

# THE SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT

**The Politics of Popular Mobilisation in Sikkim  
(1993-2004)**



Dr. Genevive Syangbo

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**Dr. Genevive Syangbo**

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**Genevive Syangbo**

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## Abbreviations

AAVA	Antyodaya Annadan Yojna
ADFVB	Agriculture Department and Farmers' Welfare Board
APOC	Argentina's Peronists Organisational Commitment
AS	Annapurna Scheme
ASDFC	All Sikkim Democratic Front Committee
BLC	Block Level Committee
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CBI	Central Bureau of Investigation
CLC	Constituency Level Committee
CPI	Communist party of India
CPI (M)	Communist party of India (Marxist)
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
CWC	Central Working Committee
DC	District Committee
DCFH	Development Commission For Handicrafts
DPC	Denzong People's Chogpa
EAAY	Extended Antyodaya Annadan Yojna
EPT	Elakha Panchayat Tribunal

FIC	Farmer Training Center
GFPPF	Government Food Preservation Factory
GPU	Gram Panchayat Unit
HYV	High Yeilding Variety
IAY	Indira Awas Yojna
ICDP	Integrated Cereals Development Programme
INC	Indian National Congress
IPR	Information and Public Relation
JAC	Joint Action Committee
JP	Janata party
LF	Left Front
LL	Lombard League
MBC	Most Backward Class
MMAAY	Mukhiya Mantri Antyodaya Yojna
MMKSA	Mukhiya Mantri Khadya Suraksha Abhiyan
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MR	Muster Roll
NCCC	National Counter Corruption Commission
NF	National Front
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
NGP	Nirmal Gram Puraskar
NH	National Highway
NHPC	National Hydel Project Corporation
NPDP	National Pulses Development Programme

NREGAS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NSDP	Net State Domestic Product
NWDPR	National Watershed Development Programme for Rain fed Area
OBC	Other Backward Class
OPDP	Oilseeds Production Development Programme
OSU	Organisation of Sikkimese Unity
PA	Panchayat Assistance
PAC	Press Accreditation Committee
PMGSY	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna
PSI	Italian Socialist Party
PSU	Public Sector Undertaking
RMDD	Rural Management Development Department
RS	Rising Sun
RSP	Revolutionary Socialist Party
RWW	Rangit Water World
SABCCO	Sikkim Scheduled Caste Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes Corporation
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCFBC	Sikkim Commission For Backward Classes .
SDF	Sikkim Democratic Front
SGP	Sikkim Gorkha Prajatantrik
SIBLAC	Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee
SICON	Sikkim Consultancy Services

SIDICO	Sikkim Industrial Development And Investment Corporation
SIMFED	Sikkim Marketing Federation
SIRD	State Institute for Rural Development
SISI	Small Industries Services Institute
SHRC	State Human Rights Commission
SHRP	Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad
SNAC	Sikkimese Nepali Apex Committee
SPIL	Sikkim Precision Industries Ltd
ST	Schedule Tribe
SPC	Sikkim Prajatantra Congress
SPCC	State Pradesh Congress Committee
SSP	Sikkim Sangram Parishad
SU	Sikkim United
SUDA	Sikkim United Democratic Alliance
SWC	State Women Commission
TDC	Tourism Development Corporation
TRT	Thai Rak Thai
TTF	Tourism and Travel Fair
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
VLW	Village Level Worker

# Glossary

**Chogyal:** Dharma Raja or the king of Sikkim which belonged to the Namgyal dynasty who ruled Sikkim from 1642 to 1974.

**Chutimpa:** Representative of the religious sect who are also called Lama (monk)

**Dzongu:** Place of Lepchas, the primitive tribe in North Sikkim

**Dada parcha:** Document related to landed property in Sikkim.

**Dhurikhazana:** Rents paid by the Sikkimese people for their dwelling space.

**Gram Sewak:** Advisor to the farmers.

**Gyeme:** Council of village elders in the Dzumsa system in north Sikkim.

**Jharlangi:** Exploitation of wages by the contractors (Kazi's) from the Porters who carried transport from Sikkim to Tibet. The Porters were paid wages by the Britisher's which the Contractors kept for themselves.

**Kalobhari:** A local name given to the black load containing arms and ammunitions to be carried to Tibet for the Britisher's through Sikkim.

**Karbari:** Class of people below the Zamindar's who collected the rents for the Zamindar's. These people were also called the mandals.

**Kazi:** Aristocrates during the Chogyal rule in Sikkim.

**Kuruwa:** Means a long wait for transport of kalobhari from Sikkim to Tibet. During such wait they survived on their own supplies, this process of long waiting is called Kuruwa.

**Kutiyadars:** Landless labourers who cultivate land of the landholders and pay the rent according to the agreement made between the owner and the labourers.

**Khyomee:** The head of Gyeme which is a Council of Village elders in Dzumsa system in North Sikkim.

**Sangha:** Monks belonging to different monasteries of Sikkim whose seat is reserved in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

**Sunakhari:** A species of noble orchid found in Sikkim.

**Smrti Vans:** Area where plantations can be done in memory of their dear and near ones.

**Theki-bethi:** Means the gifts presented to the Zamindar's and middle Man by the farmers during the festive occasion.

**Tsong:** Tsongs are the people belonging to the Limboo Community.

**Yuma Samyo:** Religion of the Limboos which is one of the ethnic groups of Sikkim. They have their own ways of performing rituals, healing diseases and illness which is distinct from other religion in Sikkim.

**Pipon:** The highest office bearers in the administrative hierarchy and are directly elected by the village community. It is prevalent in Lachen and Lachung of North Sikkim.

**Gyapon:** The next in the administrative hierarchy. They are also elected Body in the Dzumsa system.

**Thimpeon:** Are the jury members elected during the time of disputes or settlement of cases.

**Mong-Khim or Dzumsa house:** Is the place where people meet to discuss their problem or to transact important business of the welfare of the community.

# **SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT The Politics of Popular Mobilisation in Sikkim (1993-2004)**

## **Introduction**

The study entitled "The Sikkim Democratic Front and the Politics of Popular Mobilisation in Sikkim" is on the role of a regional political party in the politics of Sikkim. It covers the period from 1993 to 2004 and more particularly after the Sikkim Democratic Front (hereafter SDF) came to power in December 1994. The present work focuses on the general question of the downfall of the Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) which ruled Sikkim for more than a decade. The study further attempts on the origin of Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) and the strategies it had employed in order to come to power and maintain power. The central focus of the study is the support base of the party and the mobilising strategies adopted by the party. To examine such questions the study attempts an analysis of the growth and support base of the party a field survey conducted in four constituencies of four districts of Sikkim. The study we will see later brings out an interesting development on electoral populism in Sikkim. The entire thesis is divided into six chapters plus the introduction and the conclusion. The chapters are further divided into several sections.

