

Speech of the Chief Minister Mr.Pawan Chamling on the Budget Session 2010 on 21/06/2010.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir and Hon'ble Members of this august house.

I stand here to present the budget for the year 2010-2011. Ever since the people of Sikkim reposed their confidence on Sikkim Democratic Front party in 1994, we have consistently worked to improve the socio-economic condition of our people with utmost sincerity, devotion and hard work. Now after sixteen years at the helm of State affairs, it has given us immense satisfaction to note that our people have reaped the benefits from our overall development measures accompanied with fiscal prudence with proper management and utilization of our natural strengths and capabilities.

The overwhelming mandate and confidence reposed upon our party has vividly once again echoed in the 100% outcome in our favour in the recently concluded elections to the urban local bodies. Here I stand once again to thank our people for reposing this confidence which encourages us in our continued efforts to work for our people. I humbly urge my legislative colleagues to honour and respect this sacred mandate that we have received from the people of the State and diligently strive to fulfill the aspirations and expectations of every single Sikkimese as enshrined in our Party's manifesto.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, the preparation and presentation of this budget is the People's document representing their hopes and aspirations. Over the decades, we have succeeded to channelize resources of the State in the best interest of our people. We formulated both short-term and long-term development strategies and provide larger vision to bring about overall transformation in the Sikkimese society. Now that our feet are firmly planted, we take the sacred vow to continue and pursue our goals of comprehensive and holistic development further ahead. Our Budget, therefore, targets the fulfillment of our dreams in concrete terms with unwavering spirit.

The process of finalization of the plan size for the fiscal year 2010-2011 concluded early last month and I am indeed happy that the Planning Commission has been generous in allocating a reasonable plan size of Rs. 1175 crores which represents an increase of 12.44% over the plan outlay for the previous year. The approved plan allocation, however, will be subjected to the scheme of financing as recommended which inter-alia underlines stringent measures for fiscal discipline and sound management of the financial affairs of the State.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

The range of development strategies that we introduced during the last three terms of our governance have brought about visible transformation in every aspect of peoples' lives. To be economically more explicit, we have witnessed more than a three fold increase in all our socio-economic indicators. In relative terms, Sikkim today is the best State in the Country with multiple increase in many of the socio-economic statistics bringing in robust economic vibrancy and socio-cultural sustainability in the State. Let us consider the following for a while:

* The Annual Plan size for Sikkim increased from Rs. 120 crores in 1993-94 to Rs. 1175 crores in 2010-11.

- * The percentage of BPL in Sikkim in 1993-94 was 41.43% which came down to 19.2% in 2005 itself.
- * The literacy rate of 56.9% in 1993-94 has increased to 85%
- * The Infant Mortality Rate of 70 per 1000 in 1993-94 has improved to 36 per 1000 now.
- * Internal Revenue of Rs. 44.72 crores in 1993-94 has gone up by an impressive Rs. 571.98 crores now
- * State Domestic Product for Sikkim which was only Rs. 426 crores in 1993-94 has gone over Rs. 1000 crores now
- * The Per Capita Income of Rs. 8,402 in 1993-94 has gone up to Rs. 37,553 at present.
- * Based on data available with the Environment and Forest Ministry, Government of India, Sikkim's forest cover of 43.95% in 1995-96 has increased to 47.59% in 2009.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

As per the document titled '**Review of the Economy 2009-10**' prepared by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, Indian economy withstood onslaught of global meltdown. I quote, "The economy has rapidly rebounded from the global crisis and is now operating under vastly improved circumstances that can be considered to be normal." Even with the projected 8.5% growth rate in 2010-11 and a 9% growth rate forecasted for 2011-12, internal strife and disturbing elements are creating a war-like situation in many parts of the Country. Therefore, the most immediate and pertinent understanding of development on the whole should be translating statistics into authentic human happiness in absolute sense.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

In this august House, I would like to remind the people, bureaucracy, our political leaders and public representatives at all levels and our bureaucracy to remember that economic growth and improved data alone will not guarantee human happiness and well being. Only comprehensive and holistic development can ensure such a situation. Therefore, we need - (a) good governance, clean, positive and constructive politics; (b) a life with full security, dignity and self-respect, (c) skill and employable human resource to harness all the economic opportunities in the State, (d) make general people producers and enhance their purchasing power and (e) creation of an educated and well informed Sikkimese ready to lead the State onward. For fulfilling this commitment, I seek your permission to convey my conviction to my fellow Sikkimese who could join us in our noble endeavor as we embark on our future course of action based on our ambitious Mission 2015 targets, forming the seminal theme of this year's Budget.

Sikkim Poverty Free Mission

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

The percentage of families living below the poverty line has been steadily and swiftly decreasing over the decade. This explains the positive dent we have been able to make into poverty duly strengthening all sections of people in the State. Plan allocation of seventy percent was made as far back as 1994 for rural upliftment. The same policy continues to guide our focused social commitment by duly introducing range of social safety nets to guarantee basic minimum needs to the deprived and disadvantaged section of the society and provide them a dignified life.

I propose to carry forward all the ongoing poverty alleviation programs and measures in the State. More innovative and socially relevant measures shall be introduced from time to time to completely eradicate poverty from Sikkim by 2015. I am very pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 20 crores for this financial year.

Sikkim Self Reliant Mission

The State Government is pushing forward to make Sikkim fully self reliant within the time frame. With the immense development potential and creative mass of manpower available with the State, we have started designing the most competitive model based on the twin-approach of creating economic opportunities in the State and preparing our people to enable them to access decent employment in the ever expanding job market. Education acquired in the archaic sense and with limited scope is today remodeled and supplemented to make it compatible to what Amartya Sen would call the 'relevance of the actual world' based on larger social realization and happiness.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

As per one report titled '**India 's Demographic Dilemma'**, India would face 'talent gap'- i.e. lack of right skills and knowledge for the job required- of more than 5 million by 2012. On the other hand, there will be a surplus of 1.3 million unskilled and unqualified school dropouts and illiterate. Accordingly, we have designed a number of interventions at empowering all individuals through improved skills, knowledge and internationally recognized qualification to enter into the world job market. Since 2003 we have regularly trained our educated unemployed youth in various vocational courses both within and outside the State under the Directorate of Capacity Building.

The Skill Development Initiative we launched in 2003 which has been the precursor to the National Skill Development Mission launched in the XIth Five Year Plan will be carried forward to make the Sikkimese people self reliant. Apart from the existing Directorate of Capacity Building, we have also established the Institute of Capacity Building at Karfector with physical facilities including induction of resource persons to impart training in relevant disciplines. The launching of the Chief Ministers Self-Employment Scheme has been instrumental in carrying forward the initiatives taken under the Skill Development Mission and as many as 5,780 youths have been covered for self-vocational ventures encompassing various agro-based activities, including IT related vocations, tourism connected activities, etc. Under these schemes for skill development, the total financial involvement has been to the tune of Rs. 47.51 Crores.

