

Chapter 3

Status of Sikkimese Women in Agricultural Sector

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The discrimination against women at home, determines the allocation of time, furthering leading discrimination in work, based on gender differences. Sexual division of labour prevails both in the household and at the work (agricultural sector). Social norms affect how men and women treated and rewarded at home and society at large. Men are seen as the bread-winners and thus are expected to be paid more and work year-round. Women are considered as secondary labourers, and thus tend to work in seasonal or otherwise temporary jobs. These positions are low wage and low skill. Women are neither expected, nor encouraged to compete for higher wages or said jobs. Women who attempt to bargain for higher wages are seen as “distressed”, and viewed negatively (Whitehead, 2009).

According to ILO database agriculture is the second largest source of employment worldwide after services, with over engagement of 1 billion people. It is the most important sector for female employment in many countries, and especially in Africa and Asia (ILO, 2015). Women grow half of the world food, but own hardly any land, further leading difficulty in obtaining credit and are overlooked by agricultural advisors and projects. In Africa, three-quarters of the agricultural work is done by women while in Asia, Latin America and the Middle-East, women comprise half of the agricultural labour force. Women work is usually undervalued, unrecognized and usually unpaid. Yet, the women’s contribution to society in this regard (agriculture sector) is enormous (Prakash, 2003).

Majority of the South Asian countries depend upon agriculture sectors. It is the main source of livelihood for nearly half the population in the region. The region enjoys high economic growth but suffers from extreme poverty, and undernourishment; which is widespread, especially among women and children (Joshi, 2012). South Asia falling under poverty conditions where majority of sufferer are women, that had led women to extend their working hours inordinately, at home

and outside (agricultural field or paid jobs), in order to earn enough cash to feed and maintain the family. The neglect of the agricultural sector in many countries makes it a career of last choice; hence the "feminization" of farming (SOFA Team & Cheryl Doss, 2011) has begun.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian economy, especially in rural India. It is the core of planned economic development in India, in reducing poverty and regional inequality in the country. According to Ketki Singh of the Bhartiya Kisan Union, "About 80% of the workforce on farms are women but their work is not recognized and has no quantifies value, they don't posses any rights and their work is undervalued". She says, "I come across such women farmers and girls who face sexual harassment and exploitation when they go out to relieve themselves in the fields or while they are doing farm work. Even so, they are forced to go out every day at odd hours. They become more susceptible to abuse when people are aware that the woman has no male in the family. Even women exploit women and leave no opportunity to use her vulnerable situation to make profit" (La Via Campesina South Asia, 2015). Women play a crucial role in all agricultural related activities. They contribute a higher proportion of labor in agricultural sector as compared to men. However, they are not active in decision making.

In Sikkim, overall status of women is far better off than most of the women in South Asia and India, but as compared to their male counterparts they are still marginalized. Being patriarchal form of society, the prevalence of discrimination can be visible. Contribution of women to agricultural sector in Sikkim is enormous. They are the actual farmers in the state (Subba, 2009). Division of labour, wage differentiation and decision making by women lacks in the state. The women also lack the holding of property rights which further makes women miserable or loosen their importance.

3.2 STATUS OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AT GLOBAL LEVEL

Status, in general, is a relative term for the standing of an individual in the society. It is what is in the eyes of the beholder and what one thinks of oneself. It is the result of a pattern of relationship between man and woman, environment and self (Phillips, Rothbard & Dumas, 2009).

As of 2011, the ILO (International Labour Organisation) states that approximately one billion people, or over 1/3 of the available work force, are employed in the global agricultural sector. Agriculture constitutes approximately 70% of the global employment of children, and in many countries employs the largest percentage of women (ILO, 2011).

Table 3.1

Trend of Total, Men, and Women Active Population in Agriculture Sector from 2005-2015

Year	Total economically active population in Agr (lakhs)	Male economically active population in Agr (lakhs)	Female economically active population in Agr (lakhs)
2005	12789	7348	5440
2006	12860	7372	5487
2007	12932	7421	5510
2008	13003	7455	5548
2009	13072	7488	5584
2010	13135	7518	5617
2011	13195	7547	5648
2012	13250	7574	5676
2013	13298	7598	5700
2014	13339	7618	5721
2015	13371	7633	5738

Source: FAOSTAT, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN), Accessed on March 12, 2015, an extracted data from webpage <http://faostat.fao.org/site/550/default.aspx#ancor>.

The trend of total, men and women economically active population in agricultural sector from the year 2005 to 2015 is presented in the table 3.1. Since 2005 globally there has been slight increase in the total active population. Since 2005 to 2015, i.e. being the gap of 10 years women has not been able to be as equal as men in the agriculture sector. Women being the main contributor in agricultural sector, their work have remained invisible. Their work or their contributions towards production tend to remain unrecorded. Initially women produced, processed, and provided food starting from the household to the society at large.

Today, with the advent of globalization, agriculture is driven by patriarchy. So, the transformation of food production and distribution has been taken by the men. Previously women remain to the centre of food chain, but control over the entire food chain shifted from the women's hand into the men's hand or global corporate who is basically men. Food has no longer been a woman domain. Their work, food producing skills and creativity, knowledge, and predictability has been destroyed or washed away. Women play a crucial in all societies. However, their low socio-economic status in an historical perspective is largely based on the myth that women are inferior as agents of production. Their labour contribution inside and outside the home is usually considered as unproductive (Antonopoulous, 2009). Instead their work is the major contributor in the income generation directly or indirectly.

Women evolved agriculture, and till today most of the world women populations are engaged in agriculture sector. Participation of women in economic activity is a common feature all over the world. Women also make the most significant contribution to food security by producing more than half the world's food, and providing more than 80 percent of the food needs of food-insecure household and regions. Therefore food security is directly linked to women's food producing capacity (Shiva, 2010). About half of the world's farmers are women. They produce on average more than half of all the food that is produced (up to 80% in Africa, 60% in Asia, and 30 to 40% in Latin America and Western countries) thus forming a economic backbone. Women's limited access to resources and their insufficient purchasing power are products of a series of inter-related social, economic and cultural factors that force them into a subordinate role to the detriment of their own development and that of society as a whole (FAO, 1996 in Ramachandran, 2009).

Decision regarding input and output in agricultural field is of two forms; (i) women decides what is to be grown in the field (especially kitchen garden) that is being served in the kitchen, (ii) decision-making power resides with men if that agricultural production indulge in income generation. The women produced food is consumed at the household or at the local level whereas men headed production is for income generation.

Women work more than men, as she manages both the household and agricultural work. She has double work burden. In top of that her agricultural work

begins from sowing of seed till harvesting of crops, she is engaged in all the year around for agricultural works, livestock rearing; managing both household and farm work at the same time, or increasing her working time. The division of labour primarily pertained to ‘inside’-‘outside’ dichotomy and paid and unpaid labour categories (Krishnaraj & Kanchi, 2008).

Women lack ownership of resources. It is the owner who decides which crop to sow, which fertilisers and pesticides to be used, where and at what price the product to be sold. Due to no say in the land, there lack inefficiency in the women production. To substance the argument it has been rightly quoted in the study:

“Inequality in the distribution of resources between men and women is linked to production inefficiency, yet interventions targeting small holder farmers often fail to redress women’s lack of access to, and control of, important agricultural resources. Women are often constrained in access to and control of land, water, and other natural resources; complementary inputs, such as seeds and fertilisers; new varieties and technologies; agricultural extension; labour; credit; markets; and social capital” (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2008).

