

Skill Development initiatives: Challenges and way out- A study of Sikkim

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Abstract:*The present paper attempts to study the evolution of skill development in young Sikkim, how the journey started and what are the different schemes were announced to support the implementation of the skill vision for the entire development of the Sikkimees society and the challenges along with their solution in front of skill development initiatives in the state Sikkim.*

INTRODUCTION

Sikkim's becoming the 22nd state of the Indian Union in 1975 is still fresh in people's Memory. Located in the north-east, Sikkim reported a population of 6, 10,577 in 2011. Sikkim is also the second-smallest state in India after Goa in terms of land area. The state is spread over 7,096 square kilometers. Sikkim is a mountainous, landlocked state. Being part of the eastern Himalayas, almost the entire state is mountainous. The state has 10 mountain peaks that rise above 7,000 meters, 84 glaciers and 315 glacial lakes (including the Tsomgo, Gurudongmar and Khecheopalri). Mount Khangchendzonga (8,586 meters), the world's third-highest mountain peak and revered as a guardian deity, is situated on the border between Sikkim and Nepal. For the most part, it is difficult to come across vast areas of flat land. Rocky and precipitous slopes make agriculture, transportation, and communication difficult. Sikkim is rich in biodiversity. The state located in the eastern Himalayas is listed as one of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots. The state is endowed with rich natural resources, characterized by its huge floral and faunal biodiversity, abundant water resources, streams, rivers and glaciers, and abundant forest cover. Sikkim has over 47 per cent of area under tree cover, which is one of the highest in India, both in terms of proportion to the geographical area of the state and per capita forest cover. Sikkim enjoys a geo-political and strategic location advantage, sharing boundaries with Bhutan, China and Nepal. This gives the state advantage in terms of the potential for trade and pursuing India's Act East Policy. However, being a border state also means a large presence of defence and paramilitary forces and some restrictions on the free movement of goods and civilians across the state and internationally. The biggest challenges for public administration are posed by the state's geo-physical characteristics. Sikkim's physiographic structure makes the lives of people extremely vulnerable to earthquakes and landslides.

The 2001 Sikkim Human Development Report has pointed out: the growth of Sikkim's gross domestic product as well as expansion of per capita incomes were slow due to the slowing down in both agricultural

production and manufacturing; improvements in the delivery of health care were poor, reflected in the strikingly low rates of immunization coverage and institutional births; and the benefits of growth and human development were not equitably distributed, resulting in the persistence of high poverty levels. The new generation in Sikkim is not able to compete in the globalized world. Protests and other forms of making frustrations public are occurring more frequently. The growing frustration of unfulfilled aspirations combined with easy availability of banned substances is causing many of the young to become drug addicts. Sikkim also has a higher rate of suicides. Appropriate policies and interventions are urgently needed to prevent the young from taking their own lives. So, addressing the concerns of young people has become a priority for the state government. The Government of Sikkim has recognized the need to identify and provide appropriate livelihood skills to its youth. Sikkim is the first state to introduce capacity building programmes and livelihood schools. In 2010, the State Institute of Capacity Building was established at Karfectaar, South Sikkim, as an umbrella organization for livelihood schools in the state to make the educated and uneducated youth skilled and employable, both inside and outside the state. With a vast array of training options, these schools have trained over 4,000 unemployed youths in various courses including foreign languages, computer software and hardware, construction, trade, animal husbandry and tourism. In addition, the state government has identified certain potential sectors for growth and livelihood creation:

1. Tourism: Sikkim has a comparative advantage in tourism with its beautiful landscape, diverse flora and fauna, culture and traditions, and warm hospitable people. It attracted a record 7.2 lakh tourists in 2010—which was declared as 'the year of tourism'. Recently, Sikkim has been named the best region to visit in 2014 by *Lonely Planet*, a leading global travel guide.

2. Pharmaceuticals: Sikkim has attracted considerable investments from pharmaceutical companies over the last five years. Key pharmaceutical companies, including Sun Pharma, Cipla and Zydus Cadila have set up bases in Sikkim. Tax incentives provided under the North-East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy 2007 and additional incentives provided by the state government have played an important role in attracting these investments.

3. Hydropower: The state government has set up the Sikkim Power Development Corporation (SDPC) to tap

into the state's hydropower potential, which is estimated to be around 8,000 MW. Independent power producers (IPPs) have approved 29 hydroelectric power (HEP) plants for development. These projects are at various stages of construction and would have an installed capacity of close to 5,350 MW when complete.

What is Skill?

