



SIKKIM ALPINE UNIVERSITY

Kamrang, Namchi, South Sikkim – 737126

(Established under Sikkim Alpine University Act, 2021)

SOCIO – ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS (SEDGs) POLICY

(Policy Document – 2025)

Version: 1.0

Approved by:

**Academic Council
(Dated 03.12.2025)**

&

**Board of Governor
(Dated: 05.12.2025)**

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SOCIO – ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS (SEDGs) POLICY

**SIKKIM ALPINE UNIVERSITY
KAMRANG, NAMCHI
SIKKIM**

1. Preamble

Sikkim Alpine University (SAU) is committed to the constitutional values of equity, justice, and inclusion in higher education. Recognizing that students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds face systemic and historical barriers, SAU adopts this Policy in alignment with:

- UGC Guidelines to Provide Equitable Opportunities for SEDGs in Higher Educational Institutions (2024)
- National Education Policy (NEP) 2020
- Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

This Policy ensures that students from disadvantaged backgrounds receive comprehensive academic, financial, emotional, and infrastructural support to participate fully and succeed in higher education.

2. Purpose & Scope

This Policy aims to:

1. Provide a framework to identify and support SEDG students.
2. Ensure equitable access to academic and non-academic opportunities.
3. Strengthen SAU's systems for inclusion, sensitivity, and cultural responsiveness.
4. Guide the functioning of the **SEDGs Cell** (Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups Cell).
5. Apply to all students enrolled at SAU, across all programmes and campuses.

3. Definitions

3.1. Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)

As per NEP 2020 & UGC 2024, SEDGs include students belonging to one or more of the following categories:

(i) Gender Identity

- Female Students: Girls and women constitute approximately half of all SEDGs and often experience multiple disadvantages, especially when they belong to other underrepresented or marginalized groups.
- Transgender Persons: Students identifying as transgender who face social exclusion, stigma, or discrimination in educational and social contexts.



(ii) Social Backwardness Identity

- Scheduled Castes (SCs)
- Scheduled Tribes (STs)

These groups, recognized under the Constitution of India, have historically experienced social and educational disadvantages requiring special support and affirmative measures.

(iii) Educational and Economical Backward Identity

- Non-Creamy Layer among Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
- Economically Weaker Sections (EWSs)
- Students from Vernacular Medium Schools
- First-Generation Learners

This category includes students from economically and educationally deprived backgrounds, those educated in vernacular medium schools, and those who are the first in their families to pursue higher education.

(iv) Minority Identity

- Religious Minorities
- Linguistic Minorities

This group includes students belonging to minority communities recognized by the Government of India who may face barriers to equitable access and representation in higher education.

(v) Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and Benchmark Disabilities

- Individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that hinder their participation in education on an equal basis with others.
- Persons having not less than forty percent of a specified disability, as certified by a competent authority under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

(vi) Vulnerable and Low Socio-Economic Conditions

- Members of migrant communities, denotified and nomadic tribes
- Individuals from low-income households or Below Poverty Line (BPL) families
- Child beggars or children in vulnerable situations
- Victims or children of victims of human trafficking
- Students who have lost one or both parents
- Any other group identified as living under low socio-economic conditions as recognized by government authorities or the University.

(vii) Less-Developed, Poor-Access, and Disadvantaged Locations

Students belonging to or residing in geographically and infrastructurally disadvantaged regions, including:



- Villages and small towns
- Tribal Areas / Scheduled Areas as per the Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution of India
- Urban slums
- Aspirational districts and Special Educational Zones (SEZs)
- North Eastern States
- Islands
- Conflict-prone or border areas
- Disaster-prone regions, including those affected by floods, droughts, earthquakes, or other natural calamities

4. Interventions for Inclusion and Support

4.1. Bridge Courses

Bridge courses play a vital role in supporting newly admitted students during their transition into higher education. These courses are specifically designed to assist moderate and below-moderate level students belonging to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) in bridging the academic gap between the subjects studied at the previous level and those introduced in the new academic programme at the University.

The objective of the bridge course is to provide an adequate foundation in core subjects so that SEDG students are academically prepared and confident when regular classes commence. By reinforcing fundamental concepts and essential skills, these courses aim to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can perform academically at par with their peers.

