4.1 Introduction

The nature and role of politics in a given society largely depend upon the socio-economic background of the political leaders. As the success of democracy depends upon the performance of the political leaders, one has to study and examine the social and economic background of the political leaders. The opposition MLAs are equally important to discharge their responsibilities in checking and examining the policies and programmes of the government. The successful performance of the opposition MLAs in and outside the legislature also depends on their socio-economic background. Therefore an attempt is made to study the socio-economic status of the opposition MLA from 1972 to 2002. It may be noted that all the analysis on this chapter is solely based on available data on “Who’s Who: Manipur Legislative Assembly” published by Assembly Secretariat, Government of Manipur, Imphal during this study period 1972-2002.

4.1a Socio-economic and Political Background of the Opposition MLAs 1972

The socio-economic and political status of the opposition members in the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1972 may be examined. The opposition MLAs belonged to the Congress, Communist Party of India and Independents. There were 17 Congress MLAs, Communists-5 and independents-6 as opposition in the Manipur Legislative Assembly. Altogether there was 28 MLAs in the opposition. And M. Koireng Singh
representing Moirang Assembly Constituency was the leader of the opposition.\textsuperscript{1}

The educational qualifications of the opposition MLAs were of different degrees and levels. The opposition MLAs having post graduate degree had constituted about 20 percent. The opposition MLAs having graduate as their educational qualification formed majority i.e. 50 percent. Another 20 percent were those having passed matriculation. The remaining 20 percent of the opposition MLAs were under matriculates.

The opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1972 were of different age groups. The younger ones who belonged to the age group 25 to 35 formed 10 percent. Another 10 percent of the opposition members were of the age group 36 to 40. The members belonging to the age group 41 to 45 formed 20 percent. The highest percentage i.e. 30 percent of the opposition members had belonged to the age group 46 to 50. The remaining 30 percent was divided into 2 groups, the first forming 25 percent were opposition MLAs of the age group 51 to 54 and the 5 percent were the opposition members of the age group 55 to 60.

Regarding religious background of the opposition MLAs, as many as 70 percent were Hindus, 25 percent were Christians and the remaining 5 percent were Muslims.

The opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1972 were the representatives of rural constituencies. They had represented 85 percent of the rural constituencies and 10 percent of the opposition MLAs had represented urban constituencies like Singjamie, Yaiskul, Uripok etc. The remaining 5 percent of the opposition MLAs had represented semi-urban and semi rural constituencies.

\textsuperscript{1} Assembly Secretariat, Who’s Who, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 1980
The economic status of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1972 may be classified into middle class and lower middle class. About 85 percent of the opposition MLAs belonged to middle class group and another 15 percent were from lower middle class group.

The leader of the opposition Mairembam Koireng Singh had long political experience as Chairman of the Territorial Council 1957 to 1962; Chief Minister of Manipur, 1963 to 1969. Another opposition MLA, Sinam Bijoy representing Jiribam Assembly Constituency had started his careers as social worker since 1940s. He was elected four times uncontested from Jiribam and twice as contested candidate. He had the experience of being a member of the Legislative Assembly in 1972. Another opposition member, M. Meghachandra Singh, Communist MLA elected from an urban Uripok Assembly Constituency was a teacher and an advocate. He was elected as a member of Lok Sabha in 1967 on Communist ticket. He was a member of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1972 and got elected again in 1974.

4.1b Socio-economic and Political Background of the Opposition MLAs 1974

The opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1974 belonged to the Congress, Communist and Manipur Hill Union. Regarding their educational qualifications about 60 percent were post graduate degree holders and 20 percent were graduates. The opposition MLAs qualified the matriculation constituted about 10 percent of the total opposition strength and the remaining 10 percent were under matriculates. The entry of MLAs with the degree of higher education was

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2 Assembly Secretariat, Who’s Who, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 1974
an encouragement in the working of the Manipur Legislative Assembly which was only 3 years old.

Among the opposition MLAs, younger persons belonging to the age group 25 to 35 dominated, constituting about 65 percent. Another 15 percent of the opposition MLAs belonged to the age group of 41 to 45 years of age. Another 10 percent of the opposition MLAs were of the age group, 46 to 50. And the remaining 10 percent of the opposition MLAs in 1974 Legislative Assembly were in the age group of 51 to 55.

Religion wise majority of the opposition MLAs were Hindus constituting about 70 percent. The second largest religious group was the Christian opposition MLAs. Most of the MLA belonging to the opposition parties like the Congress and Manipur Hill Union elected from the hill constituencies were all Christians. The third religious group among the opposition MLAs were the Muslims having their faiths in Koran. It may be noted the Chief Minister of Manipur after the Assembly elections, 1974 was a Muslim Md. Alimuddin.

Regarding urban-rural divide, most of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1974 belonged to rural areas. They constitute as high as 90 percent of the opposition MLAs. The opposition MLAs constituting only 10 percent were from urban constituencies.

An attempt is made to study the economic status of the opposition MLAs. There are no authentic sources regarding their economic status. From the Who’s Who published by the Assembly secretariat, the economic status of the opposition MLAs is broadly studied and analyzed. About 90 percent of the MLAs belonging to the opposition were middle class. Most of them particularly belonging to the Congress and the Communist (CPI) were from well to do families of the Manipur society.
Only 10 percent of the opposition MLAs was from the lower middle class.

When a study is made regarding the professional background of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1974 it is found that 60 percent of the members had been teachers before becoming MLAs. And the remaining 40 percent of the opposition members had given their professional background as social workers in the Who’s who published by the Manipur Legislative Secretariat.

Party wise breakup of the opposition MLAs in Manipur Legislative Assembly 1974, shows that 60 percent of the MLAs were Congressmen, 20 percent were Communists and the remaining 20 percent were members belonging to Manipur Hill Union including one independent opposition MLA.

