

Chapter 1

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Concept of Education

Education is a powerful instrument for Human Resource Development. It is the most vital social institution which is an essential instrument for nation-building. But to define the word 'education' is very difficult because, it has a very wide meaning. The broader meaning of the word 'education' is a life long process which starts from the womb and finishes at the grave. In broader sense, "whatever broadens our horizons, deepens our insight, refines our reactions and stimulates thought and feeling, educates us"(Quoted from Agarwal :1985).

All our experiences are educative. We get education from different persons, even from our climate, soil, surroundings etc. Through both formal and informal agencies, consciously or unconsciously we receive education (Aggarwal 1985 :11).

The narrower meaning of education is a consciously directed effort to cultivate and develop our powers. Generally we use the word 'education' in a narrow sense as J.S. Mackenzie says "a process consciously organised by the state or the family or some other authority for the development of young people towards some end regarded as important by the authority in question – an end which may or may not involve a general cultivation of personality"(Kar : 1998:280).

Etymologically, the meaning of the word 'education' is the art of 'leading out' and this is suggested by the derivation of the word. 'E' means 'out of' and 'duco' means 'I lead'. From this proposition it is suggested that the education including – intellectual, moral and physical consists in leading out the innate knowledge, virtues and powers of the child making the potential actual. Latin word 'educere' means 'to lead out'. The word 'elever' as used in France, which means 'to educate', 'to bring up' and 'to raise'. According to J.S. Mill, education is "the culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at

least keeping up, and if possible for raising, the level of improvement which has been attained”(Aggarwal 1985 :12).

Education always provides a better quality of life for human beings. It is that important means which impart knowledge and skills to individuals and help in the process of social transformation (Thompson: 1981).

The educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, who opened a new chapter in the spiritual history of India, centered round the study of human soul or 'perfection'. For him education means self-manifestation, self-realization, self-perfection and self-awareness (Hossain: 1980).

In the words of John Stuart Mill, “Not only does education include whatever we do for ourselves and whatever is done for us by others, for the express purpose of bringing us somewhat nearer to the perfection of our nature; it does more, in its largest acceptance, it comprehends even the indirect effects produced on character and on human faculties, by things of which the direct purposes are quite different, by laws, by forms of government, by the industrial arts, by the modes of social life, may even by physical facts not dependent on human will, by climate, soil and local position. Every environment, every surrounding, every activity help to shape the human being. A human soul is in constant interaction with his environment. The interaction results in the modification of human behaviour or education” (Aggarwal 1985:11).

The first international treaty in 1948 - 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights' recognizes the right to education. The Declaration postulates that education should be free at least in the fundamental and elementary stages. It is the Fundamental right of all citizens of India. According to the 83rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution 1997, elementary education is a fundamental right of all children between 6-14 years. Education is that important means which helps an individual to improve his/her personal ability, build capacity and to overcome difficulties.

The role of education in a static and a modern society varies. In a static society, education system transmits culture as it is from one generation to another. But in a modern society which is a changing society, education prepare the young generation for adjustment to any changes in them that may have occurred or are likely to occur in

future (Shah & Shah :1998). Thus the relationship between education and modern society is very complex and mutual, some time the society influences changes in the educational system and sometimes the educational system influences changes in the new generation (ibid.).

1.2 Women Education and Its Necessity

Education of women is essential to improve the status of women, who constitute nearly half of the country's population. It is the most effective means to combat many challenges to their development. Swami Vivekananda says "There is no chance for welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing"(Bhattacharyya: 2002). Women of our country are still suffering from oppression, exploitation, discrimination and domination in the male-dominated society. Even after 61 years of Indian independence, women are still one of the most deprived and powerless sections of Indian society. Though after independence educational status of Indian women has improved, they still do not have an equal access to education as their male counterparts.

Education of women faces a number of barriers viz. social, cultural, economic, psychological etc. The traditional role expectations confine her within the four walls of her home, where she is expected to bear children, look after family members and is restricted to domestic work only. Therefore to improve the status of women within the family and society, expansion of girls' education is necessary. According to Anon, women no longer concentrated on and sheltered for their child bearing and child-rearing functions. They are demanding equality of treatment in all aspects of life. In spite of constitutional guarantee and different educational measures taken by the Government of India, the educational status of women is not up to the mark. It is necessary for the status of women to be on par with men not only to establish social justice but it is also the basic condition for social, economic and political development of any country.

Education of women should be in a positive direction as it will help to discover her personal endowments and capacities. It enables women to achieve economic independence which may bring self confidence and self respect to womenfolk of our society.

Education makes women aware of their social, economic and legal rights. By using their rights they can avail all the privileges for their advancement. Education paves the way for wider employment opportunity to women in different sectors and thus they can enhance their position within their family itself and within society as well. Though educated working women face role conflicts in all places but, compared to illiterate non-working women, they enjoy superior and an independent position in their family and society.

Education encourages women to realise their productive role apart from reproductive role. Longer years of schooling have a positive impact in increasing the age of marriage. Women married at the prescribed age leads to a reduction in maternal and infant mortality rate. Infant mortality declines sharply with the increase in mother's education. Education makes a woman fully aware of family planning needs. After bearing children women get an extra status or prestige within her family and that role she can play perfectly if she is given access to education, because safe bearing and rearing of children largely depend upon the educational level of the mother.

Education equips a woman with the knowledge to manage and run the family in an economically and socially more productive manner which in turn contributes to national development. An educated housewife contributes more to her family as well as her nation.

Progress and development of women means progress and development of nation. Hence women should be more educated to overcome their ignorance and to participate in economic, political and social affairs. If educated women participate in political affairs, then they can take up their own problems in the legislatures and at the government level to find out the solution.

Education imparts the idea of equality between sexes. By educating women, inequalities imposed on them can be removed and they can fully participate in developmental process of the society. Education is the surest means of women empowerment. Empowerment is a process which enables women to realise their own identity and power in every spheres of their life. The term empowerment is used in the context of 'development', particularly, women's development. Empowerment is that

active process through which an individual can challenge and overcome all the constraints in his/her life. An empowered woman takes an active part in decision making process within her family and society and can enhance self confidence also.

1.3 Education and Women: Policies and Programmes in India

Early history of the education of women in India was mainly influenced by religious and social factors. During the Vedic period women got full liberty to rub shoulders with men in all walks of life. Wives of Rishis were partners of their husbands in spiritual activities and daughters also received equal education with other residential pupils. There are evidences of co-education system in the Ashramas. Vedic period produced a host of learned women called 'Brahmavadinis' for instance Lopa, Apala, Gargi, Maitreyee and others. Girls were given the privileges of passing through the 'Upanayana' ceremony. Brahmavadinis were lifetime students who studied theology, philosophy, vedic literature, logic, grammar, poetry etc.

Women's education started declining after Manu's injunctions. During 100 A.D., the period of Hindu Lawgiver Manu, women's access to education declined. He said "By a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged, nothing must be done independently even in her own home." He said that marriage was equivalent to reading the Veda as well as service to husband and household work was equivalent to Asramic life and evening prayer.

During the Buddhist period women were not denied learning. But at the same time the philosophy of Buddhism did not encourage educational privileges of women. Buddhist nuns had subordinate position to the monks. During the Mughal period, social status of women further deteriorated. Although Islam does not place any injunction against the education of women, but in course of time the rule of 'Purdah', encouraged subordination of women's position in the society. Gradually women lost their self-confidence and became totally dependent on male members of their families and society. They were largely uneducated and remained confined to their homes. During the British period a large number of schools were established with utilitarian motives i.e., mainly to produce low ranked administrators to serve the British people. But even during this period, educational accessibility to women was not equal to men.

