

## Chapter 2

# SIKKIM TOURISM – THE SCENARIO

### SECTION I

#### SIKKIM: AN INTRODUCTION

##### 2.1 SIKKIM: AN INTRODUCTION

Sikkim is a former Himalayan mountain kingdom that was, until recently, geographically and culturally isolated. It became an integral part of India from 26th April, 1975. As part of India, it is now governed by the Indian Constitution and democratic government, and has its own state parliament in Sikkimese capital city of Gangtok.

##### 2.1.1 Origin of Name

Sikkim (or Sikkim) means crested land in Nepali. The term, which was coined by the invading Gorkhas, is derived from the Sanskrit word Shikhim which means "crested", and is the most widely accepted origin. Sikkim would thus owe its name to its almost entirely mountainous terrain. An alternative etymology suggests that the name originates in the Limbu words Su, which means "new", and Khim, which means "palace". Hence the term Sikkim may also mean "New Palace", in reference to the palace built by the state's first ruler, Panchen Namgyal. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is Denzong, which means the "valley of rice".

It is also possible that the name came from Su Him which means "Superb Snow", or "Superb Setting", supposedly the words of a newlywed Nepali princess when she first entered the palace as the bride of the local Lepcha king. During its reign, the Chogyal adopted the Tibetan translation of Sikkim, known as Vbras-ljong

It is the least populous state in India and the second smallest in area after Goa. The thumb-shaped state borders Nepal in the west, The People's Republic of China to the north and east, and Bhutan in the south-east. The Indian state of West Bengal borders Sikkim to its south. The predominant religions are Hinduism and Vajrayana Buddhism. Gangtok is the capital and largest town.

Sikkim has been divided into four districts and each district has further been bifurcated into two sub-divisions for administrative purpose. Sikkim state being a part of inner mountain ranges of Himalayas is hilly having varied elevation ranging from 300 to 8540 meters. But the habitable areas are only up to the altitude of 2100 meters, constituting only 20% of the total area of the state. The highest portion of Sikkim lies in its North West direction.

Ethnically Sikkim has mainly three groups of people viz. Nepalis, Bhutias and Lepchas. The local language is Nepali. English is the official language. The high serrated, snow capped spurs and peaks of Kanchenjunga (8546 m.) look attractive consisting of Kumbha Karna (7711 m.), Pendem (6706 m.), Narsingh (5825 m.), Kabru Dome (6545 m.), etc. A number of glaciers descends from eastern slopes of Khangchendzonga into Sikkim where snow clad line is found above 5300 mtrs. The biggest of them is Zemu, from whose snout above Lachen monastery rises the river Teesta. Teesta is the main river and its main tributaries are Zemu, Lachung, Rangyong, Dikchu, Rongli, Rangpo and Rangit which form the main channel of drainage from the north to the south.

### **2.1.2 Physical Features**

Spanning Sikkim's western borders are the Khangchendzonga and the Singalila Range, a north-south spur of the Great Himalaya. The northern limits which reach out to the Tibetan Plateau are straddled by the Donkia Range while the eastern flank is bounded by the Chola Range. The average steepness is about 45 degrees. Sikkim encompasses the Lesser Himalaya, Central Himalaya, and the Tethys Himalaya. Although the trend of Great Himalaya is to run across in an east-west direction, the two ridges demarcating Sikkim's eastern and western sides, the Chola and the Singalila, follow a north-south pattern. Across the middle, another north-south ridge of lesser elevation separates the Rangeet Valley from the Teesta Valley.

Sikkim's two major rivers are the Teesta and the Rangeet. The turbulent Teesta, which has its source at the Chho Lhamu Lake in the Tibetan Plateau is an un-seeming little stream at first but gradually swells into a raging river as more tributaries converge into its path as it snakes through deep mountain valleys into the plains of Bengal. The gentler Rangeet has its source at the Rathong Glacier south of the Khangchendzonga massif. It meets with the Teesta at the valley dividing Sikkim and Bengal.

There are numerous perennial lakes in Sikkim among which, Khecheopalri, Gurudongmar, Chho Lhamu, Changu and Menmetsho are some of the more scenic.

### **2.1.3 Climate**

From deep river valleys no more than 250 meters above sea level to the dizzy heights of Khangchendzonga at 8,586 meters, Sikkim harbours ecosystems of nearly every elevational stratum. In a matter of a few hours, one is able to ascend from sweltering tropical heat to cool alpine meadows. Facing the brunt of the North East Monsoon rains, it is also one of the wettest regions in the Himalayas due to its proximity to the Bay of Bengal and the mountain barriers of Northeast India.

Summers are extremely humid though not necessarily hot as temperatures vary according to altitude. In the lower and middle hills the maximum temperatures range between 25° C and 28° C down in the deep river valleys it can get stuffy but is never unbearably hot.

Winters are relatively cold at night but pleasant during the day. In the lower and middle hills, night temperatures average 5° C, and day temperatures hover around 15° C. The alpine region of course becomes very chilly, and temperatures remain well below freezing except during moments when sunlight can seep in through the clouds.

The Monsoon winds strike Sikkim between late May and early June, and there is incessant rain all across the state till late September. Around July and August, torrential downpours

sometimes last for several days at a stretch. Gangtok has an annual average rainfall of 325 cm.

#### **2.1.4 Vegetation**

The jungles in the lower parts are lush with creepers and crawlers beneath extensive canopies of tree ferns, plantain, bamboo, and several species of tall trees such as Kapok and Sal. The gigantic Sal is said to take a hundred years to grow, a hundred years to season, and has a hundred years of use before its decay.

The temperate forests have an interesting variety of trees and include oak, chestnuts, maple, birch, magnolia and rhododendron to name a few. Dendrobium orchids, from the giant hookeriana straddling the yokes of tall trees to the tightly-clustered densiflorum that flowers in a bunch the size of a baseball, can be seen in bloom during summer. In the soft humid soil amidst moss and shrubs are several terrestrial species, and includes several varieties of Paphiopedilum, the exotic 'ladies slipper'. In the cool temperate reaches where the earth gives way to granite, there is larch, fir, juniper and more rhododendrons. Here in the summertime, the meadows come alive with myriads of wildflowers. (Ref. PN Chopra Sikkim South Asia Books 1985)

#### **2.1.5 Agriculture**

Maize, rice, wheat, and barley are cultivated in terraced hillsides. Beans, potatoes, vegetables, fruits and tea are grown. Sikkim is one of the world's main producers of cardamom. While yaks and sheep are popular in the higher elevations, other livestock that are tended include cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, and poultry.

Agriculture is the major economic activity and is practiced on terraced field that has been laboriously created from steep hillsides. Sikkim is the largest producer of cardamom and also boasts to utilize largest area for its cultivation. Sikkimese economy broadly depends on the agriculture which provides livelihood to the majority of population in the state. However, its progress remained limited due to difficult topography and other natural barriers. As a result

all head sectors related to agriculture emerged, government is doing it's best to improve the situation.

### **2.1.6 Horticulture**

Horticulture is one of the major economic activities of the people of Sikkim. Large Cardamom, ginger and turmeric are the principal crops while Mandarin orange, guava, mango, banana and so on are the principal fruits grown in the state. The department of Horticulture is deeply involved in motivating and providing technical guidance to local farmers. Sikkim is also a paradise for flowers. Gladioli, anthuriums, lilliums, primulas, rhododendrons, orchids as well as many other floral species thrive here. The state is home to an amazing 450 species of exotic orchids alone. There is immense potential for developing floriculture on a commercial basis here, and the department of Horticulture is making concerted efforts to turn this sector into an export-oriented industry. (<http://www.sikkim.nic.in/>)

### **2.1.7 Nature and Wildlife**

Although a tour into Sikkim itself is a delightful experience of being close to nature with perpetual views of lush vegetation that accommodates an immense variety of life forms both animate and inanimate, a more dedicated approach towards the objective is bound to produce better results. Simple yet critical factors such as being in the right place at the right season and time is most important for the naturalist with an aspiration for close encounters with wildlife.

