

# **CHAPTER – VIII**

## CHAPTER – VIII

### 8.1 The Rule, Governance, Mission and Vision : Pawan Chamling

A great visionary Politician, Pawan Kumar Chamling (Pawan Chamling), strongly feels that at the core of politics should be the welfare of the people. With the pace of time, a Nepali poet, Pawan Chamling “Kiran” turned finally the Chief Minister of Sikkim, who had joined the Sikkim Sangram Parishad and contested election from his native Constituency *viz.* Damthang situated in South Sikkim and won from SSP’s ticket to become an MLA of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly in the year 1985 for the first time<sup>1</sup> and was appointed as Chairman of Sikkim Distilleries Ltd., Rangpo.<sup>2</sup> Again he contested and won from his native Constituency Damthang from the same SSP’s ticket to become MLA for the second time in the year 1989.<sup>3</sup> For all his untiring Party work and belief in the leadership of N.B. Bhandari, Chamling was offered a Ministerial berth in Bhandari’s Cabinet in the 1989 to hold the portfolios of Industries, Information and Public Relations and Printing,<sup>4</sup> which he carried out to the expectations of SSP’s High Command and served the people of Sikkim. For Pawan Chamling, N.B. Bhandari was without any shadow of doubt an undisputed leader of the people of Sikkim in the beginning and said I am a humble Sangram Worker.<sup>5</sup> He denied his reported involvement in a conspiracy to dislodge N.B. Bhandari and the report against him was malicious and mischievous by miscreants. There was no move to oust Bhandari. As a man and leader Chamling is simple, humble and with humility respects people in particular the poor masses.

As a Minister of SSP Government, his contributions were remarkable with regard to developing Sikkim. As Mister for Industries he Stated and regretted that Sikkim is deprived of the desired benefits of the Centre’s new liberal industrial policy and called for greater attention to its much-needed economic resurgence by all concerned. The State, he said suffers from lack of raw materials and has no rail link and airline. It is landlocked with only one corridor towards the rest of the Country with a single lane road *viz.*, NH 31A and communication which is also severely exposed to natural

vagaries.<sup>6</sup> As Minister of IPR Department he believed in the freedom of the Press and called upon the local Press to live up to the expectations by maintaining professional standards and norms of regularity. He asked the press to play the vital role expected of them by objectively projecting the people's problems and highlighting the Government's programmes and create atmosphere for fair cordial Government press relationship.<sup>7</sup>

Pawan Chamling, a popular figure and Cabinet Minister for the then ruling SSP belongs to Rai community. Majority community in the South District of Sikkim was perceived as the next man to occupy Mintokgang (the Official Residence of the Chief Minister of Sikkim). There were hectic behind the scene manoeuvres to propose Chamling as an alternative to N.B. Bhandari proposition favoured by the Congress even in nineties, which was then going on all out to oust Bhandari. That was worked out by 12 MLAs who were in support of Chamling and at the same time, for he said if Chamla Tshering can muster six of the 13 Tribal MLAs, Bhandari would be ousted to make Chamla Tshering – a Bhutia-Lepcha candidate as Chief Minister of Sikkim with the backing of Congress (I). But it was realized by the people and the politicians that Bhandari would to any extent to stay in power because of money power. Therefore, Chamling cowed down and kept shut.

The incidents of publication against Bhandari, Rajendra Baid to tender apology, the arrest of Duka Nath Nepal CPI (M) without any reason etc. during that time were condemned by the national media in no uncertain terms. The crackdown on the opposition in Sikkim had boomeranged on the image of N.B. Bhandari. It was justified that there was no democracy in Sikkim and the State; it was proved ruled by a ruthless dictator who suppressed the media and freedom of the press. In spite of the fact, there were attacks on Bhandari from the Media, the greatest threat came from within the SSP and the active role of the Congress made Bhandari to enter into troubles. However, Bhandari denied that there were dissidents in his Party and both Chamla Tshering and Chamling pledged their support and loyalty to Bhandari. But, Chamling was waiting for the right moment to strike Bhandari out.

Chamling's performance, his activities, links with the poor OBCs and off the cuff remarks on administration and ruling Party did not gain much favour with Bhandari – which made Chamling as one of the most controversial men in his Cabinet. The autocratic style of Bhandari's functioning in the democratic framework forced Chamling to call him that 'I am a democrat, not a sycophant'. This statement hit Bhandari below the belt to react strongly. Chamling further stated that he was unable to function in an undemocratic set up. Thus, Chamling became most vocal, arch rival and popular in the Bhandari bandwagon.

It was sure that Chamling was sure to be dropped from Bhandari's Cabinet and finally he was dropped in June 1992 for all of his alleged anti-Party activities. Under Clause (1) of Article 164 of the Constitution of India the then Governor of Sikkim R.H. Tahiliani vested in him the power, ordered that Pawan Chamling shall cease to be a member of the Council of Ministers which was done on the advice of N.B. Bhandari, the then Chief Minister of Sikkim w.e.f. 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1992.<sup>8</sup> There was no reshuffle of the Cabinet but in its stead Bhim Raj Rai was inducted in the Cabinet.<sup>9</sup>

Since Jigme N. Kazi, the editor of Sikkim Observer was closely covering the news items in favour of Chamling as the freedom of Press was nullified and the news weekly Sikkim Observer was abruptly closed down and banned in the State. Since it was printed with the help of Sikkim Government Press.<sup>10</sup> Later Jigme N. Kazi launched *The Himalayan Guardian's* news weekly of Sikkim.

Bhandari branded Chamling as communal but Chamling emerged as the leader of the backward classes in Sikkim. As Chamling was vocal and had no fear for the action of being dropped from the Cabinet, he took the incident quite casual and he really wanted to play politics in the State. For him chair was not important. It is because even in the 1985 election he was elected owing to his own personal popularity than those of the popularity of Bhandari and his Sangram Parishad. Therefore, from the above events, it is clear that

Chamling was proved to be Bhandari's 'No Man' while others were 'Yes Man'.

Chamling's ouster from Bhandari's Cabinet in June 1992 took a different turn in the Political history of Sikkim – posing the question whether Chamling will emerge as an alternative to N.B. Bhandari in Sikkim or shall remain a Nepali poet forever. In his 'Perennial Dreams' a Nepali poem of Pawan Chamling (Kiran), he gave the answer that 'His warm blood' bubbling in him is full of fiery 'Spirit of Revolt'. He was not just one of the bubbles of water – full of life and frolic for a while, but eventually made turbulent the Politics of Sikkim ultimately to come to power. He infused in the minds of the peoples' freedom from fear, hunger and oppression through his Nepali poem '*Sparks of Revolution*'.

In his Political prediction on the issue of seat Reservation for the Nepalis, Chamling wanted that the Writ Petition of R.C. Poudyal (leader and founder of Sikkim Congress (Revolutionary) (later on The Rising Sun Party) to be withdrawn from the Supreme Court of India as because he felt the judgements may go adverse to the majority Nepalis Population of Sikkim. His aim was to work out a Political solution to restore seat reservation for the Nepalis of Sikkim through a Constitutional Amendment in the Union Parliament of India. Further, he also pointed out that R.C. Poudyal did not make a plea in his Writ Petition for the restoration of Seat Reservation for the Nepalis of Sikkim. That is, the reservation of 15/17 seats for Nepalis in accordance with the provisions of May 8, 1973 Tripartite Agreement, Government of Sikkim Act, 1974 and upholding the sanctity of the Article 371F of the Constitution of India. In this both, Poudyal and Bhandari were together and managed to fool the people by appearing to be fighting against each other. The first Chief Minister of the post merger Sikkim Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa supported Chamling's move and made a call for restoration of democracy in Sikkim – thus boosting the morale of the opposition and anti-Bhandari forces in Sikkim.

All leaders of Sikkim and people of Sikkim welcomed the Constitutional recognition and inclusion of *Lingua franca viz.*, Nepali in VIIIth Schedule of the Constitution of India on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1992 by the Parliament.

In the meanwhile on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1992 unheard in the history of India and State Legislatures, there appeared the Man with the lighted candle Pawan Chamling, the lone member of the opposition, entered on the floor of the New Sikkim Legislative Assembly building situated at Nam Nam, searching for democracy, moved from one member to the other asking : 'where is democracy'. This incident shook the whole House. The then Speaker of Sikkim Legislative Assembly D.T. Bhutia did not raise any objection to it (though fire or flame is not allowed inside the House of the Legislature) as because, he felt, 'Chamling had no *malafide* intention but had rationality and logic to question the members of the ruling Party as a matter of basic right. Since then Chamling established a rapport with the members of Legislative Assembly and common men. Thus, he was able to capture the imagination of the people and make the fight moves to become a credible leader in his own making as a single man reminded the ruling Party and the people of Sikkim that he could oppose dictatorial role of one man and restore democracy to build Sikkim-New and Happy. 'With this motive along with young leaders like Hishey Lachungpa, Garjaman Gurung, K.N. Rai, K.T. Gyaltzen, Vinod Pradhan along with other youngsters and seasoned statesmen of Sikkim like B.B. Gooroong and P.T. Lucksom founded a new Regional Party namely Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) at Ghurbishey (South Sikkim) on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1993 and marched into Gangtok. In order to escape from the troubles and insecurity of his life, he had undergone ordeals and had to go underground both at Kalimpong and New Delhi.

In order to function as an opposition MLA he sought special protection from the Centre. It was because Bhandari's 'Private Commando Force' terrorised his supporters in his native Constituency Damthang. He further implored the then Home Minister of Centre, S.B. Chavan to make arrangements for his personal security as because he was unfolding the various

acts of omissions and commissions of Bhandari's Government'<sup>11</sup>. However, he played a constructive role of opposition to check Bhandari's dictatorship and became a nightmare. He stood for the cause of restoration of democracy in Sikkim and strengthened his SDF, role and the Party leadership from the grassroots level. Thus, SDF got spread in all parts of the State and was getting ready to attract the people from all over Sikkim.

During this period there was a development and which was the attempt made by former Chief Minister Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa and B.B. Goroong regarding corruption charges levelled by the Central Bureau of Investigation against Bhandari and sought the direct intervention by the then Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao on the issue. They alleged that Bhandari had amassed crores of rupees and asked further the CBI to reopen the cases against him in spite of the fact the Centre was favouring Bhandari to save Sikkim and to take bold steps as because the two former Chief Ministers fought for democracy and freedom, but in the rule of Bhandari they found dictatorship of the worst type.

In 1993 Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa, raised the issue in the Supreme Court seeking Court's direction quashing the notification of the Sikkim Government withdrawing the sanction granted by the Gurung Ministry in May 1984 allowing the CBI to investigate the cases of corruption in Sikkim – asking both Centre and the CBI, respondents in the case to produce all records pertaining to cases of corruption against Bhandari and former Chief Secretary of Sikkim P.K. Pradhan, when he was Secretary, Rural Development Department. The petition further sought for Court's direction to the State Governor to accord sanction of Bhandari's prosecution. The move of Kazi was welcomed by the people of Sikkim which boosted the morale of opposition and anti Bhandari waves in Sikkim. Kazi's move came just a few weeks after the forcible retirement of P.K. Pradhan and Pradhan's premature retirement in 1993 aimed at ensuring clean and efficient administration in Sikkim. The PCC (I) President of Sikkim A.K. Subba and the SDF President Pawan Chamling welcomed Pradhan's removal and Chamling demanded the then Governor of Sikkim R.H. Tahiliani to dismiss the Bhandari Government too for rampant

corruption in the administration. Thus, it led to Chamling's dismissal from Cabinet and the primary membership of SSP. It was in favour of strengthening opposition in Sikkim and the issue of corruption in the State of Sikkim became one of the major issues. Chamling played a vital role of support and neutrality in the Gorkha National Liberation Front Movement of Darjeeling and supported the establishment of a separate Gorkha State, too.

The SDF emerged itself as a viable force, pulling along with it many people, supporters from other Parties and organisations, minority Bhutia-Lepcha, OBC and Bahun-Chettri Communities in the State, which was a blow to the then ruling Party SSP. Since SDF's first meeting in Jorethang, the popularity of Pawan Chamling caused trouble to Bhandari and the anti Bhandari movement spearheaded and the SDF was gaining ground all over Sikkim.

The Sikkim Democratic Front according to Chamling is the Party of the Sikkimese masses had emerged to lay claim being number one Political entity as a result of squabble and subsequent irreparable rift in ruling Sangram Parishad.

In Chakung covering six Panchayat Units was addressed by Chamling, the Vice President P.T. Lucksom, Adviser to SDF B.B. Gooroon and Rastaman Rai and a Party functionary in June, 1994.

Chamling gave a brief account of the Political happening in SSP Government in 1994 as a 'passing phase' and that would not have any effect to contribute anything substantial to relieve the sufferings of the poor and downtrodden. Sanchaman becoming Chief Minister of Sikkim was due to the fact Bhandari mishandled the situation on the issue of Finance Bill. The new Government was fated to have a short life span as the people did not vote it to power and the Party had neither ideology nor any compatible Political and economic programmes.

Further, Chamling strongly appealed and called upon Sikkimese of all ethnicity to come forward and unite in a spirit of brotherhood and deeper

understanding of each others need to identify oneself with the traits of that particular ethnic group one should be proud of his origin and ethnicity and should work to protect, preserve and safeguard his culture, religion and all traditional values handed down to him through his forefathers. Likewise a Sikkimese of Lepcha origin should hold his head high and be ready at all times to protect and preserve his religious and cultural heritage. He called upon the majority ethnic group *the Nepali brethren to follow the footsteps of their counterparts – the Bhutias and Lepchas*, so that each ethnic group is tolerant of the other's need to pursue his or her own traditional heritage handed down through generations the only way to preserve and ensure unity in a diverse society that like in Sikkim. He, further, opined that there has to be radical changes in the system of Government to bring about much needed reforms, to cement the gap between the haves and have-nots through proper and intensive planning and implementation of programmes.

B.B. Gooroong said that the Political situation in the State was merely a 'storm over a cup of tea' and the turmoil caused by SSP shall not affect the progress made by the SDF and the vertical split of SSP into SSP(S) and SSP(N) shake the SDF all the more strong.

The headquarters of SDF was based in Chamling's own residence in Namchi and SSP Youth Camp to create social awareness left the camp and fled away. Later, on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1993 the supporters of SDF mobilised courage to invade Gangtok and held an impressive rally who marched along NH 31A from SDF Party headquarters Deorali to Zero Point, shouting anti Bhandari, pro-democracy slogans and resisted Bhandari Government's repressive rule. This made people of Sikkim to speak openly against the Government and Bhandari and to overthrow the oppressive regime. Destructions were caused to Government vehicles and Police Department to put an end to the fear psychosis prevalent in Sikkim during the rule of N.B. Bhandari. Police *lathi* charge and bursting of tear gas shells against the peaceful demonstrators, a rare and unexpected sight in a peaceful State like Sikkim, to put an end to the rally and arrested more than 250 SDF activists. The result was many leaders including Pawan Chamling were forced to go underground both within and

outside the State. However, their mass agitation to ensure Bhandari's speedy downfall continued. In the process of Police harassment one of the young leaders of the SDF Biraj Adhikari sustained wounds because of Police beating and was to be taken for treatment to New Delhi. He demanded protection under Human Rights Commission.

The SDF's successful encounters with the ruling Party and authorities expedited the process of unity and solidarity among anti-Bhandari forces. That led to the formation of a Joint Action Committee under Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa's leadership – a call for joint action of all opposition against Bhandari's centralized rule, and to oust him. The disproportionate assets gained by Bhandari, corruption, conspiracy under 120 (b) of IPC because of loss to State Exchequer in the RDD deal by the then Secretary, RDD, the Press Battle, the role of JAQC, insecurity to the opposition, the destruction of Moti Press, Deorali which brought out Swatantra Samachar and Paridharshan, the support by all sections of the people to SDF, harassment by Police on opposition, the opposition from Sikkim Press Association etc. were final causes for the total rejection of Bhandari by the SDF, Press and major section of the people of Sikkim and all were waiting for a chance to put an end to the rule of SSP and its leader N.B. Bhandari.

As the situation in the State was gradually worsening, the great Political upheaval by S.M. Limboo on the question of withdrawal of Finance Bill by the Centre on the issue of Income Tax gave a blow to the rule of Bhandari. The SSP (S) led by Sanchaman Limboo becoming Chief Minister winning vote of confidence supported by B.L. MLAs and other like-minded MLAs, Bhandari led SSP (N) boycotting vote of confidence on the floor of the House and the neutral role and politics of abstention stand taken by the lone SDF leader Pawan Chamling in 1994 finally overthrew N.B. Bhandari.<sup>12</sup>

The SSP (S) headed by Sanchaman Limboo joined Congress (I) and since election to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly, 1994 was announced on September 27, all Political Parties in Sikkim were busy in preparing themselves to the election of November, 1994. The election to the State of

Sikkim was held owing to the fact that five years' tenure duration of the Assembly was to expire on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1994.

## **8.2. Sikkim Democratic Front : The Rise of Ideological Electoral Politics**

Chamling after overthrowing N.B. Bhandari lived in self-exile for months, worked out strategies, formed and entered Sikkim with a new Regional Political Party viz., Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF). From the grassroots the SDF consists of its formation on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1993, Senior politicians, retired Government servants, Officials and full of youths who are fresh, energetic, enthusiastic and committed to work for the cause of Sikkimese people with a view to become phenomenal and soon a focal point to first play a constructive role of opposition in Sikkim.

