

# FACILITATING SOCIAL CHANGE

Social Justice, Women & Child Development  
and Empowerment in Sikkim



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

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## Chapter 1

# The Early Years

Sikkim joined the Indian Union in 1975 to secure basic democratic rights and to march hand in hand on the path of economic and social development. But it still remained insulated for a long time. It was only by the mid-1990s that the fast changing atmosphere in the country particularly in terms of economic reforms, liberalisation and privatisation saw vigorous efforts made by the State Government to position itself in the national scenario.

### Historical Context

Sikkim was under the dynastic rule for a long time. The Namgyal dynasty ruled Sikkim from the year A.D. 1642 to 1973. In 1890, Sikkim became a British protectorate, and was gradually granted more sovereignty over the next three decades. In 1947, when India became independent, a similar democratic aspiration in Sikkim had found its echo when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru favoured the monarchy to continue with protectorate status with Government of India controlling its external affairs, defence, diplomacy and communications, but Sikkim otherwise retained administrative autonomy. A state council was established in 1953 to allow for constitutional government under the Chogyal. Meanwhile, the Sikkim National Congress demanded fresh elections and greater representation on the basis of one man one vote. Palden Thondup Namgyal, the Chogyal at that time was amenable but his advisors were not in favour which resulted in mass demonstration and public protest leading to the Palace to request for security and protection from the Government of India.

In 1975, the Sikkim Assembly passed a resolution to become a state of the Indian Union. Thereafter, a referendum was held in which 97.5 per cent of voters

seeking participation in the Parliament of India as a member State. On May 16, 1975, Sikkim became the 22nd State of the Indian Union with the notification declaring all the Sikkim Subjects registered in the Sikkim Subjects Regulation Register as Indian citizens. First, the 35th Amendment laid down a set of conditions that made Sikkim an "Associate State," a special dispensation not used by any other state. Later, the 36th Amendment repealed the 35th Amendment, and made Sikkim a full state, adding its name to the First Schedule of the Constitution.

The Nobel Laureate, Professor Amartya Sen has famously stated that "Emergence of democracy as the political norm" was the most important event of the 20th century. Sikkim's transformation from monarchy to democracy can be best understood from this observation.

## **A Democratic Sikkim**

Democracy in Sikkim after the merger with the greater Indian Union had to undergo tremendous stress and strain under some leaders, who monopolised the institution of democracy like their fiefdom.

The establishment of democracy in Sikkim was formalised with the holding of first election to the first Sikkim Legislative Assembly. With obvious intent and purpose, the government formed after the election was the first honest experiment with elected governance. However, it is sad to note that an element of political manoeuvring and duplicity was introduced too early into the fledgling democracy in the state. Innocent people were induced to believe that what had been done could still be undone. What followed for the next 15 years is today an elaborate story of misrule and mismanagement of the State. Democracy as the vibrant institution elsewhere was some way at its deathbed in Sikkim.

Then in 1994, the Sikkim Democratic Front was elected by the people to take charge of the state affairs, with 42 per cent of the vote. And the first responsible task it fulfilled after coming to power was the restoration of democracy in Sikkim in letter and in spirit. The next step was to build of infrastructure with meticulous planning to bring about economic, social and educational prosperity of the people of Sikkim.

The last assembly election took place in April 2009, concurrently with the General Election, 2009. The elections were held in the state for all 32 assembly seats. The Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) further strengthened its majority in the Sikkim Assembly by winning all the seats. Incumbent Chief Minister Shri Pawan Chamling's Government returned for an unprecedented fourth consecutive term having won previous elections in 1994, 1999 and 2004. The evolution of political democracy in Sikkim has helped towards empowerment of Sikkimese people through education, healthcare and creation of infrastructure.

## **Demographic Developments**

A "Sikkimese" is anyone whose "name is recorded in the register maintained under Sikkim Subjects Regulation, 1961, read with Sikkim Subject Rules, 1961, immediately before 26 April, 1975; or individuals whose name is included in the Register of Sikkim Subjects by virtue of the Government of India Order No. 26030/36/90-I.Ci. of August 7, 1990 and Order of even number dated April 08, 1991; or, any other individual whose name does not appear in the Register of Sikkim Subjects but it is established beyond doubt that the name of such individual's father or husband or paternal grandfather or brother from the same father has been recorded in that Register (see also Annexure 1).

