

# SIKKIM

Exploring the Newer Frontiers

Volume 3



*Speeches of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling*



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## Exploring the Newer Frontiers

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Volume 3



INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM, GANGTOK

in association with



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Pawan Chamling





## Foreword

*“The great thing in this world is,  
not so much where we stand,  
as in what direction we are moving”*

One of the most striking features of Sikkim in the last one decade has been its conscious and significant move from a traditional inward-looking posture to a dynamic outward-looking attitude. This has had several positive impacts on Sikkim. Firstly, the discourse and debate in Sikkim about the correctness in its decision to merge with India mesmerized post-1975 Sikkim for full two decades. This was a harrowing phase. This has been for the first time discarded in toto by the politico-social elites and the mass in general. There were remnants of pre-merger political institutions and practices which became outdated and redundant in the face of openness and opportunities brought about by a forceful and steady democratization of the state. This indicated resurgence of a forward-looking Sikkim.

Secondly, the entire orientation of the economy of the state which remained primarily driven by the government has undergone changes. There is steady liberalization in the economy, presence of multiplicity of development players, skill development and social incentives that are preparing a large number of Sikkimese to go out of the state and grab opportunities in a newly emerging India. Most importantly for the first time the Sikkimese people have achieved a significant level of self-confidence to compete at the national level.

Thirdly, the state is now not only firmly integrated with the Indian Union but also striving to be a leading player in the country. These are indicated by all the major socio-economic indicators where Sikkim provides fairly competitive indices.

And finally, it is for the first time Sikkim as a brand name is fast making its mark both at the national and international markets. At no point of time in its modern history Sikkim was so elaborately covered by national and global media for its achievements.

This collection of Pawan Chamling's speeches entitled '*Sikkim: Exploring the Newer Frontiers*' (Vol. 3, 2007) exactly provides an account of how Sikkim steadily unshackled itself from the 'backward tag' and moved towards an attractively happening state. This all happened during Pawan Chamling's leadership. In fact, if one reads all the three volumes of speeches of the Chief Minister including '*Sikkim: Perspectives and Vision*' (Vol. 1, 2002) and '*Sikkim: Ensuring Human Security*' (Vol. 2, 2007), a fairly comprehensive view of what really graduated this state from an essentially inward-looking to outward-reaching state can be obtained.

In this volume Pawan Chamling makes very elaborate attempts to put Sikkim on the national and international perspectives. His speeches delivered at various fora in Singapore, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Switzerland and United Kingdom very clearly indicate the urge of the people of Sikkim to mingle with the global societies for bringing home knowledge base, technology, expertise and other resources. It is more than clear from his speeches that Sikkim also wants to share its own success stories with the national and international community. Interestingly in all these speeches Pawan Chamling puts forward ideas that are typical Sikkimese, concepts that are original and purposes that are honest and forthright. There is a distinct grassroot flavour in all his speeches though they are delivered far away from the Sikkimese grassroots.

Speeches delivered on the occasion of the reopening of historic Nathu la trade route are both touchingly nostalgic and highly forward-looking. His visions very clearly come out as one of his major dreams of reopening Nathu la trade route gets fulfilled. In one of his widely acclaimed speeches he said, "this was the route that linked vast masses of South Asian subcontinent with China and Central Asia. This cultural highway once triggered a chain of religious contacts, commercial exchanges and sharing of mountain commons. The representatives of king Ashoka in India and traveller-scholars like Fa Hien and Hieun Tsang from China were the harbingers of such contacts . . . . The travellers like Doughlas Freshfield, David Robertson, D.J.F. Newall and John Clarke provide us with beautiful and nostalgic accounts of situations surrounding this trade route". One will be surprised to see that perhaps in tune with his ideas the Government of India has now inaugurated the renovated Hieun Tsang's Memorial Hall in Nalanda in presence of the Chinese Foreign Minister on 12 February 2007.

Pawan Chamling's speeches carry in them a contemporary history, narration of his love and affections for the people of Sikkim and India and most importantly his expressions of what he wants to do for the upliftment of the masses. In such a short



time of one decade, this tiny state of slightly over half a million people has done so much, so immense and so far-reaching. Pawan Chamling's speeches adequately highlight as to how the state achieved all these that were not foreseeable even 15 years back and are not foreseen today also in many of the other Indian states. His zeal, optimism and perseverance adequately reflected in these speeches are something which could be called matchless and formidable. One hopes that the next volumes of his speeches make the ideas of NEW SIKKIM reach its pinnacle.

This is where I firmly believe that "the world is blessed most by men who do things, not by those who merely talk about them."

1 March 2007



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to the Chief Minister of Sikkim



## 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 third volume in the series entitled '*Sikkim: Exploring the Newer Frontiers*' 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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SIKKIM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
AND  
ANNUAL BUDGET PRESENTATION



# 1

## State Legislative Assembly

Madam Speaker,

I stand here to mark the last session of the 6th Sikkim State Assembly. I would, therefore, take this privilege given by this august House to primarily thank the people of Sikkim for their warmth, support, blessings and best wishes which enabled us to successfully run the government for the last ten years. My dear colleagues and me cannot express in words as to how indebted we are to the people of Sikkim for their act of kindness and benevolence. The Sikkimese people have been with us during our most challenging and difficult times. They remained with us when the situation was dark and gloomy. Therefore, the credit of ushering in bright and sprightly situation we have in Sikkim today, goes to the people of Sikkim. My government has been only an instrument, a facilitator and a supervisor in the entire people-centric process of giving Sikkim the most enviable position today in the country.

Please accept our deepest gratitude for what you have done. Our hearty thanks to each and every Sikkimese people for your immense contributions.

We profusely thank: our old revered people; our mothers and sisters; our young boys and girls; our physically-challenged citizens; our college and school students; our farmers, workers and labourers; our government officials; our teachers in schools, colleges and other institutions; our sportsmen, journalists, intellectuals, writers, musicians, painters, doctors, engineers, architects, social scientists and natural scientists and technologists; our associations and institutions representing various professions, tribes and castes; our traders and industrialists, entrepreneurs.

We want to extend our abundant thanks to: our Panchayat members; our political workers both in the ruling and the opposition parties; social workers; NGOs and other grassroot organizations.

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Speech delivered on 5th February 2004 in Gangtok, Sikkim.

I would like to personally thank the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the State Assembly. Hon'ble Madam and Sir, you have made commendable contributions to keep the dignity and decorum of the House at the highest possible level.

I would very heartily thank my own colleagues in the Cabinet and the Party who have collectively worked for the well-being of the people of Sikkim. Each one of you has been valuable and precious to the government and the party.

In the 1970s, the Sikkimese people chose to break away from their past and live under a new system of governance. Sikkim became a constituent state of India and started marching on the democratic principles. Many of us thought that these changes were inevitable as everyone wanted development, social change and upward mobilization. But our hopes were soon belied as democracy, the most fundamental pillar of our system, was tampered with and the political power could not appreciate the inherent aspects of democracy. Democracy fell and suffered in the iron hands with the velvet gloves.

Let me quote what Winston Churchill had to say about politics. He said,

“Politics are almost as exciting as war and quite as dangerous. In war you can only be killed once, but in politics—many times”.

For some years we remained silent on this phenomenon of tyranny. For some more years, we started discussing and debating on this phenomenon of one-man politics. And then we openly revolted. We made a vow to stop this process and thereby the great sufferings of the people at large. We wanted to give a death blow to this symbol of feudalism, exploitation and anti-humanism.

This is how the Sikkim Democratic Front was born. We were soon given the popular mandate to run the government and govern this beautiful state. Therefore, the SDF is the symbol of revolt. It represents the collective voice and the social will of the Sikkimese people. It is the forum of all the upholders of democratic principles and rights.

The government led by the Sikkim Democratic Front party is now completing ten years of its rule in the state. We have conducted the affairs of running the government all these years with dazzling all round performances because we are the friends, well-wishers and the champions of people's causes. Sikkimese people are our strongest strength. They are our hopes and they are our conscience. Their dignity is our basic foundation. Their prosperity is our immediate objective and their happiness is our ultimate goal.

In the long journey of almost ten years of running the government in a responsible and serious manner, we have had many ups and downs. We had to undergo many



trials and tribulations. Each day has been different. Each moment has brought new challenges and opportunities to us.

Our interactions at all levels have been very enriching. I have personally learnt so much from the thoughts and experiences of the people. Exchange of views with all strata has been very rewarding. I have seen how talented are our villagers. I have realized how important it is for us to conserve our natural and cultural heritage. I have visited villages, valleys and mountain areas. They all have renewed my abiding faith on our traditional strengths.

In the last ten years, my dear colleagues and me, and I am sure, my officials witnessed both illuminating and dusky and dim Sikkim, both brilliant and lively, and cheerless and desolate faces of our rural areas, both gloomy and joyless, and radiant and sparkling villagers and both pessimistic and lustrous and warm youths. The older generation has been a source of inspiration. They are the ones who enkindle in us immense courage and action that are required in working for the Sikkim and the Sikkimese people.

In this decade of our very delightful journey, some of our esteemed colleagues passed away for heavenly abode. A valiant soldier like Sanjog Chettri became the martyr. We also lost some of our valiant and steadfast friends who had been with us in thick and thin. Late Shri Kalzang Gyatso, former Rajya Sabha MP, C.B. Katuwal, former MP, V.C. Ganju Lama, Digay Bhutia, ex-MLA, Sang Dorjee Tamang, MLA, Ratna Bijay Rai, ex-MLA, Sompen Lucksom, N.K. Subedi, Tshering Kazi, Jas Bahadur Chettri, Namgay Bhutia, Palden Bhutia, Kalu Rai, Binod Pradhan, and Kul Bahadur Rai are no longer with us. They were solid, substantive and very resourceful. These colleagues died so young and so promising. They brought light to actions and immensely contributed to our collective effort of building a new Sikkim. They were there always and would remain with us always. We shall never forget their concerns and commitments. We remember them this day and the task we together embarked upon will have to continue.

