

A MESSAGE FROM THE PARTY PRESIDENTS

It was in 1996 only when we had the occasions to approach the Sikkimese masses for their valued support with a 22-points Manifesto to plunge headlong into the ensuing 11th Lok Sabha elections that were being held on a countrywide basis. But our MP representing Sikkim at the Parliament had hardly had a couple of sittings before the 11th Lok Sabha was prematurely dissolved for reasons best left unexplained. Despite which, However, the combined efforts expended by the Government, the party machinery being the Government and the sitting MP himself representing Sikkim, were successfully mobilized to ensure that all political and economic demands in their proper prospective were duly tabled before the House for consideration and suitable action. But unfortunately for us, the whole effort apparently proved an exercise in futility. In eighteen months, three different Prime Ministers were sworn in successively with as many Government coming into existence before each was prematurely dissolved, to leave the whole country in a near-shambles.

As long as the show lasted nevertheless, everything was planned to near-perfection. Sikkim was already on its way to join the families of North-East Council; the sitting Prime Minister was scheduled to arrive at Gangtok, the capital of the State, to announce a substantive economic package earmarked for the State, to communities of Bahun, Chettri, Newar, Jogi all this could happen, the 13-Party Government support by the congress from outside became a causality when the outside support was withdrawn by the Congress. WE have taken concrete steps to ensure that the communities of Limbu, Tamang and Gurung are included in the list of Tribes in the State while the existing castes of the State are guaranteed full constitutional protection and privileges that accrue to them. But to achieve all these positive goals, the sitting MP for the State needs a full term of the years within which to accomplish them and which, unfortunately, was forthcoming ever since he was elected to join the 11th Lok Sabha that was apparently jinxed from the start. This has plunged the country into yet another mid-term polls when the country along with its fumbling leaders is least prepared for it. Therefore, the 12th Lok Sabha elections are compulsion that brings us once again before your door so we may, with your precious support, go on to complete our unfinished tasks.

Our political opponents this time around too will be the same anti-Sikkimese elements who thrived on the misfortune they willfully brought on the Sikkimese people by their excesses in everything they succeeded in conniving against the people. We shall deal a crushing blow to all these forces of evil as we have done in the past to let them know that their evil raj in Sikkim is over for good. The SDF is a Party of the poor and the downtrodden; it is a Party that belongs to all Sikkimese and hence the sacred bond that binds the Party with the people will remain intact for generations to come. Despite the

advent of a fresh Lok Sabha elections our enemies have not changed their colour to remain doggedly determined to thwart the democratic aspiration of the Sikkimese people even though they are in virtual exile; nor our stand against them have changes. Our fight against this evil forces will have to continue without any respite and this coming Lok Sabha elections that looms large over the country itself in which we shall be pitted against this evil force again will constitute a part of that struggle.

As the SDF Party, since its inception, has been waging a relentless battle against repression and subjugation perpetrated against the Sikkimese people and have since succeeded in commendable measure to guarantee all democratic right and privileges to the people, I am extremely confident that the people's valued mandate, as in the past, will surely tilt heavily in favour of the SDF Party to make our opponents eat the dust. Since the very beginning, the SDF Party has stood steadfastly for the underdogs and has relentlessly fought against injustice, corruption and fascism that once had taken a deep root in the State. I, therefore, strongly believe that the SDF Party will come out on top once again with a massive victory at the hustings. UMBRELLA, the Party Symbol, stands for justice and equality and hence a symbol that is dear to the Sikkimese masses. Once again, the time has come for the Sikkimese people to stand solidly behind the Party I lead which stands for justice, equality and fraternity.

Our former M.P., Shri Bhim Dahal-a truly dedicated party worker who is highly competent for the post-is once again our candidate for the ensuing 12th Lok sabha election. We are fully confident that the Sikkimese People will send their lone MP to the Lok Sabha with a massive mandate to easily surpass the previous one by dropping their precious votes in favour of the symbol, "UMBRELLA" to ensure complete victory for the Sikkimese people.

With Heartiest greetings for the New Year 1998.