The reform movements and the national movement generated social consciousness among women. During 1920s, the first phase of the women's movement in India started. In 1927, under the two premier institution i.e. The Women's Indian Association and the National Council For Women, the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) emerged which was directly linked to the demand for education among women. In the 19th century reform movement social reformers wanted to enhance the social position of women through education. According to them, the main purpose of educating women was to make them more capable of fulfilling their traditional roles and at the same time, to make them more efficient units in the processes of socio-economic and political development. Social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Lord Bentick did a lot to improve the position of women in the society. Further Mahatma Gandhi too gave an emphasis on equality of men and women. He revived the women movement to join the social work programmes in the country which led to women entering professional fields as career women and participating in every sphere of life.

After independence, a new era of women's education was ushered in. The importance of education for both sexes had been recognised and the employment potential of higher education was also acknowledged. Efforts were made to enroll more girls in schools and to encourage girls to continue their education as long as possible. The Constitution of the Indian Republic introduced in 1950 guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens irrespective of race, sex, caste and communities. During the successive five year plans, emphasis was given to educational development of men and women and particularly women's education got special significance.

During 1948-49 The University Education Commission or the Radhakrishnan Commission was set up which recommended various measures for women's education. The Commission was the first review body of the entire education system. On the defects of Indian education system, the Radhakrishnan Commission in 1948 commented "Little thought has been given to the education of women. Women must share the same programme as men or go without it. There are ways in which many women's interests or appropriate fields of work diverge from those of men and educational programme should take the fact into account" (Singh 1999:120). The

Secondary Education (Mudaliar) Commission in 1952-53 appears to have been less preoccupied with gender differences.

In 1958 National Committee (Durgabai Deshmukh) for Women's Education was set up. The Committee recommended special measures to bridge the gap between girls' and boys' education at the primary and secondary level. The major purpose of these committee was to look into the problems that constrained the progress of girls' education and to recommend to the government various remedial measures to improve the status of girls' education.

The Hansa Mehta Committee on Differentiation in Curricula for Boys and Girls was appointed in 1962. The Committee recommended co-education at the elementary and secondary stages and provision for home science and vocational courses for boys and girls. The Education Commission (1964-66) well known as Kothari Commission examined the role and goals of education in the process of national development. The commission made only two suggestions to improve women's higher education. They are- provision of financial assistance and hostels. The Kothari Commission was followed by the National Policy on Education in 1968. In order to meet the new challenges and social needs corresponding to social and economic developments in India, a National Education Policy was adopted in 1986, which is a landmark in the approach to women's education. The policy took various initiatives for women's equality through education to achieve economic development, social development and social security of women of the country. It provides scope for equal access to education to all irrespective of class, caste, creed or gender. The policy set a target date for universalisation of elementary education for children (6-14 years old) and the eradication of illiteracy in the 15-35 age groups by A.D. 2000. A fourteen member group prepared the National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 A.D. The strategy was to raise literacy level and education among women keeping in view the vast cultural, geographical and ecological variations and the problems of poverty and ignorance. The objectives in regard to women's education were:

- i. Elimination of illiteracy, universalisation of elementary education and minimization of the dropout rate in the age group 6-14 years and stagnation to negligible proportions.
- ii. Ensuring opportunities to all women for access to appropriate level, nature and quality of education and also the wherewithal for success comparable with men.
- iii. Substantial vocationalisation and diversification of secondary education so as to provide a wide scope for employment and economic independence of women.
- iv. Making education an effective means for women's equality by (a) addressing ourselves to the constraints that prevent women from participating in the educational process (b) eliminating the existing sexist bias in the system (c) making necessary intervention in the content and processes of education to inculcate positive and egalitarian attitudes and (d) ensuring that teachers' perceive this as one of their essential roles.
- v. Providing non-formal and part-time courses to women to enable them to acquire knowledge skills for their social, cultural and economic advancement.
- vi. Impetus to enroll in various professional degree courses so as to increase their number in medicine, teaching, engineering and other field substantially.

Creating a new system of accountability, particularly in respect of the basic educational services to the local community, inter alia, by active involvement of women.

1.4 Profile of West District of Sikkim

A tiny State of India-Sikkim, became the 22nd state of the Republic of India in the year 1975. Until the early seventies, it was an independent kingdom. The strategic importance of Sikkim, its geographical location, diverse population makes a unique characteristic feature of this State (Detailed about the State has been discussed in chapter-2). This State is divided into four districts. Among the four districts of Sikkim, West district is the second biggest district. It lies between 27° to 28° North latitude and 88° to 89° East Longitude. (Annual Report of S.S.A. 2005). The district is surrounded by South district on the East, North district on the North, Darjeeling district of West

Bengal on the South and Nepal International Boarder on the West. The district covers total area of 1166 square kilometre which is 15.7 per cent of the total geographical area of the State.

According to census 2001, total population of the West district is 123174 which is 23 per cent of the total population of Sikkim (Report of S.S.A. 2007) of which 63835 are males and 59339 are females. Majority of the population live in rural areas and only a small section of them live in urban areas. Total numbers of rural and urban population are 121350 persons and 1824 persons respectively. (Sikkim: A Statistical Profile 2002).

There is great variation in elevation starting from 80 meters upto 8595 meters. There are several lakes, peaks, rivers situated in the West district of Sikkim. Among the important peaks located in this district are Kanchenjunga, Mount Simvo etc. Lakes mostly originate from glaciers except Khechuperi Lake which is located at an altitude of 1945 metres. Variation in elevation plays important role in climatic condition of the district. Except in few places, the climate of the district can be divided into two types- dry hot summer and dry cold winter. The rainfall of the West district varies from 1500 mm to 3500mm and temperature varies from 0°C to 35°C.

West district headquarter is situated at Gyalshing. This district is divided into two sub-divisions- Gyalshing and Soreng. There are two notified town area viz. Gyalshing and Nayabazar and 121 villages in the West district. Out of total 121 villages, Gyalshing sub-division consists of 70 villages while Soreng sub-division consists of 51 villages. The District Collector is the overall in-charge of the administration of West district to look after law and order while the Joint Director is the head of the educational administration of the West district.

The total number of literate persons in the West district is 61326 of which 36147 are males and 25179 are females. Among the male literates, 35386 belong to rural areas and only 761 males belong to urban areas while among the total female literates, 24697 are from rural areas and only 482 are from urban areas. Table 1.4.1 presents sexwise distribution of literate persons in rural and urban areas of West Sikkim.

Table 1.4.1: Sex-wise Distribution of Literate Persons in Rural and Urban West Sikkim

Sector	Number of Literates(2001) No. (%)		
	Persons	Male	Female
Total	61326(59.31)	36147(67.21)	25179(50.75)
Rural	60083(59.02)	35386(66.94)	24697(50.46)
Urban	1243(77.98)	761(82.90)	482(71.30)

Source: Sikkim: A Statistical Profile 2002, Government of Sikkim.

Total literacy rate of the West district is 59.31 per cent (2001). There is great disparity between male-female literacy rates. 67.75 per cent male literacy against 50.75 per cent female literacy in the year 2001. Also in area-wise literacy rate, tremendous disparities have been noticed. Urban areas of West district has literacy rate of 77.98 per cent whereas in rural areas it is only 59.02 per cent.

So far the sex-wise literacy rate is concerned, vast difference between male-female literacy in rural-urban areas has been noticed. In the rural areas of West district, male literacy rate is 66.94 per cent against 50.46 per cent female literacy rate while in the urban areas male literacy rate is 82.90 per cent against 71.30 per cent female literacy rate.

