



Good Governance and Higher Education in Sikkim: A Macro View

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Abstract: Education is that which makes a man of good character and useful to the society and has been considered as root of all round development. On the other side, Good Governance is the one of the most important factors in achieving the development goals of the country. It is the key to bring about state and national development. Hence, a complete and successful education is possible under the circumstances of good Governance. However, without it, we can't imagine a complete development of an individual as well as entire society too. Somehow we can say that Higher Education and Good Governance goes hand in hand. Accordingly, in Sikkim due to good governance the quality education has been made accessible especially in higher education. Around 20 percent of the budget is being spent on education in Sikkim; the highest amount in the country that is being spent on education. The literacy rate of state was just 56 percent in the year 1994-95 however in 2013 -14 it has reached to 82 percent. Higher education, at present, is developing fast with emerging new trends and subjects in state. Recent development in higher Education has been massive growth in terms of numbers of students, universities and colleges within the periphery of state. With descriptive and exploratory research design this paper attempts to analyse an overall review of development in higher education in the state of Sikkim. This paper further throw light on how good governance is useful for the expansion of higher education.

Keywords: Good Governance, Higher Education, Literacy rate, Expansion of Education, Sikkim.

I. Introduction

Higher education governance is a key policy issue of the 21st century (Kennedy, 2003). The issue of governance in higher education become an important debatable conflict not only in India but in an international level too. Higher education is considered as more than the next level in the learning process; it is a critical component of human development worldwide. With such education an individual can develop their capacity and analytical skills that drive local economy, positive support to civil society, guide children, and make valuable decisions which affect entire societies. While, it is fact that an educated people can lead the society for the upliftment in respective fields, at the same time good governance also play a effective role in field of higher education of any nations. Education and government neither run as separately nor parallel but it always runs as synonymously. Governance is one which comprises the mechanism, process and institution through the citizens and groups where they articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable, and it promotes the rule of law. It indicate that political, social and economic priorities are based on society rather than an individual and the most vulnerable are heard in decision making over the allocation of development resources. So, in Sikkim we can able to found somehow a crucial role play by governance for the development in respective fields especially in higher education.

II. Literacy Rate in the State: Comparative Figures (1981-2011)

According to 2011 census, the overall literacy rate in Sikkim is 82.20. The literacy rate for male is 87.29 and female is 76.43. Till 2011, there is 4, 49,294 state population are literate whose age is above 7 years and percentage decadal vary during 2001-2011 is 41.14. While, according to 2001 census, Sikkim had total population 540,851, among them 318,335 were literate therefore overall literacy rate of Sikkim was 68.8 percent. The literacy rate of male was 76 and female was 60.4 percent respectively. In before nineties the situation of Sikkim in the field of education was too miserable; the literacy rate of state was just 41.6 and 54.39 respectively in the year 1981 and 1991. However after 1990s the state moves towards a slightly positive change in the field of education as well. A comparative figures on literacy rate of state from 1981-2011 is indicate as below.

Table 1: Literacy in Sikkim (1981-2011)

Year	Persons	Male	Female
1981	41.6	53.0	27.4
1991	54.39	63.44	44.06
2001	68.8	76	60.4
2011	82.20	87.29	76.43

Source: Human Resource Development Department, Govt. of Sikkim

It is clearly show that the literacy rate in respect of both male and female have equally increased since last couples of decades with the help of good governance of the state. At the same time, according to 2011 census the literacy rate of Sikkim is 82.20 percent which is consider as above the national average literacy rate which is just 74.04 percent. As per 2011 census, among the North Eastern states, Mizoram has the highest literacy rate and it able to occupy the third highest place in the country. Simultaneously Sikkim also occupies a third highest place among north eastern states and thirteen place among states of India in the literacy.

