

SIKKIM

Ensuring Human Security

Volume 2



Speeches of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling



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INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM, GANGTOK

in association with



INDUS PUBLISHING COMPANY, NEW DELHI



Pawan Chamling



Foreword

*“The best way to make
your dreams come true is
to wake up”*

Since I wrote the foreword to *‘Sikkim: Perspectives and Vision’*, the first volume of the speeches of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling in 2002, the State of Sikkim has experienced some unprecedented progressive changes. The Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) government was again voted to power by an overwhelming majority consecutively for the third time in 2004. This showed much firmer reposition of faith and confidence on the vision and actions of the State Government. It was a contrasting experience. While all over the country the ‘incumbency factor’ ruthlessly lynched the ruling parties including the Union Government, in Sikkim people were celebrating the third consecutive victory of the government led by Pawan Chamling. In the 32 member Sikkim State Assembly only one opposition member could make an entry. This is not good for the avowed principle of checks and balances in a democratic system. However, the people, the most powerful voice of democracy, wanted to traverse this way.

There must have been some substantive qualitative differences and uniqueness in the functioning of the SDF government which made it so popular among the masses. This volume of the speeches entitled *‘Sikkim: Ensuring Human Security’* is all about these differences and uniqueness. Pawan Chamling is a man who incessantly believes in optimism and looking forward. The insurmountable optimism ingrained in his inner-self in fact is his greatest strength. This actually makes him climb from peak to peak. The Nathu la trade route reopening, making Sikkim the Best State in the entire East

and North-East regions of India and repositioning this state with a fabulous national and international image are only some of the inevitable consequences of this optimism-triggered actions.

He is striving to make a significant deviation from the traditional routes and discard orthodox instruments. In doing so he is fully conscious of the great and immeasurable virtues of traditional values. He is well adept with the significance of modern instruments and agencies. He remains enamoured by the great strides made through science and technology. Therefore, he always wants to strike a balance between traditional values and modern practices. His speeches delivered on the occasions of Independence and Republic Day celebrations and nature, environment, science and technology-related functions amply reflect these conscious choices made by him and his government in order to take the Sikkimese people to greater heights.

These speeches are expressions of a simple mind dazzled with grand ideas and significantly long-term thinking. The question is for what and for whom? The central tendency of his speeches is primarily the downtrodden, the grassroot and the people who are yet to see the world outside their hamlets. He wants to make every Sikkimese a stakeholder in the entire politico-economic development of the state. His major focus is to internalize institutions of democracy and make deeper inroads of varied development agencies into the villages of Sikkim. He even appeals to the ultra rich to share their resources for the good of the state. He makes this very clear in his addresses to the Sikkim State Planning Commission meetings and various other literary, cultural and social functions.

Pawan Chamling speaks at length about making Sikkim a high performing state in the country. He wants Sikkim to be counted along with other frontline states. He is fully aware of the acute handicaps a hill and mountainous state like Sikkim faces in comparison to these frontline states. That is why he consistently pleads for new development and planning strategies exclusively for the hill and mountainous states. This he does loudly, clearly and emphatically in the presence of the Prime Minister and the Chief Ministers of all the states in the National Development Council meetings. This firm conviction and out-of-the-box presentation of Pawan Chamling is appreciated by all. This is what makes him different from many of his compatriots in other states.

These speeches of Pawan Chamling could be a major source of reference and research for the future generation as they carry in them a frank account and forthright analysis of the state of Sikkim's political economy today. One enjoys reading them again and again. People who have only heard of his oratory skill will get to share at least a major portion of his beautiful mosaic of thought-process in these speeches. There

will be critics as well to call him utopian and dreamer. In democracy, every one has the right to make his point. In last many years Pawan Chamling's dreams are gradually unfurling to be reality. This makes him more confident, his government more strident and the people of Sikkim more prosperous and contented.

After all leadership is "doing what is right when no one is watching".



8 January 2007

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Preface

Man himself is the leading character in history. He will not be able to change the flow of history unless he brings reforms in the social conditions of the common people and incessantly works towards fulfilling their aspirations and hopes. This is what the Chief Minister of Sikkim, Dr. Pawan Chamling has been doing during the last 12 years of his leading the state.