Regarding the number of government schools in West Sikkim, at present total 239 government schools are there including Senior Secondary, Secondary, Junior High School, Primary, Pre-Primary and Monastic Schools and there are 69 Private Schools. Table 1.4.2 presents the category-wise number of government schools in West Sikkim.

Table: 1.4.2: Number of Government Schools in West Sikkim.

Category of Schools	Number
Senior Secondary	10
Secondary	23
Junior High School	41
Primary	87
Pre-primary	65
Monastic	13
Total	239

Source: Report of S.S.A. 2007

Apart from that there is one Sanskrit Mahavidyala which is affiliated to Sampurnanda Sanskrit Bishwa Vidyalaya, Baranasi.

The enrolment of students at the elementary stage of West district is increasing and quite an encouraging feature has been observed regarding female enrolment at the elementary level. Table 1.4.3 reflects the detail picture of it. The figure given is only of government schools.

Table 1.4.3: Year-wise Enrolment of Students

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2002	12614	12883	25497
2003	12914	13356	26270
2004	13098	13633	26731
2005	15121	15208	30329

Source: Status of Elementary Education with special reference to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan 2005.

Total enrolment of students in the year 2006-07 in various government schools of West Sikkim was 32837 of which 16761 were boys and 16076 were girls. Table 1.4.4 presents class-wise enrolment of boys and girls in the academic session 2006-07.

Table 1.4.4: Enrolment of Boys and Girls (2006-07).

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Primary	2402	2240	4642
I-V	9951	8977	18928
VI-VIII	3092	3557	6649
IX-X	953	983	1936
XII	363	319	682
Total	16761	16076	32837

Source: Report of S.S.A. 2007

The dropout rate of primary level is 16.98 per cent and that of upper primary level is 16.77 per cent as on 31-12-2004 in West district. The following factors have contributed to the decrease in dropouts and increase in retention: i) Regular cooked mid-day meal scheme launched rigorously in the district, ii) Scholarship granted to SC/ST/OBC students especially from the economically poor families, iii) Remedial classes for weak students, iv) Free supply of text books, exercise books, uniforms etc., v) Parent-Teacher Association made vibrant, vi) Mother Groups constituted, vii) 1502 students (SC/ST and girls) provided free text books (VI to VIII). Total expenditure for that was Rs. 1.13 lakhs (Status of Elementary Education with special reference to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan 2005).

1.5 The Situation of Women's Education in Sikkim

Over the years with regard to educational scenario, the state has achieved enormous expansion. The literacy rate has increased from 17.74 per cent (1971) to 69.68 per cent by the year 2001 which is quite impressive. Achievement has been noticed in female literacy rate also. Number of female literates were 31959 in 1981 followed by 71714 in 1991 and by 2001 there were 131502 female literates in the State which is very satisfactory. The following table shows the comparative figures of literacy in Sikkim from 1981 to 2001.

Table 1.5.1: Literacy in Sikkim: Comparative Figures

1981			1991			2001		
Number of literates (%)			Number of literates (%)			Number of literates (%)		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
75779 (43.95)	31959 (22.20)	107738 (34.05)	117226 (56.94)	71714 (46.76)	188940 (56.94)	191326 (76.7)	131502 (61.46)	322828 (69.68)

Source: Sikkim: A Statistical Profile 2002, Government of Sikkim.

The table also reveals the sex-wise disparity in literacy in Sikkim. Though the number of female literates has increased over the years but there is a huge gap between the number of male and female literates. The gender-wise disparity with regard to literacy rate was 15.27 per cent in the year 2001. There were 76.73 male literates against 61.46 per cent female literates. Over the years, disparity in female literacy rate between rural and urban areas of Sikkim has also been noticed. In 1981, female literacy rate in rural areas was 18.24 per cent against 45.42 per cent in urban areas followed by 35.40 per cent in rural areas against 63.40 per cent in urban areas in 1991 and 59.05 per cent in rural areas against 80.19 per cent in urban areas in 2001 (Sikkim: A Statistical Profile 2002).

Among the four districts of Sikkim, female literacy of West district is lagging behind and East district occupies the top position. From the master sheet of government schools it has been noticed that the overall enrollments of girls are more compare to the boys as on 31.3.2003 (Sikkim: A statistical Profile 2004-05). While the Annual Report of S.S.A. 2004-05 reveals that the overall percentage of failure rates of girls students upto class IV is less compared to the boys but from class V to VIII the failure rate of girls are more.

Table 1.5.2: Class-wise Failure Rates

CLASS	EAST			WEST			NORTH			SOUTH			TOTAL		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
CLASS I	21.9	18.8	20.5	26	24.8	25.4	28.1	26.7	27.4	28.5	25.3	27	25.1	22.6	23.9
CLASS II	23.9	21.7	22.8	28.5	28.7	28.6	26.1	25.2	25.6	33.2	30.5	31.9	27.6	26	26.8
CLASS III	27.1	24.7	25.9	33	32.8	32.9	30	27	28.5	35.2	30.8	33	30.8	28.5	29.6
CLASS IV	23.2	22.2	22.7	31.1	28.6	29.9	28	25.8	26.9	30.7	30.4	30.5	27.4	26.1	26.7
CLASS V	26.7	27	26.8	30.9	32.2	31.6	22.1	22.3	22.2	30	30.9	30.5	28.2	28.9	28.5
CLASS VI	28.5	30.7	29.6	33.4	37.3	35.4	26.9	32.4	26.9	36.1	39.3	37.8	31.2	34.3	32.8
CLASS VII	25.8	25.7	25.8	26.1	32.2	29.2	25.8	23.1	24.4	26.3	31.3	29	26	28.3	27.2
CLASS VIII	27.3	33.7	30.7	37.7	49.2	43.8	29.9	27.5	28.7	34	40.3	37.3	31.2	38.2	35

*B-Boys, G-Girls, T-Total

Source: Annual Report of S.S.A. 2004-05

The S.S.A. report of 2004-05 also give details about the drop out rates in Sikkim. In the overall drop out rates upto secondary level, percentage of boys are higher than girls.

Table 1.5.3: District-wise Dropout Rates-2004

Sl. No.	Stage	East			West			North			South			Total		
		B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	Class I-V	13.40	13.13	13.27	17.24	16.71	16.98	14.44	17.88	16.06	17.00	15.57	16.31	15.37	15.06	15.22
2	Class VI-VIII	10.13	7.92	9.00	19.00	14.58	16.77	15.93	16.18	16.05	16.40	12.35	14.33	14.14	11.19	12.64
3	Class I-VIII	19.52	18.34	18.95	26.84	24.54	25.71	23.22	27.63	25.29	24.76	22.22	23.54	23.02	21.70	22.39
4	Class IX-X	9.22	9.14	9.18	20.62	16.69	18.83	12.42	11.90	12.16	9.16	8.17	8.68	12.00	10.66	11.35
5	Class I-X	23.28	22.29	22.79	32.92	28.83	30.92	27.67	32.25	29.82	27.32	24.52	25.98	27.13	25.39	26.29

*B-Boys, G-Girls, T-Total

Source: Annual Report of S.S.A. 2004-05.