Nestling between China to the North, Bhutan to the east, Nepal to the west and West Bengal (India) in the south, Sikkim is a tiny state. Initially it was a protectorate of India and has a population of about 5,40,493 as per the last census comprising of Nepali, Lepcha, Bhutia and other tribes and communities. In May 1974, the Sikkim State Congress decided to put an end to the monarchical rule in Sikkim. The Chogyal was declared the constitutional head when the Sikkim Assembly passed the Government of Sikkim Act 1974 for providing responsible government in Sikkim. The 35<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act 1974 made Sikkim an Associate state of India. Very shortly this Associate state was merged with the Indian Union. The Indian Parliament passed the 36<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act on May 16, 1975 making Sikkim the 22<sup>nd</sup> state of Indian Union.

Regional political parties in India have played a significant role in the democratic process in every state and Sikkim is not an exception. In Sikkim the democratic movement began with the emergence of political parties. Political development and the emergence of party-politics in Sikkim can be traced back to the 1940s. Under the direct impact of the Indian National Congress, Sikkim's State Congress under the leadership of Tashi Tshering, the President and C. D. Rai the General Secretary was formed in December 1947 and this was the first organised political party in the state. Demands like abolition of landlordism, formation of an interim government and accession of Sikkim to the Indian Union were put forward by the party in 1947. As a new political party in 1960, the Sikkim National Congress also had its demands like responsible government, written constitution for Sikkim and Universal Adult Franchise based on joint electorate. October 1972 saw the emergence of Sikkim Janata Congress with the merger of Sikkim State Congress and the Sikkim Janata Party. With the emergence and growth of these political parties, a new turning point took place in the political development of Sikkim with



with a symbol of an elephant, ending 10 months of Presidents Rule, securing 30 out of a total of 32 Assembly seats. Political parties like Congress (I), Janata Party, CPI, CPI (M) and two regional parties viz., Sikkim Sangram Parishad and Sikkim Prajatantra Congress, an unregistered political party in the poll alliance with Himali Congress and the Gorkha League and a number of independent candidates contested the elections (Chabra, 1985). In the meantime R. C. Poudyal, President of Rising Sun Party declared to contest elections in alliance with the National Front and the Left Front. In the Lok Sabha Election of June 14, 1991, the CPI (M) entered the elections for the first time in Sikkim. The poll was swept over by the SSP but Bhandari could not continue in power for long. In early 1990's, the political parties like State Pradesh Congress Committee charged Nar Bahadur Bhandari with anti-party activities. The corruption charges and dissidence within the party led to factions in the party.

According to press reports the 32 SSP MLAs were divided into three main groups- one led by Bhandari with 12 members, the second led by Pawan Chamling with 12 members and the third group was led by N. Chamla Tshering with 8 members. After the split in the party Bhandari could not continue in office any further. The government was formed under the Chief Ministership of Sanchaman Limboo on 18 May, 1994, which lasted only for 6 months. It is under these conditions the SDF was formed by Pawan Chamling on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1993 with the aim of establishing real democracy and safeguarding the rights and interests of the Sikkimese people (SDF, Election Manifesto 1994). Following Chamling's expulsion from the Cabinet and then from the party 19 MLAs defected from the SSP.

Early 90's witnessed a great turmoil in the politics of Sikkim. The era of one man politics and leadership came to an end and post-1993 democratic political electoral process brought average leaders on the

political scene of Sikkim. The former Chief Minister Nar Bahadur Bhandari faced opposition from his own ministry. Pawan Chamling stood as a lone opposition to Bhandari's government in the Assembly. Many political organisations aroused against the ruling government. The government was criticised for corruption charges and anti-party activities which led to the breakup in the party. Many leaders left the party and joined the other political groups in the state. The new government formed under Sanchaman Limboo could not last long. With the failure of the new government under Sanchaman Limboo there was political instability in the state. There was a need for a fresh election in the state and bring stability in the state government.

It is with the Fourth Assembly election that was held in December 1994, SDF attains an absolute majority and comes to power with Pawan K. Chamling as the new Chief Minister of Sikkim dislodging Bhandari's SSP. Defections in political parties could be seen, 6 SSP MLA's joined the SDF, 9 Congress (I) leaders joined the SSP. In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections Sikkim Democratic Front candidates secured a landslide victory against one time political supremo N. B. Bhandari. 1997 saw the emergence of a new political party Sikkim Ekta Manch (SEM) led by L. P. Tiwari. In the Lok Sabha poll of 1998, interesting developments took place in state politics. The Congress (I), the earlier ally of SDF became an opponent of the party. SDF won the election despite the Congress (I) getting the support from Sikkim Ekta Manch (SEM), SSP and the Sikkim National Front. More defections were to be seen in 1999. The SSP general secretary, K. N. Upreti and other dissidents of SSP joined the Congress (I). We also see second coming of R. C. Poudyal, President of the Rising Sun Party after 14 years who had kept away from politics for many years.

On October 16, 1999, the SDF comes to power for the second time in the state. The Sikkim Democratic Front is in power since 1994 and has

dominated state politics for the past 16 years. In the state Assembly election of May 2004 the SDF swept over by securing all the 32 seats in the state. The major opposition was posed by the Congress (I) under the leadership of N.B. Bhandari. SSP lost its identity when it formally merged with the Congress (I) in 2001.

## **Research Problem**

From 1979 to 1993, Sikkim politics was almost dominated by Nar Bahadur and his party. Bhandari formed the government in 1979 under Sikkim Janata Parishad and in 1984 formed another political Party Sikkim Sangram Parishad which contested the election of 1985. Looking at the election results Bhandari won the Assembly elections of 1979, 1985 and 1989, the new political party of N.B. Bhandari secured full majority. Bhandari in his fourteen years of rule emerged to be an uncrowned monarch of Sikkim. Political parties like the Congress (I), Janata Party, CPI, CPI (M), and Sikkim Prajantantra Congress (SPC) in alliance with Himali Congress and Gorkha League existed. Gorkha League which was an unregistered party contested the elections but these parties could not make any dent in the politics of Sikkim in electoral terms. In the 1990's various political parties and ethnic groups like, the Citizens for Democracy (CFD), the Denzong People's Chagpa (DPC), the Rising Sun (RS) wanted the formation of a United Front and an alternative to the ruling SSP but could not succeed.

1993 marked the birth of the SDF which is an important landmark in the history of Sikkim's politics. It was the lone opposition party to the ruling SSP. After its birth in 1993, SDF won all the assembly elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004 and parliamentary elections of 1996, 1998 and 2004 in the state. But in Sikkim, after the decline of the SSP there arose again the dominance of one party and this one party dominance had been established by the SDF. Many defections were seen among the political

parties in the state. There was a second coming of the Rising Sun Party under R. C. Poudyal after fourteen years of retreat. In all the parliamentary elections in the state, the candidate from the SDF won all the elections. Following its success since 1994, the SDF got re-elected for the third time in May, 2004. Hence since its birth, the SDF has been able to maintain its hold over Sikkim for the past ten years.