Sikkim's location encompasses two major zoological regions, the Oriental and the Palaearctic. Therefore there is prolific abundance of floral and faunal representation in a magnitude hard to evince for so tiny an area. Birds and butterflies number well above the 500 mark, and the variety in moths may run close to 2,000. Even the list for orchids stands at an

impressive count of 450, and at least 36 species of rhododendron have been recorded in the higher climes. ([www.sikkiminfo.net/](http://www.sikkiminfo.net/))

J. D. Hooker, the 19th Century English botanist catalogued 2,929 plant species in his 1849 expedition to Sikkim. Botanists today estimate there to be anywhere from 4,000 – 6,000 species in plant life. Superlatives aside, avid nature lovers have the benefit of viewing an immense variety in vegetation from the tropical to the alpine kind. The jungles at lower elevations are lush with creepers and crawlers that lie beneath canopies of tree ferns, plantain, bamboo, and several species of tall trees that includes the gigantic Sal, which is said to take a hundred years to grow, a hundred years to season, and have a hundred years of use before its decay. The temperate region is arrayed with yet some more interesting timberland and include oak, chestnuts, maple, birch, magnolia and rhododendron to name a few. And up in the cool temperate reaches where the earth begins to give way to granite, one will find larch, fir, juniper and more rhododendrons.

From two species of the rare Himalayan Blue Poppy to the hordes of variety in wild orchids, the wilderness of Sikkim is a Garden of Eden. Beginning in spring, flowering plants bloom all the way till late summer depending on the altitude. In urban areas, many Sikkimese people have taken to gardening, with an affinity especially for growing wild flowers. A visit to one of the several flower festivals held round the year in Gangtok will surprise everyone with the sights of potted wild flowers.

Some of the world's most endangered animal species such as the Snow Leopard, Blue Sheep, Kiang, Shapi and the Musk Deer are found in the alpine highlands. At lower elevations more prolific in vegetation, there are the Himalayan Black Bear, the Red Panda, the Clouded Leopard, the Common Leopard, Serow, Goral, Barking Deer, Wild Boar and a host of other lesser mammals.

Of the hundreds of birds that range the skies over Sikkim, none is more formidable than the magnificent Himalayan Griffon or the Bearded Vulture with its incredible wingspan, which

can be over 10 feet. Then there is the elegant Impeyan Pheasant with its flamboyant electric-blue plumage. The more common birds seen are kingfishers, woodpeckers, cuckoos, sunbirds, thrushes, babblers, bulbuls, finches, eagles, hawks, owls, pigeons, doves, jungle fowls and pheasants. Seasonal visitors include migratory species such as Demoiselle Cranes, Ruddy Shell Ducks and Cormorants. ( Das Gupta Manas Sikkim, Problems and Prospects of Development/, South Asia Books 1986)

### **2.1.8 Demographic Features:**

Sikkim is a multi-ethnic state. Broadly, the population can be divided into tribal and non-tribal groups. Lepchas, Bhutias, Sherpas are categorized as Scheduled Tribes. The Lepchas are the original inhabitants of the state. Compared to other ethnic groups, the Lepchas still maintain many of their traditional ways. The Bhutias comprise of Sikkimese Bhutia and Bhutia from Bhutan and Tibet. The Sherpas are a marginal ethnic group in the state. Over 70% populations consist of Nepalese. They are dominant ethnic group in the state. The people from the plain, mostly involved in trade and services represent a marginal group. East district is the most populated where as North's density only 7, is least populated. Sex ratio (females per thousand male) in 1991 was 878, where as it has declined and now is 875 (2001). There are only eight urban towns and urban population is 9.10% of total population. Schedule caste and schedule tribe population is 5.93 % and 22.36% respectively, North district is a tribal district and it has about 55.38% tribal population. Literacy rate is 56.94% (19th position), higher than the all India average literacy tare of 52.11%. (Economic Survey of Sikkim 2002)

## **2.2 ECONOMY AND RESOURCES**

The economy of Sikkim is mainly based on agricultural and animal husbandry. Approximately 11% of the total geographical area is under agriculture. Agriculture is of the mixed type and still at the subsistence level rather than commercial level. The work force participation rate as per 2001 census is 49.54%. The female participation rate in Sikkim is also much higher than the national average. This is an important aspect if the hill economy, as productivity is low and hence all the able-bodied people are employed in agriculture and

other activities. Cultivators account for the greater majority of the people in the state. Their percentage is 57.84%. Agricultural laborers as a whole constitute only 7.81% of the workers in the state. House holds and other industries are negligible, but other worker (Tertiary Sector) at the state level represents a good percentage of population (Sikkim: Peoples Vision; Publisher: Department of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, Government of Sikkim). The decreasing ratio of worker at the state level indicates the low level of economic diversification. The importance of agriculture can be judged by the high percentage of population approx. 65% engaged in it. Animal husbandry is an integral part of the household economy of the region. There are certain household industries also which substantially adds to household incomes. The past one and half decade has witnessed a tremendous upward swing in various development programmes giving a new thrust to Sikkim economy. This process has increased wage employment opportunities. Though most of the inhabitants are basically engaged in agriculture, they have diversified into tertiary jobs such as Government services.

Sikkim's economy is largely agrarian, based on traditional farming methods, on terraced slopes. The rural populace grows crops such as cardamom, oranges, apples, tea and orchids. Rice is grown on terraced hillsides in the southern reaches. Elaichi or Cardamom is the chief cash crop of Sikkim. Sikkim has the highest production and largest cultivated area of cardamom in India. Because of the hilly terrain, and lack of reliable transportation infrastructure, there are no large-scale industries. Breweries, distilleries, tanning and watch-making are the main industries. These are located in the southern reaches of the state, primarily in the towns of Melli and Jorethang. The state has an impressive growth rate of 8.3%, which is the second highest in the country after Delhi.

In recent years, the government of Sikkim is promoting tourism. Sikkim has a vast tourism potential and by tapping into this the state has grossed rich dividend. A fledgling industry the state has recently invested in is online gambling. The "Playwin" lottery, which is played on

custom-built terminals connected to the internet, has been a commercial success, with operations all over the country.

The opening up of the Nathula Pass in July 7, 2006 connecting Lhasa, Tibet to India is scheduled to give a boost to the local economy, though many minor issues are still to be resolved. The Pass, closed since the 1962 China – India war, was an offshoot of the ancient trade route, which was essential to the wool, fur and spice trade.

### **2.2.1 Mining**

The state of Sikkim is endowed with rich geological resources. Among the minerals mined in Sikkim are copper, dolomite, limestone, graphite, mica, iron, and coal.

The department of mines and geology has been responsible for exploration and establishment of mineral resources, with the object of developing commercially exploitable mineral resources. Moderate to fair amount of success has been achieved during the investigation carried out by different agencies in certain sectors namely dolomite, coal, quartzite, graphite, lime stone, silliminite, talc, mineral water, thermal springs, building stone and materials for porcelain.

### **2.2.2 Industry**

The policy of framework in regard to industrialization in Sikkim has to be formulated keeping in mind the particular factors endowments that the state has the limitations in regard to resources, particularly, minerals and industrial raw materials as well as man power. The state is not so rich in mineral resources and apart from the deposits of copper, lead and zinc, no other viable and exploitable mineral deposits have so far been discovered. While on the other hand the state enjoys a salubrious climate, a dust free atmosphere and peaceful industrial entrepreneurial talent, has also to be taken note of. In regard to industrial development, a number of small and medium units have been promoted in the state; for example, Sikkim Time Corporation (SITCO) and Government Institute of Handicraft and Handlooms.

### **2.2.3 Power**

The innumerable streams and rivers flowing down the Himalayas have provided Sikkim with an immense potential for development of Hydro Electric Power. The demand for Power increased with the increase in the population. The number of urban centres and the pace of industrialization are picking up in the State and finally paving way for rural electrification (Sikkim Human Development Report 2001; Publisher: Department of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, Government of Sikkim).

