

Chapter - IV

Education Profile of Sikkim

Education plays a crucial role in rousing the interest among the people for improving their economic condition and for creating a healthy and clean environment to live in. Only wide spread education can bring a radical change in their social and economic life. It is wellknown that the Sikkimese economy and society are largely guided by their traditional and religious customs. So there is a need for intensive programme for Human Resource Development or Man-power planning which is closely related to the concept of Human Development. Human resource Development relates to the long range development of semi-skilled, unskilled and skilled man power requirement of the economy and plan educational priorities and investments in human resource development so as to enlarge employment opportunities and to eradicate the social barriers for development. Schultz, Harbison, Denison, Kendrick, Moses, Bowman, Kuznets and a host of other economists reveal that the important factor responsible for the rapid growth of an economy largely depends on the expenditure on education.

According to Schultz there are five ways of developing human resources : “(i) health facilities and services, broadly conceived to include all expenditures that affect the life expectancy, strength and stamina, and the vigour and vitality of the people; (ii) on the job training, including old type organised by the firms, (iii) formally organised education at the elementary, secondary and higher levels; (iv) study programme for adults that are not organised by firms, including extension programmes notably in agriculture; (v) migration of individuals and families to adjust to changing opportunities”.¹ So in a wider sense investment in human capital means expenditure on health, education and social services.

Harbison proposes that for investment in education to be more effective for rapid growth, adequate incentives should be provided to men and women to engage in those kinds of productive activities which are needed to accelerate the modernisation process. The status and remuneration attached to occupations should be in accordance with the high priority needs for economy.² Rural unemployment and educated unemployment due to drop-outs should be reduced by for reaching programmes of modernisation of agriculture and nextly, appropriate measures should be taken to replace all the trained personnel along the modern lines. Moreover, insufficient attention has been given to the traditional agriculture sector. Agricultural education, adult education, women education and on the job training programmes are not sufficient in the state like Sikkim.

The progress of education in Sikkim has been extremely slow during the period 1981. The literacy rate was 34.05% lower than the Indian rate 36.07%. The female literacy of Sikkim was 22.20% which was very unimpressive.³ On the other hand little is done on the field of adult education. Adult education helps in changing the outlook of farmers and villagers, eradicates the social superstitions and paves the path of development. Sikkimese society is largely influenced by its religious, traditional customs and geographical isolation. Professor G.Myrdal in his Asian Drama (1968), told, "Education takes many forms.... There is no common denominator. Any attempt to analyse the impact of health on education measures with taking other policy measures into consideration involved the logical".⁴ Practically the input-output relationship is not so easy in case of educational outlays.

There is an ethnic diversity in Sikkim and its natural isolation, historical and religious factors are so prominent that the traditional input-output would not result properly. In this consequence, the expansion plan for education should be matched with the local demand of the society and its sentiment. There are certain deterrant factors which come in the rapid development of a region, most important of these are geographical isolation, inadequacy of economic overheads like transport labour, technology etc. In Sikkim, the distributional aspects of development is not homogeneous in nature. The developed regions are generally confined to urban

centres, the greater part of the state remaining in the backwaters of economic regeneration.

Infrastructure is the basic condition for the rapid and homogeneous spread of education. The establishment of proper education institution is the foremost condition. At the very beginning, the literacy rate was very low, especially among women. During merger, there were only 228 primary, 29 middle and 7 higher secondary schools. But during 1979-80 the composition of the educational institution changed radically and its growth was observed vertically and horizontally. The total number of institution rose at 470. Within a decade, the total number was raised more than doubled. During a short span from 1984-85 to 1989-90 the total number of schools again doubled and reached at 1288 of which 528 pre-primary, 519 primary, 173 middle, 54 secondary and 14 Higher secondary schools. As the population of Sikkim is widely scattered, the terrain and transportation facilities are not adequate. So that the children can attend only in short distance schools. Some villages are also isolated in Sikkim;

Table 1. : Growth of Educational Institutions in Sikkim by type⁵

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pre Primary</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Mid dle</i>	<i>Second dary</i>	<i>H.Sec.</i>	<i>Total School</i>
1975-76	-	228	29	-	7	264
1979-80	85	309	44	24	8	470
1984-85	198	478	121	54	13	666
1989-90	528	519	173	54	14	1288
1990-91	-	510	122	57	18	707
1991-92	697	527	122	63	18	1427

Source : Education Department, Govt. of Sikkim. Gangtok.

Specially the La-cheng and La-chung valley of North Sikkim. The physical features, i.e., weather of Sikkim specially temperature, rainfall and relative humidity sharply varies one place to another place. Considering all these constraints it would necessary to open many new schools, so that education can reach door to door. There are 1427 schools in total in 1991-92. There was a wide gap between male-female enrolment during the period 1975-76, the male enrolment proportion was 65.67 and female proportion was 34.33. So it is evident that the traditional Sikkimese society has a clear bias towards male child and negligence towards female child. The breeds of sex differentiability in literacy germinate from the very beginning of the education and extends towards the value judgment of the society and social factors.