The above table reveals that, at the elementary level, percentage of dropout boys is more (23.02%) than the girls (21.70%) and upto secondary level also, the percentage of dropout boys is more (27.13%) compared to the dropout girls (25.39%). The table also reveals that, among the four districts, the dropout rate is more in the West district upto secondary level.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

Healthy and educated population is the greatest resource for any country. Education plays a major role in the overall development of a society or a nation. It is the birth right of every individual but women still remain deprived of educational access in society. Women play a very significant role in making or unmaking of her counterparts, the male population, the action of which shapes the society. She plays the role of a daughter, wife and mother. She also plays the role of a friend and guide to her counterpart, thereby indirectly influencing the way in which the human society grows. From time immemorial, this hidden or invisible role of a women was unacknowledged by Indian society because she remained deprived of

certain socially required privileges such as education. Women have always had a subordinate position due to various reasons, among which lack of education happens to be a significant factor. However, the need to provide education to the womenfolk has long been felt not only by the women themselves but by society also as a whole.

Without the female population of a society being educated, the overall development would have no meaning as knowledge would not pass on to the next generation. Therefore, at this juncture it is important to study what are the factors that affect the accessibility of education to the female-folk and the role that education plays in bringing about progressive change to the status of women in Sikkim.

Today women education is considered as a yardstick to measure the status of development in any society or nation. Despite the Constitution, which guarantees equality of educational opportunities to all, the statistics shows a very dismal picture in this regard, that is, a major part of the society i.e. the womenfolk are still being deprived of formal education. According to 2001 Census of India, female literacy rate was 54.16 percent as compared to male literacy 78.85 percent. A State like Sikkim is no exception to this fact. There is a great disparity between the male and female literacy rate and rural-urban literacy rate.

Since the merger of Sikkim into India in 1975, the pace of development has picked up considerably. Education is perhaps Sikkim's biggest success. In comparison to smaller states, Sikkim occupies the lead position as indicated by the award received by the State recently (India Today, Special issue, August 16, 2004). It is against this background that an investigation on the factors contributing to this success needs to be carried out. Hypothetically, women have played a major role in the economic, political and social activities of the State. The womenfolk however can do so only if they are educated. In this context, it is important to study the status of women education in Sikkim.

Besides, I have found that there are rarely any studies carried out on this topic by anyone especially by women in Sikkim. In order to produce an effective research work that would serve as a guide for many womenfolk in Sikkim, the researcher desired to work on this topic to highlight the progressive changes that has been

brought in the society through progressive educational system for women in Sikkim. Amidst the system where women are being encouraged to play major role in many areas of the society, this study would serve as a source of inspiration or reference point for establishing women's position where they will no more play the subordinate position.

1.7 Review of Literature

In the field of sociological studies on women education in Sikkim, what I have realised is that there is hardly any serious research work undertaken on women education in Sikkim, particularly in West Sikkim. Therefore, I have selected to review only those books which are related to my research work. I have mentioned some relevant books written on Sikkim in particular and on Indian perspective which can throw some light in this direction.

Works on Women and Education in India:

Aikara Jacob (2004) attempts to analyse education as a social institution in human society. From sociological perspective he has discussed different roles of education with relation to other social institutions like political, religious, economic etc. Important issues like education and equality, occupational placement, privatization, social development, right to education, adult education etc. have been discussed in his book.

Arya (2000) has systematically analysed the state of women education and empowerment of women in a historical perspective. She has mentioned the progress of women's education in India in different periods. Further she has tried to find out the role of education in empowering women in India. She has laid emphasis on the role and influence of mass media on the status of women.

Bagchi's edited book (2005) is based on essays made by different scholars on various aspects responsible for the changing status of women. In their work the scholars try to explore the condition of women in West Bengal with socio-economic and political-cultural ambience with all essential data. There is a separate chapter on tribal women in West Bengal and their struggles which highlights different aspects

that are needed to be improved. The book also covers some micro studies with statistics of different districts of West Bengal to examine the changing position of women in West Bengal.

Chanana's book (2001) is divided into four parts. There are altogether nine papers in this book. It starts with a socio-historical perspective on women's education in India and then, it moves on to Punjab and the schooling of Punjabi girls in pre-partition Punjab. Paper three is about family. She used empirical approach to look at the past and the present. Next two papers deal with the primary and secondary education, paper six and seven is about higher education and the last two papers focus on the expanding horizons of women. It is about women and their world of work. She highlighted higher education of women and their world of work.

Desai and Krishnaraj's work (1990) is a praiseworthy attempt to discuss the status of Indian women. It is based on various reports of dignified scholars. With an interdisciplinary focus they discussed various issues from feminist perspective. The scholars have discussed about various social institutions like familial, educational, economic etc.- their roles in the life of Indian women, changes in these institutions, crime against women and they have also talked about the different actions taken to stop violence against women.

Desai and Thakkar (2001) have tried to explore the changing perceptions of the status and role of women at the threshold of the new millennium. The authors attempt to present the Indian women's journey towards gender equality in the changing politico-economic background to understand the status of women in the contemporary society. The book tries to find out the answers to some important questions related to the status of women such as why women are not treated equally within their own society? Despite their education and economic progress why gender injustice is prevalent in our society? What efforts should be taken by the society to stop gender discrimination? etc. In chapter 3 of this book, the authors discuss the importance of education to empower womenfolk of our society.

Ghadially's edited book (1988) is a collection of 21 articles of different writers. The book is divided into five parts. The first part deals with the contextual

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analytical and theoretical views of women. The second part is about the empirical research organised around existing stereotypes about men and women. The third part covers violence against women. The fourth part is about the way women are portrayed by media and the fifth part is about the description of the efforts to make the people aware about the inequalities between the sexes.

Gupta's book (2003) is related with the educational development of women with relevant data. Through various chapters the writer highlighted the growth of woman's education in India, accessibility of education to women, careers for educated women, various socio-economic indicators and the role of education to bring equality for women.

Mishra's book (2005) contains rich information on all the issues related to women education. In his book he emphasized important topics like essentials of educating girls, career opportunities to educate girls, the role of education to bring empowerment of women, gender gap in education.

Mondal (1997) has analysed the state of education among the Muslim Community of Bengal in particular and India in general. To identify the level of education among the Muslims the author had done his research work on six different villages of six different districts in West Bengal. He observes that the literacy levels of the Muslim people of six villages are very low. His study reveals that there is a close relationship between educational, occupational and economic background of the parents with the education of the children. Further he has mentioned different factors responsible for educational backwardness of the Muslims. Besides he has also dealt with the system of religious and informal education prevalent among the Muslims.

Mondal (2005) has examined the social situation of Muslim women of India in general and the State of West Bengal in particular, especially of northern region of West Bengal. In his work he has tried to explore the role and status of Muslim women which is measured by their economic, social, educational and political aspects as well as their problems and prospects towards their empowerment. He has dealt with the National Policies and Programmes for Muslim women and its implications on them.

Pruthi and Sharma's book (1995) published in Encyclopaedia of Women Society and Culture Series-II which consist of eleven chapters. It gives an overall

view on women society, education and culture. Chapter 8 especially deals with the Indian situation related to women education. According to the writers, the legal position of women has improved, but Hindu women are still bound by old traditions and customs. The book tries to find out the relationship between education and marriageability of girls.

Pruthi et al. (1999) have attempted to discuss the role of education in women's life; how education brings opportunity for employment and through employment how women become empowered in their society.

Rao (2000) has dealt with the importance of education in women's life. Through his work the writer tries to show education as a significant instrument for changing women's position in the society. The writer wanted to establish the idea through his writing that an educated woman is the need of the hour for both state and home.

Seth (2001) has analysed social, economic and political background of Indian women from the Indus Civilisation till independence. She has mentioned different policies and planning implemented by the Government of India for the welfare of women in different five year plan periods. She has analysed the status of girl child and the mortality rate of girl child in different states of India. She has shown sex-wise differences in the literacy rates area-wise, religion-wise, community-wise and has focused on the remedial measures to lessen the gap. She tries to relate the impact of female literacy rate on health, employment, crime like issues.

