

Revival of Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan: A Comparative Study, 1991-2013

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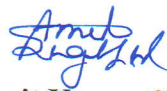
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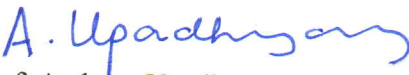
DECLARATION


I declare that the thesis entitled “Revival of Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan: A Comparative Study, 1991-2013”, submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.


Amit Kumar Singh

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis placed before the examiners for evaluation


Prof. Archana Upadhyay
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Prof. Ajay Kumar Patnaik
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Dedicated to My Parents

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List of Abbreviations

BTC	Baku-Tabilisi-Ceyhan
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CRA	Committee on Religious Affairs
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
DDK	Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan
Erk	Erkin Kyrgyzstan
GUUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova.
HuT	Hizb ut-Tahrir
ICG	International Crisis Group
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IRP	Islamic Renaissance Party
IRPT	Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan
ISIL	Islamic states of Iraq and Levant
MB	Ministry of Security
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSS	National Security Services
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SCRA	State Commission on Religious Affairs
US	United States (of America)
UTO	United Tajik Opposition

Chapter 1

Introduction

Islam reached in Central Asia in seventh century, after the demise of Prophet Mohammed *Salli Allah Alaihe Wasallam*. By 8th Century, Islam was established as a leading religion throughout most of the region. The Battle of Talas in 751 AD between the Chinese Tang dynasty and Abbasid Caliphates initiated mass conversion in the region. Till 10th Century, most of the Turkic Khanates were converted to Islam. During the reign of the Abbasid Caliphate in eighth and ninth century Central Asia witnessed its golden period. Islamization of the region blended Islam into indigenous culture, created new forms of Islamic practices among nomads and some parts of the region arise as a great center of Islam. Until 13th Century, the Bukhara, Urgench and Samarkand flourished as prominent centers of art, culture and learning in the region. With the Mongol invasion, the process of Islamization invigorated till half century. Turko-Mongolian tribes introduced nomadic culture and lifestyle in local Islamic traditions. During the comparatively peaceful era of Islamic dominance, arts and culture flourished in Central Asia. Jizya was imposed upon all who rejected Islam.

Throughout the seventy years of Bolshevik rule, the Islamic shrines that had earlier flourished in Central Asia were suppressed, closed or altered into workshops (Haghayeghi 1996). Religious Islamic priests were executed and persecuted. State started controlling the religious Islamic literature and only a state- controlled "official" Islam was acceptable to exist legally, however a secret alternative or "parallel" Islam was still continued (Ro'i 2000).

Though, the Soviet Union was trying hard to abolish Islamic way of life and traditions. But it could not eradicate the Islamic identity of the indigenous people of the region. Martha Brill Olcott points out, "The consciousness of having an Islamic heritage was one of the elements which for the Central Asians continued to express their identities - even if a specific individual knew practically nothing about religion and perceived none of its tenets" (Olcott 1995). So, this deep Islamic character is like a container whose content is yet to be filled. Pakistani observer Ahmed Rashid has asserted that "Central Asia is practically certain to become the new global battlefield"

(Rashid 2002). The Central Asian Government acknowledges that Islamist's radical actions pose a grave risk to their systems and have taken measures to make a new "official" Islam that is responsive to political pressure and to overpower uninhibited radicalism.

During the 70 years of Bolshevik regime, Muslims of Central Asia were fully aloof from the International Muslim community. This was the time of transition when they realized multifaceted socio-cultural changes which made the history of Central Asian Muslims different and exceptional from the rest of the Muslim community. During the Soviet time religion was discouraged and its organizations are almost destroyed. World War II made such circumstances in which a state-controlled Islamic religious system was re-established and some religious practices were started with state permission and under state supervision. In entire Central Asia only two official Islamic institutions appeared at that time, which were one Madarsa in Bukhara and one Madarsa in Tashkent. 1980s established Islam as an ethnic identity and culture rather an active spiritual stream in Central Asia. 1980s is the time of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* which invigorated the Islamic revival due to comparatively lenient Soviet bureaucratic strictness over Islam.

Need to manage so called Islamic threat and crucial need to improve economic performance were two prominent reasons which made Government to adopt an appeasing attitude towards religious establishments. The perception about Muslims of being possible threat was actually advocated by Western scholars, who stressed that the increasing growth rate of the Muslim population would put the stability of the Soviet Union at risk and might be the reason of its dissolution. The clear message was that Central Asians should adopt their own form of Islam and did not need to follow others. As a part of this strategy, Islam is being taken positively and more importance is given to its ethics and culture. To highlight the changed agenda of Government, many mosques were opened; growth was visible in the availability of religious literature, constructions of Islamic institutions and new centers for the education of the Quran was opened throughout the region. Special Government support provided to the elite Islamic community.

By the independence it was common opinion that Islam is going to play a crucial and constructive role in Nation building, however the so called role was not

confirmed. There was also a limited opinion about the way Islam would meet the needs and challenges of contemporary times. In fact, for the majority of the population, Islam was still a tradition and cultures rather a tool of social change. With the independence of Central Asian states Islam was hoped to be solution of major problems of the newly born states. The Civil War was the symbol of the struggle between the Islamic and Non-Islamic powers, i.e. Muslims and 'neo-communists'. Actually the Civil war was depicted as a religious war.

Today Islam in the region can be put into three main groups; as radical Islam, traditional Islam, and government-sponsored Islam. Traditional Islam is the passive attitude to religion of the majority of Central Asian Muslims. 'Government-sponsored' Islam is a continuance of the effort to co-opt religion to attend the needs of the state that manifest official policies about Islam in 1980s. The constitutions of all Central Asian republics advocate the segregation between state and religion. Yet, in the region, Islam has taken place of a state ideology. This happened due to the ideological vacuum left by the Marxism–Leninism. After independence, new legal control on religion and on religious relations has been imposed in the Central Asian states. The prime concern of the Government is to promote 'good' Islam, which is advantageous to the state and to evict 'bad' Islam of having potential to be a threat to the stability of the republic. The third tendency of Islam in Central Asia is radicalism, which is developed with course of time with the connection with Wahhabism, which has deep roots in Saudi Arabia and spreading fanaticism and terrorism throughout the World.

It has often been said that the Islamic revival in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, is promoted by Muslims of other Islamic countries. It is true that the financial assistance for the building of mosques and madrasas, for the renovation of Islamic shrines has come from overseas both from government funds and private sources as well. Students from these two republics have gone in search of higher Islamic studies to Turkey, Pakistan and Egypt in quite large numbers. It is also mentioned that the pilgrimage expenses to Mecca (for Haj) of thousands of Central Asians have sponsored by other Islamic states and especially by the Saudi rulers. To strengthen their Islamic bonds the Central Asian states organized under one organization of Islamic conferences (IOC) this is an effort to make institutional links with the remaining Muslim Worlds.

The source of other significant foreign influences is Islamic missionaries. The collapse of the Soviet Union bestowed them major opportunity to spread their religion into the Central Asia and they opened shrines and schools in many parts of the Muslim regions. Foreign religious leaders attracted two different reactions of indigenous Muslims. At first they were given freedom to propagate their religious ideologies and norms, but after some time the mood in the region began to change. Traditionalists accused them of being advanced, however; the state authorities became concerned that the Islamic missionaries were promoting nothing else but independent Islamic thoughts. Eventually the first republic to impose restrictions on Muslim missionaries from abroad was Uzbekistan.

Sufism also played a very significant role in revival of Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In fact, many nomadic tribes were attracted towards Islam due to Sufi cultures and norms of Music or *Sama*. Although many Sufi rituals like *Sama*, *Zikr* and *Qawwali* is often considered unconventional by Islamists outside Central Asia, but interestingly, these spiritual practices proved appealing to tribes and became adhesive for them. Sufism attracted nomadic tribes in large numbers towards Islamic religion and culture. Independence in 1991 provided unique ground to flourish Islam in Central Asia. The very nature of Central Asian Islamic growth was not similar to other Islamic countries. To give their own direction of growth and development of Islamic community some majority-Muslim states like Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran, started funding the projects in the region. Saudi Arabia's prime interest in the region was to promote its own ideology of Wahhabism for which Saudi Arabia provided assistance by subsidizing pilgrims on the Hajj, building religious institutions and shrines, distributing copies of the Islamic literature, and subsidizing Islamic education throughout the region.

This Thesis attempts to describe the comparative elements and differences of revival of Islam as a cultural and religious phenomenon in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan after independence of Central Asia. It also examines the nature of the Islamic revival since independence and comparatively assesses the factors imposing the influence on the process of Islamic revival in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The Islamic revival is not uniform across Central Asia or even across regions within a republic. Islamic attitude in each of the republic has developed in different ways according to the measures of state efforts to control Islam. Each republic's different approach to religion has flaws

in its ability to stand against the extremist ideologies and elements in endeavors to keep up with Islamization process.

"Religion is opium for people" was the Bolshevik slogan in Soviet period. In reality, Islam was one of the basic ideological enemies against the communist ideas among the Islamic community of Central Asia. Therefore, the Bolsheviks adopted the principle of 'the rule of terror' by 1920s-30s and launched suppression against Islam. As a result of this suppression many Islamic leaders, many Sufi *Qamil Murshids*, masters and followers were killed, number of mosques were demolished; Muslim *Madarasas* and *Maqtabas* etc. were destroyed. The objectives of Soviet leaders were to replace the Islamic ideology with the Communist ideology in the Islamic community of Central Asia.

However, the Bolsheviks failed to completely eradicate Islam from consciousness of people, and however paradoxical it may be, it continued to exist in parallel with the socialist values. For example, in Uzbekistan, despite the fierce persecution by the Soviet authorities, Islam existed in traditional life of the people (excepting the political elite and local Communist Party members) continued to observe Islamic traditions, which were displayed during the funeral ceremonies, wedding rituals, as well as in the persisting existence of Muslim relics and sacred places, etc. Besides, it is necessary to recognize a very important fact i.e. that during the epoch of aggressive (militant) atheism the Muslim population of Central Asia thought themselves as adherents of Islam and did not reject it nor forget it.

Gorbachev's Glasnost and Perestroika along with the steps for the democratization of the society changed the authoritative approach towards Islam and provided necessary boost to the religious consciousness of the nation. Pulsipher points out "Until the 1970s, Islam in the Soviet Union had been largely depoliticized. After the fall of Communism, Islam revived. Muslims practiced openly and Islamic movements became politically important" (Pulsipher 2009). According to Cummings "The Islamic Revolution in Iran and the 1978 civil war in Afghanistan that resulted of the mujahidin's counter offensive against the Marxist regime reinforced Soviet fears that Islam might be an ideological, socio-economic, and political competitor" (Cummings 2003). Today's concerns of the political regime about the threat of radical Islam might be used as a platform to voice the social defamation of the Islamic

community. This fear has led the common opinion against Islamic movements, and has often been used as a weapon to suppress 'opponent's voice' more easily. Cumming asserts "By the mid-1990s, Chechnya and Tajikistan had a significant danger of Islam playing a political role in the government, whereas it was in opposition to the Uzbekistani government" (Cummings 2003).

In spite of the majority of Muslims in this region, they were unable to unite due to controversies about radicalism which often associated with Islam. By 2001 Tajikistan has become secular state. Cummings further points, "Dominantly popular in Central Asia, despite its Middle Eastern roots, is Hizb Ut-Tahrir. This is because of the Hizb's alluring call for peace through nonviolence, organization, and criticisms of the region's governments who were unable to deliver socioeconomic stability and welfare. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan on the other hand called for violence. As agreed by scholars, neither group has respect for Islam, culture, or fear of the current regime. Despite the presence of these groups, many Muslims tried to be active in politics and prevent radicalism based on religious claims"(Cummings 2003).

During the time of Communist rule, Islam and other religions were suppressed due to the official Soviet ideology of atheism and its view that their practices and beliefs are obstacles to revolutionary change (Pulsipher & Pulsipher, 2009). Prior to this suppression, The December 4, 1917 declaration jointly signed by Lenin and Stalin said, "To the Muslims in Russia, be they Tartars of Volga, the inhabitants of Cremea, of Siberia or Turkistan, the Turks of Kaukaz, the Charks, the dwellers of Kaukaz mountains, to all those whose mosques and worship places and whose faith and traditions were trampled upon by the Tsars of Russia or the other tyrants; be assured that your traditions and faith and your national and cultural institutions shall be free from this day and nobody will object to these in future. You are free to organize your national life without any interference and obstacles from outside" (Devlet 1986). The fact that the government took back its promise highlights that the Soviet Union soon realized that Islam is an obstacle to socialist modernization. Anti-Islamic, atheistic propaganda and measures were taken by the state, and lasted more than 70 years. This made "The observance and expansion of Islam impossible and the number of believers, or more correctly, of practicing Muslims has decreased" (Devlet 1986).

Government strong commitment of secularism proves obstacle for Islamic movement. First, Islam is a way of spiritual actualization before social and cultural norms. The government secular policies are intensified with the realization of potential threat posed by Wahhabi elements in Islam, Perhaps foreign forces have sceptical attitude toward Islam due to the same reason. As Devlet puts “The Muslim population of the Soviet Union in 1980 was between 45 and 50 million, making it the sixth largest in the world after Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Turkey. It has, therefore, a national and cultural significance beyond the purely religious one” (Devlet 1986). According to Kalaam “A total of 80 million are now present in the former Soviet Union regions” (Kalaam 1991).

Abdukadir Sezgin, a Turkish Sunni cleric wrote a book distinguishing Sunniism and Shiism in Azerbaijan which was able to establish clearer differences of the two sects and unfortunately reinforce separation between the populations. He asserts “The government repeatedly attempted to control religious life, but failed to do so. Mass protests for social improvement in the early 2000s by Shias gave the sect political support, leading to successful presidential elections. However, since 2006, this movement has been taken over by the government’s propaganda. Religious schools, literature, and any other Islamic resources, either Sunni or Shia, have been shut down” (Goyushov 2008).

Soon after disintegration of the USSR, in the 1990s, in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia these processes, alongside the revival of national, cultural and historical values and traditions, prompted the resuscitation of Islam and its trends, i.e. the revival of Islam in the context of political processes. If for Western scientists studying Islam today's situation becomes very significant due to the geopolitical processes in the modern world, associated with religious fundamentalism and extremism, for Central Asian researchers, especially in Uzbekistan, the problem of Islam has been and remains an important sphere of scholarly study since during many centuries it represented a part of socio-cultural development of the region and today it occupies a specific place in the socio- religious life of this region.

It should be noted that after conquest of Central Asia by Tsarist Russia intensive study of region, including religion and ethnography of local peoples, had begun. Russian scholars, such as R. Pozdnev, N. Pantusov, E. Smirnov and others,

greatly contributed to the studies on Islamic and Sufi rituals. On the whole, by the first quarter of the 20 century, i.e. up to the beginning of the anti-religious Bolshevik campaign, many articles had been published, in which the Russian and later the Soviet researchers showed a certain interest to the Islamic theory and practice, and discussed the problem of Islamic rituals in the general context. Those research works contain very important data for the specialists dealing with the modern Islamic traditions, in spite of the fact that those writings render scanty information or are written by authors who lacked proper scientific qualifications, since their authors were direct witnesses or participants of rituals of that period.

During the Soviet period by virtue of the limited studying in the sphere of religion and religious rituals, some historians and ethnographers explored the religious rituals within the borders of ideological directives. Moreover, many Soviet authors searched for the "pre-Islamic relics" in Central Asian religion. As the Russian ethnologist S. Abashin truly emphasized, the 1980s and 1990s saw a serious turn in studying the Islamic traditions in Central Asia. (Abashin 2001).

Sufism as a mystical sect of Islam attracted many Scholars as an essential phenomenon to understand Islam comprehensively. It is not possible to segregate Islamic revival from Sufi revival. Both are progressing simultaneously. In 1983, a special issue of the Central Asian Survey, one of the authoritative scientific editions in the West, was devoted to Sufism. In that Special issue the following articles are worthy of attention: "Sufi Brotherhoods in the USSR: A historical Survey" (by Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejey), "Sufism in the USSR; A Bibliography of Soviet Sources" (by Alexandre Bennigsen). In these articles, the authors underlined the necessity to study the political-ideological aspect of the problem, and Sufism is discussed by them as the major ideological opponent of the Communist ideology. Of course, the atmosphere of the Cold War exerted a direct influence on the content and character of that Special issue.

The edition, translated from English, of J. Spencer Trimingham's book "The Sufi Orders in Islam" (written in 1971) evoked in the post-Soviet space great interest towards Islam, Sufism and its *tariqas*. In this book, the author discusses in general the relationship between the teacher (*shaykh*) and the disciple (*murid*), the process of initiation into the Sufi brotherhood, and dealt at length with the *Kubraviya tariqa*. In

the 1990s, the Uzbekistani authors published a number of research works devoted to the history of the Islam.

During the period of 1999 to 2001, the four-volume reference dictionary "Islam in the territory of the former Russian empire" was published. This work includes new material about the historical destiny of the Islam and cults and describes the rituals associated with them. It should be stated that in recent monographs devoted to Islam many scholars paid some attention to Sufi *Silsilas*. The Uzbekistani scholar B. Babadzhanov is one of the recognized and productive researchers of Islam in contemporary (modern) Central Asia. His research works are very important for understanding some aspects of the Islam. In his research this author has not limited himself to studying only historical aspects of Islam, but he also scrupulously examines the philosophical legacy, the problems of the revival of the Islam in modern Central Asia, the problems of mutual relations between the Islamic groups and the state authorities, etc. However, B. Babadzhanov in his articles devoted to studying Sufism, as an inevitable part of Islam in modern Central Asia, analyzed the religious situation in this region from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s, which is associated with the revival of Islamic values.

In regard of these processes, he used the term "re-Islamization". In our opinion, it is not an absolutely adequate definition of the historical processes because during the Soviet period the overwhelming majority of the indigenous population in Central Asia thought themselves as adherents of Islam and continued to observe Muslim traditions. Islam existed in the consciousness of people, and the indigenous population of Central Asia identified themselves as part of the Islamic society in spite of the fact that the policy of atheism had introduced essential changes to the traditional life of the Muslim community in the region. Therefore, in regard to this period of history of the Central Asia it would be more correct to speak of the revival of religious Islamic values, and of rehabilitation of cultural and national traditions. Among the Russian scholars, ethnologist Sergey Abashin showed big interest for Islam. Notwithstanding merits and the value of his researches, however, it is necessary to note that his research works on Islam are written on the basis of the field materials collected at the end of 1980s - the beginning of the 1990s, when the revival of the Sufi traditions in Central Asia was at the beginning. As the analysis of some articles by S. Abashin has shown, his judgments about the Islamic practices in modern

Central Asia are formed on the basis of the works of B. Babadzhanov and A. Hissmatullin. In fact in the last fifteen years, there had been essential changes in religious life, and in the revival of values of Islam and its practice in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan, and without personal observation of these changes, it would be difficult to give them an original estimation.