Table 2 : Educational Enrolment in Sikkim since 1975.⁶

<i>Year</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>(Propor- tion)</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>(Propo- tion)</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Growth</i>
1975-76	13764	(65.67)	71.95	(34.33)	20959	(100.00)
1979-80	30852	(61.17)	19580	(38.83)	50432	(100.00)
1984-85	50103	(60.63)	32528	(39.37)	82631	(100.00)
1989-90	58450	(54.68)	48446	(45.32)	106886	(100.00)
1990-91	59971	(54.12)	50846	(45.88)	110817	(100.00)
1991-92	61437	(53.9)	52412	(46.04)	113849	(100.00)

Source : Sikkim - A Statistical profile (1979-92), B.E.S.

The proportion analysis depicts that it was most unfavourable during 1975-76 and there was a havoc improvement during 1989-90 it stood at 54.68 male and 45.32 female child due to the enormous increase in infrastructural facilities. There is an improvement of the male-female child enrolment gulf, whereas during 1975-76 it was 31.34, it came down to 7.92. Undoubtedly this is a clear demarcation of

reduction of sex-basis and the social position of the girl child is going to improve day by day.

The spread of education is an essential need to make all round development of Sikkim. The whole education system in the state is managed by the state excepting a few. The development strategies brought about appreciable results in terms of establishment of educational institutions all over the state. The announcement of the New Education policy has strengthened the qualitative aspects of education. As per 1991 census, 56.94 per cent of the population of age 6 years and above are literates which above the all India average by 4.73 per cent. The following table shows the literacy position in the four districts and also reveals the disparity between male and female.

Table - 3⁷

Literacy - 1991 (per cent)

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Sikkim	56.94	65.74	46.69
North	53.47	63.64	40.69
South	54.08	63.18	40.69
East	65.13	73.10	55.66
West	45.62	54.92	35.26

Source : Census Report - 1991, Sikkim.

From the table, it is evident that the East district has achieved the highest per cent of literacy i.e., 65.13 and it is lowest in west district. The gulf is more than 20 per cent. The sex basis is very prominent in literacy achievement and the female literacy is always lagging to male. The highest male literacy is obtained in the East district i.e., 73.10 per cent, however the achievement of the West district

is lowest. The highest female literacy is obtained in the East district i.e., 55.66 per cent and the lowest is attained by the West district i.e., 35.26 per cent. In order to bridge the gaps in the literacy in different parts of the state, efforts are being made to identify literacy deficient areas.

Beside formal education, the state is also promoting the traditional institutions, non-formal education and adult education. The emergence of Ashram and Navodayas are of new dimensions-

Table - 4

Class-wise (Broad) Enrolment of students⁸

<i>Class</i>	<i>1979-80</i>	<i>1990-91</i>	<i>1991-92</i>	<i>30.9.93</i>
Pre Primary	2550	14793	15135	17129
Total Primary	42234	87291	88459	92282
	(83.74)	(78.77)	(77.69)	(73.6)
Total middle (VI-VIII)	6409	14814	15998	20760
	(12.7)	(13.36)	(14.05)	(16.56)
Total				
Secondary (IX-X)	1406	6653	6975	7619
	(2.78)	(6.00)	(6.13)	(6.07)
Total Higher	383	2059	2417	3528
Secondary	(0.76)	(1.86)	(2.12)	(2.81)
Degree College				1181
Law College				(0.94)
	50432	110817	113849	125370

Source : Sikkim at a glance. 1993, B.E.S. Gangtok.

The growth rate of enrolment during the period 1979-80 to 30.9.93 is 148%. This is a remarkable progress. The sub-total of preprimary and primary has jumped from 42,234 to 92,282 during the period. Not only enrolment number but also the compositional aspects of total enrolment, focuses a closer look in the qualitative aspects. The proportion of primary section has reduced by more than 10 per cent during 1993 whereas middle enrolment share has increased by nearly 4 per cent. It implies that primary enrolment was more significant during 1979-80 but with the spread of educational infrastructure and development process the total number and share less increased in latter on phases. The increase in share of the secondary and Higher Secondary are 3.29 and 2.05 per cent respectively. So the yearwise break up shows that there is a qualitative change in enrolment process.

Table - 5

Districtwise enrolment during 30.9.93 ⁹

	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>State</i>
PrePrimary	1743 (20.86)	5881 (9.79)	4961 (17.5)	4544 (15.88)	17129 (13.66)
Primary	4837 (57.9)	36111 (60.1)	16919 (59.7)	17286 (60.41)	75153 (59.94)
Middle	1244 (14.89)	10436 (17.37)	4493 (15.86)	4587 (16.03)	20760 (16.56)
Secondary	383 (4.5)	4289 (7.14)	1443 (5.09)	1504 (5.26)	7619 (6.07)
Higher Secondary	145 (1.73)	2178 (3.63)	512 (1.8)	693 (2.42)	3528 (2.81)
College	-	1181 (1.96)	-	-	1181 (0.94)
	8352 (6.66)	60076 (47.91)	28328 (22.59)	28614 (22.82)	125370 (1.00)
Population enrolment ratio	3.74	2.97	3.48	3.43	3.24

Source : Sikkim at a glance 1993. B.E.S. Gangtok.