Singh and Arora edited book (1999) is a collection of articles published by the Association of Indian Universities in their weekly journal 'University News.' It is the third in the series of selections from University News which has emphasized the role of education as the most dynamic factor of development. This volume has highlighted the role of education as an important instrument for empowerment of women.

Venkataiah's edited book (2001) is a valuable part of Encyclopaedia of Education for 21st century series. The book contains issues related to women education. It is a comprehensive work on issues like education of women, discrimination against women, primary and higher education for women, intellectual necessity, work and science, non-formal education, women and politics etc.

Works on Sikkim in General:

Basnet's book (1974) is one of the important books about Sikkim. But it is mostly written from a political perspective and he did not touch upon the educational aspects.

In Bareh's edited book (2001), a community-wise study has been taken up on Sikkim. Here the writer has mentioned how in some communities, women have progressed better than men in the field of education. Apart from that, in different chapters, he touched upon topics related to politics, ethnicity and resource management, science and technology education.

Bhadra's book (1992) is a very good attempt to explore the socio-political changes in Sikkim. It is an in-depth study on various factors or forces that have led to the transformation of Sikkim from Monarchy to Democracy. Bhadra's study has examined the answers of some important questions like-whether democracy is compatible with the Sikkimese tradition, who and what are the agents of social change in Sikkim, whether there is any special problem of adaptability and stability in Sikkim, in Sikkim's quest for political development what is the role of different classes etc.

Bhasin (1946) has made empirical studies on the two tribes of North Sikkim i.e. Lepchas and Bhutias. She tries to explore the distinctiveness of the character of these two tribes which is mainly because of their distinct physical environments. She analysed the relationship between man and nature very well. In her work she attempts to show the interconnection between eco-system and socio-cultural system of these two tribes.

Bhattacharya's book (1984) is based on the documents from the last Chogyal of Sikkim, important families of Sikkim, Darjeeling and National Archives of India. It is the story of Sikkim's coinage. He has dealt with the socio-economic and political history of Sikkim and its relation with the British India.

Bhattacharya and Bhattacharya in their article published in Bhuimali's edited book (2004) has analysed the employment scenario of Sikkimese women. The study reveals that women's participation in the total labour force is very low and the

majority of them are engaged in agricultural operations. However, there are job opportunities for them in various departments of the government. The writers suggest that if Sikkimese women are given adequate education, training and technical knowledge, they can prove themselves and can change their nature of job. They have recommended more job opportunities for women both in rural and urban areas and also the spread of vocational training for women.

Bedi's book (1989) is a fantastic collection of photographs of scenic beauty and the life of Sikkimese people. It gives glimpses of Sikkim. An additional benefit from this book is the textual details by Pushpesh Pant and Asharani Mathur about the history of Sikkim, the rulers, cultural life of the Sikkimese people and natural wealth of Sikkim.

Choudhry (2005) in her occasional paper has examined the perception and aspirations of people of Sikkim for better living. The structure of the paper is divided under four headings, viz. (a) Human Resources of Sikkim-where she has dealt with demographic, economic and employment profile of Sikkim (b) Cultural Profile of Sikkim – deals with the ethnic diversity, tribes and communities, religion, social norms, community behaviours, cultural activities, different festivals and conflicting interests of people (c) Amenities Available In Sikkim –is about the basic necessary amenities and the last part which is the most important part of this i.e. (d) The Quality of Life In Sikkim is based on empirical study. The study covers about fifty villages of Sikkim to find out the existing scenario of the quality of life of the Sikkimese people and what are their aspiration levels.

Choudhary's book (2006) is a combination of both traditional and modern subjects. It deals with the socio-cultural background of the State, physical geography, demography, economic profile, ethnic diversity etc; and also highlights modern developments in Sikkim such as human development in terms of education, healthcare and employment, tourism, economic profile, availability of amenities and infrastructure in Sikkim, quality of life of the Sikkimese people.

Das (1995) who was appointed as the Chief Executive of Sikkim in 1973 has shared his experiences in his book. He writes about the period of turmoil in Sikkim

from 1973 till its merger with India in 1975. It is a subjective interpretation of facts and events. Like Basnet's book, this book has got more to do about the political issues and not about education.

Das Gupta (1992) has identified some of the problems of this region like agricultural problems, land reforms and problems of ethnicity, constraints of mixed farming, problems of orange production, problems of industrialisation etc. He has shown the prospects of these different issues and also mentions the measures initiated by the State and Central Governments for the development of the State after its merger.

Desai (1988) has narrated the history of the small Himalayan Kingdom - Sikkim. She attempts to relate the physical geography of the State with its culture and society. The book also deals with interaction between ethnicity and changing eco-system. Desai has explained that change in the physical environment affects the cultural, economic and social systems of the ethnic communities of Sikkim. To study the interaction between eco-system and ethnicity she had conducted a survey of five villages at different altitudes each of which is dominated by one ethnic community of Sikkim and a comparative study is made on the basis of that survey.

Dhamala in her article published in the *Himalayan Miscellany* (1995-1996) has analysed the involvement of women in socio-political institutions of Sikkim with necessary data and suggested that though there is no restrictions on their movement, their involvement in these institutions is minimum, therefore necessary steps should be taken for their all round development.

Foning's book (1987) is based on personal experiences. As he himself hailed from the tribal community of Sikkim, he successfully sketched the cultural history of the Lepchas, their customs, religions, and social practices. The book provides detailed information about the Buddhist and Christian influences on the tribe Lepcha.

Geoffrey's book (1987) is a pioneering work which is based on his own personal experience and which is a on the spot study. He has dealt with the different phases of life of Lepcha people from their birth to death.

Grover (1974) attempts to cover the significant aspects of Sikkim's political and administrative development. He tries to find out the special relation of Sikkim and India. The book gives us information about the happenings in the State between 1947 to 1974.

Gulia's book (2005) is an attempt to analyse all facts constituting the human ecological aspects of Upper Rangit Basin, an important mountain enclave in the Eastern Himalayas in the Indian State of Sikkim. The book analyses the structure and functioning of eco-systems, ethno- botany and nutritional requirements. The author attempts to assess human ecology of the various human and geographic ecosystems in Sikkim. It is an in-depth study on the nature and structure of local ecosystem within Sikkim which are dovetailed into the human ecosystems, resulting into creation of various niches of the human ecosystems. These niches surround the monasteries and the monastic architecture, chortens and their eco-biological significances, spirit possession, shamans and jhakris in Upper Rangit Basin. Apart from that he studied the ethno botany and analysed his reflections on the psyche of the Sikkimese people and their ways of thinking.

Joshi (2004) portrays a vivid account of different aspects of Sikkim like history, political aspects, economic and social aspects. This book is very informative and useful to the researchers and policy makers. It makes us aware about the various developmental programmes of the State.

Lahiri et al. (2001) present an authentic document to let the people know about the functioning of the State-Sikkim. It is mainly based on the reports of various departments of Government of Sikkim, about their objectives, new plan and policies, sectoral strategy to fulfill their goals and targets. It captures various facts and figures in detail.