Sikkim underwent many changes in its economy and demography after it joined the national mainstream. There was a considerable increase in development activities which caused growth in urbanisation. The population of Sikkim was slightly higher than 540000 in 2001 as against 4, 06,000 in 1991. Sex ratio of Sikkim was much lower (875 females) than the national average (933 females). The population changes from 1891 to 2001 shows a growth of 24.4 times in Sikkim, with population density increasing from 8 in 1901 to 76 in 2001.

The population figures indicated in Table 1.1, do not take into account the floating population and the tourist inflow to the State.

**Table 1.1****Demographic Profile of Sikkim**

Year	Total Population	Rural Population	Urban Population
1951	1,37,725	1,34,981	2,744
1961	1,62,189	1,55,341	6,848
1971	2,0,9843	1,90,175	19,668
1981	3,16,385	2,64,301	51,084
1991	4,06,457	3,69,473	37,006
2001	5,40,851	4,80,981	59,870
2011	607,688	455,962	151,726

Source: District Census Handbook 1971, 1981, 1991 and Primary Census Abstract 2001, 2011, Census of India

**Table 1.2****Distribution of Population, Decadal Growth Rate, Sex-Ratio and Population Density**

State/ District	Population 2011			Percentage decadal growth rate of Population		Sex-Ratio (Number of Females per 1000 Males)		Population density per sq. km.	
	Persons	Males	Females	1991-01	2001-11	2001	2011	2001	2011
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>SIKKIM</b>	<b>607 688</b>	<b>321 661</b>	<b>286 027</b>	<b>33.07</b>	<b>12.36</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>86</b>
North District	433 54	245 13	188 41	31.34	5.67	752	769	10	10
West District	136 299	702 25	660 74	25.57	10.59	929	941	106	117
South District	146 742	766 63	700 79	33.39	11.57	927	914	175	196
East District	281 293	150 260	131 033	37.32	14.80	844	872	256	295

Source: Provisional Population Totals, 2011, Census of India, Registrar-General of India

The total population of Sikkim grew by 12.36 per cent in the last decade (2001-11). This is a substantial drop from the 33.07 per cent growth that it recorded in the 2001 census. The 0-6 consists of 10 per cent of Sikkim's total population. The higher number of females compared to males in the 0-6 age group indicates that the sex ratio of the state is going to improve.

An important feature of the demographic trends in Sikkim is that till 2001 the sex ratio was moving lower than the national average. This could have been caused among other factors by in-migration of a large number of male workers. Between 1991 and 2001, the sex ratio dropped in Sikkim from 878 to 875, the lowest in relation to the other north-eastern states. In 1991, there were 878 women per 1000 men, as compared to 933 at the national level. The ratio was even lower in urban areas, being as 581 in Mangan in the north and 620 in Namchi in the South. In rural areas it was relatively higher, being as high as 928 in Soreng in the West district. The north district recorded the lowest female-male ratio in the state, being 836 in rural areas and 581 in urban areas. The east district ranking first (948), in terms of lowest sex ratio in the age group 0-6 years (960).

Interestingly, the female population in the age group 0-29 years was relatively higher than that of the male. This led to a much higher sex-ratio (90%) for this group. The sex-ratio was substantially lower for the 30 plus age group, dropping to 655/1000 for the 55-59 age groups. It again improved steadily for the 60-64 age groups, and was as high as 86 per cent for the 80 plus age group. The steady improvement in the sex ratio in the 60 plus age group, points to the fact that women, who survive the 30-59 years mortality zone tend to have a same life span as that of men.

One possible reason behind these trends in sex-ratios according to the age groups could be that mortality rate among women in 30-59 age group was relatively higher than in the 20-29 and 60 plus age groups. The highest decline in the ratio was recorded during 1971-1981, which coincides with high influx of migrant workers. The overwhelming proportion of male population among the migrants is also corroborated by the fact that it constituted as high as 61.54 per cent, 60.88 per cent and 56.88 per cent of the total migrants in 1971, 1981 and 1991, respectively.

Coming to the 2011 census, we see that the sex ratio has improved slightly to 889 (see Table 1.4). There are now 889 women against every 1,000 males. This sex-ratio was 875 to 1,000 in 2001. Among the districts, West Sikkim has the best sex-ratio of 941 ladies for every 1000 men. This was 929 to 1000 ten years ago. The worst performing in this indicator is North Sikkim which has barely 769 females to 1,000 males. Even this is a slight improvement over the figures for 2001 when it was 750-1,000.