There is a wide disparity in spread of enrolment in Sikkim. If we made a cross-section study of the four districts, we would observe that the East and West district in a better condition than its counterpart South and North district. Out of 100, 47.91 per cent enrolment is observed in the East district and 22.82 per cent,

the second highest is obtained by the West district and if the population-enrolment ratio is lowest in the East district i.e. 2.97 and the next ratio is 3.43 in the West district. Whereas the enrolment per cents are 22.59 and 6.66 in South and North district respectively and the population-enrolment ratio is 3.48 and 3.74 respectively.

There is a wide disparity within the class enrolment in the four districts. So the efforts are being made to identify the deficiency in terms of enrolment and districts.

In Indian Education scenario, dropouts at the lower classes are very significant. The drop-out rates are also vary. It is estimated that nearly half of children who enter class I drop out before reaching class V and another hard reality is that two thirds of the children drop out before reaching class VIII. The main factor which accelerates this high rate drop out at the lower class, is socio-economic reasons of the state and is supplemented by socio-cultural factors.

At the higher level of education, there are obvious limitations in terms of infrastructure, there is only degree college and law college at Gangtok. With this aim a new B.ED. college is established at Namchi and there is need of another degree college and technical colleges.

Table - 6

Drop-outs

1993-94 (in percentage)¹⁰

	<i>Class I-V</i>	<i>Class I to VIII</i>	<i>Class I to X</i>
Sikkim			
Total	62.27	78.43	86.82
Male	63.18	78.83	87.37
Female	61.19	77.93	86.21

Source : Centre for monitoring Indian Economy Pvt. Ltd. p. 188

In Sikkim the drop-out rate is very high in comparison to other states, at class I-V, the rate is 62.27 whereas the Indian average shows it is 36.32 i.e., nearly half. At classes I-VIII, the rates are 78.43 per cent and at classes I to X, the decline is 86.82 per cent i.e., only nearly 13 per cent remains in the system. Yet there is an interesting and contrasting characteristic that is the female drop-out rates are always less than male counterpart in comparison to other states.

Table 7 : Govt. Educational Institution and their districtwise distribution - 1993.¹¹

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>State</i>
Pre-primary	76	235	205	207	723
Primary School (lower-upper)	56	165	149	161	531
Junior High School	12	43	36	27	118
Secondary School	07	20	19	18	64
Senior Secondary School	02	14	03	03	22
Teacher's Training Institute	00	01	00	00	01
Law College	-	01	-	-	01
Degree College	-	01	-	-	01
Total	153	480	412	416	1461
Population(%)	7.69	43.90	24.26	24.15	100
Institution(%)	10.47	32.85	28.19	28.47	100

Source : Sikkim at a glance 1993. B.E.S. Gangtok.

Hence we are making a cross-section analysis of educational institution in Sikkim - 1993. 7.69 per cent of the total population live in North district which account for 10.47 per cent (to all taking to rather) of the total education institute. The harsh terrain and inaccessibility require setting up more schools in North Sikkim. The La-cheng, La-chung & Donzoua valleys are isolated. There are 76 pre-primary, 56 primary and 12 Junior high schools and the number of schools declines in the upper state i.e. only 7 secondary and 2 Higher Secondary schools.

Two higher secondary schools are located at Mangan and Chungthang. Besides these, there are 20 monasteries in North district, there are also spreading Tibetan and traditional teaching in the North.

The East district is more advanced in terms of quantitative and qualitative measures. Nearly 44 per cent population of Sikkim lives here with about 33 per cent of the total educational institute. The total number of institution is 480 which consists of 235 pre-primary, 165 primary, 43 junior and 34 secondary (higher) and another notable feature is that the only college i.e. Sikkim Government College is serving the quest for higher knowledge among the upgrown Sikkimese. There are also one Law college and Teachers' Training Institute in East Sikkim. The transportation and communication system is comparatively better than other districts and good teachers are also available to continue the institutions. Yet there is the dearth of different types of vocational institutions and training course which would provide a direct incentive to develop the capability of the people. Education system would be formulated in such a manner that the raised human capability could be translated into Human development, raising the over all quality of life. Besides these, there are maximum number of monasteries i.e. 22 in East district. Of them Tibetan Institute at Deorali is famous for their continuous effort in enriching the traditional as well Tibetan type of social teaching.

