NEED OF THE STUDY
A number of studies have reported presence of enormous variety of substance abuse including prescription opioids and associated public health problems from North-eastern states of India. National Family Health Survey-2, Government of India, has also highlighted a significant prevalence of alcohol use in Sikkim (32% and 17% among above 15 years of age males and females, respectively). Until date, any systematic information on epidemiology of non-medical prescription opioid use behaviour i.e. either extent as well as pattern of abuse in Sikkim is not available. However few arbitrary data on such is available from various detoxification centres of Sikkim. That shows increasing trends in both alcohol as well as drugs including prescription opioids. More over reports in media of Sikkim indicate increased incidences of arrests due to possession and violence due to influence of drugs especially prescription opioids.

Therefore, the information on epidemiology of prescription opioid abuse in Sikkim is needed for effective prevention and treatment of substance abuse related problems in Sikkim. The purpose of this research study is to get a better understanding of the relationship between pain and prescription opioid abuse i.e. whether prescription opioids are received as a first opiate analgesic treatment of pain and whether major reasons for continuing its use. This study will help to describe demographic variables (age, sex, religion, marital status, community, occupation etc.), socioeconomic variables (income, education, family information etc.), drug use pattern (types of drug, duration, route of use etc.), high risk behaviour profile (crime, law infringement, injection sharing, visit to commercial sex workers, homosexuality etc.), quality of life, associated medical and psychiatric conditions, reasons for seeking treatment of prescription opioid abusers (overdose/withdrawal/accident/consequences etc.). This study will also help to find out any association if present among mental health disorders, blood borne diseases like HIV with the
injecting prescription opioid abuse. Thereby awareness regarding safe injection can be created. Information from this study will also help to find out the differences in various socio-behavioural characteristics like migration (either drug use started before or after migration), community (rural or urban setup), level of education etc. therefore results of my study will contribute in developing more effective strategies for prescription opioid abuse prevention and control.