Analysing the facts above, several general questions arise. What are the reasons behind the emergence of SDF? What are the principal reasons behind the domination of one party for about more than a decade in Sikkim? Why a regional political party like the SDF has been able to win consecutive elections in the state legislative assembly? Why there has been almost a non-existent of opposition, regional as well as national in Sikkim? How is the SDF able to maintain its domination in state politics? What strategies the SDF has adopted for the maintenance of its domination in the state?

## **Research Questions**

Many general questions have been identified in the present study but the central focus is on the specific questions which are answered in different chapters. In this study we have tried to answer the following questions:

- a)** What were the objective conditions that gave birth to the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) and contributed to its initial success in Sikkim?
- b)** What are the strategies which the party has adopted for winning elections since 1994 and maintaining its dominance in the politics of the state? Has electoral Populism been a part of its strategy?
- c)** Which are the classes, castes and communities that support the party? In other words what is the support base of the party in the state and how do the party mobilise them?
- d)** What kind of economic policies the SDF has pursued since coming to political power in 1994?

- e) What form of governance it has been able to provide in the state since 1994? How far the party has been successful in realising its primary objective of 'Real Democracy' and '*Janta Ko Rajma Jantai Raja*' (In a popular regime people are sovereign)?

## **Literature Review**

Even though there are a good number of studies on Sikkim but we will see that these studies hardly answer the questions raised above. Hence let us review the available literature on Sikkim and point out the research gaps. Works on Sikkim are not however many. The available literature may be grouped into two main categories but it can be grouped also in several sub-categories. The first kind deals with general issues on Sikkim like, historical and political developments in Sikkim since independence. The second category of literature evaluates the emergence and growth of regional political parties and development of party politics in Sikkim. The works of Basnet (1974), Rao (1978), Das (1983), Sengupta (1985), Bhadra (1992), Lama (1994) and Chakravarti (2003) deals with the politics in Sikkim in General since its birth. The works of Kazi (1993), Sharma (1996), Gaunley (2002) and Bali (2003) falls within the other category of literature which deals with party-politics in Sikkim. The works of Sinha (1975), Bhattacharya (1981), Dasgupta (1992), Thapa (2002) and Kharel (2002) deal with the socio economic aspects of Sikkim. Singh (1985), A. Bhattacharya (1988), Datta (1991), Wanchuck (2007) and Subba (2008) deal with the socio cultural aspects of Sikkim. Baldev, Srilekha and Agnihotri (1995) deal with the educational status in Sikkim.

Rishley's book "The Gazetteer of Sikkim" (1894) discusses the history of Sikkim in detail. In the first part of the book he discusses the physical features of the state, British intervention and the treaties signed by Sikkim. Rishley's concern was on British policy towards the East Himalayan States like Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim. The next part of

the book focuses on the geographical position and description. The boundaries and the area of Sikkim is discussed at full length. The book also traces the rulers of Sikkim and the origins of the early Tibetan Kings with short descriptions of their reigns, population, tribes and chief families of Sikkim, nomenclature of places, old laws of Sikkim and marriage customs. It also gives full account of the geological and mineral resources such as copper, iron, lime and their locations in Sikkim. Agricultural system, kinds of cultivation vegetation including flowering plants and ferns, orchids, bamboos, rhododendrons, primulas, herbaceous, plants, trees and alpine zone of Sikkim, species of butterflies, reptiles, birds and mammals found in the different regions of Sikkim. It also gives a general account on Lamaism as the state religion of Sikkim, origin of Buddhism and its spread in India and outside, its extension to Tibet, the Lamaic sects and introduction of Lamaism in Sikkim. The next part of the book focus on a general description of Sikkim Monastries, their kinds and location, monkhood, monastic routine as a village priest and some magic rites and charms. The focus is little on the political development of Sikkim. The history section of the book consists of just the origins of the kings of Sikkim and the history of laws.

A. C. Sinha's "Politics of Sikkim: A Sociological Study" (1975) provides an analysis of political developments in Sikkim. It contains three parts. Part one studies the historical evolution of the significant social forces active during the pre-merger period in Sikkim. It tries to highlight how Lamaism and its tradition of Tibetan feudalism got accommodated in the kingship in Sikkim. This gave monarchy a unique character in Sikkim which ruled Sikkim for 333 years. Monarchy in Sikkim was more based on Buddhism. In Part II the author identifies different sections of society like the elite, the Kazi's, the ambitious pro-palace bureaucrats, the Nepali political leaders and the youth Congress Leaders. The youth Congress leaders were leading the various social forces in Sikkim. This part of the

book sheds more light on the social background, economic status, political affiliation and perception of various elite groups in Sikkim. Part III has four chapters dealing with the political process and development in the post- 1947 period, i.e. after Indian Independence. Sikkim politics during that time was influenced by Indian Independence movement. The interference by the elite class, pro-palace bureaucrats, was more on the monarchical rule in Sikkim which was resented by the common people. The democrats and the common people did not favour this kind of political structure where democratic participation in decision making was absent. However, the book has certain limitations. Its study base is mostly sociological. The political aspects, peoples' participation in the political process, description on political institutions, policy formulation, electoral behaviour and role of political organisations are not covered in this book.

Basnet's (1974) book is on the Geography and Demography of Sikkim. The entire work is divided into two parts. Part I discusses the geography and demography of Sikkim and conservation of the first Bhutia King of Sikkim in 1642. It also deals with the Bhutanese and Gorkha invasion in 1700 and 1740 respectively. The book presents a detailed account of the Treaty of Sougali (1816) between British and Nepal and the Treaty of Titaliya (1817) between British and Sikkim. Part II reflects on the emergence of political parties, agitation launched by different political parties and sections of society and the intervention of the Indian government in the political affairs of Sikkim. This part of the book presents the first Panchayat election of 1950, the first Sikkim Council election of 1953, allocation of seats in the council for Bhutia- Lepcha, Tsongs (Limboo), Scheduled Caste and Nepalese in 1966. The author talks about the revolt against Monarchy and the Zamindari system under the monarchy which resulted in the implementation of democracy in Sikkim in 1975. But the book does not deal with the political upheavals' in Sikkim after 1973.

Rao (1978) begins with the influence of India's Independence on the democratic movement in Sikkim. He discusses about the struggle of the people of Sikkim for a democratic set up and also deals with the political development in Sikkim in the pre-merger period. It highlights the internal intrigues to embarrass India by siding with the feudal regime and awakening of the political consciousness of the people of Sikkim culminating in making modern Sikkim the 22<sup>nd</sup> state of India. Chapter I of the book sheds light on the creation of Sikkim Council after the first democratic election in 1953 which was based on "Parity System" and formation of an Executive Council. The book also reveals the signing of Tripartite Agreement between the Chogyal of Sikkim, political parties of Sikkim and Government of India on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1973. It also gives a detailed account of the Government of Sikkim Act 1974 and its provisions for the formation of Assembly, Chief Executive, Council of Ministers, Judiciary, status of Sikkim as an "Associate state" under the 35<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act of the Indian constitution and the status of Chogyal as the constitutional head. The book however remains silent on the political development in the post merger period. The author talks about the role played by the central government in the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union but fails to discuss about the political developments after the merger.

