' was neither an issue nor an agenda spelled out in the Election Manifestoes (1984 & 1989) of SSP but appeared as one of the policy of his government when Bhandari announced occasionally in the public gatherings that his Government stands for 'Home for Homeless'. It was in 1987, that state Government in Sikkim launched state-wide scheme, State Social Housing Scheme

²⁷⁵ The government further proposed for providing another 3,100 households for free electricity connection. The main objective of this programme was to ensure that the benefit is percolated to the level of households of Below Poverty Line and the people living at for flung areas. The government also intensified the work in the already electrified blocks to provide benefit to the left out households as well as those which were constructed later on.

²⁷⁶ With the passage of time and development of consciousness among the general masses, the necessity of electricity in the village too revolutionised the basic concept of distribution of energy. Thus, the era of extension of electricity to the rural area began, resulting the augmentation, renovation, rehabilitation, refurbishment, commission, re-commission, transmission and distribution of power and energy plants in Sikkim.

(SSHS). Under SSHS, the government distributed 24 number of 8 long Galvanised Corrugated Iron (GCI) sheet to every families belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) to help them to build and roof their houses.²⁷⁷ In between 1987-1991, altogether 12999 families were benefited under the SSHS.²⁷⁸

Besides, the state government also launched other state schemes like Housing Scheme, Economic Assistance and Economic Grant and implemented centrally sponsored scheme, Indra Awas Yojana (IAY) in the state. Under Housing Scheme, 378 families²⁷⁹, Economic Grant 185 families²⁸⁰ and Economic Assistance 41279²⁸¹ belonging to Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste were benefited by those state schemes respectively. Under Indra Awas Yojana, 658 houses for those belonging to Below Poverty Line were constructed from 1985-1992.²⁸² In addition to this, 4132 families belonging to ST and 592 SC families were provided GCI sheets for roofing their houses.

10. Programmes and Schemes for Rural Farmers

For the benefit of the weaker sections of the society and rural farmers, the government launched various programmes and schemes. Under Seed Multiflication and Distribution Programme, high yielding varieties seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, manures and implements etc. were distributed to the farmers at free of cost. More than 26 government farms meant for multiflication of seeds and planting materials, conducting various adoptive research and

²⁷⁷ To provide benefit to the poorest of the poor families, the selection was to be done through the Panchayats and Area MLAs.

²⁷⁸ The government further proposed to cover 2,240 families living Below Poverty Line by 1992-1993.

²⁷⁹ Out of which 345 were Schedule Tribes and 33 Schedule Castes.

²⁸⁰ Of which 88 were Schedule Tribes and 97 Schedule Castes.

²⁸¹ Among which 27617 were Schedule Tribes and 13662 Schedule Castes.

²⁸² Indra Awas Yojana was launched in 1985 as a sub-scheme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana to meet the shortage of houses in rural areas. The scheme aims to provide assistance to rural people living below the poverty line belonging to STs and SCs, bonded labourers and non ST and SC categories for the construction of dwelling units and upgradation of existing unserviceable katcha houses by providing grants-in-aid (Gupta, 2008, p. 163).

demonstration of improved technologies of farming were established.²⁸³ During the 10 years of SSP led government rule 10500 farmers were trained and 60 village level workers underwent 2 years diploma courses in the Training Centres/ Institutes in Sikkim. For the development of cattle and dairy production, imported frozen semen plant from the United Kingdom and installed in 1987 to produce liquid nitrogen for intensifying the herd improvement programme of cattle. Number of livestock scheme was launched during this time for the benefit of the weaker section of the society and farmers of the rural areas. Piglets, crossbred cows, poultry birds were distributed to 2500 families of economically disadvantaged group. In 1989-1991, 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. The government under maximisation of agricultural production initiated many new irrigation schemes under Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) to benefit and uplift the poor and rural farmers. The concrete Hume pipes and HDPE pipes in the damages of the open channels due to landslides and sinking were extensively used. Within this Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990), an additional irrigation potential of 6359 hectares was created and corresponding to 5530 hectares of potential was utilised. By 1990, the additional irrigation potential created was 21472 hectares and potential utilized was 14089 hectares with nearly 375 numbers of channels totalling approximately 455 Kms in length (Sikkim Herald, 26th Jan, 1993, Vol-37, No-4). Under the Livestock Scheme, 2500 Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste families were distributed piglets, crossbred cows, poultry birds (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 5-7).