In the VII Plan the two Hydel Projects namely Rimbi Stage II and Rongnichu Stage II have been completed along with the Lachen Micro Hydel Project. Above all, Sikkim Government extended a total number of 3000 free connections under the scheme of extending two point free domestic connections to the poor masses and provided electrification to all the district headquarters, towns and 90% of the total revenue blocks. Sikkim stood first in rank along with 12 States in the cent percent village electrified. (Technology Information, Forecasting & Assessment Council (TIFAC) (Department Of Science & Technology); A Vision for Sikkim: Technology Perspectives & Business Opportunities; Presented: on the occasion of 'National Science Week' held during Feb - Mar, 1997 at Gangtok, Sikkim)

### **2.2.4 Livestock**

In a predominantly rural economy such as Sikkim, animal husbandry activities form an extremely important element in the effort to bring about substantial improvements in living standards. The overall area available for agriculture operations is limited to about 15% of the geographical area of the state and with the increasing population, per capita land availability has been consistently declining, it is therefore, essential, that supplementary sources of income should be developed in order to provide not only the much needed support to the rural families but also to make available in increasing quantity, protein rich food items such as milk, egg, and meat. Adequate numbers of livestock like cattle, buffaloes, pigs, sheep's, goats, yaks and few other are reared in Sikkim. Yaks are reared in northeastern ranges bordering Tibet, Bhutan and western region bordering Nepal.

### **2.2.5 Tourism**

It is considered as the backbone of Sikkim's economy. It has brought economic prosperity in Sikkim. With the salubrious climate, the natural beauty and the fine cultural heritage of Sikkim, the growth of tourism has immense possibilities. There are large numbers of places of tourist attraction particularly the snow clad mountains, the lakes and unspoiled forest areas and valleys of flowers. The advantage of having very fine monasteries in Sikkim can also be taken to attract Buddhist tourists from countries like Japan and the South Eastern countries.

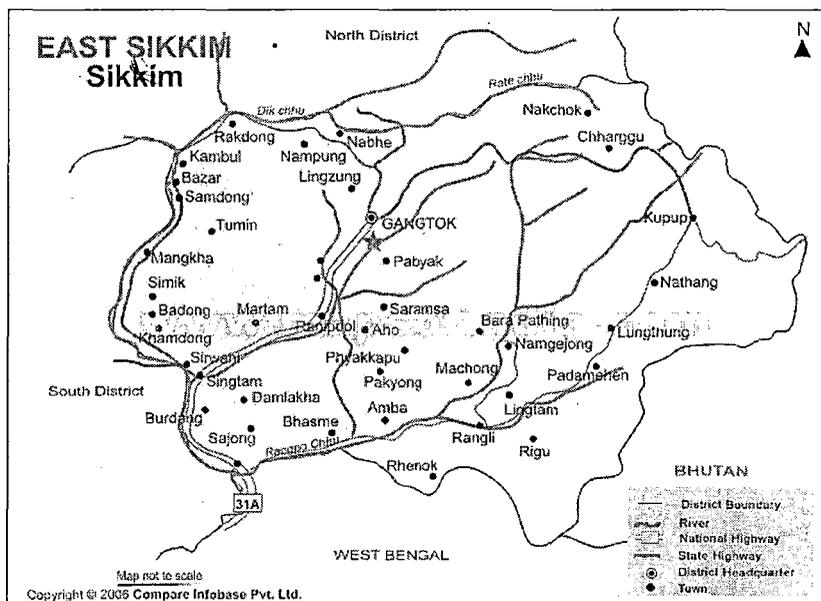
## SECTION 2

### PLACES OF TOURIST INTEREST

#### 2.3 PLACES OF TOURIST INTEREST

##### 2.3.1 East Sikkim: Places of Tourist Interest

Gangtok is the capital of Sikkim and being so it is also the centre of tourist attraction. The town itself has remnants of Chogyal period in addition to parks, monasteries and other places of tourists interest. Tsamgo lake on the way to Nathula at the Indo-china border is another place frequented by the tourists. An account all these places are given below.



**Diagram 5 - Map of East Sikkim**

The important monasteries in the east district are given below.

##### **Rumtek Dharma Chakra Centre**

About 45 minutes drive from Gangtok, 24kms away, is the Rumtek Dharma Chakra Centre, the seat of the Kagyud order, one of the four major Tibetan Buddhist sects. Since the 1960s,

after the arrival of his Holiness the XVth Gyalwa Karmapa, the Centre houses some of the World's most unique religious scriptures and rare objects. Traditional in design, it is almost a replica of the original Kagyud headquarter in Tibet, It has over 300 centres overseas.

### **Pal Zurmang Kagyud Monastery**

Zurmang Kagyud Monastery which is located at Lingdum, East Sikkim is at a distance of about 20kms from Gangtok. The present Gharwang Rimpoche is the 12th successive incarnation of the glorious emanation of Zurmang Gharwang. The monastery is a place worth visiting for its religious and exquisite architecture and serene atmosphere.

### **Gonzang Monastery**

Gonzang Monastery near Tashi View Point was established in the year 1981. The founder of monastery is H.E.Tingkye Gonzang Rimpoche. He was recognized as an incarnation of Yolmo Terton: Ngakchang Shakya Zangpo, a 15th century Nyingmapa Terton. The monastery follows Jangter Tradition of Nyingmapa school of Tibetan Buddhism.

The trip to Nathula at a height of 14000 feet is a tourist attraction for it is the Indo China border but also people can experience cold and chilling climate. Besides being a religious trip to Baba ka Mandir and Tsamgo Lake the climate is also an attraction. It often snows out here.

### **Tsomgo Lake**

It literally means the "Source of the Lake" in Bhutia language. It is located at a distance 38kms. from Gangtok. This serene lake is situated at an altitude of 3780 meters. The lake is about 1km long, oval in shape, 12 meters deep and is considered sacred by the local people. This placid lake remains frozen during the winter months.

Between May and August, it is possible to see a variety of flowers in bloom, including the Rhododendrons, various species of Primulas, Blue and Yellow Poppies, Irish etc. It is also an ideal habitat of the Red Panda and various species of birds. It is open for both the Foreigners and Indians. Foreign visitors have to be in a group of two or more and have to apply for the visitors' permit through a registered travel agency.

### **Baba Harbhajan Sing Memorial**

Built in the memory of Harbhajan Sing Mandir, the memorial lies between the Nathu-La and the Jelep-la Passes. Legend has it that he appeared in a dream a few days after he went missing and expressed a desire that a monument be built in his memory. His fellow soldiers then built a monument that has over the years acquired the status of a pilgrimage. Believers leave a bottle of Water, which they collect a few days later to take home.

### **Nathula**

56kms from Gangtok is Nathula Pass situated at an altitude of 14,450 feet at the border of India and China. It has one of the highest motorable roads and is richly covered with many varieties of alpine flora and fauna. A tranquil place to visit, Nathula is open only for Indian Nationals on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. The visitors have to get a permit from the Tourism Department through a registered travel agency.

Following are the places one can visit from Gangtok:

### **Gangtok Ropeway**

It takes the passengers to the highest point of the city of Gangtok, covering the distance of about 1km. in only seven minutes. Each cabin accommodates 24 passengers. The lower terminal station is located at Deorali market, the intermediate terminal at Nam-Nang and the upper terminal station is below the Secretariat (Tashiling.). One can truly enjoy the panoramic view and thrilling ride as the ropeway goes over the city.

### **Saramsa Garden**

About 14kms from Gangtok is the Saramsa Garden, the home of Sikkim's many exotic orchids and other rare tropical and temperate plants. Established and maintained by the Department of Forests, it is an excellent recreation, leisure and picnic spot.