3.3 STATUS OF SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

South Asia, which consists of eight independent nation-state¹ is predominantly rural (70%), populous (one-fifth of all humanity), poor (40% of world’s poor), marketed for its inequalities (especially gender based; completed further by caste, religion, ethnicities) and human deprivations (Rustagi, 2007).

South Asian people mostly depend upon agriculture sector as compared to other region of the world (see Table 3.2). As per the data presented in the table 3.2, among the four regions in the world South Asia ranks at the top in the population which is about 4384848 million, rural population with 2287860 million, with male active population of 591515 million and female active population with 439068 million. Among the four region South Asian countries tops data in all the four sectors. This figure also explains that in the entire four regions female agricultural population is lower than male population.

¹ The countries include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Srilanka.

Table 3.2

Region wise distribution of total population, total rural population, male agricultural population, and female agricultural population

	South East Asia	Americas	Africa	South Asia
Total Population	633033	991220	1166238	4384848
Rural Population	335200	185611	687546	2287860
Male Agricultural Population	82571	33486	123895	591515
Female Agricultural Population	60971	9281	118031	439068

Note: Numbers represent in Million.

Source: FAOSTAT, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN), Accessed on March 12, 2015, an extracted data from webpage <http://faostat.fao.org/site/550/default.aspx#ancor>.

South Asia is the region with the most severe anti-female gender discrimination in the world (Smith & Byron, 2011). Land ownership and distribution pattern in South Asia is largely patrilineal, where land and assets are owned and acquired mainly through inheritance down the male line (Rao, 2011). Most Hindus in India and Nepal and Muslims in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are governed by patriarchal kinship systems. As social identity is secured from the father, a son is a permanent member of the natal household and a daughter is considered transient. She has moral rights to periodic gifts but largely denied inheritance, seen as a dependent of her husband (Dube, 1997, Jackson, 2003 in Rao 2011). If they hold land then the value and size of the land lower than those of men. South Asian women and girls are the most deprived ones (Haq, 1995), especially the divorced and separated women. They are the most vulnerable, as lacking in male protection and supervision, they are seen as deviants, and denied their rights (Rao, 2011).

Rural women in South Asia have much in common despite variations in social stratification across countries and communities. There exists mass poverty and massive deprivation in rural South Asia. Of the world's 1100 million people living on less than US \$1 a day as of 2000, South Asia has 432 million or 39.2 percent and mostly in the rural areas (UNDP 2004 in Kalpagam, 2007).

In a study it has been found that women in South Asia bear the heaviest burden; has the lowest value of GDI and GEM; are victims of rigid customs and

traditions; pressured to bear children (especially son) at early age and often; weak judicial system to uphold issue of women's right; economics opportunities are basically meant for men (Haq, 1995); and are victims of honour killing, female infanticide, dowry deaths, acid attacks, rape, etc.

South Asian women have been termed as the “invisible and unrecognized back bone of agriculture” (MUHHDC, 2003). Within agricultural sector, women not only perform varied kinds of roles like that of agricultural labourers, managers of homesteads, land owners, etc. but they also participate in all culture operations related to livestock managements, crop production etc. instead of recognizing and rewarding them for bearing heavy work burdens, they are being discriminated at home front and at other levels to whether it is access to credit or to other inputs or to wages (Joshi and Singh 2007). South Asia witnessed rapid progress regarding the food security, yet nutrition outcomes in regard to women and children could not match the minimum standard level. According to Ramachandran, “food security researchers have often commented on the fact that, while most South Asian countries have available food stocks and better health and education services in comparison to many other developing countries, even most countries of food deficit Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) score higher in terms of the nutrition levels of their women and children” (2009).

Another indicator of labour market discrimination is the gender gap in wages. The gender wage gap also varies widely between countries. The wage differential between men and women varies between 32.19% in Pakistan to 59.64% in Nepal for the similar kind of jobs (Joshi and Singh, 2007). Regarding wage discrimination, throughout Asia, women's wages range from half to two-thirds of wages received by men (Ramchandran, 2009).

3.4 INDIAN WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

India is home to the fourth largest agricultural sector in the world. Over 58 per cent of the rural households depend on agriculture as their principal means of livelihood. Table 3.3 gives a view of land use pattern in India in India of the year 2013. As per table 3.3, total area in the year was 328,726,000 hectare; cultivated area was 170,000,000 hectare; arable land was 157,000,000 hectare; percentage of total area cultivated was 51.71%.

Table 3.3**Land Use Pattern in India- 2013**

Variable	Units (1000 ha)
Total Area	328726
Cultivated Area (arable land + permanent crops)	170000
Arable land	157000
% of total country area cultivated	51.71%

Source: Knoema (2016), *FAO AQUASTAT, 2015*, Accessed on 18 October 2016, <https://knoema.com/FAO AQST2015R/fao-aquastat-2015>.

Agriculture, along with fisheries and forestry, is one of the largest contributors to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As per estimates by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the share of agriculture and allied sectors (including agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery) was 16.1 per cent of the Gross Value Added (GVA) during 2014–15 at 2011–12 prices. During Q1² (April- June) of FY2016, agriculture and allied sectors grew 1.9 per cent year-on-year and contributed 14.2 per cent of GVA (Reddy 2015 in Amexwrite, 2017).

Table 3.4**Economic and Development in India- 2014**

Variable	Units
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	2070 billion
GDP per capita	1579 billion dollar
Agriculture value added to GDP	16.96%

Source: Knoema (2016), *FAO AQUASTAT, 2015*, Accessed on 18 October 2016, <https://knoema.com/FAO AQST2015R/fao-aquastat-2015>.

As per FY2014, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India was 2070 billion; the GDP per capita was 1579 billion dollar; and agriculture value added to GDP was 16.96% (see Table 3.4).

In a predominantly agricultural economy like India, marketed by labour surplus and low levels of income, the bulk of the women workers are employed in agriculture. It has been widely accepted that women are an integral part of the agricultural production systems in India and they contribute substantially to the agricultural income of the country (Vepa, 2009). Indian women workers are found in

² First Quarter

a few specific occupations, most of which are manual, insecure, part-time or uncertain works, and are characterized by informality, flexible hours; and location of work which is nearby to their homes and can easily manage with their household duties. The better and secure jobs are monopolized by men and women are left with unskilled jobs (Mandal, 2011) only few women are able to reach the level of highly standardized and well paid where men are in majority. Such women are in minority, as compared majority of women end up doing low skilled jobs. Education barrier has prevented women from participating in more skilled labour sectors.

Disparity and discrimination can be seen in the wage distribution in agricultural sector between men and women labourers. Women and men perform similar tasks with provided amount of time, but then disparity tends to continue. Indian women agricultural labourers are usually paid at least 30-40 per cent less as compared to their counterparts (National Committee on Rural Labour, 1991 in Mandal, 2011) or 70% of men's wage (Singh and Sengupta, 2009). In a study it is found that in the district of Karnal in Haryana women received Rs. 12 a day for weeding whereas man got Rs. 28. During threshing season, women received Rs. 20-25 in contrast to Rs. 40-60 by men (Sridhar 2003 in Mandal 2011). Women also do suffer from the problem of non-payment, and irregular payment.