Western experts also had carried out a number of research studies on Islam and Sufism, some of them highlighted the practices of the *tariqas* (Sufi Orders). One of the well-known researchers of Islam and Sufism (*tasawwuf*), Devin DeWeese has made a major contribution to the study of the social aspects of Sufi *tariqas*. His work scrupulously considers the social significance of *zikrs*, particularly *jahri zikr* and their role in the spiritual life of the Sufi adherents. A. Knish's work Islamic mysticism is undoubtedly a very important book for specialists studying history of Islam. The book comprises very interesting and valuable arguments about the spread in Central Asia of such Sufi orders as the Naqshbandiya, Yasaviyah, Qadiriya and others. Of great interest is the interpretation of Sufi traditions in this region, associated with the Mystic Islam, and we can define as very original also the author's judgments about the approaches of some Russian, Soviet and foreign scholars to the analysis of the problem of the Islamic activity. A. Knysh criticizes them for their bias, in his opinion, and for a prejudiced estimation of its role in political and social processes, allegedly in order to achieve particular mercantile purposes. (Knysh 2004) Of course, we cannot claim that all the published works on Islam and Sufism objectively display its role and significance in political and social life of modern Central Asia.

In the 1990s, some articles were published claiming that the local population strictly obeyed the Islamic traditions, and on the whole Islam plays a decisive role in the life of the citizens. The authors, being far from understanding the real essence of some problems, unreasonably stated that in Uzbekistan the Sufi *shaykh* had a very high position in secular society and participated in appointing the heads of the state in the allocation of housing places, as well as they were ascribed the credit for supervising the trade (Walamenko 1996).

Our brief review has shown that on the whole many research works on Islam and Sufism had the following main objects: history of Islam, Sufism and the Sufi *tariqas*, the problems of mutual relations of the spiritual teacher (*murshid*) and the

disciple (*murid*) and others; As we stated above, we could find out not many research works about the Islamic revival, Sufi revival and its ethnographic components which were formed on the basis of personal observations by experts and researchers. Therefore, a step further in the study of the Islamic rituals, can be the direct analysis of Sufism as a symbol and a sign of the revival of the Islamic traditions in modern Central Asia.

Western scientists studying Islam and Sufism in today's situation becomes very significant due to the geopolitical processes in the modern world, associated with religious fundamentalism and extremism, for Central Asian researchers, especially in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the problem of Islam has been and remains an important sphere of scholarly study since during many centuries it represented a part of historical, cultural and social development of the region and today it occupies a specific place in the social and religious life of this region. This thesis evaluates the different aspects of religion in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and analyses the government's efforts to control religion - particularly the "Islamist threat." Such efforts, however, appear to be worsening the very radical threat that they seek to contain.

The major factors to shape the Islamic revival in Central Asia are: (i) Hanafi teachings, Sufi tariqas and folk practices; (ii) foreign influences; (iii) Shi'ism; (iv) Islamist movements. To highlight the Sufism role in Central Asia Bennigsen points that "A second important strand of the prevailing Islam in Central Asia is Sufism" (Bennigsen and Wimbush 1985). The orthodox Sunni culture of Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent cannot be understood without its Sufi dimension" (Roy 2000).

With the reforms of Gorbachev in 1989 Islam got revived rapidly. Mosques, shrines, Islamic students, foreign funds from Arab Countries, Haj pilgrimage increased rapidly. Islam is considered as a major basis of culture and tradition of Central Asian states rather of political identity. Islam has been a shelter of those not satisfied by the state. The concerns about Islam rose after the occupation of Kabul by Taliban. The main reason of rising militancy in Central Asian countries are lack of resources, poverty, illiteracy, un-employment, etc. Islam provides people a promise to safeguard their rights and an ideological base for struggle against Marxism in 20th Century. Islam gives the platform to resist. It legitimizes the dissatisfaction of the

people and gives direction to it towards a good future. Communism and Socialism have been discredited by 70 years of Soviet rule. Liberalism and Democracy are condemned by Islamists who perceive that many ills like drug trafficking, prostitutions, pornography, materialism, market culture, cultural degradation etc. are due to modernization associated with liberal democracy.

My objectives of the research are to explore how revival of Sufism is related with Islamic revival in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan? Does Islam exist as an identity of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan? What is the current Status of Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan as a political and cultural Identity? Is revival of Islam a potent threat to social stability in Central Asia? What is the role of external powers in spreading fundamentalism in the region? Is Islam a contending force in Central Asia's political future? To what extent official control over Islam prevents radicalization? And how the revivalism of Islam differs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan?

For this research I developed three hypotheses. My first hypothesis is 'The revival of Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan has been based on Sufi or "Traditional Islamic" traditions, while radical form of Islam or Wahhabism is more due to external influences'. The second hypothesis states 'Revivalism in authoritarian Tajikistan is taking radical form due to its historical legacy of being center of Islamic orthodoxy and proximity to Afghanistan as compared to Kyrgyzstan which has a nomadic legacy and a liberal- democratic political system at present' and third hypothesis states 'Rather than improving socio-economic conditions, states use repressive measures, which put pressure on moderate version of revivalism and increase the appeal of radical Islam.

Comparative Study of Islam, of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as a religion and cultural Identity would provide the better insight to understand the nature of the conflict between State and Religion. Both the Central Asian States are multicultural/ multi-ethnic. The issue of Islam is a common factor in both the states. In both cases Islamic factor and transnational linkages are important variable in spurring separatist or secessionist tendencies. The question of Islamic identity is prominent for all the states of Central Asia. The findings of this study hopefully will be helpful in understanding conflicts in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The study will comprehend the role of religion in economic development, cultural structure, and role of regional in politics. I used mainly descriptive and historical analytical method. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data includes reports of respective ministries of the countries, press releases; joint statements published by the governments of the countries. The data has been collected through personal interviews. Semi structured interviews have been taken with area experts, residents (based on feasibility), govt. officials, religious leaders and political leaders of the region. Stratified random sampling has been used for selection of the sample. Inferential and descriptive statistics will be used for data analysis. The secondary data comprised books, articles published in edited volumes, journals and newspaper. Internet sources are also being used.

The Introduction contains context and rationale of the study, the research questions, and structure of the thesis. The hypothesis, research methodology and other research questions are described in it. The chapter highlights the overall objective of the thesis in terms of its validity and requirement. The first chapter, Islam in Central Asia: Historical Background throws lights on the historical legacy of Islam which has a rich cultural and historical heritage in not only Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan but in throughout the Central Asia. The Persian, Mongolian, Turkey and Nomadic traditional and cultural fusion shaped a different version of Islam in Central Asia. Islam played significant role in providing the socio-cultural identity to the people of region. This chapter highlights the historical aspect of Islam and its significance as a political, religious and cultural identity in Central Asian region.

The second chapter 'Causes of Revivalism of Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan' analyzes the factors of Islamic revivalism in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan when it was one of the basic ideological opponents of the Communism and the religion was repressed by the Bolshevik slogan claiming "Religion is opium for people". The ruling class is trying to suppress the traditional Islam by providing 'official version' of Islam due to the fear of radicalization of the region. The agenda of establishment of Islamic state in the region is the major concern of ruling regime. The US proposed 'war on terrorism' after 9/11 provided ground to the republics to legitimize their means of Islamic repressions. In reaction the process of Islamization revived rapidly and provided alternatives of inefficient rule in the both the republics. The chapter analyzes the causes of revival of Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The third chapter 'Revival of Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan: A Comparative Study' analyzes the factors which accelerate Islamic revivalism of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as an outcome of various contemporary movements. The chapter also focuses on how state is responding to shifting pattern of the Islam in order to resolve the conflict created by it. Basically mutual relation of religion and state are discussed. Chapter also highlights the concept of secularism as a tool of state to suppress the traditional Islamic religion and its basic ideology.

The fourth chapter 'External influence in Radical Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan' basically looks at the external Influences into the both Central Asian Region, which are influencing the revival of Islam negatively or positively and also analyze the external influence on the socio-political and cultural aspects of the region. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan respond differently against external influences. The comparative analyses of the results of external impacts on both the republics are very significant. Chapter five is concluding the entire discussion and hypothesis testing summarizes the findings of the study.

Chapter 2

Islam in Central Asia: Historical Background

State and Islam before the Soviets

After independence of Central Asian republics, the authority again transferred in the hand of earlier Soviet elites. The leaders have used the Tajik civil war as an opportunity to suppress the opposing voices of the political regimes. Uzbek President Islam Karimov exemplified this trend and compressed down all kinds of oppositions. He kept all his attention on Muslims "...who exercises their religion away from the tight limitations enforced by the government...". Khezri opined "Since the Uzbek regime has failed to answer decisively the Islamists logically or politically, the regime has used mass arrests and torture in order to silent its opponents. All the Central Asian regimes have regressed to the policies that the Soviet Union embraced in dealing with Islam. Each regime has supported a specific version of Islam, which the state supports of and is non-threatening to the existing state of affairs." (Khezri 1998)

Newly independent, emerging and weaker Central Asian states are trying to cope up with its Socio-religious, political and economic challenges. These states are having developing infrastructure and organizing institutions. AKS Lambton states "The elite classes have not been able to upraise the national and socio-political consciousness to unify the state- nation, that's why they have worked on a top-down policy of state-building. Therefore, there was strong competition in states like Uzbekistan among the secular elites and the Islamist opposition since the 1990s over the nature of the new state's identity, and future course" (Lambton 1970).

Soviet Central Asia was composed of the 5 Union Republics of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. According to Bosworth Zoroastrianism flourished and spread from this land, particularly from the region between the rivers Syr and Amu, and spread westward to Iran and parts of the Caucasus (Bosworth 1999). While Zurcher asserts "Buddhism was introduced into China by the people inhabiting this land" (Zurcher 2007). The major portion of the population of the region are peasants and invented most efficient irrigation system by

10th century which resulted in surplus production and emergence of trading class. The trade network of Central Asia was superior then that of anywhere in the contemporary world.

The Central Asian people have revealed their ability in their interaction with the Greco-Persians from the west and Turkish nomads from the north and later with the Arab-Iranian armies in the seventh century A.D. The first Muslim intrusion in the region was to spoil rather than crusading for religion. Muslim unified the state and later established politico-religious institution in the region. The merger of Central Asian people with Islam resulted in the development of a unique language which comprises both Iranian and Turkic accent together, the language was 'Dari; This also made Islam popular and nurtured the growth and development of local nationalism.

Later Baghdad emerged as a center of political unification under the leadership of the Iranian Abu Sufian who established the Abbasid dynasty in 750 A.D. after Umayyads. The Tahirids, was followed by the Saffavids and then the Samanids. The Samanids gave birth to an educational and economic development which lasts till the hegemony of the Soviets in the 20th century. Bukhara was the capital of Samanids which rivaled Abbasid capital of Baghdad. Bukhara was the epicenter of contemporary intellectual revolutions and innovations. Greatest Scholars like al-Khawarazmi , Ibn Sina, al- Biruni and and Rudaki were patronized by the courts of the Samanid emperors. Nakosteen says that "There were very few illiterates in the general population" (Nakosteen 1963:38-53).

According to Peter Roudik, by the 19th Century, the area was overwhelmed by the newly Islamized nomadic Qarakhanid Turks. The nomads destroyed the irrigation network and thus signaled the death of the oasis culture in the land between the rivers. This destruction, plus internecine wars and, in later years, the replacement of traditional land based trade routes to China by sea routes, due primarily to lack of safety, destruction of Caravan- sarais, drinking wells and rabats, brought about the eventual deterioration of economic and formal educational institutions, a deterioration which reached its lowest ebb during the nineteenth century. Moreover, an increase in the activities of the ascetic Sufis who frowned upon saving, consumption and science as not being legitimate paths to the Truth aided in the deterioration of the area (Roudik 2007). 19th century witnessed unification of many small Shaybani Uzbeks

ruled principalities of Central Asia into three states: Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand. With the Tsarist subjugation of the area the struggle of supremacy among small principalities ended. (Shorish 1972: 29)

Strategic Geography of Central Asia

According to Elisseeff “Central Asia is a core region of the Asia from Russia in the North, the Caspian Sea in the West, Afghanistan in the south, China in the East and It is also sometimes mentioned as Middle Asia and, colloquially, *the Stans*. As the five countries, generally considered to be within the region, all have names ending with that suffix and is within the scope of the wider Eurasian mainland. Many definitions of its exact composition exist, and no one definition is universally accepted. Despite this uncertainty in defining borders, it does have some important overall characteristics. For one, Central Asia has historically been closely tied to its nomadic peoples and the Silk Road” (Elisseeff 2001).

It has acted as a crossroads for the movement of goods, people and ideas across East Asia, South Asia, Europe and West Asia. In the modern context, Central Asia include 5 republics of the former Soviet Union: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Surrounding areas included Iran, Mongolia, Northern and Western Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kashmir and sometimes Xinjiang in Western China. With the advent of Islam, Central Asia came under Iranian reign. According to C.E. Bosworth, “Central Asia in the early seventh century was ethical, still largely an Iranian land whose people used various middle Iranian languages that included sedentary Sogdians, Chorasmians and semi-nomadic Scythians, Alans”. (Bosworth 1999:23). The history of Central Asia is indebted to ancient sedentary population who played very important role in the overall development of the region. Smethurst puts that “After expansion by Turkic peoples, Central Asia also became the homeland for many Turkic people, including the Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and, Uyghur, that’s why Central Asia is sometimes referred to as Turkistan” (Smethurst 2005). The Central location of the region influenced it by both the ways. Due to its Central location, it has access to all the regional powers, trade routes and lines of attack. But due to the same it would have been constantly attacked from all sides throughout its history.

From the North side, the region encountered horseback warriors like the Mangols and Huns. Russia in search of warm water ports also pushes down into Central Asia. The USSR made its approach to Afghanistan from the region in 20th Century. From the East direction, Chinese Dynasties The Han, Tang, and Ming continually pushed outward into Central Asia. These Dynasties conquered parts of Tibet and Xinjiang. China demonstrated its power into the region, particularly in case of Afghanistan to check Russian dominance in the region. From the South East, Indian influence was felt in Central Asia, predominantly in Tibet and in the Hindu Kush. Many historical Indian dynasties, especially Kushanas would expand into Central Asia. Peshawar and Kandhar cities of the region were established by Indian rulers. Peshawar was earlier known as Purushpur.

To the South West, Middle Eastern powers have expanded into the Southern areas of Central Asia (usually, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan). Several Persian Empires would conquer and re-conquer parts of Central Asia; Alexander the Great's Hellenistic Empire would extend into Central Asia; two Arab Islamic Empires would exert substantial influence throughout the region, and the modern state of Iran has projected influence throughout the region as well.

History of Islam in Central Asia

The early influence of Islam in the region is quite evident from the Quran, which was prepared in Caliph Usman's reign, which is preserved in Tashkent. The multidimensional development of Central Asia under Islamic influence determined new technological and cultural advancements. One such most important innovation was Samarkand paper, which was innovated in the 8th century under the Chinese influence from rags, which ousted papyrus from the Islamic states by the end of the 10th century. The Islamic scientists, such as Abu Ali ibn Sina, al-Beruni, Farabi, al-Khorezmi, brought fame to all over the world through their multidimensional achievements. Their unique technical innovations of that time made a great impression on European science. During the relatively peaceful era of Islamic dominance, multidimensional progress in terms of culture and the arts was visible in Central Asia.

The attempts of cementing Islam firmly through official means in Central Asia were evident. Many were forced to adopt Islam officially. Jizya was obligatory to

them who were not willing to accept Islam. In spite of that Central Asia witnessed the expansion of several religions apart from Islam. For example, in 1170, the Jewish scholars Tudela and write during his travels in Central Asia that the population of a Jewish community was more than 50,000 in nearby Samarkand. (Reza 1987).

According to Ahmed Rashid Islam was introduced in Central Asia as a religion in the seventh century by Arab invaders arriving from the Middle East. Islam became the predominant religion of Central Asia when the local ruler started adopting and patronizing it as well. Uzbekistan's cities of Bukhara and Samarkand developed as great centers of Islamic culture and civilization (Rashid 2002). However, the Sunni sect of Islam is in majority in Central Asia, but Shia is also in practice at large (Shahrani 1991). By the early 9th century, Islam was patronized by local rulers and became the major faith in the Central Asia. The common population of the region started emulating the ruler's religious inclination. Shahrani states "Throughout this period, Islam was encouraged from the top-down, rather than pushing upon the Central Asian populations by foreign conquerors" (Shahrani 1991).

According to Ahmed Rashid Sunni Islam primarily started spreading into Central Asia's nomadic populations by incorporating local traditions and features of Sufism, a native form of Islamic mysticism (Rashid, 2002:27). The reason for the popularity of Sunni sect was due to Sufi Values. Sufism appealed to the nomadic peoples by putting emphasis on an uninterrupted experience with God, as well as preaching mercy and reverence as an alternate form of worship (Walker 2003:24). The path of submission to God appealed common people of Central Asia due to its easiness and free from complications of rituals. Even in the 21st century, sympathy with Sunni Islam getting stronger day by day (Walker 2003:27).

Sufism in Central Asia

Sufism is a mystical sect of Islam, which earlier emerged from Islam but later adopted elements of other religion with the course of time. Mostly Sufi movements keep a rebellious attitude towards contemporary political regimes. In Central Asia, Sufism revived with Islam with some dissimilar features. Sufism is significant part of the history of Central Asia. Sufi Masters helped delineate relations between the rulers and subjects during the time of *Murid's* rule. Sufis again were a cradle of legitimization for the rulers of the 18th century *Khanates* as well as a source of

organizing protest during the Tajik Civil War, Russian colonial rule and during and the establishment of Soviet rule. Worship at Sufi shrines took on new prominence during the years of Soviet religious discrimination, making certain the reawakening of Islam received state consent during the last Soviet years and the first years after independence.

In Central Asia there are 4 major Sufi orders. The Naqshbandiya, Yasawiya, Kubrawiya and Khwajagan movements emerged in Central Asia (Nasr 2003). Their histories are interlinked with that of Central Asia largely. The Qadiriyya movement, which emerged in Baghdad, also had supporters in Central Asia. Braune says “Its founder, Abd al-Qadir Jilani (1076–1166), was originally from the Iranian city of Jilan” (Braune 1986). The Qalandariya¹, (known as the silsila of wandering dervishes) has ambiguous origins. Central Asia has also had its segment of self-proclaimed Sufis celibates who spread their own special messages of spiritual refinement and who assembled followers in *Khanqahs* (Olcott, 2007:2).