Among the districts (see Table 1.3), East Sikkim recorded the highest population growth between 2001 to 2011 at 14.80 per cent down from 37.32 per cent growth in 1991-2001 and the lowest population growth of 5.67 per cent has been recorded in North Sikkim. In the last decade of 1991-2001, North Sikkim's population had grown by 31.34 per cent. As per the provisional Census 2011 data released Sikkim has posted a total population of 6,07,688 comprising 3,21,661 men and 2,86,027 women.

**Table 1.3:- District wise distribution of Population of Sikkim (census 2011)**

State/ District	Total Population	No. of Males	No. of Females	Literacy Rate	Sex Ratio	Population Density
<b>SIKKIM</b>	<b>607688</b>	<b>321659</b>	<b>286027</b>	<b>73.94</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>86</b>
North District	<b>43354</b>	24513	18841	69.39	769	10
West District	<b>281293</b>	150259	131033	76.67	872	295
South District	<b>146742</b>	76663	70079	73.64	914	196
East District	<b>136299</b>	70224	66074	70.05	941	120



**Table 1.4 : Population of Major Towns of Sikkim (Census 2011)**

<b>Towns</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>
Gangtok	98658	51820	46838
Singtam	5874	3166	2708
Rangpo	10326	5501	4825
Rhenock	5892	3162	2730
Namchi	12194	6178	6016
Jorethang Nagar	8895	4595	4300
Nayabazar	1230	650	580
Gyalshing	4009	2053	1956

Out of total population of Sikkim, 24.97 per cent people live in urban regions. The total figure of population living in urban areas is 151,726 of which 79,539 are males and while remaining 72,187 are females. The urban population in the last 10 years has increased by 153.43 per cent. The sex-ratio in urban regions of Sikkim was 908 females per 1000 males. For child (0-6) sex-ratio, the figure for urban region stood at 917 girls per 1000 boys. Total children (0-6 age) living in urban areas of Sikkim were 14,039. Of total population in urban region, 9.25 per cent were children (0-6). Average literacy rate for urban regions was 89.26 per cent in which males were 92.94 per cent literate while female literacy stood at 85.19 per cent. Total literates in urban regions were 122,896.

Of the total population of Sikkim state, around 75.03 per cent live in the villages of rural areas. In actual numbers, males and females were 242,122 and 213,840, respectively. Total population of rural areas of Sikkim state was 455,962. The population growth rate recorded for this decade (2001-2011) was -5.20 per cent. In rural regions of Sikkim state, female sex ratio per 1000 males was 883 while same for the child (0-6 age) was 952 girls per 1000 boys. In Sikkim, 47,038 children (0-6) live in rural areas. Child population forms 10.32 per cent of total rural population. In rural areas, literacy rate for males and female stood at 85.42 per cent and 73.42 per cent. Average literacy rate for rural areas was 79.82 per cent. Total literates in rural areas were 326,398.

## Early Response to Social Justice

Considering the Sikkimese situation, the Government of India had issued the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste Order notifying Bhutias and Lepchas as Scheduled Tribes and Damai, Kami, Manjhi and Saraki as the Scheduled Castes on June 26, 1978. The Bill No. 9 (for rearranging seats in the State Legislative Assembly in Sikkim) was introduced in the Lok Sabha on May 18, 1979, which became an Act in 1981 during the Prime Ministership of late Smt. Indira Gandhi. This parliamentary provision had 12 seats reserved for the minority Lepcha-Bhutia communities (termed as the Scheduled Tribes), two seats for the Scheduled Castes and one seat for the monasteries (the Sangha) and remaining 17 were declared 'General'. The Lepcha-Bhutias were declared as Scheduled Tribes under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution. It is very pertinent to remember that elsewhere in India seats in the legislative bodies have been reserved for the Scheduled Tribes of the particular state or the districts, but in case of Sikkim an exception has been made by mentioning Lepcha-Bhutia by name. Similarly, considering the unique role-played by the Buddhist monks and monasteries in the politic body of Sikkim in the past, on that a special provision to allot a seat to the monastic bodies, Sangha in the State Legislative is implemented. It may be mentioned that Shri Moorthy the then Director General (BCW) Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India vide his letter No. 12016/24/75-SCT-V dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1976 (Annexure A) to the Government of Sikkim, in (para 6) 'There are other tribal communities, for example, Magar, Gurung, Tamang, Tsong Subba and Rai. The Sikkim Government may kindly review the case of these communities and also other communities which may have been left out.' For their inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes this was unfortunately not done so, by the then feudal bureaucracy.