Female labour time are usually consider $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ of male labour time and they do are paid in the same way, i.e. $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ of what male labour receives. In reality women workers are more efficient than men workers, it's only the pre conceive notion, to prove women as weak and fragile. In particulars, is strongly informed by the following observation of Agarwal (2012):

“It ignores the fact that differences in wages paid are not necessarily indicative of differences in productivity. The employer's own bias and his ability to command female labour at cheaper rates, for instance, would be reflected in women receiving a lower wage than men for identical agricultural tasks. (ibid)”

Women in all parts of the world especially Indian women are engaged in both household and agricultural work and often their work is devalued. Their work is not treated as work. Women are the one who do most or often all the domestic labour and men do not do or do little of it. In reality men consume the products of women's

domestic labour or in other words “appropriate it”. Some describes this as women’s work being men’s property (Hirschon 1984 in Krishnaraj & Kanchi, 2008).

Gender differences are prominent in work and wage differences in rural areas. It has been further affected by the advent of Green Revolution. As, Green Revolution was introduced to increase the yield and production of the crops by providing programmes like distribution of fertilizers, HYV of seeds, insecticides and new method of irrigation; it directly or indirectly hampered the women agricultural workers. All those new methods and techniques simplified men’s work. Women were considered to be brainless or empty headed who are not good with the machines and new methods and technologies, jobs like transplantation, weeding, sowing, inter culture, etc. requiring much less skill and generally stereotyped as purely female tasks have come to be reserved for females. The Green Revolution has, therefore, brought out a more severe division of agricultural work. Biological division as such, women’s body being suited only for a certain agricultural operations and based on physical strength in performance between male and female, especially in connection with mechanization (Ahmed, 2004).

Agricultural occupation in India doesn’t only include working in agricultural field, but do incorporate other activities, and has been updating by adding more in the group of agricultural occupations. As, Central Statistics Office (CSO), on advice of the National Statistical Commission (NSC), constituted a Working Group under the Chairmanship of T.S. Papola, in November 2012 submitted the report recommending 12 Agricultural occupations and 13 Non Agricultural occupations (Annexure II) as against the existing 11 Agricultural and 7 Non agricultural occupations (Annexure III) (Labour Bureau, 2013).

Apart from work based on field where crops are grown, other factors such as Animal Husbandry workers; Horticulture workers; Fisherman -inland, deep coast, sea; etc. are added up as agricultural occupations. Indian rural women performs numerous labour intensive jobs such as weeding, hoeing, grass cutting, picking, cotton stick collections, separations of seeds from fiber. Other than engaging in agricultural sector collection of wood, fetching water from far flung areas is also the duty of women. She is also responsible for farm activities and activities associated with it, such as milking, preparation of ghee, preparing dung cakes (Lal & Khurana, 2011). So, women not

only perform household duties, rather she is engaged in agricultural work, equivalent to men and also involved in all livestock activities.

Society is being patriarchal in nature, control over decision making lies with the man of the house, its same in the case in agriculture sector too. In one study, it came to know that male members did seek consent from women but their suggestions and/or objections were not taken into account. In a state where women are in the forefront of decision-making due to migration of their husband, they are still not involved in agriculture-related decision making. Sharmishta Choudhary in her study conducted in Orissa, revealed that farm women did not make any decisions about farm operations independently (Chaudhary, 2004 in Khandelwal and Deo, 2013). In women headed household where the male members are migrated, females are unable to fill the gap in agricultural sector which the male member used to perform, such as ploughing. Due to gendered in agricultural work women are forbidden to perform ploughing. To substantiate, in a study in the Konkan region it has found that, women left their land fallow for lack of male labour to plough the land (Krishnaraj & Kanchi 2008).

One of the reasons of women non-involvement in decision making process especially in farm-sector is lack of women hold in the family shares especially in land holding. Women are usually denied of property rights, and if they do, that also very marginal (see Table 3.6) as compared to men (see table 3.5).

To explain the number of people- men, women and total number of population holding marginal, small, semi medium, medium, large, and total land holdings simplified table has been prepared and presented in three tables, Table 3.5 represents male population, Table 3.6 represents female population and Table 3.7 represents total population.

Table 3.5 represents male numbers and area of holdings by size group of India of census year 2010-11, similarly table 3.6 and 3.7 is represents female numbers and size and total (male & female) numbers and size respectively. As per the data presented in the tables, total numbers land holders are 2281.1 lakhs with 1580.50 lakhs hectare area of land, out of which 51.99% are individual land holders with 82.79% of land holding, and 48.01% are joint land holders with 17.21% of land holding out of which 86.52% are male individual land holders with 89.06% of land

and 91.28% of joint land holders with 91.92% of land.

Table 3.5
Numbers and Area of holdings by size group (India)
Year 2010-11
Male Population

Sl. No	Size of land holding (in hat.)	Individual Holdings (lakhs)		Joint Holdings (lakhs)		Total Holdings (lakhs)	
		Number	Area	Number	Area	Number	Area
1	Marginal	685.71	267.42	114.60	45.73	800.32	313.15
2	Small	186.39	266.07	30.96	43.72	217.36	309.79
3	Semi Medium	104.28	282.61	19.90	55.07	124.18	337.67
4	Medium	43.32	248.37	10.22	60.25	53.55	308.63
5	Large	6.41	100.94	2.46	45.23	8.87	146.17
6	All Classes	1026.11	1165.41	178.14	249.1	2104.28	1415.40

Source: Agriculture Census Division, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC) (2011), accessed on September, 10 2014, an extracted data from webpage <http://agcensus.dacnet.nic.in/statesummarytype.aspx>

On the contrary 13.48% are female individual land holders with 10.94% of land and 8.72% are joint land holders with 8.08% of land. Regarding total individual land holders, 85.58% of male have 86.66% of marginal size of land, whereas only 14.42% of female have 13.34% of marginal size of land; 87.29% of male and 12.71% of female have 87.50% and 12.50% of small size of land; 89.25% of male and 10.75% of female have 89.48% and 10.52% of semi medium size of land; 91.43% of male and 8.57% of female have 91.55% and 8.45% of medium size of land; 92.70% of male and 7.30% of female have 92.83% and 7.17% of large size of land holding respectively.

Regarding total joint land holders, 91.23% of male have 91.39% of marginal size of land, whereas only 8.77% of female have 8.61% of marginal size of land; 91.28% of male and 8.72% of female have 91.26% and 8.74% of small size of land; 91.06% of male and 8.94% of female have 91.05% and 8.95% of semi medium size of land; 91.66% of male and 8.34% of female have 91.76% and 8.24% of medium size of land; 94.08% of male and 5.92% of female have 94.46% and 5.54% of large size of land holding respectively.

Table 3.6
Numbers and Area of holdings by size group (India)
Year 2010-11
Female Population

Sl. No	Size of land holding (in hat.)	Individual Holdings		Joint Holdings		Total Holdings	
		Number	Area	Number	Area	Number	Area
1	Marginal	115.54	41.18	11.02	4.31	126.56	45.49
2	Small	27.14	38	2.96	4.19	30.10	42.18
3	Semi Medium	12.56	33.23	1.95	5.41	14.51	38.64
4	Medium	4.06	22.92	0.93	5.41	4.99	28.34
5	Large	0.50	7.80	0.16	2.65	0.66	10.45
6	All Classes	159.81	143.13	17.02	21.97	176.83	165.10

Source: Agriculture Census Division, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC) (2011), accessed on September, 10 2014, an extracted data from webpage <http://agcensus.dacnet.nic.in/statesummarytype.aspx>.

