

## Chapter 1

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed (WHO, 2016). Some conceptualize gender difference as sex difference, relating to male or female, as most people are born either male or female, but the societal norms define men and women to behave characteristics that are prescribed to them or embedded in the society, which are often quoted as gender stereotyping.

Gender does not denote differences based on sex, i.e. male or female, but socially constructed one based on the differentiation between masculinity and femininity. Feminists define gender as a set of socially and culturally constructed entity that vary across time and place. The characteristics such as power, autonomy, rationality, and public are associated with masculinity, or termed as ‘real man’. Opposite characteristics, such as weakness, dependence/connection, emotionality, and private, are associated with femininity (Tickner, 2008). As defined by the United Nations, gender differences are the socially constructed roles played by women and men that are ascribed to them on the basis of their sex (Skjelsbaek and Smith, 2001). According to Tickner (2008), gender is a system of social hierarchy in which masculine characteristics are more valued than feminine ones. She further adds that, gender is a structure that signifies unequal power relationships between women and men.

Subordination of women in social, political and economic conditions is grounded long back. However it has been continuing in most of the section of the society till date. Differences based on gender are the prime focus in today’s world. Gender basically means the distinction between masculinity and femininity. When we talk about feminine quality, the majority of them are women and children. History has made us witness the rule of masculinity over femininity, in every aspect of life. So, in

some way, we can assume that the women are the major sufferer. The need and desire of women are always discarded or sidelined in every aspect by the state or at home or by their male counterparts. The decision makers are male mostly, whether it be state or family. They make laws or rules according to their needs and desire which in way subjugate women, further leading into discrimination.

Gender based discrimination towards women and children are omnipresent across the world in various forms. In many countries, women are still unable to purchase their own property, vote or even wear clothes of their choice. In Africa, female genital mutilation still exists. Throughout Asia, the former Soviet Union, Latin America, Africa and Central and Eastern Europe trafficking is still a huge problem. The numbers show that six out of ten women worldwide are exposed to some form of violence within their lifetime. Whether the violence is physical, verbal, emotional, or financial, every day women are being subjected to acts of violence. Most of the crimes are committed by the women's spouse, boyfriend, or partner, someone the women were involved with (Rainbo Organization, 2009).

Gender discrimination continues to be an enormous problem within Indian society too. Traditional patriarchal norms and behaviour have sidelined women to inferior position. Gender disparity has existed in Indian society in different forms, and continues till present era. Traditionally women were looked down socially, economically and politically. They were mere puppets in the name of tradition and custom. The women were brutally killed in the name of sati, considered as burden and practiced child marriage, etc.

Society made an invisible demarcation of area between men and women. While men are given rights to make all the major decision regarding family, work, agriculture and allied activities, etc, they are considered as bread winner and holds a high position in the family, the women on the other hand are confined at home, i.e. kitchen and is engaged in bearing and rearing of children. She is not allowed to have an opinion in important matters of family or society. Men are considered the bread winner and most of the women work outside the domestic front is limited to being an agricultural labour.

Categorization of work is highly biased or rather gendered; it has often led women to remain behind. Women are largely engaged in low skilled, labour intensive

and repetitive jobs. Due to the existent stigma and unpaid work, women are left out of the economic mainstream. The work is divided into paid and unpaid and the difference lies here, men are mostly engaged in paid works whereas women of rural areas are mostly unpaid labour and labour extensive workers. Women being confined at home and household work are not recognized as work because it's unpaid and merely propagated as duties which she has to perform. Discrimination of women in work place still exist today; they are usually paid less as compared to men, and is prevalent in most all the sectors. The film industry, both at national or international arena, conveys message of gender neutrality and gender equity. It is noted that the wage gap difference between male and female actors still pertains, where female actors is usually paid less than male actors. In the 87th Academy Awards, actress Patricia Actress said, "It's our time to have wage equality once and for all and equal rights for women in the United States of America", which proves that women in the highly empowered world also do face the discrimination in the wages in terms of gender.