We have formulated a multi-pronged approach for securing employment oriented development skills over the decade. Accordingly, the capacity development measures initiated by the government have contributed to spurring the growth of the economy of the State even in the midst of the global recession. The capacity building initiatives of the Government have witnessed commendable success with placement figures recording well over 70% in the hospitality sector alone. I am very happy to share with all of you that the 24 chef trainees sponsored by the State Government to undergo training in Dubai has resulted their 100 percent placements in 5 starred hotels on completion of their training.

We have added a new dimension in our effort by establishing one Livelihood School each in every constituency. Many young boys and girls are undergoing different kinds of vocational upgradation training in such Institutes across the State. To further

provide added impetus to our unique program, I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 12 crores for this financial year.

Social Security Mission

The Sikkim Democratic Front Government has worked relentlessly to guarantee full socio-cultural and economic security to all sections of the people on a larger canvass of human-centric development. In fact, the SDF party has always championed the cause of the poor and the disadvantaged sections of the society and worked to bring them at least at the level of their better placed members of the Sikkimese society.

My Government has the unique distinction of having pioneered to advocate the movement for women's empowerment from all perspectives granting them affirmative share be it with regard to reservation in employment, admission to educational programmes, election to Legislature, Local Urban Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions etc. This paradigm shift in our Government's policy towards addressing gender equality covering every realm of governance will have positive repercussions in transforming the social fabric and quality of the lives of our people in the years to come and for the posterity.

These forms of special dispensation in various forms and formats have already been provided to the deserving and needy sections of our citizens falling under the ambit covering SC, ST, MBC, OBC and the differently abled persons including the old aged people. We have a whole range of programmes being implemented by the Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Department to address similar socio-economic concerns in these specific areas for the targeted group. Utmost concern for the upliftment and welfare of the SC and ST and the economically weaker sections of the population have also been underlined with specific ear-marking of funds in the budget covering all development sectors. Periodic monitoring and evaluation with regard to the schemes and programmes under these earmarked sectors have been instituted.

With regard to the welfare of government employees, the State Government has created unprecedented records both in terms of increased salary structure at all levels and host of welfare measures. Officials, employees and MR workers enjoy the best salary in the Country with more than three-fold increase in their scale and other admissible allowances. We implemented the 4th Pay Commission recommendation in the State by granting highest salary and one time clearance of all outstanding arrears – first time in the Country.

In order to provide affordable housing to the government employees, I would propose construction of new Government quarters and Employees' Guests Houses in Geyzing, Namchi and Mangan. I am also pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 1 crore for the purpose for this financial year.

I would call upon all the Government Officials and employees to pay back in the interest of the State and the people. We are all people's servants called upon to accomplish the great task of State and nation building. To provide greater encouragement to the employees, I propose to enhance the daily wages of MR workers to Rs. 130 at the minimum to Rs. 190 at the maximum. I propose that this be officially implemented in the State with effect from July 1, 2010.

Universal Financial Inclusion

Closely following the goal of social justice paradigm, my Government has launched yet another unique scheme under the Chief Minister's Universal Financial Inclusion programme to cover all the married rural women in the State. This will empower them

economically which would invariably raise their status and self-esteem in a given society. The Sikkim Government is the first State to initiate such a significant social reform measure aiming to provide them with complete social security cover to live a dignified life.

With issue of one Smart Card to one married woman and with an initial deposit of Rs.1000/- for one mother at her credit the scheme takes off providing her access to Banking to be available at her door steps at her own village. Besides, this scheme would provide insurance cover against accident, property losses covering five members of the family.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I am pleased to reiterate my commitment to their noble cause and announce that the process of enlistment under the scheme shall be completed with 100 percent coverage within this financial year.

Total Literate State

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

With the impressive improvement in the literacy rate recorded over the decade, we are moving ahead with the larger Mission of making Sikkim 100 percent literate State. The Sikkimese people are already aware of a host of educational incentives both at the elementary and higher education. In relative terms, Sikkim is the best State to provide for all kinds of incentives with highest pay structure in the Country. With the highest budget allocation of 20 percent in the Country, education in Sikkim is both accessible and affordable. With one of the best teacher-student ratio of 1:16, the State Government is all geared up to make Sikkim a total literate State by 2015.

The national policies encompassing schematic framework as enshrined in the new Education Policy of 1986, the Programme of Action of 1992, the approaches for realization of the declaration made with regard to Education For All (EFL) in 2003 and the recent development relating to the passage of the Bill for Right to Education in the Parliament will provide the ideal platform to carry forward actions initiated by the State Government under this sector.

The core areas under the action plan envisages achieving 100% enrolment of children at the elementary stage of education by the Year 2012, increase in the literacy rate from the current level of 85% to 95% by the end of the XIth Five Year Plan, conducting teachers training programmes to cover 100% of the teaching faculty in the Primary upto the Graduate stage of education, universalization of education upto the secondary level, containment of drop-out rates, introduction of vocational and other technical educational programmes to channelize students at the secondary level in accordance with the recommendations of the Kothari Commission and upgrading the physical infrastructure in schools particularly with regard to laboratories for science streams backed up with placement of competent and trained teachers. We recognize teachers as makers of the future of our students who should be motivated to excel in merit and in their studies. A scheme of rewarding such meritorious and devoted teachers is being prepared by the Human Resource Development Department.

At the higher level of education which includes graduate, post-graduate and University programmes, the development emphasis will address concerns towards consolidation of the existing infrastructure and taking remedial measures to take care of the deficiencies that are existing in most of the institutes. The programmes being undertaken under the auspices of the Sikkim Manipal University have been

progressing satisfactorily and this encouraging trend has been further bolstered by the commissioning of various university programmes under the aegis of the Sikkim Central University.

We are pursuing our next goal of imparting quality education, knowledge and skill based education in the State. Provision of quality education entails a package of measures being taken in respect of teachers' training as well as ensuring basic amenities and physical infrastructure with regard to buildings and laboratory equipments. The on-going construction of the DIET infrastructure in Gangtok will be expedited and the proposal with regard to development of the B.Ed College at Soreng will also be pursued vigorously to make this facility functional at the earliest. I allocate a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs for further development of Soreng B.Ed. College in this financial year.