Table 3.7
Numbers and Area of Holdings by Size Group (India)
Year 2010-11
Total Population

Sl. No	Size of land holding (in hat.)	Individual Holdings		Joint Holdings		Total Holdings	
		Number	Area	Number	Area	Number	Area
1	Marginal	801.25	308.60	125.63	50.04	926.88	358.63
2	Small	213.54	304.07	33.92	47.90	247.46	351.97
3	Semi Medium	116.84	315.83	21.85	60.48	138.69	376.31
4	Medium	47.38	271.30	1.15	65.67	58.54	336.96
5	Large	6.91	108.74	2.62	47.88	9.53	156.62
6	All Classes	1185.92	1308.54	195.18	271.96	2281.10	1580.50

Source: Agriculture Census Division, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC) (2011), accessed on September, 10 2014, an extracted data from webpage <http://agcensus.dacnet.nic.in/statesummarytype.aspx>

The Table 3.5 and 3.6 clearly explains that whether number wise or area wise or whether it may be individual or joint holding, the ratio between men and women is

huge. It clearly explains that only few women possess property and that too in very small quantity. The table is the clear example of discrimination of women in property (land) holding, which further accelerates the decision making power of women and discriminatory attitude in almost all sectors of life.

Male migration has resulted into feminization in agriculture sector. There has been division in agriculture sector where women are engaged in jobs which are time consuming and less important, and with no or less land holdings. Later with the migration of male member, addition to no land titles and restrictions on public engagement, women are unable to access markets, technologies, inputs and institutional credit, especially due to their continued classification by the unpaid family helpers rather than independent cultivators and decision makers (Neetha, 2010 in Rao, 2011), and get restricted to lower paid casual and informal work (Kapadia, 2000).

3.5 Sikkimese Women in Agriculture Sector

3.5.1 Demographic Profile of Sikkim

Sikkim is the second smallest State of India, located in the foothills of Eastern Himalayas. Sikkim is referred as nye-ma-el (heaven) by the Lepchas, meaning 'new palace' in Nepali, and Demazong/Denzong (valley of rice) by the Bhutias (Lama, 2001). It lies between 27 degree 49'' and 28 degree 10'' north latitudes, and 88 degree 28'' and 88 degree 55'' east longitudes. It became the 22nd state of India on 16th May 1975 by the 36th Amendment Act, 1975. It stretches 115 kms from north to south and 65 kms from east to west. The state is bordered by Nepal on the west, Tibet Autonomous Region of China on the north and east, and Bhutan on the east and the Darjeeling district of West Bengal lies to the south. Sikkim is the least populous state in India and the second-smallest state after Goa in total area. Sikkim has 0.216 percent (7,096 sq km) of the total land area of India. As per 2011 census Sikkim has 610,577 populations (0.05 per cent of the total population of India) of which 323070 are males and 287507 are females. The density of population in Sikkim is 86 persons/sq km and the sex ratio is 889 females/1000 males. The literacy rate of the state is 73.94 per cent with 86.60 per cent are male literates and 75.60 per cent are female literates. In 2011 rural population consists of 480981 people while urban population consists of 59870

people. The state of Sikkim is divided into four districts- East, West, North, and South.

According to 2011 census, East District with the 954 km sq. has a total population of 283583 persons, of which 151432 (87147 lives in rural areas and 64285 lives in urban areas) are males and 132151(73949 lives in rural areas and 58202 lives in urban areas) are females, with the population density of 117/km sq, having literacy rate of 77.39%. The district has the sex ratio of 942/1000males (see Table 3.8).

According to 2011 census, North district with the 4226 km sq. has a total population of 43709 persons, of which 24730 (22274 lives in rural areas and 2456 lives in urban areas) are males and 18979 (16791 lives in rural areas and 2188 lives in urban areas) are females. This is the least populated districts of the state, with the density population of 10/km sq, having literacy rate of 78.01%. The district has the sex ratio of 767/1000males (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8

District wise Rural and Urban Population in Sikkim

State/District/ Capital	Area	Sector	Population			Sex Ratio	Literacy rate	Population Density
			Male	Female	Total			
Sikkim (Gangtok)	7096	Rural	242797	214202	456999	890	81.42	86
		Urban	80273	73305	153578			
		Total	323070	287507	610577			
East (Gangtok)	954	Rural	87147	73949	161096	873	83.85	297
		Urban	64285	58202	122487			
		Total	151432	132151	283583			
North (Mangan)	4226	Rural	22274	16791	39065	767	78.01	10
		Urban	2456	2188	4644			
		Total	24730	18979	43709			
South (Namchi)	750	Rural	65848	59803	125651	914	81.42	196
		Urban	10822	10377	21199			
		Total	76670	70180	146850			
West (Gyalshing)	1166	Rural	67528	63659	131187	942	77.39	117
		Urban	2710	2538	5248			
		Total	70238	66197	136435			

Source: Census of India (2011), Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, New Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

In South district as per 2011 census having an area of 750 km sq. has a total population of 146850 persons, of which 76670 (65848 lives in rural areas and 10822 lives in urban areas) are males and 70180 (59803 lives in rural areas and 10377 lives in urban areas) are females, having density population of 196/km sq, having literacy rate of 81.42%. The district has the sex ratio of 914/1000males (see Table 3.8).

According to 2011 census, West district with the 1166 km sq. has a total population of 136435 persons, of which 70238 (67528 lives in rural areas and 2710 lives in urban areas) are males and 66197 (63659 lives in rural areas and 2538 lives in urban areas) are females. This is the second populated districts of the state, with the density population of 10/km sq, having literacy rate of 78.01%. The district has the sex ratio of 767/1000males (see Table 3.8).

3.5.2 Socio-Cultural Profile of Sikkim

The state of Sikkim has ethnic diversity. The state comprises total of seven ethnic groups namely, Nepalis, Lepchas (native inhabitants of the land), Bhutias, Tibetan immigrants, Marwaris, Biharis and Bengalis in some proportions, the dominant being the Lepcha (Rong), Bhutia (Denzongpas) and Nepalese (Gorkhas).

Lepchas

The Lepcha are believed to be the earliest settlers of Sikkim. They are known as “*Rong*” or “*Rongkup*”, meaning “the son of the snowy peak” (Aachuley, 2010) and also called as “*Rong-pa*” which means “the ravine folk” (Bisht, 2008). The origin of Lepchas is somewhat obscure, some anthropologist believed that the tribe migrated from East, i.e. from Assam and Burma and belong to Tibeto-Burman tribal family (Kotturan, 1983 and Siiger, 1967). Anthropologist like Beauvoir Stocks traces their origination from Southern part of Tibet (Stock, 1975 and Risley, 1993). Lepcha on the other hand believe that they are an aborigine of Sikkim from a place called “*Mayel Lyang*” meaning “the land of the hidden paradise” or “the delightful region” (Waddell, 1899). Being confused of their origin and believing as the earliest settlers of Sikkim, they are recognised as the primitive/indigenous tribe. They basically are animist but with the advent of Bhutia along with Lamaism converted themselves into Buddhist, later some converted into Christianity, with the agent of missionaries in the state. Traditionally Lepchas are skilled hunters, food gatherers and followed shifting

cultivation, but now-a-days they lead a settled life and adopted animal husbandry and sedentary farming, by raising cardamom and ginger as cash crops and maize and millets as cereals (CISHME, 2007) and few taking up jobs in governmental sectors and educational establishment (Chodhury, no date). They used to follow Jhum³ cultivation.