Among the opposition MLAs the number of members who were elected twice i.e. in 1972 and in 1974 Assembly elections outnumbered those who got themselves elected in 1974 only. The twice elected MLAs had constituted about 65 percent and the remaining 35 percent were elected only in 1974. There were also MLAs who acted as President and General Secretary of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee. Rishang Keishing, the opposition leader was the President of the Ukhrul Congress Committee, was a member of the Territorial Council, 1957 to 1962, a member of the Lok Sabha from 1952 to 1957. He was associated with many organisations like Tangkhul Sporting Union, Tangkhul Nagulong, Naga Integration Council etc. R. K. Ranbir Singh was the General Secretary of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee and was associated with student’s movement in the 1950s. He was the editor of ‘The Simanta Patrika’ for more than 10 years. Another opposition Communist MLA, M. Meghachandra Singh elected from Uripok
Assembly Constituency was a member of the Lok Sabha, 1967-1971 and was associated with political movements in Manipur in the 1950s and 1960s.

4.1c Socio-economic and Political Background of the Opposition MLAs 1980

The opposition in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1980 consists of many experienced and eminent politicians like M. Koireng Singh, Janata who was the Chief Minister of Manipur in 1967, 1968-69, Kh. Chaoba, Janata who got elected since 1948 to 1974 and become a Minister, Y. Yaima Singh who had represented his Constituency since 1948 to 1980 and was a cabinet Minister in 1977 and Yangmasho Shaiza, Janata from Ukhrul Assembly Constituency who was twice the Chief Minister of Manipur from July 1974 to December 1974 and from 1977-79. All of them were leaders of the Congress Party before Janata came to power at the centre in 1977. It was after the formation of the Janata government at the centre that the above leaders had joined Janata Party and thereby got themselves elected on Janata ticket in the Assembly elections of Manipur in 1980.

There was two opposition MLAs who had possessed the post graduate degree with Ph. D. Eighty percent of the opposition MLAs were graduates and another 15 percent were under matriculates. The opposition MLAs belonged to Janata and leftist parties. Eight of them were Janata members five were the MLAs belonging to Communist Party of India and one was CPI (M) member.

Regarding age group, majority of the opposition MLAs belonged to the age group of 51 to 60 years. This group had constituted about 60 percent of the opposition. Another 20 percent belonged to the younger
age group of 36 to 40. Fifteen percent of the opposition MLAs were of the 41 to 45 age group. The remaining 5 percent were above 60 years of age.

Religion wise the opposition MLAs belonged to two different religious groups namely Hinduism and Christianity. Majority of the opposition MLAs say 95 percent were Hindus and the remaining 5 percent were Christians. There was no opposition MLA having Islam as religion.

Ninety five percent of the opposition MLAs in the Legislative Assembly of Manipur belonged to rural areas. The leader of the opposition M. Koireng himself had represented rural areas namely Moirang Assembly Constituency. The other known opposition leaders namely Y. Yaima, L. Chandramani, Yangmasho Shaiza etc. were all from rural areas. It is interesting to note that all Communist opposition MLAs had represented rural Assembly constituencies.

Regarding economic status of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1980, majority of them say, 95 percent belonged to middle class. Amongst them small percentage may be said to belong to higher middle class.

Profession wise, the opposition MLAs did not belong to any particular profession. More than 90 percent of them had stated in who’s who published by the Assembly secretariat that they were social workers. Only one opposition member namely O. Joy Singh had been working in government service.

Majority of the opposition members had long political experiences in the Party organisations as well as members of the state legislature. Kh. Chaoba Singh from Sekmai Constituency had represented the

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3 Assembly Secretariat, Who’s Who, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 1980
Constituency since 1948 continuously till 1980. He had been Cabinet Minister during the period 1972-1974. L. Chandramani, opposition member had been elected since 1972 elections and continuously represented Patsoi Assembly Constituency till 1980 Assembly elections. He had the experiences of being Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, as Cabinet Minister. Likewise Yumnam Yaima had long political experience of being member of the Territorial Council, Legislative Assembly, 1963 to 1969; Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1972-1974; as Cabinet Minister in 1977. He got himself elected again in 1980 Assembly elections. He had the experience of working as Speaker of Manipur Legislative elections during the period 1972 and 1975-78. (Dr. L. Chandramani Singh was Cabinet Minister in 1974-75 and 1978-79. O. Joy Singh, opposition member was Minister of State (works) in 1974-75 and Deputy Speaker in 1977-79). The leader of the opposition Mairenbam Koireng Singh had long political experience as chairman of the Territorial Council 1957 to 1962, Chief Minister of Manipur, 1963 to 1969, leader of the opposition in 1972 Legislative Assembly. He was also a member of the Manipur state Legislative Assembly in 1948 and member of the Electoral College, 1952. The Electoral College was formed in order to elect a member to the Rajya Sabha (council of states) of Indian parliament. Another opposition member Yangmasho Shaiza representing Ukhrul Legislative Assembly was twice Chief Minister of Manipur, first in 1974 and second from 1977 to 1979. He was member of the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1972 and 1974. The opposition MLA, Ph. Parijat Singh from Lamlai Assembly Constituency was the general secretary of the communist Party and got himself elected in the Manipur Legislative Assembly in 1972 and 1974. Though the number of opposition members was only 14, there were 2 MLAs who were the Chief Minister of Manipur and 4 other opposition
MLAs were ministries of Cabinet rank. There were only 9 members in the opposition in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1984. The leader of the opposition was M. Koireng Singh, the former Chief Minister of Manipur. In the opposition the Janata Party had 4 MLAs, the Manipur People’s Party-3; the Communist Party of India-1 and the Kuki National Assembly-1 member.