The founding leader and the lone member of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly Pawan Chamling became bitterly critical of the shortcomings of the then Bhandari Government and gained strength in order to provide a sense and meaningful direction to the youths and people of Sikkim. Not only the Party was opposed to the extension of Indian Income Tax, but vehemently opposed to the dictatorial role of N.B. Bhandari and played a politics of abstention in the Political coup launched by Sanchaman Limboo – in the fall of Bhandari to keep its distinct identity – especially to win eventually the November 1994 election to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

The aims and objectives of the Sikkim Democratic Front revolve round on its basic stands :

### **All Round Progress of Sikkim National Integration :**

Belief in the Constitution of India, sacrifice, courage, liberty and to ensure safety to all sections of the people of Sikkim. The dream of its founder Pawan Chamling is to build a new Sikkim that is self-sufficient and self-reliant – Vision and Dream (*Sapna*) 'Naya Sikkim – Sukhi Sikkim' – New Sikkim. A Happy Sikkim' with all prosperity to the people of Sikkim as a

whole – under the unfolded (tri-coloured) Umbrella – the symbol of the Party and a tri-colour flag-Blue at the top, Golden yellow in the middle and Blood Red at the bottom to symbolise determination, progress and national integration; purity, sacrifice and humanity; auspiciousness, courage and liberty.<sup>14</sup>

Further, to protect the State of Sikkim from the socio-economic and Political rights of the people and also to remove the socio-economic backwardness and Political rights of the people, communal harmony, equality of opportunity of the people, emancipation of the poor, women, disabled and physically handicapped people, due recognition to the principle of dignity to fight against injustice in the form of discrimination on the grounds of caste, religion and above all, gender, to protect and preserve the age old traditions, customs, heritage of all ethnic communities adhere to *Son of Sikkim* policy to safeguard the interest of the people and fight against poverty, illiteracy and inherent backwardness.<sup>15</sup>

#### **The First Election of SDF : 1994**

The General Election to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly took place in the first week of November, 1994, and the counting of votes was carried out on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1994, in all 258 candidates' filled nomination papers, 15 rejected, candidates withdrew their nominations and finally 186 candidates including 18 women were in the fray. That was a seven cornered contest of three national Political Parties, three Regional Political Parties and independent candidates. In spite of the fact that it was the beginning of winter season, the weather was conducive and the percentage of voting was more than 70%. The total electors were 2,17,446 (Male 1, 14,009 and Female 1,03,437) and votes polled were 1,78,018.<sup>16</sup>

The Manifestoes of all Political Parties contesting the election in 1994 were focussing certain common issues and other important issues of the State of Sikkim.

The Sikkim Democratic Front projected in its manifesto the following :

The restore of democratic rights and to stop centralized regime. The Party President Pawan Chamling releasing the manifesto offered with warmest salutations, the hallowed privilege of democracy and freedom. The salient features of the Manifesto can be summarized as follows.<sup>17</sup>

Assuring clean Administration uplift of the poor, development of all and welfare of the people of Sikkim and the manifesto promised :

- To enact local protection act for a broad based son of the soil policy;
- to delete the derogatory term immigrant for the ethnic Nepalis;
- to include Rai, Limboo, Tamang, Gurung, Manger, Sunwar and Bhujel who are already in the OBC in the list of Scheduled Tribes (besides the Bhutia and Lepchas – the Tribals of Sikkim) and the rest in the list of OBCs (Other Backward Classes);
- to obtain special designated backward hill State status for Sikkim;
- to restore seat reservation for Nepalis and the Tsongs in the Legislative Assembly;
- to protect the rights and privileges enjoyed by Lepchas and Bhutias;
- to make all out effort to secure justice, Political, economic for the people of Sikkim in order to ensure their all round progress and prosperity;
- to preserve all old laws and change those which are anti-people and adopt land reform as would benefit all three communities viz., Bhutia-Lepcha and Nepali;
- to decentralize administration by strengthening Panchayati Raj with resource and power;
- to protect the rights of the permanent employees who are from outside the State;
- to give priority in matters of educational and socio-economic development;
- to ensure development of script and literature for Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Manger and Newari languages by declaring them as State languages;

to formulate strong and effective programme for all round development of Kami, Sarki and Majhi communities and ensure adequate quota in respect of education and employment;

to formulate special programme for all-round development of the Sherpa community;

to ensure respect to Government employees specially to the teaching community;

alleviation of poverty and corruption free administration with pro poor stance to be the basic postulate of all Government policies;

70% of the total budgetary allocation to be spent for the rural development.

By and large, the SDF Manifesto, 1994 at crossroads stood for and still stands for poverty alleviation and upliftment of the downtrodden, decentralized administration, communal harmony, socio-economic programmes and all-round development of Sikkim as a whole.

**Table - I**

**Sikkim Legislative Assembly Election Results : 1994**<sup>18</sup>

Contesting Parties	Seats obtained
Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF)	19 (Absolute majority)
Sikkim Sangram Parishad	10
INC-Congress (I)	02
Independent (ULF)	01
Total	32

Source : *Sikkim, Report on General Election to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly, 1994*, Gangtok, Govt. Press, p. 25

An analysis of the results reveals certain facts and reflects the following pattern of voting behaviour :

In Yoksom the sitting MLA and Chief Minister of Sikkim S.M. Limboo lost against Ashok Kr. Subba (Independent) by a narrow margin say by 145 votes.

In Soreng N.B. Bhandari was elected defeating his SDF rival M.B. Subba.

In Damthang, Pawan Chamling won securing 70.2% votes defeating his SSP rival and the deposit of Congress I candidate was forfeited.

Many ex-Ministers and members of SSP were defeated.

The *Sangha* candidates Namkha Gyaltzen and Sonam Chyoda Lepcha from Dzongu won from Congress (I).

The SDF won 6 seats in West, 7 seats in South, 2 seats from North and 4 seats from East. Altogether the Congress (I) won 2 seats. The performance of SDF in West, South and North was highly satisfactory because the SDF swept the polls, but was trailing behind in the East District. However, the performance of SDF in terms of percentage of votes polled against SSP was more impressive and there existed a raising trend to the newly founded Regional Political Party Sikkim Democratic Front headed by Pawan Chamling.

Pawan Chamling was sworn-in as Seventh Chief Minister of Sikkim on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1994. Chamling's Council of Ministers including himself consisted of 13 members. The swearing-in ceremony of Chamling at last put an end to the centralized rule of one man after a long arduous struggle for restoration of democracy in Sikkim. Lama J.B. rightly said "The one blot in the Political career of Pawan Chamling was his dismissal as Minister in N.B. Bhandari's Cabinet in June, 1992 for allegedly dabbling in communal politics. However, that turned to be a blessing in disguise, but for which he would not be occupying 'Mintokgang' today – the official residence of the Chief Minister of Sikkim".<sup>19</sup>

For the first time Chamling introduced the office of the Deputy Chief Minister and the luck smiled on P.T. Lucksom. Similarly for the first time he gave ministerial berths to the communities' viz., Tamang, Mangar and Scheduled Castes and balanced his Council of Ministers.

The swearing-in ceremony and oath of office administered to the SDF led Pawan Chamling and his Council of Ministers was attended by the three former Chief Ministers of Sikkim namely, Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa, B.B. Gooroong and S.M. Limboo as because the victory of SDF in the State of Sikkim put an end to the 14 years' centralized rule of N.B. Bhandari.

In a Press Conference the new Chief Minister Pawan Chamling assured<sup>20</sup> that *the people have voted me for them and I will work for them, particularly for the poor and downtrodden* and further said that *his Party would give top priority to fully restore the democratic process in the State. We have committed ourselves to the people for restoration of democracy in the State, and that his Government will ensure freedom of expression and movement in the State'*. The Press will be free to write anything regarding the act against those who have indulged in corruption in the State, he said we are here to give justice to the people since Bhandari and his gang have finished all the funds in the State. He said we will now have to find out ways and means to solve the financial crisis in the State. Regarding reshuffle in the State Administration he said, 'No', and I am here because the people want change and the people had given him and his Party the mandate to remove corruption and give justice, first.

Regarding voting pattern Chamling acknowledged that in the election, there has been *communal voting* in some parts of the State particularly in the East District, where the forward classes among the Nepalis dominate most of the 12 Constituencies. Further, he added for the more perceptive observers it was not a big surprise that Bhandari's Sikkim Sangram Parishad, which largely depended on the upper caste Bahun-Chettris (NBCS) won 8 of 12 seats in the East District. Both SDF and the Congress (I) may have benefited in the East District, if the Voters were less communal. There were 4 Tribal Ministers, one NBC, one Scheduled Caste and rest all OBC Ministers.

The distinct division among the Nepalis during the polls, the New Chief Minister indicated of a rethinking by the Government on inclusion of all Nepalis in the OBC list. Without indication any reason he said, next time, East will vote for us. On rumours of SDF merging with Congress (I), Chamling said his Party was not aware of any such development. But pointed out, we must have good relations with the Centre and rest of India. Also he said he has full faith on Governor and enjoys 'Good relationship with him'. Referring to reported feelers from the SSP's camp, Chamling said some of the SSP MLAs are trying to see me. Except for one or two, we will accept them if they join us. It is interesting to note as usual SDF too lost in the most prestigious Gangtok Constituency against SSP candidate N.K. Pradhan.

Belying all expectations on the contrary and all claims by different Political Parties, thus, the SDF-the Party that claims to stand for the poor and promised to bring about the *Bare footed (Khali Khuthey)* romped home in listing with a clear mandate from the people. The Sensational victory of the SDF headed by Pawan Chamling stunned many Political Pandits and those masses that were eventually silenced with the performance of the Party that humbled a great giant N.B. Bhandari and his SSP was making it possible for ushering in a new era of Political regeneration in the State of Sikkim. The people have waited for 1993 and 94 besides 14 years of single man's rule of Bhandari for this opportunity and expects that the thrust was reposed on the SDF would be fulfilled in an ample and the poor and downtrodden would really find relief under the benign shelter of a loving and sympathetic unfolded umbrella that symbolized the Party's march towards victory.

That the Sikkim Democratic Front may be called the harbinger of democracy in Sikkim is admitted in all hands. The way the people could exercise their right to franchise during 9<sup>th</sup> November 1994 bears the proof of it though the record percentage of votes polled were divided and attributed variously by Party leaders. To S.M. Limboo, the people have behaved in a mature manner in keeping with their breathing attitude in national mainstream. Bhandari sees it as a sign of more Political consciousness among the public

and on the other hand Pawan Chamling was more reserved and contemplative.<sup>21</sup>

It should be recalled, Pawan Chamling unlike other Political leaders in India and other Chief Ministers did not retaliate to N.B. Bhandari and go for arrests and torture which is the normal trend prevalent in the country except in a significant move to institute a Special High Commission of enquiry to be headed by a retired High Court Judge to go into corruptions at high places those perpetrated by ex-ministers and bureaucrats during last 15 years. Regarding Centre-State relations, he was making all possible efforts to improve it.

Pawan Chamling, thus, emerged as the real representative of the poor people of Sikkim. Since, he had his SDF team coming to power in the State of Sikkim was based on the popular mandate, they promised and committed to rule Sikkim in accordance with the verdict and will to the people. An image of the poor man's messiah, Chamling and his SDF stood and stands for ensuring justice and root out corruption and poverty in Sikkim.<sup>22</sup>

Soon after assuming the office of the Chief Minister of Sikkim, the first step of Pawan Chamling was to unfold his austerity plan on use of Government vehicles and as first person he himself gave up using the most luxurious MERCIDES – the official car of the Chief Minister of Sikkim SK-01/0001, used by various Chief-Ministers from 1975 to 1994 and sits comfortably on the front seat of GYPSY – to exhibit his simplicity.<sup>23</sup> Also ordered for preventing the use of alcoholic drinks/liquors in official lunches and dinners hosted by the Government. Chamling's humanism resulted in his strong aversion towards authoritarian regime and abiding faith in democracy. By and large, his contempt for authoritarian regime was based on his deep attachment to the poor people, individual freedom, human values and democratic ideals. As a matter of fact, in his efforts and endeavours, democracy in Sikkim can be said to have restored. A Government of the *poor bare footed people of Sikkim* trying to work for the poor.

While everything was moving smooth and Chamling was successful, fortune smiled on him, SIX MLAs of the opposition from SSP deserted Bhandari and defected to the ruling SDF to strengthen further the hands of SDF. They were later on inducted as Ministers in the Cabinet. They were Ram Lepcha, Dorjee Tshering Lepcha, Rinzing Ongmu, Tseten Lepcha, Thutop Bhutia and Menlom Lepcha. Out of these, Rinzing Ongmu (the first lady Minister of Sikkim), Ram Lepcha, Tseten Lepcha was made Ministers in Chamling's Ministry.

The SSP in the 1994 Election took a nose-dive that brought Pawan and his SDF to power. The lone Member of opposition of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly between 1992 and 1994 finally Pawan Chamling sat comfortably on the chair of the Chief Minister of Sikkim while his rival the Chief N.B. Bhandari continued to dream of making a come back, but it was difficult for him. Therefore, the mandate of the people in 1994 is a mandate for change. D.K. Bhandari, the Parliamentarian wife of N.B. Bhandari, faced a humiliating defeat from Jorethang (South Sikkim) against the SDF candidate – Bhoj Raj Rai. Both Sangram and Sangrami turned Congress's failed to convince the people in 1994 Election as because they had nothing new to offer the people. The people could see through their deceptive façade and rightly rejected the SSP and Congress along with Rising Sun Party in what is widely accepted as perhaps the most free and fairest Assembly polls ever held in the State. But, if the Political leadership has the will to clean up the mess. Things could have been straightened out for a faster peace, enabling Sikkim to become a model State of the Country. The newly elected Chief Minister determined in implementing his 'total revolution' concept in all spheres of public life.

The call and appeal of Pawan Chamling was emotional and sentimental for the reason he said 'to uplift ourselves both economically and intellectually, he exhorted everyone to disregard their individual interest and cast aside Political differences instead work together for the interests of Sikkim and its people, which he said at the time he inaugurated the "Teesta Hydro Electric Project Stage – V". But, the people and oppositions were

opposed to Rathangchu Hydel project in Sikkim. Chamling kept up traditions of the people and the State and appealed the people of North Sikkim to safeguard and protect the age old *Dzumsa* a system of village level Government in the Lachung and Lachen prevalent since time immemorial. As Governor P. Shiv Shankar was transferred before completion of his full term, Chaudhary Randhir Singh assumed the office of the Governor of Sikkim on 09<sup>th</sup> March, 1996.

To promote unity of the people the *Statue of Unity* was installed in order to depict the ardent desire for promoting solidarity among the ethnic communities. Besides this, the Permanent RCC (concrete) bridge of 55 meters over River Teesta was also inaugurated and dedicated to the people which solved the problem of linking Sikkim with not only West Bengal but rest of the Country. The first Chief Minister of Sikkim Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa was awarded *Tamra Patra* for his contribution to democratic movement, secularism, communal harmony, national integration and devoting his life for the Sikkimese.

A Central Referral Hospital was inaugurated namely, Sikkim-Manipal Hospital in order to establish a Medical College in Sikkim. The centenary celebration of Sikkim Police was celebrated in 1997. As all-Party meeting was held to oppose the extension of Direct Taxes on Sikkim.

In 1999, the Finance Minister and Deputy Chief Minister P.T. Lucksom were dropped from the Cabinet<sup>24</sup> and were expelled from the Party for having eroded the popularity of the SDF Government and Party. Also for having joined hands with the new Party namely Sikkim Ekta Manch founded by the then Secretary to the Government of Sikkim, L.P. Tewari, the young leader Biraj Adhikari was removed from SDF. Since then the office of the Deputy Chief Minister was abolished in Sikkim.

### **Achievements of SDF Government**

The SDF Government headed by Pawan Chamling when completed one year of the office, the achievements of the Party in a span of one year were as follows :

- Government gave official recognition as State languages to the Rai, Gurung, Mangar, Sherpa, Tamang, Newar.
- 70% of the total budget of the Government was earmarked by the development of rural areas to remove poverty.
- Wages of daily labourers have been increased by 100%.
- Due attention was paid to protect and promote the interests of the minorities and SCs/STs.
- All students upto Class V were given free uniform, books and exercise books. Also 5 kgs. of rice was supplied for each child.
- Toll tax levied on indigenous products was abolished.
- License for business activities in rural areas was relaxed.
- A Land Bank Scheme was started
- Government started house construction for those who are below the poverty line.
- Government distributed 30 no. of G.C.I. Sheets to each of the poor to live under roof/to give shelter.

Various measures have been taken up to increase green coverage and the current year 1994-95 was declared as the year of Green Revolution. There was massive plantation movement with the participation of voluntary organisations, students, Government employees, Panchayats and the general public. Grazing was completely banned in the South, parts of the East and North Districts as part of Green Revolution.

- Relief grant to the affected families caused by natural calamities enhanced from Rs. 1000/- to 2000/-.
- Various steps have been taken to render help and assistance in drought affected areas and every affected family was given 40 kgs. of rice to begin with.
- Government granted monthly allowance of Rs. 400/- to *Sabhapati* and Rs. 300/- to other members of the Panchayats of the State.