In Lepcha Customary Law, Section III (The Lepcha Marriage Customary Law), (Annexure IV), part 15 (Lepcha Women) para (a) it discusses that, “if a Lepcha girl shall marry outside her community with a non Lepcha, she automatically shall forfeit her claim and right as a Lepcha ancestral land and property. She shall become a non-Lepcha. Her offspring either male or female shall become non-Lepcha.” and part 14 (Lepcha Man) para (b) it says, “A non-Lepcha bride/wife with newly acquired female Lepcha ‘Aagit’, clan however, shall not be entitled to her husband’s ancestral land and property” (Aachuley, 2011) which means whether women married from Lepcha community to the other or women marrying from other community with Lepcha are denied of inheritance or ancestral property rights.

Bhutia

Bhutia tribes usually are from Tibetan origin. They migrated to Sikkim in the 16th century. They inhabited the northern part of Sikkim where they are known as the Lachenpas and Lachungpas. Majority of the tribes are concentrated in the dry valley of the north Sikkim. In Sikkim they are called as Denzongpa which is Tibetan name of Sikkim. They have settled down in the cold, higher valleys. Members of the Bhutia community also became a part of Chogyal’s administration in the erstwhile kingdom of Sikkim. Bhutias forms 14% of the total population of Sikkim. Some of the main occupations of the Bhutias of Sikkim are trade/business, agriculture, and government services. They are Scheduled Tribe in Sikkim.

Being Tibetan origin, they brought with them a Tibetan cultural life including the language, religion and economic system which was a combination of pastoralist and semi settled agriculture (Mukherjee, 1995). Bhutia community after being settled in Sikkim started practicing a semi-pastoral form of farming. They practiced

³ Slash and burn agriculture- process of growing crops by first clearing the land of trees and vegetation and burning them thereafter.

sedentary farming within the territory of Sikkim (Dutt, 2009). For Bhutias, agriculture was subsistence.

Bhutia community being patriarchal in nature, the son of the family takes the charge of the property after his father; the women member on the other hand has no legal right in the family property but is provided with the immovable property in the form of livestock, domestic animals, utensils, ornaments etc. Few rich households do provide small cultivable land or a house to the daughter but not as equal as to their son. Sikkim being the part of India, has not yet followed Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 but still governed by their customary laws in respect of succession, inheritance and also of marriage. The Bhutia-Lepcha may inherit property as a gift from her father, but under the “Married Women” Property Regulation Act, 1962, if a Bhutia-Lepcha woman marries a non Bhutia-Lepcha person, she will forfeit her rights to such properties (Bhattacharya, 1994).

Tsongs/Limbus

The Tsongs are popularly known as Limbu or Subba but they prefer to call themselves Yakthungba (Subba, 1999). According to Subba, “They are the original inhabitants of Limbuwan, a part of which is retained in Sikkim (West district, South district and a part of North district of present Sikkim)” (CISHME, 2007). He further writes that the organisation of Tsong, “Akhil Sikkim Kirat Limbu Chumlung” established in 1973 came up with the resolution that Tsongs are not Nepalese rather one of the indigenous tribe of Sikkim (Subba, 1999). The Tsongs believed that the name Sikkim is derived from the Limbu term ‘Songkhim’ signifying New Home or ‘Singkhim’ meaning a wooden house, which was corrupted to ‘Sukhim’ and later on to ‘Sikkim’(Chodhury, Ungoing Project).

According to Risley, the Limbus were distributed over ten districts, each subject to their headmen or Soubah, hence the title Subba (CISHME, 2007) came into being, and the Tsongs or Limbus were started to referring as Subba. “The word ‘Tshong’ or ‘Tsong’ is important because it occurs in the Tibetan phrase ‘LHO-MON-TSONG-GSUM’, which identifies the Tibetans, Lepchas and Limbus as the three original races of the kingdom of Sikkim at the time of the First Chogyal (1642-

70)”(CISHME, 2007). The Lho-Men-Tsong-Sum Agreement ⁴ was signed at DenjongPhunstokKhangsar between the Ministers of Chogyal Chenpo on one side and the leaders of Lepcha and Limboo on the other side invoking the local deities of Pahungree, Phamurong, Tashiding, Pemayangtse, Thekchoyangtse, Rabdentseetc (Lho-Men-Tsong-Sum Document, Kharel, 2002, Subba, 1999, in Khamdhak, 2014) pledging and putting their seals in the agreement swearing in that the people will thereafter not have separate self government but abide by one order, one destiny, one government, and one religion (Subba, 1999 in Khamdhak, 2014).

The main reason behind this agreement was to consolidate Namgyal rule and ensure cooperation among the Lhoree (Bhutias), Menree (Lepchas), and Tsongree (Limboos) who inhabit ate Sikkim at that time (Kazi, 1983, Basnett 1974, in Khamdhak, 2014). Limboo’s are recognised as Scheduled Tribe of Sikkim (The SCs and STs Orders Amendment Act 2002) (Annexure V).

As per women inheritance right is concerned, Limboo woman cannot inherit father’s property, though she performs different roles in agriculture and animal husbandry operations. Daughters receive a share of father’s property only if she is unmarried. Limboo women are hard working and they work in agriculture fields as daily labourers, collection of firewood and fodder, and contribute to the family income (Subba, 2008).

Nepalese

At present the Nepalese form the single largest ethnic community. The Nepalese are a heterogeneous group. They consist of many castes and tribes of which Bahun, Chhetri, Newar, Rai, Gurung, Tamang, Mangar, Sunwar, Bhujel, Thami, Thakuri, Kami, Damai, Sarki and Majhi. They are diversified in their culture. Bahun, Chhetri, Newar, Rai, Gurung, Tamang, Mangar, Sunwar, Bhujel, Thami, Thakuri, Kami, Damai, Sarki and Majhi are conspicuous. Each of these exhibits diverse physical and cultural characteristics. Nepalese being Hindu, they follow caste system or social hierarchy where Bahun, Chhetri and Newar, belong to the so-called upper castes, the Kami, Damai, Sarki, and Majhi are the Scheduled Castes. Other backward classes of the region include Rai, Yakha, Gurung, Mangar, Sunwar, Bhujel, Thami and Thakuri. The Bahuns are the priests, the Chhetris are traditional warriors

⁴ Lho-men-Tsong-Sum Means the threesome of Bhutia, Lepcha and Limboo.

(CISHME, 2007) and the Newars are the merchant class. Belonging to one ethnic community, they do follow different religion. Majority of the Nepalese are hindus, but Tamang, Gurung, and few sections of Newars do follow Buddhism (Chodhury, Ungoing Project). Tamang has also being recognised as Scheduled Tribe of Sikkim (The SCs and STs Orders Amendment Act 2002).

Nepalese brought with them a part of Nepal's cultural life including the Nepali language. Buddha margi and Shiva margi and settled cultivation especially terraced farming are brought by them (Mukherjee, 1995). It can be said that settled agriculture in Sikkim started after the Nepalese entered the land. According to Singh (1993), Nepalese of Sikkim are marginal farmers, and came in Sikkim mostly in search of new agricultural opportunities, yet very often they perform combine roles of dairymen, agricultural labourers, porters, carpenters and even as errand boys. They first introduced permanent commercial agriculture, and as such cultivation of cardamom, ginger etc. started.

3.5.3 Economic profile of Sikkim

The state of Sikkim falls under three broad categories, (i) Agriculture sector, (ii) Industrial manufacturing sector, (iii) Service sector.