Lama's edited book (2000) is a collection where various writers have written about the society, polity, economy and environment of Sikkim. There are altogether twenty one articles in this book. The first article has been written by Aparna Bhattacharya on 'The Bhutia-Lepcha Women of Sikkim' where the writer has dealt with the Bhutia-Lepcha women of Sikkim, how they were placed traditionally and how they have responded to the various factors of change. She writes about the

increase in the number of girl students among these two communities. Writer Nilotpal Sarma's article is about the plainsmen in Sikkim, about their occupational structure. Dhamala and Chakravarthy have written on *Panchayati Raj Institution In Sikkim* and *Government and Politics in Sikkim* respectively. Amal Datta's article is on the *Ethnicity and Resource Management in Sikkim* which deals with the three ethnic communities of Sikkim, about the role of kazis, Sikkim subject regulations and changes in the post-merger period. Similarly the articles of other writers are also full of information about the different aspects of Sikkimese society. This book is based on well researched and policy-oriented articles of different scholars, policy-makers and professionals.

Lama (2003) has dealt with several aspects of human development like education, health, women and child welfare, forest, water and environment, finance, agriculture etc. In a separate chapter of this book he has written about the educational development in Sikkim from its initial stage. He has given data on the number of schools, literacy rate, expenditure on educational field, number of educational institutions, number of teachers etc. He has written about privatization of education, teachers' training, higher education, employment opportunities etc. Further, he has given suggestive measures for educational progress. From his book we get an idea about the women folk of Sikkim, their position, their participation in the work force and how they enjoy a better position in comparison to their counterpart in other parts of India.

Lama's edited book (2003) is based on the achievements of the State under the present government. Altogether, four parts of the book cover diverse areas like the status of the State (regional, national and international status), about the governance, economy of the State and about various aspects of the society i.e. education, health and sports, women empowerment, culture, social emancipation and the role of media in spreading public awareness. This document is an attempt to highlight all the major recent achievements of the State.

An article written by McKay Alex (2003) in the *Bulletin of Tibetology* explains Kumar Sidkeon Tulku's travels in search of education and a wife. It gives an authentic information about the educational proceedings of Kumar Sidkeon and the

aims of the British Colonial State in South Asia. The writer narrates the difficulties faced by the Himalayan aristocracy in finding suitable marriage partners and the diplomatic considerations involved in these alliances.

Misra's monograph (1977) dealt with the historical background of Sikkim with its theoretical framework-Tradition to Modernity, decline of the hereditary monarchy, evolution of constitution and democracy, the role played by the Government of India. His monograph is a praiseworthy attempt to discuss India's Himalayan Policy in general and Sikkim in particular.

Rai et al. edited book (1998) is another book on Sikkim. It has done a comprehensive work on various aspects of socio-economic activities. D.P.S. Rana in his article has given a brief history of development of modern education in Sikkim and has given data on the growing numbers of schools and teachers. He has concluded by pointing out the constraints which hamper the enrolment rate, retention rate and continuation of higher studies and also some solutions for the same. Yet there is hardly any mention of data relating to women's education and its development.

Risley (2005) presents various information on Sikkim-its physical features, geographical position, its history and its rulers, marriage, customs, varieties of butterflies, birds, reptiles, mammals, agriculture, vegetation, Lamaism etc. The book makes us aware about the rich civilization and cultural heritage of Sikkim.

Sengupta's book (1985) deals only with the political aspects of Sikkim. He has analysed the political system prevalent upto 1973 and the changes that have taken place since 1974. He has given emphasis to the political dynamics and the political framework and governmental process. It is an in-depth study of upto date account of the political process and the working of the governmental organ which have passed through different stages of development and change.

Shukla's book (1981) is a very useful one which speaks about the land, its flora-fauna, people of this region, monarchy system, British contact, about the dawn of a new era, new challenges to the State and also about the fall of the Chogyal dynasty.

Sinha's book (1975) is divided into three parts. The first part is about the historical evolution, political evolution and the organization of social forces active in Sikkim. The second part deals with the elite, their personal and social background, socio-economic status, political affiliation and perception of the various elite in Sikkim. Part three analyses the political developments in Sikkim in post 1947 period in terms of institutional accomplishments.

Thakur (1988) has written about the Lepchas-the Himalayan tribe, their origin, socio-economic and demographic profile, social institution, culture, religion, social mobility etc. In one chapter of his book, he has dealt with all three Communities of Sikkim i.e. the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese, their interrelations, social, economic, educational institution, dynamics of change and modernization among the Lepchas and at last he has written about the various policies for the development of Lepchas as a weaker tribe and their implementation.

White (1986) presents a detailed picture of the places of Sikkim, its geographical position, flora-fauna, people-their marriage customs, religion, culture etc. The book is based on his own travel experience in these places.

The book *Sikkim Coronation* (n.d.) is a detailed story of the modern history of Sikkim upto the Coronation of the Chogyal P.T. Namgyal with beautiful illustrations. The book depicts the history of the Chogyal reign, about the coronations of Sikkim, religions of Sikkim, preparations and festivities of the coronation of the last Chogyal by the people of Sikkim.

Works on Education in Sikkim:

Annual Report of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2007-08) has provided credible information regarding the progress and achievements of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the State. It has shown the collective data and the present face of elementary education in Sikkim. It has highlighted the education scenario of the State, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan activities, management structure under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, implementation and achievements achieved. The report also deals with the audit report on the income and expenditure accounts for the year ended 31st March, 2008.

Bhattacharya in his doctoral thesis (1986) has done a systematic analysis on the development of education in Sikkim. This is one of the pioneering research work

carried out on the development of education in Sikkim. He has dealt in detail the education in Sikkim from historical perspective upto the status of education in Sikkim in the 80's. He has laid emphasis on the functioning of school, teachers, pupils' view on school and home life, reaction of educational administration and parents' opinion. However, despite being an in-depth study, he has hardly mentioned anything specific on the development of education among the women of Sikkim.

Datta (1991) has assessed the role of education in emerging new class structure or to bring a new dimension in social stratification in Sikkimese society. Further he has analysed the situation in Sikkim since independence from varied angles and he has also dealt with various educational constraints in class formation.

Kharel in his doctoral thesis (2003) has analysed in detail the educational reforms in Sikkim from traceable period. He has looked into the socio-political-religious conditions affecting educational system and has mentioned the period of establishment of female education.

Shrestha in his article published in *Shrasta (1989)* has shown the expansion of education from the past upto the 80's. He has mentioned the religious education in Sikkim, different formal educational institutions developed in the beginning, the contribution of Kazi Phak Tshering in the development of various schools in Sikkim. Further he has analysed the major constraints in the expansion of education in Sikkim and he has suggested some measures for the development of education in Sikkim.

Subba, in his article published in *Timburbong Pathshala Swarna Jayanty (1992)*, has written about one of the oldest schools in Soreng constituency of West Sikkim and has mentioned very briefly about the then educational facilities available there. He has also given a very brief statistic about the number of student enrolled and how over the years the number of girl students has increased.

Thulung (1998) has written in brief about the educational development in Sikkim, about various educational institutions, its administrative structures, about qualitative education and stagnation of educational system.

1.8 Aims and Objectives of the Present Study

The present study is a humble attempt to deal with the following set of research questions:

1. What was the status of women's education in Sikkim before the merger of this State into India?
2. What is the present status of women's education in Sikkim?
3. How far are the rural Sikkimese women lagging behind in comparison to their urban counterparts with regard to their educational position?
4. How far are the Sikkimese women educationally backward from the Sikkimese men?
5. Do Sikkimese girls think that female education is a must for their self development? If yes, upto which level of education is needed to be acquired according to them?
6. What are the factors that hinder educational upliftment of the Sikkimese girls?
7. What are the remedial measures to overcome the various problems related to female education?
8. What are the strategies to be adopted for promoting women education in Sikkim?