- Work was begun on a big way to repair school buildings all over the State.
- A new degree college was started at Namchi, the headquarters of the South District. A Sanskrit Learning Centre was established at Rakdong-Tintek Constituency in the (East) District.
- Forty thousand mounds of ginger seeds was distributed to the poor farmers all over the State.
- Fruit and flower saplings were being distributed to encourage floriculture and horticulture.
- Women were given equal partnership along with male member in every sphere of human activities.
- Library and reading rooms were being opened in every Panchayat Unit.
- Pay Commission was set up for Government Employees, to revise their pay scales.
- Planned development of towns including the State Capital Gangtok was being under taken in hand with the thrust on maintenance of sanitation.
- Steps were taken to set up a Music School and Sports Institute in the State. The Government was granting funds for sports activities from the Sub-divisional level.
- Scientific agriculture has been started.
- Tourism Development was started as an industry and investment is being sought for.
- Health care facilities were increased and a new referral hospital came up.
- An Apex Cooperative Bank was in the offing to grant low interest loans to the poor farmers.
- Law and Order situation in the State was and is continued to be normal and immoral activities have been stopped.
- Reservation in jobs and educational facilities to the members of the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and OBCs were being implemented.
- Ban on use of liquors in all Government functions including Press Conferences.

- Additional Police Booths at vantage points in and around Gangtok were set up.
- Monthly ration allowance was launched for all personnel in the lower ranks of Sikkim Police over and above their usual pay and allowances.

### **Some Major Achievements of the SDF between 1994-1999**

To repeat :

- 70% of the Plan allocation has been earmarked for the development of the rural areas in Sikkim.
- Upliftment of the poor and downtrodden and wages of daily labourers was raised by cent percent.
- Free supply of books and exercise books (copies) and text books for students (Local).
- Abolition of toll tax on all indigenous products.
- License for the business activities in rural areas for all India people of Sikkimese origin.
- Six thousand families each 30 GCI sheets being distributed yearly.
- Honorarium to *Sabhapati* Rs. 400/- and Rs. 300/- to other members of the Panchayats.
- Library cum Reading Rooms were being opened in every Panchayat to encourage mass education.
- Complete ban on serving of liquors in all Government functions including Press Conferences.
- Introduction of additional Police Booths at various points in and around capital Gangtok.
- Accorded official recognition as State languages to Rai, Gurung, Mangar, Sherpa, Tamang Newari and Sunwar and to include Limboo, Tamang, Gurung Mangar and Sunwar in the list of Scheduled Tribes.
- Distribution of cows and piglets to poor agriculturalists.

- Increase in ex-gratia grants to Police Personnel.
- Mid day meal scheme, supply of free raw rice, text and exercise books and uniforms to school children and steps to set up Music and Sports Institutes in the State.
- Conferring meritorious awards to the students.
- Starting of scientific agriculture and distribution of improved seeds and seedlings to the farmers.
- To start a Mahatma Gandhi University in State.
- Grant of old age pension to 100 eligible persons from each of the 32 Constituencies of the State.
- Establishment of Scheduled Castes/Tribes and Other Backward Classes Development Corporation.
- Foundation stone of Sikkim Temple-cum-Guest House at Bodhgaya to celebrate *Kalachakra Pooja*.
- Rs. 3 lakhs was distributed for housing plan.
- Improvement of road construction in the State.
- Rs. 25,000/- was extended as financial assistance to 138 artisans of the State.
- Forty percent each as subsidy grant.
- To construct a Car Park at Gangtok and passengers ropeway between Deorali Tibetology and Tashiling.
- Improvements of facilities at Namchi Government Hospital.
- Introduction of supplementary nutrition programme for mothers, pregnant women and children.
- To establish an Apex Co-Operative Bank in the State.
- Schemes to provide assistance to physically handicapped people, destitute, children and women.
- Establishment of high, middle and lower income group shopping units.
- To provide agricultural employment to under employed and employment assurance schemes.

- Improvement by village water supply scheme.
- Generation of employment schemes under Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) and Indira Awas Yozna.
- Additional programme in Limboo and Lepcha languages in AIR Gangtok and 1 K.W. short wave (transmitter and 10 M.W. transmitters at Penangla AIR and play back facilities of High Power Transmitter of Doordarshan at Chandmari were inaugurated.
- Development of Press, freedom of Press and watch on yellow journalism.
- Increased Health Care Facilities and fast coming up of new Referral Hospital (Manipal Group).
- Equal opportunity of women along with male members in every sphere of human activities.
- Thirty percent reservation for women in Panchayats.
- Ostentatious display of portrait of the Chief Minister in the offices has been done away with.
- Observation of austerity measures and curtailment on unnecessary expenditure of the Government to raise the internal revenue of the State
- To figure Sikkim in the Railway and Air maps of the country.
- Price of rice has been subsidised by Rs. 1/- per kg.
- Tribal land alienation has strictly been disallowed.
- 382 numbers of Gazetted Officers were promoted to higher posts.
- Fertilizer subsidy to all the farmers.
- The traditional Panchayat namely, *DZUMSA* system has been preserved in Lachung and Lachen of North Sikkim and the traditional nomenclature 'PIPONS' are being retained.
- Revision of 'Pay Scales' of the Government employees.
- Planned development of towns and thrust on sanitation.
- Creation of a satellite town at Reshithang and an airstrip at Pakyong.

- Revival of sick industries.
- Foundation stone for a new High Court Building.
- Peaceful Law and Order situation.
- Promotion of Tourism and Trade.
- Photo Contest Programme.
- Historic Photo Exhibition.
- Step to improve the Government Weekly 'Sikkim Herald' and publication of same in English, Nepali, Bhutia, Tibetan, Limboo, Newari languages etc. are the major achievements of the SDF Government in Sikkim since 1994.

*(Compendium of Achievements of the SDF Government Gangtok (IPR), Sikkim, Government Press, 1999)*

By and large the SDF Government in its first term is a Government of the poor, bare footed people and it believes in simplicity and austerities.

**October 1999 Elections of Sikkim Legislative Assembly and Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency.<sup>25</sup> :**

A manifesto of any Political Party is a public written declarations normally issued before a general or bye Election in any given parliamentary and presidential form of Government. It is to express the promises of a Political Party placed before the public whether followed or not after winning the Election and forming a Government. Such promises remain manifestoes of the Parties for the reason that all Political Parties cannot capture power and all programmes cannot be translated into actions. In Sikkim since 1974/1979 a number of general and bye-Elections to both Sikkim Legislative Assembly and the lone Parliamentary Constituency took place. It is for the sixth time, Sikkim went to Polls to constitute the Sixth Legislative Assembly and eighth time to elect the Member of Lok Sabha in the year 1999. Here a sincere attempt is made to throw some light on the October 1999

Elections in the State of Sikkim and the manifestoes of some of the Political Parties.

Altogether, 105 candidates were contesting for electing 32 members of the Sixth Legislative Assembly of Sikkim. There were about 2,52,074 electors in the State. The reservations of the Assembly are : 17 open general seats, 12 B.L. seats (Scheduled Tribes), 2 Scheduled Castes and one *Sangha* seat. The electors of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs outnumber the NBC and other electors. The split up of Party wise candidates who contested in 1999 Election to the Assembly is as follows :

**Table - II**

Contesting Political Parties	Contested for the Seats of SLA, 1999
Sikkim Democratic Front	31
Sikkim Sangram Parishad	32
Indian National Congress (I)	31
CPI (M)	02
Independents	09

Source : *State Election Commission, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok, 1999.*

Two National Parties, two Regional Parties and a number of independent candidates were contesting and the main fight was between the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front and Sikkim Sangram Parishad. Sikkim Democratic Front was contesting in 31 constituencies and was not contesting from *Sangha* Constituency while the Sikkim Sangram Parishad contested from all 32 Constituencies. Similarly Congress (I) was contesting in 31 Constituencies and had not filed any nomination to the Lachen Mangshila Constituency of North Sikkim. INC, SSP and an independent candidate contested the unique *Sangha* Constituency. This Constituency was unique and not found elsewhere in the Country as because this seat is represented by monks/lamas of monasteries and *Gumpas* spread all over Sikkim. The CPI (M)

maintained its tradition of contesting Elections in one or two seats with its all India character of Manifesto.

In the Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency to elect the lone member of Lok Sabha the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front, INC and an independent candidate were contesting. The SDF candidate was contesting for the third time and was the member of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha.

Public meetings by various Political Parties, posters, wall writings, Festoons, distribution of pamphlets, hand bills, playing of audio cassettes with specially composed songs, installation of special pavilions by SDF and SSP in almost every shopping Center/Bazaar in all towns and villages of Sikkim, compulsory display of Party flags in all shops were the styles of Election campaign in the State.

No EVM and Electoral I. Card were supposed to be used for this Election of 1999. Use of Electoral I. Card was not made a precondition to cast votes. Tight security measures and committed personnel were employed for the peaceful conduct of Elections in the State.

The ruling Sikkim Democratic Front Party's Manifesto 1999 was released in a Public Meeting. Highlighting the SDF's four and a half year's achievements, the Manifesto focussed on future social economic and Political programmes to be launched. The manifesto comprised of 130 points with a supplement for Government employees. The agenda of the Party Manifesto 1999 resolved found and pledged to undertake several programme, such as :

- Protection and Safeguard of Article 371 F of the Constitution of India and fullest protection to the people of Sikkim.
- To pass and protect the existing Local Laws.
- Inclusion of Chhetri, Bahun (*Brahmins*), and Newar of Nepali community in OBC list of Sikkim.
- Protection of Revenue Order No. 1.
- Inclusion of Sikkim in the North East Council.

- To oppose the imposition and extension of Direct Laws in/on Sikkim.

Some striking programmes and policies of the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front are elaborated bellow :

Full protection of Article 371 F of the Constitution of India is given. It is with a view to ensure all-round development, peace, progress and prosperity of Sikkim and the people of Sikkim. This Article 371 F was inserted in the Constitution of India to safeguard and preserve the rights of the people of Sikkim in the wake of Sikkim joining the mainstream of the Indian Union (since 1975) as the 22<sup>nd</sup> State of India. Therefore, the SDF is committed to safeguard Article 371 F as it has conferred special rights on the Sikkimese people.

Local laws will be protected. The SDF holds the view that it has become imperative to pass local laws for the protection of the people of Sikkim so that the proper planned programme can be implemented in order to ensure speedy growth of Sikkim in a peaceful atmosphere without contradicting postures. The SDF shall strike to bring about a 'consensus' on local laws of Sikkim for the protection of rights of the people of Sikkim.

Reservation of seats for Nepalis and Tsongs in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly and the Party is committed from the beginning to restore the reserved seats of these communities. Further, it is stated that the demand for restoration of seats for Nepalis of Sikkim has been placed before the Centre on historical and justified grounds.

Inclusion of Bahun, Chhetri and Newar in the list of OBCs that was placed before the Government of India.

Protection of Revenue Order No.1 that was an old law of Sikkim enacted at the time of the British Government in order to safeguard the landed property of the minority Bhutias and Lepchas.

Inclusion of Sikkim in the North East Council owing to similarities between the people of Sikkim and North East States and the bill is introduced in the Parliament. The idea is to foster the economic benefits and Political stature at the decision making level in various matter concerning the problems of North East States and Sikkim.

**SDF is opposed to the imposition of Direct Tax Laws in Sikkim :**

Establishment of Libraries in every Panchayat for the benefit of the people to prepare the Youths for various competitive examinations and the people to acquire knowledge.

The Congress (I) viz. Indian National Congress contesting the Elections released its Manifesto in a Press Conference. It assured to overcome the Political, economic and social demands of the people of Sikkim.

Its Political programmes confine to Reservation of Seats in the Assembly for the Nepalis; restoration of the original identity of the Bhutias and Lepchas; reservation of seats for the Sherpas in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly. Realisation of the Political and other aspirations of the plains people. To impose fresh delimitation to Assembly Constituencies and Panchayat wards. To give an additional seat in Lok Sabha as the present is kept for Sikkimese Nepalis as a tradition.

The social aspects cover : inclusion of Limboos (Tsongs), Tamangs, Mangars, Rais and others in the list of Scheduled Castes and to include Newars, Bahuns, Chettries, Jogis and Sannyasis in the List of OBCs in the State. Also to recommend the President of India under Article 342 of the Constitution of India to notify the Sikkimese Nepalis as Scheduled Tribe of the State . The idea here is that if the demand is met that would facilitate to restore automatically the reservation of seats in the Assembly. Further, if Nepalis were declared as Scheduled Tribes the next move would be to request Centre to declare the State as a whole a Tribal State that in turn would provide all the rights, benefits and privileges granted to all Tribal States of India. The declaration of Sikkim as a Tribal State will be followed by the demand for

inclusion of the tribal dominated North District of Sikkim to incorporate in the VIth Schedule of the Constitution of India to declare the area as an autonomous district. There seems to be a contradiction that while there is a demand to declare Nepalis as Scheduled Tribes, yet another programme to include Newars, Bahuns, Chhetries etc. in the list of OBCs.

On the economic front to waive the debt amounting to Rs.1100/- Crores from exemption of paying income tax for the three ethnic communities.

To develop tourism and hydro electric power potential in the State.

To open border trade routes with neighbouring countries and to create more employment opportunities for the youths.

The Congress, thus, stands committed to the issues raised in the Manifesto and trying to find ways for solving the political, economic and social problems of the State.

The Sikkim Sangram Parishad, the main rival to the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front issued two different manifestoes for Assembly Election and Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency (Lok Sabha) Election. Its programmes and policies were confined to the following :

The SSP regards the Tripartite Agreement of 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1973 as indispensable armour and to protest the agreement.

To keep intact the special article 371F of the Constitution of India which safeguards and protects the rights of the people of Sikkim.

To correct the aberration of the order issued in 1978 and to restore seat reservation existed before 1978 to Bhutias and Lepchas. Similarly to restore reservation of seats for the Nepalis and extend Political safeguard for the Nepalis and fight for reservation of seats for the Limboos.

To streamline administration in the State and to root out corruption and crime from the soil and establish peace and communal harmony.

To see there exists Independence in the functioning of the judiciary and functioning of the *Lok Adalat* for early disposal of the cases of the poor people.

To extend full facilities for students those who aspire to study outside the State.

To give full facilities for the development of languages and literature of different sections of Sikkimese communities. Since Nepali language has received Constitutional recognition and included in the VIII Schedule, time has come not only to develop its literature but also to use in different Ministries of Government of India.

To provide adequate facilities and to promote sports career to sportsmen and women.

To initiate educational programme in Sanskrit Schools and monasteries to make it more meaningful.

To increase and get maximum agricultural production with new technical know-how's and provide facilities for activating cash crops along with agricultural insurance policy in the State.

To establish co-operative Banks in different parts of Sikkim to provide loans for the farmers.

To equip adequate medicines in all hospitals and primary health centres in the State.

To improve the source of revenue in Power Sector, to generate more power electricity in Hydro Electric Projects of the State to meet the demands of domestic and industries' consumption.

The SSP's Parliamentary Constituency Election Manifesto called for the members of Parliament.

To promote cordial Centre-State relations.

To create a separate Ministry for Sikkim to solve the problems of socio-economic and Political affairs.

To open up small and medium scale industries to solve the growing unemployment problem.

To recognise all Nepalis as backward and other left out communities in the list of OBCs.

To take up the matter with the Centre for providing all economic facilities to Sikkim as extended to other North Eastern States.

To develop tourism in Sikkim and extending necessary facilities for the tourists.

To provide all facilities and housing for all journalists housed in Sikkim.

To invest more funds by the Non-Residents of India in the Power Sector, ropeway, alternative highway, construction of stadium for games and sports and to give clearance to these NRIs.

To resist and fight tooth and nail the imposition of direct taxes on the people of Sikkim.

To provide citizenship to Stateless Sikkimese people and to distribute citizenship certificates to the genuine Sikkimese people.

To sum up, there are some interesting observations one can make of, if analysed well the above write up on Sikkim Election manifestoes and the nature of Election.

Sikkim was the first State in India to introduce Electoral Identity Card (since 1979) though not, it was made compulsory to cast vote. In spite of the fact that there exists a considerable increase in the Population, Political demands, Political changes and Political awareness, the strength of Sikkim Legislative Assembly remains unchanged, i.e. not more than 32 members, and in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha of the Union Parliament of India one seat each from the State of Sikkim.

The reservations based on parity since long in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly for Scheduled Tribes (Bhutias and Lepchas), Scheduled Castes (Nepalis), and *Sangha* (Gumpas and Monasteries) safeguard not only the sanctity of Article 371, F but the minorities in the State of Sikkim. Most of

the Regional Political Parties put forth *restoration of reserved seats for Nepalis which existed before Assembly Election, 1979*, as their slogans and programmes to contest Elections in the State. To amend the representation of People's Acts 1950 and 1951 Union Minister of Law P. Shivshankar also tabled a bill in the Lok Sabha for the readjustment of Constituencies in the State of Sikkim and to restore reservations for Nepalis who constitute the majority of the total Population in the State of Sikkim. The Sikkim Lepcha Youth Association makes yet another demand for 50% reservations in the existing 12 seats for Scheduled Tribes (Bhutia/Lepcha).

As a result of the composition of the electors support to local sentiments and local people, Constitutional safeguard under Article 371F of the Constitution of India and strong belief in the locally based leaders of the Regional Political Parties to capture power in the State of Sikkim, local and Regional sentiments seem to be more conspicuous. Defections within Regional Political Parties and from Regional Political Parties to National Political Parties seem to be common phenomenon in Sikkim and there exists cordial Centre-State relations.