Skill Development means developing yourself and your skill sets to add value for the organization and for your own career development. An ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills), and/or people (interpersonal skills). The skill capacity has been assessed in the form of general education and vocational training level of the Indian workforce in the age group of 15-59 and which was found to be extremely low i.e. around 38% of the workforce are not even literate, 25% are having below primary or up-to primary level of education and remaining 36% has an education level of middle and higher level whereas only 10% of the workforce is vocationally trained (with 2% formal and 8% informal training).

Objective of the study:

1. To study the present skill capacity of Sikkim.
2. To study the different schemes being implemented under the Directorate of Capacity Building, HRD.
3. To study the challenges faced by skill development system in Sikkim.
4. To suggest possible solutions or way-out to tackle challenges.

Data and Methodology

The proposed study mainly is descriptive in nature. It is solemnly based on secondary data and information which is collected from the concerned sources as per need of the research. The relevant books, documents of various ministries/departments and organizations, articles, papers and web-sites are also used in this study.

1. Evolution of Skill development in Sikkim

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Sikkim has started Skill Vision in 2003 and that's when the idea of State Institute of Capacity Building came into being. But given the geographical and topographical location of Sikkim, it took some time to develop the infrastructure. In 2008-2009, the infrastructure got ready. And State Institute of Capacity Building, following a cabinet nod, started in 2009. Till date, 11,000 students from the state are trained over and also received good response in traditional sector like agriculture. The Directorate of Capacity Building was established in the year 2007. Initially the Directorate was under the Department of Personnel, Administrative Reforms & Training.

Thereafter, the Directorate was brought under the Labour Department from 2011 to 2013. Then from July 2013 onwards the allocation of business of the Directorate was merged with the Human Resource Development Department. The Directorate is now under the newly created department of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship from the financial year 2016-17. The main schemes that are being implemented under the supervision of the Directorate of Capacity Building, Human Resource & Development Department are as follows:

1. Chief Minister's Self Employment Scheme.
2. Chief Minister's Comprehensive Educational Loan Scheme.
3. Chief Minister's Free Scholarship Scheme.

Livelihood schools

The State Government in its Cabinet decision on 31st October 2009 agreed in principle towards the establishment of 31 livelihood schools in all territorial Assembly constituencies. The Cabinet made Secretary/Head of the Department of the Line departments as in charge for the opening of such schools. These Schools are helping the unemployed youth of State to groom their talents so as to imbibe in them the ability to harness their skills and become self-reliant. The Government policy is to give preference to local resources and utilize the services from all Sectors and within the Government sector. All the 30(Thirty) Li-Schools are functioning efficiently and effectively under the guidance of SICB.

State Institute of Capacity Building

As per the Cabinet Memorandum No. 417/GOS/DOP/CB-108/09 dated 17.11.2009, the Government, approved for establishment of State Institute of Capacity Building (SICB) at Karfectar, South Sikkim to fabricate skilled man power for our State. The Institution has taken over the RAC (Regional Administrative Centre) Karfectar on 25th November 2009. In accordance with Notification No: 35/Home/2011 Dated: 25.4.2011, it started functioning under Labour Department. Further, vide Notification No: 48/ Home/2013 Dated: 27.7.2013 was relocated to function under Human Resource Development Department (H.R.D.D). Consequently, SICB's functions are now administratively monitored by Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Department/SDED vide Notification No: 44/Home/2015, Dated: 21.9.2015. Builds knowledge related principles, process and method of promoting livelihood of disadvantages section of the society; Develops training modules; Synergies capacity for market linkage; Placement Cell; Counseling-cum-Opportunity Cell (Sikkim Model Career Counseling). Convergence with other Schemes of State and Central Government. Advocacy & Promotion and Community Engagement; Motivation and Mobilization of Rural and Urban youth, women, and disadvantaged, tribal and under privileged young person's for self-employment or industrial wage employment. Foundation Level 1

Training in about 14 major areas such as Hospitality, Driving, Electrician, Facility Management, Tour Operations, Financial Management, Retail, etc. Holding Career Fair and offering job placements to in excess of 90% placement to trainees in collaboration with industries and establishments. Mobilization of funding by leveraging programmers of the Govt. of India Ministries and Agencies for augmenting the no of trained persons and enabling more no of youth in the order of 2000 or so to be employed each year.

Skill development Initiatives in Sikkim

The New Department of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was created by the Government of Sikkim vide Notification, No. 44/Home/2015, dt: 21/09/2015. The Affairs of Industrial Training Institute (ITI) and Directorate are also brought under this new Department from the Labour Department. It is implementing various schemes and programmes of the Government as under:

(a) Craftsmanship Training Scheme (CTS):

The CTS Training is being conducted at Government ITI, Rangpo, Government ITI, Gyalsing and Government ITI, Namchi. A fourth one under construction and on completion in 2019 and it will offer around 8 courses at Kewzing, South Sikkim.