Unlike any women, the Sikkimese women do also face sexual harassment and domestic violence at home and most of the cases are not even reported. According to study done by Kaur (2009), sexual violence and physical violence are prevalent in Sikkim. Almost three out of five women have neither sought help nor told anyone about the violence. Abused women most often seek help from their own families and from friends. Very few women seek help from any institutional source, such as the police or a social service organization.

In Sikkim, Buddhist women are considered to be an asset in the household and command a bride price, but she has no rights of inheritance even when there are no sons. Only when a daughter remains unmarried can parents customarily transfer some property to her (Lama in Bothe and Sachdeva, 2013). However, it is customary that they are given gifts of movable assets (Bhattacharya in Bothe and Sachdeva, 2013).

Sexual Harassment has also been a problem for the women at workplace. Women are seen as sex objects even at the workplace. Despite the presence of the Act, {The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013} and abiding by it with all the measures such as setting up a committee, issues and problems still remains. Sometimes the complaint are just ignored, sidelined and closed down with minimal punishment or just a warning.

Therefore, to bridge the gap or differences between men and women, it is very necessary to empower women. Empowerment means the transfer of power from the hands of the few to the masses. It can also be referred to as: self strength, control, self power, self reliance, own choice, life of dignity in accordance with one's values, capable of fighting for one's rights, independence, self decision-making, being free, awakening, and capability. For family, society and nation to be developed, their empowerment should be provided to each and every individual irrespective of their class, colour, race and gender. The discrimination attitude towards women in the society is so deeply grounded that it is very necessary to empower them. The position and condition of women in today's world is very different from that of the past. Women enjoyed a very privileged position during Rig Veda period. They were allowed to gain education as par with men, have choice of their own when it comes to marriages, but their situation started getting deteriorated during Manu's time and continue till date. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the position of women seems to be improving, but practicality it's not. Only by considering 20% of successful women we cannot ignore the fact that 80% of women are suffering gender based violence and discrimination. To overcome all the issues of discrimination, empowering of women is a must, especially in the rural areas.

The main occupation of rural India is agriculture and women engaging in different types of agricultural activity in India constitute a large and significant section of population. Women are always considered as adjuncts to their male counterparts, as mother, wife or a daughter. Women are considered as helping hands to improve the economic prosperity of the family headed by male member of the household. So the work done by female, whether at home or at field is always neglected or is low paid as compared to their male counterparts. As male member being the head of the household, they hold all the important powers and are the decision maker of all the activities of the household. Female being less important and lack of access to land resources their decision especially in the field of agriculture are merely overlooked or not taken seriously. The women have no access to land and are merely seen as workers. The major profits are taken away by their male counterparts.

The major source of occupation and livelihood in the hill region is agriculture. Sikkim, being in the Himalayan region, people is involved in agriculture. Majority of the people in Sikkim depend mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. Due to

undulating topography the people in the hills tend to follow the traditional methods of cultivation, which is highly labour-intensive. The working unit in agriculture is very often the household itself and the family income is divided among the members not according to productivity but according to needs. The women in rural Sikkim are mostly engage in agriculture and as women in other parts of India they also manage household activities along with agricultural and allied works as well. The woman in Sikkim enjoys more privileges than the women in other parts of rural India, but as compare to male members they are still marginalized, for instance Sikkim do also follow patriarchal system where the decision making is in the hands of the head of the family, i.e. father. The women also lack the holding of property rights which further makes women miserable or loosen their importance.

## **1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Social scientist and researchers have made significant contributions to unravel the various dimensions of gender discrimination in India in number of articles, books, reports and research papers. A thematic review of the available literature covering important books and articles has been made in this following section.

### **a. Gender Discrimination during the Conflict and Violence**

Any problem arises, whether it may be of political, cultural or economical, it is the women who have to suffer the most. Male member being the head of the state one can say that the war and conflict is the desire of the male members. Their desire make women and children suffer the most. According to Indai Lourdes Sajor (2008), War is an inherently patriarchal activity, and rape is one of the most extreme domination over women.