Table 3.9

Sectoral Distribution of Workers in Sikkim (%)

	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Primary	62	86	73	1	3	1	50	77	62
Secondary	16	5	11	25	10	20	18	6	13
Tertiary	22	9	16	74	88	78	32	18	26

Source: Government of Sikkim (2015), *Sikkim Human Development Repor 2014*, Routledge, New Delhi, P. No 9.

As per the table 3.9, out of the total workers, 62 per cent continue to be engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing. Another 13 per cent of the workers are employed in the secondary sector (mining, manufacturing, electricity, water supply and construction), with more than half of them being employed in construction. The tertiary sector constitutes 26 per cent of the workers.

Agriculture Sector in Sikkim

Most of the population of Sikkim depends upon agriculture sector followed by services sector, and few depend upon industrial sector for the source of income and livelihood. The people of Sikkim before 1890s followed jhum-cultivation and shifting cultivation. The ethnic people of Lepchas, Bhutias, and Nepalese started their settlement by clearing the forest and started settled agriculture in permanent basis. The rule of bench terracing of the pan for cultivation by the tillers started by the 10th Chogyal Sidkyong Tulku (1879-1914 AD) was accelerated after 1890s in Sikkim (Risley 1894 in Subba 2009). Settled agriculture in Sikkim was initiated by British Administration's political officer, Sir J C White in Sikkim in 1889 (Subba, 1999 in Subba 2009).

In Sikkim, 74.84% of people lives in rural areas and are mostly dependent in agricultural sector. The economy of Sikkim is mostly dependent upon agricultural sector followed by tourism. Agriculture in the state is mainly rain fed. The agricultural sector in Sikkim includes crop culture, horticulture, and animal husbandry (CISHME, 2007).

The economy of Sikkim is traditionally agrarian based on agriculture and animal husbandry. However, with the pace of development, opportunities have evolved up in other tertiary sector, mainly tourism, which has further led into decrease of agricultural land. It has estimated that less than 11% of the total geographical area is under agriculture. The contribution of agriculture sector to the total GSDP is diminishing, currently accounting for 16.30% (H&CCD Department, Government of Sikkim, 2011).

Crop Culture in Sikkim

The major crops cultivated in the state are maize, rice, wheat, pulses, finger millets, barley, buckwheat and oilseeds (CISHME, 2007).

Table 3.10 represents altitude wise cropping pattern in Sikkim, which is further divided in zaid, kharif and rabi crops. As per the table the altitude of Sikkim is divided into three phase i.e. first: 1500-3000ft where almost all types of crops are grown; second: 3000-500ft where only kharif and rabi crops are grown; third: 5000ft and above where crops are hardly grown and not grown at all.

Table 3.10
Cropping Pattern in Sikkim

Altitude	Zaid/Summer crops	Kharif Crops	Rabi Crops
1500-3000ft	Maize, Vegetables, Paddy, etc.	Paddy, Maize, Millet, Soyabean, Other Pulses, etc.	Wheat, Barley, Buckwheat, Rice-bean, Vegetables, etc.
3000-5000ft	-	Paddy, Maize, Millet, Soyabean, Other Pulses, Finger Millet etc.	Wheat, Barley, Buckwheat, Rice-bean, Rapeseed and Mustard.
5000ft and above	-	-	-

Source: Census of India (2011), Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, New Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

Horticulture and Floriculture in Sikkim

Different varieties of fruits, vegetables, spices, and flowers are grown in Sikkim, as the climatic condition ranges from sub-tropical to cold-temperate climate. The varieties of fruits grown in Sikkim are mandarin oranges, plums, peaches, pears, avocado, guava, banana, etc., vegetables includes cabbage, cauliflower, pumpkin, bitter gourd, cucumber, tomato, potato, radish, carrot, turnip, cassava, sweet potato, yam, varieties of beans, and varieties of leafy vegetables (CISHME, 2007). Among the spices grown in Sikkim, large cardamom is the major cash crops of the state. Other than cardamom, ginger and turmeric are also grown (Chodhury, Ungoing Project). Though the production is less but some produce have really high demand such as large cardamom and orchid.

The data derived from Horticulture and Cash crops Department (H&CCD), Government of Sikkim has been presented in the Table 3.11 regarding estimates of area, production and average yield of major Horticultural crops for the year 2010-11. As per the data from the H&CCD Department, the various categories of fruits, vegetables, spices, and flowers (See Table 3.11) are majorly being yielded in the state of Sikkim.

Table 3.11**Estimates of Area, Production and Average Yield of Major Horticultural Crops of Sikkim for the Year 2010-11**

Sl. No.	Crops	Area (000 ha)	Production (000 tonnes)	Average Yield (kgs/ha)
1	FRUITS			
	i. Sikkim Mandarin Orange	8.320	14.390	1730
	ii. Passion Fruit	0.015	0.030	2000
	iii. Other Fruits	4.560	5.690	1247
	TOTAL FRUITS	12.895	20.110	3089
2	VEGETABLES			
	i. Kharif Vegetables	4.033	20.991	5205
	ii. Rabi Vegetables	4.897	24.280	4958
	iii. Off-season Vegetables	5.475	29.929	5466
	TOTAL VEGETABLES	14.405	75.200	5220
3	ROOT & TUBER CROPS			
	i. Kharif Potato	4.950	22.498	4545
	ii. Rabi Potato	4.485	23.212	5175
	Total Potato	9.435	45.710	4845
	iii. Other Root & Tubers	0.675	3.450	5111
	TOTAL ROOT & TUBER CROPS	10.110	49.160	4862
4	SPICES			
	i. Large Cardamom	15.020	3.510	233
	ii. Ginger	8.510	45.890	5392
	iii. Turmeric	0.850	2.970	3494
	TOTAL SPICES	24.380	52.370	2148
5	FLOWERS			
	i. Cut/Pot Flowers (lakh nos)	0.089	114.080	-
	ii. Plants/Bulbs (lakh nos)	0.099	98.420	-
	TOTAL FLOWERS	0.188	212.500	-

Source: Horticulture and Cash Crops Department (H&CCD) (2011), Government of Sikkim, Krishi Bhawan, Tadong, Accessed on February 15, 2017 from webpage <http://www.sikkimagrisnet.org/General/UploadedFiles/Downloads/14.pdf>.