Shri Nar Bahadur Bandari's third term as the Chief Minister of Sikkim from 1989 onwards marked the gradual integration of Sikkim with Indian political system. The Government of India had decided to implement the recommendation of the Backward Class Report by reserving 27 percent seats in educational, welfare, and political and administrative offices to the communities listed by the Commission as the backward. Incidentally, the said Commission had listed all

the communities in Sikkim as economically and educationally backward. Naturally, Sikkim could not remain untouched from this development. Chief Minister, Shri Bhandari, instead of responding positively to the demand of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), was busy spearheading a demand for the recognition of the Nepali language as one of the Indian national languages. During his tenure Shri Bhandari did not take up the issue for grant of Scheduled Tribe status to the remaining Sikkimese communities as had been suggested by the Government of India in 1976 as well. One of his long time associates, Shri Pawan Chamling, and also a cabinet minister, raised the issue of implementing the recommendations of the Mandal Commission Report in Sikkim in 1992 and for that he was expelled from the Sikkim Sangram Parishad (S S P) Legislative Party. However, within a few months, a turning point came i.e. in 1994, when the State Assembly passed the resolution against the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report. Within no time, 19 out of 31 members of Shri Bhandari's Legislative Party deserted him to form a parallel political forum, Sikkim Sangram Parishad (Sanchman). Shri Bhandari was voted out of the office of the Chief Minister on May 19, 1994. The successor government immediately recommended to the Union Government to include seven communities from among the “Sikkimese of Nepali origin” as “socially and educationally backward Classes (OBCs)”. Consequently, Bhujel, Gurung, Limbu, Magar, Rai, Sunuwar and Tamang were declared OBC in Sikkim on June 2, 1994.

The fourth general election for the state assembly in Sikkim was held on November 16, 1994 and Shri Pawan Chamling fought for the barefooted and the poor downtrodden people (*Khalikhute*) and won the mandate of the electorate with nineteen members in a House of thirty two. By the time the fifth general election was declared in 1999, Shri Chamling had worked hard and accorded recognition to ten ethnic languages (Nepali, Lepcha, Bhutia, Limbu, Magar, Rai, Gurung, Sherpa, Newari and Tamang) as the official languages of the state in 1995 and promised to include all sections of Nepalese as the OBCs in 1996. His strength in the state assembly after the fifth general election rose to 24. By the time, the sixth general election was announced in 2004, Shri Chamling had literally replaced Shri Bhandari's SSP with his own political outfit, SDF in the State Assembly. By then Shri Bhandari was the lone member occupying the

opposition bench in the state assembly, as the other six members elected as on his party tickets had joined Shri Chamling's fold. By getting all 32 candidates elected to the state assembly in 2004, Shri Chamling repeated Shri Bhandari's 1989 feat. Shri Bhandari found himself outside the state assembly for the first time in 25 years, putting Shri Chamling firmly in the saddle to follow his vision for his state.

## **Development Status**

Prior to its merger with India, its very political economy did not, in fact, permit Sikkim to entertain development interventions of a democratic variety. The persistence of poverty in this hill State is in stark contrast to its relatively high achievement in the social sectors as compared to the national average. Poverty in the state of Sikkim was enmeshed in protracted feudal practices of the past, topographical ruggedness, inadequate delivery services, prolonged socio-economic deprivations and poor quality of political governance.

The Fifth Five Year Plan Document (1976–7 to 1980–1—which was Sikkim's first post-merger plan period) stated that:

Sikkim has entered upon an era of intensive development after the historic constitutional change of April, 1975, through which the State joined the mainstream of national life, becoming the 22nd State of the Indian Union. Switch-over from a monarchical system to democratic government has naturally generated great enthusiasm, and rising expectations in the people of the State. The backlog of development that has to be made up in order to reach the level of other similarly placed States in the Union has rendered the task of planned development extremely difficult and challenging but at the same time an exciting adventure . . . Nevertheless the rural population of Sikkim, who have fought bravely for the changing of the old order and who have sacrificed in the past, have to be provided at least the national minimum needs<sup>1</sup>.