B.S Das' (1983) book "The Sikkim Saga" is the book which the research scholars working in Sikkim use as a reference. The book makes a historical analysis on the reasons behind the transformation of power from Monarchy to Democracy and merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. To him, the merger of Sikkim and democratic elections in the state led to the emergence of political parties (regional and national) and democratic decentralisation in the state. The author tries to deal with questions like; was the Merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union necessary? Was there really a popular uprising against the Chogyal in 1973? He also tried to study the role played by the central government in



the merger of Sikkim and the details of May 1973 Agreement between the three political parties and the Chogyal of Sikkim and the requirement of a democratic setup in the newly created state. The book also tries to give the role of three great women; Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, Hope Cooke, the wife of the Chogyal Palden Thendup Namgyal and Elisha Maria, the wife of former Chief Minister of Sikkim Lt. L. D Kazi, in the political development of Sikkim. However there are some limitations in his work. The author failed to look at the political developments in Sikkim after the merger.

Sengupta (1985) looks at the geo-political, economic and social foundations, political dynamics, electoral process, role of pressure groups and political parties and comments that the changing trends in political dynamics, political parties and pressure groups of the past and present led to the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. He also traces the cross-current of ethnic, social and religious factors. He further argued that the purpose of the study is to correlate political dynamics to the nature and functions of the governmental organs, the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. This book though gives much information about many aspects however it fails to give a detail study on the political aspects of Sikkim.

Amal Datta's (1991) book "Sikkim since Independence" shows how a remote area like Sikkim leads towards modernisation. Within a short span of time it could make developments in all aspects -political process, social structure, economy, culture and lifestyle. It sheds light on important questions like "how Sikkim could bring rapid changes and development after it joins the mainstream of Indian Union in 1975?" Sikkim became the 22<sup>nd</sup> state under Article 371 (F) and the 36<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution. The first two chapters deal with the educational system and social structure that existed in the pre-merger period in Sikkim. The education system during the king's rule was

more monarchical than modern in character. To the author the introduction of modern educational system is essential among the new class and government servants to bring social change. The book is also an analytical study on the role of modern education among the emerging new class and the impact upon the traditional societies and social structure in Sikkim. The book also tries to focus on the social stratification and change in Sikkim after the emergence of a new class. The author has talked much about the social structure and the role of education in changing Sikkim into a modern one but it does not give an account of the role of political parties and political organisations in bringing progressive changes in Sikkim.

Manas DasGupta's (1992) book "Sikkim: Problems and Prospects of Development" discusses the problems of the region-Sikkim is facing and the measures initiated by the state and central government for the proper development of Sikkim especially after its merger with the Indian Union in 1975. The book highlights some of the major issues and their solutions which are helpful to the planners, administrators and researchers. Another section of the book covers the population and urbanisation covering Land Reforms and Development, land Revenue System, Agriculture; Problems and Prospects, mixed farming in Sikkim, Forest Management and non-cereal crops in Sikkim. The major part of the book focuses on the economic sector basically industries, natural resources, agriculture etc. The book however leaves lot of unanswered questions related to rise of political parties and the role played by these parties in Sikkim.

Kazi (1993) in 'Inside Sikkim: Against the Tide' says, Democracy is a big word in Sikkim- in many ways bigger than in any state of the Indian Union. For it was in the name of democracy that a protectorate monarchy was abolished. His focus is on how the system in Sikkim functioned in the last one and a half decades leaving people of the strategic Himalayan

border state completely defenceless, insecure and exploited. He articulates in detail the struggle of the people to live in a free and democratic atmosphere, where they can live with respect and dignity and also preserve the unique and distinct identity of Sikkim within the Union. The problem with the book is that it discusses only the party politics of Sikkim since 1979 to 1992.

Lama's (1994) edited book contains articles on different topics like society, economy, environment and polity. Focussing on the polity of Sikkim, an article by Chakravorty (1994) 'Government and Politics in Sikkim' analyses the development of party politics in Sikkim in which he shows how though there are some structural similarities between the politics and society in Sikkim and in other states of the Indian Union but to him in many respects it is also different from other states of the Indian Union. The work throws light on the question, why a regional party like the SSP in a newly emerged state has been able to win consecutive elections to State Legislative Assemblies. To him the phenomenal feature of politics in Sikkim is that opposition has been virtually non-existent in the state unlike most of the states of the Indian Union. The edited book of Lama however does not cover the political aspects of Sikkim. There is only one chapter which deals with the government and politics of Sikkim. The book does not provide much material and information which can be used for further research.

Sharma (1996) in his 'Sikkim: Past and Present' (Sikkim Hijo Dekhi Aaja Samma) provides a detailed account of the historical developments in Sikkim. In his work Sharma gives a detailed account on the monarchical set up in Sikkim and its working. He discusses how the people were dissatisfied with the rule of Chogyal and the exploitation and suppression by the Kazis, who were Zamindar's during the kingship. In the second part of his work he mainly focussed on the emergence of political parties in Sikkim like the Janata Party, National Party, Congress

(I), Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) and finally the SDF. He focuses on the state Assembly elections and the Lok Sabha elections in the state and the changing governments in Sikkim. He tries to look at Sikkimese people's faith and trust on the SDF. Though the book has discussed about the emergence of political parties in the state but it does not give a detailed account of the dominance of one party in the state for a long period of time which is very important for the recent work.

Subba's (1999) book is a translated version of the book "Sikkim Bigarne Ko Ho?" It tries to explain how democracy is created to protect the rights of the people. It highlights the violation of democratic rights of the people during SSP rule in Sikkim. It expresses how the ruler violated the Rule of Law in the state and oppressed people who raised their voice against anti-government activities in the state. The book however fails to give information on the newly emerged political party, SDF and the rule of Sikkim under the SDF.

Karma Tshering Bhutia's (1999) work "Rise and Fall of a Tyrant – Resurgence of Democratic Forces under Pawan Chamling" presents the details of administration under the Bhandari government under SSP. It gives in details the wrong commitments under the regime of Nar Bahadur Bhandari in Sikkim. The purpose of the book is to bring out in public notice how the administration, bureaucracy and police force oppressed the public to no end and the corruption cases against the former Chief Minister of Sikkim. The various incidents mentioned in the book clearly show the ordeal of the common man: the poorer section of the Sikkimese people- under the dictatorial regime of Nar Bahadur Bhandari. The first part of the book is a brief profile of Nar Bahadur Bhandari and the corruptions during his time. The second part of the book highlights the pro-people policies of Pawan Chamling in Sikkim.