In order that we are able to pursue our goal, I am pleased to announce extension of available educational incentives upto Class VIII students including supply of free school uniform, text books, exercise books, shoes/socks etc. I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 10 crores for this financial year. The Chief Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme for the fifty meritorious students at the Class V level has taken off from this year which has benefitted the selected students to study in public schools. The best ten out of these fifty students have been admitted in renowned public schools at Gwalior and Kasauli. This scheme will be enlarged to cover 100 best students from next year. The message of merit has been well received by our people and the youth. Here I congratulate our two students who have succeeded in the civil services examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission. Over the years, our youth with their hard work will have secured the presence of Sikkim in this arena at the national level as some of our youth have done so in the field of sports.

An issue like education of our children can not be left to chance. They say that abandoning a child is the worst of crimes. Therefore, we have been putting all our effort and resources to create the best of the facilities in the State. This is more of a social issue wherein cooperation of all people is needed. The American President John F. Kennedy had rightly said, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try". We know that the most powerful way to harness human capital is through education. May I call upon all my fellow citizens to fully cooperate and make contribution towards achieving our goal.

Healthy Sikkim Mission

The programmes and projects that we envisage under the domain of the health sector have been well integrated and tailored to accomplish our mission of Healthy Sikkim by 2015. Innovative steps involving both preventive and curative measures which encompass diagnostic facilities for timely detection of ailments covering all age-groups including provision of treatment and rehabilitative health care have been undertaken. This noble initiative has been launched under the auspices of the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Annual and Total Check-up for Healthy Sikkim (CATCH) campaign. We need to be adequately equipped with a comprehensive data covering the health profile of each and every citizen in the State which will be monitored and updated annually so that the required delivery mechanism for timely intervention in providing health care and treatment can be organized more efficiently. This exercise will involve upgrading the technical expertise of our doctors including the Para-medics as well as improving the physical facilities for diagnostic services covering the entire

network of our medical Centres throughout the State. We will initiate action in this regard with careful planning and also chart a realistic road map to achieve the goals under this Mission.

You will be happy to note that our Government has sponsored 85 Sikkimese boys and girls in Manipal University at Mangalore for undergoing Bsc. Nursing and allied courses. On completion of this training, the State will have the advantage of such specialized training in higher nursing. Undoubtedly, the noble work of nursing so important in health care will go a long way in meeting our requirement. A well trained nurse bestowed with Florence Nightingale qualities makes wholesome difference in the patient to recover quickly.

The absence of a super-specialty Hospital to cater to the multiple life threatening health problems of our citizens has been a grave concern for the Government. The existing facilities available with the STNM hospital are inadequate to cater to the growing pressure for treatment and medical care. With a view to resolving this problem and also for relieving the burden of our people from having to seek treatment outside the State by incurring huge expenses and often having to succumb to loss of lives due to delayed medical attention, we are constructing a 575 bedded multi-specialty hospital within the State Capital. This project has been conceived to ameliorate the hardship and distress to our citizens. In order to ease the financial strain particularly for those falling under the BPL category, we had also launched the Health Insurance Scheme at the fag end of the fiscal year 2008-2009. Under the dispensation of this scheme, the medical treatment of the needy and poor will be taken care of. You are aware that the State Government has already introduced Mobile Medical Units to cover people living in remote and inaccessible areas. I am also very pleased to share with this august House that the State Government has acquired two new bhawans in the national capital of Delhi for providing additional accommodation for our patients to receive advanced medical treatment there.

A number of schemes for extending health care assistance to those patients who are referred by the State Medical Board for medical treatment involving advanced cases of ailments as well as life threatening illness will be covered under the Mukhya Mantri Jeewan Raksha Kosh programme. Under the auspices of this scheme, two programmes namely the Mukhya Mantri Netra Jyoti Yojana and the Mukhya Mantri Sravan Shaki Samridhi Yojana have also been envisaged to cater to the needs of patients. Problems relating to anaemia and malnutrition will also be addressed with regular administration of de-worming and Iron Folic Acid (IFA) supplement courses covering children, pregnant and lactating mothers including men who are anaemic. My Government has also started administering MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccine for girl child between age group of 0-12 years. These programmes will also be complemented with the distribution of protein supplement food inputs to remedy the malnutrition problems effecting children under the auspices of the Mukhya Mantri Antyodaya Pustakhar Yojana under the State Government programme.

A paradigm shift has been made with regard to implementation of the programme relating to rural health with a cohesive and integrated approach under the flag-ship programme of the Government of India namely the National Rural Health Mission. In essence, the components under this programme involve intensive capacity building and training covering community representatives, official functionaries from the health institutions including other government personnel at the field level on issues relating

to health care and planning as a prelude to formulating realistic district plans which will eventually culminate in preparation of State Plans. The underlying objective of this Mission is to technically equip the grass-root level functionaries and the rural community at large on issues relating to medical and health care including hygiene and sanitation with a view to facilitating need-based action plans for every village unit in a decentralized manner.

The State Government deeply committed to provide nutritious food and diet to our ailing patients in the hospitals in the State. The State Government is already working in this direction for facilitating good food and diet to our patients staying in the hospitals where funds have been provided for this purpose.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

The Sikkimese people are aware that we have tried to upgrade our available health facilities and infrastructure on a regular basis to provide better health care in the State. In this august House, I would like to announce some of the new and unfolding initiatives to be taken up during this financial year.

1. A new Pharmacy College of the State will be started at the Leprosy Hospital complex, Sajong with an allocation of Rs. 1 crore during this financial year;
2. For the proposed construction of 575 bedded Hospital at Sichey, I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 30 crores in this financial year;
3. I earmark a sum of Rs. 2 crores to carry forward our unique campaign under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Annual and Total Check-up for Healthy Sikkim (CATCH). Every individual in each of the village in Sikkim shall be covered under this health scheme;
4. I am pleased to set aside a provision for Rs. 11 crores which will be utilized to purchase quality equipment, nutritious foods & medicines for patients in the State;
5. Health Insurance for all the Sikkimese people are being taken up. During this financial year, I am pleased to announce similar provision to cover all the government employees under health insurance after evolving appropriate modalities;
6. I am privileged one more time to reiterate the State Government commitment to make Sikkim malnutrition free, goitre or iodine deficiency free, TB & MDR free and HIV/AIDS free under the ongoing programme which will be vigorously pursued with additional resource allocation from time to time.