The growth was sluggish for the first decade, and as a result, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment still continued to characterise the Sikkimese at the grassroots level. A huge quantum of resources was spent and invested. Yet the results were far from satisfactory. An overwhelming majority of the rural folks were where they were when the planned development process began. All those years, the

state seem to have suffered from lack of expertise in planning and formulating schemes, weak delivery and a total lack of monitoring and evaluation.

It was only in 2001 that a well thought out; properly structured and formal State Planning Commission was constituted in the State. There was a State Planning Board, which was set up in February 1975. It, however, never saw the light of day.

In 1993-94, 45.01 per cent of rural and 7.73 per cent of urban population were below the poverty line. The overall trend in poverty for Sikkim, which stagnates and even records a small increase between 1987-88 and 1993-94, does not seem to indicate any significant impact of government programmes towards reducing income poverty levels<sup>2</sup>.

Surprisingly, though the per capita ranking had been going up over the early years but the state's poverty ranking had sharply gone down. Among the 25 Indian States, in 1983-84 Sikkim ranked twelfth both in terms of highest per capita income and HCR by 1993-94 the state was able to rank 10th in terms of per capita income but its ranking vis-à-vis poverty was extremely low, indicating, a sharp rise in poverty in the state, which was highest of all the north-eastern states and was only better than Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal (see Table 1.5).

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<sup>1</sup>Fifth Five Year Plan Document (1976-7 to 1980-1). Planning Commission.

<sup>2</sup>Sikkim, being part of the North Eastern region, the poverty ratios of Assam are used as the base line.

**Table 1.5**  
**Ranking of the Hills State (Out of 25 States)**  
**in terms of per capita net state domestic product (at current price)**  
**and poverty**

State	1983-84		1987-88		1993-4	
	Per Capita Rank	Poverty	Per Capita Rank	Poverty	Per Capita Rank	Poverty
Anrunachal Pradesh	6	8	8	8	7	7
Assam	19	9	19	9	19	5
Himachal Pradesh	8	25	15	23	14	15
Manipur	16	16	12	17	18	13
Meghalaya	18	14	16	14	17	9
Mizoram	22	17	6	18	11	17
Nagaland	9	13	10	13	9	9
Sikkim	12	12	7	10	10	4
Tripura	24	11	22	11	24	8

Compiled by Mahendra P. Lama. Source: Sikkim Human Development Report 2001.

This can be interpreted in many ways. Firstly, the high per capita income vis-à-vis a very high poverty status implies that income distribution was very skewed in Sikkim. The coexistence of extremely affluent segments within the astonishingly poor overwhelming majority has been common to many states in the North-East. Secondly, since most of the poverty-stricken people are concentrated in rural areas, the urban-rural gap, in terms of both distribution of income and asset creation could emerge in a very precarious manner. In the long

run, this would go against environmental security and socio-economic sustainability of the State. Thirdly, the syndrome of income concentration indicates a deviation in the fundamental principle of objective governance and management of the economy wherein the guiding philosophy has been distributed national wealth across the state in an increasingly equitable manner<sup>3</sup>.

According to Planning Commission estimates 1994-95, Sikkim ranked fifth in the country in terms of poverty, which only proved that benefits of growth have not percolated down to the general people. Furthermore with 38 per cent of the people below the age of 15, the number of young people entering the workforce and looking out for jobs, in Government or non-Government services only increased, thus shooting up the unemployment problem and hence poverty.

A stagnant agricultural sector combined with steadily declining industrial activity severely limited employment opportunities outside the government service. Growth which had taken place, was not equitably balanced in all four districts of Sikkim, with the North district still remaining relatively backward in comparison with the other three districts.

Interventions in mineral extraction, and forest clearing also were initiated, which affected the landscape and the environment. The complexity of the mountain terrain was not adequately considered, and development not suited to the local environment was undertaken<sup>4</sup>. Open grazing in the forests was not regulated, and this led to fragmentation of wildlife habitats. The development of sustainable income-generating industries such as tourism was not given adequate emphasis and consequently internal revenue generation suffered. Most of the planning was top down, and empowerment of the people through strengthening of Panchayati Raj institutions was not pursued vigorously. The lack of strong pro-people and pro-environment policies resulted in poverty levels of 40 per cent coupled with degradation of the environment<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>Lama, Mahendra. Sikkim Human Development Report 2001. Social Science Press, New Delhi.

<sup>4</sup>Karan PP. 1987. Development issues in Sikkim and Bhutan. *Mountain Research and Development*, 7(3):275-278.