Inger Skjesbaek and Dan Smith in the book “Gender, Peace and Conflict” says, when war is brought to the civilian population, women suffer. They further add that, the reason for women suffering is that men are more likely to be involved in the actual fighting; moreover, even as civilians, men are often killed while the women and children are expelled. One form of violence that specifically targets women is rape. It has long been a part a war, and thus seems that rape in war affects women exclusively. Rape is used not simply to attack the women but, through her, to attack another target- somebody whom she is believed to be protecting, for example, a male comrade in arms. The attack exploits not only the physical vulnerability of the

women, but also her subsequent shame and defilement, and all too often the likely rejection by her partner, family and community (Skjesbaek and Smith, 2001). In 1972, during the breakaway of Eastern Pakistan, currently Bangladesh, 200,000 women were raped by the Pakistani soldiers. After the war, the government of Bangladesh had the greatest difficulty in trying to persuade the husbands of raped women to accept their wives (Brownmiller, 1975). Thus mass rape is a way to terrorize individuals, communities and, if done on a large enough scale, an entire ethnic group (Skjesbaek and Smith, 2001). In the conflict situation, women are the major sufferer, by direct means of violence or by killing of men those engaged in war, the women lose their husbands, sons and brothers. They are faced with all type of torture physical, mental and emotional (Banerjee, 2008).

Women in post- conflict areas also do suffers from Gender based violence, their areas are usually raided by the military or rebel forces and taken back to the soldiers' camp to provide both sexual and domestic services (Rehen & Sirleaf, 2011). Trafficking, forced prostitution, rape, domestic violence, abduction, forced marriages are the common traits which women and girls faced in post-war or post-conflict situation.

Women also play active role in war and conflict situation, most of the time indirectly. In the war situation when men join the fighting, women take the responsibility back home, by being the head of the household, indulge in income generation, basically through farming methods. Despite active role by women, they are often neglected in the post-conflict situation. They are often very active in civil society, peace movements yet frequently excluded from formal peace negotiations. In 2008, UNIFEM estimated that women account for less than 10% of members in formal peace negotiations and less than 2% signatories to peace agreements (Stewart).

Apart from the conflict situation the women suffers form of domestic violence back at home, harassment in the work place, abuse in the public places, public transport, etc. The women are not even safe inside the house, in one way or the other they are abused physically, mentally and emotionally.

It was assumed that women's position would improve when the economic prosperity of their husbands improve. However, this assumption denied the unequal power relationships which exist between men and women and between people of

different castes, races and classes. Furthermore, it was taken for granted the notions of male-breadwinner and female housewife, ignoring both the fact that the numbers of female heads of household have increased and that it is women who provide a large part of the productive labour on small farms (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001). Recent structural changes (such as the removal of subsidies on fertilizers and the rising price of veterinary drugs) are undermining the ability of many women to use and conserve increasingly scarce resources in a sustainable way. Agricultural services are being commercialized and land tenure arrangements are under threat, reducing the amount of good land available to small farmers as the better land is allocated to cash crops. These small farmers, mostly women, are increasingly pushed on to marginal plots that are dispersed, remote and usually less fertile. This land may be ill suited to continuous cultivation and vulnerable to land and water degradation, particularly through soil erosion and deforestation (Muntemba and Chimedza, 1995).

#### **b. Agrarian Reforms and Gender Discrimination**

Agrarian reform programmes of resettlement and land distribution which were popular in the past have not tackled this problem and have typically failed to recognize the land ownership rights of married women, women heads of household and women producers with partial or temporary land rights. The need for women to secure full and independent land rights have been argued on the grounds of welfare, efficiency and gender equality (Agarwal, 1994).

Women benefitted much less than men both directly from the land reforms, through tenancy reform and redistribution, and in terms of indirect effects through education, employment and occupational mobility. The land reforms have been internalized through patriarchal framework of devolution of and control over property. Besides, opportunities opened up by the more wide spread availability of land, whether through education, employment or migration was also accessed on gender-differentiated terms (Kodoth, 2008).

India has increased its agricultural production manifold since independence. The contribution of women to this effort has been substantial though they are still employed in agriculture mostly as marginal workers. In most states men do the ploughing and irrigating of the land while women sow the seedlings, nurture the plants, harvest the rice, vegetables, tea, fruits and practice sericulture (Seth, 2001).