The significance of Sufism for the people of Central Asia and for the political regimes of the states has grown and vanished by the time. The Sufi organizations' high-profile role, especially the Naqshbandiya in Central Asian society led to a sharp increase in converts to Sufism and developments of its leaders influence (Zelkina 2000:77). Whereas Olcott states “This in turn added to its geographical development all over the Islamic world. In numerous ways, though, the politicization of Sufism and the new administrative role played by prominent Sufi sheiks also led to the worsening of the movement and to the introduction of the very element of spiritual decline that these orders were shaped to root out of Islam. As politically powerful Sufi dynasties comprising the lines that followed Khoja Ahrar and Makhdum-i Azam as well as the Juybari sheiks important authorities to the Naqshbandi Order and spiritual leaders of the Shaibanids in Bukhara whose progenitor was Khoja Islam, started to improve close personal bonds with the families of reigning dynasties, they terminated being capable of independent political activity” (Olcott, 2007:4).

Weakening of Silsila promoted Politicization of Sufism

¹ The movement is first mentioned in Khorasan in the 11th century; from there it spread to India, Syria, and western Iran.

Therefore, the politicization of Sufism in Transoxiana resulted in sovereign state similar to the 16th and 17th century political setup; According to Levi this assured that the Sufi movements would undergo the same kind of inertia that characterized the khanates. By the time, Naqshbandiya's social commitment and drive for internal development ceased to support and increase the silsila and in its place became sources of disaster and unproductivity. Even in Khoja Ahrar's lifetime, his sons contested for the title of *head sheik*. In that fight, each was supported by a different civil ruler, which initiated fights within the silsila to turn into political crises that led to armed conflicts within the disciple (*Murid*) dynasty. As a result, the silsila was turning away from many of its original basic moral and spiritual norms, fading its popularity (Levi & Sela 2010:192).

Friedmann concerned about the degradation when he says, "Politicization came at the expense of the prominence on morality and spirituality that defined early Sufism, and this too served as a source of immobility of the Naqshbandiya and the other silsilas in Central Asia". In addition, the teachings of disciples had been weakened, meaning that even more of the old traditions fell by the wayside. These changes further weakened the organizational structure of silsilas and encouraged their merger with the state. As has been the case of so many politicized Islamic religious figures, most pro-established Sufi Masters, and particularly those from Naqshbandiya silsila had become defacto administrators by then, claiming to be the only true protectors of Sharia (Friedmann 1971:42).

Revival of Sufism in The Eighteenth Century

Great credit for the final revival of Naqshbandia in 18th century was due mainly to the strength of its Indian branch Mujaddidiya and its forerunner, Ahmad Saikh Ahmad Sarhindi (who died in 1624). Olcott states "Saikh Ahmad Sarhindi was known as *mujaddad alf as-sani* because he lived at the start of the second millennium of the Muslim calendar" (Olcott 2008). Saikh Ahamad Sarhindi studied in India. He inherited the socio-political traditions kept contacts with basic spiritual progression from the Naqshbandiya of Transoxianian. Friedmann opines "At the time of Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya's ideal age in India, in the middle of the eighteenth century, Sufism in Transoxiana was facing stagnation, which gave *Mujadidiya* space to spread north. *Mujadidy*a was essentially a reformed (*mujaddad*) version of the

Naqshbandiya silsila. The old process repeated itself: the silsila simplified its rituals, amplified its social base, and re-engaged in the political and economic life of the community” (Friedmann 1971:14).

Nonetheless, the formation of large group adversely influenced the disciplines and strict ethical norms and Sufi statutes and maintained a gap between the Masters and disciples. Competition among the ruling dynasties for throne also triggered another struggle for power within the silsila. Thus silsila breakup into distinct branches and small groups.

Development of Sufi Crusade (Ghazavat) Against Colonial Rule in Central Asia

Under colonial rule with rising influence in politics Naqshbandiya- Mujadidya continued to exercise impact over local people, as most popular norms of that time were Sufi norms. Due to the said reasons political influence of Naqshbandya-Muzadidya was reduced. However, in the period of Russian rule, Sufi Masters were able to exercise their political and social power. The Aftabachi uprising was controlled by the Sufi master Makhtum Aftabachi in the Ferghana Valley in 1875-1876 who belongs to a small Sufi silsila.

According to Allworth “The difficult Russian plans was the 1898 rebellion in Andijan that was led by Dukchi Ishan², a disciple of a regional sheikh, Sultan Khan Tura. In his youth, he escorted his father to Samarkand and Bukhara, where he was left with local mullahs and educated the fundamentals of Arabic grammar and reading of the Quraan”. (Allworth 1994) Olcott added “At the age of sixteen, he became a disciple of the Naqshbandya-Muzadidya sheikh, Sultan Khan Tura, in a settlement called Tajik. Dukchi Ishan wrote that at the age twenty-six, he received instruction (*irshad*) from his Master (*pir*). Two years later, he was upgraded higher to a *white felt* by the intimate followers of Sultan-khan-Tura, this was a custom in which Dukchi Ishan was accepted as a spiritual successor or Khalifa of his pir and acquired a spiritual association (*nisbat*) with the sheikhs of the silsila” (Olcott 2007).

Initially, Dukchi Ishan was against the attack over Russian living in Central Asia. According to Kullberg “He mostly pushed hard for order, claiming that only

² Muhammad Ali Madali is known as Dukchi Ishan in Kyrgyzstan. He belongs to Naqshbandi Sufi order. Masali led an 1898 revolt against Russian domination, centred in the town of Andijan in modern Uzbekistan.

complete *ghazavat*, a form of holy war that is always prepared, and has precise prerequisite, would change the political condition” (Kullberg 2003). lack of political channels and worsening economic conditions obliged Dukchi Ishan to recruit local people in his troop to manage the "Yaran" (affairs of brothers). Tsugitaka opine “Archival evidence endures of a meeting of Disciples in Osh district held in early 1898, in which Dukchi Ishan was declared a successor of (*Khalifa*) Allah's messenger, with a right to declare *ghazavat* and with the duty of declaring the right conduct and banning wrong conduct. Dukchi Ishan made an appeal for *ghazavat* against Russian rule that was sent to chiefs of Uzbek and Kyrgyz clans and even to numerous officers in the local government” (Tsugitaka 2004). Though many voiced empathy with Dukchi Ishan's call, most either needed more time for the preparation of *ghazavat*. However, some people rejected the call completely. According to Allworth for Dukchi Ishan to acquire strong religious support for officially and violently opposing Russian rule, he would have had to transcend the local sentiment that he was going too far, too fast. One of the resident historians of the time, Mirza Sami, wrote of Dukchi Ishan's rapid speech and that he had dishonored the fatwa on amity with the White Czar, brought much damage to Muslims, and became a cause of unrest and chaos among them. Dukchi Ishan distinguished that most of his funding came from the nomadic and agrarian people of the Uyghurs, Uzbeks, Ferghana Valley and the Kyrgyz, whom he represented. Dukchi Ishan amenably criticized local representatives and titled them *new bourgeoisie*, the large landowner (*bais*), the native clerics (*Ulema*), and representatives of traditional spiritual clans and clergy ie. Sayyids, khojas and ishans, thereby depriving the rebellion of their possible support and dooming it to failure” (Allworth 1994).

Opposition to Russian Rule

Dukchi Ishan's call for *ghazavat* against Russian Government was distributed about 6 weeks prior to the real attack, due to this short time of preparation of attack broader support could not be arranged. The local people took part in attack with strong religious motivations for the pre-determined actions. Allworth mentions determined by a desire to legalize the status of their murshid as the *main ghazi*, the Disciples of Dukchi Ishan conducted an observance of *khan kutarilish*³ a day afore

³ ascent to khan

setting out. On the one hand, this action represented their objective to reconstruct an Islamic state in lieu of the Kokand khanate that had been defeated by the Russians in 1876; on the other hand, it authenticated their right to a legally nominated khan, especially for those who took motivation from Dukchi Ishan. Dukchi Ishan personally took part in attacks on the Russian army camps in Andijan (Allworth 1994). Allworth further states that Dukchi Ishan's revolt quickly failed, and its leaders, including Dukchi Ishan, tried to escape to Kashgar but were caught on the route. The Naqshbandiya leader was hanged, along with six of his closest devotees (Allworth 1994).

The followers of Dukchi Ishan then collected at the library of the Khankah of Dukchi. About 300 volumes lithographic were submitted to Uzbekistan's Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences, which has given modern scholars access to the incident and ideology of Dukchi Ishan. This literature made scholars able to learn the religious knowledge in the late colonial period. As Olcott mentions that most of the books are legendary works on *fiqh*, books of madrasa, and Sufi hagiography, but the library also contains Dukchi Ishan's own *Ibrat al-ghafilin* which is one of the final works of the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya literature of the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries whose authors collectively tried to turn Sharia into a single law and the norm of life of Muslims, written in rhymed style in the Ferghana dialect of Uzbek (Olcott 2012:44).

Ibrat al-ghafilin is all about the moral decline of Muslims, who had forgot Sharia in a Worldly indulgence This motivated Dukchi Ishan to explain to his followers the basic of the Sharia in order to resolve Muslim duties and the life style of fellow citizens with the Sharia. Undoubtedly, Dukchi Ishan also sought to encourage a sense of ghazavat in his disciples, as Olcott asserts “Not only for the land and pastures of ancestors, but also for their believes” (Olcott 2012:49). *Ibrat al-ghafilin* is the unique creation of the Naqshbandiya-Muzadidiya literature of the 15th to 19th centuries whose authors mutually tried to turn Sharia law the only law. However, some Uzbek intellectuals consider the teachings of the book ordinary and raise questions whether *Ibrat al-ghafilin* is a work of Sufism or just a religious text.

Olcott puts “There is no question about the political intentions of Dukchi Ishan's message. The public around him comprised mostly of peasants who had been

mistreated by the Tzars migration policy as Russians reached and took over large areas of the peasants land. It made sense, then, that the local peasantry would use the Sufi call to protect Sharia to pursue religious alternative and protection against the Russians. The public around Dukchi Ishan can be termed as a Sufi public only in the sense that it replicated the major changes that had happened in Sufism, especially in the Naqshbandiya- Mujadidya movement. This change directed society in only one direction: turning Sharia into the foundation of Sufism and making Sharia the only law that encompassed all facets of Muslim life” (Olcott 2012).

Sufism: An Anti-Colonial Movement

Sufism sparked anticolonial movements in Russia with a precise Institutional structure. But in Central Asia during the Russian colonial time, this relationship between religion and social protest triggered a new debate that does Dukchi Ishan denounce Sharia for his idea of *ghazavat*? The history of the Andijan revolt⁴ creates a historical example of great probable significance for the Uzbek population today. (Erkinov 2009:118) Olcott asserts “Unlike the Basmachi revolt during the early Soviet time Civil War, when the connection of religion to the political agitation in the region was problematic to decisively establish, the revolt of Dukchi Ishan was an obvious religious response to a wide diversity of economic, social and political challenges. It was possible because of the strange duality of Dukchi Ishan's inheritance as a freedom fighter and as a supporter of restoration of the Islamic state” (Olcott 2007).

Russian Effort to Weaken Sufi Groups

After the defeat of *ghazavat* led by Dukchi Ishan, the Russian government started treating Sufism with extreme skepticism. The Russians were afraid of new possible protest of Sufis and so tried to weaken Sufi groups financially. The status of *waqf* got revised, the tax exempted real state of religious institutes brought under taxation system. 1860s witnessed various religious restrictions in which scrutinizing and constraining *waqf* land was common legal practice. Olcott writes “The priestly establishment was stripped of the right to store new land. Over time, the position of

⁴ The Andijan uprising of 1898 was a nationalist rebellion which occurred on 30 May 1898. Over 200 lightly armed men attacked the Russian forces at Andijan under the direction of the Naqshbandi Sufi sheikh "Dukchi Ishan" (Muhammad Ali Madali)

the existing *waqf* lands began to be inspected as well. Russian administrators undertook a review of *waqf* and led changes that deprived almost all *Sufi khanaqah* of their real estate. Important Sufi Masters also lost the priestly status assigned to their own assets. Between 1900 and 1902, even Khoja Ahrar's descendants in Samarkand were stuck off the *waqf* status of their several possessions” (Olcott 2007:14). *Waqf* land had comprised of property given to religious institutions by their followers, both as gifts and as payment of taxes (*Zakat*), in addition to the real estate on which school, madrasas, mosques and other religious buildings were located. As an outcome, the tax exempted lands of many religious orders brought under taxation system.

Till the start of the Russian Revolution, Sufism was no longer a strong movement in Central Asia. However, the state of Bukhara and the khanate of Khiva, were still in Sufi control. Russian policy of suppression could not finally eradicate the Sufi influence from the region. Still the lineage of Sufi clan is getting major popularity and the Members of clans are called *Ak-Suyak* (white bone) establish a marital relation only with other high-ranking clans. In Soviet times, within their limits they played an important role in the protection of Sufism, its traditions, and its rituals, as Mc Chesney puts “But they did not step out beyond their immediate close circles because self-preservation was viewed as more important than trying to spread the Sufi way. Most of contemporary prominent religious families in Central Asia, whether or not the current generation of leaders follows the Sufi way, also are white bone” (McChesney 1996). According to Olcott, “Many highly regarded Sufi figures remained, including Khoja Kirmani in Bukhara, Ishan It-Yimas and Abdurrahmanjon-Sufi in Tashkent. In Andijan, a group was led by Mavlana Makhdum, himself a descendant of Makhdum-i Azam. One of its members, Madamin Beg, later headed the longest armed resistance to the Red Army troops as part of the Basmachi movement. But Madamin Beg himself was not a Sufi leader of any particular spiritual standing” (Olcott 2012:39).

Sufism Under Soviet Rule

According to Green the Central Asian Muslims often made much of the religious element in the Basmachi struggle to the starter of Bolshevik rule. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) celebrates the Basmachi movement as a major part of the history of jihad in Central Asia. Religion might have been a key

element in stimulating the resistance, but only a few of the military leaders came from Sufi Ishans. Most leaders of large numbers of Basmachi troops came from ordinary families. More often, leaders of resistance groups added Amir al-Mominin to their names, emphasizing that they were marching under the banner of jihad. It was certainly true, though, that the Basmachi fighters enjoyed a great deal of support, both moral and financial, from Central Asia's religious establishment (Green 2012:210).

The conquest of the Bolsheviks guaranteed the further decline of the Sufi movement in Central Asia, as it was now fully stripped off its economic means of survival (Green 2012:217). Between 1922 and 1928, the *waqf* land came under the process of Nationalization. This weakens the Sufi Silsila and Khanqahs and was closed down. As Ro'i says "Many Sufi sheikhs fled to remote regions or, more often, to Afghanistan, Kashgar (in western China), and other Muslim countries. Those Sufi sheikhs who remained were arrested, persecuted, executed and deported during the subsequent anti-religion campaigns" (Ro'i 2000). Still very few Sufis remained in the Russia and managed to survive and secretly teach individual disciples. Ro'I further puts "To survive, they fled to provincial regions of the former Bukhara khanate. They returned to their hometowns only after Stalin's death, and not all of them managed to educate disciples"(Ro'i 2000).

Three Sufi Masters of Underground Sufi Movements in Central Asia

Ravnaqi

Faizallah Ravnaqi Makhdum Khojaev Shakhrisabzi was a lawyer, a poet, and the author of the history of the Sufi silsilas. He was born in Shakhrisabz, educated in Bukhara after which he was appointed qazi of Shakhrisabz. When Sharia court dissolved, he tried to match newly adopted laws with Sharia norms. There was the fear of protest among Muslim community due to rapid secularization of laws, therefore Soviet authorities invited former qazis to prepare such laws which seems in harmony with Sharia laws. In 1931, Ravnaqi was full of resentment against anti-religious campaign of the Soviets and returned to Shakhrisabz where he went underground with his intellectual assets. In underground status he got plenty of time to turn his attention to his religious writings and authored 10 books on the history of Sufi silsilas among them *Risala-yi tariqat-i Ishkiya*, *Risala-i Chishtiya*, and *Risala-yi Jakhriya-yi Yasawiyas* are World renowned books which focus on the technique of

Sufi rituals. He also mentioned the details of the burial sites of famous Sufi sheikhs of the Kashkadarya valley and the objects contained in their burial sites.

Ravnaqi's essays on *fiqh* are much popular in local people. In his writings the most significant book is the collection of letters of Sufi masters to their disciples. These letters are a good source of history of Sufism and throw light on the incidents chronologically. Olcott writes "Ravnaqi was a gifted poet. His early poems, written under the pseudonym Ramzi, were included in a collection of poems by prominent poets of Bukhara that was published on the eve of the Russian Revolution" (Olcott 2012:97). The scholars and disciples came into touch with the intellectual assets of Ravnaqi in 1997. The rich collection comprises essays, calligraphy work, more than 100 texts on *fiqh*, Sufi treatises, poems. 500 lithographic works on the India, Arab, Samarkand, Novo-Bukhara (Kagana), Tashkent, and Russia, books of legal decisions (*daftar*)

Olcott writes that Ravnaqi's personal library is well-preserved by his descendants in Shakhrisabz, and the block on which he lived has been named after him. Ravnaqi also had a living legacy. Beginning in the 1960s, he organized his own *hujra*⁵ and gave private lessons on reading Quran (*qiraat*), on poetry writing, and on calligraphy. He also continued to practice traditional methods of healing, using spells (*ruqia/dam solmoq*) and writing special recipes for herbal infusions. Copies of some of his recipes have been preserved in his archive in the form of special messages to his relatives and acquaintances. Ravnaqi's grave in Shakhrisabz, Arslanbab is very much respected as a place of pilgrimage in his descendants, disciples and admirers (Olcott 2012: 68).

Faqiri.