11. Massive Rural Sanitation Programme

The government launched Massive Rural Sanitation Programme (MRSP) in order to improve general health and achieve proper sanitation condition of the rural population in 1985-1986. Considering the social and cultural attitude of the rural

²⁸³ Other programmes such as Oilseed Production Programme funded by the Government of India and state Government on 75:25% share basis to meet the internal requirement of edible oil and National Pulses Development Project funded by the Government of India and state Government of Sikkim on 75:25% share basic to explore the production potentials was launched

people, it firstly gave emphasis on the constitutional household and institutional latrines construction (Sikkim Herald, 12th February 1986, Vol-29, No-9). Under this programme, a single seat latrine for each family belonging to Below Poverty Line was constructed at the cost of Rs 1200/- including fitting and fixing of pass and water seal. By the end of 1992, a total of 7898 rural sanitary latrines were constructed at a total cost of Rs 93.57 lakh (Sikkim Herald, 26th January 1993, Vol-37, No-4).

12. Rural Connectivity Programme and Scheme

Sikkim is a mountainous state with sloppy areas, numerous valleys and steep gorges through which river and streams flow. The people especially school going children of rural areas have to cross number of rivers and streams. This poses greater problem for those rural people. With a view to solve the problem, the government constructed number of foot-bridges over those rivers and streams and villages roads for inter-village connection and connection of villages with nearest market place, health centres, government establishment and motarable roads. Till 1991-1992 the government had constructed more than 519 foot bridges; 103 number of suspension bridges, 216 RCC bridges, 183 steel bridges and 17 number of log bridges at the total cost of Rs 158 Lakh.

13. Decentralisation of Administration

Democratic decentralisation of administration was one of the important agenda of SSP (SSP, Election Manifesto, 1984). To ensure active involvement and empowerment of the grassroots people, SSP aimed to strengthen the people through what is called '*Panchayati Raj Institution*'.

During the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990), the reorganisation of Gram Panchayat was carried out and thereby 153 Gram Panchayat Units was reduced to 148. Each Gram Panchayat Units were given wider area of operation (Notification No.35 (2) 87-88/11/RDD/D, Dated: 10th December 1987). An annual grant of Rs 10,000/- was allocated to all the Gram Panchayat Units to carry out

their day to day functions. In 1991, the Government provided two tier of the Panchayat Raj System at the District and Village level, namely Zilla Panchayat and Gram Panchayat to revitalise the Panchayati Raj Institutions. This was a major step towards decentralisation of democratic administration. The Zilla Panchayat were also provided with sufficient developmental funds to enable them to carry out the developmental works in their districts and also were groomed to formulate district plans covering all the departments (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 115-117).²⁸⁴

14. Food Security Policy of SSP with reference to PDS

Food grains and allied food items constitute basic needs of mankind. Consumption of adequate food nutrients with wide variety and balanced diet are very important for health.²⁸⁵ It is the government which has an important role to play in the distribution of basic food items and maintenance of food security. While formulating policies regarding the food security, government has to plan in such a way that each and every family has adequate and equitable distribution of essential food items and thereof none of the individual is deprived of basic commodities.

In Sikkim, Department of Food and Civil Supplies (FCS) is primarily concerned with various activities such as procurement, storage, distribution and determination of policies of control an essential commodities allotted by the Government of India under the Public Distribution System (PDS).²⁸⁶ Under Public

²⁸⁴ To facilitate the meeting of the Gram Panchayat, the Government constituted two Zilla Bhawans at Geyzing, West Sikkim and Mangan, North Sikkim. Besides, government constructed 51 Panchayat Ghars to serve either two or three Gram Panchayat Units by each Panchayat Ghar. 100 Black and White Television sets and 20 Colour Television sets were distributed to all Gram Panchayat Units where reception was clear. Regular Television Programmes, video films, relating to various developmental schemes were screened through these outlets

²⁸⁵ Otherwise, malnutrition leads to nutrient-deficiency disorders like protein-energy malnutrition, anaemia, night blindness, goitre, susceptibility to a number of infectious diseases, low birth weight of children, lack of resistance to illnesses among mother and children etc.

²⁸⁶ The Public Distribution System (PDS) has been one of the most crucial instruments in food policy and for improving food security at the household level in India where millions of poor suffer from persistent poverty and malnutrition

Distribution System (PDS) basic commodities such as wheat, rice, sugar, edible oils, kerosene etc are distributed in uniform and subsidised rate.²⁸⁷

In 1984, SSP made a commitment to ensure proper management and adequate distribution of essential commodities specially food items at highly subsidised rate through proper and systematic channel. During 10 years of SSP led government rule in Sikkim, the government adopted uniform pricing policies for the control of market monopoly, black marketing and hoarding in the state considering the benefit of the consumers irrespective of the location. To avoid storage and maintenance of regular supply and buffer stock, government constructed a godown with a storage capacity of 6400 Metric Tonnes at Rangpo mining complex, East Sikkim. The controlled commodities which was lifted from Food Corporation of India (FCI) depot Siliguri previously was handed over to the Food and Civil Supplies Department of Sikkim at 2000 Metric Tonnes of Rice from Rangpo FCI, 2000 Metric Tonnes Jorethang and 500 Metric Tonnes from Siliguri totalling 4500 Metric Tonnes. By the year 1991-1992, food godowns have increased to 25 against 10 of 1984 with the total capacity of 5273.5 Metric Tonnes; 4500 Rice, 600 Wheat and 173.5 Sugar under ITDP (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 39-41).²⁸⁸