The visit of M.S. Gill, Chief Election Commissioner of India to the State of Sikkim indicated that the State may introduce Electronic Voting Machine in the Election, 1999, but it was not introduced.

Since, the son of the soil policy, protection of local sentiments, Article 371 F and its experiences say Regional Political Parties have a strong base than National Political Parties. To strengthen National Political Parties visits of National leaders and establish locally based strong leaders are inevitable in the newly emerged tiny State *viz.* Sikkim. It is also interesting to note that Pawan Chamling presenting the memorandum to the Prime Minister, particularly made a plea for the preservation of *status quo anti* in respect of imposition of Income Tax to Sikkim till such time that the people of Sikkim had got over the rigid regimentation of the past fifteen years rule and were ready to understand the implications of Income Tax in proper perspective. He also highlighted the severe handicaps that the State is experiencing for want of

an Airport and alternative route to the existing N.H. 31A, which tended to get blocked now and then. He also spoke of necessity of improving the Doordarshan and Air-Set-ups in the State, in the interest faster and more effective for national integration.

Source : *Sikkim Express*, September 7, 1995, Gangtok, Himalindia Photo Offset.

**Gorkha National Liberation Movement, Sikkim joining North Eastern Council, The Episode of Employment Act, 1959, Indian. Income Tax Act etc. further sensitised the Politics of Sikkim during this period.**

### **Panchayat Elections 1997 : A Success to SDF :**

A notification No. 212 dated 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1997 was issued by State Election Commission, Sikkim to hold the Election on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1997. The Election was based on reservations including 33% reservation for women.

The campaign started by both ruling Party SDF and independent candidates supported by the opposition. The SDF swept the polls defeating the opposition supported independent candidates in all four districts of the State and in particular in the backward classes dominated South and West Districts.

The Government of India notification No. 228, dated 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1997 stipulated that the Council of Ministers in its meeting unanimously resolved that the Employment Exchange Act (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1959 shall not be extended to the State of Sikkim, the same was conceded by the Centre and the proposal was treated as closed vide letter DO No. 10/58/97-EII dated 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1997 issued from the office of the Joint Secretary, Home Ministry, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

**Table - III**  
**Results At a Glance**

**Zilla Panchayat**

District	Seats	SDF	Independents
West	22	21	1
South	23	18	5
East	27	19	8
North	20	13	7

**Gram Panchayat**

District	Seats	SDF	Independents
West	261	193	68
South	240	184	56
East	269	172	97
North	98	55	43

Source : *The Guardian*, Vol. 6, No. 28, October 1997, pp. 15-22; Gangtok Hill Media Publications, p.1.

SIKKIM, *Sikkim Govt. Gazette* (Ext Gaz), No. 255, 12 November, 1997, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p. 22.

SIKKIM, *Sikkim Govt. Gazette* (Ext Gaz), No. 256, 12 November, 1997, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p. 4.

Another milestone in the rule of SDF was land marked pay revision to the Government employees' w.e.f. 1996. The cabinet approved for the C&D grade employees to be awarded 'Best Seats in the Country' in order to ensure commitment and better output. The lowest scale starts from Rs. 2850-4170 and the highest being Rs. 17200 - 21250 per month i.e., almost 4 times more than what was existing before, as per the Gazette Notification No. 11, Dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 1998.

## **1999 Second Election to Sikkim Democratic Front : An Analysis :**

The Election to both Lok Sabha and the Sixth State Legislative Assembly was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1999 simultaneously, INC, SDF, SSP and independent candidates were in the fray and there were four Candidates contesting for the lone Lok Sabha Seat from the Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency. The total number of electors in 1999 Election were 2, 55,377 (Male 1, 32,591 and Female 1, 22,786) and total polled were 2, 05, 133.

The SDF candidate Bhim Prashad Dahal secured, 1, 07,828 votes defeating his nearest rival Satish Chandra Rai of SSP who secured 86,466. Somnath Poudyal of INC (I) and Independent candidates were defeated to the extent of getting forfeited their deposits security.

Table - IV

**TOTAL ELECTORATE**  
**(ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY-WISE)**

No. and Name Assembly Segment	Electors		
	Men	Women	Total
1. Yoksam	3914	3754	7668
2. Tashiding (BL)	3001	3013	6014
3. Geyzing	3834	3737	7571
4. Dentam	3529	3405	6934
5. Barmiok	3253	3190	6443
6. Rinchenpong (BL)	3725	3601	7326
7. Chakung	3861	3682	7543
8. Soreong	4310	4201	8511
9. Daramdin	4185	4083	8268
10. Jorethang Nayabazar	5640	5142	10782
11. Ralong (BL)	3053	2848	5901
12. Wak	3261	2881	8425
13. Damthang	4266	4159	8425
14. Melli	4256	4105	8425
15. Rateyapani West Pandam	4516	4293	8809
16. Temi Tarku	4666	4502	9168
17. Central Pandam East Pandam	6003	5319	11322
18. Rhenock	3931	3648	7579
19. Regu	4255	3971	8226
20. Pathing (BL)	4397	4227	8624
21. Loosing Pacheykhani	3589	3555	7144
22. Khamdong (SC)	4790	4400	9190
23. Dzongu	2689	2780	5469
24. Lachen Mangshila (BL)	3615	3763	7378
25. Kabi Tingda (BL)	2757	2800	5557
26. Rakdong Tintek (BL)	3674	3483	7157
27. Martam (BL)	4477	4112	8589
28. Rumtek (BL)	5707	5528	11235
29. Assam Lingjey (BL)	4149	3834	7983
30. Ranka (BL)	4864	4601	9465
31. Gangtok	7170	6133	13303
32. Sangha	3254	36	3290
Total	1,32,591	1,22,786	2,55,377

Source: SIKKIM, Report on General Elections To Lok Sabha & Assembly  
1999, SIKKIM: Statistical Report, (Gangtok), Sikkim Govt. Press, p.21

In Sikkim Legislative Assembly Election 1999, the two National Political Parties namely, Indian National Congress (Congress – I), CPI (M), two Regional Political Parties viz. Sikkim Democratic Front and Sikkim Sangram Parishad and independent candidates contested the Election. The total electors were same as that of the Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency.

**Table - V**

**District wise Total Electorate, 1999**

District	Men	Women	Total
West	33612	32666	66278
South	29658	27930	57588
East	60260	52847	113107
North	9061	9343	18404
Total	1,32,591	1,22,786	2,55,377

*Source* : SIKKIM, *Ibid.*, p. 22

**Table - VI**

**Results at a Glance**

SDF	24
SSP	7
Independent	1
Total	32

*Source* : State Election Commission, Govt. of Sikkim, Gangtok, 1999.

In both West and South districts, the SDF swept the polls. There was an increase in the number of Seats won by SDF, when compared to 1984 Election. The Sangha Seat was won by Palden Lama as an Independent Candidate.

The sweeping victory for SDF and to Pawan Chamling with 25 seats in the Assembly and from the lone Lok Sabha seat in the 1999 Elections gave SDF to rule over the people of Sikkim for next five years and further confirmed the undisputed leadership on Pawan Chamling and reflects the faith of the people of Sikkim on SDF.

Former Chief Minister Sanchaman Limboo was defeated for the second time from Yoksom (West) Constituency, Kalawati Subba of SDF won from Yoksom and became the first woman speaker of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

Former Lok Sabha M. P., Dil Kumari Bhandari of SSP was defeated by Garjaman Gurung of SDF from Temi Tarku (South) Constituency. It is interesting to note that the SSP candidate D.K. Bhandari and (wife of N.B. Bhandari) was never elected from any Constituency to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly in spite of the fact she contested Elections since 1985. However, she was elected to Lok Sabha twice both in 1985 and 1989 from the Sikkim lone Parliamentary Constituency.

Namkha Gyaltzen of Congress (I) and a sitting MLA of *Sangha* Constituency was defeated by Palden Lama as an independent candidate in this Election.

In order to save himself N.B. Bhandari leaving his native Constituency Soreng contested this time from Rhenock Constituency (East) and was declared elected defeating his immediate SDF rival B.S. Panth.

Pawan Chamling for the fourth time was declared elected from his native Constituency Damthang (South) scoring 72.26 percent votes.

As usual from Gangtok the ruling Party SDF candidate K.B. Gurung was defeated by N.K. Pradhan of SSP. Invariably no ruling Party or a Party with majority number of seats on the floor of the Legislative Assembly is able to win the prestigious seat of Gangtok Constituency.

The most noteworthy feature of 1994 Sikkim Legislative Assembly Election is that, from reserved Bhutia-Lepcha seat of Rakdong-Tintek Constituency (East) the candidate by name Mingma Tshering Sherpa was declared elected. Once again in 1999 Mingma Tshering Sherpa was elected from the Bhutia-Lepcha Constituency. Perhaps for the first time a Sherpa (Tribal) candidate was declared elected though Bhutia Lepcha seats are reserved for Bhutia and Lepchas of Sikkim. The Sherpa community was declared as a Tribe of Sikkim in 1978. The success to Sherpa community/Tribe is accepted as per the verdict of the Supreme Court Judgement delivered in 1993 on seat reservation issue of R.C. Poudyal's Writ Petition which reserves for Sangha and Tribals totalling 13 seats.

The SDF secured minimum 43.06 percent (but won) in Kabi-Tingda (North) Constituency and highest percentage votes from Damthang where Pawan Kumar Chamling won the Election.<sup>26</sup>

**Pawan Chamling : Chief Minister of Sikkim :**

**Cabinet Ministers :**

Dorjee Dezom Bhutia

Garjaman Gurung

Hishey Lachungpa

K.B. Chamling

Thinley Tshering Bhutia

R.B. Subba

P.S. Tamang

Dorjee Tshering Lepcha

K.T.N. Gyaltzen

Ram Bahadur Subba

S.B. Subedi.

## Ministers of State :

Girish Chandra Rai  
Tseten Dorjee Lepcha  
Chandra Kumar Mohora  
Ongden Tshering Lepcha  
Thutop Bhutia.

Later all the Ministers of State were promoted to the Cabinet rank. There are altogether 7 Bhutia-Lepcha Ministers and the rest including Chief Minister belong to OBC cadre. At present there are 17 Cabinet Ministers including— the Chief Minister. There are 19 Chairmen of various organizations who are chosen from MLAs and other supporters of SDF.

The defection started in the Sixth State Legislative Assembly 1999. Sonam Gyatso Lepcha, Sang Dorjee Tamang and Mingma Tshering Sherpa of Sikkim Sangram Parishad were the first lot to defect to the ruling SDF. Later N.K. Pradhan, J.K. Bhandari and Sonam Dorjee had decided to defect to the ruling SDF and whose position was not conformed. In case of the defection N.B. Bhandari, it was expected, shall remain the lone opposition member representing Sikkim Sangram Parishad. Moves were already being made by Bhandari to defect either to Congress (I) or BJP. One had to wait and watch to which National Party was ready to accept him.

The then Minister for Education and Culture K.N. Rai was made Government Chief Party Whip of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly. Kalawati Subba assumed the office of the Speaker as first women speaker of the Assembly on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1999.

The most interesting feature of Administration and Government of Sikkim is that seldom reshuffle takes place with regard to Ministry and transfer of Secretaries of various departments. Since the idea of Chief Secretary is being brought from Central Government and other State cadres of

Indian Administrative Service. Now, the trend is to appoint Local Officers as Chief Secretaries in the State. However, the post of DGP is still based on Central posting. On the retirement of Honda, IPS, T.N. Tenzing, IPS is appointed as DGP – the first local Police Officer to become Director General of Police in Sikkim.

Bharat Shiromani <sup>28</sup> Pawan Chamling won the hearts of the people, trying to serve the people of Sikkim untiringly with his team and Party with his fruition of dream of transforming the Himalayan State into a 'New Sikkim – Happy Sikkim'. The people have tasted real democracy in their life and the SDF was made them to realise that in *Janata Raj Ma Janatai Raja*. (in a popular regime people themselves are the Rulers). The Sikkim Democratic Front under the leadership of Pawan Chamling in the first and second terms of office spared no effort to bring about an all-round Political, social and economic developments of the State of Sikkim laying particular emphasis on improving the lot of underprivileged and vulnerable sections of the Society by a number of poverty alleviation and Welfare Schemes – especially to fulfil the promises made by the SDF in its Election manifestoes. The inspiring leadership of SDF's supreme and the Chief Minister Pawan Chamling who always maintains that his one and only principal objective is to develop Sikkim and uplift the poor, deprived, disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable sections of the society.

The first vision of Pawan Chamling is restoration of democracy and in order to achieve it, he not only overthrew the dictatorial undemocratic rule of N.B. Bhandari, but also came to power to restore democracy. In this effort at the outset he restored democracy to give complete safeguard to Sikkimese rules and traditions, rule of law, protection under Article 371 F of the Constitution of India, to restore freedom of speech, freedom of press to close the black chapter of gagging in the fourth estates, but with legal action on yellow journalism, to maintain law and order, restoration of peace and tranquillity and make Sikkim further one of the most peaceful States of India with the help of law abiding and peace loving people.

The first step in this direction to him is to achieve the goal to provide social justice for all sections of the society and Sikkim-in religion, gender, age, profession, culture and to build the interests of the people in their plural diversities. As promised most of the Communities in Sikkim, Nepalis are included in the list of OBCs and concerted effort is on to include all those left out Communities in the list of OBCs in order to provide admissible facilities. Decision has also been taken to grant quota seats for students belonging to Communities other than OBCs for higher education with scholarships in the institutions of national importance situated outside the State. Equally in all Government jobs 23 percent of seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes, 6 percent to Scheduled Castes and 21 percent to OBCs. In vacant position rest are also given preferences on the basis of de-reservation policy besides keeping reservations to the NBCs.

Efforts are also being put to recognise local languages to be given Constitutional recognition. Bhutia, Lepcha, Limboo and Tibetan languages are the State languages and have received recognition in Central Board of Secondary Education upto class XII and in the University of North Bengal to be taught at degree levels. The State Government has accorded official recognition to Gurung, Rai, Sherpa, Mangar, Newar and Sunwar (*Mukhia*) languages and has taken steps to develop these languages. Further, the State Government has strongly demanded to consider the senior and respected persons and dignitaries of Sikkim for high posts in the Centre. The Centre had already appointed Sikkim's former Rajya Sabha M.P., Karma Topden as the Indian Ambassador to Mongolia. Some names are in the offing to appoint as Governor of a State and judge of the High Court and Supreme Court. Since SDF is in support of NDA Government and demand is also placed for a berth in the Union Cabinet. Invariably in the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections, Sikkim supported to the winning candidates.

In the Social Sector Education is number one and top priority is given. Chamling Government is intending to increase the share of budgetary allocation substantially for education – which alone the SDF Government feels that will make the State less dependent and more motivated to achieve the

dream – ‘Sikkim Vision 2015 – A shared dream’. The literacy rate in the State has risen to 70 percent. The ruling Government has introduced more than half-a dozen colleges including Advanced Technical Training Centre at Bardang, East Sikkim and Centre of Computers and Communication Technology at Chisopani, South Sikkim. Manipal Institute of Technology and Medical College under Sikkim Manipal University have already started functioning. The MIT has produced two batches of engineering degree holders. The Medical College was commissioned in the year 2001. Literacy level in the State has gone up while dropout rate in various schools has come down. Further stress is also being made to improve quality education in the State of Sikkim.

The Government’s endeavour in Education has been primarily to enhance quality education and for which developmental activities were undertaken. Schools were upgraded for availability of schools within walking distance of children and to tackle the growing numbers of students in the State. There are 179 Lower Primary Schools, 322 Primary Schools, 129 Junior High Schools and 76 Secondary Schools and 29 Secondary Schools spread all over the State. In achieving national objective of universalisation of Primary Education the SDF Government took the bold and commendable step and issued a notification No. 14/LD/200 dated 30.06. 2000 for making Primary Education to be made free and compulsory for all children upto the age of 14 years in Sikkim. Free tuition fees upto Class XII and College level, free uniforms to children upto class V and free text books upto class V and 50% subsidy on cost of books from Class VI to XII from the year 2000. The Managing Committees of the schools with Local Panchayats are established. Besides these, infrastructural facilities for educational institutions are increased. The Sikkim Manipal University as mentioned earlier was established for degree courses in Engineering and Medicine. Education Bill 2000 was passed by the Assembly to streamline standard of education, administration and functions of the Institutions, to extend grant-in-aid, and for other improvements in the field of education. The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan was introduced with the aim of providing quality elementary education to all children upto the age of 14 years in the State. The computer education is being

made compulsory in all schools and the SDF Government headed by Pawan Chamling envisions a future where every child in the State is well ingredients in ensuring a meaningful and purposeful life. The State is marching towards 100 percent literacy, supply of electricity and water supply. Many Schools were upgraded to Senior Secondary Schools in the State. The mid-day meal system in the form of supplying uncooked rice to each student upto Class V is now looked into to be served as cooked food. Education is free upto to collegiate level. Scholarships for the students studying outside the State are continued. Within the State the Social Welfare Department awards scholarships for Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste and OBC students of collegiate level.