Invoking the idea of *Naya* and *Sukhi* Sikkim, his speeches range from his progressive thoughts that facilitate the State of Sikkim to enter into the new millennium and play a major role to the spirit of universality, liberal democracy and brotherhood. This is how he wants to bring forth his vision of Sikkim as a model state into reality.

The Department's earlier publication '*Sikkim: Perspectives and Vision*' containing speeches delivered by Chief Minister Dr. Pawan Chamling on different occasions was well received. This was published in collaboration with Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi in 2002. Looking at the overwhelming appreciation of the people, this second volume in the series entitled '*Sikkim: Ensuring Human Security*' is being brought out with the firm belief and fervent hope that the thoughts and ideas expressed and experiences narrated by the Chief Minister would reach far and wide both within the country and outside.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M.G. Kiran', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

M.G. KIRAN, IAS

Secretary

Information & Public Relations Department
Government of Sikkim, Gangtok



Acknowledgements

“Actions speak louder than words”. We are, too readily, familiar with this age-old precept spurring humanity to greater actions calculated to better the world. However, the term ‘Action’ in its generic terms and meaning alone may tend to be misleading. It should be better qualified by desirable adjectives to invariably refer to an action/ actions which is/are desirable, noble, honest, sincere and actions that do good to the greatest number of people as opposed to actions subservient to the wishes and ulterior motive of an individual or a group of individuals. World history is replete with such actions and reactions that combined to considerably impoverish the world and its community, both in terms of physical exploitation and mental exhaustion leading to widespread hatred, aversion to and distaste for general cause of collective peace and brotherhood.

Over the last one decade, we have consistently condensed historical facts to tread a cautious path which would fully address the welfare of the people and their well-being. The collection of speeches delivered on different occasions, I am sure, would form part of historical events summing up the very actions in a combination of veritable words, to preserve all events and occasions conceived and undertaken with all sincerity and honesty. What we have thought, created and discovered would continue to bear fruits and serve the collective interest of the people of Sikkim through the next millennia. The many images the words conjure up in this textual presentation would conclude that our actions have served the greater interest of our society, state and the nation, making great contribution in promoting peace, progress and overall prosperity of the state.

I would sincerely like to thank the people of Sikkim for reposing complete faith on me to conduct the affairs of the state for the last twelve years. The steady support to

our policies and programmes over the years has emboldened us to move ahead with greater vigour and purpose.

I would record my sincere appreciation to all the Members of my Cabinet, Members of Legislative Assembly for the unstinted support to the cause of Sikkim and its people.

I express my sincere thanks to Dr. Mahendra P. Lama, Professor in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi for writing an excellent Foreword to this book and his overall support to bring out this publication.

I am thankful to Shri M.G. Kiran, Secretary, IPR, for all the support rendered by him and Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi for efficiently publishing this volume.

I would like to thank Shri Veeru Bangdel, Shri Padam Chettri and Shri B.P. Rai for their valuable services to bring out this publication.

I express my profound sense of gratefulness to the members of the media fraternity, who have, on different occasions and circumstances, carried our message far and wide to educate and inform our people, policy-makers and intellectuals about our works over the decade.



1st January 2007

PAWAN CHAMLING
Chief Minister of Sikkim
Gangtok

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Section

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INDEPENDENCE DAY
AND
REPUBLIC DAY

1

58th Independence Day Message

Respected fellow Sikkimese,

On the auspicious occasion of the 58th Independence Day of the nation, I extend my heartiest greetings to my fellow Sikkimese and fellow Indians. Having been chosen to lead the third consecutive term of government (in the recently held elections), I feel privileged to address my fellow countrymen in the capacity of a Chief Minister made possible by the great tradition of freedom and free choice won through decades of hard struggle. On this occasion, I also would like to pay tribute to scores of freedom fighters who have left behind example of supreme sacrifice and patriotism.