(b) Apprenticeship Training Scheme (ATS):

Central Apprenticeship Act, 1961 was extended to the State of Sikkim on dt. 19/09/2008 and it is enforced w. e. f. dt. 27/02/2009. While implementing the Act every year ITI passed outs are sent to local industries for trade Apprenticeship Training and currently 09 Apprentices are under ATS. Under the umbrella of this programme, 70% of the candidates will be assured employment in sectors and job roles in which they get trained. Further, the Directorate is implementing Apprenticeship Protshahan Yojna (APY) under which Government of India and Industry share wages of Apprentices equally. Currently 29 Apprentices are undergoing APY in the State.

(c) Skill Development Initiative (SDI) under Modular Employable Skills (MES):

The scheme is based on Modular Employable Skills (MES) framework to provide vocational training for early school leavers and existing workers, especially in the unorganized sector to improve their employability. In Sikkim almost 60,000 are working in the unorganized Sector. It is a Govt. of India Scheme being implemented by the Department. In 2014-2015 more than 1600 Candidates were trained under SDI/MES at a cost of Rs 88.00 lakhs by utilizing services of registered Vocational Training Providers and a fund of Rs 13.40 lakhs. MES schemes are implemented through 9 registered PVT and 3 ITI.

(d) Ongoing Externally funded schemes /projects

- Under Capacity Building & Technical Assistance funded by Ministry of DONER 600 were trained in 2016 in 4 States of NE including Sikkim. The proposal for training 440 trainees alone in Sikkim has been given to MSDE worth 2.8 cr for the current year.
- NERLP has trained 500 in 2016 and another 500 are targeted this year in 2 Dist. of South and West Sikkim.
- DDUGKY funded by MORD shall skill and cover rural youth between ages of 15-35 years and cover 2400-3000 candidates.
- Chief Minister Special Start up Scheme - 10 cr budgets approved, Commerce & Industries Dept to formulate guidelines and present to cabinet for approval by April'17, 25 % or 5 lakhs subsidy whichever is maximum shall be given.
- Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana funded by the Ministry of Agriculture for a sum of 2 cr to be shortly implemented for sustainable production of aromatic plants and essential oils as value addition to ancillary industry of perfumery.
- The Border Area Development Programme under Ministry of Home Affairs shall cover 27 villages under 8 wards covering 200 candidates from border areas of Sikkim.
- Sikkim State Model Career Counseling Centre at Shram Bhawan, Sokaythang and two more such Centers, one at Jorethang and second one at Dentam Livelihood School at West Sikkim are established with Central Assistance from Ministry of Labour & employment. 100% funds have been utilized out of 60% received from the Centre.

(e) Future Plans and Projects:

- A new ITI at Kewzing, South Sikkim, is being established shortly at a cost of Rs. 950.00 lakhs as the State Government has cleared the proposal. The ITI will offer eight with seating capacity of 200 trainees in the ITI. The project is scheduled to be completed within 2 years.
- Under Vocational Training Improvement project (VTIP) - 3rd Phase Government ITI, Rangpo is being upgraded with Central assistance of Rs. 100.00 lakhs. The Department by utilizing the fund had procured machines and equipments at Rs.72.00 lakhs in 2015-2016 through STCS and balance of fund expected to be realized shortly, once released more equipments will be procured to make the ITI a modern Institution.
- Government of India has accorded approval and sanction to upgrade Government ITI; Namchi is as model ITI with an estimated cost of Rs. 500.00 lakhs and released an amount of Rs.175.50 lakhs as first installment.
- The Department has established a Apparel Training and Design Centre at the ground floor of Shram Bhawan, Sokeythang in December 2015 currently, 25

candidates are undergoing training in sewing machine operator course

- The Department has also established a Hospitality Training Institute at the ground floor of Shram Bhawan, Sokeythang in December 2015. And currently 25 candidates are undergoing training in food and beverage course.
- A new ITI at Chadey, Mangan is under construction with NHPC Ltd funding, being executed by the State Energy and Power Department, expected to be completed by 2018.
- Resource Development Centre is under Process at Krafectar, S. Sikkim.
- State Industry Integrated Training cum Production and Service Centre is under process at Sokaythang, Shram Bhawan, and Gangtok.
- The Department is scheduled to establish Pharma Training Institute in collaboration with local Pharmaceuticals companies at Rangpo.
- PMKVY the flagship scheme of the MSDE is to start shortly at Karfectar, South Sikkim.
- The National Entrepreneur scheme of MSDE to begin shortly to train and create 250 entrepreneurs and incubates annually.
- It has a proposal to have State Training Authority and to bring all training under NCQF/NCVT.
- To achieve convergence across State Departments in implementation of Skill Trainings through the Core Committee.
- For accreditation of Training Providers, creation of training and hostel facilities both inside and out of the State.
- It will work as per the allocation of business envisaged to the Department in all respect.