Sikkim as Producer State

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

Our endeavour has been to free Sikkim from the culture of consumerism and promote the State as the producer State and the people as productive citizens. Our Party has made a commitment to transform our State as a self-sufficient and a producing State rather than a consumer one particularly with regard to enhancement of produce from the agriculture and allied sectors. We are working hard to ensure that all kinds of demands created in the State are met within the State. And we want to see the Sikkimese people themselves fulfil local demands by being producers of goods and services in the State. Therefore, the State Government is formulating strategies based on Sikkim 's own natural resources, all the climatic zones found in the State, geographically rich zone with its immense biodiversity wealth. On the strength of these natural resources, we are seeking to make sustainable development creating a host of sustainable employment opportunities within the State. That means Demand-Supply graph in the State should be equally maintained and local demand should be

fulfilled through local efforts on the basis of our own skilled manpower and increased production of goods and produces locally. The State Government has remained one of the most progressive States in the Country for our essential principle to think globally and act locally.

We cannot afford to remain complacent as a consumer State but rather move ahead to be a progressively producing State by even exporting agricultural and horticultural produce from our organic farming environment. Our team of experts in the field of agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, pisciculture and allied disciplines will need to dedicate their efforts by cross-consulting with technical experts in their respective fields and come out with positive solutions for effective implementation of viable and feasible projects in their respective areas. I hope that my colleagues in the Legislature and the Government machinery will dedicate and devote their sincere effort and wisdom in bringing about a progressive transformation in this core sector in which maximum percentage of our population are dependent upon. The role of village cooperatives to improve rural economy is a well established fact. I propose to seek their participation on a larger context to enable these cooperatives to contribute on a wholesome manner. I am very happy to bring this to the notice of this august House that our Cooperative Societies in Melli are doing excellently well in poultry meat production. In fact, you will be happy to know that the State Government has been successful in achieving 100 percent chicken meat self-sufficiency within the State. We are no longer required to bring chicken meat from outside the State as our farmers are producing chicken meat for local consumption as well as for the consumption of the Indian army stationed in the State as well as in the neighbouring areas outside the State. In terms of eggs production we will have secured 100 percent self sufficiency before the end of the current year. These are examples of Sikkimese people becoming producers.

Seeing the enthusiasm of the people of that area, we are taking steps to set up a Poultry Processing Unit at Melli. This will result in better marketing access. Similarly, a Poultry Estate is being set up, the first of its kind, in the entire country, at Mangalbarey on a cooperative basis with progressive farmers. In addition, two new pig breeding farms at Assam Lingzey and Melli Dara are being set up for increasing the production of piglets in the State. You will be happy to know that construction of a full fledged Regional Training Centre in animal care services with residential facilities is being taken up at Sokeythang, East Sikkim with the assistance of North East Council. A Fisheries Training Centre at Rangpo along with two new trout farms are also coming up at Kyongsla and Baba Mandir. 750 high yielding cows will be inducted all over the State during this financial year. This august House is well aware that a Mother Dairy Farm is being set up at Karfectar to serve as a model dairy farm.

Agriculture being the most important industry of the world, our effort has been to attract more and more educated and young Sikkimese to take up agriculture, horticulture and floriculture as an industry. In floriculture, Sikkim is already the No. 1 State in the Country which would be further nurtured to play more crucial role and contribute towards the global floriculture output. All measures comprising technology transfer, delivery of inputs, pre and post harvest technology, marketing etc. will be systematically organized and judiciously harnessed for greater result. This will be done particularly with regard to re-plantation of cardamom in our cardamom farms.

Similarly, greater emphasis will be given to tea plantation and new plantation and rejuvenation of orange orchards in the State.

I am again happy to state that SIMFED is arranging a tie-up with Himalaya Drug Company, Bangalore to boost the rural economy through contractual farming with 100% buy-back of the production in *chirata*, *kutki* and *bojo* and other medicinal plants without any expenditure of the State Government.

To further provide additional marketing facility to our farmers, four Kisan Bazars in four districts shall be constructed followed by sixteen Kisan Bazars at the BDO level in the villages. I would like to allocate a sum of Rs. 9 crores in this financial year. We are undertaking this project to provide ready outlet for organically growth produce by our farming community, and fulfill demands of the consumers across board. Let me urge upon my legislative colleagues to work hand in hand with the concerned departments, representatives of local bodies including farmers to fix realistic targets in respect of all development programmes which are tailored to make Sikkim self-sufficient with regard to improving production in agricultural and allied crops and step further ahead to make the produces from these enterprises abundantly surplus for export.

In the sphere of industrial production, our Government has put in place pragmatic policies that are favourably inclined to woo investors in areas of investment which are small scale, clean and eco-friendly and which will offer employment opportunities for our local unemployed youths. The series of investments in areas covering pharmaceutical, food processing, hospitality and service industries are testimonial to the galloping growth taking place in this area of development.

Sikkim Organic Mission

The call given by my Government to make Sikkim totally organic has caught the imagination of the entire people in the region and also the Country. With less than 14 percent land available for productive cultivation, the share of agriculture to gross state domestic product (GSDP) has declined from 48.7% in 1980-81 to just 18.8% in 2006-07. Therefore, we have been trying to find an effective way to supply high value produce within the limited land to the world population who are growing more health conscious and seeking to ignore the chemically-treated food items across board.

While organic farming practices along the hilly states generally revolves around securing livelihood on their small rain fed farms, the same farm practices is expected to provide an alternative low cost farming to people in central Indian States. Here Sikkim is leading in adoption of organic farming practices to improve the soil fertility.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, our approach has been a comprehensive package seeking to transform every inch of the Sikkimese soil into organically viable and sustainable land. With immense pride, may I have your permission to quote and share a line in this august House which appeared in the significant journal 'The India Organic Pathway' published by International Competence Centre for Organic Agriculture, Bangalore . The line reads, "**Sikkim was declared as organic state and entry of pesticides and fertilizers is banned**". I call upon all the Sikkimese people and the government machinery to cash on the national and international recognition coming our way to promote Sikkim as brand entity on organic farming.

The future already offers a very bright prospect for organic food retailing which is expected to grow from the present level of under Rs. 3000 crores to Rs. 150,000 crores by 2015. In addition to regular drive underway to transform our land as totally organic, there are other related issues to be pursued to fully reap the benefit accruing

from the organic mission which include organic certification, identifying competitive organic market and cost effectiveness. In order to facilitate all these steps, I am very happy to earmark a sum of Rs. 20 crores for this financial year.

Sikkim Green Mission

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

Beginning with 'Harit Kranti Varsha' that we observed during 1995-96, we have come a long way grooming the State into the best Green State in the Country. It is with immense sense of satisfaction and pride to state that we have put Green Mission 2006 in place with regular programmes dedicated under the Mission which are progressing satisfactorily. The recently concluded International Rhododendron Festival was most successful earning a unique recognition far and wide.