I would like to begin my message today by putting forward the view on independence the way I look at it. Every time, I have maintained that political freedom is not complete in itself. Together with political freedom, what is equally necessary is economic freedom, social, cultural and linguistic independence. This has become especially pertinent in today's context where development on all fronts is taking place rapidly and human problems have become multi-dimensional in nature. People's wants and aspirations have become more intricate. Today the world is no longer uni-polar in nature. Together with the development of human thought, all areas of human development have also become more broader and all inclusive. Hence, political freedom alone shall not guarantee complete freedom to man.

Many of the values we cherished and the obstacles we faced in the 20th century are no longer the same. We do not come across instances of explicit colonialism nor do we find examples of one-nation subjugation. We are past the era when one powerful nation would enslave another by its superior military power. However, we are still far from achieving complete balance of power among the comity of nations. Still today,

Speech delivered on 15th August 2004 in Gangtok, Sikkim.

we find some instances of imperialist tendencies in different forms and designs. We need to understand these changes in the new century. This shall also lend us new understanding of the concept of freedom in different forms and shades.

We freed our country from the foreign yoke half a century back in 1947. For the last 58 years, we have been a free country. We no longer need to wage military war to free our nation. In a sense, thus, we are not required to invest our mind and strength for the independence of our nation in its physical sense. But, are we free in its comprehensive sense of the term that a human being aspires to be? Should our definition of freedom limit us to freeing our country from British imperialism? This auspicious occasion induces us towards finding answers to all these vexed questions. And we must go ahead to find the answers.

Today we are crippled by many problems. We have become prisoners of circumstantial obligations. The country is free with the self-governing citizens. Even after achieving freedom for so many years now, we still need to struggle for greater social freedom, economic freedom, cultural freedom, so on and so forth. Today the world is beset with formidable challenges. We have to find solutions to all these problems before we could rest in peace.

There has been an increase in cases of social and economic disparities. Problems like poverty, illiteracy, starvation, unemployment, communalism, class and caste discrimination are raising their ugly heads. Ecological imbalance and breakdown of social fabric are a matter of serious concern. Generational gap in terms of values and ideals is equally worrying. Social dilemma and self-centredness have become the order of the day. Unless we free ourselves from all these ills, we cannot claim to be a fully liberalized citizen.

How well are we positioned to defend ourselves against the ill effects of globalization-led forces? Therefore, we have to wage a continuous battle to keep ourselves free from the adverse consequences.

And it becomes our collective responsibility to keep people safe from all these problems. We have been fighting against all these forces to transform our vision of making Sikkim a model state in the country. You are witness to all our sincere endeavours all these years and you can also feel the differences of positive intervention on the part of the State Government.

As a result of our positive policy framework, what we can feel today is not only the spate of developmental activities in material sense but also in the domain of mental and emotional levels. Sikkim is considered today at par with the most developed states of the country. You are aware that in the recently-held Chief Minister's Conclave in New Delhi, Sikkim ranked among the top states in the country. In fact, we enjoyed

the recognition of being the number one state in the education sector among all the smaller states. For the glory bestowed on our state, I seek to express my sincere thanks and congratulate the entire Sikkimese people. You are aware that as of today, Sikkim is the best performing state in the country. On the same spirit, I beg to submit to the people that we have to keep up the tempo and sustain the momentum to make Sikkim the very best state in the country.

As mentioned earlier, political freedom alone cannot guarantee complete freedom to man. Although, we gained freedom from the colonial regime, yet there are many internal and external problems that we face today. India is struggling hard to achieve this second phase of freedom. We, on our part, are fully committed to this task. Many of the positive changes and indications that we have brought about in recent years are almost palpable in our society and state.

Based on our performance, respected Sikkimese people voted us for the third consecutive term in a row. Overwhelmed and humbled by the love and faith that they have bestowed on us, we have gathered extra vigour and encouragement to work still harder for their collective welfare.

We have been in the government for the last ten years. And whatever we did for the Sikkimese people—both material and intellectual—is there for everybody to see and feel. To draw the old phrase, it is an open book. Our endeavour is recognized one after another at the national level. To receive the prestigious Bharat Shiromani award for emotional integration and restoring the institution of democracy in Sikkim was a definitive indicator of our commitment to and achievement in fostering national unity. Likewise, on the environmental front, we received the Greenest Chief Minister of India award, the Manipal University recognized our effort at poverty alleviation. And more recently, on August 6, Sikkim was adjudged as the Best Performing State, topping the list in education sector. All these go a long way to tell the success stories that we have crafted during all these years.