### **Jawaharlal Nehru Botanical Garden**

It is situated an altitude ranging between 1800 meters to 2200 meters. Established in the year 1987, it comprises of virgin temperate forest of oak and as many as 50 different kinds of tree species. The garden is situated at a place, which is not only a scenic beauty for the tourists but also adjoins Rumtek Monastery and Fambongla Wildlife Sanctuary. It is open to the visitors from 1000 hrs to 1600hrs.

### **Water Garden**

Water Garden at Martam Khola is on 31 A National Highway, 16kms south of Gangtok. It is an ideal spot for picnic with a small swimming pool for children.

### **Himalayan Zoological Park**

8kms. away from Gangtok is the Himalayan Zoological Park which covers an area of 205 hectares, This area is also known as Bulbulay. One can spot the Red Pandas, barking deer's, spotted deer's, bears, in a semi natural habitat and many more animals.

### **Tashi View Point**

Situated along the North Sikkim Highway, it is only 8kms from Gangtok. From this point one gets a breath taking view of Mt.Khang-chen Dzonga, one of the most graceful peaks in the world. Ideal time to visit is early in the morning.

### **Ganesh Tok**

It is situated on a ridge at a distance of only 7kms from Gangtok. From this spot one can get a bird's eye view of sprawling Gangtok town, while across the hills Mt.Khang –Chen – Dzonga and Mt.Siniolchu loom over the horizon. A cafeteria serves hot tea, coffee and snacks.

### **Hanuman Tok**

It is 11kms away from Gangtok town, above Ganesh Tok. It has a temple of Lord Hanuman where the devotees come and offer prayers. Because of its locational advantage the view of the mountain along the horizon is just magnificent especially on a clear sunny morning.

### **Sa-Ngor-Chotsong Centre**

It is a Tibetan refugee monastic institution established in 1961 by His Eminence Luding Khen Rimpoche, Head of Ngorpa, Sub-Sect of the Sakya Order, with the blessing of HH Sakya Trizin and HH the Dalai Lama. This is the only monastery of Sakya Order of Tibetan Buddhism in Sikkim. It is located on a beautiful hill top at a distance of 5kms from Gangtok town.

### **Pastanga**

Pastanga in Assam Lingzey is located at an altitude of 1425 meters (4676 feet). It is two hours drive from Gangtok. The enchanting little village provides magnificent view of the mountain ranges. One can wander up lush green mountain trails where one comes across beautiful waterfalls along the path. There are rare species of bamboos in dense rhododendron and magnolia forest.

The tourists are provided with home stay facilities with organized cultural programmeme and local handcrafts show. It is also worth while to visit traditional houses of ethnic communities which are one hundred and fifty years old. Pastanga is also the take off point for Khedi trekking route.

### **Fambong Lho Wildlife Sanctuary**

Fambong Lho Wildlife Sanctuary is located at a distance of 25kms from Gangtok and has an area of 51.76 sq km. The main vegetation is oak, katus, kimbu, champa and thick bamboo forests and ferns. The sanctuary is also home to a large number of wild orchid, rhodoendrons, etc. The richly forested area is known to be the home for various species of wild animals and

birds. This area is located close to Gangtok, is being developed as a short trekking trail. A log House with two rooms is available at Golitar and Tumin. Apart from this, there are other sanctuaries like Kyongnolsa, Alpine, Shingba, Maenam Wildlife and Khang –chen- Dzonga National Park, Permission to visit these places is given by Chief Wildlife Warden (Wildlife), Forest Secretariat Deorali , Gangtok .

### **Aritar**

The Aritar Lake (Ghati-Tso) near Rhenock about 3 hours drive from Gangtok is worth visiting. For those interested in spending a night or two in the peaceful environment, a trekker's hut, few lodges and a private resort are available at Aritar. Other attractions are visiting and exploring the way of living of the villages and also to the monasteries like Lingsay Monastery. A short trek in and around Aritar is possible. A night in an old British built Bungalow of 1895 located half km below the lake could be an enthralling experience.

### **Angling in Sikkim**

Sikkim with its massive Bio-diversity is a heaven for adventure and nature lovers. With its river system and various altitudes, Sikkim is an Anglers delight. For an advent angler- the Mahasheer, the Katley and the Trout provide fond angling opportunity. The Teesta and Rangeet provide ample scope for Mahasheer and Katley. Angling during the pre and post monsoon season, can be done by laggering or spinning.

Amongst the alpine regions in East, North and West Sikkim, there is an ample opportunity for Trout Angling by Fly Fishing or Spinning. Ideal months are March and May and August-September.

### 2.3.2 West Sikkim: Places of Tourist Interest

The west district of Sikkim is important not only due to its exquisite natural beauty but also because in it is situated the most sacred regions from the point of view of Buddhism and the historical sites of Sikkim. The tourists usually stay at Pelling and from there undertake the excursions in different directions.



Diagram 6 - Map of West Sikkim

The important monasteries are:

#### Pemayangtse Monastery

Pemayangtse Monastery is one of the oldest monasteries in the State. Originally established by Lhatsun Chempo, one of the revered Lamas to have performed the consecration ceremony of the first Chogyal (Religious Monarch) of Sikkim. This ancient monastery belonging to the

Nyingma Sect has been considered as one of the premier monasteries in the State. It had been entrusted with the task to perform all religious functions of the erstwhile monarch. The Monastery, located on a hill top at an altitude of 6500ft. commands a magnificent panoramic view of Himalayan ranges, the surrounding hills and countryside.

### **Sanga-Choling Monastery**

This monastery is situated on a ridge above Pelling and the famous Pemayangtse Monastery. Built in 1697 A.D. it is considered to be one of the oldest monasteries of the State. To reach the Monastery a road leads through rich forest area.

### **Dubdi Monastery**

This was the first monastery established soon after the consecration ceremony of the first Chogyal. The monastery is located on a hill top above Yuksom surrounded by verdant forest. It can be approached by trekking only, negotiating steep slope for about half an hour. It is an ideal place for lamas seeking meditation recluse.

### **Tashiding Monastery**

This monastery is constructed on top of a heart shaped hill with the back drop of the sacred Mt. Khang-chen-Dzonga. According to Buddhist scriptures, Guru Padma Sambhava (Guru Rimpoche) blessed the sacred land of Sikkim in the 18th Century A.D. from this spot. The monastery, however, was built in the 18th Century AD by Ngadak Sempa Chempo, one of the three lamas who had performed the consecration ceremony of the first Chogyal.

Tashiding is also famous for the most holy Chorten known as ‘Thong-Wa-Rang-Dol’, which literally means ‘Saviors by mere sight’. It is believed that the mere act of beholding it is supposed to have washed away all the sins of the devotees. Another important feature of Tashiding is the sacred water festival unique to this monastery only. Every year, on 14th and 15th day of the first Lunar month, the Bhumchu Ceremony is celebrated with devotees coming from far and near to get the blessing of the holy water. The Sacred holy water is

officially sealed for safety by the lamas of Monastery. It is taken out once a year on an auspicious occasion, only to be put back with some fresh additions. The sacred water, which is taken out is partly mixed with normal ware to be distributed among the thousand of devotees.

The history of the early days of Chogyal was created in this part of Sikkim in the following areas:

### **Rabdentse Ruins**

This was the second capital of the erstwhile Kingdom after Yuksom and till the year 1814 A.D., the King of Sikkim ruled from this place. Today, the ruins lie hidden from the main road at a walking distance from the Hotel Mt. Pandim and the Pemayangtse Monastery. It can be approached by following a footpath which branches off from the main road just below the Pemayangtse Monastery. The Scenic view from the top of the ruins scanning across the valley to the mystic heights of Khang-chen Dzonga ranges is something to be cherished and etched in memory.

### **Khecheopalri Lake**

The lake is situated at a distance of 25 kilo meters from Pelling, Khecheopalri Lake is considered to be one of the sacred lakes of the State both the Buddhist and the Hindus. The Lake remains hidden under the rich forest cover. The birds do not permit even a single leaf to float on the lake surface. There is a motor able road from Pemayangtse right up to the lake area.