Regarding their educational qualifications, MLAs namely Wahengbam Nipamacha Singh and Yumkham Irabot Singh had post graduate degree, 3 of the opposition MLAs possessed graduate degrees constituting 33 percent and another 43 percent of the opposition MLAs were under matriculates. The educational qualifications of the remaining opposition MLAs are not indicated in the Who’s who published by the Assembly secretariat, Imphal. Dr. M. Nara Singh the lone CPI opposition MLA possessed medical graduate degree in homeopathic science.

Regarding the age of the opposition MLAs, M. Koireng Singh, the leader of the opposition was the oldest one being 69 years of age. Two of the opposition MLAs belonged to the age group of 41-45 constituting 30 percent. Another 2 opposition MLAs belonged to the older age group of 60 and above, constituting 30 percent. Another 30 percent of the opposition MLAs was in the age group of 51 to 55. The remaining 10 percent were the younger ones belonging to the age group of 25 to 35.

The religious background of the opposition MLAs was a mixture one. As many as 60 percent of the opposition MLAs were Hindus. Another 30 percent of the opposition MLAs representing the hill constituencies of Manipur were Christians and the remaining 10 percent was Muslim. There was only one Muslim MLA in the opposition namely Md. Allaudin.
4.1d Socio-economic and Political Background of the Opposition MLAs 1984

As many as 95 percent of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1984 belonged to rural constituencies. The remaining 5 percent of the MLAs belonging to the opposition were from semi-urban and semi-rural areas. There were no opposition MLAs representing purely urban Constituency.

The economic status of the opposition MLAs of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1984 was dominated by members belonging to the middle class group. They had constituted 80 percent of the opposition MLAs. The remaining 20 percent of the opposition belonged to the lower middle class. 4

The opposition MLAs had stated that they were social workers before becoming MLAs. Only one opposition MLA, O. Joy Singh was in government service before becoming MLA.

The leader of the opposition M. Koireng Singh had long political experience. He had been continuously elected since 1948 when Manipur had a legislature of its own after independence under the Manipur state constitution act, 1947. Since then he was a member of the Territorial Council/Assembly 1957 to 1963, becoming Chief Minister in 1963 itself when Territorial council was converted into Territorial Assembly. He continued to be a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1972 to 1984. W. Nipamacha, the opposition MLA got elected in 1974 Assembly elections and was Minister of State, education during 1977 to 1979. O. Joy Singh, MPP was Minister of State (works) in 1974-75 and was Deputy Speaker during the period 1977-1979. He was the General Secretary of Manipur People’s Party. Three opposition MLAs namely M.

4 Assembly Secretariat, Who’s Who, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 1984
Nara Singh, J. F. Rothangliang and Ngulkhohao were newcomers in the Assembly.

The opposition CPI MLA, Moirengthem Nara representing Wangjing Tentha Constituency had the political experience being a member of the Manipur Legislative Assembly. Another opposition member, J. F. Rothangliang representing Churachandpur Assembly Constituency as KNA MLA was also a member of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1984.

4.1e Socio-economic and Political Background of the Opposition MLAs 1990

After the Assembly elections, 1990, there was MPP led coalition government under the Chief Ministership of R. K. Ranbir Singh. The Congress having 26 MLAs. The leader of the opposition was R. K. Dorendro Singh, the former Chief Minister of Manipur. There were also other 3 Congress MLAs who were former Chief Ministers of Manipur namely M. Koireng Singh, R. K. Jaichandra Singh and Rishang Keishing.

Among the opposition MLAs, 50 percent of them possessed higher educational qualifications of holding post graduate degrees in different disciplines. Some of them had also passed LLB degree in law. Opposition Congress MLAs having graduate degree formed only 15 percent of the total number of MLAs. MLAs having studied intermediate had constituted about 20 percent. Another small group of MLAs who were under matriculates had constituted 15 percent and the remaining 20 percent.5

Regarding the ages of the opposition MLAs, majority of the Congress members in the Legislative Assembly of Manipur belonged to

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5 Assembly Secretariat, Who’s Who, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 1990
the age group of 46 to 50. The opposition MLAs belonging to this age
group had constituted about 60 percent. 20 percent of the opposition
members belonged to the age group of 51-55 and another 15 percent of
them were of the age group 51 to 55. There was one opposition MLA
namely M. Koireng Singh who was 75 years of age.

The opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1990
belonged to three main religious groups namely Hinduism, Islam and
Christianity. The opposition MLAs having Hinduism as their religion had
constituted about 60 percent. The Congress MLAs having Christianity as
their religion, mainly representing the hill constituencies of Manipur
formed 30 percent of the opposition.

Regarding urban-rural background of the opposition MLAs in the
Manipur Legislative assemblies, 1990, 60 percent of them were from
rural constituencies representing the rural areas of both valley and hill
districts of Manipur. The opposition MLAs representing urban
constituencies had constituted about 30 percent of the elected opposition
MLAs. The remaining 10 percent opposition MLAs had represented
semi-urban and semi-rural constituencies.

Majority of the opposition MLAs belonged to middle class group.
Some of them had inherited parental property and few of them might
have acquired property on their own due to political position as Ministers
and MLAs. The remaining 30 percent of the opposition MLAs belonged
to upper middle class. Among the opposition MLAs who belonged to
upper middle class mention may be made of R. K. Dorendra Singh,
opposition leader and former Chief Minister of Manipur; R. K.
Jaichandra, former Union Minister and former Chief Minister of Manipur
and Rishang Keishing, former Chief Minister of Manipur.
The professional background of the opposition MLAs in the Legislative Assembly 1990 may be classified into three i.e. legal profession, teaching and social work. The number of opposition MLAs stating to be social workers before being elected as MLAs had constituted majority reaching 60 percent. The next larger group of opposition MLAs were in the legal profession and had constituted about 30 percent of the opposition MLAs. The rest 10 percent of the opposition MLAs were teachers.