Let the people of Sikkim know that this is what we did in the last ten years. We worked with a zeal and speed unparalleled in the history of modern Sikkim. We gave patient hearing to each and every individual and institution. We looked into all the grievances and difficulties. We gave both individual and societal solutions. Yet we devised a collective response and state-level interventions in all these. We have realized that for all these, we will have to bring about fundamental changes in our system, in our attitude and in our approach. We have now started working towards all these. I am sure our mission will be a successful one.

Our government has been able to fulfill all that we had promised in our election manifesto in 1994 and all subsequent elections. Take any field, any village, any sector

and any segment of our society. You will find that we have delivered what we had promised. Ask any visitor or any observer from outside Sikkim about what they feel about Sikkim. They will tell you the difference.

This is clearly reflected in the image we have projected and built about Sikkim and the Sikkimese people at the regional, national and international level. Our stature today is unquestioned. Today Sikkim is widely known for its development and economic growth, political stability, social tranquility, quality of governance, reforms, communal harmony, high standard of environmental management and crime-free situation.

- Sikkim became the eighth member of the North-Eastern Council (NEC). This inclusion will bring about tremendous amount of financial, institutional and infrastructural benefits to the state.
- Top dignitaries of the country including Vice-President, Prime Minister, Home Minister, Defense Minister and others visited the state.
- Other national and international dignitaries including the heads of the United Nations, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, AusAid, USAID offices in India, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, intellectuals, scientists, environmentalists, economists, industrialists, legal experts, politicians, public figures, media men and social activists visited Sikkim. Sikkim also had the privilege of receiving representatives of very renowned national and international donor agencies, non-governmental organizations and other development agencies.

As a result, a range of projects and development programmes have been initiated by the international and national non-governmental, multilateral and donor agencies in the state.

- Sikkim has obtained very extensive coverage in both national and international media.
- Sikkim has emerged as the Conference Capital of the North-East. A large number of regional, national and international seminars/conferences/workshops have been held in Sikkim.
- Sikkim became the third state in the country to prepare the *Human Development Report* in 2001. By also publishing the same in Nepali language, Sikkim possibly became the first state in the country to publish the Human Development Report in a national language.
- Sikkim is also one of the first states to prepare a vision document entitled '*Sikkim: The People's Vision*'.
- India's trade with China is now possible through reopening of the traditional trade route via Nathu la. The gains to Sikkim will be enormous.

- The survey on the 'State of India's Public Services: Millennium Survey of States' done by the ORG-MARG and PAC in 2002 ranked Sikkim as one of the top states in the country in the arena of public services including drinking water, health, road and road transport, public distribution system, school education and domestic sanitation facilities.

All of us would like to know about where do we stand today in India? With great sense of satisfaction let me state before this august House that out of the 28 States and 7 Union Territories in the country, Sikkim's:

- Per capita income growth rate is 5th highest in the country.
- Per capita income is 10th highest.
- Per capita Plan Outlay is the 3rd highest.
- Literacy rate is the 16th highest.
- Infant mortality rate is the 13th lowest.
- Fertility rate is the 12th lowest.
- Index of Social and Economic Infrastructure is the 9th highest.
- Access to safe drinking water in percent of households is the 6th highest.
- Plan Expenditure on Social Sector is the 4th highest.
- Average per capita per annum of externally-aided projects is the 10th highest
- Gross Fiscal Deficit/Plan Expenditure is the 4th lowest.
- Human Development Index (HDI) has steadily improved from 0.454 in 1991 and 0.509 in 1995 to 0.532 in 1998. This is significantly higher than many other states of India.

When we started our journey as the government in 1994, the financial situation in the state was in a very poor and alarming condition. We had debt and liability everywhere and with all the institutions.

However, we were determined to change the situation to our favour. We worked hard, injected discipline in the expenditure norms and patterns and subjected ourselves to self-imposed discipline. At the same time we started looking for diverse sources of revenues. We convinced the Union Government about the honesty of our purpose. Seeing our firm conviction and solid commitment to people-centric development programmes, we were given whatever we wanted by the Union Government. Situation started changing and today we are at a very strong platform.

Today our financial position is sound and upbeat. Some states in the country have defaulted in the payment of salaries to the government officials whereas we make



advance payments of salaries. Many states have a large number of people without proper shelter, drinking water, educational facilities, health amenities and electricity. Our state has provided all of these including food items at an easily affordable price. All these are possible, because each action of our government is well-thought out, prudently planned and seriously implemented.

1) Increased Development Spending:

- The Development Plan allocations in different Plans have recorded very significant increases. As against a Plan outlay of Rs. 216.67 crores in the 7th Plan (1985-90) and Rs. 1091.32 crores in the 9th Plan (1997-2002), Sikkim's 10th Plan (2002-2007) outlay has been fixed as Rs. 1655.74 crores.

2) Bright Performance in State Domestic Product and Per Capita Income:

- After 1995-96 both the Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) and per capita income have always recorded a very steady growth.
- The NSDP at current prices increased from Rs. 426 crores in 1995-96 to Rs. 891 crores in 2001-2002.
- The per capita income also almost doubled from Rs. 8905 in 1995-96 to Rs. 16,143 in 2001-02.
- This means both the NSDP and per capita income recorded a rather high growth rate of 18.19 percent and 13.55 percent per annum respectively.
- Sikkim maintained one of the highest economic growth rates in the country during the 9th Plan. As mentioned in the 10th Five-Year Plan (2002-2007) document (published by Planning Commission, New Delhi) with a growth rate of 8.3 percent Sikkim was second to only Pondicherry, Chandigarh and Delhi. Sikkim was far ahead of many well-performing states.

3) Growing Revenue:

- Sikkim has started to generate handsome amount of revenue of its own that will lead the state to a self-sustainable situation. Our tax revenue increased from Rs. 27.28 crores in 1995-96 to Rs. 105.53 crores in 2002-03. Most significantly, our non-tax gross revenue increased to Rs. 1316 crores and a net non-tax revenue of Rs. 143.36 crores in 2002-2003.
- Fiscal deficit has been drastically brought down from 11 percent in 1999-2000 to one percent in 2002-2003.
- Tax-GSDP ratio has increased from six percent in 1999-00 to nine percent in 2002-2003 and non-tax-GSDP ratio from eight percent to 13 percent during the same period of time.

4) Falling Poverty Level:

- The percentage of population below poverty line has gone down steadily from 41.43 percent in 1993-94 to 36.55 percent in 1999-2000. By 2007 it is likely to go down to less than 33 percent.

In the last ten years of our being in the government, we have single-mindedly devoted our time, effort and resources in building as many institutions as possible in the state. The institutions we have set up are diverse and cater to the all round development of Sikkim.

We firmly believe that it is the institution which will always remain as a strong link between the past and the present generation. It is the institution that smoothly ushers the present into the future.

It is in institutions we can make policies. Debating and discourse is not a tea shop or a motor stand gossiping. It is thinking, reading, understanding, consulting, discussing to arrive at a constructive conclusion. This conclusion can then be used for meaningful political action.

We have set up institutions in very crucial sectors like health, education, agriculture, environment, trade and commerce, tourism, science and technology. Let me name some of these institutions:

- Sikkim State Planning Commission.
- Agriculture Export Zone.
- New colleges and schools.
- Sikkim Akademi.
- Mass Communication Centre (is being designed and implemented by Jamia Milia University in New Delhi).
- Himalayan Centre for Adventure Tourism.
- Chintan Bhavan and Samman Bhavan.
- Sikkim Board of Investment.
- Encouraged a large number of non-governmental organizations in the development sector which includes Watershed Management Institute by Social Work and Research Centre in Tilonia, Rajasthan, Sikkim Development Foundation, Eco-tourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim and Voluntary Health Association of Sikkim.
- Under the leadership of the Chief Minister, an extraordinary and unique Round Table Meeting was held between the Sikkim Government and the NGOs (non-

governmental organizations) and other institutions at India International Centre, New Delhi in December 2000. This Round Table was attended by a very distinguished group of dignitaries representing very well-known and eminent institutions. NGOs from Sikkim, Sikkim Government officials, Union Government officials and experts participated in the deliberations with positive results.

It is during our regime many distinguished Sikkimese have got national awards, honours and other distinctions.

- One of our valiant soldiers Sanjog Chettri got the top gallantry Ashok Chakra. He attained martyrdom while fighting against the terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir.
- The first Chief Minister Shri Kazi Lhendup Dorjee was conferred the Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award of the country,
- Shri Danny Denzongpa has been conferred with the Padma Shri.
- Our litterateurs, cultural doyens, craftsmen and intellectuals have brought laurels to the state. These awards include Sahitya Akademi award, Sangeet Natak Akademi awards and range of awards given by both the Union Government and affiliated institutions and other prestigious private institutions.
- Sikkimese including the Chief Minister have been conferred highest degrees including doctorates and honoris causa.
- Sikkim Tourism Department bagged the national award for the best performing state in the North-East for 2001-2002 for the fourth consecutive year.

The villages are the greatest asset and strength of the Sikkimese society. We are, therefore, extensively using the decentralization and devolution under the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution to be the basic policy instrument. We have conducted two rounds of Panchayat elections where our youths have actively participated. What have we done for our villagers, poor and marginalized people?

The Sikkim Democratic Front government has provided direct assistance to the needy sections of the population by:

- Exempting poor farmers from paying toll tax for their products brought to bazaar for sale.
- Providing housing grants of Rs. 20,000 each for needy families.
- Providing GCI sheets free of cost to needy families for house construction.
- Distributing LPG gas stoves free of cost to families living below poverty line. After the launch of LPG distribution scheme in 2002, the government has already covered a total of 16,381 beneficiaries till date for Rs. 4.23 crores.
- Achieving 100 percent electrification in rural and urban households in Sikkim.