For those interested in spending a night or two in the peaceful environment a trekker's hut is available. The hut presently managed by a private operator provides comfortable stay and a taste of local cuisine which may include 'chaang'-brew made by fermented millet. There is also a pilgrim's hut managed by the Tourism Department.

## **Yuksom**

This was the erstwhile capital of Sikkim, where according to the historical records; the first Chogyal of the Kingdom of Sikkim was consecrated in 1641 A.D. by three learned lamas. The evidence of the consecration ceremony is still intact in Norbugang Chorten in the form of stone seats and foot prints of the Head Lama on a stone. Since the history of the state began from this place, these areas are now considered sacred by the people of Sikkim. Yuksom is connected by all weather roads from Pemayangtse, a distance of 32kms. The trek to Dzongri and to the base camp of the famous Mt.Khang-chen-Dzonga beings here.

In addition, there are other places of tourists interest which includes the following places:

## **Pelling**

Pelling is a fast growing urban settlement. Situated at an altitude of 6,100ft, it offers a good view of the mountain ranges. Due to its locational advantages many hotels and lodges have mushroomed in and around Pelling.

## **Singshore Bridge/Uttarey**

The highest bridge in Sikkim is located at a distance of about 25kms. from Pemayangtse. About 20 minutes drive is Uttarey a base camp for Adventure Tourism for Singalila Range trail; a place worth visiting.

## **Khang-Chen Dzonga Water Fall**

About an hour drive from Pelling is Khang-Chen- Dzonga Water fall.

## **Rangit Water World**

The water park is situated close to Legship one can avail of a serene white water rafting and boating facilities. Legship Shiva Mandir is a short drive from here.

### **Kongri-Labdang**

Besides Tashiding Monastery there are other attractions in and around Tashiding like Sinon Monastery. Tso-Nim-Dawa (Pokhri Danra) Hungri Monastery and Pao –Hungri. The Paha Khola falls on the way to Kongri is worth visiting. The wild beehive on the side of the falls makes the visit more interesting. It is also a point for the trekkers visiting Kastur Orar adjoining Khang-Chen –Dzonga (Dzongri) trail. One can also visit Jhang Lhari Nyingpo, one of the most sacred caves of Sikkim from Labdang.

### **Varesy**

It lies at 10,000 ft. It has a road access up to Hilley, an easy 4kms trek from there takes one up to the Varsey Rhododendron Sanctuary . One can also trek from Soreng and Dentam in West Sikkim. The place provides a magnificent view of the mountains. Visitors can halt at ‘Guras Kunj’ trekkers’ hut.

### **Soreng**

Soreng is a picturesque village with beautiful landscape. It is about three hours drive from Pelling and four hours drive from Melli. A trek to Jhandi Danra from Soreng is a must to see various species of flowers and birds. Hotels and Lodges are available. Visit to villages for getting an insight in to the way of life of people is a must. A base camp for adventure tourism is being set up. A very challenging trekking route from Soreng to Dzongri via Rathong glacier is being opened for International trekkers and Mountaineers.

### **Rinchenpong-Kaluk**

Situated at an altitude of 1700 meters the drive from Gangtok to Rinchenpong takes about four hours via Zoom. It is also accessible from Siliguri and Darjeeling via Jorethang.

It is a picturesque village with beautiful landscape and a panoramic view of Khang-Chen\_Dzonga range. A visit Resum Moonastrey is an interesting experience. One can also trek to Khandi Danra/Melanpso which is richly forested area known to be the home to

various species of wild animals and birds. Accommodation is also available at Kaluk. A night halt in an old British Guest House could be an enthralling experience.

### **Hee Bermiok**

It takes about four and half hours from Gangtok. One can also reach He Bermoik from Pelling, the journey taking one and a half hours. The main attractions are mountain biking, nature walk and visit to the villages, Sirijonga Yuma Mangheem, Sirijonga Holy Cave at Martam, Sirijonga Mandir etc. The adventure lovers can enjoy two and a half hour trek to Varsey.

### **Dentam**

About an hour drive from Pelling is Dentam. It is famous for the Alpine Cheese factory, a product of Indo-Swiss collaboration.

### **Sirijonga Yuma Mangheem-Martam-West Sikkim**

This Mangheem was constructed in 1996-97 in the memory of Sirijonga Tey-Ongshi.

### **Sirijonga Fooku and Wadhan (Cave)**

After a 2km ride from Sirijonga Yuma Mangheem, one comes across a waterfall besides which lies a cave where Teongshi took refuge. This place is revered by the Limboo Community.

### **Limboo Cultural Centre, Tharpu, West Sikkim**

This Centre was inaugurated on August 23rd, 2003. Each year, on this day, a function depicting the rich culture and heritage on various communities is organized. This Centre houses a hall, a museum and a library.

### 2.3.3 North Sikkim: Places of Tourist Interest

The alpine zone of North Sikkim is highly mountainous and sparsely populated. Tourists are attracted to this region due to the wonderful natural beauty, the mountain, the glaciers the pristine rivers and the rhododendrons. But as in others parts of Sikkim, this region too houses some old monasteries which bears the Sikkim tradition. The Lepcha reserved areas are also situated here.



**Diagram 7 - Map of North Sikkim**

The monasteries in North Sikkim are as follows:

#### **Phensang Monastery**

The place is situated on the gentle slope stretching from Kabi to Phodong with perhaps one of the best landscape in the region. The Phensang Monastery, under the Nyingmapa Buddhist Order, was built in 1721 during the time of Jigmee Pawo. It was gutted by the fire in 1947 and

rebuilt in 1948 through the efforts of the lamas. The annual festival of Chaam is performed on 28th and 29th days of the tenth month of Lunar Calendar (Tibetan Calendar)

### **Phodong Monastery**

One of the six major monasteries in Sikkim Phodong monastery is located in the North approximately 38kms from Gangtok. 4kms beyond Phodong is the recently renovated Labrang Monastery, unique in its architectural design.

The historical sites are described as follows:

### **Kabilungchok**

This historical place is 17kms from Gangtok on the North Sikkim Highway. This is where the historical treaty of blood brotherhood between the Lepcha Chief Te-Kung-Tek and the Bhutia Chief Khey-Bum-Sa was signed ritually. The spot where the ceremony took place is marked by a memorial stone pillar amidst the cover of dense forest.

### **Sirijonga Yuma Mangheem-Mangshila**

This was constructed in 1983, the designs are similar to that of Sirijonga Yuma Mangheem-Martam, (West Sikkim). During January Maghey Sankranti is celebrated with enthusiasm and people of all communities from the neighborhood hamlets come and partake in the celebrations with fervor and gaiety. In recent years the festivity has gained so much popularity that people travel for hours to witness the cultural extravaganza.

### **Guru-Dongmar Lake (17,800 Ft.)**

Guru-dongmar Lake is considered as one of the sacred lakes of the State both by the Buddhists and the Hindus. The lake remains milky in colour throughout the year and it is believed that Guru Padmasambhava touched the lake while he visited Tibet from this area.

The places of natural beauty in North Sikkim are:

### **Seven Sister Falls**

The fall is located 32kms away from Gangtok is the Seven Sisters falls on the National Highway heading to North Sikkim. To facilitate the Tourist to savour the pristine beauty and to be with nature, Tourism Department has a waiting shed where tourists can take a break and shoot pictures. A must see picturesque beauty of nature.

### **Singhik**

The place offers one of the most spectacular and closest views of Mt. Khang-chendzonga and its ranges. A well located Tourist Lodge provides accommodation for visitors. The area also has a number of interesting short nature trails for one to three days along the higher ridges of the surrounding hills. One can also savour the most graceful peak in the world. Mt. Siniolchu.

### **Rong Lungten Lee**

This Lepcha traditional house at Namprikdang, Dzongu, was inaugurated on 05.01.2003. It is a replica of a traditional house and comprises of three rooms. The ceiling called 'PHAHONG' an attic is used to store valuable items. This house is open to tourists, both foreigners and domestic throughout the year and visitors can admire the antique artifacts displayed.

