

## **Sikkim Himalayas: Ecology and Resource Development**

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**ABSTRACT** Sikkim, a small mountainous state in the Eastern Himalayas have witnessed great changes in its political system, social structure, economic life and cultural values during the past hundred years. The process of change was quickened by currents from four different directions, resulting in a multiform ethnic mix. Sikkim is divided into numerous small valleys with an un-even distribution of population, and with inadequate communication facilities. The economy of Sikkim is overwhelmingly rural and agricultural. Industry, whether small or large scale is insignificant. Different ethnic groups are characterized by specific ecological adaptations, as well as by the social organization of the region where they live. The traditional human interaction with the environment experienced by the entire Sikkim state had always remained with one another that developed into a totality and a closed system. The ecological conditions and finite resource base had limited production abilities, but the scattered village communities were self-sufficient with its agro-pastoral subsistence level economy and had almost fixed output of food grains and livestock products. The primitive and conventional methods of agro-pastoral activities and operative technologies did not generate enough surplus for export except for local and to certain extent interregional trade limited mostly to barter system. The development programmes in the state were directed towards improving condition in the villages, where most of the Sikkimese live. No society remains changeless; it always changes because of self-propelled forces. But if directed and planned change has to come it must be beneficial and ameliorative to all. The process of planned economic development in Sikkim was initiated in 1954. The political integration of Sikkim with the rest of the country has incited the processes of economic development in the state. In the present study an attempt has been made to study the issues of development: problems and recommendations.