**Pawan Chamling
president
SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT**

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MANIFESTO

12th Lok Sabha Election- 1998

1. Reseravation of seats in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly for all Sikkimese of the State will be obtained. Provisions will be sought in Parliament for realignment of existing Constituencies of the State to ensure that the State of Sikkim as of 2000 A.D. is entitles to send at least TWO (instead of one that is allotted now) representatives to each of the two Houses of Parliament namely, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, with a view to seeking more meaningful integration of this sensitive border state with the nation and to reaffirm our commitment to the institution of the Indian Republic.
2. Concrete steps will be taken to ensure that the identity of each of the three ethnicities of the State viz, Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepalease is fully protected by resorting to means that are both legal and constitutional.
3. All caste-communities of Sikkimese Chettri, Bahun, Newar , Jogi, Sanyasi and Thami so far excluded from the list, will be brought in the States mainstream with the rest by including them in the State list of OBCs in order to ensure that equitable justice is done to all sections of the State populace in equal measure. Thanks to the incessant efforts made by the then sitting MP of the State in Parliament , the Central Commission for the OBCs have already made three separate enquires in this regard to clinch the issue in favour of the principles involved.
4. Protection to the minority Sikkimese Bhutia and Sikkimese Lepcha and their social, educational and economic upliftment to always remain an article of faith with the SDF Party, while their constitutional rights and cultural aspirations will be fully appreciated, respected and safeguarded. The centuries old customs and traditional that are in themselves distinctly unique and peculiar to the Tribals of the North Districts, will be preserved and safeguarded at all cost.
5. The constitutional rights and privileges that accrue from it to all Sikkimese tribals and the Scheduled Castes in the State to remain fully protected and safeguarded
6. All efforts will be made on the floor of the Parliament to prevent the extension of Direct Central Taxes to the State of Sikkim in that Sikkimhas its own Tax Laws formulated in 1948, which, in the sprit and text of May 8 Agreement of 1973, has a right to remain recognized under the aegis of articles 371IF of the constitutions

- that was inserted at the time of Sikkim merger to make some special provisions relating to the administration of Sikkim.
7. Since only 13% of the total land area of the State is arable for agriculture purposes, Sikkim is permanently faced with the prospect resource crunch on the food front. To compensate for this daunting disadvantage, massive Central aids for all-round development of tourism and its infrastructure to be expeditiously sought from the benign government at the Centre.
 8. A University of its own to be set up in Sikkim to bring all educational institutions in the State under its aegis.
 9. Sikkimese Limbu, Tamang and the Gurung to be included in the State list of Tribes while ensuring raising the issue on the floor of the Parliament for consideration and suitable action.
 10. The Bhutia, Lepcha and the Limbu languages to be further developed and steps to be taken to ensure their inclusion in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution . Concrete steps to be taken to set up appropriate institutes for research and development of literatures related to all recognized languages at the State level like Newari, Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Manang, Sunuwar and Sherpa
 11. The existing Centre for research on Buddhism in the State to be provided with fullest scope and facilities for intensive research work, with all financial help coming from the benign Centre, so that it may emerge as the major centre of authority on Buddhism in the country.
 12. Air-link with the rest of the country to be established by setting up an airport and air service to be regularized to link the State with all important airports of the country. The unreliability of the existing national Highway 31 A, particularly during the rains has been recognized on principle by the Government at the Centre. Based on this, the Centre will be persuaded to concede our demand for an alternative route linking Sikkim with the neighboring West Bengal without let or hindrance.
 13. The quota of seat reservation allocated for the students of Sikkim aspiring to pursue higher studies both academic and technological in institutions located in the advanced States of the country to be sought for suitable enhancement wherever such facilities exist 50% Job reservation for Sikkimese candidates in all offices and establishments under the central Government in Sikkim to be sought with a view to providing jobs for our educational employed youths of the State.
 14. Sikkimese women from all sections of the populace will be given their due place in society while their rights, privileges and status will be protected and justice will be brought to them in all spheres of activities social, political and economic. The rights and privileges of employee fraternity to be fully protected and promoted; rights privileges and function of the Panchyats and their members to be respected, protected and promoted. The rights and privileges due to all business communities in the State will be given due weightage to promote their wellbeing and interest.
 15. Request will be made to be Government at the Centre to Totally stop sending IAS, IPS and IFS deputationists to Sikkim as we are trying our level best to raise the rank and file of the above cadres inside Sikkim itself. Meaningful steps have

already been taken in this direction with gratifying results in the offing as we have succeed in reducing the prescribed quota to some extent

16. Sikkim as an underdeveloped state will be brought under a special category because of its late entry the comity of States in the Republic of India. Under this special category, the Government at the Centre will be requested to provide development funds for the State in such manner that the annual allotment for every successive year is increased in volume for the during of next 50 years. Owing to Sikkim's late entry into the mainstream, the demand that Sikkim should be facilitated with more funds for development than those allocated to the North-Eastern States, shall be driven home with increased vigour determination
17. Sick industries will be scrapped or revived as the case may be deemed fit, those in health to be provided with full impetus for their growth, while the Centre will be approached to finance the infrastructures for viable industry/industries to generate much-needed employment opportunities
18. The rich heritage of Sikkim's varied culture vested in her ancient monasteries, temple , churches and other sacred institutions like the " Mang-Him" and other places of historical as well as mythical significance will be duly protected and preserved by obtaining suitable assistance, both financial and technological, from the Archaeological Department of India
19. The task of setting up a State Television Centre for featuring Sikkim's own independent programmes to be expedited
20. In order to boost agriculture production, a separate budget over and above the prescribed allocation of State fund, will be had from the Centre.
21. An academy for games and sports for the youths of Sikkim to be established along with a Recording Studio equipped with the latest gadgets and know-how to facilitate those who are musically and artistically inclined
22. An orphanage centre at the State level for Sikkimese destitute and orphans will be set up along with 'Home for the old the decrepit' with the help of suitable grants obtainable from the Centre.