(f) After completion of course either of one year or two years Trainees sits for All India Trade Test and passing of the same Trainees get National Trade Certificate for National Council for Vocational Training, New Delhi. The NTC is having a national recognition for all specific jobs either under Central Govt. or all State Govts. /U.T. Administration.

(g) For NSQF aligned courses the Sector Skill Councils authorize the third party assessors to evaluate the performance of the trainees based on the NOS and QP as mentioned for the various job roles specified on the Official website of NSDA .Besides these the State Departments of Sikkim Govt. run various training programmes through State & Centrally funded schemes directly.

Challenges before the state for the Skill Development are:

The absence of well-designed district plans due to that the needs of communities have not been fully integrated into public decision making. Inadequate attention paid to the farm sector. Quality of education, even though school

enrolment is high, the educational attainment levels remain poor. Transport and communication: condition of roads remains bad despite several attempts to improve the quality of construction. With a large portion getting washed out during the monsoons, net addition to roads remains low. Connectivity has also been hampered by the absence of telecommunication services, especially in remote hilly areas. Poorly implementation of centrally sponsored schemes.

Present Scenario of Skill Capacity of Sikkim: Working Population in Sikkim

	1981	1991	2001	2011
Population	316,385	406,457	540,851	610,577
Total Workers	152,814	168,721	263,043	308,138
Main Workers	147,436	164,392	212,904	230,397
Cultivators	88,610	97,834	101,200	82,707
Agricultural Laborers	4,887	13,793	9,081	11,582
Worker in Household Industry	1,586	1,309	3,168	2,888
Other Workers	52,353	55,785	99,455	133,220
Marginal Workers	5,378	4,329	50,139	77,741
Non Workers	163,571	237,736	277,808	302,439
% of Total Workers to Population	48	42	49	50
% of Main Workers to Population	47	40	39	38

Note Figures are rounded off Source Census 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

How to tackle challenges:

As per the 2001 Sikkim Human Development Report , State human development challenges requires a strategic focus on seven priority areas to sustain the momentum as well as to address some of the pressing challenges of the times.

1. **Expand livelihoods:** Unemployment and under-employment are a major concern so employment opportunities need to expand keeping in mind the need to conserve the natural resources and cultural heritage of the state. The real potential for Sikkim lies in promoting organic farming and eco-tourism. Floriculture and fruits& food processing have the potential to become viable activities for young people. Sikkim has lot to do to fully tap the potential of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
2. **Improve connectivity:** The real challenge before the state is to make every village accessible by an all-weather road. Equally important will be to ensure better telecommunications and internet connectivity. Developing a common information technology platform can yield substantial benefits to the state.

3. **Manage urbanization:** Public transportation has to be given high priority along with minimizing the problems of parking, traffic congestion and pollution.
 4. **Establish a knowledge society:** A knowledge society requires knowledge workers who are not just skilled workers but also have the capacity to analyze, innovate and bring about transformational changes in society. This will require promoting opportunities for knowledge-intensive businesses, enhancing the ability to absorb new technologies, continuously upgrading the skills of workers, and effective networking to tap into new thinking and new ways of organizing businesses. Promote universal health coverage.
 5. **Eliminate alcohol and drug abuse:** The growing alcohol and drug abuse among children's are serious consequences on society as well as on health. Preventive, curative and rehabilitative measures are needed to deal with this problem.
 6. **Deepen democracy:** Increased participation in local governance and forging a strong national identity will be crucial for making life more secure and adequate for the people of Sikkim.
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CONCLUSION

In today's era employees are not keen to join an organization where their Knowledge and skills are not upgraded means employees expects that their advancement is the responsibility of the organization where they work. Current and future trends show that organizations that want to retain skilled employees need to provide for ongoing development and educational opportunities. The new global trends in the corporate world is to emphasize more on applying systematic approach to training and development in order to achieve higher level of organizational effectiveness. Organizations now days try to link business strategy with training. Skill development is proved to be the most important aspect for the development of any country it needs a coordinated effort from all the agencies, stakeholders and the students to make it a successful program. The policies, if are able to reach a larger audience will make a difference in the employment scenario of the country. As India moves towards the Knowledge economy, it becomes increasingly important for the Sikkim also to focus on advancement of the skills because these skills are not only relevant for the emerging economic environment of the state as well as for the advancement of entire community.

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