To answer all these questions, empirical research work at micro level is done. The basic aim of the research work is to explore and analyse the state of women's education at rural and urban areas of West district of Sikkim and the major objective of this study is to make a comparison between rural and urban women of West Sikkim in relation to their educational status, problems and prospects. The specific objectives of this research work are as follows:

1. To examine the state of women education with particular relation to literacy and educational status of the female population.
2. To study the process of development of women education in Sikkim especially since merger with India.
3. To identify the major constraints affecting women's education.
4. To suggest concrete measures for the reorganization of women's education with a view to maximise the women empowerment.

1.9 Theoretical Perspectives

Since the study is based on women education in Sikkim, hence it is necessary to explain theoretical perspectives on women as well as on education also. The theoretical approach to study the women is based on three major perspectives: Structure-Functional, Marxist, and Feminist.

Structure-Functional Perspective:

In South Asia and Indian subcontinent studies on women are influenced by this perspective owing to influence of British structure-functional school of Anthropological/ Sociological thought. This approach explains women as a social category, thus must be studied in terms of roles and attributes as ascribed by the society. According to this perspective, a harmonious division of labour between men and women is necessary for smooth functioning of the social systems. (Mondal:2004).

Marxist Perspective:

It analyses the interrelations between the modes of production and the position of women in the household as well as in the society. Both Marx and Engels are of opinion that the remedy for female oppression is female employment. Employment would largely free women from economic dependence upon their husbands and from male dominance within the family. According to Engels emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework. According to this perspective, women's liberation is not a fight of women against men, but of women against the capitalist system (Adams and Sydie:2002, Mondal:2004).

Feminist Perspective:

This perspective analyses the issues by the women and for the women. Feminism has been divided into many brands which differ among themselves both politically and epistemologically.

i. Liberal Feminism:

In this approach the explanation for women's position in society is seen in terms of unequal rights. Public citizenship and the attainment of equality with

men in the public arena is central to liberal feminism. According to them women are much the same as men and they should be able to do what men do. Rather than to bring revolutionary change, liberal feminists give emphasis upon reform of society (Beasley:1999,Adam and Sydie:2002).

ii. **Radical Feminism:**

Radical Feminism gives attention to women's oppression as women in a social order dominated by men. It gives a positive value to womanhood rather than supporting a notion of assimilating women into arenas of activity associated with men. Radical feminists pay attention to discover positive elements in femininity. According to this approach, women are oppressed because of their sex group and their oppression is as women, not as members of other social groups. This approach advocates a revolutionary model of social change (Beasley:1999,Adam and Sydie:2002).

iii. **Dialectical Feminism:**

This approach analyses women's oppression exclusively from economic point of view. It assumes that if women gain economic power, gender relation will change naturally (Mondal:2004).

iv. **Post Modern Feminism:**

The aim of this approach is to examine the gender differences and the gender constructions in a given society. This approach views that gender relations are shifting from one society to another and also from class to class, thus women of higher social position can not understand the problems of women of lower social position (Mondal:2004).

1.10 Some Important Concepts Used for the Study

To make the research work systematic and meaningful, it is appropriate to mention the important concepts involved with the study. The most important concepts used in this research work are as follows:

Rural and Urban Areas : In Sikkim, the basic unit for Rural areas is the Revenue Block, which corresponds to a village. The Revenue Block is the smallest unit which consist of several inhabited areas such as hamlets—commonly known as “*Busty*” or “*Gaon*”. Besides, rural areas also cover some areas like forest, tea estate, monasteries

etc. The basic unit for Urban areas is the Sector. In the 1991 Census of India the definition of Urban Area adopted is as follows: (a) all places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee, etc. (b) all other places which satisfy the following criteria: (i) a minimum population of 5,000; (ii) at least 75 per cent of male working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and (iii) a density of population of at least 400 persons per square kilometre. Besides, the Directors of Census Operations in States/Union Territories were allowed to include in consultation with the concerned State Government/Union Territory Administrations and the Census Commissioner of India, some places having distinct urban characteristics as urban even if such places did not strictly satisfy all the criteria mentioned under category (b) above. In Sikkim also, there are some urban places which do not strictly satisfy all the criteria mentioned under category (b) above. (Census of India 1991, series-22, Sikkim, Part XII-A & B).

Education : Education is the most vital social institution. It is a social means to a social end. From the Functionalist perspective, the education system makes a number of vital contributions to the survival and continuance of modern societies. For the Marxists, the major role of education in capitalist societies is the reproduction of labour power. Educational institutions are agencies that reproduce and legitimate the existing social order through the functions they perform. By reproducing and legitimating the existing social order, the educational institution benefits some individuals and groups (Bhattacharyya :2002).

Sex Ratio : The sex ratio refers to the number of females per 1000 males in a given area at a specified time period.

Dependency Ratio : The dependency ratio is a measure comparing the portion of a population which is composed of dependents with the portion that is in the working age group.

Extended/Joint Family : An extended family which is commonly known as the joint family can take different forms, but has more than one couple and often more than two generations living together.

Nuclear Family: Consists of a married couple with their unmarried offspring, although in some cases one or more additional person may reside with them.

Incomplete family: It refers to a family without any couple.

Landless family: In this study, by landless family, only those families have been considered which do not possess any cultivable land. These families possess homestead land only.

Literate People: It refers to those people who have had formal education and it also includes people without any formal education but are able to read and write.

Illiterate people: It refers to those people without any formal or informal education.

Status of women: Status is the position which a person occupies in the social structure. It is simply the means of identifying a particular social role. A role is the behavioural aspect of status. It is the manner in which a given individual fulfills the obligations of a status and enjoys its privileges and prerogatives. Kingsley Davis has said, a person's identity in a social situation reveals his status. According to Morris Ginsberg "A status is a position in a social group or grouping, a relation to other positions held by other individuals in the group or grouping." Ralph Linton says that "Status is the place in a particular system which a certain individual occupies at a particular time." One individual may have several statuses. Role changes with each new incumbent in a status. In the modern complex societies, the statuses assigned to women have changed greatly. Still some division of labour between the sexes persists. In the occupational sphere today though women are not excluded, they are handicapped in competition against men in certain fields and in certain fields, certainly they are excluded. It means that the ascribed status of women limit their attainment for achieved statuses (Rao:2007). In the present study, the status of women considers the roles performed by women and the positions they achieve by their qualification.

Empowerment of Women: It refers to the process of strengthening the hands of women who have been suffering from various inequalities and gender discrimination. It is the process of providing equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and power positions to women so that they are able to play a role on par with men in society (Rao:2007).

Primary education: It refers to the level of formal education from grade I to V.

Elementary Education: It refers to the level of formal education from grade I to VIII.

Secondary Education: It refers to the level of formal education from grade VI to X.

Senior Secondary Education: It refers to the level of formal education from grade XI-XII.

Feeder School : It is a lower primary or primary or junior high school under the supervision of any secondary or senior secondary school.

Bride Price:The money or goods given by the kin of the groom to the kin of the bride on marriage.Although it is sometimes seen as compensatory payment to the natal family for the upbringing of the daughter,it varies in form and meaning across cultures.In some,the bride-price may become the property of the bride,and it is treated as an insurance against divorce(Oxford Dictionary of Sociology).

Son Preference:The social phenomenon where members of a community prefer to have sons rather than daughters,i.e.they value sons more than daughters.

Ethnic Group: A collectivity which is perceived by others in society as being different in terms of language,religion,race,ancestral home,culture etc.whose members also perceive themselves as different from others and who participate in shared activities built around a real or imaginary shared descent and culture.According to J.Milton Yinger,an ethnic group is a segment of a large society whose members are thought,by themselves or others,to have a shared culture(Rao:2007).