In case of West and South district there is an striking similarity in their educational set up. Nearly 28 per cent population of the total Sikkim occupies 24 per cent of the total educational institution each. In both the district there is no college or higher study centre. Although recently a B.Ed. college is proposed to establish at Namchi, South district. There are 12 monasteries in West district, of them Pemayangtse monastery is oldest and famous persuiicy traditional teaching, near pelling and in the South occupies 20 monasteries, a little bit better than West district.

In the pre-primary sector both the district occupies nearly equal number of institutions, but the west is ahead of south in respect to primary schools whereas the South is in a better position in terms of Junior high school i.e., 36 but the West

contain 27 only. There is no remarkable difference regarding the secondary and higher secondary school. The composition of the number of educational institution is of pyramid shape, implies that the modern education is a new phenomenon and it is of primary nature. The main emphasis was given to spread of basic education quickly among the people. The absence of any college; any vocational training institute and a few number of senior secondary schools implies that the mean years of schooling is very low in terms of quantity and quality too.

Table - 8 : Teacher Pupil Ratio as on 30.9.93¹²

<i>Stage</i>	<i>No.of</i>	<i>No. of Teacher</i>	<i>Ratio(T:S)</i>
Pre-primary	17129	723	1:23
Primary	75153	4284	1:18
Jr.High School	20760	1109	1:19
Secondary School	7619	724	1:11
Sr.Secondary School	3528	264	1:13

Source : Sikkim at a glance 1993, B.E.S. Gangtok.

Pupil-teacher ratio is one of the crucial indicator to measure the education imbalances in an education system. The pupil-teacher ratios of high Human development are primary 28 and secondary 17 in 1990 and in low human development countries excluding India, it is 43 and 23 respectively in 1990. In Sikkim, being a backward state the primary pupil-teacher ratio is 18 and in Junior level, it is 19 and at secondary and senior secondary level, these are 11 and 13 respectively. Apparently the pupil-teacher ratio in Sikkim is similar to the high human development countries. Basically it is due to two reasons. Firstly the rapid expansion of primary schools and massive investment in education and secondly the drop outs at higher level, non-availability of school and less interest in higher

education reduces the pupil-teacher ratio at the secondary level. As the pupil-teacher ratio falls the education imbalances declines and tends towards better education. Public expenditure on education as the percentage of total expenditure during the 8th plan period is proposed 10.00 per cent in 1992-97 whereas during the annual plan (1992-93) it was 9.09 per cent and in 1994-95 it was 7.59 per cent. It reveals a declining tendency. If we compare with India it was 11.2 during 1990. So the share is below the national level. Sikkim is in primary stage of education, so it requires more share in this regard to nourish the educational upliftment of the state. In spite of the efforts put in by the state government for spreading education, the education facilities have only touched the fringe of the population. The people are still shy of sending their children to school because of a subsistence economy and non-availability of labour. Parents need the help of the children in minor agricultural operations and, fodder and fuel collection for the family. This is one of the major cause behind the low pupil-teacher ratio in backward Sikkim.

Although low pupil-teacher ratio is a good indicator of balance education but the ratio declines so sharply i.e. 23 in pre-primary to 11 in secondary is due to social and economic causes not due higher development in education imbalances.

Table - 9 : Literacy Rates by sex to total population¹³

<i>Year</i>	<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Extent increase</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>	<i>Change (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>	<i>Change (%)</i>
1971	25.37	00	8.90	00	17.74	00
1981	43.95	17.58	22.20	13.30	34.04	16.30
1991	54.16	10.21	17.74	15.54	46.48	12.45

Source: Compiled from Census Report 1971, 81, 91, Govt. of India.

Variation in Literacy

The quality of people of a state largely depends on the rate of literacy and its progress in the desired direction. In 1971, the literacy rate in Sikkim was only 17.74 per cent lower than the Indian average. Even during 1981 the literacy rate in Sikkim was 34.04 per cent which is also lower than the Indian rate of 36.07 per cent. Not only the literacy rate is very low but also there was a wide gap between the rate - female literacy rate. The female literacy rate was 8.90 in 1971 which is very poor as compared to male literacy rate 25.37 per cent. After merger, during 1981 overall literacy rate has increased but the gender disparity stood at nearly 21 per cent. The male literacy has increased 17.58 per cent during the decade while the female literacy was achieved 13.30 per cent more than 1971.

The education facilities were quite inadequate as the socio-cultural taboos restricts many girls to attend school. The population of Sikkim widely scattered, the terrain, the transportation and the climate do not permit children to travel relatively short distance to attend school. Except few places, villages are set apart and children from different villages can not attend the same schools. Some villages and valleys are isolated in Sikkim by natural barrier. The socio-economic status of the population is not in favour of acquiring proper education.

In 1991, the literacy rate by sex to total population is 46.48 and there is an impressive change of 12.41 per cent from 1981. Another significant improvement is that the extent of change in female literacy is higher than the change in male literacy in comparison to 1981. Although the progress is significant but the achievement of female literacy rate is a revolutionary change.