Gaunley's edited book (2002) contains the achievements and contributions of various personalities of Sikkim towards the democratic

movement in Sikkim before the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. The book also provides an outline of the democratic movement in Sikkim with the birth of the first political party. It further explains the process of administration and the Zamindari system under the Chogyal's of Sikkim. He provides detailed information on the events before 1950s and onwards. He highlights the first and the second phase of people's movements and political party activities. Transformation of Sikkim from Monarchy to Democracy (Rajtantra Dekhi Prajatantra Samma), the role of political parties, change in governments since 1974 are the other things discussed in this work. The second part of the book deals with the works of the Bhandari Government. To him the corrupt political activities of Bhandari led to the decline of the SSP and the emergence of the SDF. The book has failed to give a detailed study on the democratic process in Sikkim in the present day.

Gopal Gaunley and Samiran Chhetri's (2002) edited book "History of Democratic Movement" gives an outline of the democratic Movement. The Kazi's and the Thekedar's exploited the masses. The political parties in Sikkim opposed this exploitation and raised movements against the Chogyal and the Kazi's and it sought to eradicate Sikkim from the evil of the Zamindari system. The book's focus is on the contributions made by various people in the democratic movement of Sikkim. The book presents the contribution of 110 persons who had dedicated their life for the betterment of Sikkim. These leaders hailed from all the four parts of Sikkim. The book however fails to analyse the various political organisations and political parties that contributed to the democratic process of Sikkim.

On the emergence of SDF in the state, the work by Bali "Pawan Chamling-Daring To Be Different" (2003) is the most significant one. He gives a biography of the President of the party. Pawan Chamling who to him is a leader of the masses and examines how he as the Chief Minister

makes an effort towards rebuilding the State of Sikkim. As a man of the masses, the Chief Minister Pawan Chamling is closely knit together with the evolution of Sikkim as a constituent democratic state of India from an independent kingdom ruled by the erstwhile Chogyal. Pawan Chamling has been the chief architect of Sikkim's emotional integration with mainstream India. Chamling's extra-ordinary success story as a mass-based politician is popularly credited to his humility to accept and respect the people as the fountain head of all power. To him, in order to understand the performance of the party when in power one must look at the manner in which the party came into being i.e., the factors that led Chamling to start a new regional political party in Sikkim.

"Sikkim: Past and Present" (2004) by H. G. Joshi is a work on different aspects of Sikkim- its history, politics, society and economy. It contains seven chapters. The first chapter covers an overview of Sikkim's history and geography, agriculture system, industries, irrigation and power, transport, festivals and tourist centres of Sikkim. The second chapter of the book presents the abode of snow, interesting places in and around Gangtok as tourist spots, natural wealth, and mountainous adventure, Lamaism, Buddhism and Monastries of Sikkim. The third chapter discusses the historic evolution of Sikkim, cultural aspects, population, settlement pattern and economic aspects of Sikkim. It also discusses the economy of the former Kingdom, forest resources, minerals, industries, power and transport. Political aspects like internal and external political problems like that of the neighbouring countries like Bhutan, Nepal and India are also discussed. Talking about the modern state, the book sheds light on national identity, nation-building efforts, accession of Sikkim to the Indian Union and the rise of democracy in Sikkim. A large number of issues and problems had been discussed in this book but still the book has some limitations. The most important limitation is that it

fails to provide an account of the political development in Sikkim after the merger in 1975.

Shri Krishan's (2005) "Political Mobilisation and Identity in Western India, 1934-47" is a series of six volumes. The first volume is by Sucheta Mahajan, "Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India". The second volume is on "A Narrative of Communal Politics: Uttar Pradesh, 1937-39" by Salil Mishra. The third volume is on "Imperialism, Nationalism and the Making of the Indian Capitalist Class, 1920-47" by Aditya Mukherjee. The fourth volume is by Visalakshi Menon "From Movement to Government: The Congress in the United Provinces". The fifth volume by Mridula Mukherjee is on "Peasants in India's Non-Violent Revolution: Practice and Theory". And the last volume is by Rakesh Batabyal on "Communalism in Bengal: From Famine to Naokhali, 1937-47. The volumes highlight the issues on party mobilisation only in the introductory part and the rest of the book is on different issues which are not relevant for the present study. In discussing party mobilisation, the focus of the book is only on Western India and not on the other parts of India including Sikkim.

Lepcha (2008) had focussed on the achievement of Sikkimese Lepcha under the SDF government. The government under the SDF has given more importance to the development of the Lepcha Community as it is the Primitive Tribal Community of Sikkim. The SDF government implemented several programmes for the welfare of the poor section of the society. The book reveals how the government under the SDF has made progressive programmes on environment conservation and taken measures to protect and preserve the identity of Lepcha's of Sikkim. The book does not highlight the study on other communities of Sikkim and the measures taken by the government to improve the living status of these communities. It also fails to shed light on the role played by different communities in the political development of Sikkim.

Jigme N. Kazi's (2009) "Sikkim for Sikkimese" is a book in which the author tries to discuss the hopes and aspirations of the Sikkimese people; Lepchas, Bhutias, Nepalese and members of the other Communities who have been living in Sikkim for generations. It informs the readers the efforts made by the people and their demands for restoration of their political rights and preservation of their distinct identity within the union and within the framework of the Constitution of India. The author highlights the methods adopted by the people to achieve their objectives. The people adopted peaceful, non-violent and democratic means for their purpose. The book provides an overview of the democratic movements taking place for the protection of rights in the state and the government's effort to control these movements. The author tries to raise questions related to identity issues and preservation of constitutional rights. Talking about the democratic movements and the protection of political rights of the people, the author neglects the role played by the other political parties in this movement.

The second category of literature deals with the socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects of Sikkim. Bhattacharya (1988) focuses on the inter-relationship between the indigenous Bhutia and the Lepcha Communities and the diverse collection of ethnic groups from Nepal that started migrating into Sikkim in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its focus is on the critical role played by the Buddhist institutions that provided the foundation for Sikkim's political system since the establishment of Sikkim as an independent polity in the central Himalayas. The ruler of Sikkim was from the Buddhist faith and the coronation of the first king in Sikkim was done by three Buddhist Monks from Tibet. Since then the rulers have been accepted as a religious head and the ruler. The author further stresses on the impact of Buddhism on the political process in Sikkim but fails to shed light on the democratic set up in Sikkim.



Bhadra (1992) in her 'Sikkim-Democracy and Social Change' explains the factors and forces that led to the transformation of Sikkim from a monarchy to democracy. Commenting on the political developments in a traditional society it stresses that the objective of the present study is not theory building but to explore and gain understanding of the factors of socio-political change in Sikkim. Bhadra presents the socio-economic conditions of Sikkim, the state of political parties and pressure groups. To her it is important to analyse the political process in terms of nation-building, popular participation, modernity, social mobility, identity etc. She looks at whether democracy is compatible with the Sikkimese tradition. It also tries to find out the agents of social change and what role do different social and economic classes in Sikkim play in her quest for political development since the basic issue is the standard and practices of modern democratic life in Sikkim? The book provides with much information but still it has some limitations. It fails to study the political development and the process of social change in the post-merger period in Sikkim. It focuses more on the social forces than on political organisations.