1.11 Research Methodology

I. Research Design:

The design of this research has been formulated on the basis of the nature of this research work.The study area,the informants,the tools and techniques for data collection has been decided as per aims and objectives of the research work.The main purpose of this study is to gain insight into the problem.

The research has been carried out on the basis of structure-functional approach.It is an exploratory study in which the analysis has depended heavily on empirical data.In some cases diagnostic outlook has also been carried out.The approach of this study is analytical one,where comparative method has been adopted

for understanding the rural-urban situation of the women education. The comparative method, both synchronic as well as diachronic over space and time, has been adopted for understanding the present educational situation of the Sikkimese women and the changes therein. The data for this research work have been collected both from primary as well as secondary sources. Primary or empirical data have been collected through field work and methods and techniques like census survey, observation, interview and case studies were used. Secondary data have been gathered by analysing published materials like books, articles, journals, government official records, gazetteers, reports and minutes etc. and also unpublished materials like dissertations, articles, thesis etc.

II. Venue of the Study:

The present study is based on the educational status of Sikkimese women. Though literacy rate alone can not predict educational status, still it is one of the important factors to understand educational scenario of a particular place. According to 'Sikkim: A Statistical Profile 2002' the total literates in Sikkim was 3,22,828 in 2001 which constitutes 69.68 per cent literacy rate in the State. In the West district, total literates were only 61326 in the same year. This constituted only 59.31 per cent literacy rate in the district which is very less in comparison to other three districts. Hence, the study is confined to West district of Sikkim only.

Since it is a comparative work, places for field work have been selected both from villages and towns to represent rural and urban scenario. Two villages i.e. Bariakhop and Timburbong and two notified town areas of West district i.e. Gyalshing or Geyzing and Nayabazar have been selected for field work. The fieldwork has been conducted at three different phases. The first phase which is related with census survey started in July 2006 and concluded in June 2007. In the second phase, data were gathered through interview schedule both from males and females of the study areas. In the third phase, selective case studies were conducted. It was completed in October 2007. Thus it took more than one year to complete the field work.

III. Selection of Respondents and Procedure of Sampling:

It was predetermined to conduct empirical study on every Sikkimese household of all the four study areas mentioned above. Information on Sikkimese households of the selected study areas were obtained from the village officials i.e. the

members of the Panchayat, R.D.A., from knowledgeable persons, from Land Revenue and R.M.D. Department.

In the first phase, to gather necessary information, the actual census was conducted in all the study areas. All the households of the local Sikkimese people were chosen and all the household heads were selected as respondents. In a few cases where household heads were absent, the next person in rank or the next reliable and eligible person was selected as the respondent.

In the second phase, after pilot field survey, a sample number of respondents were chosen, that is 40 per cent of the total households of each study area. Again the sample respondents were divided into two categories—males and females. Male respondents consist of household heads, professionals, influential persons, businessmen etc and female informants consist of housewives, professionals, school going girls etc. The respondents were chosen on the basis of stratified random sampling techniques to present every section of the community with particular reference to their socio-economic strata in their respective society. Due weightage was given to the informants sincerity and reliability for getting correct informations, fair appreciation regarding the questions and their capability to respond the questions.

IV. Tools and Techniques of Data Collection:

Before conducting the fieldwork, a plan of work for field study had been prepared so that the study could be done in a systematic way. The information or data for this research work were collected from both primary as well as secondary sources. Primary data were collected through intensive field survey. The data on the concept of women education or the overall educational development in Sikkim were gathered from published materials, various information furnished by several officials, and also from unpublished materials like dissertation papers, thesis etc. While the empirical facts were collected through intensive field work on two selected villages and two selected towns of the West district of Sikkim. The field work was conducted between July 2006 to October 2007.

In the beginning, I faced some difficulties in doing the field work. I had to convince the people about the main purpose of the research work and people were convinced when they were assured of the secrecy of the data collected from them.

In the initial stage, a pilot survey was conducted on every households of the study areas. Census schedules had been prepared for collecting basic demographic, socio-economic attributes of these areas as well as the educational status of the Sikkimese people living in these areas.

In the second stage, to obtain empirical and comprehensive data, structured interview schedules were prepared. Data were collected through intensive study from sample households and informants of the study areas through interview schedules. The interviews were conducted by taking prior appointment with the informants. Interviews were conducted at the residences or at the schools and at places of work. Though the questions were in English, the respondents were interviewed in Nepali. With the help of closed and open questions, the required data were obtained. Two separate interview schedules were prepared to collect data from the heads of the households, influential persons and from the continuing girl students and the women. To get good response from the respondents, for the first 10-15 minutes general issues were discussed followed by formal interview. Each interview took about one or one and half hour depending on the nature of the respondents. During the interview, each question has been explained clearly to the respondents to draw out correct information relevant to the present study.

Informations were also gathered through informal discussions with various members of the families and other members of the localities. A survey on village schools and town schools were also conducted. To obtain necessary facts, the attendance register of the schools were analysed and the school records of the dropout students were collected. For detailed information, formal group discussions were also arranged and to ensure accuracy of the collected data, cross checks were done in a limited way.

In depth study was made through case studies. These data were supplemented by participant and non-participant observations. Method of comparison had been used to get the rural and urban variation in educational achievement of the respective study areas.

V. Data Processing and Analysis:

After collecting, checking and editing the relevant data, it was processed. While processing, the accuracy and completeness was carefully examined. Tabulation was

done manually and in some cases computer aid also taken. Simple statistical method were used. Data were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data were analysed through tabulation and calculation. Qualitative data were analysed through proper systematic description and analysis of the facts. In course of analysis, methods of comparison were implemented. Finally, data were organised into relevant chapters through different tables and also analysed in a descriptive manner.

VI. Limitations:

The present research work has certain limitations. The empirical study highlights the state of women's education in Sikkim. Studies which cover the same are very rare and scanty. Therefore limited benefits were available from secondary sources.

Secondly, the study is limited only to the West district of Sikkim. The study was undertaken on only four areas which include two villages and two towns of West Sikkim. Hence, the observations drawn from this study cannot be generalised for the whole district or State, though it provides important ideas about the issues related with women education.

Thirdly, the entire research work was limited on the education of the womenfolk of the ethnic communities found in the areas under study. The study escapes the women of other communities settled here for long period.

Lastly, the fieldwork took more than one year to collect authentic data and took a long time to prepare the report. So, the recent changes might not have been reflected in the present study.

VII. Chapterisation:

The material of this study has been divided into eight different chapters.

Chapter 1 –Introduction-which deals with the concept of education, objectives of women education, development of women education in India, situation of women education in Sikkim, educational scenario of West district, statement of the problem, review of relevant literature, aims and objectives of the study, the research methodology followed in this research work, limitation of this study and about the organisation of various chapters of this whole research work.

Chapter 2-Sikkim at a Glance-which deals with the physical, demographic and educational aspects of Sikkim.

Chapter 3- Society, Women and Education in Sikkim.

Chapter 4-Educational Scenario of Sikkim: Policies and Programmes.

Chapter 5-Research Setting-the brief description of the study areas.

Chapter 6-State of Women's Education in Rural and Urban West Sikkim: Field Studies on Villages and Towns-A comparative study on rural-urban differences on the state of women's education in West Sikkim.

Chapter-7- Problems of Women's Education: Some Case Studies.

Chapter-8- Major Findings, Concluding Remarks and Recommendations-which is the summary of all the findings.