Regarding political background and experience, some leaders of the opposition group had long political experience. R. K. Dorendra Singh, the leader of the opposition, representing an urban Constituency namely Yaiskul Assembly Constituency was twice the Chief Minister of Manipur, a) 1974-1977 and b) January 1980 to November 1980. He was Speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly from June 1974 to December 1974. He was also member of Rajya Sabha in 1988. He was President of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) 1978-80 and member of the all India Congress Committee (AICC), 1974-1977. He was also greatly associated with the working of Praja Socialist Party in Manipur from 1952 to 1956, being the Secretary of the Young Socialist League 1953-54, executive member of all Assam Socialist Party, 1955; Director, youth socialist association; 1955-56. Wahengbam Angou Singh representing Naoriya Pakhanglakpa Assembly Constituency and opposition member had political experience as an MLA since 1980, 1984 and 1990. He was Speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1985 and was Agriculture Minister, 1988-1990. Thounaojam Chaoba Singh, Congress representing Nambol Assembly Constituency had political experience of being MLA since 1974 onwards. He was Minister in the government of Manipur from 1980 to 1983 and from January, 1985 to
February 1990. He was the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, 1983-85. Another opposition member, Thoudam Devendro Singh representing Jiribam Assembly Constituency was Minister of State from June, 1980 to February 1981; Minister of Education, June 1981 to January 1985; Minister for Public Health Engineering, Law and Legislative Affairs and Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly. Helaluddin Khan from Lilong Constituency was Cabinet Minister from 1980 to 1983. He was secretary of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee, 1989. R. K. Jaichandra Singh, Congress representing Sagolband Assembly Constituency was a member of the Rajya Sabha in 1984; became a Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports in the Union Ministry, 1984-1985; was a Union Minister of chemicals and petrochemicals, was the Chief Minister of Manipur from March, 1988 to 1990. M. Koireng Singh, Congress was a member of the Manipur state Legislative Assembly 1948 constituted under the Manipur state constitution act, 1947; member of the Territorial Council, 1957 to 1963, member of the Territorial Assembly 1963 to 1969; was the Chief Minister of Manipur, 1963 and 1967 to 1969. Rishang Keishing, another Congress opposition member is known political leader. He was associated with the political movements of Manipur in the 1950s and 1960s; was a member of the Lok Sabha twice, 1952-57 and 1962 to 67. He was deputy Chief Minister and Chief Minister of Manipur from November to March, 1988. Irengbam Tompok Singh, opposition Congress MLA was associated with the political movements of Manipur in the 1950s and 1960s. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly, 1972; was a member of the Rajya Sabha, 1976 to 1980; was the deputy Chief Minister of Manipur, 1985 to 1990.
4.1 Socio-economic and Political Background MLAs 1995

The opposition party in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1995 had consisted of 18 MLAs belonging to Manipur People’s Party, Communist Party of India, BJP and 3 Independents. Among the parties, the MPP had constituted the largest group having 12 MLAs. The Communist Party had 2 MLAs, BJP-1 and Independents-3.\(^6\)

Among the opposition MLAs, there were some who possessed post graduate degree in different subjects. Md. Abdul Salam representing Wabagai Assembly Constituency is a master’s degree holder in political science and hold Law graduate degree. Another opposition MLA, Dr. Sapam Dhananjoy Singh was a post graduate degree holder in psychology and a Ph.D. The post graduate degree holder had constituted about 20 percent of the opposition group. The opposition members possessing graduate degree had constituted the largest group constituting 50 percent. And the remaining 30 percent were MLAs who studied only upto matriculation and under-matriculations.

The age group of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1995 were evenly represented. There were younger opposition MLAs who belonged to the age group of 25 to 35. They had constituted about 10 percent. The opposition MLAs belonging to the age groups of 41 to 45, 46 to 50, 51 to 54 and 55 to 60 had constituted 20 percent each. The remaining 10 percent were the opposition MLAs who had crossed 60 years of age. R. K. Ranbir Singh, former Chief Minister of Manipur belonged to this group.

Religious wise the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1995 belonged to Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. The

\(^6\) Assembly Secretariat, Who’s Who, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 1995
opposition MLAs having Hinduism as their own religion had constituted the largest group, i.e. 80 percent.

The MLAs having Christianity as their religion formed 15 percent of the opposition group. These MLAs, majority had represented the hill constituencies of Manipur. The remaining 15 percent were the Muslim MLAs adopting Islam as their own religion.

Regarding urban rural divide among the opposition MLAs, 80 percent of the opposition MLAs were from rural constituencies mostly from the rural of the valley and hill areas of Manipur. Only 15 percent of the opposition MLAs had represented semi-urban and semi-rural constituencies. From the sources available in the Who’s who published by the Assembly Secretariat, Imphal, it is known that 70 percent of the opposition MLAs in the Legislative Assembly belonged to the middle class group. 10 percent of them may be said to belong to lower middle class. The remaining 20 percent of the opposition MLAs belonged to upper middle class. R. K. Ranbir Singh, former Chief Minister of Manipur and C. Doungel, who was the Finance Commissioner, Government of Manipur and later Minister belonged to this group.

Regarding professional background of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1995 it is found that majority of them constituting 60 percent were in the government service. 30 percent of the opposition MLAs had stated that they were social workers before becoming MLAs. Only 10 percent of the opposition MLAs had teaching as their profession before joining active politics.