It has been twenty-nine years since Sikkim became part of the Indian Union. However, in all developmental sense and in terms of real achievements, the process had only begun ten years back. In this short span of time, it is great achievement to be adjudged as the best performing state. Having done this, our next target and the inevitable challenge is to make Sikkim the best state in the country. On this occasion, I appeal to all my fellow citizens to contribute and work hard towards achieving this goal.

During the last ten years in government, we have achieved success in diverse areas on an unprecedented scale. Be it education, health, rural development, animal husbandry, agriculture/horticulture and floriculture, hydro-power, tourism, environmental conser-

vation, women empowerment, power decentralization, Panchayati Raj. We have created history and set new standards—both in terms of qualitative improvement and the delivery mechanism.

When we took over the reign of State Government in the year 1994, we were worried to see the near absence of intellectual outputs and exercises on Sikkim. There was lack of clear-cut policy framework and the earlier government had opted for a piece-meal approach in addressing the crucial socio-economic issues. We decided to end this adhoc system and lend them a more formal and institutional shape. As a result, State Planning Commission came into being with a panel of top economists drawn from the national institutions. The government commissioned top economic professionals for preparing Human Development Report and Vision Document on Sikkim. These two documents for the first time helped in determining our strengths, our present status and a road map for future development. We have also in place today the District Planning to oversee planning and implementation of various schemes at the district level.

We have formed Investment Board to work out broad policy framework while dealing with the prospective investors from outside the state. We have also formed State Patent Right Board. We established the Sikkim Akademi, the State Museum and instituted Sikkim Study Series with a view to provide institutional support to the preservation of local languages, culture and traditions. Under the Sikkim Study Series, we commissioned professionals to prepare authentic documents on various aspects of Sikkimese society—its culture, language, literature, politics, geography, environment etc. Some volumes have already been prepared and released. In the state administration, we have introduced the Single Window System to avoid delay and for quick delivery of service. We have today a fully operational forty Community Information Centres equipped with computers. We are also in the process of opening a Software Technology Park in Sikkim.

Looking at the uncertain and unplanned developmental strategy adopted by the earlier government, we carried out what in economic term is known as the 'SWOT analysis'. On the basis of this analysis, we sought to reposition ourselves in delivering a qualitative service to the people. Sikkim, characterized by hilly terrain has its weaknesses, but this equally presents us with its inherent strength also. Based on our pragmatic findings, we set out to identify our priorities that would best take care of our developmental needs and also people's aspirations. Ten years down the line, we have proposed a definite preference of our strength based on our natural resources. I have submitted to my fellow Sikkimese over the years that all our development strategies shall be based on our natural endowments of Sikkim.

Sikkim has today become an exemplary state in the country. Especially in issues like peace, security and political stability, Sikkim has earned great distinction in the

country. Rule of law has been made the order of the day. There is complete transparency in political arena and administration. On the political front, we have again achieved many of our demands as per our policy. Constitutional recognition of Limboo and Tamang as STs, MBC status and facilities to the notified OBCs of the state and the left-out communities like Bahun, Chettri, Newar and Bhujel have been accorded the status of OBCs at the state level with all facilities admissible to the backward classes. Besides, our government has also reserved seats for women, STs, SCs and the OBCs in the Panchayati Raj and in government employment. The other pending demands of the Sikkimese people are being discussed in different fora at the center. We have placed our demands concerning seat reservation for the Limboo and Tamang in the State Legislative Assembly, tribal status for the MBCs, recognition of OBCs at the national level, recognition of Nepali community as the minority community, etc. During my recent visit to New Delhi, I have formally placed these demands with the Prime Minister, Home Minister, Finance Minister and others, and have submitted our Memorandum. I have also been able to extract positive response from all of them.