The SDF Government has promised in its manifesto that it would rebuild and reenergize the State Health Care System so that the more poor will benefit. Hospitals are constructed in all four districts, Primary Health Centres and Sub-Primary Health Centres in all the major villages in Sikkim are constructed. Multi-bedded Community Health Centres are also being constructed in all four districts. Besides these, sophisticated equipments are being provided in STNM Hospital Gangtok and Namchi Government Hospital along with availability of specialists from different fields and specialization. However, lack of sufficient beds to the patients seems to be a great problem in STNM Hospital Gangtok and Namchi. The State is free from major diseases like leprosy, HIV positive, Aids, cancer etc. Tuberculosis and Goitre are found to be common/chronic ones owing to altitude, under nutrition among the people and lack of iodine content.

Since Sikkim is a hilly terrain with forest, Pawan Chamling believes that 'we will safeguard our environment as in this lies the very essence of our survival and future.'<sup>29</sup> In the protection of environment, the SDF Government has taken various measures to increase green coverage by involving in massive plantation movement. The State Government has banned grazing by all kinds of domestic and semi-domestic animals in reserve forest areas. Sikkim also holds the distinction of becoming the first State in the Country to ban on the use of plastic bags to protect the environment. Do Chief Ministers think green ? Down to Earth conducted a survey and found that they

do, at least in some States. In the environmentalists survey, the Chief Ministers who came out with flying colours were Pawan Chamling of Sikkim along with Dig Vijay Singh of Madhya Pradesh and Chandra Babu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh who occupied the top position. The environmentalists were all praise for the efforts of Chamling to curtail logging and to restrict timber transport. Chamling also won praise for pushing ecotourism that gives employment opportunities to a lot of poor people. It has also improved urban environment to 77 percent in Sikkim and in sustainable development to 88.89 percent; along with involvement of the civil society in the environmental management.<sup>30</sup> Chamling is called 'Green' of India for having taken steps to protect environment and ecotourism. As forests are often considered to be the most splendid manifestation of plant life on earth to play an important role in the development of civilized man, Pawan Chamling has detected to create and established Smritivan at various places as a part of Green Sikkim, by involving all the segments of the society. Today, under these scheme social, religious, educational institutions, defence, police, tourism, NGOs and Government agencies are voluntarily undertaking massive plantations in different parts of Sikkim in memory (*smriti*) of their near and dear ones. Thus, Chamling becomes eco-friendly and environment friendly Chief Minister in the Country.

Lok Adalats are being established in all the districts for the benefit of common masses and extend legal help to the poor and the weaker sections of the society at their doorsteps. Similarly, Consumers' Court, Human Rights Court, Atrocity Court, Family Court have also started functioning. Further, Sikkim holds the record of the least number of pending cases in the entire Country.

There are a number of schemes for the welfare and development of girl children, children, women, SC/ST/OBC, handicapped, aged people in the State including Indira Mahila Yojana, Balika Smridhi Yojna, Small Family Scheme, Widow-Remarriage, Pensions to widows of Ex-servicemen, Training etc.. 30 percent reservations are being given to women in Government jobs and Panchayats. Old age pension of Rs. 200/- per month is

given to more than 10,000 people above the age of 65 years who are living below the poverty line.

The Sikkim State Plan of Action for children cares for the Rights for Survival of children with regard to their health, maternity, nutrition, environment, sanitation, hygiene water development, protection and participation.

The striking feature of SDF Government headed by Pawan Chamling is to record and recognise the unforgettable contribution made by eminent senior citizens in their chosen fields who have contributed towards the overall development of Sikkim. They are being remembered and had honoured by this Government. In the 25<sup>th</sup> year of celebration of the State Day on May, 16, 2000 such citizens were honoured in the Roll of Honour with shawls, carpets and cash Award of Rs. 15,000/- each including the surviving members of the first Sikkim Legislative Assembly like Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa and others. Persons who made outstanding contributions were honoured by naming important roads and schools in the State after their names. Sikkim State Awards are also instituted for proud sons and daughters of Sikkim in recognition of their excellence in their chosen field of activity and contributions for Sikkim. Film star Danny Denzongpa, footballer Baichung Bhutia, traditional artist Ganden Lharipa, folk singer Benjamin Rai, Olympian Jasraj Pradhan, poet-author late T.R. Sharma and others were given awards.

The ruling SDF Government headed by Pawan Chamling has identified Tourism, Power, Education, Agriculture, Horticulture and low volume but high value projects and eco-friendly industries as the sectors of priority to be promoted and developed. The stress is also made to repair roads, carpeting of roads, beautification of Sikkim, National Himalayan Study cum Museum, National Medicinal Plants Research and Study Centre, metal education and finally to foster Sikkim's distinct identity and character which are environment friendly, culture-friendly, communal harmony and secularism to make the State known to the rest of India.

Land is being provided to landless and home to the homeless. The living standard of the people of rural areas has significantly improved. Sikkim under the role of SDF umbrella has already occupied a place in the world map of tourism. The daily wage earners of Sikkim are one of the best-paid Government employees in the Country. The daily wage of the labourers, which was at only Rs. 20/- per day, has been raised to 100 percent by the SDF Government. Another raise was of Rs. 10/- was added on May Day in the year 2001, thus, making Sikkim one of the highest paid daily wage earners in the Country. SDF stands for abolition of child labour, which is rarely found in the State of Sikkim. In the field of economic development, the SDF strives to continue with greater vigour to bring about rapid and sustained growth of economy by laying stress on long-term and time-bound productive schemes and projects having potential to create more revenue and employment in the State. Development oriented and people-centric schemes are being given priority along with hydropower, floriculture and eco-friendly tourism. Opportunities are being created in as many diverse fields as possible so that the people will become less dependent on the Government and more on themselves. Economic survey is being conducted in the State with State's own budget and manpower. It is a unique programme, first of its kind and on the completion of the survey, economic assistance will be given to persons falling below poverty line (BPL) and tries to bring them above poverty line (APL).<sup>31</sup>

In the agricultural sector efforts are being made to design ecologically sustainable, economically profitable and resource efficient cropping system for different agro-climatic conditions. Emerging areas like genetic engineering, bio-insecticides, integrated nutrient management, integrated pest management and agri-business management are being incorporated in the fields of research development for aiding growth in agriculture development. Efforts are being put to create mass awareness on the need of achieving higher agricultural productivity. The yields of large Cardamom, Ginger and Tea are contributing to a maximum extent to the resources of the State. Veterinary services, Animal Health Cattle Development, Poultry Development and other livestock developments are

taking headway and improved to a maximum extent. Dairy Development in the State has shown a remarkable progress. With regard in Irrigation the State is adopting appropriate Techniques to suit to the hilly terrain and make them sustainable. Further, non-residential buildings, Secretariat annexure buildings, District Administrative Centres, Sub-Division Administrative Centres, P.T. Namgyal Memorial Park, Guest Houses, Banquet-cum-Conference Hall, Prison Administration, Residential Buildings and Quarters for Ministers are getting completed and commissioned.

For the Co-operative Department Sahakari Bhawan was constructed and was shifted in 1998. An apex level namely, Sikkim State Cooperative Bank Limited commonly known as SISCO has been established. SISCO Bank since its inception as distributed short-term agriculture credit to the farmers to a tune of Rs. 5.67 lacs. The Sikkim Consumers' Cooperative Society Ltd. had achieved in purchase Rs. 683.72 Lacs, sale Rs. 1021.55 Lacs and in recovery Rs. 783.51 Lacs.

The Sikkim Milk Union Ltd. and SIMFED have made appreciable performance. The Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation undertook National sample survey with reference to the State of Sikkim, State Income, Economic Statistics, Economic Survey, Sikkim at a glance 2001, Economic Census, Agricultural Census, Sikkim Vision Document, Sikkim Human Development Report 1999 (SHDR), estimation of cropping pattern and Statistical service. The Ecclesiastical Department is a unique department that caters to the spiritual needs of the people of Sikkim and documented all religious institution and places of worship dating 100 years and more has been actively engaged. The Chinmaya Mission was established to promote discipline, Vedic Studies and promote human resource development in the State. Kanchi Kamakoti Seva Samity is registered to construct a meditation centre in the South Indian style of architecture at Nandok, East Sikkim. More than a thousand NGOs, Associations, Social Welfare Associations are registered under Land Revenue department and District Collect orates to promote welfare activities in the State. The Nepali Sahitya Parishad is established to protect and promote Nepali language,

culture and traditions. The excise department has increased the State's Excise Duty from Rs. 6.80 crores to the year 1994-95 to Rs. 13.19 crores in 1999-2000. Licenses were issued to establish new liquor industries.

The Department of Food and Civil Supplies ensures the adequate supply of essential commodities throughout the State. The department has started the issue of individual ration cards for the people who live Above Poverty Line and the issue of Below Poverty Line ration cards is on the anvil. The Weights and Measures Acts and Rules are strictly adhered to by the Department of FCS. A consumer protection cell is given top priority to promote consumer welfare activities in the State. The Department of Forests, Environment and Wildlife are the wealth of the State. It controls forests, environment and land policy. The concept of Smriti Vans, the brainchild of Pawan Chamling is a new frontier and new opportunity for creating new forests without Government patronage and to promote forest crop, Parks and Gardens and landscaping of urban areas including those of tourist importance are being developed. Illegal felling and grazing, forest land encroachment and forest fire are prevented. A number of rules relating to forest control have been enacted to protect forests in the State. The National Park and Sanctuaries are taken care to protect the animals under wildlife Act. To learn about forest, wildlife and to protect them, Environmental education is being introduced in schools and colleges. Horticulture and Sericulture are also given adequate importance in the State. The *Khang-chen-dzonga* Conservation Committee takes care of *Khangchendzonga* National Park and the sanctity of the *Mount Khang-chen-dzonga*. (*the Guardian deity of Sikkim*)

The untiring effort of Pawan Chamling is to recognize Sikkim as one of the bio-diversity 'hot-spot' regions and for an MOU has been signed with the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India, that the Forest Environment and Wildlife Department of the State will be the custodian, implementer and also the nodal agency for all biodiversity and related issues. Along with conservation of medicinal plants under WWF are taken care. Floriculture offers dignified profession not only to the villages, but also to the educated unemployed youths of the State.

The police department is performing its duty with the utmost satisfaction. Traffic rules of the Traffic Police, the role played by Sikkim Armed Police and Women Police are commendable. Efforts are on to modernise Police Administration in terms of mobility and equipments. One of the major achievements of the SDF Government is in the field of Information and Technology. The mission of the department has been the use of information tools, income and employment generation through private sector participation and empowerment of rural communities. Keeping this in view, a number of activities have been undertaken in the State such as Community Information Centres, Computer Training for Government Officials, Development of web-sites, CD ROMs, Software Technology, Telemedicine and encouragement to the private sector.

In the Industrial sector, the department of industry has been playing a pivotal role in implementing developmental schemes and to solve unemployment problems extending necessary assistance for self-employment through its various undertakings and agencies. It also stops the migration of the people from rural areas to urban areas and to improve their living conditions.

The Sikkim Jewels Ltd., Sikkim Times Corporation, Sikkim Tea Estate, SIDICO, Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom are contributing to the income of the State by their excellent performance. The Government Food Preservation Factory – a sick industry has been revived. Still a lot has to be done in the field of industry in Sikkim as because of the weather conditions, topography, and lack of resources, geographical position, lack of space and Cost of Production, etc..

The Land Revenue Departmental functioning is strengthened and in January 1999, the Rongli Sub Division was established, besides the existing District Collectorates and Sub Divisions. Land records are computerised. Cadastral survey and Land Bank System are introduced, natural calamity is taken care. Further protection of old laws under Revenue Order No. 1, of 1917

is strictly adhered to. However, under this law the Government has the power to relax the prohibition and allow the land to be used in the State.

The Mines and Geology department is to explore the reserves of the minerals of the State. It assesses coal dolomite, quartzite, talc sillimanite, rock crystals and building stones in the State of Sikkim. The Sikkim Mines Corporation, which is running at a loss, is being revitalized.

The Planning and Development department is the nodal department for examining, evaluating and examining the projects and schemes by different sectoral departments. The 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan is prepared. Various NGOs are being consulted to prioritise the schemes and mobilization of resources. The Department published the Human Development Report and the Sikkim-People's vision documents. The State Government vide notification No. 194/P &D dated 08.05. 2001 has constituted for the first time the State Planning Commission in order to bring about the economic growth and social justice in the State.

**The State Planning Commission consists of :**

Chief Minister Pawan Chamling	Chairman
Muchkund Dubey	Deputy Chairman
S. Sen	Member
A. Lahiri	Member
Mahendra P. Lama	Member
K.C. Pradhan	Member
S.W. Tenzing, former Chief Secretary	Member
T.T. Dorjee, Principal Secretary Finance	Member
G.K. Subba, Development Commissioner	Member

Later, P.D. Rai, Chairman, Sikkim Industrial Development, Investment Corporation (SIDICO) and SABCO were also made non-official members. Once again three more were inducted as members of the Commission and lastly vide Sikkim Government Notification no. 31

Home/dated 20.08. 2002, P.K. Pradhan retired Chief Secretary of Sikkim was appointed as non-official member of the State Planning Commission.

In the infrastructure development and in the socio-economic arena the power sector is an ingredient. Sikkim is blessed with tremendous hydroelectric potential to a tune of 8000 MW and a firm base of 3000 MW and can bring revenue to the State by proper planning and implementation of power projects. In this sector the State Government has sought the participation of public and private agencies for generation and transmission of powers to tap the Teesta-Rangit basin. The small hydropower Houses prevalent in the State are eco-friendly power generation in the State. The State Government has been facilitator and playing a positive role and planned development in the power sector. The Power Department of Government of Sikkim is trying to establish Power Houses namely, Kalez Khola Hydrel Project 2x1 MW and Diesel Power House at Gangtok – 4X1 MW to add 6 MW of installed capacity and renovation of Lower Lagyap, Jali Power House, Rimbi Stage-1 and Rothak Microhydrel to a tune of retrieved capacity of 13 MW from 6.15 MW. Rabomchu, Peuray, Lachung Stage II and Mangley Projects are under construction. The networks of transmission are under progress with improved techniques. The rural electrification programme is also taken as a minimum need programme and trying to achieve 100% electrification of the villages of Sikkim at least with two point free connections to poor households known as 'Kutir-Jyoti' programme as against one point free connection programme of 1988-89 as because majority of the Population reside in villages. A State Regulatory Committee as an independent quasi-judiciary power for formulation of tariff and other related matters is underway. In the power sector reformation, Sikkim Power Development Corporation has been established to implement major generation schemes with an installed capacity of 61 MW seasonal and 40 MW firm. The Department of Power is taking care of revenue receipt and tariff. Between 1999-2000, the revenue receipt is increased and is Rs. 824.84 lakhs against 55,000 consumers. Steps are also being undertaken for implementation and uninterrupted power supply to Gangtok – the capital city.

As water is life second to air for the survival of human beings and other beings, the Department of Public Health and Engineering is toeing with the policies of the Government providing potable water and taken care of systematic disposal of sewerage within the framework of pollution act. It is because of the difficult and fragile terrain, the potable water in capital and other places of Sikkim are being fed from the snow-fed Ratchu Source. The Rangpo water supply scheme of Army at Ravangla is completed. In South and West efforts are being made to keep the water supply smooth. Augmentation of Rabdentse, Legship Bazaar, Naya Bazaar, Melli Bazaar, Samdruptse and Namchi Water Supply Schemes has been successfully executed. Besides, treatment facilities are also being undertaken. Similarly, the sewerage network is being looked into stop pollution.

Since travel in olden days in Sikkim was done on foot steps and loads by mules were carried on construction of roads and bridges have started from the British time. The NH 31A is the chart road to connect Sikkim with rest of the country where vehicles with limited loads ply. In the First Five Year Plan, a thrust was given to road network, since 1950. Later, low cost roads and bridges were constructed to link all parts of Sikkim. Therefore, the Department of Roads and Bridges of SPWD undertook the activities of widening and improvement of the existing roads, upgrading of lower load carrying bridges into higher-class bridges and construction of new roads in accordance with the specifications prescribed by Indian Roads Congress. Soil cutting, rock cutting, bridges to cross over the streams and rivers and avoid slides, steps are being taken along with back cutting, providing protection of walls and drains. The Government is taking steps to carpet road surface and up-gradation of surface. The Sikkim Democratic Front Government had undertaken the carpeting work in Water bound Macadam area, 16 routes covering a distance of 127 Kms. in all four districts. The Government has approved to resurface the roads in 13 routes to cover a distance of 248 kms. The laying of new roads and bridges are also receiving attention.

Many of the new roads are under completion and to be completed soon covering a distance of 200 kms. In all four districts. Simultaneously the

repair of roads and bridges and landslides are getting completed. To avoid difficulties due to rains and landslides, the helicopter service is restored between Bagdogra and Gangtok. Besides, these helipads are being constructed at remote places of Sikkim. Whatever the efforts are being taken by the Government, the natural calamities caused to roads because of rains and landslides cannot be avoided. Only nature can help Sikkim from these evils. As Sikkim is landlocked Himalayan State with no air, rail and water transport facility depends more upon road transportation. Since 1946, the Sikkim Nationalised Transport Bus services link Sikkim both within and outside. The SNT also works as an out agency for Railways and computerised rail reservation counter operates from 1997. Reservation quota for Sikkim is made in long bound trains for the benefit of the people of Sikkim. The SNT Gangtok Bus Terminus is upgraded. The SNT is expected to bring good revenue generation to the State. Besides SNT buses, a number of private buses, trucks and taxies ply both within and out the State.