- Covering 15,800 households during 1994-2003 under the 2-point free connection scheme, now the government has further moved on to provide free electricity to poor rural households.
- Constructing a Janata Bhawan at Gangtok for the poor people who visit Gangtok for various reasons.
- Providing safe drinking water to 100 percent of the population both in rural and urban areas.
- Simplifying the licensing system for rural traders and businessmen desirous to start a business in rural areas.
- Conducting the rounds of Janata Melas all over the state under which the needy people were distributed with items of their daily requirements including gas stoves and blankets.
- Launched Annadan Yojana for the people below poverty line which provides for free distribution of rice @ 35 kilograms monthly for poor households. They are identified in a particular village by the village community itself for relief and support.
- The government has provided half acre of land to the landless Sikkimese for construction of dwelling house. The idea has been to give them a proper address and raise their prestige and self-esteem. Under the Land Bank Scheme, thousands of Sikkimese have benefited making them the owners of homes.

The SDF government is trying to revolutionize the role of Panchayats in all the development activities. This is done to realize our avowed goal of "People's Supremacy". We want to have a leader in every village. Leader is very important for any social and political action.

In Kautilya's '*Arthashastra*' when he discusses the role of the king he says,

"If the king is energetic, his subjects will be equally energetic. If he is reckless, they will not only be reckless likewise, but also eat into his works. Besides, a reckless king will easily fall into the hands of his enemies. Hence the king shall ever be wakeful. In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good. Hence the king shall ever be active and discharge his duties".

- In order to empower the Panchayats at the grassroot level, the government has delegated more administrative and financial powers to the Panchayats. Administrative control of all government institutions like Primary Schools, Primary Health Sub-centres, VLO Centres, Libraries, Community Information Centres, Rural Tourism, Minor Irrigation Works, Community Centres, Grounds for Sports etc.

falling under a Gram Panchayat Unit (GPU) are being given to the President of the particular Gram Panchayat.

- Gram Panchayat Units will now have the power to prepare, sanction, supervise and implement various schemes in their own areas. To enable them to exercise these powers each Gram Panchayat Unit in the state is being provided with an amount of Rs. 10 lakhs and four Zilla Panchayats are being allotted with an amount of Rs. 50 lakhs each. This will benefit all 166 Gram Panchayat Units and four Zilla Panchayats in the state.
- Out of 166 Gram Panchayat Units in the state, 102 GPUs have self-contained Panchayat Bhavans and 10 more such Bhavans will be constructed this year. Apart from this, Gram Panchayat Units also have bank accounts in district headquarters operated by DDO.
- Village libraries have been established in each Gram Panchayat Unit in the state to enable local citizens to get access to books, magazines, periodicals and newspapers.
- Zilla Adhyaksha and Upa-Adhyaksha have been accorded the status of Minister of State and Deputy Minister of State. The government has also honoured them with a monthly honorarium. Likewise, Zilla members and members of Gram Panchayat Unit are being provided with monthly honorarium.
- Decentralization of payment system has been introduced. All payments are now made at the district headquarters through the Pay & Accounts offices. Zilla Panchayat bhavans are run by officials of the rank of Joint Directors and below and other subordinate staff.
- The traditional Dzumsa system at Lachen and Lachung has been retained and protected. It is run and administered by the locally-elected head known as Pipon from among the local populace.

### **What Have We Done for Our Youths?**

The SDF government has made very substantive and consistent efforts for the all-round development of youths in the state. It launched various programmes including in education, sports, health, employment, tourism, intellectual activities, industries and many other areas that directly impinge upon the youth and their aspirations. Indeed, to start with, the SDF government created a new and independent Sports and Youth Affairs Department in the state.

- The SDF government has created a large number of job opportunities for the youths both in the governmental and non-governmental sectors. We have also



enabled the youths to grab the opportunities outside the state by extending a range of facilities to them.

- There are several development projects both in the government sector like Teesta Hydel Power projects and in the private and non-governmental sector like Indo-Swiss projects, Manipal Hospital projects and Engineering projects that have generated considerable number of employment for the youths.
- For the first time in the state, the Sikkim Democratic Front government also launched the Chief Minister's Self-Employment Scheme (CMSE). This scheme enables the educated unemployed youth of Sikkim to start their own ventures.
- During the last two years since its inception, the government has sanctioned and disbursed loans to 2293 young entrepreneurs amounting to Rs. 14.96 crores.
- State Sports Policy for Sikkim has been formulated and announced.
- The government has also launched the Swarozgar Udyog Yojana which provides for assistance in the form of cash and materials amounting to Rs. 25,000 to the vocationally trained unemployed youths to establish their own businesses. In the financial year 2002-03 alone, the government spent an amount of Rs. 8.05 lakhs reaching out to a total of 1071 craftspersons.
- Skill Development Fund is also being launched primarily to build a range of skills among the youths in the state. Youth can take advantage of this fund to undertake varieties of skill building trainings, professional courses and other capacity-building exercises anywhere in the country.
- A number of youth hostels have been built across the state. A 50-bedded Youth Hostel at 6th mile Tadong was recently inaugurated on January 25, 2004. This is one of the few hostels with all modern facilities.
- A new adventure tourist complex, the Rangit Water World (RWW) at the NHPC Dam at Legship—the first of its kind for boating and rafting in dam water—was inaugurated. It is a new tourist spot that provides a major employment opportunity for the local youth.
- The State Government has also launched “Talent Search among Youths” project in which talented young students are selected from across the state. They are put under intensive training course in sports besides providing for their education, food and lodging.
- Work for upgrading Paljor Stadium to a full-fledged stadium has been going on. The stadium with all modern facilities is within completion now. Gymnasium halls have been established in all four districts. Playgrounds are being provided in all the Gram Panchayat Units.



- Under the Incentives to Promising Sportspersons an award of Rs. 1 crore will be given to the sportsperson who wins a Gold Medal, Rs. 50 lakhs for a Silver Medal and Rs. 25 lakhs for a Bronze Medal in the Olympics. Under the Asian Games category, the cash prize respectively for gold, silver and bronze is Rs. 15 lakhs, Rs. 10 lakhs and Rs. 5 lakhs. Similarly under the national games, the prizes are Rs. 5 lakhs, Rs. 3 lakhs and Rs. 2 lakhs.
- The government has also instituted State Award with Rs. 1 lakh in cash and a citation for prominent Sikkimese in fields like literature, music, drama, arts and sports. Captain Ramsingh Thakuri, late Pem Dorji Bhutia, Shri Jas Lal Pradhan, late Tulsi Ram Sharma Kashyap, Danny Denzongpa, Sonam Tshering Lepcha, Lharipa Ganden Lama, late Benjamin Rai, Baichung Bhutia and Shri Chugden Sherpa are some of the recipients of the State Award till date.
- The new Incentive Scheme of providing cash awards to deserving sportspersons has already been announced and notified. In the year 2003 alone, an amount of Rs. 3 lakhs was distributed to 64 outstanding sportspersons who had secured medals at the national and zonal level competitions.
- Khel gaon/Sports village: The State Government has approved the establishment of a holistic 'Khel Gaon' for which a land measuring 50 acres is being earmarked. The 'Khel Gaon' will have state-of-the-art sports facilities of international standard for all games including a golf course and a research centre for sports science. This is going to be the first such facility in the country.
- The government has also announced its decision to award 2% reservation in government employment to artists and sportspersons.

In the government, we have been the strongest votary of rule of law. Every one is equal in the eyes of law. If one flouts the law and goes scot free, there will be scores of people and institutions to do so. This is how system gets infected, society gets fragmented and country gets disintegrated. Therefore, we have followed and abided by the system, however outdated some of them may be. This has brought a very distinct and unquestionable faith and confidence of the people on both the government and the system. This is what is important for the state and the nation. I am at the same time a firm believer in the changes and reforms. We will have to reform, amend and change our system, laws and norms as per the changing time and needs of the people and society.

As the head of the government, I am directly accountable to the people. At the same time every individual who works for the government is accountable to the system.

To the government employees of Sikkim, our government has given due honour and

prestige. We pledge to keep up the same spirit so that all the government employees can work with more commitment, zeal and enthusiasm. The government feels that the government employees are the invaluable partners in the development of the state.

- The government effected a record increase in their basic salary structure by more than 300 percent.
- Teachers are the best paid employees compared to employees of other services in the state and elsewhere in the country.
- The government granted promotion on an unprecedented scale to all qualifying employees, in many cases, overcoming stagnation suffered in the past.
- The qualifying years of advancement grade for primary teachers and school mothers have been reduced from fifteen years to ten years.
- The government has granted Leave Encashment benefit to the Grade III and Grade IV employees.
- Ration allowance @ Rs. 400 per month has been given to Police personnel.
- Physically-challenged employees of government and Public Sector Undertakings are being paid monthly conveyance allowance of Rs. 100 per head.

The daily emoluments of muster roll workers and other temporary employees have been raised to Rs. 85-100 per day with effect from April 2004.

- The government also, for the first time, introduced Compassionate Appointment scheme for the non-gazetted employees. When the sole bread-earner in a family passes away, employment is given to the wife of the deceased or the next of kin of the deceased for family sustenance. Till date, 500 such appointments have been made by the State Government.

The voters are a very conscious lot today. They do not buy cheap gimmicks. They do not want comedians as politicians. More than anything else they can distinguish between a sincere and committed leader and a phony and artificial character. We will have to be serious about it.

Our actions and their results are all before the people. We have consistently tried to inject social justice because we believe that the entire concept of distributive justice is based on this. Therefore, we have taken a range of affirmative actions which will have a very rewarding impact in the long-run.

- After the persistent demand made by the present government the Limboo and Tamang communities of Sikkim have been included in the List of Scheduled Tribes.
- Thami community has been included in the Central list of OBCs.



- Bahuns, Chettris, Newars and Sanyasis have been included in the OBC list of the state.
- A provision of total 74% reservations has been made by the government in all the government jobs and higher studies: 33%: Scheduled Tribes including Bhutia, Lepcha, Limbus and Tamangs; 21%: Most Backward Classes (MBCs) including Bhujel, Dewan, Gurung, Jogi, Kirat, Rai, Mangar, Sunuwar, Mukhia and Thami; 14%: Other Backward Classes including Bahun, Chettri, Newar and Sanyasi; 6%: Scheduled Castes (horizontal reservation of 30% for women, 3% for handicapped, 3% for ex-servicemen and 2% for sportspersons within the total of 74%).
- The government established the Sikkim Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes & Other Backward Classes Development Corporation Limited (SABCCO) in February 1996 to promote economic and development activities of these classes in the state
- The SDF government has also been making persistent demand to the Centre to grant constitutional recognition to Bhutia, Lepcha and Limboo languages.
- Similar demand is being made to accord national recognition to Bahun, Chettri, Newar and Sanyasi as OBC at the Centre.
- Demand has been made with the Central Government to include Most Backward Classes of communities in Sikkim in the list of Scheduled Tribes.
- Ever since SDF party took over in Sikkim, we have made persistent demand to recognize Nepalese in India as the Minority Community.