Complete freedom of cultural and linguistic practices has been the hallmark of Sikkimese society. Dialects spoken by different communities have been recognized as State Languages, paving the way for formal process of preservation and promotion of regional languages and cultures. Different festivals belonging to different communities have been declared as government gazetted holidays. We have safeguarded religious freedom of people and tolerance in a practical sense. Assistance is provided to preserve and promote different religious sites. The installation of the tallest statue of Guru Padmasambhava ever (in the whole world) has become one of the wonders both in its magnitude, splendour and its spiritual substance.

Sikkim has been inducted into the North-Eastern Council bringing in many financial, technological and institutional supports for the overall development of the state. Policy decision has been taken at the national level to open the traditional Nathu la route for trade with Tibet.

When we took over the government in 1994, the internal revenue was a mere Rs. 44.72 crores which has now risen to Rs. 300 crores. Plans are afoot to improve this revenue figure to an impressive mark of Rs. 1500 crores by the year 2015.

The first major policy intervention that we made was to allocate seventy percent of plan annual budget for rural upliftment. Under the policy, we carried out many people-centric schemes and programmes for uplifting the living condition of the Sikkimese people. Sikkim is the first ever state to invest such a major chunk of its state budget for rural sectors. The list could be long and highly elaborative. Land Bank Scheme for the landless Sikkimese, grants of Rs. 20,000 and GCI for rural housing, free distribution

of rice @ 35 kilograms to families falling below the poverty line, distribution of subsidized rice @ Rs. 4 per kilogram for the rural people, are some of them. Every household is provided with potable drinking water, electricity and road connectivity. Free electricity is provided to people of BPL category.

In order to make education and health facilities easily accessible, a number of schools and health centers have been established across the villages. Senior citizens and the physically-challenged Sikkimese people are being given a monthly pension of Rs. 300. The government initiated people-centric schemes like the Janta Mela to reach out facilities at the doorsteps of the people. For the welfare of the poor Sikkimese coming to the capital from far-flung areas, a Janta Bhawan was recently inaugurated and dedicated to the people of Sikkim on August 12, 2004. We have further strengthened legal infrastructure by setting up various courts in the state.

The government, you are all aware, has affected an unprecedented increase in the pay scale of the government employees coupled with granting of unprecedented promotions to them. The State Government has created a conducive atmosphere of democratic peace and overall dignity to work in. When we came to the government, the daily wages of our labourers was only Rs. 20. Now it has gone up by manifold to Rs. 100. In collaboration with the central ministry, we created a separate branch of Indian Reserved Battalions under Sikkim Police to ease the crisis of growing unemployment among the young generation.

To provide easy accessibility to quality education, we have opened up sufficient number of schools at the village level. Colleges have been established in each of the district. We have a Degree College in Namchi, another college is soon coming up at Rhenock. We have also laid the foundation stone of Science College at Soreng. Sanskrit Mahavidyalya, Medical College, Engineering College, higher technical studies centers are already there in our state. All low cost school buildings have been transformed into concrete blocks. Policy decision has been taken to establish a Dental College in the state. Preliminary works have begun for establishment of own university in the state.

Our government is serious about making education more qualitative. Our ideal is to see that the society benefit from education and the educated. The noble goal of education cannot be defined on the basis of degree or certificate earned from a given institution. Our belief is to ensure that every individual who passes out from an institution with flying colour should equally stand the vicissitudes of life and sail through the many hurdles that life presents in different modes and colours.

Besides education, we are equally concerned about the promotion of sports in the state. We have developed necessary infrastructure for the promotion of sports. The

State Government is undertaking a major project to develop national Khel Gaon of international standard for enabling our young and budding sportspersons. Sports are equally encouraged at the village level with development of sports facilities at the village level itself. We want sports to be an integral part of the very living process of our people.

In the health sector, our government has achieved considerable success. With the establishment of modern hospitals in all the districts, we have also upgraded the STNM Hospital by linking it up with the prestigious AIIMS in New Delhi through telemedicine. Sikkim was the first state in the country to carry out the Hepatitis B vaccination for children, free of cost. Our government is now working towards covering all the BPL families under the health insurance scheme. We are seriously considering to frame law on the compulsory annual health check-ups for all the senior citizens in the state. In my view, a balanced combination of mental alertness and physical fitness is the only attribute of a healthy human being. We are sincerely working towards this goal to make our society more robust and our living more meaningful.