The majority Population of Sikkim belongs to poor and weaker sections, the Social Welfare Department of Sikkim Government works in a three pronged strategy – (a) development measures for education and economic development; (b) protection measures through Civil Rights Act and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989; and (c) intensive and integrated development of areas having Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Population.

The Government of Sikkim vide notification No. 4/WD/95 dated 01.07.1995 enforced new reservation policy as follows :

SC (of Sikkim) : 6%, ST (of Sikkim) : 23%, OBCs (of Sikkim) : 21% and upper age is relaxed in recruitment for various services as SC : 5 years; ST : 5 years and OBCs : 3 years.

Many development schemes for the welfare of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes are launched vide circular no. 21/Home/2000 dated 18.1.2000. Welfare Boards are constituted for both SCs and STs to implement various schemes for weaker sections at grass root level. Intensive economic

development programmes are also undertaken to uplift the weaker sections of the society. Old age pension, welfare of the disabled, stipend, subsistence allowance, equipments, free camps, sheltered workshop etc. for the disabled have been launched. The department runs destitute homes in all four districts and a Juvenile Home at Gangtok. Many NGOs do participate in the venture of Government promoting Welfare Schemes. There are some private orphanages available in the State.

In the arena of Sports and Youth Affairs a newly founded department in the year 1995 promotes physical fitness, stops and menace of drugs and to provide the facilities and exposure for the talented to excel. Sports activities are promoted at School and College levels and promoting excellence a 'Search more Baichung' programme was launched in 1999 – especially among footballers under – 14 years. Under the auspices of Sports Authority of India a Sports Training Center at Namchi is in the offing to encourage football, boxing and archery, the State Game in Sikkim. At present 13 State Associations and 3 District Sports Associations are existing. The major competitions and tournaments in the State are :

The Governor's Gold Cup Football Tournament

The Eastern Indian and Sikkim Body Building Competition

The Open Marathon Competition

The Vijay Merchant Cricket Tournament

The *Khang-Chen-Dzonga* Invitational Boxing Tournament.

The State Team and a few players are making their mark at national level in Football, *Tae Kwon Do* etc. Baichung Bhutia, the footballer was bestowed for the first-time the *Arjun* Award. The Paljor Stadium is upgraded into a modern State Complex. Similarly NCC is also encouraged. The Government for promoting sports and youth affairs is according more priority.

Yet another important field is Rural Development for alleviating rural poverty for providing productive employment opportunities. The concern of the department implies both economic betterment and greater social

transformation of the people of Sikkim. Besides, many centrally sponsored schemes such as IAY, JRY, JGSY, IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, SGSY etc. The State Government has dually introduced several poverty alleviation programmes. The basic necessities like food, shelter and clothing, home for homeless etc. are being provided. Under the same scheme 30 Nos. of GCI sheets are provided to each of the rural poor families and old age pension. At grass root level Government, the State has extended devolution of power and decentralization of Planning and Administrative machinery – thus giving independent at the bottom. Elections for Panchayats of both Gram and Zilla were conducted successfully to allow the Village *Pramukhs* to rule. Religious tolerance is being promoted along with peace in villages of Sikkim. The SDF Government under the leadership of Pawan Chamling organized training at the Sikkim Institute of Rural Development, State Level Gramin Mela and Panchayat Sammelan in different locations of the State since 1996. Rural Employment, Employment Assurance Scheme, Jawahar Rozgar Yojna, Indira Awaas Yojna are being launched and conducted successfully to alleviate poverty in the villages of Sikkim. Under IRDP people are able to cross the poverty line. The Biogas and improved Chula Schemes save the forests of the villages. An emphasis is also made for proper rural water supply in the State, besides rural sanitation and construction as well as repair of rural roads and bridges.

Tourism is an important sector, an industry in Sikkim and has a tremendous potential. Some of the attractions of Sikkim are the high Himalayas, Mount *Khangchendzonga* – third highest peak of the world, rich *flora* and *fauna*, bio-diversity, monasteries, lakes, distinct culture of the three ethnic communities, pristine beauty of hills supported by the deep valley and perennial flow of river Teesta. The Government has recognised the importance of tourism in the socio-economic development and gives high priority in the State. One of the best tourism performing States of India, Sikkim has bagged National Award too thrice. The number of visits of tourists is increasing every year and is expected to go very high in future – especially with the opening of *Nathu la* for Indian tourists to visit, white river rafting, Yumthang valley etc. The Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation has renovated and reactivated

tourism in Sikkim. A number of Travel Agencies have been started to give employment opportunities in the State. In the Himalayan Tourism Advisory Board Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2002, Pawan Chamling said that Tourism in Himalayan regions are most undiscovered and unidentified tourist destinations in the country, besides the facts, like fragile character of the region, infrastructural and institutional bottlenecks and resource constraints. These should be taken note and bestowed on Sikkim Himalayas with further responsibilities to be a flag bearer of eco-tourism movement in India. However, Chamling is hopeful that the encouraging attitude and support of Government of India towards Sikkim that shall flourish the tourism sector in the near future. Tourism brings to Sikkim one of the main sources of income and the SDF Government gives utmost importance to it.

The urban sector, which was given little priority is receiving greater attention under the SDF Government. There are no parallel Acts/Regulations of Town and Country Planning in the State. Therefore, there was no proper control over constructions and developments as well as informal bazaars that had developed by them. There are no Master Plans to develop the capital Gangtok and other towns in the State. There is shortage of urban land and no proper wastage management system. The State as a whole and capital Gangtok are lacking parking space for vehicles.

The present Government undertook various measures to develop the urban areas for the benefit of general public with a policy to treat urban sector as a priority. It is the effort of the Government to acquire land for dumping and conversion of biodegradable garbage into composts, to impose ban on non-biodegradable materials like plastic shopping carry bags. The Sikkim Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act was enacted in 1998 and is enforced strictly. Reshithang and Ranka of East Sikkim are identified as the ideal place for new Satellite townships. The project for Greater Namchi is also being prepared. The drains are taken care to restrict seepages. Flyovers and length reduction footsteps were constructed to avoid vehicular pedestrian conflict. Also a ropeway is in the offing. Gardens are created and maintained for tourists' attractions, Private taxi stands, marketing areas and parking

spaces are being made to avoid difficulties. Regional Planning and Development Act, 1998 is passed for the benefit of having townships and legislators are provided with residential sites. Unused lands are being converted into marketing areas and the Lall Bazaar founded in 1955 will be renovated. Public toilets are maintained as pay and use toilets. The M.G. Marg of Gangtok city will be converted into a Vehicle Free Zone by introducing multi level car park near Police Head Quarters. Work shed for tailoring and cobblers are constructed. Marketing yard for urban poor in Lall Market and Taxi Park at Chandmari are being constructed. Restrictions on throwing of spills and garbage in *Jhoras*, drains and public places are frame to levy fine or imprisonment.

For the Welfare of Women and Children, a number of schemes have been introduced by the Department of Women and Child Welfare, under Indira Mahila Yojana, Balika Smridhi Yojana, Small Family Scheme, Widow remarriage, crèches for working women's children, working women's hostel, Integrated Child Development services, Nutrition and State Plan of action for children.<sup>33</sup>

The budgets presented since 1995 till 2002 are based on poverty alleviation programmes though deficit in nature. The Tenth Five Year Plan focuses upon all round development of Sikkim and poverty alleviation agenda.

The POTA, 2002 has been extended in the State of Sikkim vide notification no. 48/Home/2002 dated 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2002. In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 23 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002 (15 of 2002), the State Government has constituted the Court of District and Sessions Judge, East at Gangtok as the Special Courts for all types of cases arising under the said Act in the State of Sikkim. The State Government appointed vide notification no. 49/Home/2002 dated 8.10. 2002 S.W. Tenzing, Chief Secretary/Home Secretary to Government of Sikkim as the competent authority for the purposes of Chapter V of the said Act with immediate effect and vide notification no. 50/Home/2002 date 8.10. 2002,

K.N. Lepcha, Special Secretary, Home as the Designated Authority for the purpose of the said Act w.e.f. 8.10. 2002.

The Chief Minister's self employment schemes recently launched to a tune of Rs. 50,000/- to Rs. 1.00 lakh to the educated youths is a turning point to solve unemployment problem. Still unemployment in Sikkim is an acute crisis. A mountain/Sikkim Regiment is also in the offing to solve unemployment problem. However, Sikkim under the rule of SDF and leadership of Pawan Chamling is the most peaceful State of the Indian Federal Polity, promoting communal harmony and with essence of peace.

To remember history, the statues of *Chogyal* Palden Thendup, Guru Rimpoche Padmasambhava, Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa are to be installed soon. Already the statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, B.R. Ambedkar and Adhi Kavi Bhanu Bhakta are installed in the State.

#### **Inclusion of Sikkim in the North-Eastern Council :**

Following the decision of the Central Government to include Sikkim<sup>34</sup> as an eighth member of the North Eastern Council, there has been visible sign of doubts and apprehension among some sections of the people in Sikkim. The general apprehension among the people is that with the inclusion in the NEC fold, the Article 371 F of the Constitution of India, which guarantees special status to the State of Sikkim, will be affected. In fact, it doesn't but adds additional protection and economic development of the State of Sikkim.

Keeping in mind the general apprehension of the people, the State Government raised a number of queries with the Solicitor General of India, for his valued opinion. In his reply Santosh Hegde, Solicitor General of India has given his reply to the State's queries point by point and are incorporated in the white paper<sup>35</sup> published by the State Government, which was presented during the first day of the Budget of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly by the Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling on August 24, 1998.

**The clarifications are listed as follows :**

**Status and Identity of Sikkim :**

By including Sikkim in the North-Eastern Council, the status and identity of Sikkim will not be affected in any manner whatsoever since the same is Constitutionally protected under the Constitution and the Act which creates the North-Eastern Council does not in any manner, interfere with the status and identity of Sikkim.

**Provisions of Article 371 F of the Constitution :**

Article 371 F (a-p) of the Constitution of India introduced by virtue of Constitutional 36<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, which is now a part of the Constitution itself. The provisions of the Constitution of India cannot be overridden by any other legislative enactment unless Constitution itself says so. So far as the State of Sikkim is concerned, as stated above, it enjoys a special status in the Constitution of India and the opening words itself State the provisions made therein are being made notwithstanding anything in the Constitution. That being so there can be no apprehension whatsoever that the provisions of North Eastern Council Act, 1970 could even remotely override or affect the provisions of Article 371 F of the Constitution of India.

**The rights and protections of the Sikkim subjects now citizens of India by virtue of the Sikkim Citizenship Order, 1975 :**

The North-Eastern Council Act of 1970 does not control any of the rights and protections of Sikkim subjects who are now citizens of India. Even otherwise their rights are protected under the Special Provisions of Article 371 F of the Constitution of India as interpreted by the Supreme Court of India in cases of R.C. Poudyal vs. Union of India (1994) Sup.1 Sec. 324 and State of Sikkim vs. Surendra Kumar and ors. (1994) 5 SCC 282. Therefore, there need be no apprehension in regard to these rights being affected by the North Eastern Council Act, 1970/1971.

**Old Laws Protected Under Article 371 F (k) of the Constitution whether they will be diluted in any manner :**

In the narration of history and background, Sikkim becoming a part of Indian Union by inclusion of Article 371 F made as above. It is notified that a special provision for protecting the existing laws is made in clause (k) of the said article. These laws have been further given the protection for the challenge based on violation of the ordinary Constitutional provisions. The provisions of the North Eastern Council Act not in any manner relate to or override the provisions of any of the Sikkim's existing law. Even the decision of the North Eastern Council cannot in any manner either directly or remotely affect the laws of the State of Sikkim.

In fact, the opinion is that the inclusion of Sikkim in the North Eastern Council would only be for the better development of the State and could never be derogation of its status and identity nor would it in any manner affect the rights and protections of the people of Sikkim much else would it affect the Provisions of Article 371 F including sub article (k) of the said Act. Therefore, there is no intention for Government of India to make any changes in Article 371 F of the Constitution of India, which provides special status for Sikkim, to safeguarding the rights and privileges of the people of Sikkim. Sooner or later with an amendment Act Sikkim will become a part of North Eastern Council. Sikkim becoming a member of North Eastern Council was past by the Union Parliament of India. However, article 371 F of Constitution of India will always remain a Great Charter for the State of Sikkim.

One of the steps in this direction is that under Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) to the North Eastern region including Sikkim, the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, GOI have made a provision of Rs. 90 crores. For Sikkim 5 projects are sanctioned for the financial year 2001-02 and 2003-04 for Water Supply Scheme to Tourist Centres, Augmentation of Gangtok Water Supply System Phase I, Municipal Solid Waste Management Plan for Gangtok City including Eco-Friendly Garbage through projection of compost base organic fertiliser,

Design of Storm Water Drainage System along NH 31A in Gangtok and Development of Lall Bazaar Phase – I at Gangtok (Source : *Gangtok Times*), Vol. 6, No. 39, Sept. 30 – Oct. 6, 2002, Tadong Baba Offset Press, p. 8.

**Indian Income Tax Act is extended and is yet to be implemented in the State of Sikkim :**

Sikkim became the 22<sup>nd</sup> State of the Indian Union in the year 1975. Among various conditions of the merger, which was solemnly agreed to by Government of India, was the protection of the old laws in force in the State and that it would continue to be in force until the same was repealed by a competent authority of the Legislature. This Constitutional safeguard has been engrafted under Article 371 F (k) of the Constitution of India, the provisions run thus –

“all laws in force immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State or any part thereof shall continue to be in force there until amended or repealed by a competent legislature or other competent authority.” (The Constitution of India).

The Direct Laws were sought to be enforced in the State, which goes contrary to the safeguards enshrined under Article 371 F of the Constitution relating to Sikkim since Sikkim had its own Income Tax Manual, 1948. The enforcement of Direct Tax Laws has created serious apprehension among the people about erosion of their identity since necessary tax on income is paid under Sikkim Income Tax Manual, 1948, which is being protected by the Article 371 F (k) of the Constitution of India. However, the SDF Government under the leadership of Pawan Chamling has completely done away with Sikkim Income Tax 1948 and exempted for the local people of Sikkim from Indian Income Tax under the Income Tax Act, 1961, w.e.f. June 16, 2008. (*For details, Appendix – X*)

**Table – VII**

**At a Glance Results of Zilla Panchayat and Gram Panchayat : 2002**

**Zilla Panchayat**

District	Seats/TC	SDF	Independents
West	25	24	01
South	24	24	-
East	31	30	01
North	18+2*	13	05
Total	98+2*		

T.C. : Territorial Constituencies

\* Lachen & Lachung Dzumsa

**Gram Panchayat**

District	Seats	SDF	Independents
West	274	269	5
South	255	225	29 Repoll in 1211 Bemayak GPU on 12.10.02
East	273	244	29
North	101	94	07
Total	903		

Source : State Election Commission, Sikkim, 2002

Yet another feather in the electoral victory of Pawan Chamling and SDF Government was the success in the Panchayat Election held on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2002.<sup>36</sup> That was a unique Election. Many members of the Panchayats were declared elected uncontested and the fight was between candidates of SDF and independents. Even the independents belonged to SDF as because they were not able to get Party tickets. No other Regional Party and National Party contested this Election. However, it was 100 percent success for SDF. Later in November, 2002 the Election to the *Sabhapati* and *Upa Sabhapati* to both Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats were conducted. The number of Wards, Gram Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats were territorially reorganised along with 33 percent reservation for women in this Election.

It is also interesting to note that Pawan Chamling has worked as Chief Minister of Sikkim under more than three to four Governors. On 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2002, V. Rama Rao took over as 12<sup>th</sup> Governor of Sikkim. Therefore, his relation with the Gubernatorial Office and Centre always seem to be cordial.

On 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2002 three of the defected MLAs of Sikkim Sangram Parishad were officially allowed to join SDF at Mintokgang – the official residence of the Chief Minister of Sikkim. They were N.K. Pradhan, J.K. Bhandari and Sonam Dorji Bhutia. Now the strength of SDF rose to 31 in the House of 32 members. Nar Bahadur Bhandari of SSP remains the lone opposition leader of the House.

Another achievement of SDF Government is that Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on Sikkim's inclusion in North Eastern Council<sup>37</sup> and to be sent to Lok Sabha for formal assent, Sikkim becoming a member of NEC does not affect the safeguards guaranteed under article 371 F of the Constitution of India.

Further, it is very interesting to note here that most significant achievement of the SDF Government led by Pawan Chamling is the exemption of taxes to the bonafide Sikkimese.

The Circular reads as – “whereas, an amendment has been made in the Income Tax Act, 1961 by the Finance Act, 2008 by incorporating provisions for exempting the “Sikkimese” people from being assessed under the Indian Income Tax Act on any income which accrues or arises to him/her.”

- (a) From any source in the State of Sikkim; or
- (b) By way of dividend or interest on Securities.

And therefore, consequently the Sikkim Income Tax Manual of 1948 shall not be acted upon any further in respect of any assesses within the State, with immediate effect.”