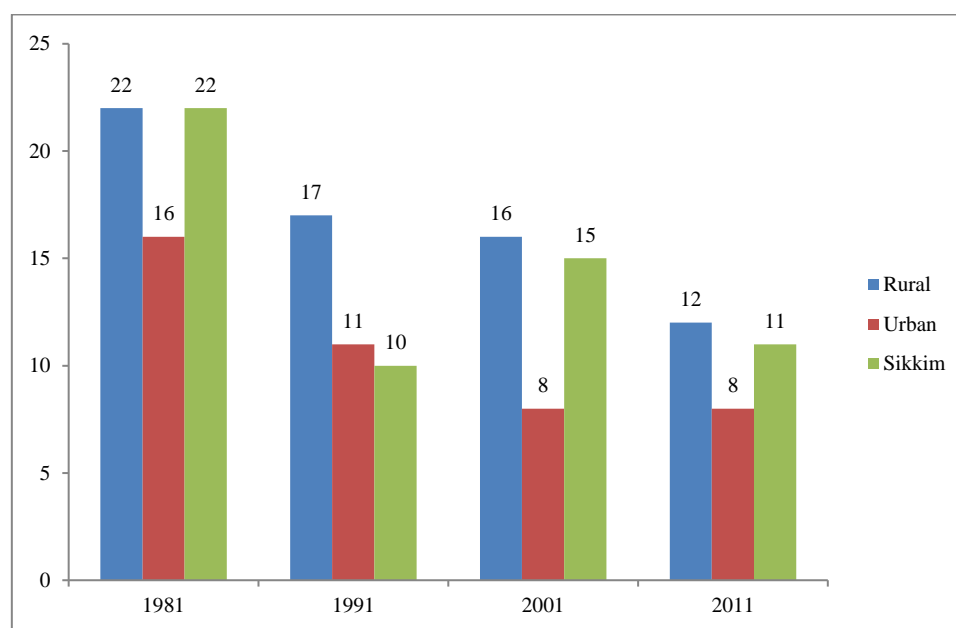
Even though the rural-urban differences persist, the overall gender gap in literacy has gradually narrowed down in Sikkim from 22 percentage points in 1981 to 11 percentage points in 2011 (Table 1.1). In rural areas, the gap has narrowed from 22 percentage points in 1981 to 12 percentage points in 2011. In urban areas, the gap has reduced even more sharply from 16 percentage points in 1981 to 8 percentage points in 2011. With the help of this figure we can analysis that there were somehow practised of decentralization of power of state government.

Table 1.1 Gender Gap in Literacy (in per cent)

	1981	1991	2001	2011
Rural	22	17	16	12
Urban	16	11	8	8
Sikkim	22	10	15	11

*Note Figures have been rounded off.

Source: Human Resource Development Department, Govt. of Sikkim.

**Fig 1.1: Bar Chart showing Gender Gap in Literacy (in per cent)**

III. Higher Education in Sikkim

Regarding the higher education, it is considered that Sikkim is still remaining in many steps back in compare with other states of the nations. No doubt the state ruling government were played a crucial role for the development in higher education of the state since 1994. Until the last nineties, the people of Sikkim were really unaware about the complete facilities of colleges and Universities. A number of students went to other states for take admission especially in science education; same kind of system was practiced even in the pre-merger days. In the year 1977 only one degree college was established at Gangtok, which is affiliated to the North Bengal University with Arts, Science and Commerce subjects up to graduate level. Hence, we can say that the dream for University of Sikkim's people was just a far reaching goal in early nineties. At the same time till 2009 in Sikkim there was only one District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) which was established in 1988. The DIETs was set up to vitalize elementary education and to bring about qualitative improvement in its academic aspects.

IV. Development of Higher Education in Sikkim

There is no doubt that the development of Higher Education in Sikkim was started very late and it was surprisingly too slow. However, in between 2005 and 2012, 70,293 students have enrolled in higher education and professional courses—in 25 government and private institutions. Of these, almost 44 per cent are female and 56 per cent male students. Institutes running technical courses show a comparatively higher gender disparity, with female enrolment standing at less than 40 per cent. Among the institutes running professional courses, Sikkim Government Law College (59 per cent) and Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Science (60 per cent) have a larger number of women enrolled than men.

In 2011, 3,210 students were enrolled in four government colleges in Sikkim. Of these, 59 per cent were female students. There are, however, clear-cut gender differentials across disciplines. In the humanities and social sciences stream, more than 70 per cent of students are female. On the other hand, female students account for only 8 per cent of the total enrolment in science and 11 per cent in the commerce stream. The gender balance in science and commerce is expected to improve with the introduction of science courses in Namchi Government College and commerce in other degree colleges. The state government nominates students for higher education degrees.

The state government nominates students for higher education degrees and also for professional courses outside the state. An examination of such nominations during 2001, 2007 and 2010 shows an encouraging trend for girls. Out of the 1,438 nominated students, around 42 per cent were female. Women candidates represented 54 per cent of the total students nominated in 2005 and 52 per cent in 2010. The proportion of female candidates nominated was 31 per cent for engineering and management, 57 per cent for BA, B.Com, B.Sc and LLB, and 60 per cent in the fields of agriculture and veterinary sciences, hotel management and medical sciences.