The political experience of some of the opposition MLAs may be studied. R. K. Ranbir Singh elected from Keishamthong Assembly Constituency and leader of the opposition was PWD and Finance Minister in the government of Manipur. He was also the Speaker of the
Manipur Legislative Assembly from January 1979 to February, 1980. R. K. Ranbir Singh was the Chief Minister of Manipur during the period February 1990 to January 1992. He was the General Secretary of Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee for 8 years. Chungkhakai Doungel representing Saikul Assembly Constituency was Minister of Finance from August 1990 to January 1992 and from June, 1993 to December, 1993. He was the Vice President of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee. Before joining politics, Ch. Doungel was Finance Commissioner, Government of Manipur from 1979 to 1983. Another opposition member Dr. Sapam Dhananjoy Singh representing Thongju Assembly Constituency was involved in the statehood movement in Manipur in the 1960s. He got elected in the Manipur Legislative Assembly for the first time in 1995.

4.1g Socio-economic and Political Background of the Opposition MLAs 2000

The opposition in the Manipur Legislative Assembly 2000 had 4 political parties namely Indian National Congress, BJP, Samata Party and Janata Dal (S). The Indian National Congress had 11 MLAs in the opposition, BJP 6 MLAs Samata party and Janata Dal (S) had only one MLA each. Altogether there was 19 MLAs in the opposition.

The educational qualifications of the opposition MLAs had varied from post graduate level to under matriculates. The opposition MLAs possessing post graduate degree had constituted about 35 percent. The MLAs studied up to graduate level had dominated others regarding educational qualifications. This group had constituted 55 percent among the opposition MLAs. The opposition MLAs constituting 5 percent was matriculated and the remaining 5 percent was under matriculates.
The age group of the opposition MLAs are of different categories. The younger MLAs of the age group 25 to 35 were fairly represented, forming about 20 percent of the opposition. The opposition MLAs who belonged to three age groups i.e. 4-45, 46-50 and 51-54 were represented on equal basis i.e. 20 percent each. Another group of opposition MLAs constituting 8 percent were those who belonged to the age group of 36 to 40. Among the senior members of the opposition were Rishang Keishing, H. Bhubon Singh and R. K. Dorendra Singh. All the three senior members of the opposition were above 65 years. R. K. Dorendra Singh was 66 years old, Rishang Keishing 79 years and H. Bhubon Singh; BJP was also 79 years old.

The opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly 2000 mainly were Hindus. The MLAs adopting Hinduism as their religion formed 85 percent and opposition MLAs having Christianity as their religion had constituted 15 percent. There was no Muslim MLA in the opposition.

Regarding urban- rural background 80 percent of the opposition MLAs had represented rural constituencies of the valley and hill areas of Manipur. The opposition MLAs representing urban constituencies were only 15 percent and the remaining 5 percent of the opposition MLAs had represented semi-urban and semi-rural constituencies.

The economic background of the opposition MLAs in the Legislative Assembly of Manipur, 2000 may be classified into three i.e. upper middle class, middle class and lower middle class. The opposition MLAs belonging to upper middle class had constituted about 30 percent. The opposition MLAs belonging to this group were Radhabinod Koijam from Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency, Rishang Keishing

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7 Assembly Secretariat, Who’s Who, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 2000
representing Phungyar Assembly Constituency, R. K. Dorendra Singh representing Yaiskul Assembly Constituency etc. They were senior political leaders of Manipur and two of them namely Rishang Keishing and R. K. Dorendra Singh were former Chief Ministers of Manipur. Majority of the opposition MLAs constituting 60 percent belonged to middle class and the remaining 10 percent belonged to lower middle class group.

Majority of the opposition MLAs constituting about 55 percent have stated that they were social workers before becoming MLAs.\(^8\) 30 percent of them had teaching profession before joining the electoral politics of the state. The remaining 15 percent were in government service.

Some of the opposition members belonging to both Congress and BJP had long political experiences. Dr. Nimaichand Luwang from Wangkhem Constituency was an MLA since 1984. He was Minister of State in 1988 and a Cabinet Minister from June 1992 to December, 1993. He was again a Cabinet Minister from March, 1995 to May, 1996. He had attended workshops and conferences in foreign countries such as Switzerland, London, Sri Lanka, Denmark etc.\(^9\) Another opposition Congress MLA Radhabinod Koijam had strong political background of being MLA since 1980 and became a Minister from 1980 to 1984. Again he became a Minister from 1984 to 1988. He was Deputy Chief Minister from March 1995 to May 1995. He was associated with party organisation since 1976 in different capacities. Senior Congress opposition leader, Rishang Keishing had long political experience. He was a member of Lok Sabha for two terms, 1952-57 and 1962-67. He was MLA since 1972 and became a Minister 1974-77, Deputy Chief Minister,
1980 and Chief Minister, 1980-84; 1985; December 1994 to February, 1995; and 1995-97. Rishang Keishing was also associated with the working of socialist party in Manipur, a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and a member of Voluntary Organisations.

The opposition leader, R. K. Dorendra Singh elected from Yaiskul Assembly Constituency on BJP ticket was the Speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly from March, 1974 to April 1977 and become the Chief Minister of Manipur in 1980. He was a member of Rajya Sabha (Council of states) and again was the Chief Minister of Manipur in 1992. R. K. Dorendra Singh was associated with the Socialist movement in Manipur in the 1950s and was a member of All India Congress Committee (AICC) from 1974 to 1980.

4.1h Socio-economic and Political Background of the Opposition MLAs 2002

The opposition in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 2002 had 5 political parties. These parties were: the Federal Party of Manipur having 13 MLAs, the Bharatiya Janata Party-4 MLAs, Samata party-3 MLAs, the Manipur People’s Party-2 MLAs and Democratic Revolutionary Party-2 MLAs. The Federal Party of Manipur having 13 MLAs was the largest group in the opposition. The party was established in 1993 and joined the electoral politics of Assembly elections since 1995.