The SDF government has laid ample emphasis on agriculture as it is the backbone of our economy. Sikkim's agriculture sector has shown a robust performance.

- Total food production in the state has steadily increased from 61.8 thousand tonnes in 1980-81 to 1.14 lakhs tonnes in 2000-01 produced in hardly 64,000 hectares of net sown area.
- Maize production increased from 28,930 tonnes in 1980-81 to 50,940 tonnes in 2000-2001.
- Sikkim also made significant progress in the livestock and poultry production.
- Milk production has gone up from 27,000 tonnes in the 7th Plan to 34,000 tonnes in the 9th Plan and the per capita availability of milk increased from 163 ml to 243 ml during the same period.
- Horticultural production recorded impressive growth with the production increasing from 62,790 tonnes in 1990-91 to 86,465 tonnes in 2001-2002.



- A cheese plant at Dentam, West Sikkim has been set up and is running successfully in the production of 'Alpine Cheese' with a steady sale in the domestic as well as foreign market.

We have not left a single field unattended. Industry, investment and other income and employment-generating activities have always received our maximum attention. Sikkim has been adjudged as an investor-friendly state. A survey carried out by a leading national magazine *Business Today* showed that various parameters like the quality of electric power, social infrastructure and State Government support have improved during 1995-99 in the perception of the investors.

- State Government has set up the Board of Investment under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister to implement a Single Window Policy. This is an apex body that examines investment proposals and gives clearance at the highest level.
- The government has earmarked number of highways as industrial belts. The stretch between Rangpo-Gangtok, Melli-Jorethang, Jorethang-Legship, Jorethang-Namchi have been identified as industrial zone with easy access to basic infrastructure for setting up industrial units.
- After Sikkim became the member of NEC, Sikkim is slated to enjoy tax holiday including exemption of excise duty for the initial 10 years, on industrial ventures.
- The first Sikkim Investors' Forum meeting was held on 22nd February 2001 at India International Centre in New Delhi. It was subsequently held in Kolkata, Mumbai, Gangtok and New Delhi primarily to attract investment in the state. There are a number of proposals under the active consideration for their entry into Sikkim.
- We have also initiated the disinvestment process in the existing industries.

Hon'ble Madam Speaker, it gives me a great pride in expressing a sense of satisfaction. This has become possible because of the collective action of all the legislators, bureaucrats, officials at the grassroot, civil society members and most importantly the people of Sikkim. Each of us has contributed to what Sikkim boasts of today.

One can pick up any micro level and macro level indicators today in Sikkim to assess how much we have progressed. Sikkim is a happening state today. There has been massive review of the activities we have been doing by both the public and the press from within and outside Sikkim. We have seen most of these reviews and assessments to be of high appreciation for what we are doing. But we should not be complacent. We would have to keep up this tempo both in spirit and content. It is a major challenge to all of us.

The SDF government is very conscious of the need to protect the fragile nature of

Sikkim's environment and ecosystems. Sikkim has been able to traditionally and scientifically conserve its rich biological diversity including that of more than 5000 species of angiosperms (one third of the total national angiosperms).

- In recognition of the SDF government's outstanding contributions towards preserving forests and plants and safeguarding the environment, we were awarded the "Greenest Chief Minister of India" award in a rigorous national opinion poll conducted by the internationally-acclaimed institution viz., New Delhi's Centre for Science and Environment in 1998.
- Sikkim made a major headway in both replantation including innovative concept like the "Smriti Van" or Memorial Forest.
- Ban on grazing by all domestic and semi-domestic animals in reserve forest areas to protect the plantations in the state.
- Total closure of army shooting zone (G Firing Range) in North Sikkim measuring 17,250 hect.
- Ban on the use of non-biodegradable products like plastic bags to protect the environment. This makes Sikkim the first state in the country to effectively implement this ban.
- Landscape and other beautification of numerous parks, gardens and other aspects of urban areas.
- Government safeguarded the religious-cultural interest of the state, by scrapping the proposed Rathong-chu Hydel Power Project.
- Protection of cultural ecology of the Mount Kanchenjunga by banning climbing expeditions to this revered mountain.
- Intellectual Patent Committee and State Intellectual Law Committee have been set up to deliberate and decide upon intellectual property rights-related issues.
- The government has declared to make Sikkim as the "Total Organic State".
- The State Government is committed to preserve environmental cleanliness through enactment of various acts like the Sikkim Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act 1997. The work with regard to installation of an eco-friendly Garbage Treatment Plant converting waste into compost is being completed.
- The government has covered a total of 289.34 km in jhora/river training works and construction of minor irrigation channel in the state.

This government has been a government which has performed. Let me cite only two major sectors of prime importance, i.e. education and health. We have all good signs.



Educational Heights:

- The literacy rate, which was hardly 17.7 percent in 1971, increased to 56.9 percent in 1991 and finally to over 70 percent now.
- In 2002, Sikkim had a total enrolment of 1,37,656 students in government and government-aided schools. This has been possible because of number of interventions made by the SDF governments including: (i) No tuition fee is levied in all the government schools; (ii) Free textbooks and exercise books; (iii) Free uniforms to all students up to Class V.
- The most notable aspect is the number of enrolments among the girl children which is almost 50 percent of the total enrolment in the state.
- A school now exists within walking distance of every child in Sikkim.
- A Mid-Day Meal Programme for school children has been launched.
- Three State Languages—Lepcha, Limboo and Bhutia—are taught at the University level.
- ‘Smart School’ concept is now being adopted in schools and emphasis is being laid on the quality of education.
- Sikkim University Act has been enacted in March 2003 thereby formally paving the way for establishment of the first State University in the state. Till such time that we establish our own University, we will seek affiliation of all our colleges in the state with the North-Eastern Hill University.
- Sikkim had only one college when the present ruling government assumed office. Now the state can boast of more than half a dozen colleges including Engineering College, Medical College, Advanced Technical Training Centre at Bardang (East Sikkim) and Centre of Computers and Communication Technology at Chisopani (South Sikkim).
- The government has also established a Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya in Sikkim and thirteen other Vidyalayas across the state.
- One OBC residential school is being established at Kamrang and a Tribal Residential School is set up in North Sikkim.
- Computer education has been made compulsory in schools. Twenty-nine Sr. Secondary Schools have been fully computerized. Tashi Namgyal Academy bagged the President’s Award for Excellence in IT.
- Teacher training is given utmost importance. The government has made District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) fully operational from August 2003 which is recognized and affiliated to the National College of Teacher Training Institute.



- Physically-challenged persons are getting subsistence allowance from the State Government and school-going children are provided with stipend to encourage them in academic field.
- The State Government awards scholarships under various categories for students pursuing higher courses outside the state. I would like to mention only a few. For Postgraduate course, the scholarship is Rs. 2000 per month, for M.Phil and Ph.D. degree, it is Rs. 2500 per month. The post-Matric scholarship is increased to Rs. 1200 per month.
- The government has also launched two merit scholarship schemes namely: General Merit Scholarship and a separate Merit Scholarship 'Prerna Scheme' for girl students of government schools.
- Under Prerna Yojana, scholarship is given to school girl child who excels at Standard V, VIII and X.
- Reading of Nepali language, as the lingua franca of Sikkimese people, has been made compulsory in all schools in Sikkim.
- Likewise, local dialects like Gurung, Tamang, Rai, Mañgar, Sunuwar, Sherpa and Newar have been recognized as state languages. Teachers in these subjects have been recruited in schools and these subjects are taught as part of the academic curriculum.

We have made the health facilities both accessible and affordable. Increased health facilities have resulted in better health for the people and the longevity of all the Sikkimese have steadily gone up.

- Free medical treatment to the people both within and outside Sikkim at government's expenses. A record number of people have benefited from this facility.
- Disease prevention is given paramount importance.
- The entire state has been covered by the anti-polio vaccinations and is on the verge of making Sikkim into a polio-free state.
- As against hardly 30 percent infants covered by immunization in 1975, the rate of immunization is more than 70 percent in 1999.
- Infant mortality rate figure of 42 per thousand is much lower than the national figure of 66.
- Sir Thutop Namgyal Memorial (STNM) Hospital is being converted into an ultra-modern hospital equipped with sophisticated and latest machinery to enable the local patients to obtain the best treatment and facilities. This hospital will now be linked with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi

through telemedicine, for both treatment and research. This was announced by the Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee during his visit to Sikkim.

- Five new hospitals have been constructed in all the districts of Sikkim. A new 110-bedded hospital was dedicated to the people of Sikkim recently on January 29, 2004.
- From a mere 2 in 1975, the number of Primary Health Centres and Sub-Centres have increased dramatically to 24 and 147 respectively in 2002.
- To discourage alcoholism, the government has banned serving of liquor at Mintokgang, the official residence of the Chief Minister and all other official functions, party and dinner.
- Sikkim is the first state in the country to launch Hepatitis 'B' vaccination programme for the benefit of children in the age group 0-1 at government's expense launched on 14th August 2001. A total of 22,829 children have so far been vaccinated following implementation of the said programme.
- Several re-constructive plastic surgery camps were organized in the state in collaboration with Interplast Germany. So far, about 600 patients have benefited from these camps.
- By bringing legislation entitled 'The Sikkim Prohibition of Smoking and non-Smokers Health Protection Act, 1997' Sikkim became the first state in the country to ban smoking in places of public works or use in public service vehicles in the state.
- The sex ratio of 986 females per 1000 males in the age group 0-6 years is also one of the best in the country, indicating non-discrimination of sex and a very low death rate among female child in the state.
- The government has announced construction of a Superspeciality Hospital at Sichey, Ranka.
- The State Government, through Notification No. 601/H&FW, dated the 11th June 1996, has also waived all charges on investigations in respect of senior bonafide citizens (above 65 years).

