PREFACE

The successful working of the democratic government largely depends upon the effective role played by the Opposition. The Opposition has to play a very important role in a democratic form of government. Its importance has increased tremendously with the introduction of democratic form of government in developed and developing countries. In other forms of government, the Opposition party has to play a very little role or no role in the administration of the State because the ruler or the rulers who exercised political power and political authority are supreme in all matters relating to the working of the political system. The origin and emergence of Opposition can be traced from the ancient Greece and Rome. In Latin word ‘Opposition’ means to oppose.

Mention may be made that the Opposition in Britain is highly organized as the government itself. The modern concept of Opposition in a democratic form of government had its origin in the British Parliament. As early as 1826, the Opposition in Britain was to all intents and purposes a branch of His Majesty’s Government. The term “His Majesty’s Opposition” was coined during a debate in the House of Commons in 1826. Later the Opposition was officially recognized. The leader of the Opposition was given a room in the parliament. Since long back the Opposition party acts as ‘Watch Dog’ in the governance that they are always alert to criticize the government in the good sense or with appositive thinking for the development of entire people of the state. When the Opposition fails to defeat the government, it does not fallow that it cannot influence the policies of the government. Of course, the government can carry its policies if it is determined to do so. But the
policies and its implementation may be affected by the impact of the Opposition. In the normal democratic procedure, the government and the Opposition follow the democratic principle of give and take. On the other hand, in United States, though having a democratic form of government, there is no official Opposition. The same may be said of France as they have a quasi-parliamentary form of government.

The Opposition seeks to expose the errors, the omissions and the commissions while asking questions and rising debates on adjournment motions in the legislature. Through general debates on the budget and through motions of censure on other occasions, the Opposition subjects the policies and actions of the government to constant and often vehement criticism.

The Opposition had a precedent evolved over a less than two centuries in Britain. When provincial autonomy was experimented in India, provision was also made for the functioning of the Opposition. The Opposition of the post Independence period also seemed to be labouring under certain predilections. It seemed as though they had not got over the habit of identifying the government with an alien power capable of sympathising with aspirations of the people who they were governing and not concerned with their progress in the democratic development. This was evident in the states especially after the Congress debate. At the centre however, the Congress enjoyed an unchallenged hegemony so much so the Opposition was comparatively weak and ineffective. In the state legislatures, the Opposition to an alien government seemed to have given place to the Opposition to a dominant centre, scarcely capable of sympathizing with the problems of the states.
The present work is an attempt to understand role of the Opposition Party in Manipur politics specifically from 1972 to 2002. It was from the late 1930s that there was demand for the introduction of democratic form of government in Manipur. Manipur as a Princely State had attained its political freedom with the lapse of British paramountcy by 15 August 1947 and then democratic form of government as also started following the first general election 1948 under Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. Since then, role and responsibility of the Opposition Party in Manipur has been considerably important by seeing their modus operandi in and outside the Manipur Legislative Assembly where they criticized governance as well as moved various amendments for the welfare of the society.

For a systematic analysis the present work is divided in to six Chapters. The first Chapter introduces with a statement of the problem that shows the essence of the study. Besides, the Chapter itself made a deep analysis of theoretical background, concept and meaning, and classification of the Opposition Party. State of Opposition party is also a part of this Chapter where it attempts to study contemporary phenomena of Opposition party in Indian context. Significantly, this Chapter also deals with review of literature on the role of the Opposition party.

Chapter two focuses on the early phase of Opposition Party in Manipur, 1948-1969. Different stages and movements of Opposition parties are reflected in this analysis. The emergence and the role of Opposition party in the premerger period is discussed in the first part of this Chapter. It is followed by the post merger period where the different movements of Opposition Parties in the Manipur Legislative Assembly are discussed. Last part of this Chapter deals with the movement of
Opposition Party during Territorial Council. It is known to all that, in this period, opposition parties had great role for the achieving of full-fledged state hood to Manipur by 1972.

The main focus of Chapter three is the role of Opposition Party in the Manipur Legislative Assembly during 1972 to 2002. It is indeed main part of this study as the present analysis is an effort to examine role of Opposition Parties in Manipur. The main components of this Chapter is again divided in to two as statistical accounts of Opposition Parties in the Assembly and Opposition Parties on different issues where they argued in the Assembly sessions. Moreover, the first part of this statistical account is concentrated to the positions of Opposition Parties in the House. Later, the second part is fully confined in their roles in the Assembly sessions by putting different issues that signifies the role of Opposition Parties in the House.

The subject matter of the fourth Chapter is Socio Economic Status of the Opposition MLAs. 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. In this context this Chapter attempts to analyse socio-political and economic background of the Opposition MLAs. The Opposition MLAs are equally important to discharge their responsibilities for the success of the democratic government. For a systematic analysis it is attempt to concentrate on leading MLAs of Opposition Parties in different periods of Assembly. It is concluded with a comparative study on the basis of socio-political and economic background of Opposition MLAs.
The fifth Chapter is an attempt to examine the Opposition Parties in Electoral Politics from 1972 to 2002. Elections are very important for both the ruling and opposition parties. It is the elections, which provides a political party or parties to capture power by securing majority by a political party or by forming coalition among the likeminded parties. It is usually finds both the ruling and the opposition parties to be very active on the eve of elections. The ruling parties try to impress the voters by highlighting the achievements during the period of its rule. The opposition, on the other hand, may be said to be more active than the ruling parties on the eve of General elections. As done in the previous Chapter this Chapter has also studied in phase wise manner the different Assembly Elections from 1972 to 2002. Apart from this, it is also concluded with a logical observation.

Finally the conclusion is a systematic summarization of the findings of the previous Chapters and reflected on the last Chapter six. Real democracy can function only when there is strong, vigilant and vigorous opposition. It is the responsibility of the opposition to inform the nation in time the defects and dangers in official plans and policies of the government and to mobilise public opinion to get them suitably modified.