The educational qualifications of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur legislative elections, 2002 are varied ranging from matriculation to post graduate degree, some having Ph. D. degree, degree in medical science and legal practices. The opposition MLAs having post graduate degree had constituted the highest percentage of 60. And the opposition MLAs possessing graduate degree formed 20 percent of the opposition
MLAs and another 20 percent were those MLAs who had studied only up to matriculation.

Regarding the age group of the opposition MLAs, middle aged MLAs had dominated both the younger and older ones. The middle aged opposition MLAs who were in between 55 and 60 years of age had constituted about 40 percent and the opposition MLAs who were above 60 years of age had constituted another 10 percent. R. K. Dorendra Singh who was the leader of the opposition in the Assembly was 68 years old. The younger group of opposition MLAs who were in between the age group of 36 to 40 had consisted only 10 percent. Another group of opposition MLAs who belonged to the age group of 46 to 50 and 51 to 54 had constituted 20 percent each of the opposition MLAs.

Religion wise opposition MLAs having Hinduism as their religion formed majority, constituting about 80 percent. Another group of opposition MLAs mainly representing the hill constituencies of Manipur and adopting Christianity as their religion formed the remaining 20 percent. There was no Muslim Opposition MLA having Islam as their religion in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 2002.

When studied, the urban-rural background of the opposition MLAs; it is found that 60 percent of the opposition MLAs had represented rural constituencies of Manipur. The MLAs representing the hill constituencies were more in number than the opposition MLAs representing the rural constituencies of the valley of Manipur. The opposition MLAs representing urban constituencies had constituted only 20 percent of the opposition in the Legislative Assembly of Manipur, 2002. The opposition MLAs representing semi-urban and semi-rural constituencies had increased slightly as the process of urbanization had

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10 Assembly Secretariat, Who’s Who, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 2002
entered slowly in the different areas of Manipur. The opposition MLAs representing semi-urban and semi-urban constituencies had constituted 20 percent of the opposition in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 2002.

The economic status of the opposition MLAs can be known from the brief bio-data of the MLAs published in the Who’s Who published by the Assembly Secretariat, Imphal. The number of terms represented by the MLAs from their respective constituencies may be taken as one of the basis for the study of economic status of the MLAs. If some of the MLAs happened to be ministers of the last government, it is presumed that they may be grouped as upper middle class. The opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 2002 who may be classified as upper middle class had formed 10 percent. Majority of the MLAs who belonged to middle class had constituted about 80 percent. The remaining 10 percent were those opposition MLAs who belonged to the lower middle class.

The professional background of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 2002 may be classified into four groups namely social workers: government service, legal profession, Teaching and medical. The opposition MLAs who belonged to social worker group had constituted about 80 percent. The opposition MLAs who had teaching profession before joining the Assembly electoral politics, 2002 had constituted 5 percent. There were also opposition MLAs who had legal profession and they constituted about 5 percent. There was also opposition MLAs who had medical background as their profession. They constituted 5 percent of the opposition MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 2002.

Regarding political experience, majority of the opposition MLAs had long political experience of being MLAs, Ministers and office
bearers in the party organisations. The leaders of the opposition R. K. Dorendra Singh former Chief Minister of Manipur and former opposition leader had the political experience of being Chief Minister of Manipur twice and Speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly. He had also the experience of being MP in the Rajya Sabha in 1988 for six years. He was also associated with the working of the Socialist party in Manipur in the 1950s. Later on he became a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) from 1974 to 1977. He was leader of the opposition in the Manipur Legislative Assembly 2002 as BJP MLA. Meisnam Bhorot Singh representing Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency was a popular opposition MLA in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 2002. He was the President of BJP Manipur for two terms. Irengbam Hemochandra Singh representing urban Singjamei Constituency was elected MLA in 1991 and re-elected to the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1995. He was Deputy Speaker from March, 1995, Minister of State for municipal Administration, Housing and Urban and became a Cabinet Minister in December 1997. He was the President of the Youth Congress, Manipur in 1992 and a member of All India Congress Committee in 1997. He was elected from Singjamei Constituency on Federal Party of Manipur ticket. Salam Ibohal Singh, FPM MLA representing Thanga Constituency was elected for the first time in 1990 on MPP ticket. He was Minister of state for community, Rural Development, Panchayati raj and Power from March, 1990 to April, 1992. He became a cabinet Minister from June, 1992 to December, 1993 in charge of youth Affairs, Sports, Science and Technology and Environment. He was joint Secretary of the Manipur People’s Party in 1968. Thangminlein Kipgen, an opposition MLA belonging to FPM and representing one of the hill constituencies namely Kangpokpi Constituency was an MLA in 1995. He was Minister of
Power in 1998. The opposition MLA B. D. Behring FPM representing hill Constituency of Chandel had the experience of being MLA in the 5th Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1990. He was a member of the Rajya Sabha in 1990. Laienlakpam Lala Singh representing Khundrakpam Constituency, belonging to Janata Party had political experience of an MLA since 1984. He was re-elected in 1995 to the 6th Manipur Legislative Assembly. He was Deputy Speaker in July, 2002. Okram Joy Singh, MPP MLA, very popular and known opposition MLA from Langthabal Assembly Constituency had long political experience of having been represented his Constituency for six terms from 1974 to 2002 in 1974-75 he was Minister of State, works and Agriculture and was Deputy Speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly from 1977 to 1979. He was Cabinet Minister in 1990-92 in charge of Irrigation and Flood control, law and legislative affairs. He was general Secretary of Manipur People’s Party from 1992 to 1997 and became President of the party in 1997 itself. Another opposition MLA, Dr. Nimaichand Luwang from Wangkhem Constituency had political experience as an MLA and Minister from 1984 onwards. He was Minister of state in charge of PWD, Publicity and Tourism in 1984. After Assembly elections 1995, he was Cabinet Minister in charge of Minor irrigation, CADA, Higher and Technical Education, Science and Technology and Environment. There was also new opposition MLA Dr. Th. Meinya Singh representing Konthoujam Constituency and elected on the platform of newly formed party, Democratic Revolutionary People’s party.
4.2 Socio-economic and Political Background MLAs: Comparative Study