Notwithstanding this, the entry of females in non-traditional courses and higher degrees is indicative of the new trend against gender stereotypes and of the fact that women are making their presence in all streams. Sikkim is fast emerging as a rich educational hub. Society's attitude towards the education of girls and women is extremely positive. Although disparities still exist, the gradual transformation and more representation of girls in higher education in both professional and non-professional courses is gaining momentum. The state is still far below from attaining the 100% literacy status (Sikkim Human Development Report 2014).

Table 1.2: Growth in the number of Colleges/ institutes in Sikkim since 1990-2011

Sl. No	Year	No. of colleges / institutes
01.	1990-1991	05
02.	1995-1996	10
03.	2000-2001	13
04.	2004-2005	16
05.	2006-2008	16
06.	2008-2009	17
07.	2009-2010	17
08.	2010-2011	18

Source: Achievements of the SDF Government, Published by SDF central committee.

Fig 1.2: Bar Graph showing Growth in the number of Colleges/ institutes in Sikkim since 1990-2011

The above table shows that there was just five colleges/ institutes in Sikkim before 1994, however, in between 1995-1996 the number of colleges/ institutes were increase 100 percent i.e. 10 colleges/institutes. There was a reason behind the increase of number of colleges and institutes after 1994 is set up of new political party i.e. Sikkim Democratic Front, under the leadership of Shri Pawan Kumar Chamling. His government is able to rule over state since 1994 to till date.

V. Expenditure On Higher Education In Sikkim

Twenty percent of the budget is being spent on education by state government. This is considered as the highest amount in the country that is being spent on education. While, it is said that the Sikkim is only one state among the other states and Union territories of the nation who were spent huge amount in the field of education. Due to this reason the state government were able to bring the positive changes in the field of education of the state. How much the state government were spent the budget on education was indicate as below.

Table 1.3: Government Expenditure on Higher Education in Sikkim (Rs. In thousands)

Sector	2005-2006		2006-2007		2007-2008	
	Plan	Non Plan	Plan	Non Plan	Plan	Non Plan
Higher Education	33395	14748	38383	14820	47258	13997

Sector	2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Plan	Non Plan	Plan	Non Plan	Plan	Non Plan
Higher Education	57335	16434	93381	36630	89912	33433

Source: Human Resource Development Department, Govt. of Sikkim

It is vividly clear from the above table the actual amount of expenditure made for higher education in 2010-2011 has doubled then in 2005-2006. With the help of above information we can analysis that there were somehow showing the function of good governance of the state.

VI. Role of State Government in the Development of Higher Education in Sikkim

We have already known the glimpse of education with the help of above paragraphs especially in the field of higher education in state. However, it can consider that somehow the state government were able to improve the education in Sikkim after the establishment of Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) in December, 1993. The state government is talking paramount task in various fields of development and one among them is education. No doubt being a small mountainous state compounds the problems of ensuring universal access to essential goods and services, time and again Sikkim has record an impressive acceleration in human development over the past decades.

Moreover, in the functions of the state government in Sikkim we can found the characteristics of good governance. In common concept the good governance is one which has certain characteristics like accountability, transparency, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, and equity and rule of law. The ruling government of Sikkim has able to follow the characteristics, due to which the people of state also can enjoy the fruits of peace, equality and development in all fields. The benefits of growth and human development in Sikkim are more equitably distributed today than they were a decade ago.

The state government take the following steps for the development of education in Sikkim, which are as follows:

- Education has been made free up to college level.
- Educational loan for higher education.
- Fellowship for students who opt for higher education and professional training.
- Chief Minister's Complete Literacy Mission has been launched.
- Monastic schools and Sanskrit University (2001) have been established.
- Free books and uniforms are given to students of monastic and schools and Sanskrit University.
- Laptops for students above class XI.
- Teacher Training Institutes have been established in Gangtok (1979), Namchi (2010) and Gyalshing (2010).

The state government of Sikkim were given the different kinds of facilities to the students in various levels for the encouragement of education which we can see in the above discussion. With the help of such facilities and encouragement the number of students and institutions were increased within the state. What kind of changes were brought by the state government in the field of education in between 1994 to 2013 is being showing the below table.