Hence, now onwards no Sikkimese has to pay any tax, but non-Sikkimese will be governed by the Indian Income Tax, 1961. (*For details, please see, Appendix – X*)

Furthermore, Pawan Chamling has been a forerunner in the empowerment of women in the State of Sikkim. To him God resides in women and women are worshipped. He stresses upon giving due respect to women rather than to be considered as an object.<sup>38</sup>

The long felt desire of Tamangs and Limboos was fulfilled and the Lok Sabha cleared the desk for tribal status to them. Similarly, the Gurung, Rai, Bhujel, Manger, Sunwar and others will also be given tribal status soon.<sup>39</sup>

A major achievement of SDF Government is to kick off *Janata Mela*, the biggest ever welfare for Sikkimese poor.<sup>40</sup> Many poor people received all kinds of benefits such as housing schemes, land and landless (*Sukhumbasi*), Chief Minister's self-Employment Scheme, gas stoves, old age pension etc. as because the year 2002 is the year of implementation – an outreach programme of the Party to assess the ground realities at the grass roots – alleviation poverty and to uplift everyone – a golden opportunity in the golden age of Sikkim to foster good will as well as to move forward. Thus, Pawan Chamling's vision is to make Sikkim a model State of India – a dream sure to come true.

Table - VIII

## General Elections : 2004

## (SIKKIM PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY ELECTION)

No. and Name Assembly Segment	Electors		
	Men	Women	Total
1. Yoksam	4089	3946	8035
2. Tashiding (BL)	3211	3154	6365
3. Geyzing	4302	4272	8574
4. Dentam	3834	3646	7480
5. Barmiok	3492	3396	6888
6. Rinchenpong (BL)	4071	3877	7948
7. Chakung	4312	4123	8435
8. Soreong	4765	4654	9419
9. Daramdin	4615	4633	9248
10. Jorethang Nayabazar	6336	6106	12442
11. Ralong (BL)	3348	3047	6395
12. Wak	3672	3284	6956
13. Damthang	5113	5137	10250
14. Melli	4829	4780	9609
15. Rateyapani West Pandam	5181	5072	10253
16. Temi Tarku	5278	5402	10680
17. Central Pandam East Pandam	6460	5506	11966
18. Rhenock	3993	3614	7607
19. Regu	4377	3968	8345
20. Pathing (BL)	5484	4282	8866
21. Loosing Pacheykhani	3894	3636	7530
22. Khamdong (SC)	5427	5089	10516
23. Dzongu	2959	2944	5903
24. Lachen Mangshila (BL)	3757	3956	7713
25. Kabi Tingda (BL)	3965	3198	6163
26. Rakdong Tintek (BL)	3945	3657	7602
27. Martam (BL)	4833	4483	9316
28. Rumtek (BL)	6955	6771	13726
29. Assam Lingjey (BL)	4707	4345	9052
30. Ranka (BL)	5723	5535	11258
31. Gangtok	7627	6653	14280
32. Sangha	3084	33	3117
Total	145738	136199	281937

Source: State Election Department, Govt. Of Sikkim, 2004.

Table - IX

General Elections : 2004

(SIKKIM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY)

No. and Name Assembly Segment	Electors		
	Men	Women	Total
1. Yoksam	3455	3039	6494
2. Tashiding (BL)	2872	2518	5390
3. Geyzing	3540	3245	6785
4. Dentam	3341	3031	6372
5. Barmiok	2979	2645	5624
6. Rinchenpong (BL)	3408	3092	6500
7. Chakung	3799	3311	7110
8. Soreong	4090	3593	7683
9. Daramdin	3840	3508	7348
10. Jorethang Nayabazar	5083	4556	9639
11. Ralong (BL)	2940	2413	5353
12. Wak	Uncontested		
13. Damthang	Uncontested		
14. Melli	Uncontested		
15. Rateyapani West Pandam	4198	3675	7873
16. Temi Tarku	4461	4031	8492
17. Central Pandam East Pandam	5214	4323	9537
18. Rhenock	3341	2999	6198
19. Regu	3671	3112	6783
20. Pathing (BL)	3847	7112	7313
21. Loosing Pacheykhani	3247	2922	6169
22. Khamdong (SC)	4452	3845	8297
23. Dzongu	2642	2476	5118
24. Lachen Mangshila (BL)	3215	3278	6493
25. Kabi Tingda (BL)	Uncontested		
26. Rakdong Tintek (BL)	3287	2906	6193
27. Martam (BL)	4051	3626	7677
28. Rumtek (BL)	5086	4960	10046
29. Assam Lingjey (BL)	3723	3469	7192
30. Ranka (BL)	4341	282	8488
31. Gangtok	4769	4221	8990
32. Sangha	2089	-	2089
Total	104981	92265	197246

Source: State Election Department, Government of Sikkim, 2004.

Pawan Kumar Chamling along with his Cabinet Colleagues and Minister of State took the oath of office. The Council of Ministers included the following members.<sup>41</sup>

## CABINET MINISTERS

1. Dorjee Dazom Bhutia
2. Garjaman Gurung
3. Hishey Lachungpa
4. Kedar Nath Rai
5. Prem Singh Tamang
6. Dorjee Tshering Lepcha
7. Ram Bahadur Subba
8. Sher Bahadur Subedi
9. Kalawati Subba
10. Menlom Lepcha
11. Somnath Poudyal

Further, the following members were appointed as Chairpersons, Advisors, Chief Party Whip with the status and facilities as admissible to a Cabinet Minister with immediate effect.

## CHAIRPERSONS

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 1. Ran Bahadur Subba | State Trading Corporation of Sikkim                               |
| 2. T. T. Bhutia      | Power Advisory Board  |
| 3. N. K. Subba       | Denzong Agriculture Cooperative Society                           |
| 4. N. K. Pradhan     | State Bank of Sikkim and<br>Sikkim State Corporation Bank (SISCO) |
| 5. B. M. Ramudamu    | Sikkim Distilleries Limited                                       |
| 6. S.G. Lepcha       | Industries, Trade and Commerce<br>Development Board               |

## ADVISORS

- |                 |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. B.B.Gooroong | Press Adviser to Chief Minister       |
| 2. S.M.Limboo   | Political Advisor to Chief Minister   |
| 3. O.T.Lepcha   | Political Secretary to Chief Minister |

## CHIEF PARTY WHIP

1. K. B. Chamling

### Result of Panchayat Election held on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2007

East District	
Zilla Panchayat	Seats Won
1. Sikkim Democratic Front	14
2. Independent	03
Gram Panchayat	
1. Sikkim Democratic Front	95
2. Independent	27
West District	
1. Sikkim Democratic Front	08
2. Independent	Nil
Gram Panchayat	
1. Sikkim Democratic Front	27
2. Independent	10
3. INC	01
North District	
Zilla Panchayat	
1. Sikkim Democratic Front	08
2. Independent	01
Gram Panchayat	
1. Sikkim Democratic Front	23
2. Independent	15
South District	
Zilla Panchayat	
1. Sikkim Democratic Front	10
2. Independent	03
Gram Panchayat	
1. Sikkim Democratic Front	74
2. Independent	32

Source : State Election Commission, Government of Sikkim, 2004.

Much before the Panchayat poll held on October 26, Sikkim Democratic Front President and the Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling had predicted that the opposition Parties will not be able to win a single seat in the election. True to his prediction, two opposition Parties, CPI (M) and Sikkim Gorkha Prajatantrik Party drew a blank. But, the Congress may argue that they have proved the prediction wrong by winning a solitary Gram Panchayat seat in the West District out of 889 Gram Panchayat seats and 93 Zilla Panchayat seats in the whole State. Results declared on October 29 shows that SDF has won 90.43% Gram Panchayat seats and 91.39% Zilla Panchayat seats. It indicates that the opposition Parties were no where to come in the way of a thumping victory of the ruling Party.<sup>42</sup>

However, as indicated in the editorial analysis of Sikkim Reporter October 29 issue, independents have faired far better than any of the opposition Parties in the State by winning 75.2% Zilla Panchayat and 9.44 % Gram Panchayat seats in this election.

Further, in order to bring reforms in the urban areas, preparatory steps for Municipalisation of urban areas have already been initiated and Government is being fully geared up to hold Elections shortly. This is a Constitutional requirement under the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment. Demarcation of the geographical jurisdiction of urban settlements has been carried out. It is proposed to set up local urban bodies in townships with more than 5,000 populations and with area covering at least 50% non-agricultural land. The Municipal Act will also be formulated which inter alia will ensure that the local agenda for environmental protection is fully addressed. Other aspects that will be incorporated in this Legislation encompass issues such as financial sustainability, transparency and accountability, local taxes, checks on corruption etc. The Act will be so designed as to enable the local bodies to function independently and also ensure that they are people – responsive, efficient, effective and financially sustainable. Further, it will be ensured that the local bodies are made in a manner that they are fully representative of all communities and that provision for 40% reservation for women is duly

ensured.<sup>43</sup> The demarcation of Municipal Areas has resulted decrease in Gram Panchayat Units.

Since, the Sikkimese economy traditionally has been agrarian one. However, with only 12% of the land suitable for productive farming activities coupled with population growth, the situation has forced to the Government to think for other alternatives for livelihood. Besides, offering diversified alternatives in other service sectors, the Government is pursuing the policy of making the State a fully organic State. All the products grown on organic manure would be able to fetch competitive price at the global market.<sup>44</sup> Hence, the Government is approaching the Village Level Planning in the entire 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan from a new perspective for which the Government had laid firm grounds in the last few years. Most of the development projects in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan will be primarily based on the proposals of the people in both rural and urban villages. The State Planning Commission and the concerned departments have already started consulting the people for a comprehensive approach plan. This is the best way to ensure ownership of development at the most local level.<sup>45</sup> Relating to the overall development of the State, the SDF Government has prepared three clear strategies for the sustainable development of Sikkim. First, the Government will increasingly be playing a role of facilitator and would devote much of its time, energy and resources to consolidate what has been done so far. This means Government will continue to work for the poor and downtrodden and gradually withdraw from many sectors. Secondly, many of the development activities are now handled by the Non-governmental organisations. Thirdly, the Government will increasingly open the productive sectors to the private entrepreneurs by making the investment in the State, both attractive and sustainable. In the State, there has been a steady erosion of entrepreneurial urge largely because of (1) Planners' skewed priorities, (2) ignorance about the opportunities, (3) inability to attract appropriate private investors and (4) wrong prescription of incentives. All these virtually have, overshadowed the Political will of the Government. Hence, now it is in the process of correcting each of these ills and providing very durable solutions.<sup>46</sup>

To some up precisely, achievements of splendid Sikkim on a platter under the leadership of Pawan Chamling and SDF are :

- > Sikkim in North Eastern Council.
- > Encasing the potential in Hydel Power resources.
- > 70% of the State budget spent in rural development.
- > Consolidation of Judicial Infrastructure throughout the State.
- > Grant issued for 40,000 homeless families.
- > Employment for the local people.
- > 50% rebate on electricity charges for rural households.
- > Crime rate lowest in the country.
- > Reduction of non-Plan and unnecessary expenditure.
- > Top per capita income in the country.
- > Preparation of Plan of Action for the Children.
- > Empowerment of women through improved participation.
- > Strict and sincere concern for environment.
- > Improved road connectivity to the remote corners.
- > Planning for satellite town and super markets.
- > Providing top priority to the education sector.
- > Compulsory computer education in secondary level.
- > Much improved health sector with preventive medicine facility.
- > Decentralisation through active Panchayat Raj.
- > Establishing consistent work culture.
- > Multifarious plans of tourism development.
- > Introduction of IT in governance and other sector
- > Upgradation of Paljor Stadium.
- > Revenue through Sikkim lottery, Lotto, Play Win etc.
- > Restoration of Nathu *la* Trade route
- > Sikkim Central University to be established soon.
- > New Industrial Policy.
- > Empowerment of youths and skill developments as prime resources.
- > Schemes for sustaining local economy and market orientation.
- > Devolution, decentralisation and plan allocations.
- > Village Level Plan in XIth Plan.

- > Bill on Private Job Quota passed (March, 2008).
- > No Sikkimese has to pay tax but non-Sikkimese will be governed by the Indian Income Tax Act, 1961.(Amendment – 2008)

To summarise the nature of capture of Political power, administration and achievement of Sikkim Democratic Front headed by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, it is interesting to note that on September 9th, 1992, a striking incident took place on the floor of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly. An Assembly which had absolutely no opposition since 1975 witnessed an MLA, Pawan Chamling taking out a candle from his coat's pocket. With other MLAs dumbstruck by the queer act Chamling proceeds to calmly up and light the candle. He then starts making rounds of the House, with the candle cupped in his hand and in his clear voice, the entire Hall reverberates as he questioned *Where is Democracy ? I am looking for it*. In spite of the fact that fire is not allowed inside the House. Daring to be different and with a clear perspective, Chamling thus proved to be a towering, firm and pure figure in the scene of Politics of Sikkim.

Born at the first progeny to a farmer, Aas Bahadur Chamling, Pawan Chamling's mother's name is Assha Rani Chamling. He was born in Yangyang village of South Sikkim on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1950. His family was basically agrarian. At the time of his birth, Chamling's family had been facing economic problems, but with the passage of time thing fell into place. Chamling inherited the ethics of Spiritualism, well being of the people of Sikkim and mere godliness from his family. Prior to merger, Sikkim was an independent Himalayan kingdom during Chamling's childhood. Under the rule of two *Maharajas*, Chamling entered manhood.

The 'Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950' was signed to promote relations between India and Sikkim and granted a protectorate status for the State of Sikkim. The rich were few and the poor were too many. Chamling's educational dream turned him into a poet, philosopher and a scholar of considerable originality. His flair for poetry was inspired by his teacher Kavi Tulsi Ram Kasyap (former Minister and Speaker) and his paternal aunt,

Yamuna Devi Rai. He took to social work and his way of living made him a leader and envy of other youths of his age. From the very inception, he had a fascination for democracy, freedom of speech and action. He believed in replacing conflict management by preventing conflicts. To resolve social conflict, he stood for identity, peace and harmony.

The post merger Sikkim, since 1993, may be termed as the *Chamling Era*. Though his promises and pronouncements are yet to be achieved and evaluated by the performance of his three consecutive terms as 'Chief Minister', today, we hear of Political developments and see socio-economic developments in the State of Sikkim. He has dreams and all his dreams are to be translated into reality. His unfulfilled dreams are to create a better life and clean corrupt free environment for the poor people of Sikkim. As an ideological Guru, Chamling's thoughts are focused on how good governance can be motivated to achieve goals. Chamling's politics is not a means to realize his personal interest but welfare of the poor people. Chamling was first invited by the senior leader Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa to represent the 1973 Great Revolution of Sikkim from the South District which ended by the signing of the famous May 8, 1973's Tripartite Agreement with the Government of India, Political Parties of Sikkim and the Sikkim *Darbar* in order to safeguard the interests of all three ethnic communities of the State. The Revolution stood for non-aggression, one vote one man and equality among all. Thus, Chamling was actively involved in the revolution of 1973. The 34<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Amendment Acts of 1974 and 1975 are quite significant in the history of Sikkim. In 1974 Sikkim became an Associate State of Indian Union. Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa and his Party won the Election and he became the first Chief Minister, Sikkim was formally merged with the Indian Union by the 36<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act of 1975 and with a referendum of the people of Sikkim, she became a part of India as the 22<sup>nd</sup> State of Democratic India on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1975, abolishing the age old institution of the *Maharaja* of Sikkim. For democratic fighters it was the liberation and freedom of Sikkim. The merger of Sikkim with India was unique and quite different as to the manner in which many Princely States of India joined the Indian Federal Polity. A special Constitutional provision under Article 371F of the

Constitution of India was incorporated. It was designed to protect the rights, local laws, cultural identity, traditions, interests etc of the people of Sikkim. The State Day is observed on May 16 every year.

Chamling worked for clarification and removing the people from delusion. His vision was far-sighted and did not look to grabbing power and wealth. He injected Democracy in the rural society of Sikkim, thus, nurturing it. Instead of making people aware of *Jana Krant* he made the people participate, thus, highlighting the rule of the people, by the people, for the people.

In fact, the merger of Sikkim with India started the era of Political democracy in the State, but the grassroots level was oblivious of it. Chamling realized that rural Sikkim was devoid of communication systems, there was prevalence of illiteracy, belief in superstitions, lack of infrastructural facilities, the difficult hilly terrain were the reasons resulting in the backwardness of Sikkim. Chamling set on the path of strengthening the Governance and Administration such that the foundation of the social pyramid reaped the benefits of democracy by becoming aware of it.

Chamling could diagnose as to what ailed the masses, he shared their sorrows and difficulties and tried to identify and innovate solutions to their ills and maladies. Consequently, he identified himself as 'poor man's Pawan Chamling. He simmered with anger seeing the fate of the poor and burned with the desire to change the condition of the poor mass that the deprived and downtrodden. His Political journey, thus, began and his aim is always to take them along and give them the basic dignity of life. It is great of Chamling to consider himself as one of them.

Chamling was well aware of the fact that he had to evolve the politics a new for the people and make it work in the fabric of the State and the society such the fear of the Ministers, MLAs and bureaucrats to the landlords was eradicated. With this thought, he was elected as President, for the first time, to the Yangyang Gram Panchayat. He was the first Vice-President and General Secretary of the Sikkim Prajatantra Congress led by Nar

Bahadur Khatiwara. His wait was for establishing a Party which would be sincere towards the common people of Sikkim and he was not ready to set up a Party of his own. With a group of like minded people and friends, Chamling joined the Sikkim Sangram Parishad. Chamling's Political ideology is to struggle for providing the children of the poor, equality of opportunity, inject Political pragmatism and build a new society for the people.