4.1.1 Objectives of Bridge Courses:

- To facilitate the students to overcome challenges in their learning process.
- To assist students with different learning abilities and multiple challenges to perform at optimal level.
- To act as a buffer for the new students.
- To provide adequate time to the SEDGs students for smooth transition.
- To provide knowledge on core courses and prepare the students for the identified courses which will commence in the forthcoming sessions/semesters.
- To equip the students with the necessary knowledge and confidence to take on more challenges.

4.1.2 Measures to be taken by SAU

- **Timing:** Bridge courses shall be organized every year prior to the



commencement of the semester programme, either in physical or online mode, depending on feasibility.

- **Purpose:** These courses are intended to provide both primary and supplementary knowledge in subjects that are foundational to the academic programmes in which the students are enrolled.
- **Identification of Beneficiaries:** The University shall identify students belonging to SEDG categories who require additional academic support at the entry level through diagnostic assessments, interaction with faculty, or review of academic records.
- **Medium of Instruction:** Wherever possible, bridge courses may be conducted in local or regional languages to enhance understanding and participation.
- **Curriculum Design:** The content of the bridge courses shall be tailor-made to meet the specific academic requirements of SEDG students. A separate timetable shall be prepared for effective delivery and monitoring.
- **Outcome:** Successful completion of bridge courses is expected to improve students' academic preparedness, confidence, and retention, enabling them to fully participate and succeed in their chosen programmes.

4.1 Earn-while-Learn Scheme

The Earn-While-Learn (EwL) scheme is designed to support students belonging to Socio- Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) by providing them with opportunities to earn while pursuing their education. This initiative aims to reduce financial constraints, enhance employability, and build self-reliance among students through skill development and practical engagement.

The EwL scheme seeks to mitigate the economic hardships faced by students during their studies and to foster adaptability in learning, thereby improving the overall quality and purposefulness of higher education. In addition to financial assistance, the scheme helps students develop essential technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills that prepare them for professional careers.

4.2.1 Objectives

- To provide financial support to economically weaker students without compromising their academic performance.
- To enhance employability through skill-based and work-oriented engagements.
- To encourage self-reliance and a sense of responsibility among students.
- To enable practical exposure and professional development through on-campus opportunities.



4.2.2 Implementation Mechanism by SAU

- **Part-time Engagements:**

Eligible SEDG students shall be offered part-time work opportunities within the University campus, ensuring that such engagements do not interfere with academic commitments.

Eligible SEDG students will be selected through open, fair and transparent procedure.

- **Indicative Areas of Engagement:**

Opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- Research project assistance
- Library and documentation support
- Computer and data entry services
- Laboratory assistance
- Departmental or administrative support work

- **Capacity Building:**

Through the EwL programme, students gain hands-on experience, time management skills, and professional exposure, preparing them for future employment or entrepreneurial ventures.

- **Remuneration**

The rate of remuneration for each of the students will be a consolidated amount on an hourly basis for the part-time service they render. Eligible students can be engaged up to a maximum of 20 hours per week, 20 days per month. The payment may be made on an actual basis. The services of the students may be planned in such a way that it does not affect their classes.

- SAU will be referring to the UGC guidelines to provide opportunity for the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) in the HEIs, 2024 for further steps to be taken if necessary.

5. SOCIO- ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS CELL (SEDGS CELL): STRUCTURE, ROLE & FUNCTIONING

5.1. Objectives of SEDGs Cell

1. To protect all the constitutional rights of the SEDGs students.
2. To ensure that the SAU is inclusive, safe, and secure for the SEDGs students.
3. To provide socio-emotional and academic support and mentoring for the students belonging to the SEDGs through proper counselling and monitoring programme.
4. To ensure proper implementation and monitoring of orientation and bridge



courses designed by the SAU to benefit SEDGs students.

5. To ensure implementation of all such programmes designed and developed by SAU to increase the participation of SEDGs students in academic activities.
6. To ensure implementation of Government's policies, including reservation policies and various schemes, programmes, facilities, and guidelines for SEDGs students.
7. To ensure that the University develop appropriate outreach programmes to help the SEDGs students avail the various opportunities of educational/academic programmes of SAU.
8. To ensure proper implementation of preventive measures and laws against discrimination and atrocities, and for safeguards of students belonging to respective categories under SEDGs.
9. To circulate, publicize, facilitate, and monitor the implementation of all UGC and Government guidelines and instructions issued from time to time in reference to SEDGs.
10. To redress the grievances and complaints of the SEDGs students within 15 days through a Student Grievance Redressal Committee (SGRC) without compromising the safety, privacy, and dignity of the complainant.