The State Government has also adequately addressed concern raised on account of Climate Change consequences and reduction of CO₂ emission. The Central Government has also drafted the 2020 Green India Mission document aiming to increase forested areas to 20 million hectares by 2020 to serve as carbon sinks aimed at reducing Green House Gas emission by 6.35% which otherwise would be less than 1.5%.

You are aware that we have already constituted Glacier and Climate Change Commission in the State where scientists are making in depth observation and carrying out intensive studies on the behavior of our glaciers. The findings are very positive without any perceptible threat as is generally feared. The State Government has also taken initiative for preparation of State Action Plan on Climate Change for Sikkim in collaboration with German Technical Cooperation. The State Government is also pursuing Climate Change Adaptation Project in Sikkim under the framework of Indo-German Development Cooperation.

On a larger canvass, a new study has concluded that global warming will not shrink the Himalayan glaciers that feed Asia's five largest rivers by 2035 including Brahmaputra, Indus and Yanzse. On this positive note, I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 30 lakhs to carry forward our glacial studies and related research works in the State.

Under the Biotechnology Mission, the State Government has taken initiatives for construction of Biotechnology Research and Application Centre at Sajong, Rumtek, in East Sikkim . Further, green houses using state of the art technology will also be set up in this centre in addition to modern equipment facilities. Emphasis is given to tissue culture, vegetative propagation of rare and endangered and economically important plants. During this financial year, I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 30 lakhs to carry forward all works under the Biotechnology Mission.

I am very proud to share with you that eleven research scholars from Sikkim have been selected for research work on Sikkim by the National Centre on Biological Science and Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment, Bangalore.

Besides the already implemented battery of green initiatives and incentives, we have recently introduced yet another green campaign known as "Ten Minutes to Earth" since 2009. This is the unique green program started by my Government which will be promoted as annual ritual planting trees every year. This year on June 25, lakhs of Sikkimese people will rise up again and converse to plant thousands of saplings across the State.

In order to further complement and reinforce our green drive, I am pleased to inform this august House that my Government will soon formulate legislation for Clean Air Act, Water Quality Act, Environment Policy Act, Pesticide Act and Endangered Species Act in the State. Here I am very happy to inform that we are working towards outsourcing our garbage management and disposal more scientifically so that the garbage water could be re-cycled for use as well as the waste disposal re-cycled for productive purpose.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

I convey my thanks to the people of Sikkim, panchayats, the NGOs, civil society members and all government machineries for the steady cooperation provided to the State Government. The age-old tradition of the Sikkimese people to live with nature and worship all forms of nature has not only strengthened our green campaign but inspired world community at large to follow our example. To carry forward this green campaign in the State, I would take this privilege to allocate a sum of Rs 1 crore for 2010-2011.

Eco-tourism destination:

Our efforts towards harnessing the potential in the tourism sector has begun to yield dividends to all stakeholders engaged in this industry and more importantly to our numerous local youths in terms of employment in various activities relating to this booming trade.

We have brought about investor-friendly tourism policies with rigidly binding safeguard provisions for environmental concern including employment guarantee for our local youths. Over the recent years, many hotels in all categories have been established and many more project proposals are in the pipe-line. This emerging trend is indicative of the conducive climate that is in place not only in terms of the pristine and picturesque environment that the State is blessed with, but also the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity in this region as well as the investment friendly policy that has been brought into effect to woo investors in this sector. This is a happening area of economic activity in the State and I am convinced that Sikkim which is already a premiere destination within the Country shall soon find a respectable place in the world map. The rich cultural heritage, the peace and tranquility, the natural scenic beauty with a breath taking collection of flora and fauna and last but not the least, the congenial and hospitable nature of our people are very favourable attributes which, in essence, are the greatest inherent strengths that we are blessed with to fully exploit the immense potential that we have in the tourism industry.

As part of our Government's effort in taking initiatives that will provide economic spin-offs for the upliftment of the livelihood of the rural population, a few noble projects designed to promote pilgrimage tourism along the lines heralded by the installation of the 135 ft. tall statue of Guru Padmasambhava at Samduptse, will be considered to complement the development works which are already in progress at Chardham, Solophok. There is a need to develop ancillary infrastructural facilities like Rishi Kutir, Meditation Centres etc. in the vicinity of this project location for the comfort and convenience of our visitors. We have engaged consultants to finalize action plans for the planning, design and execution of these projects. Another pilgrimage centre Buddha Park at Ravangla is being constructed which will be completed soon. Another statue of Chen Regiz in West Sikkim is being constructed by the Government. Further,

construction of Culture Centre at Yangang, Bhanubhakta Study Centre at Geyzing, Sirijunga Study Centre and Tenzing Hillary Park shall be completed within this financial year. Construction of Kanchendzonga Tourist Villa cum Socio-Cultural Centre and Amusement Park at Ranka is completed which was formally inaugurated by Her Excellency President of India Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil on 15th April, 2010 . In fact, we are creating our own pilgrimage and culture tourist circuit within the State. These infrastructural development works have been conceived as a means to project Sikkim as a favoured pilgrimage destination for tourists from within the country as well as from across the globe and also to facilitate in creating a business hub for our local entrepreneurs in the hospitality and other related business activities for betterment of their economic livelihood. Construction of Ramayan Busty is very much in the pipeline which shall be started at the early date. The State Government has also undertaken an ambitious project of installing Skywalk at Bhaleydungta which will be a unique project not only in Sikkim but also in the Country. I am pleased to share with this august House that the 13th Finance Commission has already sanctioned Rs. 200 crores for this project. In this connection, I am very pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs for the Ramayan project and also set aside a sum for Rs. 1 crore as Consultancy Fee for the Skywalk project.

The tempo of growth in the tourist traffic has been phenomenal. We need to further expand on the available physical infrastructure to accommodate as many tourists coming to us in terms of available accommodation, tourist amenities and well-organized capacity building measures covering all stake-holders in the hospitality business. We need to facilitate project proposals from private investors comprising local residents as well as outsiders under a conducive and workable policy framework. Apart from these issues, we need to prepare our future plans and programmes to address the need for other complementary infrastructural support to sustain the euphoria generated by our successful promotion of eco-tourism in the State.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, we are committed to further expand our tourism potential in the State by locating appropriate tourist amenities across the State. However, in many cases, ownership of land lies with the private individual. Therefore, in order to reposition ourselves for the impending growth envisaged during the next few years, we will acquire additional land in the State at our own disposal for construction of different types of infrastructure, tourist spots etc.

Harnessing hydro-power potential

Closely linked with our mission to attain self sufficiency to harnessing our rich natural resources. My Government has taken a bold initiative to judiciously harness the abundant resource potential with regard to hydel energy despite resistance from some elements who have been stalling the process of development of the State. Bestowed with a handsome hydel power potential of 8000 MW, we have so far commissioned projects which have the capacity to generate 610 MW of hydel energy which leaves considerable gap against the total exploitable hydel potential of 8000 MWs.