Infrastructure is our top priority. We have already made big progress. The real progress on the planning and investment we have made would actually start appearing only in the next few years to come.

- A new airport at Pakyong in East Sikkim is under construction.
- Construction of eight helipads have been completed in different parts of the state connecting rural Sikkim by airways.



- Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) has been vigorously implemented to improving and carpeting the existing road network and also for the construction of new roads providing connectivity to remote villages.
- The ropeway in Gangtok is functional now attracting thousands of visitors from within and outside to experience this new development in the state.
- Another enchanting ropeway linking Namchi, the headquarters of South Sikkim with Samdruptse, where a 135-feet statue of Guru Padmasambhava has been erected, is also under execution. These transport projects will considerably increase the number of tourists.
- Rural markets or haat bazaars are constructed in various small towns for the benefit of people in rural areas.
- The historic Lal Bazaar in Gangtok has been replaced by a multi-storied Super Market.
- A satellite town is being planned below Sichey Busty area to ease the growing congestion in Gangtok town.
- State Bank of Sikkim has opened many new branches in all the four districts to provide its services to rural people.
- Sikkim State Cooperative Bank has been established in Gangtok providing soft loans to farmers and cooperative societies in each Gram Panchayat Unit. Two of its branches, one each in Namchi and Geyzing have also been set up. The government has secured approval of RBI to set up another four cooperative branches across the state.
- The Central Electricity Authority of India has recently identified a total of 21 macro and mini hydel schemes. A detailed study has been completed on different phases of power projects on Teesta river.
- The government has commissioned the 2 MW Kalez Khola Hydel Project in West Sikkim and a 3 MW Rabomchu HEP in North Sikkim. The government has also begun construction of a number of mini & micro hydel projects within the state sector like the Lachung II HEP, Mangley HEP, Rongli HEP, Ringyang HEP, Lachen-II HEP and Relli Chu HEP. With the commissioning of all the six stages of projects along the Teesta cascade and other power projects, Sikkim is poised to become a power-surplus state with the annual revenue of Rs. 1500 crores.
- 510 MW Teesta Hydroelectric Project Stage-V will be completed by 2006. The project will generate 2172 million units annually which could be exported to other parts of India thereby generating handsome revenue for the state. This has also

created employment opportunity for the local people during the period of construction, operation, maintenance and in the aftermath of completion.

- The State Government has entered into agreement with Gati Investment on Build, Own, Operate and Transfer arrangement to develop three projects at Sada-Mangder, Bhasmey, Chuzachen. Similarly agreement has been made with another private developer, Amalgamated Transpower India Ltd. for developing hydro-electric projects of Rolep, Ralong, Chakungchu for development of clean and environment-friendly hydro energy. The government will execute work for generation of 2000 MW of hydro-power in the next financial year.
- These infrastructure projects have also created business opportunity for the local contractors and entrepreneurs and training opportunity to the local youths for the jobs required during and after the construction period.
- The Legship Project has already been commissioned and another major project is being undertaken in full swing in collaboration with NHPC.
- The SDF government is now seriously taking up the extension of the East-West Corridors to Sikkim to link it with the Golden Quadrilateral under the National Highway Development Project. This means effectively linking Kanyakumari with Gangtok.
- Building an alternative highway to the present 31-A National Highway. This is a major task the SDF is contemplating. This proposal has also been endorsed by the Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee during his visit to Sikkim.
- A new highway linking Melli-Mamring-Rangpo is being constructed.
- A number of pedestrian flyovers have been constructed in Gangtok town for smooth traffic and to ensure public safety.
- Social facilities like Hospital, School, Community Center, Bank, Post Office, Shopping Center and other institutions will provide social benefit to the local people. The government will soon complete construction of various guest houses, community centres, administrative centres across the state including a State Guest House in Kolkata.
- A new Panchayat Hostel-cum-Guest House has been inaugurated at Geyzing which will immensely benefit the Panchayats of the state and also the general people.

Hon'ble members will appreciate that the task of running the government is Herculean. This is particularly so when you have set a high standard of norms of governance, political pronouncements and policy interventions. We have upheld all the democratic values and have respected human rights and dignity of every one with equal



zeal and fervour. We found that development alone is not adequate for all round development of Sikkimese people. Therefore, to strictly uphold democratic norms we provided the channels and canons of freedom and justice easily accessible. We thus actually practiced the slogan of Justice to all at their Doorsteps.

We have revamped and restructured the entire canons and institutions of justice in the state. This is to provide speedy justice at an affordable cost to all. Therefore, Sikkim today holds the record of having least number of pending cases in the entire country.

To bring justice right at the door of poor people, Lok Adalats or People's Courts have been constituted in all the nine sub-divisions of Sikkim. To simplify the system of imparting justice, the following courts have also been constituted: Atrocity Court; Human Rights Court; Family Court; Consumers' Court.

The SDF government created history in terms of empowering women in the society. We have successfully uprooted the unjustified mindset to treat woman folks as subordinate to male members of the society. This we have been able to do through consolidating on the tradition of not discriminating on the basis of gender and giving due respect to both the genders. I would like to place some of our far-reaching steps to empower them in this august House:

- Women have been appointed to senior government positions and are further honoured by enforcement of law that makes it mandatory to mention mother's name also in all official papers and documents.
- Gender-related Development Index (GDI) in the state has steadily improved over the last few years from 0.445 in 1991 to 0.499 in 1995 and finally to 0.528 in 1998 as very clearly shown in the *Sikkim Human Development Report 2001*.
- To enable the women to play a greater role in the Panchayats as well as in the government administration, 33 percent seats have been reserved in Panchayats and 30 percent seats in government jobs for women.
- This government has earned the distinction of appointing the first woman to senior positions like: Speaker of the State Assembly; Cabinet Minister; Secretaries in the State Administration; Zilla Adhyakshyas; Upa-Adhyakshyas; Chairperson, Sikkim State Commission for Women; and Chairperson, Sikkim Public Service Commission.
- The number of girls at schools has gone up significantly.
- Women have been assisted in training for employment or self-employment, providing special loans, starting their ventures, old-age pension schemes, widow re-marriage schemes, among other projects.

- Scores of schemes for the welfare and development of women and children, SC/ST/OBC, handicapped and aged people have been launched and are in operation including: Indira Mahila Yojana; Balika Samridhi Yojana; Small Family Scheme to delay marriage by offering attractive incentives (state-sponsored scheme for school-going girl children); Widow Remarriage Scheme; Pension to widows of ex-servicemen, training etc.

The SDF government ever since its formation has very consciously tried to address the needs and aspirations of every section of the society. In the process, we have undertaken various social welfare measures for the benefit of the Sikkimese people.

Old Age Pension of Rs. 200 per month is given to senior citizens above the age of 65 years who are below the poverty line.

The government has drastically increased the ex-gratia payment payable to persons who meet with fatal injuries and accident.

Free Rice: The State Government issues ten kilos of rice free of cost per month to senior citizens above the age of 65 under the Annapurna Scheme.

Old Age Home is being established for the aged citizens left uncared.

The government also provides for free travelling to the senior citizens in the state-owned buses.

Child Welfare: The State Government has also prepared 'Sikkim State Plan of Action for Children'. This takes care of the children in the following areas:

- Rights for Survival—deals with health, reproductive and child health, maternity, nutrition, child environment, sanitation, hygiene and water supply.
- Rights for development.
- Rights for protection of the children especially in difficult circumstances.
- Children's rights for participation.

Orphanage home is being established and run by the state taking care of less fortunate children, providing them with food, lodging and education.

The SDF government has worked with considerable success in promoting the state as the prominent tourist destination of the country and abroad. Our idea has been to open up rural Sikkim for tourists so that people from outside could see Sikkim in its entirety.

- As a result of our sincere effort, the tourist arrivals have recorded an annual growth rate of almost 10 percent per annum in the last six years. In 1994 over 99,000 tourists visited Sikkim which significantly increased to over 1,54,000 in 2001.



- The entire tourism sector policy of the SDF government is driven by the mantra of making Sikkim the 'Number 1 Eco-friendly Tourism Destination in India'.
- On our consistent demand, the Ministry of Civil Aviation will shortly be introducing a regular flight from Kathmandu to Bagdogra.
- For the high-income visitor, a five-star hotel is coming up at Pangthang in East Sikkim.
- To promote village tourism, thirty model villages having all the basic and modern facilities are being constructed in different parts of the state.
- By maximizing the benefit accruing from booming tourism trade, the government has gone all way to make it people-centric and village-centric.
- The Himalayan Centre for Adventure Tourism will be established at Chemchey village.

The people of Sikkim may recall that there was a time when the press freedom was totally infringed upon. The media remained gagged, journalists remained terrorized. And the entire voice of dissent remained throttled. Under the SDF government, the freedom of press has been fully restored and the prolonged black chapter of gagging the Press is over. Yellow journalism is, however, closely watched for legal action. We have strongly followed what Franklin Roosevelt, former American President, once said that security is nothing but "the freedom from fear".

- The number of registered local newspapers which were around 20 before this government assumed power in 1994 has shot up to more than 50 at the moment.
- Over 50 accredited newspapers are functional in Sikkim today.
- The advertisement budget in the last 18 years have recorded a considerable increase from a mere Rs. 4 lakhs in 1985 to Rs. 15.7 lakhs in 1998 and to Rs. 1.30 crores in 2002.
- The SDF government has also helped to form the Press Club of Sikkim and has been granting Rs. one lakh annually to meet various expenditures of the Club.
- *Sikkim Herald*, the official newsweekly of the Government of Sikkim now comes out in thirteen different state languages, viz. English, Nepali, Newar, Lepcha, Gurung, Limboo, Tamang, Sunuwar, Manger, Sherpa, Bhutia, Rai and Tibetan.