The government over the decades has been initiating many schemes to eradicate poverty. For the overall progress of the state, our government is seeking to make the entire state a poverty-free state. Besides granting immediate benefits, we are also trying to promote their productivity in various sectors. We are now firmly promoting a campaign to make each household as an industrial unit, taking up at least one productive scheme by each family.

The State Government has always been involved in tapping the huge potential of our youth force. For the entrepreneurial and hard working youths, we have always been playing the role of a good facilitator. We are sincerely seized of the need to generate as many opportunities as possible for engaging our youths in productive business, trade and other private ventures. Unlike in the past, where the government was the sole arbitrator and the propeller of all economic activities, we have today a wide spectrum of agencies outside the government. The non-governmental organizations, foreign investors, the multi-nationals are all actively involved in shaping the lifestyle of our people. The role of our youths is crucial and they should equally be active and capable partner in the context of multiplicity of economic actors that we increasingly witness today. Youths cannot possibly excel on the basis of easy handouts. What they require is to associate themselves with variety of institutions and technology houses for any meaningful contribution in the nation-building process.

Respected Sikkimese citizens, agriculture is the mainstay of our people. Hence, we want to promote agricultural activities in the state on modern and scientific methods. Greater thrust would be given this time on viable and feasible area-specific cultivation of crops. Cultivation of cash crops like cardamom, ginger, peas, passion fruits, pumpkin,

squash, mushroom, pears and orange shall be our priority. Besides, production of potato seeds, flower seedlings and peas seeds shall be encouraged in the state. We shall seek to bring about rural prosperity through scientific farming of all these crops. The State Government shall systematically discourage use of chemical fertilizers and shall highly encourage use of organic manure to retain the fertility of our soil. By doing so, the State Government shall create and promote a new brand of our produce. By 2009, our goal is to make Sikkim as the total organic state.

Together with agriculture and horticulture, promotion of animal husbandry is also our priority. Dairy, piggery, poultry and fishery shall be promoted and encouraged to attain self-sufficiency in meat, fowl, fish and milk production in the state.

Tourism is one of our intimate areas of operation—both for economic freedom and for easing the pressure on government for employment. In fact, we want to promote tourism as the new profession of the Sikkimese people. We have initiated various measures to promote village tourism enlisting every village within the ambit of tourism activities. Major attention shall be given to the promotion of snow sports like skating, water sports, environment-related tourism. We would like to give tourism trade an altogether new dimension to include natural falls, lakes, forest including cultural festival, flower festival and pilgrimage tourism. We are working sincerely to make eco-friendly tourism as the new profession of the Sikkimese people.

Sikkim is a rich reservoir of natural resources and this surely forms a major part of our strength, the competitive advantage in relation to many other states in the country. We feel that without tapping in the huge natural resources, otherwise wasted, we cannot bring about desired level of progress and prosperity. We want to make good use of our resources for the betterment of Sikkimese people. Hence, generating hydro-power in the state is our priority. You are all aware that we have been developing the long stretch of Teesta basin for generation of electricity in collaboration with the reputed power corporations of the country. We are going ahead with our plan to improve the generating capacity to 4000 MW of hydro-electricity by 2015. Apart from what nature can offer us, we have very limited choice for any other feasible economic activities. Hence, we have to utilize our limited resources wisely to give fresh lease of life and direction to our state's economy. Sustainability continues to remain our challenge. All of us should be thorough with the relevance of sustainability before we embark on any economic project. This would serve twin purpose of conservation and also securing sustainable resource base for our coming generations.

Besides tapping the huge potential of our natural resources, we are also going to concentrate on areas like promotion of quality education, health, sports, rural development and youth activities.