The procurement and distribution of food items also increased up to 4500 Metric Tonnes from 2000 Metric Tonnes.²⁸⁹ The distribution of rice and wheat at subsidised and uniform rate was started from December 1985. All the area under Schedule Tribe reserved constituency and Tribal predominant revenue blocks were covered under the distribution programme (ITDP). About 2.04 lacs of

²⁸⁷ The specific goals of PDS are to (i) make goods available to consumers especially the disadvantages section of society at fair prices; (ii) rectify the existing imbalances between the supply and demand for consumer goods; (iii) check and prevent hoarding and black marketing in essential commodities; (iv) ensure social justice in distribution of basic necessities of life; (v) even out fluctuation in prices and availability of mass consumption goods; (vi) support poverty-alleviation programmes particularly rural employment programmes (Gupta, 2008, pp.245-253).

²⁸⁸ Of these 14 food godowns, 07 were in west, 03 in south, 02 in north and 02 in east districts of Sikkim. For the proper distribution of these commodities, Government also opened 1475 fair price shops

²⁸⁹ With the difference of 2500 by 1992 in the case of rice, from 250 Metric Tonnes to 600 Metric Tonnes ie with the difference of 350 Metric Tonnes in the case of wheat and from 100 Metric Tonnes to 173.5 ie with the difference of 73.5 Metric Tonnes in the case of sugar respectively.

consumers living in 197 revenue blocks of the state could avail the benefit of heavily subsidised rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene commodities under ITDP, the rationing system was implemented for maintaining equitable distribution in ITDP areas from 1985-1992, thirty five thousand (35000), ration cards were issued covering 197 revenue blocks and two towns; Gangtok and Jorethang respectively. The essential commodities were distributed through fair price shopkeeper appointed by the department. With the view to protect the consumers from unscrupulous, traders, hoarders etc, the government of Sikkim on 1st July 1987 constituted State Consumers Protection Council (Notification No.7 (4) FCS/85/7/FCS, Dated: 20th July 1987) and enforced Consumers Protection Act 1990. Beside this, the government also constituted the State Commission and District Forums in Sikkim for the protection of consumers (IPR, Govt. of Sikkim, nd, pp. 39-41).

Conclusion

During the two consecutive terms of the SSP led government in Sikkim welfarism, rural development and poverty alleviation could not make much headway. For the health care and family welfare only Hospitals, Family Health Centres, Primary Health Centres and Primary Health Sub-Centres were established. The existing hospitals were upgraded and the number of beds in the Hospitals and PHCs were increased. Programmes relating to health care and control of diseases were launched to fight against killer diseases. For social welfare and security, old-aged people were granted pension, monthly monetary grant was provided to the disabled persons and scholarships was granted to the disabled for their education. The Day Care Centres and Recreation Centres, hostels for the working women and destitute homes for the orphans were established. The students belonging to the ST and SC families were provided pre-matric and post-matric scholarships. For the ST and SC and BPL families only housing and other schemes such as distributions of piglets, bullocks, milch cows and sewing machine and black smithy tools for the SC families and GCI sheets for roofing houses was launched. Training on knitting, tailoring, carpet weaving, cane and bamboo work

and blacksmithy was imparted. For educated unemployed youths and economically disadvantaged groups, only training relating to handicrafts, trades and industrial units was imparted. Financial assistance in the form of loans and raw materials were provided at subsidised rates to those educated unemployed youths who were interested in establishing industrial units.

For rural development and poverty alleviation, school buildings, playgrounds, village roads and jeepable roads, water ponds, anganwadi centres, irrigation channels, community halls, panchayat ghars, bridges, village tanks and Indra Awas Houses for the poor were constructed and works relating to sanitation, flood control, soil conservation, land development, nursery, social forestry works and welfare activities were carried out. For the rural and poor farmers, high yielding varieties of seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, manures and implements and seeds and saplings of ginger, cardamom, potato and orange and milch cow, bullock, goattory, piggery, poultry, pisciculture were distributed at free of cost. Safe drinking water was made possible only to 369 of 440 villages and out of 405 Revenue Blocks, only 400 habitable Revenue Blocks of Sikkim were electrified and 3,104 households belonging to BPL were electrified. About 7898 rural sanitary latrines and foot-bridges over those rivers and streams and village roads for inter-village connection and connection of villages with nearest market place, health centres, government establishment and motarable roads. The essential commodities such as food items were made available at subsidised and uniform rate and uniform pricing policy by the government for the control of market monopoly, black marketing and hoarding was made possible.

Thus although the SSP government led by Bhandari seem to have performed well in the spheres of welfare, rural development and poverty alleviation yet, much of the achievements was made under the aegis of centrally sponsored schemes and programmes.