In 1991, the literacy rate in Sikkim excluding the age group (0-6) year and 56.94 per cent higher than the Indian rate of 52.21 per cent. During this decade the achievement is so significant that it suppresses the national level, although the male-female gap remained more or less 20 per cent. The sex - disparity in literacy remain stagnant, instead of decline. This havoc change is possible due to the enormous growth of educational institute and large investment in education sector. Education lies in the concurrent list of state and centre, as Sikkim became a part of

India, a huge amount was spent to spread the basic education as soon as possible and the low literacy rate among woman hinders the spread of literacy in the state.

Table - 10 : Literacy Rates on the basis Rural-Urban & sex composition (variation in percentage only) and districtwise 1981-1991¹⁴

State	Sector	Area (in sq.km.)	Literates		
			Persons %	Males %	Females %
Sikkim					
	Total	7.096	12.43	10.21	15.54
	Rural		14.09	11.69	17.06
	Urban		15.99	13.25	17.98
North	Total	4226	12.69	11.48	15.48
	Rural		12.86	9.91	11.53
	Urban		30.15	9.91	11.53
East	Total		12.95	10.49	15.83
	Rural	954	15.37	12.63	19.02
	Urban		37.18	13.52	17.45
South	Total		11.38	8.58	15.06
	Rural	750	12.14	9.40	15.06
	Urban		19.11	11.57	25.30
West	Total		13.20	11.57	15.12
	Rural	1166	15.35	11.72	15.19
	Urban		12.23	11.43	14.53

Note - Including the population (0-6) years.

Source : Calculated from Census Report 1981, 1991 Govt. of Sikkim.

Nearly 9 per cent of the total population live in urban areas of Sikkim. Urbanisation is a recent phenomenon in Sikkim. The rate of change of literacy is 12.43 per cent during the period 1981-91. In urban area the variation is little better than rural area, the rates are 15.99 and 14.09 respectively which is quite natural. But the extent of increase of female literacy i.e. 15.54 is higher than male literacy i.e. 10.21 per cent. Not only in the rural males are also lagging behind the female by the extent of literacy increase but also the urban rates are also far behind the extent of increase in literacy in urban females. The increase of variation of female literacy depressing the male literacy would reduce the disparity in literacy, reducing the gap. Female literacy only 2.57 per cent population live in North district. The variation in percentage is 12.69 during 1981-91. Urban population is very low but its extent of change in literacy is faster i.e. 30.15 than rural areas where nearly 98 per cent population lives. This is because two factors; firstly the two main valleys La-cheng and La-chung are practically isolated from the modern education system and secondly the Bhutia composition and their monastic education system.

In East district, the positive variation in percentage is nearly 13 with 17.86 per cent urban population to the total population. The proportion of urban population is highest among all other districts, reveals a highest increase of 37.18 per cent in literacy during the period 1981-91. The variation of percentage change in urban population is greater than rural males. But in case of female, the change is in favour of rural i.e. 19.02 in comparison to urban i.e. 17.45.

The south district depicts a variation in percentage of literacy 11.38, in which the urban change i.e. 19.11 is far ahead of rural literacy change during the period. Whereas in case of male-female scenario, the variation in literacy percentage among female i.e. 15.06 is nearly double than the male rate i.e. 8.58. With respect to rural-urban males, the urban positive variation i.e. 11.57 suppresses the rural male literacy variation i.e. 9.40. In case female rural-urban, the rural female literacy variation, i.e. 15.59 is lower than the urban female literacy variation. Although the composition of urban population is 2.61 but the variation in literacy is far ahead of the bulk rural population. The variation in literacy percentage is to be improved to uplift the quality of life of the rural people.

The proportion of urban population in West district is lowest, i.e., 1.80, most of the people resides in the rural area. The overall growth rate in literacy is 13.20, with rural variation 15.35 and urban lower than rural i.e., 12.23. The progress in rural literacy is progressive and desirable. In case of male literacy variation between rural urban and overall is nearly 11 per cent and in case of female the variation in percentage is nearly 15 per cent.

There are very significant disparities regarding the rural-urban and male-female literacy. Gender bias is very prominent in backward states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. So adequate study is to be done to evaluate the progress of literacy. To measure rural-urban disparity and gender inequality and to find direction and to prescribe policy we have to study the extent of variation in literacy percentage. Eastern Himalayan region covers eastern parts of Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet, a few parts of West Bengal and Arunachal. There is a close regional, similarities among them. But in case of literacy, there is a large variation among them. The literacy rate of Sikkim, i.e., 56.94 per cent is far ahead of the literacy rate of Arunachal Pradesh, i.e., 41.95 and it is almost equal to West Bengal. Not only this the literacy rate of Sikkim is more than the All India average, i.e., 52.21 per cent. Consequently the progress in literacy is very significant. Although the literacy rate of Sikkim is far behind the literacy rate of most advanced state, Kerala, i.e., 89.79 per cent. The massive progress in literacy is possible in Sikkim during last ten years. State Government has given a great deal of emphasis on education. There are primary schools in almost all villages.