An attempt is made to compare the socio economic and political background of the opposition MLAs during the period from 1972 to 2002 i.e. a period of 30 years. When we compare the educational status of the opposition MLAs in the eight Manipur Legislative Assemblies of 1972, 1974, 1980, 1984, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2002, it is found that the MLAs possessing post graduate degrees is highest in 1974 and 2002 Legislative Assemblies. In these two Legislative Assemblies, the opposition MLAs possessing Post graduate degrees constitute 60 percent, the highest one. The next 50 percent of the opposition MLAs having post graduate degrees was in the Manipur Legislative Assembly of 1990. The opposition MLAs having post graduate degrees in the Manipur Legislative Assembly of 2000 was 35 percent. The opposition MLAs having post graduate degrees constituting 20 percent was in the Legislative Assemblies of 1972 and 1995. The Manipur Legislative Assembly of 1980 had opposition MLAs having post graduate degree holders constituting only 10 percent. The least percentage of opposition MLAs having post graduate degrees is found only in the Manipur Legislative Assembly of 1984.

Regarding opposition MLAs possessing graduate as educational qualification, the Legislative Assembly of 1980 had the highest percentage of 60 percent. The next was the Legislative Assembly of 2000 having 55 percent of the opposition MLAs possessing graduate qualifications. The next percentage of 55 opposition MLAs possessing graduate as educational qualification were found in the two Legislative Assemblies of 1972 and 1995. The Legislative Assembly of 1984

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11 Assembly Secretariat, Who’s Who, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 2000
opposition MLAs possessing graduate degrees had constituted 33 percent. Two Legislative Assemblies namely the Assembly of 1974 and the Assembly, 2002 had graduate opposition MLAs having graduate degrees, constituting only 20 percent. The least 15 percent of the opposition MLAs with graduation was in the Legislative Assembly of 1990. The opposition MLAs who had studied only upto matriculation had formed small percentage in all Legislative Assemblies from 1972 to 2002. In 1972 it was only 20 percent, 1974- 10 percent, 1980- 15 percent, 1990- 20 percent, 1995- 15 percent, 2000-5 percent and 2002- 20 percent. There were also opposition MLAs who had studied only upto class IX and X only. These groups of opposition MLAs had constituted 20 percent in the Legislative Assembly, 1972; 10 percent in 1974; 15 percent in 1980; 43 percent (highest) in 1984; 15 percent in 1990 and 1995 and 5 percent only in 2000 and 2002 Legislative Assemblies.

Regarding the age of the opposition members, the highest percentage of the members between the age group of 46 to 50 was in the Legislative Assembly of 1990. These opposition MLAs belonging to the age group of 55 to 60 had constituted the highest percentage of 60 in the Legislative Assembly of 1980. The Legislative Assembly of 2002 also had 40 percent representation of the same age group of the opposition members. The next 30 percent of the opposition MLAs was in the Legislative Assembly of 1984 and 1974; the former group belonged to the age group of 41 to 45 and the latter to the age group of 51 to 54. The opposition members belonging to the age group of 55 to 60 was constituting 30 percent was also in the Manipur Legislative Assembly of 1974. The age group of the opposition MLAs was evenly distributed in the Legislative Assembly of 1995 i.e. Age groups 41 to 45, 46 to 50, 51 to 54 and 55 to 60 had constituted 20 percent each. The remaining 20
percent was equally distributed between the age group of 25 to 35 and above the age of 60. On the whole, in all 8 Legislative Assemblies under study, the opposition MLAs belonging to the age group of 41 to 60 had dominated both the younger and older ones.

An attempt has been made to study the political experiences of about 15 senior opposition members who were known political leaders in the state politics of Manipur during the period from 1972 to 2002. The leaders are M. Koireng Singh, M. Meghachandra Singh, W. Nipamacha Singh, R. K. Ranbir Singh, Rishang Keishing, L. Chandramani Singh, O. Joy Singh, Y. Yaima Singh, Yangmaso Shaiza, Th. Chaoba Singh, R. K. Dorendro Singh, Radhabinod Kojiam, Th. Achouba Singh, Ph. Parijat Singh and I. Tompok Singh. Among these senior opposition leaders and members as many as seven were former Chief Ministers of Manipur. They were M. Koireng Singh; W. Nipamacha Singh; R. K. Ranbir Singh, Rishang Keishing; Yangmasho Shaiza; R. K. Dorendra and Radhabinod Kojiam. And two of the opposition members during the period, 1972 to 2002 namely I. Tompok Singh and L. Chandramani Singh were Deputy Chief Ministers. M. Koireng Singh, former Chief Minister of Manipur was in the opposition three times during the period of the study. The first was in 1972 when the government was formed by the MPP led coalition under the Chief Ministership of Md. Alimuddin. M. Koireng, Congress was the leader of the opposition. The second was in 1980 when the government was formed by Congress. M. Koireng was the opposition leader. He was elected from Moirang Assembly Constituency on Janata ticket. The third was in 1984 when M. Koireng was the opposition leader elected from Moirang Assembly Constituency elected on Janata ticket. M. Meghachandra Singh, CPI the known Communist Leader was in the opposition 2 times, the first in 1972 and the second in 1974. In both these
two times, M. Meghachandra Singh was elected from Uripok Assembly Constituency on CPI ticket. As an opposition member, M. Meghachandra Singh had played his role criticizing the policies and the programmes of the government from time to time. W. Nipamacha Singh was in the opposition 2 times, the first in 1974 Manipur Legislative Assembly, elected from Wangoi Assembly Constituency on Congress ticket. The second was in 1984 elected from the same Constituency but on Janata ticket. His role as an opposition member was more on issue based matters rather than ideological principles. He later became the Chief Minister of Manipur in 1997 and 2000. R. K. Ranbir Singh was elected three times from Keishamthong Assembly Constituency, the first in 1974, the second in 1990 and the third in 1995. The first elected from Keishamthong Assembly Constituency on Congress ticket in 1974 had resulted R. K. Ranbir Singh in the opposition as the government was formed by MPP led coalition led by Md. Alimuddin. The second, elected from the Keishamthong Assembly Constituency in the Assembly elections, 1990 on Manipur People’s Party ticket, R. K. Ranbir became the Chief Minister of Manipur. The third, elected from the same Constituency in 1995 on MPP ticket, R. K. Ranbir Singh was the opposition leader. As a leader of the opposition, R. K. Ranbir had pointed out the mistakes and loopholes in the policies and programmes of the government.