Ravnaqi's nephew Ismail bin Ibrahim-Khoja Shakhrisabzi (1910–1980) was a renowned Sufi poet and known as Faqiri, He also belongs to the Qazi family. Olcott puts "One founder of this family was Mirak-shah-khoja, who served as a qadi for Abd al-Aziz-Khan II (1645–1681) in Balkh" (Olcott 2012:340). The family was also known for the high intellectual level of its women in theology. Women of the family served as religious trainer and theologian which is called *otin-oyi*⁶. Olcott mentions

⁵ underground religious school

⁶ Women with religious training who have some religious standing in the community

about Faqiri that Faqiri left a copy of his personal genealogy that described how Najm addin- khoja, one of the notable figures of the family, was taken captive during the World War II and appointed as a mullah in the Turkistani legion of the German army. At the end of the war, Najm ad-din-khoja managed to flee, but, in accordance with Soviet practice, he was court-martialed and sentenced to 25 years of exile. Faqiri's father, Ibrahim-haji simultaneously served as *imam khatib* in the Juma mosque in Shakhrisabz, as a representative of the emir in the city administration (*uraq*), and as head (*mudarris*) of the local madrassa at which Faqiri began his studies. After Soviet authorities closed the madrassa, Faqiri continued his education with his grandmother, who was an otin-oyi. Then he went to study with Ravnaqi (Olcott 2012:344).

The Naqsbandiya silsila was started in 1930s by Sheikh Makhdum-i Azam who was succeeded by Katta haji Dahbidi. Katta hajj was the great Kamil Murshid of Faqiri. In the mid-1930s a ban was imposed on Katta haji from gathering Disciples but he still continued training Faqiri underground with the help of written Sufi instructions. These Sufi instructions are still preserved in book form in Faqiri's library as a significant source of history and spiritual guidance. Olcott writes "Faqiri also corresponded with the son of his teacher, Muhiy ad-din-Khoja Dahbidi, and at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s his correspondence broadened still further to include a number of Central Asia's most authoritative *ulema*, among them domulla Muhammadjan Hindustani, who was himself a practitioner of the Sufi way but who focused most of his attention on the preservation of the basic tenets of the Hanafi legal tradition"⁷ (Olcott 2012:353). Katta-haji's letters included dogmatic questions and the sequence of performing some Sufi rituals and their mandatory or voluntary interpretations; they were mandatory for members of stable Sufi communities. Faqiri himself adhered to the Naqsbandya-Muzadidya tradition of quiof them (or their combination) had a specific name, which corresponded to one of the phases of zikr and methods of spiritual concentrations (Olcott 2007).

According to Olcott concentration on each one of these points was accompanied by a mental chanting of Allah's words or a formula of the beliefs symbols a number of times. Faqiri had a few disciples whom he taught theoretical

⁷ Hanafi Islam is the Sunni Muslim tradition, Hanafi is one of four "schools of law" and considered the oldest and most liberal school of law. Hanafi is one of the four schools of thought of religious jurisprudence within Sunni Islam

aspects of Sufism as well as the traditional practices. He did not give proper documents to any of his Murshid. Though Ahmadjon Makhdum never completed even seventh grade in secular schools, he was taught a religious curriculum that was little changed from what had been taught in the pre-revolutionary period. A solid spiritual connection in the Sufi studies. Thus, he believed he could teach but he had no right to prepare his successor (Olcott 2012).

Like Ravnaqi , Faqiri is author of many Sufi texts, poems, history and essays. But it is not confirm that his intellectual assets are protected. The significant books of Faqiri include *Diwan* (mystical Sufi poems) in Uzbekistani, *Risala* (Sufi treaties), Sufi histories, folk tales (told to women disciples), 30 volumes of manuscript on fiqh and kalam⁸. He died in Sarasia and was buried in a local cemetery. His grave has become a pilgrimage for the local population.

Ahmadjon Makhdum

In 1939, the third Sufi Master Ahmadjon Makhdum Mujaddidi was born in Surkhandarya oblast. He was the great-grandson of well-known Mujadidya sheikh in eastern Bukhara, Ashur Hisari. Ahmadjon Makhdum's father, Makhdum-qori was renowned scholar of his time, but never made *Khanqah* to train students formally. Nonetheless, Makhdum-qori started teaching Sufi rituals to his son. By the age of 6, Ahmadjon Makhdum Mujaddidi was well trained in Arabic language. Although Ahmadjon Makhdum Mujaddidi never completed his formal schooling. His teaching was totally oriented towards Sufi *ilm*. After completing his education with his father Ahmadjon Makhdum Mujaddidi came in touch with Muhammad Boboyi and Qozi domullah. Both the Masters broaden Ahmadjon Makhdum Mujaddidi's perceptions of Sufism and gave him the training of Indian Sufi *Tariqa*. Olcott writes "Ahmadjon Makhdum also studied with a number of well-known Sufis, including Makhdum Boboyi Andaki from the village of Andak in Samarkand oblast, with Ishan Abdurrahmanjon from the village of Qala-yi naw near Dushanbe (Ishan Abdurrahmanjon died in 1971 at the age of 89), and with Ishan Sheikh Asadullah, also from Qala-yi naw (who died in 1980)" (Olcott 2012: 92).

⁸ The science of seeking Islamic principles through the use of the dialectic.

Ahmadjon Makhdum was known as expert in *Mujadidya zikr* and transferred the *ilm* to many of his disciples, but left no formal disciples as a successor of his spiritual legacy. Ibrahim Hazrat is one of the closest disciples of Ahmadjon Makhdum who learned *Mujadidya zikr* from him. According to Ziyaeva "In 1992, Ahmadjon Makhdum also came into close contact with Sheikh Ahmad Zulfikar Naqshbandi Mujaddidi, from Lahore, Pakistan, and when Sheikh Zulfikar visited Ahmadjon Makhdum at home many followers from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also arrived, which gives testimony to Ahmadjon's legacy among a whole generation of Hanafi clerics from Surkhandarya and from Tajikistan. Ahmadjon Makhdum's religious tracts show that he had a classical understanding of Sufism. Knowledge of Sufism could not be separated from knowledge of Sharia. His view was that of a religious elitist: Sufism could not be allowed to fall into the hands of the *dirty dervishes*" (Ziyaeva & Olcott 2008).

Islam in Central Asia Under Soviet Rule

Up to Russian colonization of central Asia, Islam was an indigenous culture of the region. With coming into power of Bolsheviks, after the First World War, Muslims started experiencing repression. 1920 onwards Muslims of Central Asia witnessed new Soviet 'scientific atheism' in form of continuous attack over their beliefs, traditions, and institutions (Shahrani 1991). This assault on Islamic religion began after Josef Stalin's rule between 1924 and 1936. These newly born states, Uzbekistan (1924), Turkmenistan (1924), Tajikistan (1929), Kazakhstan (1936) and Kyrgyzstan (1936) had no basic ethnic and historical ground of division. According to Olcott, "Stalin drew the map of Soviet Central Asia not with an eye to consolidating natural regions, but rather for the purpose of reducing the prospects for regional unity" (Olcott 2002). This political segregation of five new states without any demographic logic was just a Soviet step to bring down the Islamic institutions and unity among subjects through purges between the 1920s to 1930s (Walker, 2003).

World War II lifted official hostility towards Islam in the Soviet Union. The Soviet version of official-Islam had been created to regulate the established Islam and a Muslim religious board was established to oversee this. There were three more bodies of Islamic regulations that simultaneously existed with same liabilities. Central Asian people continued to practice their own Islam secretly. (Walker 2003). Soviet

invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 provided ample opportunity to connect the Soviet Muslim with foreign Muslims of Afghanistan known as Mujahidin. This marked another significant time for Islam in Central Asia. The loyalty and commitment of Afghans towards Islam impressed Central Asian people. They also felt ethnic and linguistic ties with their Afghani opponents. This contact reminded them how Soviet political regime acquired their lands and breach their faith, true identity and national pride as well (Rashid 2002:6). These connections between the Muslims of Central Asia and those from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia at this time formed the basis of resurgence of Islam in Central Asia following the breakup of Soviet Union.

With the advent of Michael Gorbachev in Soviet political helm around 1980's, Islam and Central Asia relationships entered into transition. Gorbachev's policies, openness and reconstruction provided them greater religious freedom comparatively. Under Gorbachev's liberal policies many Muslims from Central Asia got the opportunity to pilgrimage of their holy places, Mecca and Medina, for the first time. Thus they came into touch with a variety of Muslims from many countries which started supporting financially the Muslims of Central Asia. Islamic institutions, governments, and individuals began sending money to reinvigorate Islamic practices in Central Asia (Walker 2003). This outer support played a significant role in the development of radicalism in Central Asia in the 1990s.

Basmachi Revolt

Under the Communist political regime, there existed the largest Islamic populations of the World with approximately 50 million adherents. To suppress Islam in the region Soviet government executed a radical program segregating religion from state. The Communist government launched a vehement campaign, in general, targeting all the religious institutions. Religion was considered as an obstacle to social advancement and modernization. Mosques, sharia courts, and Muslim religious institutions were shut down. Muslim religious leaders were prosecuted and *waqf* was confiscated by the government. This suppression campaign resulted in Basmachi revolt of Islamists in 1918. The objective of revolt was to protest against the establishment of the Communist rule which would expel the Muslims from power. The government tried hard to repress the Basmachi rebellions, but in spite of that, the revolt went in the Pamirs until 1928.

Islam under Lenin's Leadership

Lenin moderated the Soviet Islamic policies in 1924 under the influence of some important Muslim-turned Communists who advised him to reconsider about his religious policies. For some time the anti-Muslim operation was put on hold and few attempts were started by the government to restore faith of governance among the Islamists by returning *waqf* properties, resuming the Sharia practices, reopening Islamic educational institutions and reopening the mosques (Haghayeghi 1995: 15-18). The period between 1925 to 1927 witnessed a relative strictness in Islamic policies of Lenin when a certain degree of support and trust of Muslim population was achieved. A prohibition on the establishment of new sharia courts and cutting off financial aid to Islamic institutions and *waqf* was initiated in 1925. Relocation, exile, imprisonment and assassination were used as tools to weaken the officialdom of Muslim religion. Lenin banned all madrasas and Latin script replaced Arabic means of instruction (Akiner 1994: 146). 1930's were the period of harsh treatment for Muslims when mosques and clerics were reduced to their lowest number. Remaining few Islamic institutions were running under conditions of persistent persecution.

Islam under Stalin and Establishment of SADUM

Stalin's government imposed such restrictions over Islam which was not known ever before in Central Asian Islamic history. Stalin eliminated outer attributes of Islam and outlawed three of the five pillars of Islam- Zakat (the payment of Muslims), Hajj (Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca) and Roja (the observance of the fast of Ramadan). Till World War II, Soviets undermined all the religions and especially Islam was no exception. With the advent of World War II Soviet Union needed to improve relations with friendly Muslim countries, importantly with Middle Eastern Muslim Countries. The war period was the time of creation of the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM). Muftiate is made to administrate and regulate the SADUM. Basically, SADUM was an official edition of Islam with the charge of registration of mosques, appointing Imams and to regulate Islamic practices in the region as per authorities will. The official version of Islam was under communist party's leadership. As Oliver Roy puts, "The role of Muftiate was to undermine and even attempt to destroy popular Islam, particularly the connections between national and religious identities, and to create a token, regulated,

officially appointed clergy in order to manage the few remaining religious institutions, and after 1955, to improve relations with friendly Muslim countries” (Roy 1996).

Islam under Khrushchev's Rule

The campaign against religion was once again reinvigorated in Khrushchev's period. Khrushchev supported staunchly the secular education system (non-Islamic education system in particular) as a tool of the freedom of consciousness from religious dogmas. According to Ramet “Khrushchev advocated Communist education as a superior option than Islam. Often he accused that Islam was still hampering Soviet people from the full demonstration of their creative powers. Khrushchev issued a decree in March 1961 entitled 'On the strict observance of the laws on religious cults' as a foolproof strategy to limit the influence of religion” (Ramet 2005: 20). An attack against clergy, implementation of anti-religious laws and harsh penalties for religious offenses were the significant tenants of the decree (Pospelovsky 1987: 78). These anti-religious laws lasted until the beginning of Perestroika.

Islam under Brezhnev's Period

Brezhnevite period was no different than that of Khrushchev. Brezhnev carried forward Khrushchev's policy of so-called secularism. Despite the official suppression of Islam in the Soviet Union, Islam has managed to sustain its existence as a way of lifestyle and culture. (Polonskaya and Malasenko 1994: 110). No decree could curb any pillar of Islam, such as fasting, feasting, handing out of alms, polygamy, and pilgrimages. The communist campaign against Islam never became entirely successful. The government's efforts to eradicate Islamic values motivated the Islamic believers towards unity and mutual cooperation and deepened their roots in the Central Asia.

Islam under Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost

Perestroika and Glasnost provided some ground for Islamic revival in Soviet Central Asia. The liberal reforms intensified the gradual revival of Islam in Central Asia. Though Gorbachev had not expected this result because his revolutionary policies include neither Central Asia nor Islam. Actually, on the back of these reforms the revival of Islam slowly found its way. Gorbachev's policies had two phases. In the first phase of his reconstructions, he carried forward his predecessor's policies of anti-

Islam and went on blaming Islam for the cultural and socio-economic ills of Central Asia. This first phase lasted from 1985 until 1988.

The second phase lasted in 1988 to 1991 when glasnost or openness was permitted to be implemented equally in all the republics of the Soviet Union. (Haghighi 1995: 48-49). Communist Party of Soviet Union was put under retreat and attack by reformists and nationalists. The nationalists acquired strict control over the ideology including policies covering religion. (Ehteshami 1994: 10) These shifts in political power in the region drove the policies of liberalization which resulted in changes for Islam in Central Asia. The bureaucratic restrictions on mosques were removed. (Polonskaya 1994: 115-116). The Waqf institutions were re-established during this period and it provided an independent source of funding to the clergies. The independent financial system provided a firm base to the followers of Islam. The process of Enlightenment was initiated which attracted young scholars and researchers to promote Islamic integration and national support. The support for Islam had become the support for the nation. The national revival got intertwined with the Islamic revival. Islamic expression developed gradually in accordance with the development of ethnic and nationalistic views. Muslim religion emerged as a sovereign political force in the Central Asian region by 1991.

Islam After Independence of Central Asian States

After long repressions of Islam under Soviet rule, an understandable version of Islam emerged after the disintegration of the Soviet Union (Mandelbaum 1994:117). Soviet rule oppressed Islam and did a campaign to de-idealized the religion by cutting it from the sources of knowledge and research. Independent Central Asian states seek their identity in Islam, which was still alive in the form of culture and traditions in the deep veins of society. Central Asian states made strategy to re-educate their subjects about the strength of Islam as a device of National unification. Primarily, Revival of Islam in Central Asia was aimed to rediscover national individuality and cultural legacy which is observed in the disproportionate increase in mosque construction, Islamic institutions and Islamic rituals. Lenin's latin means of instructions are replaced by Arabic script. School and colleges started offering courses in Islamic history, Sharia law, hadith and Arabic studies. Islamic study gained popularity as a career option. Islamic practices and traditions generally have been on the rise. *Hajj*,

Roja, qalma, namaj and *zakat* regained its earlier popularity in the society. Mosque attendance (especially the Friday *namaz*) has increased dramatically. Although the intensity of these practices are different from republic to republic.

The significant part of the Islamic revival was different from the expectation of the strategists, since it did not translate into radicalism (which was anticipated by many scholars) due to the fact that 98 percent Muslims of Central Asia follow the Hanafi school of law of Sunni sect. Hanafi is one of the four schools of thought of *fiqh* which belongs to Sunni stream. Imam Abu Hanifa was the founder of Hanafi school. Hanafi school uses reason and logic in legal opinion making. This ethnographic setup demoralized radical Islamic tendencies in the region, especially supported by Iran and rejuvenated more liberal Islamic elements (Haghayeghi: 98-99).

The development of Islamic consciousness in the region is not uniform. Unfortunately, people considered only political Islam as the absolute version which was not the actual picture. Major support for Islamic revival came from Sufism and Sufism had nothing to do with politics. Actually, Sufis were most apolitical people ever. Sufism incorporates Christianity, Shaman and Buddhist tenets and it has molded tolerance towards all the religions (Khalid: 2000). The differences in Islamic observance reflect the lack of religious unity in the region.

Radical Islam

The Fall of Communism and economic collapse not only offered Central Asian Muslim's new prospects to put into practice their faith but also provided space for the growth of radical Islam (Hill 2003:2). According to A. Tolga Turker "Radical Islam in Central Asia is a result of repressive political atmosphere and authoritarian policies. Repressed and unable to operate in their own countries, the radicalized portion of Central Asian population emigrated to join international groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and Al-Qaida only to return to Central Asia with greater prospects" (Patnaik 2011: 281-82). Radicalism and terrorism also has fascinated U.S. attention, particularly after the September 11 terrorist attacks. In 2001, the Central Asian states initiated themselves on the front lines of the global war on terrorism, as a US-led alliance entered Afghanistan to depose the hard-line Islamic Taliban rule. The Taliban was a recognized supporter of al Qaeda. The network that was considered responsible

for the attacks on US and maintained ties to fundamental Islamic elements active in Central Asia. Central Asian leaders offered to support the US commanded Operation Enduring Freedom to improve ties with the United States and strengthen their fight against "Islamic extremists" whom they accused of anti-government activities. The Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, among all republics, were particularly active in this struggle, offering the U.S. military their territory to open bases in support of the manoeuver. Although U.S action in Afghanistan ultimately disturbed Taliban sponsored radical Islamic drive in Central Asia, radicalism and terrorism continues to lure support from native people. Some background knowledge is vital for understanding the rise and growth of radical elements in Islam of Central Asia since the early 1990s.

Islamic Opposition in Central Asia during Gorbachev Period

Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP)

One of the most remarkable consequences of the Gorbachev rule was the creation of the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP). The IRP founded in 1991 to protect the Muslims of Soviet Union. As such, the party became very popular in both within the Soviet Union and amid scholars and academicians in the West. Primarily, the party had some striking agendas of growth of the understanding and consciousness of Muslim of Soviet Union and to make them capable to protest against Communism. Hghnavaz stetes "The party split since it had regional subdivisions for the each republic of the USSR" (Hghnavaz, 2004). Tajik Civil War created the circumstances which enhances the popularity IRP beyond the borders. IRP materialize the civil as a medium to mobilize regional and clan support in the region. Noticeable fact was that the IRP did not try and establish Islamic supremacy during the civil war. Though the objective of IRP was scholastic not political; therefore, it had limited targets and objectives.

The Tajikistan's IRP leader Akbar Turajanzode made it clear that the prime objective of IRP was not the establishment of an Islamic state, but a secular democracy. Hence, the IRP has not tried to 'Islamize' Tajikistan. According to Hghnavaz "The IRP's primary importance was based on stressing that Islam was more significant than regional or national attachments. Yet, the IRP's improvement of regional configurations undermined this. In Tajikistan, the IRP has been designed into

the regime and fundamentally destabilized by this. It has broken over its standing in the present Tajik government. The same has materialized in other republics such as Jordan, where the state vigorously seeks to co-opt such engagements in order to weaken them and confirm they pose no threat to the regime or the current situation” (Hghnavaz 2004).