Women perform multi-dimensional role in agriculture (sowing, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, fertiliser application, plant protection, harvesting, winnowing, storing, etc.), domestic (cooking, child rearing, water collection, fuel wood gathering, household maintenance, etc.) and allied activities like cattle management, fodder collection, milking, etc. (Singh, 2013).

Having played a crucial role in agriculture the agriculture surplus is in men's hands as they do most of the marketing operations of cereals and milk. The benefits of new schemes in improved farming practices have percolated down most inadequately to women. They also continue to get very low wages and hardly any labour benefits worth mentioning (Seth, 2001). Despite women's extensive and varied participation in agriculture, they continue to have less access than do men to modern agricultural inputs. As a result, their farm work is labor intensive and yields meager economic returns (Singh, 2013). Rural women are not only the warriors, creative actors in the agriculture scene, or rural areas, but also the urban poor, the migrants, the homeless, the source of labour supply into the expanding urban spaces, including trafficking (Jain, 2009).

When women own or have access to land, they often have a limited access to agricultural support services, such as credit with which they can purchase inputs, and advice and training in agricultural technology. This limited access may arise from a range of factors, including legal restrictions (such as the need for a male signatory); lack of collateral (e.g. land title); lack of information about credit availability; and lack of small-scale services such as micro-credits schemes (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001).

Cultural bias, in many countries, prevented women from active participation in group training, extension meetings and, most importantly, access to inputs such as fertiliser and credit. These services have been predominantly staffed by men. According to the FAO only 15% of extension workers are women (FAO, 1999) and they tended to direct their services to male farmers or head of households, excluding female-headed households and women members of male-headed households (World Bank, 2000).

In the rural areas of hilly regions, women equally share the bread earning responsibility of the family and work shoulder to shoulder with their men folk in



various agricultural and animal husbandry operations in day-to-day life. In the hill economy, women's participation and role in agricultural holding is very significant. Women promote hilly areas participate in almost all the agricultural operations, from preparation of land to harvesting of produce to stocking it.

Most of the agricultural works are being carried by womenfolk therefore the success and failure of the product largely depends upon their contribution. Since men are only indulging in ploughing of field, irrigating the land and harvesting the crops, it is women who takes care of the crops till it is harvested.

Due to the geographical conditions women in the hilly areas have to undergo a very hard life. The household activities performed by women consume the maximum time of the women folk. The major household activities mostly done by females in the hill region are rearing of children, taking care of old aged member of the family, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, cooking, milching cattle, arranging fodder for cattle, as well as extending help in the marriage and religious ceremonies of neighbour and relatives (Pande, 1996).

### **c. Gender Discrimination in Decision Making**

Despite the fact that women comprise around half of the world's agricultural workforce, women are often not even recognized as farmers. They face widespread restrictions on decision making about the basic resource for production i.e. land; access to productivity-enhancing inputs such as credit, fertilizer, improved seeds and extension; and control over the produce resulting from their labour and other investment. Women's ability to produce enough food is further hampered by the physically exhausting labor and drudgery associated with farming practices that have remained unchanged for generations (Global Conference on Women in Agriculture, New Delhi, 2012).

Women empowerment, being the main concern and highly debatable topic in 21st century, where equal opportunity and equal participation being the main theme, survey and statistics still reveals that women are lagging in most of the sectors than men. Times of India with various statistics and data revealed that, "though female participation in elections went up from 56% in 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections to 66% in the current one (16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) in 2014, the male participation also improved from 60% to 67% during the same period", "women also have less participation in the states,

where women have only an 8% share in legislative assemblies and 4% in legislative councils as on August 2014”, as per the services are concerned, 2012 data shows that, only 14% females were in Indian Administrative Services (IAS), 19% in Indian Foreign Services (IFS), 12% in Indian Trade Services (ITS), 30% in Indian Economic Service (IES), and 28% in the Indian Forest Service (IFS). As per 2011 census, the workforce participation rate for females is 25.51% against 53.26% for males. Rural areas have a better female workforce participation rate of 30.02% compared with 53.03% for male. In urban sector, the participation rate of females’ trails at 15.44% against 53.76% for males, women also face a significant wage differential vis-a-vis their male counterparts (TOI, 2014).