Table - 11 : Literacy rate 1991¹⁵

	<i>Persins</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Difference</i>
India	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
Sikkim	56.94	65.74	46.69	19.05
Arunachal Pradesh	41.59	51.45	29.69	21.76
West Bengal	57.70	67.81	46.56	21.25
Kerala	89.79	93.62	86.13	7.49

Source : Census India 1991, Govt. of India.

The male literacy is 65.74 per cent in the state which is more than eastern himalayan state. Arunachal Pradesh and Indian male literacy rate. But the state is lagging behind neighbouring West Bengal and Kerala. In case Kerala, the variation in literacy is nearly 30 per cent. But in case of female literacy, the condition of Sikkim is better than Arunachal i.e. 29.69 per cent and all Indian female literacy rate i.e., 39.29. It is equal to West Bengal. The female literacy rate of Kerala is 86.13 per cent which is 40 per cent more than Sikkim. As a consequence proper care should be taken to improve the female literacy rate of Sikkim. The socio-cultural and socio-economic condition hinders the growth female literacy in the state. Girls are not sent to school as they are needed at home to look after small children or do other odd jobs, e.g. cooking, fuel collection and etc. at home.

Gender sensitivity is very prominent in all the underdeveloped countries and regions. Even within each country there are very significant educational disparities between the sexes. The male-female literacy difference is 24.84 per cent in India. Although there are large variation in literacy among Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal. But there is a striking similarities regarding the sex disparities. The differences are 19.05, 21.76 per cent respectively. It depicts a difference of nearly 20 per cent between the sexes and the trend is irrespective of the socio-economic or socio-cultural status of states. So the factors affecting this

may have a closer similarities which are inherent in the system.

Table - 12 : Age-specific literacy distribution -Male¹⁶

Age group	6-14	15-19	20-44	45-47	60 & above	all
Educational Status						
Illiterate	150 (39.3)	18 (8.9)	105 (13.8)	16 (9.3)	20 (28.8)	
Upto V Standard	179 (46.9)	110 (55.8)	413 (54.3)	72 (41.8)	31 (44.9)	626
VI-VIII	40 (10.8)	33 (16.8)	102 (13.5)	53 (30.5)	15 (21.2)	203
IX-X	13 (3.5)	25 (1.26)	84 (11.0)	21 (12.2)	3 (3.8)	133
XI-XII	0 (0)	9 (4.5)	39 (5.2)	8 (4.7)	0 (0)	56
Graduate	0 (0)	3 (1.4)	8 (1.00)	1 (0.5)	0 (0)	12
Professional	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (0.7)	1 (0.5)	1 (1.3)	8
Post Graduate	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (0.5)	1 (0.5)	0 (0)	5
Total	382 (100.0)	198 (100.0)	716 (100.0)	173 (100.0)	70 (100.0)	

Source : Calculated from Personal Survey.

Being an Indian state, Kerala reveals a smaller difference of 7.49 per cent. It shows that the achievement of overall high literacy and 90 per cent has reduced the disparity between the sexes. Consequently it can be concluded the declining trend of disparity between the sexes indicates not only a better progress of literacy but also with greater social justice that radically changes in the economic and social life.

A total of 645 households were surveyed covering four districts of Sikkim. The total number of population is 3528 with 1882 persons male and 1646 female. To evaluate the educational status of the surveyed people. We exclude the population of (0-6) age groups because formal schooling starts at the age of six in India. Excluding 0-6 age groups. The total number of male population stood at 1584.

The educational status are classified in the following manner. e.g. illiterate and literate implies a person who can both read and write with understanding in any language. Literate persons are sub-divided into upto V standard, class VI-VII, class IX-X, class XI-XII, Graduate, professional and post graduate. To make a clear understanding the population is grouped into five age-specific categories. The categories are 6-14, 15-19, 20-44, 45-49 and 60 and above age groups. Besides the number of people into different categories, their percentages are also given in the brackets.

Out of 382 people in 6-14 age group nearly 47 per cent population belongs to the literacy bracket of up to V standard and 39 per cent in the category of illiterate. This high rate of illiteracy is due the socio-economic backwardness and socio-cultural factors. The poor parents show a little interest to send their children to school. In the next group i.e., 15-19 age groups, there are 198 people, of which the highest number of literacy upto 5th standard i.e. 55.8 per cent is observed and

followed by 16.8 and 12.6 per cent in the VI-VIII and IX-X classes respectively. The illiteracy rate is lowest i.e. 8.9 per cent. The drop outs due to socio-economic and socio-cultural are major factors behind the stagnation and concentration of literacy at the upto V standard.