Russian Interest in Central Asia

Russian interest in Central Asia goes back to the Peter the Great. Peter was aware of the strategical importance of Central Asia and interested in trade for which he sent representatives to the area. After one century Kazakh steppe emerged as a challenge and opportunity both, for trading caravans of Russian troops. Trade and commerce brought Russian merchants closer to the people of oases. To protect the caravan trade between Russia and Khanates of Bukhara and Khiva Russian Government built a number of forts in the first half of the 19th century. Till 1840 fortified line was created parallel to the Syr and Chu rivers on the north border of Central Asia. Russian presence in Central Asia had been always over fortified territories in form of advanced army outposts. Till the end of 19th century the entire Central Asian region was converted in the colony of Tsarist Russia.

The colonization process of Central Asia was not similar to that of Central Asia and Africa. As Shorish puts “The Slavic settlers and the local population were all subjects of the Tsar. There was very little overt differential treatment of Slavs vis-à-vis the local population by the government officials, as opposed to that afforded to Englishmen in India. For example, Russians did not develop a category of hukka-pashas or Sahibs in Central Asia as the British did in India. Also, a great many of the Europeans who came to Central Asia settled there permanently while the English colonizers almost always returned to England. Otherwise, the *classical* form of colonization was carried out by the Russians as the following will illustrate: Colonial authorities kept, generally a laissez-faire attitude toward the local social and economic structures. This aspect of colonization, the indirect rule, is analogous to those which were closely adhered to by the British in their colonies” (Shorish 1975).

According to Vaidyanath under the Russians' rule, Central Asian agricultural became increasingly specialized in the production of cotton and silk. More and more acreage was devoted to cotton due to higher prices resulting from the American Civil

War which had cut European cotton imports from the United States substantially. Upland and Planters varieties practically replaced the local types by the end of the nineteenth century. The acreage devoted to the Upland variety alone increased from 300 destinations (810 acres) in 1884 to more than 100,000 destinations (407 acres) a decade later. Cotton prices increased five-fold between 1860 and 1864, and the price rise continued in the following years (Vaidyanath 1967: 44).

According to Connolly in the Bukhara Amaret acreage devoted to cotton increased from 41,000 desiatins (110,700 acres) to more than 542,000 desiatins (1.46 million acres) in 1915 (Connolly 1967: 36). According to Pierce the cotton industry ushered in capitalism to Central Asia. Several ginning and textile factories developed in the valleys of Zarafshan, Ferghana, and Hissar. By the 1860's the traditional Islamic educational institutions had become parochial and thoroughly theological. They were left untouched by the Russians except that Waqf properties of Madrasas were expropriated. The colonial authorities, personified by General K. P. von Kaufmann, thought that the sheer neglect of the Islamic educational institutions coupled with the *superior* Russian culture and education would be sufficient to undermine the Islamic culture and thus accelerate the *Russification* process of the Central Asians (Pierce 1960:213-214).

According to Shorish the colonial authority introduced a second educational stream in the form of a series of primary schools for the children of the colonialists and some Russian native schools enrolling local boys. Many graduates of these schools became interpreters or otherwise did low-level technical work. The third stream of educational activity, this one flourishing by the beginning of the twentieth century, was called *Jadid*⁹ by its founders, the Central Asian intellectuals. It had essentially a general education type curriculum, akin to the French schools of the day, and taught Islamic theology in a much more systematic manner than that inculcated by the traditional Islamic education. All three types, the traditional, the Russian-native and the Jadid schools, were going their separate ways with continuous conflict, especially between the Jadidists and the traditionalists, by the time of the Soviet takeover of Central Asia (Shorish 1972:46-115).

⁹ New or Modern

The Soviet rule in Central Asia was established after long struggle by the native people of the region against Tsarist officials, local chiefs and begs. East Bukhara was the center of revolt against the anti-colonial movement. The two revolts against Tsarist suppression are most famous. First was happened in late 19th century and second was happened in 1916. The revolutionary majorly comprises landless farmers of Central Asia, Landless farmers in Central Asia made up more than 90 % of the population. 3% of the population own more than 90% of the land. These 3% of elite class comes from the relatives of Tsars. Consequently, the protesters, exclusively European and Russian railroad employees, got victory over Petrograd and united under the title 'Soviets of workers' in Central Asia. This was the beginning of the formation of communist party.

Soviet Government passed a land reform act in 1921 which was aimed against rich Russian Landlords who holds nearly 90% of regions land. The Government nationalized land and water to check irregularities and corruptions in the next year, 1922. Pierce states "The implementation of these two laws went quite smoothly except for some of the amir and Tsarist functionaries who worked against the Soviets, either by joining the White Russians, the British forces in Meshhad, Iran or the local bands of Basmachis guerrillas. The latter was led by sympathizers of the amir of Bukhara who used Afghanistan as a sanctuary and plagued the Red Army up to 1931" (Pierce 1960:219-220).

Central Asia nowadays is a facing New Great game of world powers competing for its valuable natural hydrocarbon resources. The objectives of World powers collide with those of Islamic fundamentalists who see the state as fertile territory establishment of Islamic state. The surrounding countries of Central Asia are horrified to envisage the consequence of this struggle which is of great significance to the stability of the neighboring Russia, China, Iran and South Asia as well as Central Asia itself. Islamic radicalism and terrorism in Central Asia is led by Taliban campaign of Afghanistan and wave of Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia. Actually the internal challenges of Central Asia like corruption, Control of Soviet minded bureaucracy, lack of economic reform, lack of development, unemployment, public suspicion due to inadequate ruling authority have made its governments gradually fragile. Fair democracy and open progressive society is still a dream for Central Asia.

Chapter 3

Causes of Revivalism of Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

Islam has complex dimensions in contemporary Central Asia. While World is experiencing the disastrous influence of radical Islam i.e. terrorism, Central Asia is the region where Islam is working positively and shaping the national and regional identity, assisting in the war against the challenges of the common people and paving their way towards modernization and progressiveness. In Patnaik's words "With the discrediting the Soviet System, Islam emerged as an alternative source of authority" (Patnaik 1996: 199). This aspect of Islamic revival is something different from radical Islamic influence which the contemporary World is facing. In this chapter, I analyses the causes of revivalism of Islam in both the Central Asian state- Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The comparative analysis indicates relatively alike factors for revivalism in both the republics but some distinctions are also present there in terms of their specific social and political variations.

Shaping National Identity

Presently, all Central Asian countries are under strong revivalism of Islam. This course is working at three core levels: the national level, characterized by incorporation into the Islamic world; the social level, characterized by links between religious and secular associations in societies; the personal level, characterized by the transformation of the Soviet Identity into Islamic Identity.

Up to now, it looks like that none of the Central Asian republics has shown satisfactory responses to these processes. This is not surprising since all the countries in the region have so far experienced the process of secularization and hence, have not accepted a coherent religious policy. Religious National legislations are full of limitations and there is no clear agreement on how the liberation of religion should be continued and what the limitations of this freedom and the attitude of government are towards the actions of religious organizations and the citizens. The scenario of religious education is also uncertain. The question of republic's economic status, democracy, charity, and other burning issues remains open and unattended.

As Patnaik puts “However political leaders in Central Asia realize the importance of relations with Islam, because this relation may grant them legitimacy. Therefore, the choice between cooperation, control, or scuffle with different divisions of Islam is based on the situational characteristics of each state. The choice of how to deal with Islam depends on the accessible resources and tools of social control in the country, but not on the ideology. The leaders of the secular democratic movement felt obliged to adopt a more religious stance to broaden their appeal to the masses” (Patnaik 1996:199).

Islam in central Asia has links with Turkish heritage except for Tajikistan that has links to a Persian heritage which distinguish it from the other republics as well as those of Russia. Graham Fuller puts Islam as an element of nationalism (Mandelbaum 118). Islamic revival and national renaissance are closely attached in each Central Asian republic. Islam is national identity, a way of spiritual freedom, distinct identity from the Slavic culture and communist system, which were an expression of foreign colonial domination. Nationalism and Islam mutually synergize each other rather than acting as opposing forces. Islamic consciousness shapes the national and regional identity of Central Asia and vice versa.

The revival of Islam, according to Ahmed Rashid, is accepted to elites of Central Asia only to the extent up to which it serves the purposes of establishment of the secular state, the rediscovery of ancient culture and a greater participation in religious rituals (Rashid 1994: 224). Islamic revival is also welcomed in the region as long as it assists in solving the problems of development (Mesbahi 1994). According to Patnaik “Islamic activism is growing in strength; many mosques and madaras have been built recently and the number of adherents to Islam is growing. Young people with no established positions and uncertain about the future look to Islam as a solution to their own problems and the problems of the country as a whole” (Patnaik 1996: 200). The political version of Islam is envisaged by elites as an attempt to the establishment of Islamic state. However, this conclusion is discarded by contemporary scholars.

Islam: As A Tool of Economic Diplomacy

The disintegration of the Soviet Union had speedily thrown the Central Asian states into the global arena and vividly expanded the financial crunch in the state. In

the next two years, the states got a fast lesson of the true meaning of freedom. Kazakhstan and Russia bilateral trade went down in December 1991; the disputes over cotton prices between Russia and Uzbekistan in winter 1992 demolished the trade relations between both the states. Russia stopped supply of fuel and grain to Uzbekistan. By these incidents, the republics learned that they had to make their own credibility apart from Russian influence. Russia keeps control over the foreign affairs of the republics; Soviet's supremacy is unhindered in the region and the states felt they could not do what they want, so that's why by 1993 the each republic signed agreements with Russia in which they left claims to the Soviet Union's inheritances. Internally the republics are suffering with corruption and their financial efficiency is falling rapidly. Central Asians severe economic need bound them to turn to the International community. Olcott clarifies that with independence, the leaders of the new states hoped to use their ethnic composition to attract global investment and foreign support. She contends that in order to strike the best deals possible between their own national concern and those of a partner, the republics could play many ethnic cards in the international ground. Amid these ethnic cards is their Islamic conviction. Inner economic forces could be accountable for pushing the republics in the direction of Islam (Olcott 1998: 31-33).

Actually, the leaders of Central Asia, though loyal to the development of secular society, hoped to use Islam for economic reasons to attract aids and finances from Gulf States. But, their methods of using Islamic cards are different in different Central Asian States. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are moving rapidly towards Gulf States in comparison to other states to acquire assistance. Arab states are also being approached by them as their favorite destination. Olcott further clarifies that Turkmenistan's President Niyazov, a stout supporter of a secular state, went so far as to change Lenin's statue in Ashgabat's main square with a statue of himself as a haji. President Karimov of Uzbekistan also stressed his dedication to Islam by taking his presidential pledge on a Koran and telling interviewers that he only ate halal meat that met Muslim values. Though, when Tajik President Nabiev was exiled, Karimov saw the danger of consistently inspired political activism enthused by Islamic radicalism and soon became uncertain about advancing Uzbekistan's Islamic interests overseas and began cracking down on suspect religious activism at home. President Akaev exploited on his Muslim heritage in October 1992, when he went to Saudi Arabia

stating lightly that he would convert a *haji* if it would help bring Saudi currency to Kyrgyzstan. He also confirmed two Muslim holidays as state holidays. On the other hand, Nazarbaev has been quite unenthusiastic about finding a direct relationship with Islam since the beginning of independence. In fact, he went so far as to prohibit all religion-based political parties in the republic on the ground that religious radicalism could intimidate the region's strength. Nonetheless, financial needs have obliged Nazarbaev to receive offers from Oman, Saudi Arabia and Iran for aid in the oil and economic sectors, even when these *gifts* have been connected to assets for the creation of new mosques (Olcott 1998: 33).

According to Esteshami generally, the states have been careful in playing their Islamic card. Central Asian Countries are good sources of profitable investment, but the problem is that most of their imported assistance programmes are related to schemes aimed to propagate faith and in light of the risks of Islamic radicalism; the states have been more enthusiastic to work with the rest of the world instead. Central Asia has now started fostering relations with nations and bilateral institutions where the huge money is accumulated (Ehteshami 1994:07). Mandelbaum opines that the United States, Japan, China, Germany, France and South Korea are all on their way to becoming the region's major dealing partners and investors. Malaysia and Indonesia, moderate Islamic states, have also articulated interest in becoming commercial partners with the states and in supporting them towards development. In addition, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have been fast to supply much-needed external exchange to the country. In the future, the neighbouring Muslim states and West Asia are likely to play the smallest significant financial role in the states (Mandelbaum 1994:175). Mandelbaum further puts "Much more important players in Central Asia's struggle to shape market economies are going to be the capital-rich West, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Japan. Therefore, it is economic needs which earlier force the states to play their *Islamic card* to invite profit-making activities and investments since hardly they have other substitutes. Now that they have other external partners, they do not need this card" (Mandelbaum 1994:175).

Process of Democratization in Tajikistan

As per as democratic developments in Tajikistan is concerned, like the other Central Asian States, Tajikistan also imitates a mixed culture leading to a continuous

struggle among different players to define the nature of political system in the state. Under international obligations, it is bound to move towards democratization but the domination of pre-independence political leaders had crippled the process up to a greater magnitude. The only stimulating force that appeared in the course of time is that of Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), another political party more conservative in nature than its democratic orientation. Therefore, it can be concluded that future of democratization will greatly depend on the future growths in the entire Central Asian region as well as its communication and nature of dealings with the western democratic world.

The Reversal and Failure of Democratization in Tajikistan

Tajik nationalism varies from the other Central Asian republics. Tajikistan was primarily comprised in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic before its position was raised to Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). Some of the literature available specifies that the Tajik identity started to advance as a result of the national demarcation that allowed Tajikistan to become a distinct national entity. Ensuring its national demarcation, Tajikistan became more involved in Central Asia's political life and started to cultivate a stronger identity of its own. The lack of a unified Tajik national identity in the initial years of the growth of the USSR was more evident when in 1924, the Tajiks acknowledged the Uzbek-Tajik delimitation, which deprived them of the ancient cities of Samarkand and Bukhara (Haugen 1999:153). Till now these cities, though in Uzbekistan, are massively populated by ethnic Tajiks and Persian is the key language used for non-official purposes. Tajikistan's association with democracy differs in comparison to its neighbours. Though each Central Asian country has its own approach towards democratization, Tajikistan was different because it never had the chance to try it throughout the period when fundamentals of democratization and liberalization reached their post-Soviet peak top in the region.

The republic jumped into a civil war at the beginning of independence in 1991 which lasted for 6 years (1992-97). As the civil war was predominantly fought between the Islamists and the former Communists. Tajikistan became the only Central Asian country not to follow the same pattern of gradually increased authoritarianism during the early 1990's. The civil war was an indication that Islam played a large role in the Tajik national identity, enough to spark a conflict that lasted for five years.

However the civil war only cannot be blamed for the failure of democratization; evidence for this is that the more stable Central Asian countries are not more democratic today than Tajikistan. At present, democratization is continuing to fail because neither the Tajik population nor the elites are willing to change the status quo. The Rahmonov regime is growing in authoritarianism and is mimicking the regimes of the other Central Asian countries. This is in its favour as it further consolidates Rahmon's power base and marginalizes the opposition, while at the same time maintaining political support from Russia. The population exhausted by the devastation and instability caused by the civil war appear unwilling to resist the increasing repression from the regime. Thus democratization has inevitably failed.

The appointment of Rakhmon Nabiev, a former Communist First Secretary, by the Supreme Soviet as leader of independent Tajikistan in 1991, evoked a wave of protest against what people saw a restoration of communist control. This revealed a form of national unity and consciousness rarely seen in the other Central Asian countries. This willingness to attack the ruling elites was later to play a large role in the eruption of the civil war. Most of the population wanted their chief as president Abkhar Turadzhonzoda, an Islamic spiritual leader. These early signs were indications of the role religion would play in the politics and lives of Tajikistan and the Tajiks. The first presidential elections, held in November 1991, were far from being democratic, but there did appear to be some form of competition between the two candidates. At that stage, Tajikistan appeared to be affected by the ripple effects of democratization experienced in the wider region.

The first presidential elections had two candidates, Nabiev and the opposition leader Davlat Khudonazarov. Nabiev received 57% of the vote and Khudonazarov 37%. A trigger of demonstrations against the regime unfolded after the elections and escalated into what became the Tajik civil war. In a tactical move, the opposition united and called itself the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and was composed mainly of Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) members and democrats; the backbone of the opposition were the Islamists, headed by the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) leader, Said Abdullah Nuri. Their popularity and strength grew through the media and opposition publications. The violence and bloodshed that unfolded between 1992-1997, served as a threat not only to the future of Tajikistan but also to its neighbors. Nabiev resigned as a result of the escalating violence and was replaced by Emomali

Rahmonov in 1992. Once the civil war started, Tajikistan lost all chances of a transition towards reform. In many ways, Tajikistan has been robbed of its transitional period; it was neither given sufficient time nor opportunity to experiment.

The Islamic character of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) grew in strength; this was mainly as a result of the IRP's own evolution as an Islamic party, and as a result of the Taliban's rise to power in neighboring Afghanistan. By the late 1990's, the unsettled situation in Tajikistan was becoming of serious concern to Russia and the other Central Asian countries. In June 1997, the General Agreement on Peace and National Reconciliation was signed between the Rahmonov regime and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). This ceasefire was primarily achieved with the help of the Russians, and also as a result of the Uzbek and Iranian government's mediating role. According to the agreement, the IRP would disarm. In return, the government agreed to give the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) 30% of all government posts and guaranteed them participation in political life. For the first time in Central Asian history, a step was taken to legitimize an Islamic party (Olimova 2010: 255-256) and give it a role in governing the country. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the Tajik elite is susceptible to Russian political influence, not only did their survival rest on Russia's role in the peace treaty with the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), they are also guaranteed Russian security from the largest Russian military base outside Dushanbe.

Since 1997, the Rahmonov government has slowly become increasingly dominant and authoritarian, resembling more and more the regimes of its neighbors. In 1999, changes were made to the constitution enhancing the power of the president. In 2000 the country had its first multi-party parliamentary elections. Rahmonov could not stop the IRP from participating in these elections, as that was one of the main conditions of the National Reconciliation Agreement. Nevertheless, the elections were carried out under increased authoritarianism. The existence of an opposition in all theories of democratization gives a lot of importance, as is the ability of the opposition to achieve political power if the population gives it the legitimacy to do so. Ghassan Salame in 'Democracy without Democrats', places a lot of emphasis on Arab/Islamic exceptionalism, which would automatically rule out any aspects of liberalism that the Tajik government could have achieved by incorporating the Islamised opposition (Ghassan 2001).