The present generation capacity of 610.70 MWs is particularly contributed by the 510 MW Teesta Stage V Hydel Project as well as the 60 MW Rangeet Hydel project along with several other mini and micro hydel projects which have been commissioned over the recent years.

We also have, in the pipe-line, as many as 21 hydel power projects which have been entrusted for execution on joint venture between State Government and reputed power producers and the National Hydro-electric Power Corporation. These projects envisage a combined installed generation capacity of 5000 MW. Four projects are targeted to be operational during the XIth Five Year Plan with a projected installed generation capacity of 1900 MWs. The Sikkim Power Development Corporation (SPDC) will also initiate steps to take up projects in partnership with the State Government under the PPP module. In all these ventures, the SPDC and the Government of Sikkim will hold equity of 26% as well as enjoy 12% free power for 15 years which will be enhanced to 15% over the subsequent period till the 35th year of the contractual agreement. Apart from the above arrangements from the PPP contract, the contractual agreement will also yield a fair share of dividend from these projects.

Beautification and Modernization of Bazars

We have made significant progress with regard to Gangtok and some other major townships in terms of beautification and other miscellaneous development works. These innovative efforts have been instrumental in changing the psyche of the people in the urban areas towards a more positive attitudinal change in focusing concern for environmental safeguards within our surroundings. The dramatic transformation of the M.G.Marg complemented by the proactive participation of all the stakeholders, business community and local gentry within the locality has clearly demonstrated that we have an ideal system of governance at place with developmental initiatives being triggered by the State Government.

As part of town beautification drive, a uniform, standard state-of-art design and architectural model shall be evolved as a blue-print for construction of all private and government structure and buildings. I would propose that the State Government enforce strict adherence to the design and model so provided to enhance the aesthetic value of our landscape.

I would like to humbly acknowledge people's appreciation including the visiting tourists of our innovative pebbled lane developed along the Mahatma Gandhi Marg in the heart of the city. Similarly, Namchi bazaar has been remodelled giving a distinct look attracting both the common men and the visiting tourists. I would like to further propose that our towns and bazars in the State namely, Melli Bazar, Makha Bazar, Namthang Bazar, Kaluk Bazar, Yangang Bazar, Rhenock Bazar, Rongli Bazar, Pakyong Bazar, Soreng Bazar, Maniram Bhangyang Bazar, Ranipool Bazar, Sombarey Bazar, Kewzing Bazar, Majitar in South Sikkim and Dentam Bazar may be similarly modified, upgraded and beautified by constructing or adding additional flyovers and pedestrian foot paths at all vantage points across the towns and bazars in the State. For this purpose, I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 7 crores in the current financial year.

Complete Decentralization and devolution

The spirit of democracy as is ingrained in the ideology of the SDF Government has been clearly demonstrated during the tenure of our Government over the last 16 years. After having put in place, the Institutional machinery of the Panchayati Raj Institutions as per the 73rd Constitution Amendment, our Government has forged ahead in creating yet another historic milestone with the peaceful and orderly conduct of the elections to the urban local bodies in accordance with the 74th Constitutional Amendment. The resounding mandate that our Party received from this election is

testimony to the complete faith and confidence the people have in the transparent and democratic people's Government in the State. The entire election process, which is historical, was peaceful and orderly and for which I would like to extend my appreciation and thanks to all the respected people of Sikkim for their active participation in the electoral process and the State Election Commission for conducting free, fair and peaceful election. The new regime that has emerged in the true spirit of the 74th Constitution Amendment will infuse a more creative input into the developmental scenario of our State.

I extend my heartiest congratulations to all the elected members of the local urban bodies and call upon them to exercise their leadership with utmost care, maturity and diligence and work towards the welfare of the community at large as well as in improving the overall civic environment with assured basic amenities to the people. In order that they are better positioned to discharge their duty and better empowered with broader options, I am pleased to allocate Panchayat Discretionary Fund of Rs. 5 crores which could be equally accessed by both the panchayats at the Gram Panchayat level and Members of the urban bodies.

Democratic decentralization with inclusive and participative governance has been put in place in every panchayat administrative unit throughout the State. With the creation of the Block Administrative Centres, the process of decentralized district planning for every micro unit of administration within the State has been brought into operation. The bottoms-up approach to the planning process involving District level officials and elected representatives of all Gram Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats has now become a reality. With a view to empowering the Panchayat institutions, our Government will continue to earmark 10% of the plan outlay under every developmental sector as decentralized allocation to be devolved and utilized under the independent discretion and control of the Zilla and Gram Panchayats within their respective administrative jurisdictions. We have proposals under consideration to strengthen and equip the administrative powers of the Block Development Units with the constitution of Block Development Committees in order to assist the BDO's in the discharge of their duties under the regime of decentralized administration.

MLA-Local Area Development Fund

We have a clear agenda to achieve a double digit growth rate by the end of the XIth Five Year Plan. Our move forward towards achieving this objective will be focused on inclusive growth for the welfare and betterment of all citizens. My fellow colleagues, Hon'ble MLAs in the State Assembly are sacredly bound by the common objective of serving the interest of the people to the best of their abilities. Starting this financial year, I would propose to set aside a sum of Rs. 8 crores under MLA-Local Area Development Fund. An equal share of resources from this allocation shall be earmarked for individual MLA to carry out important development works in their areas.

Village Development Mission

In keeping with the underlying strategies and objectives envisaged in the XI th Five Year Plan, my Government will continue to lay emphasis in sustaining the impressive growth rate of 7.79% which, I believe is, by all means achievable. The flag-ship programmes as charted under the UPA Government's Common Minimum programme will continue to be underlined in the State's Plan agenda and our developmental strategy will focus on inclusive growth with a view to ensuring that each and every

single citizen of the State both at urban and rural level can participate and reap the resulting benefits from the burgeoning growth process. We will continue to address the agenda concerning human resource development including measures to ensure endowment of happiness, security and livelihood to each and every Sikkimese. I call upon the leadership under the rural and urban local bodies including my legislative colleagues to work in tandem with a view to complementing the rural-urban development pace that is taking place in the State.

Unlike in other parts of the country, the rural-urban divide in Sikkim is quickly narrowing down based on the dedicated program like Village Action Plan being prepared by Professor Bernard Dafflon of the Freebourg University under the broad assistance and support of the State Government. The report prepared by Prof. Dafflon is ready which will be released soon as the roadmap for scientific development of village under the eco-city concept. I would like to allocate a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs for undertaking Village Action Plan and designing in this financial year.