Respected citizens, on the occasion of the Independence Day, I would like to put forward some of our new programmes that we are going to undertake in the days to come:

- In order to strengthen the institution of Panchayati Raj, the process of power decentralization shall be further expanded and broadened. We would divide Sikkim into thirty administrative blocks and establish Block Development Office in each one of them. In the next financial year, work shall commence for development of infrastructure including the offices in all the thirty blocks.
- In order to ensure greater participation of general public in state administration, Panchayat members shall be further empowered and made more accountable.
- More power shall be given to the Zilla Panchayats for taking up various schemes in public interest.
- Works within the limit of Rs. 50 lakhs shall be implemented at the Zilla Panchayat level.
- One regional Secretariat shall be established at Jorethang for South and West Sikkim.
- Financial aid shall be given to college students falling under the BPL category.
- All people below poverty line shall be covered under the Health Insurance Scheme.
- All the physically-challenged citizens of Sikkim shall be given a monthly pension of Rs. 500.
- An additional 10,000 households shall be identified for distribution of subsidized rice at the rate of Rs. 4.00 per kilogram.
- To improve agricultural output, a total of five crores of passion fruits seedlings shall be provided to the farmers for mass fruits farming.
- By 2009, a total of five crores of orange and pear saplings each shall be supplied to the farmers for cultivation.
- To transform Sikkim into a poverty-free state, all poverty alleviation incentives and schemes launched and implemented so far shall be retained.
- We shall further intensify our campaign to provide quality education and health services to make people healthy and wise.
- All possible avenues for self-employment shall be explored for the benefit of educated unemployed and our youth force. All programmes undertaken by the government shall have a special bearing on the needs and aspirations of the youths.

- We shall undertake plans and programmes and policy decision that may be necessary to achieve our goal of making Sikkim as the very best state in the country.
- Government this time shall increasingly formulate and implement long term programme so that the work that we accomplish in the next 5 years shall continue to bear fruits even after 100 years for the welfare of the next generations to come.

Under the democratic form of government, people are the ultimate custodians and the masters of all rights and privileges as provided under *loktantra*. But this equally implies that the responsibility of nation-building also rests with its people. We cannot conceive of a master with only rights but no responsibility. Hence, safeguarding the integrity and sovereignty of the country is the sole responsibility of the people. Therefore, it is widely held that the dignity of a given nation depends on the character of its citizens.

Our government has launched and implemented a number of people-centric programmes to give to its people complete freedom in its holistic connotation. In the days to come, we shall follow the same spirit that guided us so far in the service of the people for achieving peace, progress and prosperity of the state and its people.

Towards the conclusion, I beg your permission to quote reference to a substantial definition of democracy and freedom offered by a scholar. It reads, “Freedom is when the people can speak. Democracy is when the government listens.” As said earlier in many occasions, our government has restored the lost voices of the people and gave unto them the elemental freedom to see, to hear and to speak their minds in a fearless and frank manner. In short, our government has listened to your calling, to your needs and to your aspirations.

Respected fellow citizens,

Today we are marching ahead towards a new horizon—horizon that leads to a prosperous and developed Sikkim. We can feel the warmth of a new vista of peace, prosperity and economic freedom. However, among us there is a general attitude growing to dishonor the very dignity of labour. We seem to have quite forgotten the biblical injunction to earn our bread with the sweat of our brows! This does not augur well for our future progress. This attitude, indeed, causes stagnation and not progress. Now we have to promote a sense of honour for labour and to respect its values. We need to promote positive thought process in service of society, state and the nation. Every citizen should be dutiful to his responsibility and make everyone around us dutiful, hardworking and tolerant. We also feel our society adversely influenced by narrow consideration like that of communalism. We cannot afford to subscribe to all these

narrow thoughts, for this will only push you backwards in time. Nowhere in the world has anyone benefited anything out of such narrow considerations. Suffice it to remember that the rights and privileges of a citizen are safeguarded by the Constitution and as provided under the law of the land.

In this globalized world, our immediate challenge is also to rescue human values, values like mutual respect, brotherhood and humanism as a whole from the rising cruel clutches of the self-centred humanity. Everyone needs to contribute towards revitalizing the traditional faith in the inherent goodness of man and that of the creation.

With a humble appeal thus, I once again extend my warm greetings and best wishes to all the Sikkimese people on this great occasion.

Jai Hind.

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