Buddha M. Subba and J. R. Subba's (1994) "Cries Unheard" presents some of the major issues like in the field of economic, social and legal problems of women in the state of Sikkim. The book is set out in six chapters. The first part of the book highlights Sikkim today, its land and people, population, communities, constitutional status, language, religion and economic development, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes and resource mobilisation in the state. The second part deals with the sex ratio, education, literacy, health, social welfare, economic status, history of women's status, role of judiciary on women's status and women's legal status in Sikkim. Part III, IV, V and VI summarises the technological, training needs, role of women on economic development and role of Five Year Plans on the status of Women. The book gives a detailed study on

Women's status in Sikkim but the drawback of the book lies on its failure to deal the political aspects of Sikkim.

"The Awakening Struggle for Survival" (2006) by Tseten Tashi Bhutia, a former legislator of Sikkim Legislative Assembly is a book that attempts to project the authentic documentation of the ongoing challenges faced by different ethnic communities such as Bhutia, Lepcha, Limboo and other Nepalese of Sikkimese origin. The rights of the people had been often hijacked by the local politicians for their party and political gains. The book tries to shed light on the major challenges faced by the Sikkimese people like over increasing influx, rights and interest of the Sikkimese people as enshrined in the Article 371(F) of the Constitution. Since this book is an effort made by one man, it discusses only various issues pertaining to Sikkim and Sikkimese people, it does not cover any political and socio-economic aspects of Sikkim. The major part of the book contains only the press releases by Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Association and senior citizens correspondence and representation made by the organisation.

"Sikkim, Feudal and Democratic" (2008) by A.C. Sinha is a book on social and political development in Sikkim. It is divided into three parts and twelve chapters which study the history of Sikkim, its past and present. It shows how the Tibetans, Nepalese, and the British dealt with Sikkim leading to be an autonomous entity. Part one provides the background and social history leading to emergence of ethnic plurality and their political status. It reflects how the Bhutia rulers of Namgyal dynasty ruled Sikkim. In this part of the book one gets to know about the immigration of Nepalese Sikkimese and the ethnic complexities in Sikkim, the interference of the British in the politics of Sikkim and the detail account on how Sikkim became the protectorate of India and then the 22<sup>nd</sup> state of the Indian Union. Part III describes the transformation of Sikkim from feudal set up to a democratic set up under Nepali leader. The

book is informative and interesting for the readers that highlight the role played by the elite class in the democratic set up. It however does not deal with the role and contribution of other social groups in the society.

The third category of literature being reviewed is on the socio-cultural aspects of Sikkim. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya's (1981) book "Aspect of Cultural History of Sikkim: Studies of Coinage" contains only five chapters. The chapters gives a brief background on the historical geography and further elaborates the geographical location of Sikkim, its close neighbours, passes, mountains, rivers, lakes, landscapes, flora and fauna, climate and so on. Chapter II is a study of the population which reflects the origin and existence of different ethnic groups and their culture, traditions, religion, language and social status. The third part of the book is on the political history of Sikkim. It provides the history of Namgyal Dynasty which was established in 1642 and its rule since then. It also discusses the relationship with the neighbouring countries like British India, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. Chapter IV sheds light on the socio-economic condition of Sikkim during the Namgyal dynasty. In the last chapter, the author writes about the tradesmen in Sikkim and the description of the coins and identifies the coins as *Doli Paise* and *Chapte Paise*. The author however does not talk about the political organisations in *Sikkim during the Chogyal's Rule*.

"Sikkim- The Prayer Wheel and Scriptorium" by Aparna Bhattacharya is a study of socio-political system in Sikkim which has largely focussed on the inter-relationship between the indigenous Bhutia and Lepcha communities and the diverse collection of ethnic groups from Nepal that started migrating into Sikkim in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The second part of the book is on the critical role played by the Buddhist institutions in the foundation of Sikkim's political system in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. Bhattacharya has made an important contribution to our understanding of the impact of Buddhism on the political process in

Sikkim. The author is however analysing the impact of Buddhism in the politics of Sikkim and not the other factors, which had contributed in building Sikkim as a 22<sup>nd</sup> state of the Indian Union.

Singh's (1985) edited "People of India: Sikkim" is a work on bio-cultural and linguistic profile of all the 25 communities of Sikkim and their history, culture, custom, religion, faith and belief, languages, art, crafts, food habits, agriculture, settlement pattern, festivals, socio-economic and political organisations. Its focus is mainly on the interrelationship between the indigenous culture and Buddhism and other ethnic cultures of Sikkim. In the political development of Sikkim, he criticises the role of Buddhist institutions in the foundation of Sikkim's political system since the establishment of monarchy in Sikkim in 1642. It sheds light on the influence of Buddhism in the governing system, administration and law making process. This book especially gives emphasis to the governing process, administration and law making processes in Sikkim during the Chogyal's rule and Sikkim as an independent kingdom. Singh however fails to discuss the important aspects of political process and administration after the fall of the Namgyal dynasty in Sikkim which could have made his book more useful.

Kharel's (2002) work "Socio-Economic Condition of Sikkim under Colonial Domination (1889-1947)" has five chapters. The first chapter highlights the socio-economic, political culture, educational and administrative condition of Sikkim during the British Colonial Domination from 1889-1947. John White Claude was appointed the first political officer of Sikkim in 1889. The book is thus a study of the developments since 1889. The author sheds light on British penetration after 1814 Anglo-Nepalese war on the pretext of handling over territory. The author gives two reasons for the war; i) the British wanted to trade with Tibet through Sikkim and ii) the British realised that the establishment of sound relations with Sikkim would make their way easy in operating its activities

in Tibet without any disturbance. The author talks about the socio-economic condition of Sikkim but neglects the political condition and processes in Sikkim.

Subba's (2008) book provides the history of existence of the Himalayan Kingdom. Its focus is on the disintegration of ethnicity, culture and customs of the people of Sikkim. The author elaborates the history and culture of various groups and communities of Sikkim like the Lepcha's, Bhutia's, Limboo's and the Nepalese. There are sub-groups amongst the Nepali community and the author has done a good work in explaining and elaborating the various cultures and traditions of the sub-groups as well. The landscape, agriculture, food, dress culture, religion, social transformation, language and literature had been well presented. The book gives a detail account of the folk culture, festivals, art and culture of different communities of Sikkim. The political aspect of Sikkim is however not much covered in the book.

Chettri's (2008) thesis on "Women's Empowerment" mainly studies the aspect of women participation, empowerment and Panchayat in Sikkim. It tries to study the implementation of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act 1993 in Sikkim and provides a historical background of Women's participation in Panchayati Raj. The Act has been implemented in the state and 33% seat reservation for women in the Panchayats is given. The women have been empowered more by the Act and this has resulted in raising their status in the society. They have been able to take decisions at the grassroots level. The thesis gives a detail account of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1957), Committee on the status of Women in India (1975), Ashok Mehta Committee (1977), National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000), the Constitution's 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act 1993. At the end of the thesis, suggestions are also provided as to how improvements on the condition of women can be achieved.