Namprikdang is situated at the confluence of two rivers- Kanaka and Teesta. Visitors will definitely admire the pristine beauty of the flora and fauna.

### **Chungthang**

Chungthang, located near the confluence of Lachen and Lachung Chu and the starting point of River Teesta has emerged as a major subdivision settlement in North Sikkim. It is the nodal junction for the two passes, Lachen Lachung. The valley is believed to have been blessed by Guru Rimpoche and one can visit the Holy Guru Lhedo to see the foot in bio

diversity with a large variety of orchids, plants and wildlife. It is 95 kms from Lachen. It is predominantly a Lepcha region.

### **Lachung**

It is a village situated at a height of 8000ft with a unique local self governing body called the dzumsa which substitutes the Panchayat. Lachung has emerged as a tourist destination with soaring popularity of Yumthang Valley which is just 25kms from here. The village, spread out on either side of Lachung Chu, has managed to retain its unique culture and tradition. The Lachung Monastery on the slope opposite the highway is a focal point of all religious functions of the local inhabitants. To get a glimpse of the religious functions performed on auspicious occasions a visit to the Monastery should form part of the tour itinerary.

### **Yumthang**

Yumthang, at an elevation of 11,800ft and 140kms from Gangtok is a paradise for nature lovers, with a fascinating blend of flora and fauna and breathtaking scenic grandeur. The valley is also the home of Shingbha Rhododendron Sanctuary having 24 species of Rhododendrons. Yumthang Package tours are organized by the registered travel agents only.

### **Lachen**

Lachen is situated at an altitude of 2750mtrs. It is about 6hours drive from Gangtok. The Lachen Monastery located on a top of the village commands a panoramic view of the surrounding hills and country side. Resorts, Hotels and Lodges are available for accommodation.

### **Thangu**

Thangu situated at an altitude of 14,000 ft. it is about three hours drive from Lachen. It is small village where the visitors usually acclimatize before they proceed to Guru-Dongmar Lake, Muguthang or Cho Lhamu (source of River Teesta)

### 2.3.4 South Sikkim: Places of Tourist Interest

#### Namchi:

Namchi, meaning 'Sky High', nestled among the hills at an elevation of 5,500 ft commands panoramic view of the snow-capped mountains and vast stretches of valley. Atop Samdruptse hilltop near Namchi, recently erected is the worlds tallest statue of Guru Padmasambhava, the patron saint of both Hindus and the Buddhists.

Namchi being the headquarters of the south districts is the principal place of tourist attraction. From here excursion are carried out to different place be it Temi Tea garden, snow capped mountain view from Borong and Meenam hill or the Forest atmosphere at Ravangla.

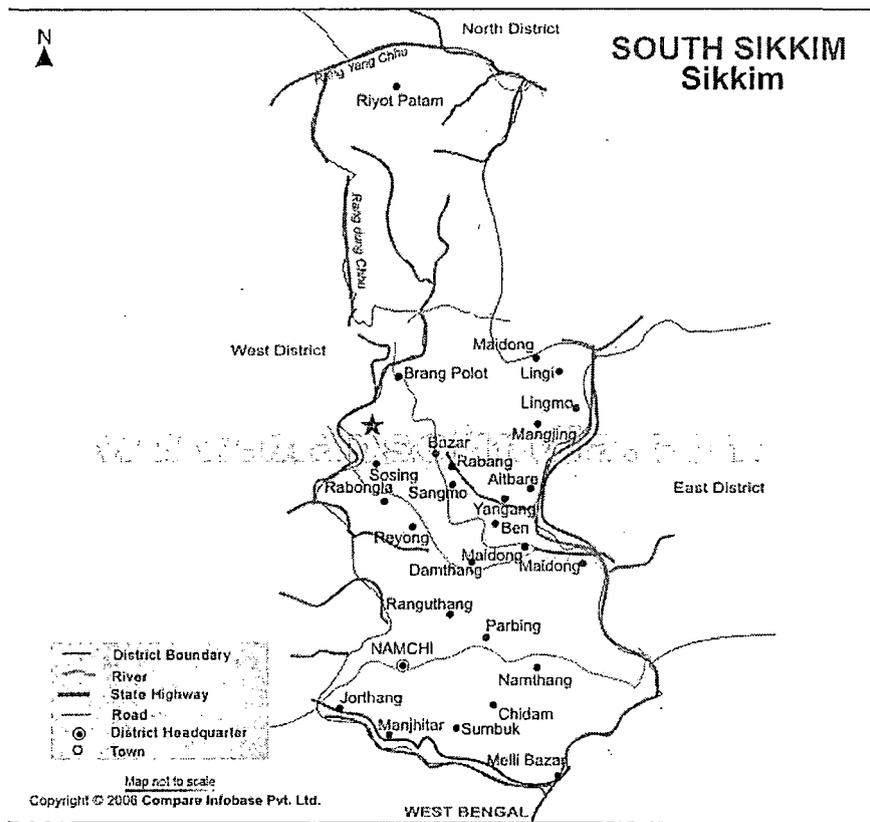


Diagram 8 - Map of South Sikkim

The places usually visited by tourists are as follows

**Temi Tea Garden:**

The one and only tea garden existing in the State produces one of the top quality teas in the international market. The tea garden is spread out on a gently hill slope originating from the Tendong Hill and provides a magnificent view for the surrounding villages. The visit to the factory could be an eye opener for those wanting to know more about tea processing methods.

**Ravangla:**

At the base of Menam Hill is Ravangla, a small township and transit to various tourist destinations in South and West Sikkim. It is also an upcoming tourist spot, and transit point for trekkers to Menam hill and Borong. There are accomodation facilities and numerous short nature trails. A trek down to the sacred cave 'Sher Chok Bephu', one of the four holiest caves in Sikkim, would be a memorable experiance.

**Menam Hill:**

Menam Hill towers above Tendong Hill on the other side over looking the Ravangla Bazar settlement. Situated at an altitude of 10,300 ft the scenic view from this height is, perhaps, unmatched in this part of the world. Mt. Khangchendzonga and its surrounding ranges looms above the dwarf the richly forested and rugged hill. On a clear sunny day, it is possible to see the plains of Bengal spanning across Kalimpong and Darjeeling Hills in the South, right across the Indo-China border towards the North. A short distance away is the legendary Bhaley Bhunga, a kind of rocky spur which juts out from the ridge top and remains suspended in the air above Yangang village.

**Borong:**

Facing the snow-capped mountains is Borong, motorable from Ravangla or a trek via Menam. A picturesque village, its beautiful landscape and magnificent view is also host to the hot spring, Borong TsaChu'. The trek trail, originating from Namchi or Damthang to Tendong - Ravangla - Menam - Borong (5-6 days) is one of the most interesting trails scaling

all the hill tops along the route. The trek can continue to Tashiding or terminate at Borong and drive back to Ravangla

## **2.4 SCOPE OF NON-CONVENTIONAL TOURISM**

One can wander up lush green mountain trails in the very footsteps of early travelers. Marvel at the stupas, monasteries and temples. Acquaint oneself with a culture that is at once bizarre and fascinating with its endless intriguing rituals and festivals. Sikkim offers one a holiday that is more than a dream- a voyage of adventure and discovery.

### **2.4.1 Trekking**

This is one the best ways to see the whole of Sikkim. The beauty of Sikkim will mesmerize everyone who ever decides to explore it on foot. It offers a variety of routes for tourist having different tastes.

#### **Monastic Trek: (March-May/October –December)**

Pemayangtse-Sangacholing- Khecheopalri-Dubdi-Sinon-Tashiding-Ralang

#### **Rhododendron Trek ;( March- May)**

Naya Bazaar- Hilley / Soreng- Varsey- Dentam- Pemayangtse.