Promotion of local talents:

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

The wealth of human resources in our youth population is one that matches the best mind available in the world both for their dynamism, creativity and imagination. The State Government is well on its path to harness this resource by facilitating measures for channelizing and developing skills and talents among this critical target group in their respective spheres of interest and talents. They constitute the upcoming generation of leaders who will need to be fully equipped and groomed with qualities to be in a position to inherit the responsibilities and duties of leadership in different fields. In this context, our endeavor has been to cultivate skills and personalities in various fields among our youths. We have produced a few nationally and internationally acclaimed local celebrities in the fields of sports and film acting. These accomplishments have been an eye-opener and motivation for our aspiring youth to strive and take the path of the role models in our celebrities in different fields.

The Government is well prepared to establish Sports Academy at the Paljor Stadium which will be dedicated towards development of talents in various sporting activities. We have also taken initiatives in the area of adventure sports particularly with regard to river rafting, para-gliding, rock climbing etc. and the prospects of introducing training in Skiing, hang-gliding and bungee jumping are also being considered. These few areas of adventure sports have been identified for introduction in the Sports Academy's training format keeping in mind the interest of tourists in these areas of sporting activities. This new initiative will open up avenues for our youths to professionalize in these fields of adventure sports whereby they can be well geared and technically equipped to conduct adventure sporting activities for the entertainment of tourists and thereby be self-employed.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I am very pleased to announce that the State Government has already sanctioned a sum of Rs. 5 crores for laying of green turf, the artificial grass in Paljor Stadium to make it all-weather, world class stadium in the Country. In addition, I also propose to allocate a sum of Rs. 3 crores for construction of Bhaichung Stadium in Namchi, Geyzing Stadium and Mangan Stadium during this financial year. Construction of 16 Community Playgrounds at the BAC level shall also be taken up during this financial year.

Sikkim is blessed with unmatched scenic beauty with the breath-taking Himalayas at the background. With the most attractive locale coupled with peace and hospitable people, Sikkim will be promoted as a premiere destination for production of commercial films on a large scale. In order to facilitate further action and encourage local talents, I am very pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs for this financial year as grants to local film makers working in Sikkim showcasing people's lifestyle, culture and tradition.

Total Connectivity

True economic development of the State can be realized with the good standard of transport and communication network including both road linkage, airways and railhead. Being a geographically land-locked State, Sikkim genuinely needs all kinds of communication system to connect it with the mainland India. Without going into greater details, I am happy to announce that within 2015, Sikkim will have one of the best linkages both on ground and airways.

1. Construction of Greenfield Airport under the aegis of the Airport Authority of India is in full swing at Pakyong which will be ready by July 2012;
2. Foundation stone of the Rail link project from Sevoke to Rangpo is already laid. The project is expected to be completed by 2015 at the estimated cost of Rs. 3380 crores;
3. Double laning of the existing 31A National Highway on the progress;
4. Construction of alternative route to Siliguri via Chalsa is on the pipeline which will be taken up soon.
5. Construction of alternative Highway from Sevoke in West Bengal to Gangtok and onward to Nathula post located at the Sino-India border;
6. Expansion of State Highways and new roads within the State is also being adequately covered under the PMGSY programme to provide connectivity to remote settlements.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

I end this section on a very positive note. As all the major connectivity projects are on-going projects, we need some time before we are fully connected with the Indian mainland with uninterrupted communication links. I would call upon all the officials in the State Government and all the central government agencies to work collectively to see that the projects are completed on time, for the benefit of the people and in the larger interest of the security and safety of the border State of the Country.

Media Development

Media fraternity in Sikkim has been an important arm of democratic functioning. Through hardwork and sincerity of the Press Members, the State Government has received regular feedback, suggestions and other significant happenings. This has put us in a better position to assess or re-assess the impact of our programs in every sphere of activities. Having recognized the vast contribution made by the Fourth Estate in furthering the cause of democracy, I feel privileged to allocate a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs for further development of media in the State

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

Having shared some of our new thought processes, I shall now table, for the consideration of this august Assembly, the highlights of the budget for the fiscal year 2010-2011. I present a gross budget size of Rs. 4046.71 crores comprising Rs. 1175.00 crores under State Plan and Rs. 2306.90 crores under the Non-Plan account

excluding recoveries. This budget represents an increase of 13.80% over the corresponding figures for the preceding year. There has been a 12.44% enhancement in the Plan budget allocation and an increase of 11.30% under the Non-plan side over the previous year. The gross expenditure I propose in this budget is Rs. 4046.71 crores composed of Rs. 1715.05 crores under the Plan account which includes funding from the NLCPR, NEC & CSS as well as provision kept towards recoveries which will be adjusted as reduction in expenditure subsequently.

While our revenue receipts have been recording steady progress, the huge burden on account of committed liabilities is a matter of serious concern. The impact of the pay revision with the concomitant liabilities towards settlement of arrears will need to be cushioned tactfully. These are unavoidable developments which we have to manage with more stringent efforts being addressed towards austerity measures and curtailment of non-plan expenditure. The steps to be taken for administering fiscal reforms as prescribed by the Government of India will need to be complied with for bringing about discipline in the management of the financial affairs of the State. Concerted efforts to narrow the fiscal deficit and to liquidate the debt burden of the State are areas which need to be addressed. The implementation of fiscal reform measures particularly in the context of the prescriptions under the framework of the Fiscal Reforms and Budget Management scheme of things will need to be monitored and an appropriate authority instituted for this purpose with the mandate to not only oversee issues relating to curtailment of non-plan expenditure but also in respect of matters pertaining to revenue mobilization including debt management.

The revenue generation figure for the base year of the XIth Plan (2006-07) was Rs. 344.93 crores which now stands at Rs.571.98 crores representing a 65.82% increase. This performance is attributed to our efforts made towards broadening the tax-base as well as improving and revamping the revenue collection drive. Apart from the significant contribution to our State's coffers from the hydel power projects which constitutes 52.67% of the State's total non-tax revenue of Rs. 360.72 crores, we have also ventured into broad-basing the lottery operations with the introduction of the on-line lotteries. These new developments have yielded promising returns. Our earning from the Lottery today is of the order of Rs. 60 crores as compared to Rs.50 Crores in the initial year of the XIth Plan. Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, I would also wish to apprise this august House that Sikkim is the pioneering State in introducing on-land casino operations. With the passage of the Sikkim Casino Games (Control & Tax) Act of 2002, one Casino complex is already in operation in Gangtok and a few more applications are under consideration. This historic legislation had been conceived with a view to attracting investors to develop five star category hotels in the State.