As Sikkimese women enjoys better privileges as compared to most of the women in other parts of India, the society being patriarchal in nature still lacks in many aspects specially in decision making. Their views, ideas and concepts are still sidelined by their male counterparts. Women still hold second position in the family and the society. Women in Sikkim do engage in agricultural activities but the decision of final output or holding of profits is still in the hand of male members or the head of the household i.e. father. The heads decide what is to be done and women are expected to follow orders. The reason could be lack of access to property rights for women. As power is determined in the economic sense, unless and until women holds the important position in the society the domination will be prevalent.

In agriculture sector, similar to other sectors, roles of women’s and men’s responsibilities are socially determined. For instance: Women work mainly in the subsistence crops while men are mostly involved in cash crops (Bajracharya, 1994 in Gurung et. al, 2000). Half or more of the work in the farm is done by female as compared to male; in addition to it they also perform the household activities. Pleasant tasks such as marketing are carried out by men whereas relatively unpleasant tasks like carrying and spreading manure are done by women. It is common for women to perform men’s tasks but the opposite rarely occurs (IFAD, 1999 in Gurung et. al, 2000). Men and women do not have equal access and control over farm assets including land, labour, time, technology, services, training, etc. Most often men control major crops and larger livestock while women control minor crops and vegetables and smallstock (IFAD, 1999; RAPA, 1995; Ahmad and Loutfi, 1985 in Gurung, et. al, 2000). As more land that used to be under food crops is being brought

under cash crops, women are losing control over food production and security (Bajracharya, 1994 in Gurung, et. al, 2000).

#### **d. Women Empowerment through Agricultural Development**

Women play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth in developing countries, but they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture (Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2013). Many initiatives from global to local level are carried forward to empower women in almost all the fields and same is in the case in agricultural sector. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) measures the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector is an effort to identify ways to overcome those obstacles and constraints. The Index is a significant innovation in its field and aims to increase understanding of the connections between women's empowerment, food security, and agricultural growth (Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2013). It allows us to identify women who are disempowered and understand how to increase autonomy and decision making in key domains. It is also a useful tool for tracking progress toward gender equality. It is a composite measurement tool that indicates women's control over critical parts of their lives in the household, community, and economy (Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2013).

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is established and setup in almost all parts of the Indian states so as co-ordinate, guide and manage research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences in the entire country (ICAR, 2010). The Directorate has been upgraded especially for women and renamed as "ICAR-Central Institute for Women in Agriculture" (ICAR-CIWA) in the year 2015 replacing Directorate of Women in Agriculture (DRWA). DRWA has been in the forefront undertaking research on issues affecting women and the opportunities in agriculture. It has focused on participatory action research in different technology based theme areas involving rural women to test suitability of technologies for women and suggest for their refinement (Press Information Bureau, 2016).

Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) was launched as a sub component of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in 2011 with a focus

on empowering women in agriculture by strengthening community institutions of poor women farmers to gain more control over the production processes and manage the support systems, enhance access to inputs and services from government and others (Access, 2014).

The literatures available in the field of gender discrimination indicate that although a lot is available in print on the subject, it falls short in highlighting the reasons for the gender discrimination especially in Sikkim. In some of the available literature one or two aspects of the gender discrimination are touched upon but all the issues are not dealt with. The present research work seeks to identify the problems related to gender discrimination in agriculture sector, analyze the role of women in decision making process and government policies and programmes in raising the standard of women in society. The proposed research work, thus, is an endeavor to fill these lacunae by studying the nature and pattern of status of women in India in general and Sikkim in particular which would facilitate further development in the agriculture sector.