#### **Khang-Chen-Dzonga Trek; (Mid March-Mid June/ October-December)**

Yuksom-Bakhim-Tshokha-Dzongri-Thangsing/Bikbari-Zemathang/Chaurigang-Goechala/Rathong glacier and back.

#### **Coronation Trek ;( October-December)**

Rumtek-Sang-Yangyang-Ravangla-Tashiding-Yuksom.

### **Khedi Trek; (October-December)**

Assam Lingzey-Pa-shing Teng Kha 1425m (BaseCamp) - Chaukri Kharka-Do Bato-Khedi(7710m) –Sela Pass(3150m)-Do Basto-Tal Kharka-nubang-Passang Teng Kha.

### **Singlila Trek**

Mid May and October

Uttarey-Chewabhanjang-Dhor-Sikkim Megu-Dafey Bihar-Gomanthan /Boktok pandga-Theshyapla –Bikbari –Dzongri- Tsoka- Yuksom

### **Kosturi Orar Trek**

Mid March-Mid June/October-December

Yukosm- Dzongri- Thangsing- Kostori Orar- Labdang- Sinon- Tashiding.

### **Samartek Trek**

Mid March / Mid June/ October- December

Kodong- Dokshing- TsenKhong- Lenchok- Samartek- Pakchong- Kungo- Kuling Nae (Cave) Gungramampo- Singhik Dak Bungalow.

### **Rinchenpong / Soreng Trek**

April- June/ October- December

Kaluk- Rinchenpong Dak Bangalow- Rigsum Gumpa- Kaluk- Sribadam- Zhandi Dara-Soreng.

### **Himalaya Trek**

April- June/ October- December

Namchi (Base Camp)- Tendong- Damthang- Ravangla- Maenam- Bhaley Dhunga-Yangyang- Sinchuthang- Bermoik- Parbing- Namchi.

### **2.4.2 White Water Action**

Young and adventurous tourist can get attracted to the Teesta and Rangeet rivers sparkle. Here everyone can have some white water rafting action with every bend of the river revealing new panorama- gorges with vegetation covered vertical walls soaring from the swift waters, luxuriant waterfalls and tranquil lakes. This, however, is seasonal.

### **2.4.3 River Rafting**

October- December (Best Season)

Teesta Experience

Makha- Siwani- Bardang- Rangpo

Rangeet Experience

Sikip- Jorethang- Majithar- Melli

### **2.4.4 Kayaking**

Kayaking is undertaken on the Teesta and arranged for

### **2.4.5 Yak Ride / Safari**

A Safari with a difference, an unique experience.

## SECTION 3

### TOURISM & SOCIO ECONOMIC CHANGES

#### 2.5 TOURISM & SOCIO ECONOMIC CHANGES

Tourism is an industry of primary importance for the world economy. For some countries, tourism is the first source of income and foreign currency, and many local economies heavily depend on tourism. In this study an attempt has been made to highlight the relationship between socio economic changes and tourism. The researcher finds that the existing studies have but started unveiling the complexities of this relationship, by means of very heterogeneous approaches and scarcely comparable studies. A comprehensive, coherent quantitative message cannot yet be drawn from the literature. The research project investigates the changes tourism on the socio-economic systems of Sikkim

The impact of tourism on economy and physical environment of a country can be immense; tourism can contribute to social and cultural changes in host societies, including changes in value systems, traditional lifestyles, family relationships, individual behaviour or community structure.

#### 2.6 SOCIAL CHANGES DUE TO TOURISM:

"Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs. During their stay in the destination, tourists interact with local residents and the relationship brings about some changes in the host individuals' and host community's quality of life, value systems, labour division, family relationships, attitudes, behavioural patterns, ceremonies and creative expressions. The larger the cultural and economic difference between tourists and local residents, the more obvious and more significant these changes are.

Changes in the host community's quality of life are influenced by two major factors:

- The tourist-host relationship and
- The development of the industry itself.

Tourist-host encounters occur in three main contexts:

- Where the tourist is buying some good or service from the host,
- Where they are in the same place at the same time, and
- When they meet and share ideas and information

As the last type of encounter is far less common than the first two, tourism often fails in promoting mutual understanding among different nations and stereotypes prevail.

Four major features characterize the tourist-host relationship: it is transitory, unequal and unbalanced, lacks spontaneity and is limited by spatial and temporal constraints. The tourist usually stays in the destination for a short time, so there is no opportunity to develop the superficial relationship into a more meaningful one. The traditional spontaneous hospitality turns into commercial activity. Tourists are on holiday, served by locals, which results in different attitudes and behaviour. The obvious relative wealth of the tourists often leads to exploitative behaviour on the hosts' side.

The main changes brought in by the tourist-host relationship are the demonstration effect, when the hosts' behaviour is modified in order to imitate tourists; the change in language usage in the destination; the growth of alcoholism, crime, prostitution and gambling and the transformation (revitalisation or commoditisation) of the material and non-material forms of local culture.

In short the tourist impresses upon the residents/locals of their superiority in terms of culture, taste, habits, styles etc. The host fails to understand that the tourists are spending their leisure time in the destination. Every one is always casual in approach in an informal atmosphere. The laid back attitudes of the tourist inspire the host to behave as one of them. This often have negative consequences in the form alcoholism, crime, prostitution and gambling.

Besides the physical presence of tourists and their encounters with local residents, the development of the tourism industry also contributes to changes in the quality of life, social structure and social organisation of local residents. Rapid and intensive tourism development results in different and usually less favorable changes than organic and small-scale development.

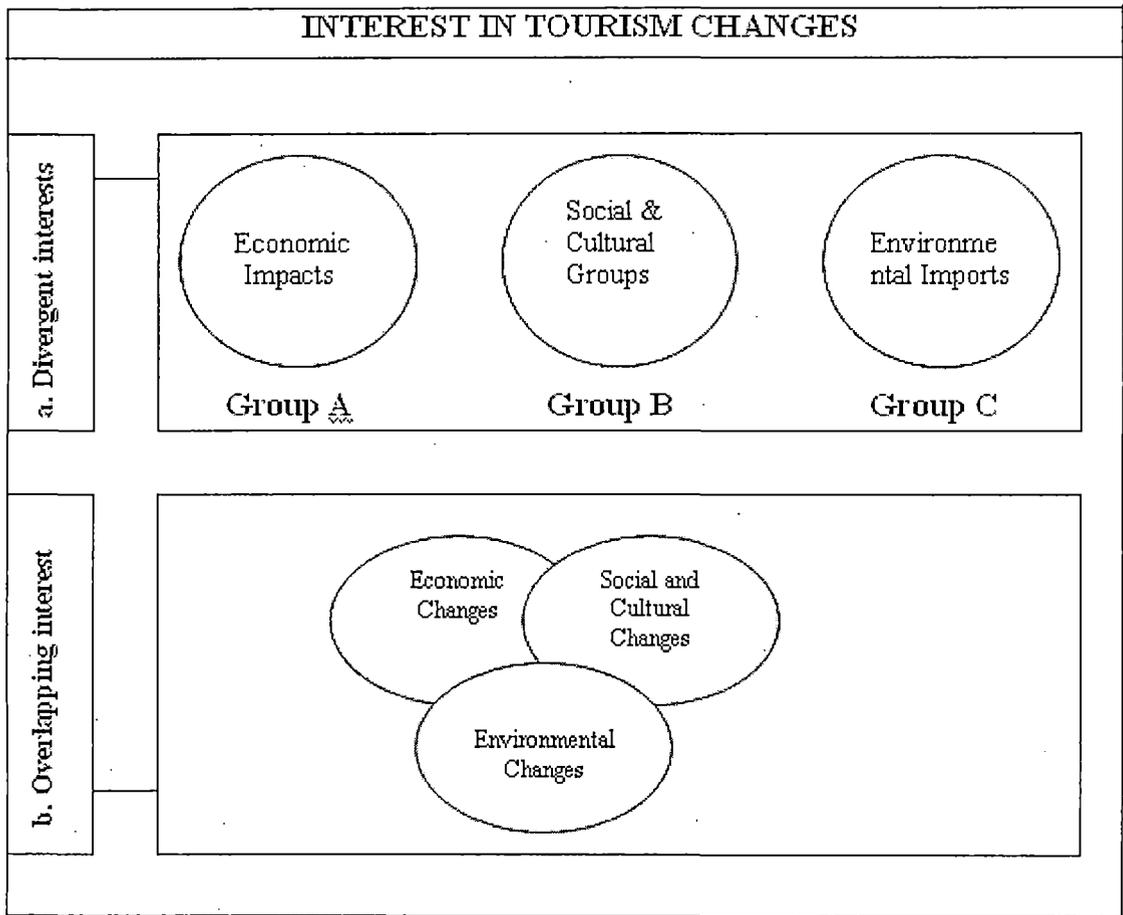


Diagram 9

The development of the tourism industry is often credited with generating new employment in the destination. However, much of this employment is seasonal, unskilled and low-paid, and the community's traditional work patterns might be seriously affected, resulting in the abandonment of agricultural occupations.