We have made our sincere efforts to pay handsome tribute to our past heroes in scores of areas. The government has honoured all those Sikkimese who have brought laurels to the state and also fought for the cause of democratic Sikkim.

- On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of India's Independence,

141 sons and daughters of Sikkim, most of them posthumously, were honoured with Tamra Patra Award in recognition of their outstanding contributions in their chosen fields and the overall development of the state.

- A number of distinguished sons of Sikkim who made outstanding contributions in shaping up the present society of Sikkim have been honoured by naming important roads and schools in the state after their names.
  - Ravangla-Tarku Road to Late Ganju Lama, V.C. Marg.
  - Soreng-Sombaria Road to Late Dharmadatta Sharma Marg.
  - Nam Nam bifurcation to Dukhit Pan Dokan and Shri Tashi Tshering Marg.
  - Old Tibet Road to Sonam Gyatso Marg.
  - Nam Nam to Deorali junction to Kashiraj Pradhan Marg.
  - 31-A National Highway to Dr. Ambedkar Marg.
  - Rongli-Chhujachen Road to Mahakavi Tulshi Kashyap Marg.
  - Namchi-Maniram Road to Agam Singh Tamang Marg.
  - Gangtok-Arithang Road to Rashmi Prasad Alley Marg.
  - Namchi-Manpur Road to C.D. Rai Marg.
  - Chakung-Khanisirbong Kamling Road to B.B. Gooroong Marg.
  - Rangpo-Duga Road to Nahkul Pradhan Marg.
  - Nayabazar-Sombaria Road to L.D. Kazi Marg.
  - Zongtempa Hotel-Mangan Bazar to Rinzing Namgyal Kazi Marg.
  - SPWD-DAC (Mangan) to Dr. Lobzang Tenzing Marg.
  - Ravangla SSS to Ganju Lama VC Sr. Secondary School.
  - Vok Secondary School to Nayan Tshering Lepcha Secondary School.
  - Kabi Tingda SS to Kalzang Gyatso Secondary School.
  - Daramdin Secondary School to Kripasalyan Sec. School.

We do not want Sikkim to lag behind in any area. We want our Sikkimese to compete with any one in the country and abroad. We want our people to know everything that we do and the people outside the state through giving them access to latest mode of communications. Therefore, we made several policy interventions in this critical area.

- New Information Technology Department has been created in the state.
- Tashiling Secretariat is computerized and rest of the departments are being connected by computers.
- NEC sanctioned 40 Community Information Centres (CICs) have been set up in Sikkim and are manned by IT professionals.
- Sikkim will soon have its own Software Technology Park.



- A web site ‘cm-on-line’ has been designed and launched for common people to communicate directly with the Chief Minister.
- Other web sites on Sikkim Government have been launched enabling masses to access various government notifications including appointment and transfer orders and also read the government publication *Sikkim Herald*.
- Sikkim is the third state in India besides Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh to adopt and implement the SCOSTA (Smart Card Operable in State Transport Authority) system.
- Land records in all four districts have been computerized for authentic future records

Culture is so dear to all of us and intellectual activities are a clear reflection of the societal thinking and progress. We did very many things and substantive activities in the area of cultural and intellectual progress.

- The government is very active in the conservation and promotion of the religious and cultural heritage of Sikkim.
- A 135-foot statue of Guru Padmasambhava is being constructed at Samdruptse in South Sikkim.
- Statue of late Chogyal P.T. Namgyal has been installed in the Tibetology complex at Deorali.
- A 9-foot tall statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has been installed in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly complex
- The tallest ever statue of Adi-Kavi Bhanubhakta is being installed at Geyzing along with a research centre.
- *Swarga-jane-sidi*, literally the ‘stairway-to-heaven’ is being raised at Daramden, giving a fresh life to Lepcha legends.
- *Sri Junga Mang-him*, the religious centre of Limboo communities, has been established at Hee Bermiok. A statue of Srijunga is being installed at Bermiok.
- Limboo Cultural Centre has been constructed at Tharpu.
- Limboo Guest House has been constructed at Diesel Power House complex, Gangtok.
- The monastery-cum-guest house at Bodh Gaya in Bihar for pilgrims from Sikkim has started functioning. Similarly, cultural bhawans of different communities are being constructed with government funding. To start with the Lepcha traditional house at Dzongu and Rodo-khim of the Rais are being constructed.

- Sikkim Akademi has been established with a view to bring the diverse and rich cultural and literary heritage of the state to a single forum for both cross-cultural interactions and conservation practices.
- The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology has now been revamped to make the study of Tibetology and Himalayan culture more popular.
- Mapping of the cultural and natural heritage of Sikkim has now been completed by the Indian National Trust for Cultural Heritage (INTACH), New Delhi.
- The government is also now preparing grounds for putting some of the most precious and prestigious natural and cultural heritage sites and objects of Sikkim both in the national and World Heritage List.
- A number of religious places including new temples, new gompas, gurudwaras, churches and mosques have been set up in the state thereby sustaining the record of communal harmony and secularism in the state.
- Notable publications to enhance Sikkim's prestige and provide authentic information that have been published recently include: *Sikkim Human Development Report 2001* (in English and Nepali); *Sikkim: The People's Vision*; *Sikkim: Perspectives and Vision* (a collection of Shri Pawan Chamling's 125 odd speeches); *25 Years of Statehood*; *Pawan Chamling: Daring to be Different* (biography of the Chief Minister); *Glory of New Sikkim*; *Our Natural Resources, Our Responsibility*. And *Sikkim Studies Series* (7 volumes on various aspects of Sikkim) is soon going to be completed.
- Preservation and promotion of Sikkimese culture and tradition is one of the prime concerns of this government. Under these policies, the State Government has declared different festivals of different communities as government gazetted holidays. Some of them are: Lochhar; Tendong-Lho-Rum-Phat; Birth anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava; Birth anniversary of Srijunga; May Day; Sakewa; Sonam Lochhar; Birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.
- Cultural park, commonly named *chaar-dham* is being developed at Solaphu, Namchi. The concept is based on the belief that we can attain salvation if we pay visit to four different pilgrimage centres located in different parts of the country. The idea has been to localize all these pilgrimage sites at one place with a 108-feet tall statue of Lord Shiva occupying the centre stage.
- The National Planning Commission is also planning to bring out "Sikkim Development Report". I am sure this document will also highlight the work we have done.

We have succeeded in opening the Nathu la trade route and has convinced the Prime



Minister about the need to have an alternative highway.

- The SDF government is now comprehensively looking into all the aspects of this new trade route. This will give a major boost to both economic and tourism activities in the state.
- The target is to increase the volume of trade between India and China to \$ 10 billion by 2005 and to \$ 15 billion by 2010. Sikkim will play a major role in enabling India to reach this target.

To cut it short, we have achieved so many, SDF government has added many new chapters in history of Sikkim. We are firmly in place to bring in many new chronicles of events and achievements in the lives of our people and our state. Having recorded some of our outstanding achievements in the last ten years, may I place before this august House, what we have in store for the coming years. Some of them are:

- A herbarium will be constructed in the state for promotion and conservation of our natural medicinal base.
- Research Institute on Water Resources in the Himalaya.
- Establishment of Art colleges at Mangan, Rhenock and Gyalshing.
- Establishment of Science College at Soreng.
- Upgradation of Secondary schools into Senior Secondary schools.
- Upgradation of Jr. High schools into Secondary schools.
- Upgradation of Primary schools into Jr. High schools.
- Upgradation of LPS into PS.

Introduction of fifteen vocational courses will be effective from the next academic session in 40 Sr. Secondary schools in the following trades: Management of Adventure Sports and Tourism; Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Production; Local Handicraft; Beekeeping; Videography and Photography; Dairying; Poultry Production Technology; Floriculture; Mushroom Farming; Modern Office Management; Clock and Watch Repair Technology; Computer Hardware Maintenance; PCO and Internet Café Management; Automobile Repair Technology; Catering and Hotel Management.

### **Institute of Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management**

The Government of Sikkim will soon set up an Institute of Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management. This would be primarily set up to conserve and promote the use of scientific and commercial use of biodiversity and natural resources in the state including medicinal plants and other herbs. The Institute will carry out the advanced

research on natural resources with the state-of-the-art technology. Our government will soon appoint a committee to draw a framework and modalities for the setting up of this Institute.

### **Health Insurance**

All of us have noticed that many of the Sikkimese people are not able to access better health facilities and medical treatment on account of poor income. This is, despite the fact, that the Government of Sikkim has been extending monetary support to all the Sikkimese for their treatment both in and outside the state. In order to ensure maximum health security to the people of Sikkim, my government now announces a Health Insurance Policy for all the Sikkimese people above 35 years.

In this regard, government will go into a contractual arrangement for mass health insurance with an established National Health Insurance company. This implies that the government and the individual insured will pay the annual premium on 60:40 basis. We are very hopeful that it will to a large extent address to the major grievances of the people of the state regarding access to better health facilities.

### **Centre for Career Focus**

In order to cater to and match with the increasing hopes and aspiration of the youths of Sikkim, the Government of Sikkim hereby announces the setting up of the Centre for Career Focus exclusively for the youths in the age group of 18-30. This Centre will serve as Career Focus to the youths of Sikkim and provide career-related work opportunities in Sikkim, India and abroad. This will help them acquire advanced skills and become leaders in their fields. This Centre will help young people, particularly those facing barriers to employment, get the information and gain the skills, work experience and abilities they need to make a successful transition to the workplace.

The Centre for Career Focus will offer youth a range of work experience, learning and skill-building activities to help them choose careers and encourage them to pursue advanced studies. This Centre will also work in responding to the needs of the youths and their career development including coaching support and mentoring opportunities.

These activities will help Sikkimese youths acquire advanced employment skills and experience that can respond to emerging opportunities in the national and international marketplace. This Centre will also link highly skilled young people with potential employers to provide both domestic and international career-related work experience.

Almost all new jobs require high skill level, and skill requirements are constantly changing. Therefore, choosing education and training wisely is very crucial for the



youths. The government departments and agencies will work in partnership with business, labour, industry, voluntary organizations, rural and remote communities and all levels of government to help young people get the knowledge, skills, information and work experience they need to prepare for and participate in the world of work.