### **1.3 RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Women constitute half of the human population worldwide but they are denied of their socio-economic and political rights in all known histories. They have been the victims of patriarchal domination, perpetrated through a long history. In a conflict situation, the women and children became more vulnerable. In every aspect it is the woman who is the sufferers, be it political, social or economic problem of the state. If any kind of disturbance takes place, the prime targets are women. It is the women who are given less importance or paid less in whatever work they do, whether it may be the household work or the agriculture work. When it comes to work, it is always valued as the work which generates income is always valued but the work back at home i.e. unpaid is always ignored. It is counted as duty and given less importance. So, their issues need research and exploration.

In the under developed and developing countries, poverty is the major diseases that has affected the majority of the people. When it comes to poverty, the major sufferers are women. They become the bread winner of the family. Being a woman, belonging to poor group, lacking medical facility and education, leads to

unawareness. They tend to have many mouths to feed with no skills and therefore end doing menial jobs having unequal situation in the labour market.

In developing countries, more than three-fourths of men's work is in market activities. So, men hold the major chunks of income and are recognized for their economic contribution, on the other hand women's works, which are more drudgery, remains unpaid, undervalued and unrecognized. With no economic value given to these activities, the contribution of women is seriously underestimated, and there is no adequate reward or recognition for the burden of work that women carry. Women's work being undervalued or with zero value lead to no entitlements of economic transactions and property ownerships, so they cannot obtain loans from the bank. In contemporary society, women carry a higher share of the total work burden; still they suffer a major undervaluation of their economic status, the status is often equated with income-earning power, where women seems to be lacking behind against men.

The population of Sikkim also depends on agriculture and state being well known for Organic farming has led many to opt for farming. In the process of agricultural farming, like the other women folks, Sikkimese woman also have an important role. About 80% of the women folk are involved in agricultural activities as labourer. They supply the major man power in the agricultural field. It starts from preparing agricultural beds, repairing bunds of the field, soil crushing, and manuring, sowing, weeding, irrigation to the field, harvesting, and preservation of seeds and also the marketing of the product. Women are involved more in agricultural work than the men folk but their work is either not recognized or given less importance. Almost every woman in the rural households is farmer, but the male members are often quoted as farmers of the particular household.

Since independence, many steps has been taken from the international to national to the local level to initiate the importance of women in the field of agriculture for women empowerment. For instance, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979), the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization, Beijing +5 Outcomes Document (2000), the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and many NGO's and INGO's has been set. The NGO's and governmental organizations working at the local level, i.e., in Sikkim are Jagriti,

Chanmari Women's Service Cooperative-Society, Drishti, NABARD, SIDICO and SIMFED. As they have been working really hard to uplift the position of women in the society, in some ways they have been successful but only partially. More strong measures should be taken to improve the position of women in the society and nation at large, so that the world really becomes the just world.

The proposed study focuses on the gender discrimination prevalent in the agricultural sector in Sikkim. The study tries to find out the reasons of discrimination of women and the ways of empowering them. The study also focuses on the position of women in Sikkim.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

1. What is the status of women in Sikkim in general and in the agricultural sector in particular?
2. Why women are always ignored and marginalized in the economic holdings in the agricultural sector?
3. What are the components (factors) of differences between men and women with regards to agricultural sector in Sikkim?
4. How can the gap be bridged between men and women of Sikkim in economic holdings in agricultural sector?

#### **1.5 HYPOTHESES**

1. Patriarchal nature of society has lowered the standard of women or has no position of women in the family or society at large.
2. Socio-economic condition (i.e. illiteracy and lack of awareness) among female members in the society discourage the participation in decision making process.
3. Lack of rights to hold the property in the agricultural sector has created a gap between men and women in the society, which further lowered the position of women in the society.

## **1.6 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The primary objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the nature and pattern of status of women in Sikkim in general and of agricultural sector in particular.
2. To understand the status of women in decision making process in patriarchal society, with reference to women belonging to agricultural sector.
3. To understand the government policy of Sikkim in raising the standard of women in general and rural women engaged in agriculture in particular.
4. To identify the problems related to gender discrimination in Sikkim, especially in agricultural sector.
5. To bridge the gap between men and women in participation in agricultural sector.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is analyzed through descriptive and exploratory research based on both qualitative and quantitative method has been used for the proposed study. The Secondary source includes available literature, publications, documents, newspapers, etc. on issues related to gender discrimination, women position in general and agriculture sector in particular from global to local level. The information from various sources related with the topic in context of Sikkim.