Beginning as a Village Panchayat President, Chamling made his way to *Mintogang* (Official Residence of the Chief Minister of Sikkim), Gangtok and has been residing there since 1994.

### His Political Career :

1973-1979	Entry into politics/democracy in Sikkim.
1980-1992	Experimentation and participation as a politician, MLA and;
1980-1993	Minister who was in search of democracy.
1993 to till date	Standing for the cause of restoration of democracy and understanding the problems and sufferings of the rural masses.

He calls his Government (ruled by the Sikkim Democratic Front) as the Government of the *Khali Khuthey* (bare footed people) wherein all are rulers. He came to this learning by way of facts of realities, books and sermons. Today he is a Political theoretician and ideologue. He believed in the father figure of politics in Sikkim – Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa, and awarded him *Sikkim Ratna*. His principles and practices of politics differed from previous Chief Ministers. A strong believer in the saying of Mahatma Gandhi that *if the village perishes, India will perish*, he established the Sikkim Democratic Front to achieve his cherished goal of uplifting the poor people of Sikkim and making the villages self-contained. His innovative strategy of governance is people and poor oriented, radical and dynamic. Thus, Chamling proved to be a keen Political observer and activist. The present Government of the poor is for him, a result of the past. Leaving aside

the anti-India stance, Chamling focuses on socio-economic development of Sikkim both within and outside the State.

It is Chamling who stood up and protested to explain that democracy has little meaning in the context of Sikkim with the principle that, cynical had to be fought and democracy had to be served at all costs. Chamling clearly charted the future course of Sikkim, his people and saved the democratic ideals to build his vision of a Happy and Prosperous Democratic Sikkim overlooking the thorny paths, danger of threats and challenges and he leaves no question of turning back and trudges forward.

Thrice his Party, 'The Sikkim Democratic Front' was elected to power and in the 2004 Seventh Sikkim Legislative Assembly Elections, Chamling and his team bagged 31 out of 32 seats. It is because Chamling as a dreamer possessing immense faith in vision has become instrumental in integrating Sikkim with the Indian Union. It is because of Chamling's dreams that Sikkim has been flying the flag of peace, sending a message to the rest of the country. He has immense courage and confidence to take difficult decisions. He has kept two former Chief Ministers as his Political advisors – a rare phenomenon in a State Government and politics in India. A revolutionary, visionary, a green Chief Minister holding the portfolio of finance thrice, Chamling an astute politician and above all holding the poverty alleviation programme, supporting women's rights. During his first tenure there was a lady Minister, in the second Kalawati Subba occupied the exalted position of the speaker of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly and in the present Government, she has been given a ministerial berth. There are women IAS secretaries and bureaucrats who are efficiently discharging their duties. It is gratifying to establish a pro-poor democratic Government, root out corruption, empowerment of women and implement his programmes of tackling poverty and various other schemes like the Chief Minister's employment programme for educated unemployed youths of the State.

Thus, under the leadership of Chamling, the Sikkim Democratic Front and its young team work for the progress of the State of Sikkim and at

the same time with a national outlook promoting cordial Centre-State relations. Chamling and his team are serving over the years to promote peace and tranquillity in the sensitive border State of India viz., Sikkim.

Chamling's journey continues with his endless dreams. He is the Chief architect of emotional integration of Sikkim with India's mainstream of life. A mass based politician is popularly credited to his humility accepts and respects the people as the fountain head of all power, to bring about prosperity and happiness for the people of Sikkim.

Among the major projects that are in the final stages of completion and commissioned are the Kanchenjunga Plaza at Lal Bazaar, the Heritage Park at Tsamgaon in Namchi and Palzor Stadium, Gangtok. Further what has been so far after assuming power for the third term in May 2004 and MOUs signed to promote tourism, power and industries, Janata Bhawan for villagers coming with work to Gangtok, building schools roads and a Circuit House, initiating minor water supply schemes, declaring M.G. Marg as a spit and litter free zone, *Sikkim Ratna* for the first time was instituted and awarded to the senior Statesman and first Chief Minister of Sikkim Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsarpa and making Sikkim the first State in the Country executing free-of-cost Hepatitis B vaccination for the children of Sikkim and received India Today award for Education from small States of India for the first time.

Chamling has achieved to divide Sikkim into 31 administrative blocks and each block having a Block Development Office, free health insurance scheme for BPL families, monthly pension for *Padma Vibhushan*, *Padma Shree*, *Arjuna*, *Ashok Chakra*, Sahitya Academy and other National Awardees. It is also one of his major efforts to open the silk trade route and pursuing it with centre for better Sino-Indo relations through Sikkim.

We all know that reopening of the Nathula trade route will bring about a variety of benefits to the people of Sikkim. At the national level this will strengthen the security interest of India and promote cordial international relation.

In the 2004 Election to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly with SDF won 31 seats out of 32 and when Chamling assumed office for the third term he rechristened certain Governmental departments as follows. This was done to modernize administration in the State :

**Table - X**  
**Re-naming of Departments**

Sl. No.	Existing Departments	Renamed as
1.	Agriculture	Food Security and Agriculture
2.	Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services	Animal Husbandry, Livestock, Fisheries & Veterinary Services
3.	Personnel, A.R. & Training	Personnel, A.R., Training, Public Grievances, Career Options and Employment Skill Development & Chief Minister's Self Employment Schemes
4.	Cultural Affairs	Cultural Affairs and Heritage
5.	Education	Human Resource Development
6.	Forest and Environment	Forest Environment & Wild Life
7.	Finance	Finance, Revenue & Expenditure
8.	Horticulture	Horticulture and Cash Crops
9.	Health and Family Welfare	Health Care, Human Services & Family Welfare
10.	Irrigation	Irrigation & Flood Control
11.	Land Revenue	Land Revenue & Disaster Management
12.	Mines and Geology	Mines, Minerals & Geology
13.	Planning and Development	Development, Planning, Economic Reforms & North Eastern Council Affairs
14.	Power	Energy & Power
15.	Public Health Engineering	Water Security & Public Health Engineering
16.	Rural Development	Rural Management & Development
17.	Social Welfare	Social Justice, Empowerment & Welfare

Source : *Sikkim Govt. Gazette*, Ex. Ordinary, No. 205 (45)/Home/2004 & F.No. GOS/Home II/95/38/Vol. II, Gangtok, Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2004.

The Promises made by Chamling are more or less seen in the State of Sikkim such as :

- ▶ Adoption of decentralized participatory and beneficiary approaches designed to uplift the poor and rural services such as connectivity, drinking water and health to be provided and to foster confidence among the people.
- Empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institution as 'institution of self-Government' to plan and implement programmes of economic development and social justice. The Government of Chamling is of the firm opinion that Panchayats can only fulfil their responsibilities as institutions of 'Self-Government' after the devolution is patterned on "3 F's" – Functions, Functionary, and Finances. These devolutions will be taken up through a transparent form of activity mapping so that respective functions are developed to their tiers. The entire devolution process will be based on the principle of subsidiary. It is also being ensured that the devolution made is irreversible.
- Chamling's Government is also of the firm opinion that the goals of devolution and decentralization can be achieved through empowerment of Gram Sabhas. For the meaningful empowerment of the Gram Sabhas, it is being ensured that they are entitled to all the information required for a transparent and good governance methodology. The duties and functions of the Panchayats are also being redefined so as to make the elected Panchayats answerable to the Gram Sabha. For improving the participation of women and the disadvantaged measures are being taken. The quorum of rules of the Gram Sabha is being modified to incorporate presence of certain percentage of women and other vulnerable section of the society.
- To provide all urban amenities in the rural area including banking, insurance, transport, drinking water, trade and shopping, electricity, internet cafes, libraries, cinema halls, restaurants, A.P.J. Kalam calls it

PURA or Providing Urban Amenities in the Rural Areas. This will largely prohibit the problem of rural migration to urban areas.

- Consolidate the devolution of governance, financial management and policy planning to the people of the rural areas through Panchayats. The entire planning process is to be initiated at the village level by the villagers themselves.<sup>47</sup>
- Make the villages a hub of eco-tourism.
- Marketing of agricultural commodities and the processed and value added products will be given the highest priority in the same through State agricultural export zones.
- Re-skilling and re-training the able bodied rural mass so that their livelihood and occupational choices are broadened. This will be supplemented by innovative friendly and cost effective technologies.
- Beggar free State, plastic free zone, pollution free zone and smoke free zone (especially cigarrattes).
- Vehicle free zone especially M.G. Marg, Gangtok and major towns in the State.
- Mayalmu House (Gangtok-Tadong) for mentally retarded and destitute people.
- Management of parking of vehicles separately zone wise.
- Intensive provision for green houses for promoting and producing organic vegetables.
- Encouraged scientific terracing system to the farmers so as to enhance agricultural productivity in the State.

Neither a celluloid nor a matri idol as a person preaching idolocracy, but belief in strong ideology Chamling is able to establish himself as a

leader of the bare footed people. Chamling as a poet of dreams and visions won the hearts of the people of Sikkim.

## Notes and References

1. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Government Gazette* (Ext Gaz), No.23, March 8, 1985, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p.1.
2. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Government Gazette* (Ext Gaz), No.40, March 25, 1985, p.1.
3. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Government Gazette* (Ext Gaz), Nov.23, No. 120, 1985, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, 1989, p.1.
4. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Government Gazette* (Ext Gaz), No.123, December 1, 1989, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p.1.
5. *Sikkim Express*, Oct. 31-Nov. 7, Gangtok, Himalindia Photo offset, 1991.
6. *Sikkim Express*, Feb. 1-15, Gangtok, Himalindia Photo offset, 1992.
7. *Sikkim Express*, Feb. 9-23, Gangtok, Himalindia Photo offset, 1990.
8. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Government Gazette* (Ext Gaz), No.54, 1 June, 1992, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p.1.
9. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Government Gazette* (Ext Gaz), No.55, June 1, 1991, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p.1.
10. Kazi, Jigme N., *Inside Sikkim Against the Tide*, Delhi, Photo Offset Printers, 1993, p. 309.
11. *Sikkim Express*, August 15-22, Gangtok, Himalindia Photo offset, 1992.
12. The Story of corruption, Memorandum to Prime Minister, Formation of Sikkim Democratic Front and its strengthening is a strong opposition by lone member Pawan Chamling etc. were based on the narration made by B.B. Goorooong, *The Sikkim Democratic Front Bulletin – 4*, Vol.1, June 1994, New Delhi, Print Shoppe.
13. SIKKIM, *Report on the General Election to Sikkim Legislative Assembly*, 1994, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, 1985, pp. 1-3.
14. *Constitution : Sikkim Democratic Front* : New Delhi, Print Shoppe, p. 1. Also see Chakaravarthi, K.R. 'The Rise of Sikkim Democratic Front, its coming to power and performance', *Sikkim Express*, Vol. XXI, No. 9, March 9-15, 1996, Gangtok, Himalindia Photo Offset, 1996.
15. *Ibid.*

16. For details see : Report on General Election to Sikkim Legislative Assembly, 1994, p. 2.
17. *Sikkim Democratic Frontko Goshna Patra*, Sikkim Legislative Assembly Election, 1994, Siliguri; Das Offset, 1994 (in Nepali), pp. 24.
18. For more details see Report on General Election to SLA 1994, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 20-2.
19. Lama, J.B., 'Pupa to Butterfly', *The Statesman*, 15 July, 2002.
20. *Himalayan Guardian*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 14 Dec., 1994, Gangtok, Hill Media Publications, pp. 1, 3, and 4.
21. *Sikkim Express*, December 10-12, 1994, Gangtok, Himalindia Photo offset, 1994.
22. Chakaravarthi, K.R., "The Rise of Sikkim Democratic Front, its coming to power", *Sikkim Express*, Vol. XXI, No. 9, March 9-15, 1996, Gangtok, Himalindia Photo Offset, pp. 2 and 3.
23. *Ibid.*
24. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Government Gazette* (Ext. Gaz.) No. 158, August 2, 1997, Gangtok Sikkim Govt. Press, p. 1. In the exercise of the power vested in the Article 164 (1) of the Constitution of India and subsequent to the advice of the Chief Minister the then Governor of Sikkim Chaudhary Randhir Singh ordered that P.T. Lepcha should cease to be a member of Council of Minister.
25. For details please see Congress I, SSP Sikkim Democratic Front Manifestoes – 1999.
26. For details see Report on General Election to Lok Sabha & Assembly, 1999, *Op.Cit.*, pp. 30-36.
27. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Govt. Gazette* (Ext Gaz), No. 222, 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1999, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p. 1.
28. The then Vice President of India K.R. Narayanan conferred Pawan Chamling with the Bharat Shiromani award in March, 1997 – for fostering emotional integration of the people of Sikkim with the rest of the country and bringing them to the national mainstream for having been overwhelmingly voted into power by dint of his hard work and strong sense of determination coupled with his charismatic leadership for being ardent beholder of the rule of law and democratic values. *Himalayan Guardian*, Vol No. 52, March 10-17, 1997, Gangtok, Hill Media Publications, p. 1.

29. SIKKIM, Sikkim Genuine Commitments Unique Achievements (IPR), Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, 2001, p. xv.
30. 'Taking the Lead', *Down To Earth* (Science and Environment Fortnightly), Vol. 7, No. 18, Feb. 15, 1999, pp. 23-27.
31. Sikkim Commitments Unique Achievements, *Op. Cit.*, pp. VI & VII.
32. For further details on achievements and developments see *Ibid*.
33. For more details see *Ibid*.
34. After Sikkim became the 22<sup>nd</sup> State of the Indian Union in the year 1975, it was made a member State of the Eastern Zone comprising the States of Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa vide S.O. 778 (E) Gaz. of India, 1976, Pt. II, S.3 (ii) Extraordinary. In order to include Sikkim in the North East Council; the North Eastern Council Act, 1970/71 needs to be amended by Parliament.
35. SIKKIM, *A White Paper on Inclusion of Sikkim in the North-Eastern Council*, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, 1998.
36. SIKKIM, Government of Sikkim Notification O/O the Chief Secretary, No. 38/Home/2002 dt. 9.9. 2002, file no. 35 (10) 2002-2003/RDD/p.1.
37. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Herald*, Vol. XLVL No. 51, Dec. 5, 2002, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p. 1.
38. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Herald*, Vol. XLVL No. 50, Nov. 29, 2002, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p. 1.
39. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Herald*, Vol. XLVL No. 53, Dec. 20, 2002, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, p. 1.
40. *Ibid*. p. 1.
41. Sikkim, Sikkim Gazette Not. (Extra Gaz) No. 199, dated 21.05.2004, Gangtok, Sikkim Government Press, Sikkim, Sikkim Gazette Not. (Extra. Gaz) No. 200, dated 21.05.2004, Gangtok, Sikkim Govt. Press, Sikkim, Sikkim Gazette Not. (Ext5ra. Gaz) No. 201, dated 21.05.2004, Gangtok Sikkim Govt. Press, Sikkim Govt. Press, Sikkim, Sikkim Gazette Not. (Ext5ra. Gaz) No. 202, dated 21.05.2004, Gangtok Sikkim Govt. Press,
42. Ashok Chatterjee, *SDF Sweeps Panchayat Polls as expected*, *Sikkim Reporter*, Vol. 1, Issue 65, Dated 30/10/07, published by NMA, 31 A, Daragaon, Tadong, Gangtok, p. 1.
43. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Exploring the : Newer Frontiers*, Vol. III, Gangtok, (speeches of Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling, IPR Publication, (Govt.

of Sikkim), in association with Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2007, p. 93.

44. SIKKIM, *Sikkim Ensuring Human Security*, Vol. II, Gangtok, IPR Publication (Govt. of Sikkim), in association with Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2007, p. 113.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
46. SIKKIM, *In South East Asia and Europe*, Gangtok, IPR Publication (Govt. of Sikkim), in association with Har Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2007, p. 14.
47. For details see, SIKKIM – *Twelve Years of the SDF Government*, (1994-2006), Gangtok, IPR Publication, (Govt. of Sikkim), April, 2007, pp. 1-82.

SIKKIM, *Sikkim – Twenty Five Years of Statehood*, Gangtok, IPR Publication, (Govt. of Sikkim), 2000, pp. 1-112.

SIKKIM, *Sikkim Thirty Years of Statehood*, Gangtok, IPR Publication, (Govt. of Sikkim), 2005, pp. 3-149.

SIKKIM, *Sikkim Genuine Commitments – Unique Achievements*, Gangtok, IPR Publication, (Govt. of Sikkim), 2001, pp. 1-259.

SIKKIM, *Sikkim Perspective and Vision*, Gangtok, (Speeches of Pawan Kumar Chamling), IPR Publication, (Govt. of Sikkim), 2002, pp. 3-584.

SIKKIM, *Sikkim Ensuring Human Security*, Vol. II, Gangtok, in association with Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 19-340.

Author's Interview with B.B. Goroong, former Chief Minister of Sikkim, Government of Sikkim and now Political Advisor to the Chief Minister Pawan Chamling on 11.08. 2007.

Author's Interview with Sanchaman Limboo, former Chief Minister of Sikkim, Government of Sikkim and now Political Advisor to the Chief Minister Pawan Chamling on 2.08.2007.

Author's Interview with C.D. Rai, Ex-Councillor, Retired Secretary and now the President, Press Club of Sikkim, Gangtok, Sikkim, dated 26.06. 2007.

Author's Interview with K.R. Chakaravathi, Principal, Govt. College, Rhenock, East Sikkim, (Gangtok) dated 12.11. 2007.