Animal Husbandry in Sikkim

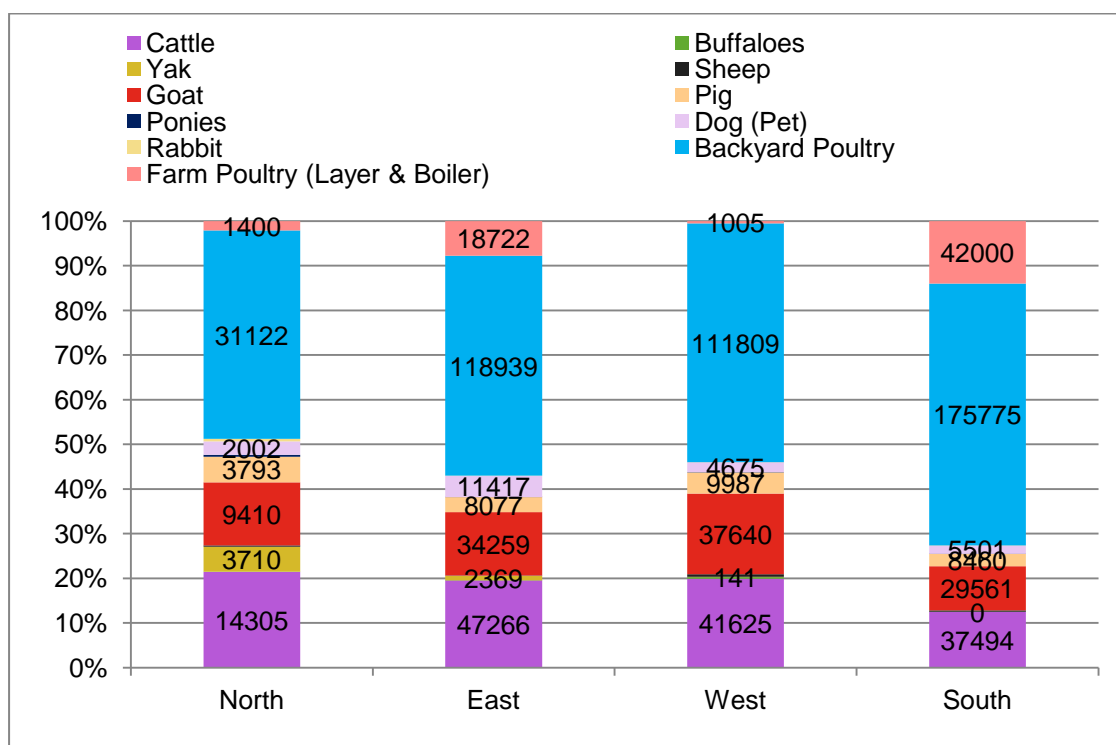
After agriculture, animal husbandry is the most important economic activity of the people of Sikkim (CISHME, 2007). Before settled agriculture, people of Sikkim were semi-nomadic tribes and used to indulge in animal grazing (Chodhury, Ungoing Project). Later when the people started living settled life, they started crop cultivation and rearing of livestock. With the limited agriculture area and increasing population, per capita land availability has been consistently decreasing. In a rural economy like Sikkim, animal husbandry activities form an extremely important element to bring about substantial improvements in living standards of the people (UDHD, 2013). The animals reared in Sikkim include, cattle, buffalo, yak, sheep, goat, pig, horse, pony, mule, dog, rabbit and poultry (CISHME, 2007). Out of them cattle, poultry, piggery, and yak rearing mostly in Northern part of Sikkim is done in larger amount as the source of their livelihood.

Table 3.12						
District wise Livestock Population- 2012						
Sl. No	Livestock	North	East	West	South	Total
1	Cattle	14305	47266	41625	37494	140690
2	Buffaloes	19	39	794	40	892
3	Yak	3710	2369	141	-	6220
4	Sheep	234	212	1234	1004	2684
5	Goat	9410	34259	37640	29561	110870
6	Pig	3793	8077	9987	8460	30317
7	Ponies	324	102	99	11	536
8	Dog (Pet)	2002	11417	4675	5501	23595
9	Rabbit	353	127	28	65	573
10	Backyard Poultry	31122	118939	111809	175775	437645
11	Farm Poultry (Layer & Boiler)	1400	18722	1005	42000	63127

Source: Department of Animal Husbandry Livestock, Fisheries & Veterinary Services (AHLF&VS) (2012), Government of Sikkim, 19th Livestock Census Report, Accessed on February 15, 2017, <http://www.sikkim-ahvs.gov.in/Download/Report2.pdf>.

Table 3.12 presents the district wise livestock population in the state of Sikkim that has been derived through 19th Livestock Census Report, 2012 and further illustrated in the figure 3.9. As per the data in North district the highest percentage of livestock population are of yak (59.65%), ponies (60.45%), and rabbit (61.61%); in East district the highest percentage of livestock are cattle (33.60%), dog as a pet (48.39%). In West district highest percentage of livestock found are buffaloes (89.01%), sheep (45.98%), Goat (33.95%), and pig (32.94%). In South district the highest percentage of livestock are backyard poultry (40.16%), and farm poultry (layer and boiler) (66.53%).

Figure 3.1
District wise Livestock Population- 2012



Source: Department of Animal Husbandry Livestock, Fisheries & Veterinary Services (AHLF&VS) (2012), Government of Sikkim, 19th Livestock Census Report, Accessed on February 15, 2017, <http://www.sikkim-ahvs.gov.in/Download/Report2.pdf>.

Industrial Sector in Sikkim

Compared to the agricultural sector, the industrial sector of the state is still weak and under-developed. The industries of Sikkim can be classified as cottage, small and medium scale industries. There is no large-scale industry in the state. Being mountainous region and difficult terrain, there is less possibility of big industrial

sector. Few private hydropower and pharmaceuticals companies have been set up. Rather state is focused on cottage, small and medium scale industries. Most of the medium-scale industries of the state are beverage industries (tea, beer and other alcoholic beverages) while the small-scale and cottage units are chiefly based on food products and handicrafts (CISHME, 2007).

Service Sector in Sikkim

After agriculture the major employment is under service sector. It is believed that the 'engine of economic growth' in Sikkim has to be the service sector (Sikkim Today, 1999, CISHME, 2007). Being absence of large scale industries and IT sectors, the major job provider is the state and the central government.

Apart from these, the most remarkable development in last one or two decades has been the tourism sector. Diverse forms of tourism, namely eco- tourism, adventure tourism, village tourism, cultural tourism (CISHME, 2007), and pilgrimage tourism, etc, have been flourished in the state. That has led development in the hotel industry. Further it has provide platform for the locals to take up different kinds of opportunities as per the demand proliferated by this sector.

As per the report of Centre for Inter-disciplinary Studies of Mountain & Hill Environment (CISHME), 2007, the major occupation of the people in Sikkim may be grouped as under:

1. Main workers
 - . a) Cultivators
 - . b) Agricultural labourers
 - . c) Workers in household industry
 - . d) Other workers
2. Marginal Workers
3. Non-workers.

Table 3.13

Categories of Workers in Sikkim- Districtwise (2011)																											
Categories of workers	East Sikkim						North Sikkim						South Sikkim						West Sikkim								
	Rural			Urban			Rural			Urban			Rural			Urban			Rural			Urban					
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F			
Total (Main+ Marginal)	864948	54524	3240	52789	370	14162	21627	14667	11937	11484	11897	6680	3997	2480	6680	3997	2480	6680	3997	2480	6680	3997	2480	1930	1432	498	
Cultivators	30973	16141	1472	5266	220	7220	3855	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345	3345
Agricultural Labourers	105443	48988	5445	9440	446	21966	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006	12006
HHI Workers	1665	796	693	939	65	2374	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335	1335
Other Workers	4367	3216	131	503	31	1168	1319	234	114	14	24	84	24	26	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Total Workers (Main)	6139	4517	1249	4911	353	1183	2549	1422	1014	1335	483	2103	1335	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250
Cultivators (Main)	21987	12901	1303	2312	120	4770	2776	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332	2332
Agricultural Labourers (Main)	4222	8290	1900	3000	100	9507	6319	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188	3188
HHI Workers (Main)	870	591	279	665	41	1183	1335	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752	752
Other Workers (Main)	3746	2938	030	468	37	1992	3792	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276	1276
Total (Marginal)	2189	879	109	311	41	640	331	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281	281
Cultivators (Marginal)	886	323	573	179	79	299	191	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168	168
Agricultural Labourers (Marginal)	5722	074	647	635	232	391	633	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
HHI Workers (Marginal)	595	209	392	393	193	137	637	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243
Other Workers (Marginal)	6507	3255	357	568	38	2909	1369	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610

Source: Census of India (2011), Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, New Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

According to Table 3.13, there are 31,489 cultivators out of which 16,477 are males and 15,012 are females in East district. Of them 30,973 live in rural and 516 live in urban area. In rural area 16,181 are males and 14,792 are females, in urban areas 296 and 220 are male and female respectively. Total no. of agricultural labourers is 11,483 out of which 5,382 are males and 6,101 are females. Of them 10,543 live in rural and only 940 live in urban area. In rural area 4,898 are males and 5,645 are females, in urban areas 484 are males and 456 are females.