Carpeting and surface improvement works of a total of 936 km of roads in the state has been completed. The government also constructed a total stretch of 309 km of new link roads connecting different villages and centres. A new 236.50 km of road construction and 363.75 km of link roads sanctioned under different plans will be completed within the next financial year.

In the industrial sector, the government will work out major strategies in terms of:

- a) rehabilitation of sick units;
- b) simplification of procedures for opening up industries in Sikkim;
- c) enrichment of agriculture sector through establishment of appropriate linkages between agricultural and agro-based industries;
- d) promotion of traditional handloom, handicrafts and artisan sector;
- e) development of tourism as an industry;
- f) development of Sikkim as a major centre of manufacture and marketing of tea;
- g) rapid development of basic infrastructure facilities like setting up growth centers etc.;
- h) human resources development;
- i) setting up Food Park and Export Processing Zone.

A total number of 1402 beneficiaries were benefited under the Swarozgar Udyog Yojana upto 2003-04. The government will further extend assistance to 1500 nos. of beneficiaries under the schemes during 2004-05.

- One veterinary hospital will be constructed together with officer quarters.
- Stockman centre and staff quarter will be constructed in a number of places in the state
- Three demonstration farms under the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Service will be set up in three districts.

All of us are aware that the entire nation is celebrating the "Feel Good Factor" propelled by the all round development in the country. We call it "India shining". In Sikkim we have reached a situation which is more than mere feeling good. We have happily reached a level where we should be proud of what we have collectively, genuinely and tirelessly achieved. Every Sikkimese should take credit of our achieve-

ments. Every Sikkimese should take pride in where we have reached today.

Sikkim is not only shining it is illuminated and dazzling with smiles, successes and satisfactions all over. Therefore, let us celebrate the “Feel Proud Factor” in every nook and corner of Sikkim in every hearth and home of Sikkim, in every organization and institution of Sikkim. We have earned this celebration “Hami Garva garaon”.

### **Government Announcements-1**

As the people of Sikkim are fully aware that the economy of Sikkim has been doing very well in the last eight years. We took over at a time when the state exchequer was virtually empty and the debts ran into crores of rupees. Every one in the state worked hard to change the situation. My government is very thankful to all of you.

Further, we have set a very impressive target in the ongoing 10th Plan (2002-2007). We will have to achieve target of annual economic growth rate of 10 percent in the 10th Plan. If we achieve this, we would have entered into a situation where we can be counted among the best performing states in the country. It will be moment of great pride for all of us.

While making appeal to all the government employees, teachers, farmers, Panchayat members and leaders, investors and businessmen, entrepreneurs, travel agents, non-governmental organizations, and civil society members, to work hard to achieve this 10th Plan goal of 10 percent growth rate, I am delighted to announce the following “Feel Proud” incentives.

- i) A one time “Development Dividend” of Rs. 5000 to the selected, committed and outstanding government employees including muster roll, casual and temporary staff in the state. This will be conducted by Department of Planning.
- ii) A one time “You Have Done Well Grant” of Rs. 5000 to the selected and registered (as on January 20, 2004) NGOs in the state. This will be conducted by Department of Rural Development.
- iii) A one time “Keep it up Grant” of Rs. 5000 each to the selected and registered (as on January 20, 2004) tourism and travel agents in the state. This will be conducted by the Department of Tourism.
- iv) A one time “Creative Performance Grant” of Rs. 5000 to selected writers and intellectuals to enable them to consult libraries, archives and visit other institutions for intellectual exchanges anywhere in India. This will be conducted by Sikkim Akademi.
- v) A one time “Positive Journalism Grant” of Rs. 5000 to the selected accredited



- journalists to enable them to consult their counterparts, libraries, archives and visit other institutions for professional exchanges anywhere in India. This will be conducted by Department of Information and Public Relations.
- vi) A one time "We Respect You Grant" of Rs. 5000 to all those veterans above 70 years. This will be conducted by Department of Social Welfare.
  - vii) A monthly "Sikkim State Appreciation Pension" of Rs. 1000 to the outstanding sportspersons, the Sahitya Akademi awardees in Nepali literature from all over India and Sangeet Natak Akademi and Lalit Kala Akademi award winners of Sikkim. This will be conducted by Department of Culture.
  - viii) A one time "State Laurels Grant" of Rs. 10,000 to all the sportspersons who have represented Sikkim and participated in the national games. This will be conducted by Department of Youths and Sports.
  - ix) A one time "Most Progressive Farmer" grant of Rs. 5000 to the most progressive, committed farmer of the state.

### **Government Announcement-2**

The Government of Sikkim is constantly monitoring the trend and status of unemployment in Sikkim. We have worked very hard to generate as many employment opportunities as possible in the last ten years of our running the government. As a result, there is a considerable ease in the employment situation in the state.

By now at least 42 percent of the 1991 population who were then in the age group of 10-14 to 25-29 would have entered into the job market. This would imply that over 1,70,000 younger people would have been looking for employment in the state.

However, because of the very good economic performance, diversification of economic activities and creations of a varieties of opportunities in public, private, NGOs and self-employment ventures, a large number of our young employment-seekers have been gainfully employed. More importantly the decentralization and devolution under the Panchayat Acts which we have very consciously advocated and promoted will now absorb a large number of unemployed youngsters in the villages and rural areas.

We have adopted multi-pronged strategy to mitigate the problem of unemployment. Some of them are mentioned below.

- For the first time in the state, the Sikkim Democratic Front government also launched the Chief Minister's Self-Employment Scheme (CMSE). This scheme enables the educated unemployed youth of Sikkim to start their own ventures. During the last two years since its inception, the government has sanctioned

- and disbursed loans to 2293 young entrepreneurs amounting to Rs. 14.96 crores.
- The Skill Development Fund of Rs. 2 crores is also being launched primarily to build a range of skills among the youths in the state. Youth can take advantage of this fund to undertake varieties of skill-building trainings, professional courses and other capacity-building exercises anywhere in the country.

While appreciating the patience, dynamism and devotion of our talented youths in the state, my government now announces a special scheme of Career Development Fund (CDF) of Rs. 1 crore which can be accessed and used by all the graduate unemployed students/youths of Sikkim.

The CDF will be provided as one-time assistance for coaching classes and other counselling services anywhere in the country with an upper limit of Rs. 3000 per person. It will be conducted by a State Level Committee under the Department of Personnel which is being soon set up. Students desirous of making use of these funds could do so from March 2004 onwards.

We are living in a time of great change—in our country, world, in our economy, in science and technology. People have gone as far as to term it ‘glocal’ to imply that there is no region which is not explored and is not immediately accessible. We must have a dream, well thought-out programmes, and slogan that best validate this changed situation.

We leave it to our warm and dear people of Sikkim to elucidate as to how our government has given them dignity, democracy and devolution of powers. Every Sikkimese has regained the self-respect they had lost. Every Sikkimese today is proud of being a Sikkimese and an Indian. In a democracy, people can not be faulted. After all, ten years back, people had turned a new leaf to give SDF party their mandate to run the government. Ten years down the line, they know that their decision was right for the common cause of justice, security, development, for peace, for human dignity.

After we took over in 1994, we earmarked 70 percent of state plan allocation for rural upliftment, for the welfare of the poor. And we have tried to reach out to the remote corner of the state to deliver the development share to the poorest of the poor. We want to see every Sikkimese to break free from poverty and become rich and prosperous.

Over the years, SDF government has sincerely tried to strengthen our traditional values, harmonize our ancient heritage with the emerging world. Peace and tranquility so crucial for the progress of any state and nation has been maintained. We are not prepared to gamble on this issue at any price any time in the future as well.

The people of Sikkim are by nature peace-loving and maintain communal brotherhood



and fraternity. These are our inherent strengths. This can be traced to our state being free of any gender discrimination. Both men and women have equal rights and walk together. This is the hallmark of our society. No bonded labour exists. Child labour has also been prohibited in the state. Child and women rights have been fully implemented in our government. We will continue to further strengthen this intimate sense of oneness among the Sikkimese.

The State Government has relentlessly represented the Central Government to address all our pending demands including seat reservation for the ethnic Nepalese of Sikkim. The Sikkimese Nepalese have a distinct social structure which needs to be protected for historical reasons. The State Government has requested the Centre to provide seats in the Legislative Assembly for them as was provided at the time of Chogyal's regime.

Further, special protection of the distinct identity of Sikkim subjects and their descendents comprising of Bhutia-Lepcha and the Nepalese is necessary. All these communities have similar lifestyle, way of living, food habit, culture, history, tradition and social life. The Sikkimese Nepalese are worshippers of nature who follow traditional healing methods based on animistic tradition similar to the practices of the Sikkimese of the Bhutia-Lepcha origin. Sikkimese of Nepali origin are a distinct group who are yet to reach to civil society status and which needs special protection. Therefore, Sikkim should be declared as Tribal State, this issue will be taken up again and again with the Central Government.

The SDF government has always remained committed to the cause of women. We have taken some of the far-reaching decisions to give them a respectable place in the society. To further the cause of women, our party and government are in favour of women reservation of 33 percent in State Legislature and the Parliament. We will continue to work towards this end.

Our government has been successful in securing Scheduled Tribe status for Limboos and Tamangs of the state which was a long-pending demand. Except seat reservation, the State Government has already granted all other entitled facilities to them in the state as Scheduled Tribes. With the conferment of Scheduled Tribe status to Limboos and Tamangs, our government has been instrumental in removing the stigma of immigrant attached to the Sikkimese Nepalese, as these two tribes are the sub-castes of Nepali community.

Our government has been able to confer on Limboos and Tamangs the tribal status. Now with time, the question of seat reservation for these two tribes will also be fulfilled. As we have succeeded in this task, now again we will be successful in bringing seats for them. We have reason to be proud and people have firm basis to believe in us.<sup>8</sup> In

this context, we have already requested the Prime Minister to conduct a special census for determining the number of seats that would be available to the Limboo and Tamang tribes in the state legislature without disturbing the twelve seats reserved for Sikkimese of Bhutia-Lepcha origin.