The lion's share of people belongs to 22-44 age groups. Out of 761 male people, 54.3 per cent population has concentrated their education upto V standard. It implies that the spread of education in vertical direction is limited in nature. The basic requirements of literacy is more crucial than the quest of higher studies. The literacy rate is 13.8 with 105 population and the literacy rate declines sharply at a lower level at higher studies. These rates are nearly 13, 11, 5 and 1 for the VI-VIII, IX-X, XI-XII, and graduate level respectively. In Sikkim, the literacy mission and educational infrastructure gained the momentum during the last decade. Before merger, the educational infrastructure was very poor and insufficient to meet the requirements and rousing interest about education. A large number of population of this age groups belongs to before merger Sikkim. That is why the concentration at a lower level and the balance growth in upper layer of education is not observed.

Lastly, the next age groups, (45-49) years & 60 and above contain a population 173 and 70 respectively of which 9.3 per cent and 28.8 per cent are illiterate. In the (45-49) years of age bracket, better literacy rates are observed upto V standard and VI-VIII classes respectively. The rates are nearly 42 and 30 per cent respectively. In the (60 and above) age groups, about 45 per cent population lie in the upto V standard, most of them only can read and write and 21 per cent in the next strata of education. There is not a single number of graduate or post graduate in this group. Basically these people started their journey life long before the merger of Sikkim with India. These people have suffered due the poor infrastructure of educational facilities, non-availability proper guidance and control, poor communication system, less investment to education and lack of social consciousness. The economy is very much subsistence and sensitive to cultural and social taboos. Besides these, religious education and traditional occupation were very significant to them. They were less interested in modern education.

Table - 13 : Age-specific Educational Status of Women (in years) ¹⁷

<i>Age group/ Educational Status</i>	<i>6-14</i>	<i>15-19</i>	<i>20-44</i>	<i>45-49</i>	<i>60 & above</i>	<i>Total</i>
Illiterate	239 (64.2)	28 (15.5)	107 (17.8)	31 (23.7)	26 (48.5)	
Upto V Standard	98 (26.0)	110 (59.4)	324 (53.9)	64 (47.8)	20 (36.8)	518
VI-VIII	28 (7.6)	20 (10.5)	77 (12.8)	20 (14.8)	4 (6.6)	121
IX-X	8	19	57	12	5	93
XI-XII	0 (0)	6 (3.5)	26 (4.4)	2 (1.30)	1 (0.7)	35
Graduate	0 (0)	2 (0.7)	5 (0.8)	2 (1.30)	0 (0)	9
Professional	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (0.5)	1 (0.6)	0 (0)	4
Post Graduate	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (0.4)	1 (0.8)	0 (0)	4
	373 (100.00)	185 (100.00)	602 (100.00)	133 (100.00)	56 (100.00)	All 1349

Source : Calculated from Personal Survey.

Out of total 1646 female, 1349 belongs to the age group beyond (0-6) years. There are 373 female in the (6-14) years of age group of which 64.2 per cent is illiterate and 26 per cent has the literacy range up to V standard. As compared to male illiteracy, the female illiteracy rate is very high in this age group. This is a clear case of social disparity and gender bias to education. Even in now-a days, the education facilities are restricted to girl child. Most the girls are diverted to household works fuel collection, to look after the siblings and old persons in the family rather than school.

In the (15-19) age group, there are 185 females of them nearly 60 per cent belongs to up to V standard group and 15 per cent in the illiterate group and nearly 10 per cent in VI-VIII and IX-X classes. Due a large number of drop outs the concentration is highest in the upto V standard group. The socio-economic and socio-cultural taboos also restrict further study. There is a striking similarities in case of male and female in this bracket. Early marriage is another important factor alongwith household engagement.

The largest number of female, numbering 602 lies in the age group (20-44) years with nearly 14 per cent illiteracy. The high stagnation in literacy is observed in upto V standard categories, i.e., 53.9 per cent. The reasons are high dropouts marriage, poor and inadequate infrastructure during the beginning of their educational life. The spread of modern education in Sikkim is last 10 to 15 years phenomonon. The distribution of education in the upper sphere is limited. It is nearly 12,9,4,0.8,0.5 and 0.4 per cent respectively in the upward direction. Consequently the mean years of schooling is not impressive among in this age group. The achievement of primary education is not sole aim of literacy mission, the depth of education enlarges the legal rights and status given to them, employment opportunities and demographic factors and it leads to a positive contribution to human development process as a whole.

In the (45-49) age group nearly 48 per cent female out of 133 has the educational record upto V standard and nearly 15 per cent belongs to (VI-VIII) brackets. Almost 24 per cent females are illiterate as compared male of this age

group. The female attainment is very lower. Poor educational achievement reflects a poor status of women in the society. Basically, in a primitive isolated state like Sikkim, the females were used as a means of reproduction and household management. Due the pastoral and subsistence economy, a large proportion of women has to perform work for economic and livelihood reasons. Whereas 15 per cent women attained upto VI-VIII standard of education, the male rate is double than the female, indicates a higher disparity or gender bias in education. Not only this, the next categories are also lagging behind in comparison to male educational status in this group. The state of women education is very poor in the 60 and above age groups. Merely basic education is observed among 36.8 per cent of the women and the illiteracy rate is very high nearly 50 per cent. The spread of education is also poor in the upper ladder. In comparison to male the female educational status is far behind in this age group. These women are of pre-merger Sikkim and the social progress, urbanisation, spread of communication and educational institutions were not sufficient and adequate to rouse the social demand and necessity of education among them.