<sup>5</sup>Bhasin MK, Kumar V, Sehgal A. 1984. Impact of human activities on the ecosystem and vice-versa with reference to the Sikkim-Himalaya MAB (Man and Biosphere) Programme. UNESCO. *Mountain Research and Development* 4(3): 267-271. Also, Karan PP. 1987. Development issues in Sikkim and Bhutan. *Mountain Research and Development*, 7(3):275-278.

## Setting the House in Order

After coming to power in 1994, the SDF undertook the task of real development in the state. Irrespective of geographical difficulties, the state witnessed spectacular growth in almost every aspect of development. The literacy rate shot up to 68.8 per cent compared to the national average of 64.8 per cent. Similarly, opening up of the Nathu La trade border, organic farming and hydropower projects propelled the state to take great strides of progress. The SDF's commitment to harness 8000 MW of seasonal hydropower from the Teesta-Rangit river system only helped the party grow stronger in the state.

The reason behind SDF's hold in the state is clearly their single minded focus on implementing inclusive policies. The SDF provided opportunities for every section of the society. The policy of inclusiveness worked for SDF and has helped them to stay there for 18 long years<sup>6</sup>. In its first Budget Session in 1995-96, the SDF Government took the historic decision of allocating 70 per cent of its plan budget for the development of rural areas. As a result of this farsighted decision, remarkable transformation was achieved in the rural areas.

The imbalance and inequitable distribution of growth can be explained by considering that Sikkim remained marginalised from the development activities that characterised mainstream India. Only in the last 15 years, the philosophy of growth with equity and self reliance in the planned development of the State has been pursued vigorously.

Accordingly, the SDF Government took urgent note of the issue and the Annual Plan 2000-01 reflects promotion of employment opportunities as a strategy against poverty, through strengthening the key sectors of economy to progressively reduced unemployment to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life of people particularly in rural and backward areas. In order to build capabilities, improving survival rates and harnessing the human development potential of the youth was focussed upon.

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<sup>6</sup>The SDF completed 18 years in 2011.



The significant enhancement in financial investment, coupled with good governance and innovative policies, ensured that human development indicators, along with social infrastructure creation, showed impressive progress. Looking back, Sikkim has indeed made rapid strides. Not surprisingly, most of these achievements are now perceived to have come during the chief ministership of Shri Pawan Chamling. Economic, social and political equality of women, conservation of the environment, institutionalisation of democracy and a trouble-free atmosphere which has enabled all-round economic development which are some of the major achievements of his government.

However, over the past decade, the state has adopted a unique developmental model with a pro-environment and pro-people perspective. It is the stated policy of the government to develop rural areas on a par with towns and cities by providing all basic amenities and employment opportunities, with a vision to develop an ecologically friendly state.

The percentage of poor people (below poverty line) decreased from 41.4 per cent in 1994 to 30.9 per cent in 2005, with a rapid decline to 13.1 per cent in 2010<sup>7</sup>. This 17.8 per cent rate of poverty reduction in Sikkim from 2005 to 2010 was the second best in the country. The groups that are vulnerable to poverty are the landless and near landless (owning less than half an acre of land), whose main source of income is wage labour. Special schemes are being formulated with such groups in mind.

Women are significant contributors to the growing economy and children are assets of the future. For growth to be truly inclusive, we have to ensure their protection, wellbeing, development, empowerment and participation. The Sikkim Government today recognises that women and children are not homogenous categories; they belong to diverse castes, classes, communities, economic groups, and are located within a range of geographic and development zones. Consequently, some groups are more vulnerable than others. Mapping and addressing the specific deprivations that arise from these multiple locations has been a key tool for the success of planned interventions. Under the Targeting

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<sup>7</sup> Planning Commission of India. 2012. Press Note on Poverty Estimates 2009–10. 19 March 2012. New Delhi, India: Planning Commission, Government of India, Press Information Bureau.

with “Scientific Poverty Mapping using GIS” for promoting inclusive growth scheme, an in-house study was undertaken using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to examine and illustrate the basic features of relative poverty in the state including its extent, distribution and locations of relative poverty hotspots depicted through poverty maps. This helps to target the poorest Gram Panchayat Wards (GPW) in the development programmes of the state. Thus apart from the general programme interventions, special targeted interventions catering to the differential needs of various groups is being undertaken vigorously.