Furthermore, government of India has been requested to increase the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha seats from one each to two, so that the ethnic communities of the state are appropriately represented in the Parliament. Similarly, request has been made at the Centre to increase the Assembly seats from the existing 32 to 40.

Our government recognizes the fact that in the changing scenario of globalization, it is necessary for our people to review their strength and fortify them further in order to keep up with the fast pace of development. We can not, therefore, remain complacent and idle. It is necessary to focus our attention while looking forward and as well as inward so that our deep inner strength and values take us to the right direction.

The SDF government is committed to ensure security to the people of Sikkim as provided under Article 371F of the Constitution. All the old laws, as usual, will be protected. My government has always functioned within the parameters enshrined in Article 371F of the Constitution of India, for protecting and promoting the social, political and economical well-being of the people of the state.

The SDF government has aborted the practice adopted by the earlier government of taking away all the revenues collected from the erstwhile Monastic Estate by returning 50% of such revenues for conducting the mandatory prayers and ceremonies of Pemayangtse, Tashiding, Ralong, Rumtek, Phodong and Phensong monasteries from the financial year 1997-98.

Sikkim so endowed with bountiful natural resources needs to be pragmatic in the way it looks at it. We need to continue with our programme to tap the huge natural resources to our advantage. Our development should be based on our natural resources, with sustainable development as our basic mantra.

The SDF government through my own personal example is trying to bring about what I call the second generation reforms in politics. My firm belief is that we can not allow sacred institution like democracy to be infested by dynastic overdose. Hence, I have announced that I would not nominate my family members to become an MLA, MP or Minister in the government. I am committed to go by these words in future, and the people would obviously see my sincerity to cleanse politics of all such elements in the greater context of our country itself.

The State Government has taken upon itself the task of spreading the essential message to the Sikkimese people—that is to become producer and not only consumer.



We are vigorously trying to promote our state as a producer state. We are also trying to provide a wide-range of choices to the people, developing their skills to take up different schemes. In fact, we are encouraging our farming community to change their trade. We have a long-term vision and programme for the people. In this context, may I quote an enduring saying:

“Where the vision is one year  
Cultivate flowers,  
Where the vision is ten years  
Cultivate trees,  
Where the vision is eternity  
Cultivate people”.

To further this campaign, we will encourage and assist people to take up at least one productive scheme, taking each household as an industrial unit. They say that one can not build an island of prosperity in the middle of despair. Hence, prosperity of a state is linked with the prosperity of every single individual living in it.

We have groomed Sikkim to be an active and progressive Indian state. It no longer lives in isolation and has gone on to occupy an honoured place in the general psyche of the fellow countrymen. Our government has been successful to integrate the Sikkimese people emotionally into the Indian mainstream. This is one of our biggest achievements. On 13th April last year, our Prime Minister confessed that Sikkim remains in his heart. We are thankful for the love so showered.

Hon'ble members in the opposition are most of the time found to be bereft of any meaningful issues. They tend to raise questions for the sake of raising them. In the treasury bench my colleagues would be happy to face such faceless opposition. But this is not a good sign for a healthy democracy. We always wanted enlightened opposition who can contribute to the process of governance. Opposition will have to work equally hard to achieve this status of enlightened and effective opposition.

The national daily, *The Statesman* recently said that the opposition in the state is in disarray. I feel for them. If democracy is made of empty rhetoric, persistent threat and intimidation, hollow promises, let it be. On the other hand, if democracy is for liberty, peace, human dignity and human fulfillment, you can tread the way we have chosen. After all, democracy demands mutual respect and understanding, we can collectively fight the common enemies of mankind—poverty, deprivation, suffering and other forms of discrimination. I call upon all political leaders in the state to engage in constructive politics based on constructive idealism

Look what has happened today? The leaders themselves have deserted the party under whose banner they ruled the state for 14 long years. People know that these

leaders have not changed their attitude. They are still artificial in their sympathy and love of the people. They have no credibility. So wherever they go, and whichever party they join or form, these leaders will be haunted and hounded by the same lurking fear of the past.

How can anyone disown his past? His past itself will defeat him. It remains our hope that the opposition leaders will be blessed with sufficient reason to realize that history will not be denied and that a new society cannot be created by reproducing the same past, however refined or enticingly repackaged.

Madam Speaker, all of us here in this august presence are the representatives of the people called to great responsibilities. We must rise up to meet them. We cannot wish away people's hardships in cheap jokes and careless mockery. We must attend to them in all seriousness. Someone has prescribed something very relevant for all of us:

“Our values are our guides  
Our job is to serve  
Our workplace the future”.

We can not afford to be wayward, and are called upon to lead the masses by good words as well as good deeds. Knowing well that reputation without character is meaningless, it is our sacred duty to spread the message of uprightness, integrity and honesty in the society practising them ourselves. We have great responsibility. What we say and do now will have a direct bearing on the quality of the Sikkimese society in the future. Let me quote some penetrating lines in this august presence, to reinforce the gravity of my appeal.

“When individuals blunder, it is unfortunate and their families go down. When rulers fail, it is national tragedy”.

When Pushkar Thapa, a graduate student, comes and asks me for a job, he is only asking for his fundamental right. When a Lapcheni boju meets with me to demand for a financial support for her treatment she is not asking for a favour. She wanted us to uphold her fundamental right to live a healthy life. And when Namgyal Bhutia pays a visit to my office to complain about pest infestations in his Aduwabari, he is only highlighting the threat to his livelihood. When a teacher comes and tells me that the school had leaking roof, she is pointing at the hardship faced by the teachers and students. And when I hear a large-scale grievances on a certain issue I find that there is something wrong in the system only.

Therefore, I take all of them in my strides. These are the challenges we will have to confront with every moment, every day and for years to come. Most of them emanate



from deprivation, poverty, and ignorance. These are our biggest living enemies.

If we do not address them on a holistic and comprehensive manner, there will be unending numbers of Pushkar Thapas, Lapcheni bojus, Namgyal Bhutias, teachers and others raising these problems in an incessant manner. This situation could be devastating. The system will collapse and we will never be able to progress and develop. This is the one point resolve we had made when we founded the Sikkim Democratic Front party. We must have reasons enough to rejoice now after all these years. Of course, we are always determined to give a solution to all the major social, economic, political and other problems.

On the penultimate day of the last session of the 6th Sikkim State Assembly let me reassure the people of Sikkim that:

- Our ultimate goal is to make Sikkim one of the most vibrant, robust and sought-after states in the country.
- We will like to lead and not follow.
- We will always remain committed to fulfill the aspirations of the people.
- The SDF government has a mission—a mission to make Sikkim poverty-free, illiteracy-free, and economically strong.
- By 2015, our vision is one that of establishment of strong Sikkimese society, a model state, self-reliant Sikkim and a self-sufficient Sikkimese.
- In economy, we would like to develop Sikkim into another Singapore.
- In health, we would like Sikkim to be like Japan and Cuba.
- In education, we want Sikkim as good as Netherlands, Norway and Singapore.
- In the field of science and technology, we want Sikkim to be like Japan, USA and Taiwan.
- In animal husbandry, Sikkim has to be as productive as Germany, France and Australia.
- In the area of eco-tourism, Sikkim has to earn reputation as high as that of Switzerland, Austria, Fiji, Mauritius and Paraguay.
- In civil society, Sikkim has to earn status as high as that of USA, Canada and other European nations.
- Our government will continue to make increased efforts in future so that Sikkim could be transformed into the best state in the country and other states may look at it as a fountain of inspiration.
- SDF government would continue to strive to make every Sikkimese intellectually

free, spiritually rich and materially fulfilled, and who may be plentiful in the enduring human values like courage and compassion, reverence and integrity, respect for elders and national patriotism.

- The SDF government would strive on to finish the work we are in.

Hon'ble Madam Speaker, it was on Thursday, November 19, 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln went on to dedicate Gettysburg field as a national cemetery for the dead soldiers. And in his two-minute speech, he immortalized the very concept of Democracy. I quote,

“that we hereby highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that the nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth”.

Hon'ble Madam Speaker, we are here in this august House as the custodian of people's voice that the institution of democracy may not perish. We are among the privileged few, the chosen few to act responsibly so that people's voice and aspirations may be heard ever after..

In this sense, it is not so much a question to fight the election or to fight in the elections. On the other hand, it is basically the question of seeking the mandate of the people to run people's government.

On this day, let us together vow to continue our crusade against all such political predators whose survival depend on the destruction of the other, and let us together vow that we shall always fail those usurpers who seek to take power away from the people, in pursuit of their own ignoble purposes.

Restoration of democracy in Sikkim was the defining success of our government. But the long walk continues. We will keep the democratic institution secure and will further work for democratization of the Sikkimese society in full measure. Undemocratic attitude, illegal and casteist tendency has no place in our government. They can not be and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

In order to develop Sikkim into a prosperous entity, what we need are opportunity, resources and development. What we require are peace, security and dignity. And what is essential are knowledge, science and amity. And, we the Sikkimese, lack none of them. What we need, indeed, is only a firm resolve to make things happen. And the SDF government would lead the people towards realizing their potential to its full bloom.

We have worked together with the Sikkimese people to face many challenges in the past. Now in times to come, my respected Sikkimese people would again face a choice. Certainly, SDF party will go to the people to seek fresh mandate. And again, I am sure, they can not be at fault.



If the people of Sikkim choose us to lead them again, my dear people of Sikkim will never have to look back again. Our campaign to empower the people will continue. In fact, we would genuinely want to transfer power to each person to make the most of what is within him or her. We will be your custodian, we will be the champions of your cause and we shall fulfill all the remaining tasks that remain undone.

Let me end by quoting a famous saying that,

“If you can put a smile on the face of the poor, remember you are doing God’s work and you will be repaid manifold in times to come”.

Dear colleagues, let us keep working hard. People have faith and confidence in us. If we have measured up to their aspirations in the last ten years, success will naturally come our way. May the people of Sikkim forever triumph.

Thank you.

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