In theory, Tajikistan has a more genuine multi-party system, with a real opposition than any other Central Asian country. Nevertheless, by 2000 elite cantered authoritarianism, seen in the other four Central Asian countries, had also included Rahmonov. The opposition's incorporation into the government is becoming nothing more than a facade. The Rahmonov regime is increasingly being accused of abusing the ceasefire agreement reached in 1997 by pushing the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) further and further away from politics. The 2000 parliamentary elections caused great outrage amongst the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) members. Many felt that Rahmonov had conducted the elections illegally and manipulated the results in order to thwart their power (Cummings 2004: 61).

In Tajikistan, the absence of a center of power due to an incapable and corrupt government combined with a widespread sense of cynicism and poverty carried the country to Civil war. The Tajik civil war, one of the most neglected wars of the contemporary period, was the bloodiest conflict to occur in the entire former Soviet period after the disintegration of the USSR (Capisani 2000). The conflict lines are now tremendously confused, although it is depicted as a conflict linking new-communists with relations to the former Soviet administration against an association of new Islamist and national parties. Many scholars stated that the conflict was, at its origin, a power struggle among regional or local identity groups. According to American foreign policy council “A rash of current violence in Tajikistan offers the clear indication of an Islamic reawakening taking place in the former Soviet republic. This Islamic re-awakening is being reinforced and made persistent by changes taking place within Tajik society itself. Clans increasingly turn to Islamic leaders and institutions for aid and advice and the Tajik youth adopt the Muslim Islamic faith in larger numbers. Nevertheless, even though in recent years a speedy succession of violent attacks driven by militant Islamists which included prison break freeing 25 convicts with extremist connections, Tajikistan has presented itself to be a strong state. It has not surrendered to the rising Islamic militancy within its borders, nor has it experienced greater insecurity as many had expected” (almanac.afpc.org). Najibullah states “Islamic extremism remains a tangible concern, and converts to it have increased due to the policies of the Tajik government, which has failed to address the basic social and economic necessities of average Tajiks, and whose heavy-handed strategies in response to violence have alienated many. Tajikistan,

especially after the departure of American troops from Afghanistan in 2014, still has the potential to become a hotbed of Islamic insurgency capable of destabilizing Tajikistan and Central Asia as a whole” (Najibullah 2010).

The Struggle Between Islamic Political Parties and Political Regime of Tajikistan

In words of Karagiannis “The disintegration of the Soviet Union carried independence as well as instability to Tajikistan, as regional clans who enjoyed privileged profitable status during the Soviet era try to maintain their control on the levers of state power” (Karagiannis 2006). Former Communist political leaders from the Kulyab region in southeast Tajikistan snatched control of Dushanbe and designated Emomali Rakhmonov as President. In early April 2007, President Emomali Rakhmonov officially adopted the process of de-Russification of his name and became Emomali Rakhmon.

According to Akiner and Barnes the pre-established parties united to form the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) that included of Islamists from the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and secularists, including elected democrats, nationalist, and separatist movements who joined to oppose the new regime, aggravating the Tajik civil war (Akiner and Barnes 2010). As Karagiannis states, notably, the Tajik civil war was motivated first and foremost by religious, rather than ethnic interests and tensions. The civil war was not primarily driven by deep-rooted hostilities between regional or ethnic groups. As an alternative, the conflict in Tajikistan had the classic dynamics of a civil war in which different concern groups prepared to contest to acquire the control over the state and its resources. That conflict erupted until 1997 when the Tajik regime and the UTO decided to a truce and an UN-brokered peace deal. The ceasefire deal gave the UTO, mostly the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), a 30 percent posts in the central government (Karagiannis 2006).

Regardless of the power game, the Muslims underwent a blow to their respect and trustworthiness; the Tajik people find the elements of opportunism in the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and their divergence from Islamic values and IRPT made secret agreement with secularists through which they have to share power. (Karagiannis 2006). This disloyalty of the IRPT as an Islamic political party dishonored it in Central Asia.

As the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) gradually has resorted to democratic activities to stay within the rules and to remain important, the Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami replaced it from Tajikistan's most rapidly expanding Islamist group. In the opinion of some experts, “HuT's aptitude *to frame the public and financial problems in Tajikistan* as a outcome of secularism, prevalent corruption in the government, Western cultural impact and the lack of a strong, widespread Islamic state has given the group *ideological supremacy* and place it in an advantageous position to recruit dissatisfied Tajiks” (Karagiannis 2006). HuT appealed “The quiet removal of the Tajik government” in radical and non-violent ways unlocked the door for more fundamental and radical Islamist groups, i.e. the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)

Two ethnic Uzbeks Tahir Yuldashev and Juma Namangani founded a militant Islamic group The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in 1998. The movement has aimed to overthrow President Karimov from Uzbekistan and to establish Islamic State under Sharia norms. However, in later years IMU has become an ally of Taliban and al-Qaeda. In mid- 2015 the militant group publicly announced its loyalty with Islamic states of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and emerged as a regional branch of ISIL. Between 1999 to 2000, the IMU launched a series of raids in Tajikistan, Taliban occupied regions of northern Afghanistan and Southern Kyrgyzstan. One of its founder leader Namangani was killed by US led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, while Yuldeshev and many remaining fighters of IMU escaped to the Taliban controlled areas of Pakistan (Sidikov 2003).

As Roggio states, “In 2010, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan revealed a strong ability and enthusiasm to carry out violence in Central Asia and even expressed willingness to establish connections with European-based terrorist setups. The IMU changed sense of radicalism was the consequence of the demise of its leader Tohir Yuldashev, who was killed on August 27, 2009, after a drone attack by alliance armies in Afghanistan” (Roggio 2010). Yuldashev had been put, “Quite content operating as an armed division for the Taliban in Pakistan, functioning as a support group. Its revival in Tajikistan was established by the August 2010 jailbreak and release of 25 prisoners with Islamic radical ties from the State Commission for

National Security's high-security prison in Dushanbe” (Olimova 2010). In Najibullah’s words “Along with the September 2010 suicide car explosive attack on a police station in the Northern Tajikistan city of Khujand a violence the IMU has been suspected of masterminding” (Najibullah 2010). According to Kozhevnikoh “Also in September 2010, the IMU directed the trap of a Tajik military party in the Rasht Valley, killing 25 soldiers. Abdufattoh Ahmadi, a spokesperson for the IMU, issued a declaration claiming responsibility and calling on the Tajik government to terminate its restrictions on Islamic activities” (Kozhevnikov 2010).

The chain of violence ignited an official drive to arrest the fled prisoners and counter the mounting mutiny in the Tajikistan’s Rasht Valley. The rigorous action resulted in the demolition of the IMU and the encounter of its main leaders. However, the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan soon improved, but after this incident the ability to combat against these kinds of adverse situation in Tajikistan and other Central Asian security services enhanced. The terrorist and radicals shifted then in a safer atmosphere of Pakistan and Afghanistan. As Olimova puts, “Even though the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan issued a new official announcement in 2012 advertising recent combats in Afghanistan and Pakistan and assured future large-scale operations, specialists agree that such proclamations are only operational and that the IMU, is expected to number no more than a few hundred combatants. That does not now pose a substantial threat outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan” (Olimova 2010).

Hizb ut- Tahrir

Hizb ut-Tahrir replaced the popularity of its former competitors Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan in Afghanistan and rose to eminence in native Muslims. The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan had lost its religious reputation and converted into a political party while the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan joined the Taliban against U.S.-led armies in Afghanistan. Like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Hizb ut-Tahrir was also trying to remove of the Tajik government, but in a nonviolent manner to achieve its goal of Islamic state. As Karagiannis states, “Over time, it became acceptable among traditional Uzbeks and Tajiks alike through the widespread distribution of radical Islamic literature. The two groups, however, got attracted to HuT for different reasons; Uzbeks in Tajikistan joined on account of the group's campaign of Muslim

unity, while Tajiks joined to march against the booming social and economic complications in Tajik society” (Karagiannis 2006).

In 1999, after observing the risk of radicalism and terrorism by Hizb ut-Tahrir the Tajik government posed ban on it by declaring it an illegitimate political party and accordingly arrested and prosecuted the active members of Hizb ut-Tahrir under article 187 for disturbing ethnic and religious harmony of the state and article 307 for involving in a coup against the government (Karagiannis 2006). Karagiannis gives the account “between 2000 and 2005, about 500 suspected members of HuT were detained” (Karagiannis 2006). After these strict official actions against radical Islamic groups of Tajikistan's the extremist agenda of Islamic state is getting demoralized. Government took several repressive actions to suppress extremism like passing many strict religious laws to put some sensor on the law on the freedom of consciousness. In March 2009, Government launched a military surgical strike against radical Islamists of the Rasht Valley, which put sustained pressure on both modest and radical Islamist groups. Ramazanov states that “As a result of the intense suppression of HuT, Tajik specialists suspect that the group has gone underground, making it more problematic to be fully destroyed. Tajik security officials have confessed that the state will continue to have difficulties with Hizb ut-Tahrir, no matter how tough they try to damage them” (Ramazanov 2005). Though, experts consider HuT to be "the best-organized underground group in Central Asia," in recent years, “Tajik authorities have become successful in preventing the further spread of the group and arresting some of its senior leaders” (RFE/RL 2011).

The actions of Tajik Government against radical elements also put greater suspicion and pressure on modest Islamist groups, like the officially registered Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT). According to a report of Euresianet while the IRPT has been nearly side lined in political terms and now holds only two seats in the 63-seat Assembly of Senates, Tajik authorities remain too obsessed over suspecting and abolishing the organization, which they believe to be an access group to fundamentalist Islam. Even though the IRPT has observed with registration measures and functions as a political party, the Tajik Interior Ministry has labeled the group's members *fundamentalists*” (Euresianet 2011).

As Najibullah points out, “President Emomali Rahmon and his government have reason to fear the IRPT. This is not because the IRPT is fundamentalist, or because it is alleged of radicalizing its members. To the contrary, experts agree that it is regularly the IRP that is the finest measure of the country's proper political and religious inclinations” (Najibullah 2011). Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan is often seen as a political challenge by the Government which have explanation of the party having a "false face" of democracy and unbiased thinking while hiding the desire "to turn Tajikistan into an Islamic state" (Euresianet 2011). The Government's attitude toward Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan was always susceptible, President Rahmon believes that the acceptance of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), is a primary motivation for the radicalization of Tajik Muslims.

Governance Issue and Rise of Religious Influence

Islamism was not always this much conspicuous in Tajikistan. The Tajik Civil war in 1997 made common people so dissatisfied with Islamic parties and many of them withdrawn their support from religious extremists. However, Najibullah updated that “Over the course of the past years, Islam in general has made major advances in the state. Islamic names are the new fashion” (Najibullah 2010). “And families are gradually turning to sharia law to resolve clashes” (Ato 2010). Ato further states “A Gallup poll showed in August 2010 that 85 percent of Tajiks said religion was a vital part of their lives, with only 12 percent saying it was not, making Tajikistan first among Central Asian states in terms of religiosity. So, promptly has Islam and Islamism amplified in popularity that the Tajik government now worries that it could challenge the influence of the state” (Ato 2010).

Observing the development of views on Sharia in the last decade, the following can be noted: a noticeable increase in the influence of Sharia on people's everyday lives; more and more people (over 50%) would like to see a compiling of Sharia rules and principles that serve as guiding principle for the lifestyle and ethics, and fewer people attribute this role to secular laws an increase in the number of devotees who address the Quran as the only source of laws and regulations in Islam, leaving the traditions, customs, and authority of the *faqih*¹⁰ (Rf/Rl)

¹⁰ experts in Islamic law

Unfortunately, the revival in Tajikistan has been helped by corrupt and totalitarian leaders who have gathered power and refused to revive in the country's poor economy and civil society. In a 2009 study, the International Crisis Group asserted that "Tajikistan is far from being a protection against the spread of radicalism and violence from Afghanistan somewhat, it said, the country looks more and more like its southern neighbor, a fragile state that is suffering from a failure of leadership" (ICG 2009). The ICG explains that "Tajikistan is on the road to failure as the administration will be defined with grave economic complications as the poor grows poorer" (ICG 2009).

Trails of dissatisfaction with the ruling regime and a liking for Islamic transformations was visible with the winter emergencies of 2008 and 2009, when the Tajik's were shaken through tough winters as a result of failure of Tajikistan's energy infrastructure. Notwithstanding, official promises of making gas and power easily available, people put their faith in Government's promise. In a clear manifestation of dissatisfaction, some Tajiks yelled, Even in the civil war we had electricity! (Eurasianet 2009), the crisis was at its height during the economic crisis of 2009 when due to employed outsiders in Tajikistan common Tajik people faced severe unemployment.

According to experts, the lack of capable leadership in Tajikistan has assisted in intensifying the country's economic crisis. Negligible steps have been taken in recent years to upgrade the falling socioeconomic situations of the Tajik people. Cynicism among Tajik citizens continues to grow, due to the Rahmon government's failure to address simple requirements while exhibiting its power. For instance, even as the price of bread spiked in March 2011 and gasoline prices hit new highs in April 2011, the Tajik government involved itself with extravagant nationalistic developments such as the spending of \$30 million to construct the world's highest flagpole to fly the world's largest flag. For these causes, people have instigated to criticize that what the president sees... is no more than a fantasy, and has nothing to do with the actualities of life in a poverty-stricken nation surrounded by joblessness and hopelessness (Najibullah 2011).

President Rahmon's security strictness can only give people protection and peace, but not the basic infrastructure and resources for which Tajik people are living

in anticipation from government. Tajik government is using the resources to enhance its control over common Tajik people. The military surgical strike between September 2010 and November 2011 against Islamic radicals in the Rasht Valley caused death of 100 people. The strike was mainly targeted Mullo Abdullo the extremist belongs to Taliban and known as 'Bin Laden of Tajikistan'. The surgical strike was successful, but later created bitterness in the government's relations with even non-Islamic conflict forces. As reported by Euresianet, under the pretext of the murder of a local security official in Khorog, a border town in the Badakhshan region of southeastern Tajikistan, Tajik government directed heavily-armed Tajik troops to eradicate opposition leaders who have retained political influence and social power there since the Tajik civil war. A stressed situation already intensified into anarchy and extreme street-to-street conflict between government forces and local fighters ensued in which one civilian death and 50 fighter deaths were reported, trapped in the middle were people of Badakhshan, who are mainly Pamiris and nonviolent Ismaili Muslims. The Pamiris were already apprehensive of Rahmon's rule, but now are more so than ever. Some have gone so far as to call the military intrusion an *ethnic scrubbing* (eurasianet 2012). Actually, Rohmon's prime concern was to check and acquire control over beneficial drug trafficking and smuggling along the border routes of Tajikistan and Afghanistan, but despite that the common attitudes against Rahmon and his regime appears to grow more than ever.

Causes of Revivalism of Islam in Tajikistan

Independence in Tajikistan took place in the absence of any strong political power at the centre and fragile social structure. The common people took Islam as a source of reliable solutions of their problems in Tajikistan. Cheldelin states, "Islam has a particular influence on Tajik society, yet it cannot be the foundation for violation of the principle of secular governance. It is necessary to broadly discuss and propagate the idea that religion and secular governance can coexist and constructively cooperate in the socio-political composition of the society and that the two are necessary for the health and well-being of Tajikistan citizens" (Cheldelin 2007:4)

The dispute between traditional Islam and official Islam is now a days a burning concern in Tajikistan. Today, after independence, with the exposure of

Central Asia to the international community, Islam appeared as a key factor in the socio-political and religio-cultural dimensions of Central Asia.

The main causes of revivalism of Islam in Tajikistan can be stated as follows-

1. The processes of fast transformation of Tajikistan, principally re-Islamization, are characterized by weak will power for the state building and ineffective strategic plans to meet new challenges. Political elites in Tajikistan are experiencing a severe crisis of legitimate authority, which pushes them to strengthen their repressive behavior. In current condition, Islam can be proven an efficient tool for mobilizing the common people. Nevertheless, the opposition religious leaders are posing a new threat to current political situation in Tajikistan. Hence, in this political situation, Tajikistan's Government is adopting an authoritarian attitude to control the opposing sphere of influence.

2. Though in Tajikistan, religious features are controlled by the state, still the key concerns remain unresolved. At the same time, Tajik Political regime poses legal measures to control the religious communities. The strict official vigilance and control over religious community, making them weak.

3. Therefore, the evidences in support of the fact that 'communism is behind the implication of laws against religious policies and harassment of Muslims in Tajikistan' are very limited. The religious harassment is the result of struggle between political authority and extremist Islamic organizations, not the Communist ideology.

4. A portion of the elite class of Tajikistan is trying to gain benefit out of being true Muslim, but their interpretation of the Islam is according to their own benefit. Unofficial Islam not only comprises the radical elements, but also these Muslim elites which are contributing in the growing despotism of Central Asian politicians. In Tajikistan the contemporary struggle is between Authoritarianism Islam vs. Democracy+Islam.

Democratization in Kyrgyzstan

Since independence, this small mountainous country has captured the attention of academics and proved exceptional in its domestic political environment. It has oscillated back and forth from elements of democratization and liberalization to

despotism. Its domestic scene has been the least consistent in nature and the most surprising in events. Kyrgyz exceptionalism, in regards to its openness in comparison to its neighbors, has ultimately contributed to this country becoming the third former Soviet Republic to undergo a 'revolution' and remove the leadership. From the very early years of independence, First President Akayev spoke about the importance of a civil society to pave the way towards democratization. The number of social organizations, political parties, religious communities and media organizations that evolved with the president's encouragement was incomparable to any of the other Central Asian countries. Social pluralism flourished and the country, as Anderson calls it, became 'An Island of Democracy' (Anderson 2000: 77-88).

One of the main movements to emerge on the Kyrgyz political scene during the latter stages of perestroika and into the era of independence was the Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (DDK). This group's framework was a combination of social and political programs. One of the main splinter groups to tear away from the DDK was called Erkin Kyrgyzstan (ErK). This group described itself as a democratic group; ErK also began to show signs of taking a nationalistic position, which was also critical of the government. This party was exposed to many divisions, while its criticism of Akayev became more and more intense as the regime grew in authoritarianism.