Women educational status is very significant in uplifting the socio-economic, socio-cultural and demographic factors of the society. 15-49 age group is very crucial. The age group is regarded as the reproductive age group, as the fertility of Sikkim is very and the maternal death is also very high. To improve the condition of infant mortality, child care, population control and over the spread of education, the women of this age groups have the major responsibility in sharing the shoulder in the society. But the educational status in Sikkim is practically frezzed in the category of upto V standard. The bottleneck of the system is should be open. Women literacy is more vital than male literacy, not only in rousing the social and legal consciousness but also nourishing the demographic and vital factors of life and spreading better education campaign. The literacy rate which is accounted for 15 years and above age groups, is considered to be the adult literacy rate.

Table - 14 : Adult literacy and years of schooling ¹⁸

<i>Educational Status</i>	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Total years of schooling</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Total years of schooling</i>
Upto V standard	626	952	518	728
VI-VIII	203	1131	121	782
IX-X	133	997	93	902
XI-XII	56	631	35	380
Graduate	12	156	9	126
Profession	8	85	4	40
Post Graduate	5	70	4	55
All	1043	4022	784	3013

Source : Enumerated from Personal Survey.

Total population male 1882

Total population female 1645

Male adult literacy rate = $(1043 \times 100) / 1882 = 57.056$

Female adult literacy rate = $(784 \times 100) / 1646 = 47.63$

Combined adult literacy rate = $\{(1043 + 784) \times 100\} / 3528 = 51.78$

Mean years of schooling for male = 2.137 years

Mean years of schooling for female = 1.83 years

Combined mean years of schooling = 1.994 - 2 years

The male adult literacy rate is 57.056 per cent and the female adult literacy rate is obtained at lower level of 47.63 per cent. In accordance with 1991 census, the gender disparity is nearly 19 per cent between the sexes whereas in case of adult literacy the gulf reduces to almost 10 per cent. It implies that young age structure of Sikkim has a greater impact on the overall education system and achievement. A huge amount of investment and improvement is done during the last decade. It is seen that in the 6-14 age group. The female illiteracy, i.e. 64.3 per cent which more than male illiteracy 39.3 per cent of the same age group. The education trend of lower age groups influences the literacy achievement and widens the gender bias.

From the table it is seen that the main educational thrust is concentrated upto XI-XII and standard and it is mostly frezzed at VI-VIII standard of education. As a consequence the mean years of schooling is not impressive and significant. The mean years of schooling for male is 2.137 years and for female it is 1.83 years. The shows that the overall adult literacy of the survey population is 51.78 per cent and the mean years of schooling is 1.994 years. The United National Development Programme has classified all the countries in to three board categories with respect to the human development conditions attained by the different countries. These are high human development, medium human development and low human development. The high human development suggests a high adult literacy rate of 97.3 per cent with 9.8 years as mean years of schooling whereas the medium human development shows an adult literacy of 80.4 per cent and 4.8 years as mean (19) years of schooling. The low human development countries is composed of mainly developing, under-developed and undeveloped countries reflects a lower adult literacy of 47.4 per cent with 2.0 years as mean years of schooling. India belongs to low human development category. During 1992, it achieved an adult-literacy rate of 49.8 per cent and 2.4 mean years of schooling. The position of India among the low human development countries is little bit better both in respect of adult literacy and means of schooling.

Table - 15¹⁹

<i>Regions and countries and state</i>	<i>Adult literacy 1992</i>	<i>Mean years of schooling 1992</i>
High human development	97.3	9.8
Medium human development	80.4	4.8
Low human development	47.4	2.0
India	49.8	2.4
Nepal	27.0	2.1
Bhutan	40.9	0.3
Sikkim (1993-94)	51.78	1.99

Source : Human Development Report - 1992.

During 1993-94 the adult literacy rate of Sikkim is 51.78 per cent which is more than national average 49.8 per cent during 1992 but the mean years of schooling is 1.99 years which is less than the Indian average. It implies that the spread of education has got momentum recently. The state Sikkim is in a better position in respect of neighbouring countries Bhutan and Nepal. The adult literacy rate of Bhutan and Nepal is less than Sikkim. The mean years of schooling of Bhutan is 0.3 years which is far below Sikkim but the mean years of schooling of Nepal is a little better than Sikkim. There is a close social, religious and economic identity among the states, So the comparison is made.

It is also above the Indian average, although the mean years of schooling is marginally below than the low human development category but it far below the Indian mean years of schooling. It indicates a poor and inadequate educational inheritance of Sikkim.

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