The third category of literature is on the socio- cultural aspects of Sikkim which also includes the education section. Baldev, Srilekha and Agnihotri's (1995) book "Educational Administration in Sikkim-Structure, Processes and Future Prospects" is the outcome of the survey conducted by the All-India Survey of Educational Administration covering all the states and union territories. The book is based not only on the information collected from primary sources in the state but also from the latest data from secondary sources. It gives the present status of educational administration right from the institution to the state level, with a focus primarily on administration of school education. The book provide selected indicators of educational development which further gives a comparative picture of the state vis-a-vis the all- India position at different points of time. The book provides a critical analysis of various functions of educational planning and administration with suggestions for future development of the administrative system. It outlines the task ahead for educational planners and administrators. It also studies the activity profiles of educational administrators, particularly at district and institutional levels. The book is a series of publication on educational administration in the various states and union territories of the country and is a valuable reference material for researchers, educationists, educational planners and administrators as well as all those interested in the development of education.

The fourth category of literature is on the historical perspective of Sikkim. Maitreyee Choudhary's (2006) work "Sikkim; Geographical Perspective" covers the physical and human geography of Sikkim. It also deals with traditional subjects like physical landscape, demography, economic profile, urbanisation, modernism and post-modern developments such as human development, infrastructure and quality of life. In the physical features topics like mountains, rivers, peaks, passes, glaciers, lakes, hot springs and climate of Sikkim is discussed in details.

Human population trends, ethnic diversification and urbanisation process in pre and post merger periods are discussed. Human development is given importance and side by side education, health care, employment, economic profile and tourism are highlighted. The book is confined to only geographical aspects of Sikkim and it does not cover other aspects like social, political and economic.

A brief history of Sikkim is provided by Pema Wangchuk and Mita Zulca in "Kanchendzonga Sacred Summit" (2007). The book provides an account of the history, culture, tradition, faith and belief, language, literature and social way of life of the original inhabitants of Sikkim such as Lepcha's, Limboo's and Bhutia's. The author attempts to demarcate the boundaries of Limbuwan (Land of Limboos) that existed before the birth of Sikkim in 1642 A.D. The book gives an account of the spread of Buddhism in Sikkim and the coming of the three great Tibetan Monks, Gyalwa Lachen Chempo, Katok Rigzing Chempo and Ngadak Sempo Chempo to Sikkim in the 1640's. There was a conversion of Lepcha's and Limboo's to Buddhism from their ancestral faith. The book however fails to study the socio and political structure of Sikkim.

The fifth category of literature review is on the article on the political development of Sikkim. The second article "Spotlight on Sikkim" is an article by Jigme N. Kazi (1983). The first part of the article is entitled "Sikkim Down the Ages" which gives the history, cultural identity, geographical and topographical aspects, religion and social reforms in Sikkim. The second part is entitled "Political and Administration development" which talks about the consecration of the first Chogyal Phuntsok Namgyal at Yoksom, West Sikkim in 1642. The third part discusses the formation of first popular ministry under the Chief Ministership of Tashi Tshering Bhutia on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1949. It also traces the appointment of the first Indian Dewan, J.S Lall in Sikkim in August 1950 and the formation of Advisory Committee with representations from

political parties like Sikkim State Congress and the Sikkim National Party. The article highlights the first general election of the state Council of Sikkim based on the parity system; seats equally distributed between the Bhutia- Lepcha and Nepali of Sikkimese origin. It also talks about the creation of the Sangha seat (monk) in 1958 and seat for Limboo and Scheduled Caste in Sikkim Council in 1966. The political parties in Sikkim made demands for the abolition of landlordism, formation of Interim government and merger of Sikkim with India. The other chapters presents an account of the May 8 Agreement 1973, Tripartite Agreement between Chogyal of Sikkim, leaders of political parties of Sikkim and the Indian Government on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1973. It also talks about the constitutional provision given in article 371F. The article tries to present the major issues that took place in Sikkim. But it gives account of only the issues and problems prior to 1982 and not after 1982.

Another article is on "Seat Reservation in Sikkim Assembly" (2001) by B.B Gurung in "Sikkim Perspective –A 25 Year Recap from Sikkim Express -1976-2001". The article's focus is on the issue of seat reservation in Sikkim Legislative Assembly for different communities of Sikkim. The article gives an account of the promulgation of Sikkim Subject Regulation. It also discusses the Tripartite Agreement of 8<sup>th</sup> May 1973 and the seat provisions i.e. 16 seats for Sikkimese Bhutia- Lepcha, one Sangha seat and 16 seats for the Sikkimese Nepalese. The article studies the ordinance passed by the Governor of Sikkim in 1979 which abolished the 16 seats reserved for the Nepalese and the same seat was declared as General seats in the Assembly. The article has the shortcoming of dealing with only the reservation issue and ignoring the other issues confronting Sikkim.

"Sikkim: Darjeeling Compendium of Documents" (2004) is a compilation and collection of treaties, agreements and conventions entered between India, China, Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim. The article



contains memorandums, petitions of various organisations and notifications of state and central governments compiled and edited by R. Moktan in 2004. It contains 20 treaties, 6 Amendment Bills, 12 Memorandums, 2 petitions, 1 resolution, 3 letters, 1 speech of Ladenla, 2 debate papers and 10 articles by various writers. The article contains Tripartite treaty, "Lho-Men-Tsong-Sum" signed between the Bhutia's, Lepcha's and Limboo's in 1641-42 A.D during the time of coronation of the Bhutia king in Sikkim. Part IV contains ten articles by different scholars and writers. The article by J. R. Subba highlights the historical aspects of Lepcha's and Manger communities of Darjeeling and Sikkim. It also highlights on "Sikkim; history of Annexation". The article does not cover all the political issues and problems of Sikkim and Democratic movement in Sikkim.

"Panchayati Raj Institution in Sikkim: Participation and Development" is an article by R.R Dhamala (1994) where she discusses the importance of participation of the people in the Panchayat Raj Institution in the state. To him participation of the people is an important element in the development process of the state. To him, participation means (i) voluntary contribution to the public programme, (ii) the initiative and involvement of the people in any development programme of the area, and (iii) involvement of the people in the decision making process. In this article Dhamala talks about the development of Panchayati Raj Institution's in Sikkim and how far it has been successful in the participation of the people. The article is about the grassroots democracy of Sikkim, it fails to write about other aspects like political and socio-economic.