The most nationalistic party to emerge in Kyrgyzstan was Asaba. This party was only interested in defending the rights and interest of the Kyrgyz people, and therefore not interested in the other nationalities in the country. It was often also opposed to Akayev, as he was seen too tolerant towards elements of Russification, such as the status of the Russian language. Most other parties that emerged were predominantly centrists and only moderately critical of Akayev. Despite the different social and political groups that emerged during the earlier half of the 1990's, the population was far from acquiring a clear party identification. This can be seen as one of the reasons that caused the failure of democratization almost as soon as it had started. Political parties appeared to have failed as major political forces, thus putting at stake the evolution of a civil society.

Tocqueville and Sakwa warn against this and argue that democratization cannot be forced on a society. They argue that the evolution towards democracy does

not and should not follow a consistent pattern, and that every society has different characteristics and historical backgrounds, which have to be taken into consideration. Aspiring towards the creation of a civil and political society, and identifying the importance of developing a multi-party system with strong political leaders was a very difficult task for the Central Asians as they did not have any experience with such concepts and developments before, Nor have they ever fought for such principles, especially when they are compared to some other nationalities in the former Soviet Union. As Vardys puts “The failure of democratization, in many ways, is a result of the population not wishing to express or exhibit anything new or different to what has always been prescribed. Independence told a very different story in the Baltic States, which had a very strong sense of national liberation and emancipation from anything Soviet or in fact Russian” (Vardys 1990:441).

The Baltic States' pre-Soviet existence also included some experience of pluralistic democracy (Vetik 2001: 129-132). This was very different to the Central Asian nomadic and clan-structured society. In Lithuania political parties and the population made giant leaps and concrete moves in the direction of political and social pluralism (Vardys 1990:472). This is clearly seen in these countries' antagonistic nationalization policies towards their Russian population. In the Central Asian countries, lack of movement for national emancipation on the other hand, has not only resulted in the failure of democratization but has also made the country far more susceptible to Russian influences.

One of the main weaknesses of democratization in Kyrgyzstan was the failure to create strong political actors. The failure of these political parties to grasp the attention of the population is partially because many officials remained skeptical of alternative power structures. Secondly, these organizations were too often based on personalities and regions with no firm political base. In addition, many of the country's traditional characteristics of tribalism and clan loyalty also contributed to the failure of an effective pluralistic political system which resulted in the failure of democratization (Anderson 2000:34-38).

According to Linz and Stepan, Kyrgyzstan appears to have experienced a high dosage of liberalization, which entailed the political and social changes mentioned above (Linz and Stepan 1992). It would be difficult to describe this process as

democratization as a voting procedure had not yet taken place, although most of the signs of an evolving democracy appeared initially visible, including the evolution of a civil, and political society and the rule of law. This pattern had to be maintained in order for democratization to properly be maintained. Unfortunately for Kyrgyzstan, this would not be the case. Kyrgyz exceptionalism showed few faults during the first few years of independence. By 1994, however, the first signs of change away from the notions of democratization were slowly surfaced. The president appeared to be distancing himself from political, economic and social reform. Kyrgyz exceptionalism, due to the nature of the leadership, was short lived. Akayev, just like his counterparts in the other Central Asian countries was a product of the Soviet system and was easily tempted to revert back to authoritarian rule. He had the support for doing this from Russia and the other Central Asian countries, whose leaders were also increasing their grip on power.

Thus Kyrgyz exceptionalism refers to Kyrgyzstan's positive and enthusiastic approach towards accepting and attempting to implement characteristics of democratization. 'Exceptional' because it was one Central Asian country that took preconditions to democratization the most seriously, and hence was the most successful in achieving them. The failure of democratization was a product of Akayev's method of rule and the Kyrgyz population's lack of understanding of the characteristics of democratization, such as political society. This was a traditional country, where modern forms of the organization had not developed before 1989; experience in the liberal democratic rule was alien. Attempts at democratization and creation of a civil society occurred at the same time in Kyrgyzstan, while in most successful democracies the latter always preceded the former (Anderson 2000: 77).

From 1994 onwards, Akayev engaged in disputes with the media and began to strengthen his grip on this important element of an open and a free political system. The concept of civil society came even more under attack after the parliamentary elections in 2000. Akayev was accused of neutralizing the political potentials of most of the country's opposition leaders and barring them from participating. In 1999 Felix Kulov, once part of Akayev's governing elite, created the political party Ar-Namys (Dignity), which with other opposition parties participated in the 2000 parliamentary elections. All opposition candidates came under strong attack from the government and Kulov was even detained. The OSCE voiced its concern over the fraud behind

these elections, and strongly criticized the Kyrgyz government. The government authorities continued targeting the opposition and even arrested the leader of ErK Erika Dailey (eurasianet 2006) The 2000 Presidential elections were equally undemocratic. Since the mid-1990's, Akayev had totally marginalized the two features of democratization that Huntington placed so much importance on. Neither contestation nor participation has been carried out fairly, and elections have been a democratic facade, aimed at Akayev's re-election.

Kulov faced even more challenges and was eventually imprisoned when he announced that he would be participating in the elections. The general opinion domestically and internationally was that Kulov's arrest and accusations were totally politically motivated to remove him as a threat to Akayev's power base. The elites and the president's extreme grip on power have been one of the reasons why Kyrgyzstan failed to democratize. Even after the Tulip revolution in 2005, new president Bakiyev's resistance to curbing executive power has gone against the wish of his population and stamped out hopes for democratization to develop (Marat 2005). Both the Russian and Kyrgyz regimes do not want to see an escalation of the unrest that triggered the Tulip revolution. Russia is very hostile to 'colored revolutions' in the former Soviet Union and has consequently supported all Central Asian regimes in spite of their treatment towards their population. This has promoted Russia's political influence amongst the Central Asian presidents (Olcott 2005).

The 2005 parliamentary elections created the final spark of discontent amongst the population. The elections were a clear indication of the extent the country had moved away from liberalization and democratization. Even before the election results became public, unrest had been manifested in the south of the country over speculations that the regime had manipulated the results to its own advantage. As a result, the entire political atmosphere in the country was highly charged. It had been a mere few months since the protests in Ukraine, resulting from controversial election results, had brought about another colored revolution in the former Soviet Union. Leading up to the parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, anger at the marginalization of the opposition and the victory of the pro-Akayev candidates finally triggered a wave of protest that reached Bishkek (Marat 2005).

On March 24 2005, hundreds of people stormed government buildings, including the parliament and the president's palace, in protest to the rigged election results. The scene and atmosphere that prevailed was unseen during any of the other 'colored revolutions'. There was no clear organization to the protests, any clear objectives or agenda and the most important, there was no clear opposition or leadership. There existed a kind of mob mentality, which took control of events in the capital. Looting and violence spread, and the country appeared too often too close to the brink of total anarchy. The revolution was a protest with no long-term strategy or aim. The people that were involved were predominantly angry people, not intellectuals (Olcott 2005). The intellectuals stood at the periphery of the revolution. This is one main reason why many today see the Kyrgyz Tulip revolution as a failure, which brought with it very little change. What some educated Kyrgyz argues today is that an intellectual revolution is now needed, one with a strategy and an agenda of change and reform (www.csce.gov 2005).

The main issues of concern today revolve around the kind of changes that have been introduced in the country since Akayev's ousting from power, and the appointment of Bakiyev as president in July 2005. Has the country's Tulip revolution and the removal of Akayev from power reverted the country back to its previous route of liberalization and democratization? Unfortunately, the answer, according to Kyrgyz political scientists and most importantly to the Kyrgyz people are 'no'. Real change did not occur anywhere in the country (Tudoroiu 2007). Bakiyev was not prepared to be president; he was a member of parliament with no anticipations of becoming a prominent political figure. The revolution was a result of the growing anger towards Akayev and his family. Years of nepotism and fraud had motivated the Kyrgyz people to reject the corruption of the regime and achieve a revolution. Kyrgyzstan's relatively open society, and the acceptance of some political maneuvering allowed protesters to mobilize and carry out a revolt against the same body of authority, which had given them this power.

What lessons could be learnt from the Kyrgyz example? Each Central Asian country reacted differently to it, although all leaders were extremely wary of a replica in their own country. Did the Kyrgyz example of allowing too much reform and freedom result in a population not scared to rebel against the leadership? If this was the case, then should other authoritarian regimes isolate themselves completely from

liberalization and democratization in order not to encourage a revolution or is each country differently? Some are tackled with more detail in the chapters related to Russian and American influences in the region (Cummings 2009).

Kyrgyzstan's unmatched levels of freedom inevitably played a role in encouraging vast numbers of the population to take to the streets. The Kyrgyz people were no longer going to tolerate the conditions which Akayev had exposed them to. The political, economic and social situation in the country has not only led to the rise of Islamic sentiments, but also inevitably played an important role in the eruption of the protests that led to the removal of Akayev from power. Political suffocation and economic difficulties were blamed on the regime; injustice was coupled with hardship. USA's role in the series of 'colored revolution' hitting the region has not had equal effects in the three countries affected by this. American NGO's and democracy-promoting initiatives have always been regarded with skepticism, yet their presence cannot be ignored. The US played a role in supporting local NGO's to step up their opposition to the Akayev regime. They indirectly encouraged what little existed of civil society to fight back. This mix of predominantly internal and some external characteristics, which led to the events of March 2005, have not contributed to any form of real domestic change in Kyrgyzstan today. (The New York Times March 30, 2005)

Bakiyev was not a reformer, and changed very little of the country's external and internal politics. He faced growing criticism and political opposition, there were few media outlets that were prepared to criticize him and the press was wary of the regime just as it was during the Akayev era. Although he could not be compared to Akayev, his authority was slowly increasing. Civil youth organizations such as Kel Kel (revitalization), played a big role in the Tulip Revolution, and were originally very much pro-Bakiyev. The organization was made up of around 1000 students who wanted to see political reform and electoral transparency in the country. They promoted notions of liberalization and democratization. It often seemed that the main spark for the 2005 revolution was more concerned with removing Kayev from power, than to enforce long-lasting reforms. When speaking to some of the students that participated in the revolution, most agreed that this was one of the root causes why people were so angry moved them further away from the Bakiyev regime. They have reached an extent where they are even calling themselves opposed to the Bakiyev

regime. Kyrgyzstan's failure to democratize is fairly typical of a country that not only places too much relevance to tribal and clan politics, but also appears unable to break from authoritarian rule and Soviet-styled governing. This makes it more sympathetic to Russian influences than American or Islamic. The country's relationship with Russia further allows the elite to hold on to power and receive political support in the face of international and domestic pressure. The fault lines also lay in the population's mentality and their lack of national and political direction.

Popular debates on the causes of Islamic Revivalism in Kyrgyzstan suggests that it is -

1. An expression of tensions between traditional and Western cultures
2. A reaction against political secularization
3. An attempt to create a distinct nationalist identity
4. A commoner's response to failing repressive rule.

Religious Revivalism in Kyrgyzstan: Tension Between Traditional and Western Cultures

Academic and popular press debate over the hypothesis of cultural clash often (Huntington 1996) with definite empirical foundation. (Geertz 2003) The radical Islamic party Hizb-ut-Tahrir claims that "Clash of civilization is an inevitable process and promises that the Hizb-ut-Tahrir will save the faithful Muslims from the pro-west Kyrgyz government". Hizb-ut-Tahrir represents the common voice of Kyrgyz people and propagates "keep fighting the enemies of Islam throughout the world." In 2003, Ariel Cohen asserted that "Hizb-ut Tahrir's message resonates far beyond its 5000-10000 hardcore supporters in Central Asia and poses a direct challenge to the Western model" (Cohen 2003). Even some scholars consider it Al-Qaeda's influence in Kyrgyzstan (Chaudet 2008).

Manja and Landes say, "There is a palpable cultural vacuum at the heart of Central Asia, which cannot be filled by consumerism or imitations of Western culture. What *Western culture* actually means in these *clash hypotheses* is not always clear. Some scholars express gender roles as central to the clash" (Manja 2008, Landes 2001). "Others highlight the different discernments of family in Muslim and non-

Muslim cultures” (Wiktorowicz and Farouki 2001). Mazrui puts “Still, others note several differing views on sexual behavior, gender roles, alcohol, race, and the death penalty” (Mazrui 2004). Islamic revivalism is a response to what Muslims identify as Westerner’s disproportionate moral negligence.

Islamic Revivalism as a Response to Political Secularization

According to Samuel Huntington: "Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, often have little resonance in Islamic cultures" (Huntington 1993). However, without being Western one can be secular and democratic as per as post-Soviet scenario is concerned. In 1998, Uzbekistan president fumed "Islamists must be shot in the forehead! If necessary, I'll shoot them myself." (BBC 1998) In May 2001 then Kyrgyz president Askar Akaev asserted “radicals were trying to extend the geographic range of Islam, and even to set up a state an Islamic caliphate". Then Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Nikolai Tanaev put in 2004, "A few years ago Hizb-ut-Tahrir was only a religious organization, but two years ago, it became extremist and has a goal of overthrowing a political regime" (Toktogulov 2005).

Prosecutor-General of Kyrgyzstan Kambaraly Kongantiyev uttered in 2006 that, “Islamists openly advocates setting up an Islamic caliphate in the Fergana Valley and overthrowing the secular regime" (ITAR-TASS 2005). And in January 2009, the Supreme Court of Tajikistan posed legal restriction on Salafism after the allegation “Conservative Islam was a threat to national security” (Najibullah 2009). Bjørn Olav Utvik, writes “Many Islamist movements are involved in a bitter struggle for the establishment of democratic rules in a region dominated by authoritarian regimes, and increasingly they move towards a principled defense of popular sovereignty and political pluralism legitimated by references to the holy scriptures of Islam” (Utvik 2003; 65).

Islamic Revivalism in Kyrgyzstan as an Attempt to Create a Distinct Nationalist Identity:

Two Scholars Utvik and Adeeb Khalid while discussing Islam and its attempt to create a distinct nationalist identity in different manners came to different

conclusions. Where Utvic envisages Islam as an effort towards democratization, Adeb Khalid sees Islamic revivalism as ‘a process which assists in producing nationalists rather than democratic identities’. In the context of Uzbekistan, he explains "Islam today is widely understood in Uzbekistan in ways that are profoundly secular. . . . Islam, nation, and tradition coexist happily in Uzbekistan. A return to Islam today is widely seen as a way of reclaiming the national cultural patrimony and of decolonization, but little more” (Khalid 2003). Where Utvic sees religion as ‘a *Central tool* in Islam’, whereas, Khalid analyses religion in only instrumental terms. Islamic past, replaced the mandatory homage to the Great Russian people (Payrouse 2007;245)

Revivalism of Islam in Kyrgyzstan as a Local Response to Failing Autocratic Rule:

The fourth cause of Islamic revivalism may be seen as not only a protest for nationalism, anti-Westernism or anti-secularism, but rather as a reaction against autocratic ruler which is inefficient and incapable to provide basic needs to its people such as pensions, educations, and health care. As *Times of Central Asia* mentioned “For the facility of basic public goods, the Kyrgyz government at the beginning of the twenty-first century cannot even provide what Lenin provided at the beginning of the twentieth century: electricity on a consistent and predictable basis” (*Times of Central Asia* December 24, 2008).

In Adeb Khalid’s words, “To pay compensation for the state's inefficiency, a varied mix of Islamic organizations and institution’s local mosques, Hizb ut-Tahrir, various religious and business groupings in Osh and Kara Suu, and even the Diyanat, the Turkish government's spiritual board—are moving in and providing food, shelter, and education. Others have acknowledged a similar underlying link between state weakness and Islamic revivalism” (Khalid 2003). Kathleen Collins states "Islamism is likely to emerge as a major source of opposition when two conditions are present: when a state is characterized by significant political and economic uncertainty and when Islamist ideologues offer a counter-ideology to failed democracy and nationalism” (Collins 2008: 72). Collins's findings are unique and cooperatively practical which assess the Islamic revivalism beyond other popular theories that look for the West or with secularism and democracy. Islamic activism in Kyrgyzstan is

where religious ideals lead to developing social trust which resulted in capital aggregation. Capital produces effective Islamic business and charities which win local appreciation and thereby encourage the further spread of Islamic identities. In short, shared norms yield social and economic capital, and this growing capital, in turn, helps the further expansion of Islamic norms.

Chapter 4

Revival of Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan: A Comparative Study

The earlier Soviet nations of Central Asia included five states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These republics became free in 1991, when the Soviet Union dissolved. Since independence, the Central Asian nations have experienced rapid financial changes and political displacement. The challenges facing these republics include declining gross domestic products (GDP), in words of Sievers, “High unemployment, emigration, the collapse of industry, absence of foreign investment, and the saturation of corruption into each sector of public life. Literacy is still close to universal and education and health systems hold some of the strength of the Soviet era, but even those advantages are declining quickly” (Sievers 2003).

The largest religious community of Tajikistan is Sunni Islam. According to a 2009 U.S. State Department release the population of Tajikistan is 98% Muslim¹¹. The history of Sunni sect of Islam is 1200 years old in Central Asia. The Tajik population includes mainly Tajik Sunni Muslims, Sufis, Pamir’s Shia Muslims and Ismailis¹². Ismailis are in minority in Tajikistan and lives in remote Pamir Mountains. In spite of many invasions and massacres, Ismailism are still flourishing in the plateau. According to Harzig “While religion has not played a predominantly significant role in the politics of Kyrgyzstan, more traditional elements of Islamic values still exist despite the nation's constitution adhering to secularism. Though the constitution prevents the intrusion of any ideology or religion in the conduct of state business, a growing number of public figures have expressed support for the promotion of Islamic traditions” (Herzig 2000:246-247). The major concern of other parts of Central Asia is about non-Central Asians, which have been afraid about the potential of radicalism that would replicate Iran and Afghanistan by bringing Islamic Sharia law directly into the state policy even at the loss of the non-Islamic people.

¹¹ approximately 95% Sunni and 3% Shia

¹² first gained adherents in Central Asia in the early 10th century

The chapter analyzes the factors which accelerated Islamic revivalism of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as an outcome of various contemporary movements. The chapter also focuses on comparing the distinct nature of revivalism in both states. The first half of the chapter analyses Tajikistan and second part discusses about Kyrgyzstan.

Tajikistan at The Crossroads of Peace and Stability

The Civil War of Tajikistan was continued till five years and due to the massacre of Civil war Tajikistan undergone the worst fate of all the post-Soviet states. The consequence of the Tajik civil war was horrible. It led to the largest population displacement, tolled thousands of people; devastation was at its peak in any Central Asian state till the date. The seeding of the Civil war was done by Stalin's random model of Central Asia in the 1920s. In Central Asia only Tajik people are of non Turkic origin. They are the successors of the Persian Empire in Central Asia. Tajiks was termed as 'Sarts' in Tsarist Russian and were able to speak both Persian and Turkey. Down the centuries, the main occupation of Tajiks would have been trade and commerce in the region. Initially they were nomadic tribes involved in trades for centuries.