5.2. Functions of SEDGs Cell

1. Shall co-ordinate with other existing cells and statutory bodies of SAU and enable the implementation of existing schemes and provisions, including scholarships and fellowships of the Government of India and respective States.
2. Shall ensure the implementation of orientation and bridge courses, Earn-While-Learn schemes, and outreach programmes designed and developed by SAU for SEDGs.
3. Shall provide socio-economic, academic, and psychological support and mentoring to SEDG students through proper counselling and mentoring programmes.
4. Shall sensitize and inform all faculty, staff, counsellors, students, and service professionals about SEDG issues and the facilities available to support their inclusion.
5. Shall explore and generate funds from various sources such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and Alumni contributions to provide additional financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs.
6. Shall coordinate with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) to raise awareness about the implementation of various policies for inclusive and equitable quality higher education.
7. Shall function as a "Single Window" for SEDG students for their grievances, basic needs, amenities, facilities, welfare measures, and scholarships/fellowships.
8. Shall upload and disseminate guidelines, welfare facilities, and safety measures on the SAU website and maintain records to monitor amenities and the basic facilities required for a safe and secure environment for SEDGs.
9. Shall circulate, publicize, and facilitate existing welfare schemes such as Remedial Coaching, NET Coaching, Entry into Services, and Residential Coaching for SC/ST/OBC (Non-Creamy Layer), Minority Community, and PwD students.
10. Shall establish a team of counsellors, social workers, and faculty members to provide emotional and social support to SEDGs and assist them in adapting to the University environment.



11. Shall focus on overall personality development, including professional and soft skills, to enhance employability among SEDG students.
12. Shall organize periodic meetings and monitor the progress of various schemes, ensuring that the University maintains a comprehensive database of all schemes related to SEDGs.
13. Shall assess the needs of SEDGs through stakeholder consultation and make necessary recommendations to the authorities of SAU.
14. Shall sensitize all students to bring about a positive attitudinal change towards SEDGs and ensure their participation in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities.
15. Shall hold regular meetings with representatives of SEDG students to address their concerns and engage with the management/authorities of SAU while maintaining confidentiality of deliberations and data.
16. Shall inform all students during induction/counselling sessions about the University's zero-tolerance policy towards any form of discrimination.

5.3 Governance of SEDGs Cell:

1	Chairperson (SEDGs Cell)	
2	Senior Professor	Member
3	In-Charge of Internal Complaint Cell	Member
4	Coordinator/Director of IQAC	Member
5	SC/ST Representative	Member
6	OBC Representative	Member
7	Two Students' Representative belonging to SEDGs	Members (one male and one female member)
8	Assistant Registrar/Administrative Officer	Member Secretary

5.4 Provisions for Attendance and Replacement of Members:

Members shall attend the maximum number of meetings of the SEDGs Cell. If any member fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without a valid reason, or if a member leaves the University or is unable to continue in the designated role, he or she shall be replaced with the approval of the competent authority.

5.5 Implementation & Monitoring

1. The SEDGs Cell shall meet at least **twice each semester**.
2. Minutes shall be submitted to the **Registrar** and **IQAC**.
3. Annual Report must be included in **AQAR/NAAC documentation**.
4. Policy implementation shall be reviewed annually by IQAC.

5.6 Grievance Redressal

- SAU shall establish a **confidential grievance mechanism** for SEDG students.



- All grievances must be resolved within **15 days**, ensuring dignity, privacy, and safety.
- Serious violations shall be escalated to the Registrar/VC.

5.7 Review & Revision of Policy

This Policy shall be reviewed every three years, or earlier as required by new UGC/GoI guidelines. The review process shall be carried out in consultation with stakeholders, members of the SEDGs Cell, and based on feedback received from students.



Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDG) Cell
Sikkim Alpine University,
Kamrang, Namchi, 737126



Ref No.: SAU/SEDG/MOM/001/2025

Date: 01/12/2025

SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS (SEDG) CELL MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: 1/12/2025

Time: 1:00 PM

Venue: Director's office, Main Campus, Kamrang, Sikkim Alpine University

With reference to the notice issued with **Ref No.SAU/SEDG/NOTICE/001/2025**, it is hereby recorded that the earlier notice contained a typographical error in the date. The notice date was mistakenly mentioned as **01/12/2025**, whereas the **correct date** of issue is **29/11/2025**. The meeting of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) was held in the Director's office, Sikkim Alpine University, on the above-mentioned date and time to finalize the policy for SEDGs.

Agenda:

1. Official welcome of all members of the SEDG Cell.
2. Discussion and finalization of the draft SEDGs Policy.
3. Review of corrections and suggestions provided by members.

Proceedings

1. Agenda (i): Official Welcome of Members

- The Chairperson formally welcomed all members of the newly constituted SEDG Cell.
- Members were introduced and acknowledged for their roles and responsibilities.
- The Chairperson emphasized the importance of collective effort in shaping and implementing the SEDGs Policy.

Outcome:

- Members were officially inducted into the Cell.
- A spirit of collaboration and commitment was established.





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2. Agenda(ii): Discussion and Finalization of Draft SEDGs Policy

- The Chairperson initiated the discussion on the draft SEDGs Policy.
- Members reviewed the draft in detail.
- Key points of deliberation included:
 - Alignment of the policy with university vision and regulatory guidelines.
 - Ensuring inclusivity and sustainability aspects in the draft.
 - Clarification of roles and responsibilities of the SEDG Cell.

Outcome:

- The draft policy was discussed thoroughly.
- Members agreed to incorporate necessary corrections before finalization.

3. Agenda (iii): Review of Corrections and Suggestions

- Members provided constructive feedback and suggestions for improving the draft policy.

Suggestions and decisions included:

- Preparation of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Cell.
- Addition of exclusion criteria to clearly distinguish the SEDG Cell from other cells, such as ICC, EOC, and SC/ST Cells.
- Framing of rules for attendance and defining a minimum meeting quorum of 50% of members, along with the Chairperson.
- Tenure of members was decided to be 3 years.
- Rules for replacement of members: if a member fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings without valid reasons, or leaves the university.
- For part-time engagement, students will be selected through a fair and transparent process.
- Reviews and revisions of the policies will be carried out through consultation with stakeholders, members, and feedback from students.





**Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDG) Cell
Sikkim Alpine University,
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- Few functions of the Cell were found to be overlapping, and hence they were merged for clarity and efficiency.
- The next meeting will include coordinators of different cells to jointly frame the SOP and establish a grievance redressal mechanism.

Outcome:

- All suggestions were noted and accepted for incorporation.
- The revised draft will be circulated among members for final approval.

4. Resolutions

- The SEDG Cell resolved to finalize the policy after incorporating the suggested corrections.
- The Cell will prepare a draft SOP and circulate it for review.
- The next meeting will include coordinators of other cells to ensure clarity and coordination in grievance redressal.

5. Conclusion

The Chairperson thanked all members for their active participation and valuable inputs.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.





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Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDG) Cell
Sikkim Alpine University,
Kamrang, Namchi, 737126

Members Present:

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Signature
1.	Dr. Aita Rani Subba (Limboo)	Chairperson	<i>Aita Rani Subba</i>
2.	Mr. Bimal Thapa	Member Secretary	<i>Bimal Thapa</i>
3.	Dr. Nirjala Rai	Member	<i>Nirjala Rai</i>
4.	Ms. Migma Dolma Lama	Member	<i>Migma Dolma Lama</i>
5.	Ms. Tabbasum Banu	Member	<i>Tabbasum Banu</i>
6.	Ms. Pragya Gurung	Member	<i>Pragya Gurung</i>
7.	Mr. Roshan Baraily	Member	<i>Roshan Baraily</i>

Aita Rani Subba

Dr. Aita Rani Subba (Limboo)
Chairperson, SEDG Cell
Sikkim Alpine University,
Kamrang, Namchi, 737126

Copy forwarded to the following for information and necessary action-

1. Registrar I/C.
2. Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Chancellor.
3. Deputy Registrar.
4. Deputy Registrar (Admin).
5. Assistant Registrar (Exam & Admin).
6. Deputy Director (Academics).
7. IQAC Coordinator.
8. All cell members.
9. Record File.