The literature that we have analysed above focuses on the historical development of politics in Sikkim and the factors that led to the formation of regional parties in the state and its role in the democratic process in the state. The problem with the literature is that it provides only general

ideas and information about the establishment and growth of democratic politics in Sikkim (Das 1983, Dutta 1991, Bhadra 1992). The works of Sengupta (1985), Kazi (1993), Lama (1994), Sharma (1996), Gaunley (2002) and Bali (2003) all provides detailed information and ideas on party politics to some extent. It covers the issues and topics like party-politics, origin of political parties (regional and national), party strategies, defections, rule of political parties and pressure groups etc. But it can be stated that these literature is simply not enough and do not shed light on democratic process and the working of democratic institutions in Sikkim. Questions like, why it is so that there is a domination of one party in Sikkim from 1994 till the present in every sphere of political life even though in most of the Indian states there is competitive party politics either a multiparty system or a two party system? This is a question that is hardly dealt with in any of the works.

The books by Sengupta (1985), Lama (1994) Sharma (1996), and Gaunley (2002) deals with the emergence of new political parties but fail to deal with the problem, i.e., the question of dominance of one party in Sikkim since 1979 till date, the emergence of SDF, its strategies, objectives achievements, continuance of SDF in government since 1994, people's acceptance of SDF as a regional political party, their faith and trust upon the party and also the kind of stability that we witness in the state. The present work has addressed the gaps in the performance of the regional political parties in the state, especially the role played by two regional parties; Sikkim Sangram Parishad and Sikkim Democratic Front, which has ruled Sikkim for more than a decade and half. The study is based on how the two regional political Parties have been able to win the Assembly Election for consecutive terms and maintain its hold in Sikkim. it looks into the support base of the party and governance in the state by one party, i.e. by the SDF since 1994.

The primary objective of the study had been to analyse the reasons behind the "dominance of one party in Sikkim" and other related questions. The study has particularly focussed on the emergence, expansion and growth of SDF since 1993 in the state. The study also focuses on the strategies adopted by the party, its main objectives, support base and its performance as a ruling party which is ruling Sikkim for a long period of time. The study has tried to provide an understanding of party politics in the state since 1994 and the support base of the party in the state.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study required data collection for answering the research questions. Considering the objective and the research questions the data used are of two types: primary and secondary. The data collected through field survey belongs to the primary category. The first four chapters use secondary as well as primary sources. The primary sources used are government documents, official reports, party documents and biographies. The last two chapters is completely based on field surveys conducted in four different constituencies, one from each district.

The selection of the constituencies was done in such a way that it covers both urban as well as rural areas. The constituencies of the north, south and west districts constitute purely rural areas and the Gangtok constituency in the east district covers both rural and urban areas. The main purpose behind the selection of these constituencies is that since its formation in 1993, the party has been able to win all the Assembly elections (1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009) in the state. The study, therefore *tries to find out the reasons for the consecutive success of SDF in the elections, the dominance of the SDF in the state politics and the support base of the party in the state since 1994 -2004.*

At least four gram panchayat's were selected from each constituency for conducting the survey. The survey was carried randomly

in the villages. In the Damthang constituency of south district the survey was conducted in the five panchayat blocks; Maniram Singithang Block, Maniram Block, Salleybung Block, Singithang Block and Boomtar Block. In Geyzing constituency the survey was conducted in Geyzing Block covering middle lower Kyonsa, Omchung Block covering upper Omchung and lower Omchung, Lungzik Block covering Lower Lungzik and Upper Lungzik and Tikjya Block covering Lower Tikjya and Upper Tikjya. In the Lachen-Mangshila constituency of North district, the survey was conducted in Lachen, Lachung, Tshungthang and Mangan. In the East district the survey is conducted in Gangtok constituency. The areas where survey was conducted were the town area and the surrounding areas.

The survey was conducted among all the caste groups and all categories of people with different occupations. The survey was also conducted among the party supporters and activists. There were some obstacles in discussing party based questions especially among the employed groups. The respondents were reluctant in answering the questions. At least 100 to 150 persons were surveyed from each constituency covering at least three Gram Panchayat's. It is from these responses attempt was made in order to get an understanding of the manner in which the party mobilise support at the grassroots and the support base of the party.

## **Organisation of the Study: The Chapters**

The entire research work is divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the questions related to the genesis, initial growth, the success of the Sikkim Democratic Front as a regional political party and the dominance of one party rule under SDF since 1994. It begins with a brief political history of Sikkim and the foundation of democratic movements in Sikkim in the 1940's and the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union in 1975. The chapter gives a detailed account of the rise of Nar Bahadur

Bhandari and his success in the three consecutive Assembly elections of 1979, 1985 and 1989. The chapter covers the reasons for the downfall of Bhandari under SSP and the emergence of SDF as an alternative government in 1994. The SDF President and the founder of the party, Pawan Chamling applied different means and measures for gathering support of the people against Nar Bahadur Bhandari and his government in Sikkim. The chapter further discusses the success of the party and the performance of the party in the Assembly Elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004.

Chapter II is on the promises which the SDF use as an important strategy for winning and maintaining its dominance in the politics of Sikkim. The promises are divided into political, social, economic etc. Political promises include the promise of democracy and decentralisation in Sikkim under the SDF. The first part of the chapter also discusses the shifts in the party and how it tried to mobilise the people by its pro-people policies. Part II of the chapter has studied the populist promises and measures of the party. It discusses how the SDF uses populism in the state to keep its support intact and remain in power.

The third chapter is on the economic policies of the SDF government. It studies what policies the party has adopted and how far the party has been able to implement these policies and the consequent development brought as per the policies mentioned. The economic policies of the party are categorised into Agricultural sector, Industrial sector, Tourism and service sector. In the Agricultural sector the SDF *government has provided with many* facilities and incentives to the farmers for better agricultural production. Similarly in the industrial sector the government revived old and sick industries in the state and introduced modern and scientific technologies for the improvement of industrial production. The government also gave importance to the development of service sector and tourism as it leads to economic

development in the state. We analyse the policies since it helps the party to muster support for itself.

The fourth part of the study deals with the governance of the SDF government. The chapter deals with the status of democracy in Sikkim. The chapter studies how democracy was established in the state and how far the SDF tried to restore democracy in the state after it came to power. The chapter looks at how far the SDF has been able to establish "Janta ko raj ma jantai raja". It also looks at the status of substantive democracy under the SDF regime.

Chapters V and VI both taken together analyse the success of the SDF in consecutive Assembly elections in Sikkim and the support base of the party. This chapter is based on a field survey that has been conducted in four constituencies of Sikkim. Damthang constituency in south district, Geyzing constituency in the west district, Lachen-Mangshila in the north district and Gangtok constituency in the east district were selected for this purpose. The field survey included questions on the occupation, income, religion, economic background and more importantly on the support to the political parties in the state and performance of the party in the constituency. After the field survey it was found that the people support the SDF as it is the only party in the state that has brought development in the state. The people are happy and satisfied with the party. It is also clear from the election results of 1994, 1999 and 2004 that the party gets support from the majority of the people in the state. It is also found that the main support base of the party is the rural masses who have benefitted from the SDF led government.