Other significant changes of tourism development are changes in the size and the demographic characteristics of the host population; increased mobility of women and young adults; infrastructure development in the destination, increased supply of services, and, consequently, improved quality of life for local residents.

The social and cultural characteristics of the host community are, of course, also continuously influenced by the political, economic, technological, social, cultural and natural aspects of their wider environment.

### **2.6.1 Change or Loss of Indigenous Identity and Values:**

Tourism can cause change or loss of local identity and values, brought about by several closely related influences:

#### **Commoditisation**

All activities are catalogued and marketed in such a fashion that the host communities are made to feel that their customs and traditions are dramatised for the economic benefit and to match to tourist expectations. Local products are sold as souvenirs, arts and other commodities to the tourist for entertainment and remembrance.

#### **Loss of Genuineness and Staged Authenticity**

The host community at times performs shows as if they were "real life" constitutes "staged authenticity". This is done for commercialization purpose to meet the expectation of the tourists. While the interest shown by tourists also contributes to the sense of self-worth of the artists, and helps conserve a cultural tradition, cultural erosion may occur due to the commoditization of cultural goods. Village Tourism Defined: Here the tourist wants to experience the ways of indigenous people lead their life. They thus stay in a paying guest accommodation in the peoples' houses in the rural areas so as to get a slice of different living standard. Often, the villagers to please the guest (read tourist) often mock acts their living in form of their celebration, social customs, festivals, rituals etc.

## **Culture Clashes**

Because tourism involves movement of people to different geographical locations, and establishment of social relations between people who would otherwise not meet, cultural clashes can take place as a result of differences in cultures, ethnic and religious groups, values and lifestyles, languages, and levels of prosperity.

## **Economic Inequality**

Many tourists come from societies with different consumption patterns and lifestyles than what is current at the destination, seeking pleasure, spending large amounts of money and sometimes behaving in ways that even they would not accept at home. One effect is that local people that come in contact with these tourists may develop a sort of copying behaviour, as they want to live and behave in the same way. Especially in less developed countries, there is likely to be a growing distinction between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', which may increase social and sometimes ethnic tensions. One serious implication that could be understood the difference of income between the host and the tourist. Those who were serving the tourist were earning approximately  $1/80^{\text{th}}$  &  $1/6^{\text{th}}$  part of the foreign and domestic tourist's income. This wide anomaly does leave a negative change on the tourist.

## **2.7 ECONOMIC CHANGES DUE TO TOURISM**

The main positive economic changes of tourism relate to foreign exchange earnings, contributions to government revenues, and generation of employment and business opportunities.

### **Foreign Exchange Earnings**

Tourism expenditures and the export and import of related goods and services generate income to the host economy and can stimulate the investment necessary to finance growth in other economic sectors. Some countries seek to accelerate this growth by requiring visitors to

bring in a certain amount of foreign currency for each day of their stay and do not allow them to take it out of the country again at the end of the trip.

### **Contribution to Government Revenues**

Government revenues from the tourism sector can be categorized as direct and indirect contributions. Direct contributions are generated by taxes on incomes from tourism employment and tourism businesses, and by direct levies on tourists such as departure taxes. Indirect contributions are those originated from taxes and duties levied on goods and services supplied to tourists.

### **Employment Generation**

The rapid expansion of international tourism has led to significant employment creation. For example, the hotel accommodation sector alone provided around 11.3 million jobs worldwide in 1995.(W.T.O) Tourism can generate jobs directly through hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, taxis, and souvenir sales, and indirectly through the supply of goods and services needed by tourism-related businesses. According to the World Tourism Organisation, tourism supports some 7% of the world's workers.

### **Stimulation of Infrastructure Investment**

Tourism can induce the local government to make infrastructure improvements such as better water and sewage systems, roads, electricity, telephone and public transport networks, all of which can improve the quality of life for residents as well as facilitate tourism.

### **Contribution to Local Economies**

Tourism can be a significant, even essential, part of the local economy. As the environment is a basic component of the tourism industry's assets, tourism revenues are often used to measure the economic value of protected areas.

There are other local revenues that are not easily quantified, as not all tourist expenditures are formally registered in the macro-economic statistics. Money is earned from tourism through informal employment such as street vendors, informal guides, rickshaw drivers, etc. The positive side of informal or unreported employment is that the money is returned to the local economy, and has a great multiplier effect as it is spent over and over again. The World Travel and Tourism Council estimate that tourism generates an indirect contribution equal to 100% of direct tourism expenditures.

It has been said many times and by many stakeholders: Tourism is a double-edged activity. It has the potential to contribute in a positive manner to socio-economic achievements. At the same time, its fast and sometimes uncontrolled growth can be the major cause of degradation of the environment, and loss of local identity and traditional cultures.

Tourism's relationship with the environment is highly complex. There are obvious economic benefits involved for countries and societies, and obvious options for an increased interest in conservation and concern for nature and the protection of fragile environments. At the same time, there are equally obvious ecological risks of ecosystem and habitat depletion and destruction due to the pressure of growing tourism.

Tourism growth is difficult to control. Guiding development is a time-consuming process involving establishing policies, ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, and monitoring to determine if desired conditions are being met. Tourism activities require environmental change assessments and carrying capacity studies. At sites with limited budgets and staff, increasing tourism can stretch scarce resources taking managers away from protection efforts. While tourism's benefits can contribute to protection and restoration efforts, it can be difficult to strike a balance between economic gain and unacceptable changes.

Or thus summarized in a SCOPE (International Council for Science/Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment) research programme and symposium on "Placing tourism in

the landscape of diversities", on the tourism–biodiversity interaction, opposition and possible symbiosis.

## REVIEW

What becomes clear from the above discussion is that Sikkim is a small mountainous state with limited scope of agricultural or economic development. Due to its uneven terrain and often harsh climate the scope of agricultural expansion is limited. The same constraints limit the scope of growth of heavy industries as well. The mineral resources too are limited. However, the state is extremely rich when comes the question of resources in terms of natural beauty . One viable option for development is therefore tourism. As the section two describes, the scope is almost unlimited. Its pristine beauty, cultural heritage and scope of adventure tourism make the State extremely rich in terms of tourism potential. Accordingly the Government too is turning its attention towards tourism by opening up new places of tourist attraction and offering facilities for eco, cultural as well as adventure tourism in different ways.

Section three is a theoretical discussion regarding the extent of social and economic changes that *tourism brings in a society*. As the experience of the other countries show, while *tourism can regenerate the economy by creating jobs, opening up business opportunities and bringing in foreign exchange it can have negative impact also in terms of loss of cultural identities and traditional values*.

The scope of tourism being so wide in Sikkim attempts have been made in the following chapters to identify the changes that tourism is bringing in Sikkim. This has been done though an understanding of the perceptions of the local residents and the business communities along with the perception of the tourists themselves regarding their impression of the socio economic conditions of Sikkim.

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