This research was done by conducting a field survey with the help of simple random sampling method in the four districts of Sikkim

The samples for the study were targeted to those women who majorly engaged in agricultural activities. 50 respondents from each district with a total of 200 respondents were examined. 3 villages from each of four districts were selected for carrying out agricultural practices was followed.

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and interviews with the respondents. Questionnaires were divided into open-ended and close-ended question. In the open ended question the interviewee gave the

information that seemed to be appropriate rather than set answers in close ended question. Both types of questions are used under the proposed study. The study is based on in-depth interviews, following face to face interviews along with door-to-door methodology application in order to find out ground reality.

### **1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

As per the requirement of the study, the rural areas of Sikkim were covered. The rural areas being sparsely populated, with difficult terrain and time and financial constraints only twelve villages were selected.

Some of the Challenges experienced during the field study are as follows:

Due to remoteness of study area easy availability of vehicle was not possible. The vehicle hired was bit expensive. In some villages there were no proper road to get access with the vehicle, and had to walk a lot. Due to its remote location there was inaccessibility of grocery stores and eateries while performing the field survey. Packet foods such as biscuits, instant noodles, snack bars and water was carried after the second day of field study due to the problem faced in the first day of the field visit. There was a major problem of accommodation, so local lodges and home-stays have to be booked which really pinched the pocket.

The houses in the study areas are mostly scattered, the minimum time taken to cover distance from one houses to the next house was two - three minute and maximum was ten-fifteen minutes.

In some villages, especially in North district, the area of the residence and the area of the agricultural field was not at the same place, the farmer themselves used to leave early morning and come back late in the evening. So, to meet the respondent the pilot survey was done and had to fix timing as per their availability and that was really time consuming and only two to three houses was interviewed in a day.

Many times the respondents questioned about the intention of the survey. Even by providing basic information about the research at the start of the interview. They believed that we were the part of state or the central government employees, and even thought that we might be from the NGOs. To make them understand was a major problem. Some respondent even asked about the outcomes of the survey and benefits that they would be provided after the responding to the question.



It was brought that the male member interfered a lot while interviewing the respondents and they were the one who was responding first or correcting the answer of the respondent. In one of the villages, the information reached to the local Panchayat that, “two girls are walking around the village carrying pen and paper and asking question to the ladies of each household”, the University ID and permission letter along with questionnaire were shown to Panchayat and also make him understand the intention of the survey.

## **1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is divided into six sections including introduction and conclusion which are as follows:

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This introductory chapter contains general overview of topic including review of literature, research questions, objectives, hypothesis, rational and scope of the study. The various conceptual issues related to gender discrimination in agriculture sector and the methods of data collection is discussed in detail.

### **Chapter II: Determinants of Gender Discrimination in Agriculture Sector**

It contains theoretical understanding of the term gender, gender stereotyping, patriarchy, and gender discrimination. The chapter also tries to explain the linkage between women and agriculture sector and the basis of gender discrimination in agriculture sector.

### **Chapter 3: Status of Sikkimese Women in Agriculture Sector**

This chapter discusses about the status of women in agricultural sector from global to local level. The chapter also provides the demographic pattern, socio cultural profile, economic profile, and status of women of Sikkim in general and agriculture sector in particular.

### **Chapter 4: Government and Civil Society Initiatives and Programmes in Agricultural Sector**

It contains an overview of policies and programmes to safeguard the position of women in general and agriculture sector in particular from global to

regional to national and to local level by governments; national or international organizations or by the concerned NGOS.

### **Chapter V: Analysis and Findings of Field Survey in Sikkim**

It elaborates the field study conducted across 12 villages from 4 district of Sikkim. It also discusses the major findings and effort has been made to analyze the phenomena extracted from the field.

### **Chapter VI: Conclusion**

It contains summarization of the study regarding the status and problem of women in agriculture sector. An effort has been made to identify challenges and measures to solve the problem through the form of some suggestion and recommendation.