In North district, there are 7,313 cultivators out of which 3,889 are males and 3,424 are females, of them 7,280 live in rural and only 33 live in urban area. In rural area 3,875 are males and 3,405 are females, in urban areas 14 and 19 are male and female respectively. Total no. of agricultural labourers in the district is 2,262 out of which 1,308 are males and 954 are females. Of them 2,196 live in rural and only 66 live in urban area. In rural area 1,270 are males and 926 are females, in urban areas 38 are males and 28 are females (see Table 3.13).

In South district, there are 37,802 cultivators out of which 20,808 are males and 16,994 are females. Of them 37,527 live in rural and only 275 live in urban area. In rural area 20,672 are males and 16,855 are females, in urban areas 136 and 139 are male and female respectively. Total no. of agricultural labourers in the district is 4,188 out of which 2,116 are males and 2,072 are females, out of them 4122 live in rural areas and 66 live in urban areas. In rural area there are 2,077 are males and 2,045 are females, in urban areas 39 are males and 27 are females (see Table 3.12).

In West district, there are 40,797 cultivators out of which 22,153 are males and 18,644 are females. Of them 40,752 live in rural and 45 live in urban area. In rural area 22,141 are males and 18,611 are females, in urban areas 12 and 33 are male and female respectively. Total no. of agricultural labourers in the district is 8,053 out of which 4,077 are males and 3,976 are females. Of them 8,019 live in rural and only 34 live in urban area. In rural area 4,052 are males and 3,967 are females, in urban areas 25 are males and 9 are females (see Table 3.12).

The above data shows that in all the districts more than half of the cultivators are small/medium farmers. It was also observed that almost all of them live in rural areas and equal number of female participants was sighted as that of men.

3.6 Status of Women in Sikkim

Women through ages have remained dominated and subjugated in almost all parts of the world, so do the Sikkimese women. Traditionally Sikkimese women did not hold any political post, denied of property inheritance right, and were in a second position after men. Later with the intervention of the state in the development process of women uplifted women. Now Sikkimese women enjoy better position and opportunities as compared to women of other parts of the India. According to Lama, (2001) the social position of Sikkimese women in the state seems to be better than that in the rest of the country. He further adds that women play a major role in trading activities, which allow them to participate in decision-making far more than in most other states in India (Dwivedy, 2014).

In the entire sector whether it may be education, political field and economic sphere women are privileged, may not be equal to men but better than the women of the developing nations. Being better off doesn't mean equal. Sikkim also does patriarchal family system, where father is the family head of the household. He is the decision maker of the family. Son is the rightful heir after his father death. The right to inherit property usually passes on to the son, only few family do give share in the property to their daughters, but that also not in equal portion. Bhutias and Lepchas of Sikkim are still governed and guided by their customary laws with respect to succession, inheritance, and marriage (SHDR, 2015).

According to Singh (1993), customary laws of Lepchas explain that after the death of father, landed property equally divide into sons and mother's ornaments among the daughters. The eldest son succeeded after his father and the widows and daughter do not receive any share of the land. The same is in the case of Bhutia community; the right to inherit property also passes it on to the son. The property of the family remains fully under the control of father until his sons and daughters get married (Subba, 2008). All the property either movable or immovable, belong to the father or head of the family (Bhattacharya, 2000). After the death of the father, property inherited by the eldest son of the family. The small portion of land remain in the name of father known as 'Zyuni', later get pass it on to son or daughter who stay with their parents and take care of them (Aachuley, 2010).

In Bhutia custom, the youngest son of the family receives the larger share, as he has to take responsibility of the house, his mother and unmarried sisters after the death of his father. On the other hand women have no right of inheritance of property but at economic, social, religious, and political level they enjoy equal rights (Chodhury, Ungoing Project). Bhutia and Lepcha women may, however, acquire property by way of gift or under a will from their fathers or other relations. Under the Married Women Property Regulations Act, 1962, if Bhutia or Lepcha women marry outside their community, they shall forfeit their rights to such property (SHDR, 2015). As Lepcha and Bhutia community, Nepalese community also follows patriarchal family system, where inheritance right passes on to the sons of the family.

Marrying at early by both girls and boys are a common factor, especially in rural areas. The marriage is not at all a forced one. As per the SHDR 2014, the mean age of marriage for girls in Sikkim in 2007–08 was 21.5 years as against the all-India figure of 19.8 years. The percentage of girls marrying below 18 years still accounts for 16 per cent in the state as against the national average of 22 per cent. In Sikkim, 12 per cent women in the age group of 15–19 years begin childbearing, compared with 16 per cent at the national level. Rural women in Sikkim are more than three and a half times as likely as their urban counterparts to begin childbearing during their teens. The negative effect of early marriage is high number of divorce, that in early age too, the report states that, ‘Almost 6 per cent of married males and 7 per cent of married females who are either separated or divorced are in the age group of 10–19 years’ (SHDR, 2015).

Consumption and liquor and drugs are a major problem of Sikkimese society. Both men and women are affected of this problem, mostly women in both ways. Firstly, they themselves are consumer and secondly, their men (father, husband, and brother) consumption make them suffer. An analysis of data on recovering addicts from three rehabilitation centers in Sikkim revealed that only 17 percent of substance abusers seeking treatment were female, whereas a staggering 83 percent were male. This shows that alcohol-and drug-related problems are male-centric in Sikkim (SHDR, 2015).

Patriarchal system is also prevalent in the agricultural sector. The agriculture being the dominant economic activity of Sikkim, the contribution of women in this sector is also enormous, but yet invisible as same as any other women in the world.

Women in Sikkim do play significant role in the agricultural fields. They do manage both agricultural work and household work at the same time as same as the any other women in the world, from collecting fodder, to taking care of the family and preparing food (Subba 2008). Considering that woman make up the majority of the people in the farming sector with low accessibility, it is disheartening to note that their socio-economic condition is pitiable (Dwivedy, 2014).

Being hilly region and with difficult terrain, terrace farming is done in Sikkim. Both men and equally women are engaged in agricultural activities, with gendered work distribution. The women communities are hard working and contribute to the family income, though men and women do almost all works from land preparation to seed storage. But at the same time, their role depend more on the family situation, if there is more male member in the family, than male ember works in the field, whereas in families with fewer men, women work equally with men (Dwivedy, 2014). Ploughing of field, purchasing of seed, and fixing the price to sell the crops are done by male member and women are indulge in wedding, sowing, hoeing and digging (Rahman, etal. 2009).

Being laborious women do not hold any decision making in the purchase and sell of their crops, unable to generate more income or in other words they are not well paid off. Dwivdey in her study came up with the result (i) that female farmers in Sikkim are unhappy with the income that they receive from the farm works, and (ii) female farmers would like to do anything except agriculture.