Rishang Keishing was the leader of the opposition in 1974 when the MPP led coalition was formed with Alimuddin as the Chief Minister. He was again in the opposition in 1990 when the third MPP led coalition government was formed with R. K. Ranbir Singh as Chief Minister. He was elected from Phungyar Assembly Constituency on Congress I ticket. R. K. Dorendra Singh who was elected from Yaiskul Assembly Constituency on BJP ticket. Rishang Keishing, for the third time was also
in the opposition in 2000 when the government was formed by Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) under the Chief Ministership of W. Nipamacha Singh. He was elected from the same Constituency namely Phungyar on Congress ticket. Rishang Keishing as a leader of the opposition in 1974 and as opposition member in 1990 and 2000 had contributed his mite in pointing out the defects, mistakes and loopholes in the policies, programmes and action taken by the government. L. Chandramani Singh was in the opposition only once i.e. in 1980. He had been elected from Patsoi Assembly Constituency on Janata ticket. L. Chandramani Singh had the experience of being in the opposition for the first time. His role in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1980 as opposition member was characterised by constructive thinking and approach. Okram Joy Singh representing Langthabal Assembly Constituency was the only member who remained in the opposition four times i.e. in 1980, 1984, 2000 and 2002. He was also the only opposition MLA who did not change his political party in all elections since 1984. In 1980 Assembly elections, he was elected on Janata ticket and in the following three Assembly elections i.e. 1984, 2000 and 2002 he got elected from Langthabal Assembly Constituency on MPP ticket. As an opposition member, O. Joy Singh had made great contribution in asking questions, in raising motions, cut motions pointing out the correct procedure to be followed in the House etc. he was popularly known as ‘Opposition O. Joy’ by the people of Manipur. Y. Yaima Singh was the opposition member only once i.e. in the Manipur Legislative Assembly of 1980. He was elected from Oinam Assembly Constituency on Janata ticket. Being in the opposition, Y. Yaima had utilized his knowledge and experience of being in the politics for long period of time. Yangmasho Shaiza elected from Ukhrul Assembly Constituency was in the opposition
only once i.e. in the Manipur Legislative Assembly of 1980. He was the chief minister of Manipur from 1977 to 1979 when the Janata government was formed in Manipur.

Likewise Th. Chaoba Singh elected from Nambol Assembly Constituency on Congress I ticket was in the opposition in 1990 when there was MPP led coalition ministry under the Chief Ministership of R. K. Ranbir Singh.

R. K. Dorendra Singh, former Chief Minister of Manipur was in the opposition three times i.e. in the Manipur Legislative Assembly of 1990 when there was MPP led coalition government with R. K. Ranbir Singh as Chief Minister. The second and the third was in 2000 and 2002 legislative Assembly when there were MSCP led coalition governments under the Chief Ministership of W. Nipamacha Singh. He was the leader of the opposition in all these three assemblies. He was elected from Yaishkul Assembly Constituency on Congress I ticket in 1990 and on BJP ticket in 2000 and 2002.

Radhabindor Koijam elected from Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency in 2000 Assembly elections on Congress ticket was in the opposition for the first time. He was the leader of the opposition in 2007-12 Manipur Legislative Assembly. He had contributed in the debates and discussions in the Assembly by utilizing his legal knowledge and practices. Th. Achouba Singh elected from Khangabok Assembly Constituency on CPI ticket was in the opposition three times. The first was in 1972 when the government was formed by MPP with other likeminded parties. The second was also when MPP led coalition ministry was formed in 1974 under the chief ministership of Md. Alimuddin. The third was in 1980 when the government was Congress led coalition. Th. Achouba Singh in all these three being in the opposition had played his
role emphasizing the political ideology and principles of his party i.e. communist party of India. Ph. Parijat elected from Lamlai Assembly Constituency in 1972, 1874 and 1980 was in the opposition. As an opposition member, he was free and opens when criticizing the policies and programmes of the government. He was elected on CPI ticket in all Assembly elections. I. Tompok Singh was in the opposition only once i.e. 1990. He was elected from Singjamei Assembly Constituency on Congress I ticket. As an opposition member, he was very outspoken and free in pointing out the lapses and loopholes in the policies and actions of the government.

In conclusion, it may be stated that of all the popular and known opposition leaders and members, only O. Joy Singh had been in the opposition four times. There were five senior opposition members namely M. Koireng Singh, Rishang Keishing, R. K. Dorendra Singh, Th. Achouba Singh and Ph. Parijat Singh who had played important role in the proceedings of the Assembly as well as.