In this budget, I have projected an expenditure of Rs.8535.77 crores including Public Accounts against the projected gross revenue receipt of Rs. 8535.42 crores. An amount of Rs. 211.26 crores from tax-revenue sources and Rs. 1274.57 crores from non-tax revenue sources compose the gross revenue receipts in the budget. The budget being presented is inclusive of funding under the dispensation of the NEC amounting to Rs.101.00 crores, Rs.139.11 crores under Non-Lapsable Pool of Resources, Rs. 298.34 crores under Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Rs. 4515.42 crores under Public Account. A provision of Rs. 526.10 Crores has also be made as earmarked allocation for schemes under the Additional Central Package of Assistance.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I now present the scheme of revenue receipts and expenditure envisaged in this budget for the fiscal year 2010-2011.

		(RS. IN CRORES)
(A)	<u>REVENUE RECEIPTS</u>	
1.	State's Revenue	Rs. 1485.83
	(i) Tax Revenue	Rs. 211.26
	(ii) Non-Tax Revenue	Rs. 1274.57
2.	Grants-in-Aid	Rs. 1598.96
3.	State's share of shareable Tax	Rs. 500.36
4.	Loans from other Institutions	Rs. 385.12
5.	Loans from Central Grant	Rs. 4.04
6.	Recoveries of Loans and Advances	Rs. 0.83
7.	Public Accounts	Rs. 4560.28
	Total Receipts	Rs. 8535.42
(B)	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
1.	State Annual Plan	Rs. 1175.00
2.	Centrally Sponsored Scheme	Rs. 298.34
3.	Non-Plan Expenditure	Rs. 2306.90
4.	Non-Lapsable Pool of Central Resources	Rs. 139.11
5.	North Eastern Council	Rs. 101.00
6.	Public Accounts	Rs. 4515.42
	Total Disbursement	Rs. 8535.77
(C)	<u>DEFICIT</u>	(-) Rs 0.35
	Opening Balance (2010-2011)	(+) Rs. 123.32
	Closing Balance (2010-2011)	(+) Rs. 122.97

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

In every sphere of development, we have covered unprecedented milestones. The development strategies we adopted and the means we employed to achieve results are being recognized both within and outside the Country. Having successfully provided all the basic needs and requirement to the people, our next aim is providing qualitative service and qualitative infrastructure to our people.

1. In terms of hygiene and cleanliness, Sikkim is today the No. 1 State in the country having already received Nirmal Rajya award from her Her Excellency, the President of India as the total sanitation covered State.

2. In terms of rural connectivity, Sikkim is the No. 1 State in the Country and the India Today Group has already recognized our effort by giving us Bharat Nirman Awards in Rural Roads.

3. In terms of providing drinking water, we are again the No. 1 State in the Country with over 99 percent coverage.

4. In terms of rural electrification, we are again the No. 1 State in the Country wherein we have already earned national recognition in the form of Bharat Nirman Awards in Rural Electrification

5. In terms of Education, we have got national recognition a number of times, the latest being the Best State in Education in small state category instituted by the India Today Group

6. In terms of health services, we are the No. 1 State in the Country with many national recognition coming our way including the JRD TATA Memorial Award, 2008

7. In terms of environment management and protection, Sikkim has already earned unique distinction both nationally and internationally

8. In terms of social justice and empowerment, Sikkim again is the No. 1 State in the Country for all the affirmative action and share granted to all the deserving groups including the women.

9. In terms of low figure poverty index, Sikkim is one of the best States in the Country with higher amount of per capita income than the national average. Our next target would be improving the Per Capita Income of Sikkimese to Rs. 1 lakh

10. In terms of infrastructural assets, Sikkim has one of the best facilities to make Sikkim the Conference capital of the region. In addition to the existing assets, we are going to initiative or complete construction, as the case may be, of host of other infrastructural facilities within this financial year like State Museum and Art Gallery , Habitat Centre, State Library, Suchana Bhawan, Udhog Bhawan and Paryatan Bhawan.

11. In terms of peace and tranquility, Sikkim is the No. 1 State and the torchbearer for the entire nation.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

Sikkim has today emerged as the best State in the country in all the fields. Next, we will further accelerate the pace of our development under the Mission mode to address quality aspects with regard to all the infrastructure and public amenities created in the State. We will continue to further develop the status of our people into a more productive and proactive people through imparting proper knowledge, skill and capacity and transform Sikkim into the best State in all parameters nationally and internationally. Our endeavour will be to consolidate on all our achievements and translate them into total happiness and well being of the people.

Sikkim is passing through a promising phase from dependency to self-reliance both at the domain of physical and material needs. The State's own resources and economic potential must be harnessed to judicious and sustainable use. I propose applying stringent austerity measures to curtail avoidable government expenditure at all levels. Therefore, I would like to call upon all the government machinery to be more responsible and contribute towards overall economic health of the State.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

The Sikkim Democratic Front party has been elected to head the Government for the record fourth consecutive term. With 19 seats in 1994, the party secured increased public mandate in every subsequent election. Today, the House is in full strength with 100 percent mandate gone in favour of the SDF party. This is the highest forum to showcase your strength in a Democracy and any right minded leaders having faith in the democratic system should be able to honour public mandate and respect their decision.

However, some of the people are out in the wild trying to tarnish the good image of the State by blaming the State Government. Let me ask them, have I ever failed in my duty to discharge my assignment as a leader of the people? I am reminded of Abraham Lincoln who once said,

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power".

Respected fellow Sikkimese, you have given me the opportunity to serve you for the last sixteen years as the Head of the Government. Have I changed myself? You know that I have passed that *agni-pariksha* through my sincerity, hard work and my integrity. In any case, I need not explain to people opposed to me the dialectic between becoming and being and I am not interested in managing their decline in the political realm either. I feel like a man more sinned against than sinning- born of envy, jealousy and unfounded resentment.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

The war was bound to happen- for the just cause. Arjuna argued but finally gave way to Lord Krishna arguing in favour of retrieving the right to rule from the unjust Kauravas. Drawing quick reference to the epic Mahabharata, I want to say that I have, for the interest of one and all, followed the principle propounded by Arjuna to 'fare forward' and also to 'fare well', bringing in absolute harmony between *niti* and the *nyaya*. I also call upon all the people opposed to me to come out of the 'state of denial syndrome'. As required under the democratic system, may we respect public mandate to accept the truth and shoulder greater responsibility- both in words and deed. Under the perfect environment of peace and harmony in Sikkim, we must forge ahead collectively to provide better future for our people. This is the very basis on which democracy thrives and prospers.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

With these words, I very heartily dedicate this budget of my government to the great people of Sikkim.

Thank you

Jai Sikkim/Jai Bharat