Table 1.4: Developments of Schools and Universities since 1994-2013

	1994	2013
Senior Secondary Schools	22	58
Secondary Schools	66	105
Junior High Schools	118	197
Primary Schools	529	416
Monastic School	0	72
Local Teachers	6381	9200
Universities	0	05
No. of School Students	1.13	1.72

Source: Official Website of HRDD, Sikkim

As good governance, the state of Sikkim was also providing a reservation of seats in higher education to all the categories of peoples who were stayed in the state since long time. According to their population the reservation on education as well as in job recruitment were also provided by the state government.

Table1.5: Reservation of Seats in Higher Education

Sl. No.	Reservation in higher education	% of seat
01.	Merit (Local with SSC/COI)	10
02.	Bhutia and Lepcha (Local with SSC/COI)	20
03.	Primitive Tribal (Local with SSC/COI)	05
04.	Most Backward Classes (Local with SSC/COI)	20
05.	Other Backward Classes (Local with SSC/COI)	20
06.	Scheduled Tribes (Local with SSC/COI)	13
07.	Scheduled Casts (Local with SSC/COI)	07
08.	Others	05

Source: Achievements of the SDF Government, Published by SDF central committee.

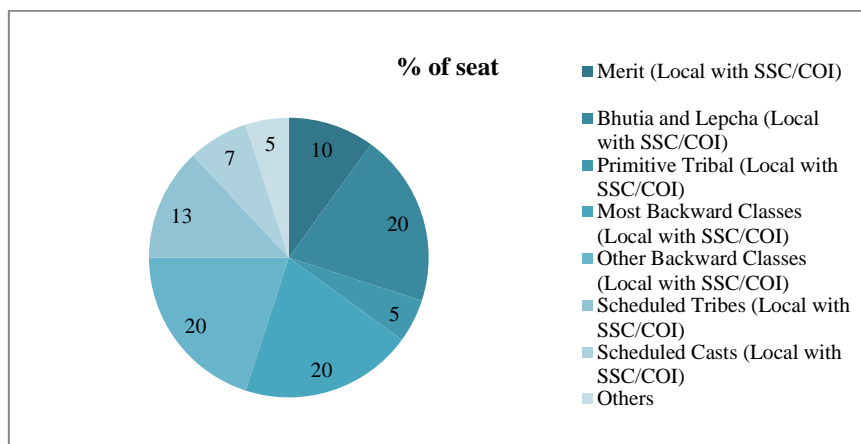


Fig 1.5: Pie diagram showing reservation of seats in higher education.

Beside, Sikkim University has been established in 2007 as a source of higher learning institution of national level which brings the benefits to the people by directly as well as indirectly. The university aims to make Sikkim and its surrounding areas as an education hub for the whole Eastern South Asia and South East Asia. Among the main objectives of the Sikkim University as defined in the Sikkim University Act, 2006, two things is crucial for the state: I) To educate and train manpower for the development of State of Sikkim; and ii) To pay special attention to the improvement of the social conditions and welfare of the people of the state, their intellectual, academic and cultural development.

So, due to the well policy of the state government on education, they were able to reach in 82 percent of literacy rate in 2013-2014 which was just 56 percent in 1994-1995.

VII. Conclusion

Good governance and higher education are complimentary with each other. Without one another cannot run properly. So we can say that there is a close relation between these two. It can clearly visualise from the above findings that the development of higher education in Sikkim since the time it became 22nd state of India in 1975 was not favourable, however it take an acceleration only after 1994 when there was an establishment of new political party in state i.e. Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF). This government is being able to spent 20 percent of total state budget on education which is regarded as one of the highest amount in the country that is being spent on education. The state government were spent huge amount on education because government believes that education is the catalyst that generates human resources. It is seen that higher education has made gradual progress in state. Since 2010-11, the number of colleges/ institutes of higher education doubled as compared to 1994-95. Now the state has eight government general college including Soreng Government B.Ed. college, West Sikkim, Government Law college, Gangtok and Science College in Chakung (2016), West Sikkim. Apart from these there is one Central University i.e. Sikkim University. The state has also number of private general colleges/ institutes and universities. Due to rise of such kind of colleges /institutes has surely increased the opportunity of providing higher education to the students of Sikkim at the same time it also create the job opportunities for the educated youths of the state.

Nonetheless, being a hilly and land locked state there are innumerable problems like paucity of man power, problems of connectivity (in terms of transport and communication), time and again the state government has tried its level best to improve the quality of higher education in the state and lead it to making a complete conversant society. While, the fact is that without good governance, it is difficult for higher education to succeed even if it has a high research base.

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