Stalin separated the Tajikistan from Central Asia and handed over, it's the most prominent trading and cultural cities Bukhara and Samarkand to Uzbekistan. 93% of the land remained back in the hands of Tajiks included infertile Pamir Mountains with no urban centers and with a pathetic agricultural infrastructure. According to the CIA world fact book of 2017 "In 1925, Dushanbe, the capital, was a village of 6,000, where each Monday a countryside market was held. Ignored by Moscow, Tajikistan had the lowest per capita income, the highest unemployment and birth rate and the smallest industrialization in the former Soviet Union" (CIA World Factbook 2017). Later Khujand turned into an industrial epicenter where 1million Uzbeks were living. Badakhshan remained poor. Badakhshan was occupied by Ismaili Muslims and they follow the Agha Khan. The expansion of Tajik population is from northern Afghanistan to Uzbekistan and from Badakhshan to Northern China. Due to these adverse circumstances, poverty and political un-unification, the concept of one nationhood was almost absent in Tajiks when independence came in 1991.

The living style of Tajik people is not advanced compared to other Central Asian ethnic groups. They still live in closely knit clans, disconnected, and inconsistent social units. Tajik clan is known for its contribution of the Basmachi Islamic revolt against the communists during the 1920s. In the 1980s, Soviet-Afghan war adversely affected the Tajik people of Afghanistan. As Imamkhodjaeva states “The Afghan Tajik Mujaheddin leader, Ahmad Shah Masood, became a star in Tajikistan's Islamic underground movements. Since 1995, Masood has led the anti-Taliban front, which is made up of Afghanistan's smaller ethnic groups.¹³ Independence left Tajikistan deprived of Soviet grants, foodstuffs, and economic aid, creating an instant crisis. The former Communist president, Rakhmon Nabiev, was forced to resign in September 1992, after weeks of rioting that left 2,000 dead in the streets of Dushanbe” (Imamkhodjaeva 2007:348).

The Civil war was an effort to get back the lost legitimacy of Tajik people in Stalin’s regime. As Takkar gives the detail of Tajik civil war “Opposition parties, including the Islamic Renaissance Party, and several democratic and nationalist groups, formed an association that captured power, which was bloodily toppled in December when Dushanbe was attacked by pro-Communist forces from Khujand and the southern town of Kulob. The United Tajik Opposition (UTO) set up bases in Afghanistan, from which they launched guerrilla attacks. The victors fixed Emomali Rahmonov as president, while the losers retreated to grips in Gharm, Gorno-Badakhstan and Kurgan- Tyube then the civil war began in serious. In the next five years, among a population of six million, 50,000 persons were killed and 250,000 escaped as refugees to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and elsewhere, while half a million were made homeless” (Takkar 2016). Rashid states that the civil war had the outward coloration of neo-Communists fight Islamic rebels; the main divisions were between the Tajik clans - the Kulobi and Khujand clans versus the more Islamic Kurgan-Tyube and Gharm clans. At the same time, the poorly controlled pro-government, local militia, led by clan warlords, raged through the countryside, causing chaos. Some 8,000 Russian border guards and other troops posted along the Afghan- Tajikistan border, through which arms and drugs flowed, supported the government, but took no part in the struggle inside the country (Rashid 2002). He further mentions “Dreading the conflict would spread; other Central Asian states also sent troops to back up the

¹³ the members of the Taliban coming mostly from the majority Pashtun ethnic group

Russians. Foreign envoys escaped Dushanbe as the capital became the target of bombs, shootouts, and murders. As the economy collapsed, even food production terminated, and the government pledged its industrial assets to Moscow to pay for Russian loans, arms, food, and fuel” (Rashid 2002). A new threat was taking shape in Afghanistan as Taliban with objective of establishment of Islamic state so under pressure of Russia and other Central Asian states Rahmonov agreed to a truce in 1997. A new challenge was ahead in form of Taliban as a matter of concern for Russia and the Central Asian states, therefore, Rahmonov provided Masood with a base in Kulob, from which he received military assistance from Russia and Iran.

The civil war proved a landmark for Tajikistan’s Islamic community because it was the first time that the states, neo-Communist politicians were enforced to share sovereignty with local Islamic leaders. The situation became even more critical when Fergana sandwiched by attacks from two sides in 1999-2000. The Uzbek militants of IMU invaded Fergana from North side in summer 1999 to demolish Uzbek rule of Islam Karimov. From south side, IMU attacked in 2000 which was based in Afghanistan under Taliban’s control. The economy, administration, territories and infrastructure of Tajikistan got destroyed. The government lost its control over territories. The opium trafficking via Afghanistan to Europe has become a major factor in the country's continued decline. However, the IMF and the World Bank have raised their helping hand towards Tajikistan and permitted loans for its renovation, one more indigenous agency, the Agha Khan Foundation has launched a development program in Gorno-Badakhstan. But in spite of all, Tajikistan still remained at the junction of peace and stability in Central Asia, encountering both the Uzbek militants in Fergana to the north and the Taliban threat from the south.

Islamization of Tajikistan

With the independence of Central Asian countries, Tajikistan returned back to Islamic ideology. This returning back of Tajikistan into the Islamic world influenced geopolitics of Tajikistan in significant manner. According to Ubaidulloev “An estimated 99% of Tajikistan’s citizens are Muslims. From this amount, 97 % of the

country's Muslims belong to Hanafi school of Sunni sect of Islam¹⁴ and the remained part; about 3 % of all Tajikistan Muslims belong to an Ismaili branch of Shi'a sect of Islam¹⁵ (Ubaidulloev 2000). Almost all of Ismailis of Tajikistan lives in the Autonomous Province of remote mountain valley of Badakhshan. The incidents of religious conflicts between these two communities are rare. Aga Khan, the religious leader of Ismaili's pertains healthy relation with the ruling class and Tajikistan's people as well. The helping hands of the Agha Khan Organization support not only the Ismaili community of Badakhshan province, but also Sunni, Christians, Zoroastrians, Bahais and Bukhari Jews etc.

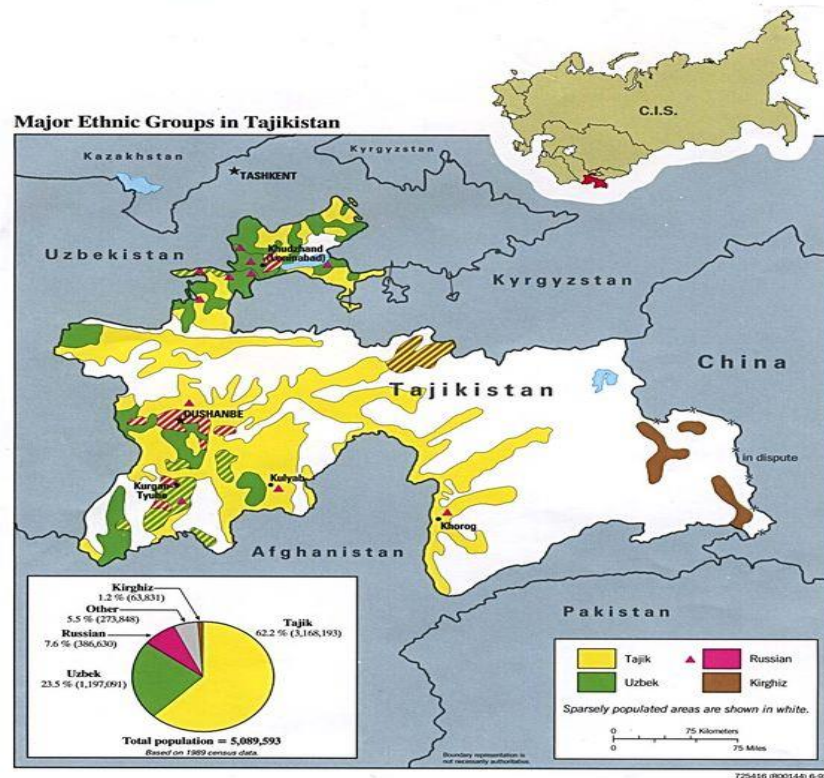
Islam is definitely the dominant religion in Tajikistan. According to an official estimate, In 2013 about 4% of Tajiks ascertain themselves as non-Muslims. Though, some approximations suggest more numbers of non-Muslims.¹⁶ (CIA 2013) There are certainly some active Christian communities in Tajikistan, such as the Orthodox, Baptist and Evangelical Churches. Hoji Ibodullo Kalonzoda, the esteemed imam-khatib of the Nuri Islam mosque in Khujand, mentioned that "In Soviet times there were only 16 mosques in the entire territory of Tajikistan, while there are currently between 3,000 and 4,000 mosques" (Thibault 2014).

¹⁴ The Hanafi school is one of the four religious Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence (fiqh). It is named after the scholar Abū Ḥanīfa an-Nu'man ibn Thābit , Hanafi is the fiqh with the largest number of followers among Sunni Muslims.

¹⁵ Tracing its earliest theology to the lifetime of Muhammad, Ismailism rose at one point to become the largest branch of Shī'ism, climaxing as a political power with the Fatimid Caliphate in the tenth through twelfth centuries. Ismailis believe in the oneness of God, as well as the closing of divine revelation with Muhammad, whom they see as "the final Prophet and Messenger of God to all humanity". The Ismā'īlī accept the same initial Imams from the descendants of Muhammad through his daughter Fatimah and therefore share much of their early history. They consider the family of Muhammad (*the Ahl al-Bayt*) as divinely chosen, infallible (*ismah*), and guided by God to lead the Islamic community (*Ummah*), a belief that distinguishes them from the majority Sunni branch of Islam.

¹⁶ For example, in 2012 a Turkish Information agency reported 95% Muslims (Islam News 2013b). Also, a 2003 estimate reported 85% Sunni Muslim, 5% Shia Muslim and 10% other religions (CIA 2013).

Map 1: Major Ethnic Groups in Tajikistan



(Source: UN Tajikistan Information Platform)

A 1996 IFES survey found that only one percent of Tajiks offers Namaj five times daily (Wagner 1997;111), but in 2010, this percentage had jumped to 63% (IFES 2011, 41).¹⁷ Presence at Friday prayers had also improved intensely, from 13% in 1996 to 52% in 2010. Tajikistan is the only Central Asian republic to have a legal Islamic political party, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (henceforth referred to as the IRPT), incorporated into the country's power structure in 1997 as a consequence of the signing of a peace agreement¹⁸ (Kabiri 2002: 55). According to the study, the number of followers (including all religions) in Tajikistan has increased from 66% to 85% between 1970 and 1995 and is now one of the highest rates in the former Soviet states. Diverse statistics show that in 1987, 45% of Tajiks identified as

¹⁷ Participants were asked about the number of times they prayed a day; 41% of the respondents prayed 1 to 5 times a day, but only 1% prayed 5 times a day.

¹⁸ The agreement devised the allocation of 30% of the ministerial positions to the opposition, a provision that was slowly implemented and which remained largely unaccomplished. Yet, in 1999, 5,377 veterans of the United Tajik Opposition joined the Army ranks as well as frontier and regular police services (Khamadov and Olimov 2003, 52).

believers (Hiro 1995:197). Scholars admit that Islam in Central Asia has become involved in national politics due to the fact that it is used for the purposes of legitimacy.

Islam and Secularism in Tajikistan

The first year after independence of Tajikistan was the toughest period ever due to the Civil War. Tajikistan was the only state among Central Asian states which faced bloody Civil War between 1992-1997. This Civil War was between newly revived Islamic groups and Soviet seculars. Some scholars signify this war as ‘a battle between Islamic fundamentalists and the forces of secularism and stability’ (Grave and Akiner 1997). The 1st year of independence of Tajikistan brought Islam not only as a religion, but also as a political movement. Islamic awakening in Tajikistan has made promises to meet its intrinsic challenges which Communism could not. The uncertainty posed by the Tajikistan by Civil War gave threshold to Islamic revival which in the region through wide acceptance of Islamic practices and rituals and the establishment of new mosques. It also shaped political Islam, i.e. the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, United Tajik Opposition (UTO). Najibullah rightly puts “The peace agreement was signed in 1997 in Moscow between Emomali Rahmon (then Rahmonov), Tajikistan’s president, and Sayyed Abdullo Nuri, the leader of the UTO, who at the same time was the chairman of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan” (Najibullah 2012).

Behind The Tajik Peace Agreement the efforts of the UTO and government, as well as Russia, Iran and other countries worked. The negotiations between 1994-1997 are of historical importance which changed the agenda of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan from radicalism to liberalism. Today IRPT is the only legally registered Islamic political party in entire Central Asia. The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan now as the key oppositional party is functioning for elementary principles of Islam to be implemented in the ideological and political context of Tajikistan. Najibullah States that “At present, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan complies with the country's constitution, which backs the secular system in Tajikistan. 97 percent of Tajikistani Muslims belong to Hanafi school of Sunni sect of Islam. According to Muhiddin Kabiri, the former Chairman of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, the Hanafi school of Sunni sect does not support the

idea of theocratic governments, so, no one should rule a country in the name of God. Therefore, according to Kabiri, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan is not seeking to create an Islamic state or an Islamic republic in Tajikistan. As an alternative, it wants to create an Islamic society and its most vital objective is the creation of a society that governs by Islamic values” (Najibullah 2012).

Constitutionally, Tajikistan is a secular country. So this reason prevents government from any religious support to any religious institution in any form. But the law does not prohibit the local or outside funding for religious constructions. Tajikistan gave a courageous response to the religious vacuum of Central Asian countries in its own unique manner. After independence, the Tajik government tried to restore its national identity by declaring 2006 the Aryan’s year. Establishing the Zoroastrian religion as the main religion before the advent of Islam in Bactria¹⁹. Thus the government of Tajikistan attached its identity with Zoroastrianism. However, the present Tajikistan adopted democratic values and secularism, but in its very depth the Islam remains as its religious, cultural and socio-political identity.

Map 2: Political Map of Tajikistan



(Source:www.maps.com)

¹⁹ The land of Tajikistan and Afghanistan was collectively known as Bactria.

Since constitutionally, Tajikistan is a secular state, however, its government is promoting and patronizing the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam by a new law adopted by Tajik parliament *Majlisi Oli* on religion and religious organization on March 2009 which favors the Hanafi school of Islam. Imam of the Hanafi school, Imam Abu Hanifa, has got appreciation of President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, who has called him an ‘outstanding son of the Tajik people’. The President also signed a decree to declare 2009 a year of Imam Azam Abu Hanifa in Tajikistan and officially organized a seminar entitled ‘Heritage of Imam Abu Hanifa in the Context of Inter-Civilization Dialogue: Past and Present’ in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan on 5th to 6th October 2009, in which more than 500 delegates from 46 countries participated (Asia plus 2009). The Tajik government seeks its cultural identity in Hanafi sect. Establishing Islam as its cultural and religious base, Tajik people are fostering their contacts with the outer world and adopting their values to broaden connections with other civilizations.

The secular political regime is playing a dual character simultaneously. On the one hand, despite of being secular, it supports particular religious groups, (United Press International Sept 8, 2007), however, on the other hand, invited bitter reactions by many Islamic communities for breaking several unlicensed mosques (Report on International Religious Freedom, July 2012). By a law *Majlisi Oli* restricted the people under 18 years from attending religious services at the Mosques (Schwartz 2011). Project director for Central Asia at International Crisis Group, Paul Quinn-Judge asserts that government policies could be disastrous for Tajikistan (Orange 2011). Former First Deputy Prime Minister of Tajikistan, Haji Akbar Turajonzoda has voiced his concern on ‘secular extremism’ in ‘talk of Islamic radicalism in Tajikistan is a fib’ (Schwartz 2011).

Controversial Religious Laws Against Islam Passed by the Government of Tajikistan

Many religious laws are passed by *Majlisi Oli*, which are considered as a tool against radical Islam by Tajikistan government and invited bitter criticism from around the world. Some recent obligatory religious policies of the Tajikistani Government are-

1. Islamic services at the Masjid cannot be performed by people under 18 years and are legally banned (Schwartz, 2011).
2. Those Tajikistan's students, which are studying in foreign Islamic institutions without the approval of government, are called back from Iran, Iraq and Egypt etc. (International Religious Freedom Report 2011).
3. In 2007, Ministry of Education prohibited *Hijab* wearing by Muslim women in educational institutions. Only students of Islamic institutes can have *Hijab* (UNHCR 24 August 2010)
4. The teachers less than 50 years of age cannot have beards. Above 50 aged teachers are not allowed to have beards more than 3 c.m.s. (International Religious Freedom Report 2010).
5. The Government banned all private religious schools (International Religious Freedom Report 2010).
6. The new law of religion reserves the right of appointment of *Imams* or *Khatibs* of Islamic institutions (International Religious Freedom Report 2009).
7. Council of *Ulema* from 2004 prohibited praying of women in the Masjid, emphasizing that women should pray at home only (International Religious Freedom Report 2005).
8. Council of *Ulema* released a *fatwa* from 2012 stating that the beard of man must not be greater than his fist (International Religious Freedom Report 2011).

Resurrection of Ismailis (Shia sect of Islam) in Tajikistan

Ismailia, a branch of Shi'a sect of Islam, was most popular in Central Asia during the 10th century, by the contributions of great Scientists, philosophers, thinkers and poets, as well as the distinguished Ismaili scholar Nasir Khusraw, known as a great philosopher and poet across the region. The Badakhshan mountainous province is the adobe of the Ismailis of Tajikistan. In order to conduct liberal relation across the borders, the present Ismaili's Imam travelled in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan at the request of their governments in May 1995, which followed with many other visits to Tajikistan afterwards. As a result of Soviet atheistic policy, Ismailis of Tajikistan were forced to practice their faith in secret for decades.

The collapse of Communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union enabled a great opportunity for them to practice their religion and follow their spiritual leaders and norms freely. The independence brought the Sunni majority of Tajikistan in contact of Ismaili's leader Aga Khan's engagement with the country. In the mountainous region of Central Asia and South Asia Ismaili sect is dominant and particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan the Ismaili believers are widespread who follow and worship Agha Khan.

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is an International charitable religious foundation of the Imam Agha Khan, who has brought his followers in Tajikistan not for only Spiritual Renaissance but to spread its influence beyond the borders. The AKDN working domain is very vast and assimilates many dimensions like infrastructure, culture and health care. The trust also works to increase the prosperity of the region by support and establishment program of the government, private sector and civil society coordination. The major role of AKDN is to play corresponding roles in increasing prosperity and creativity within a multi-ethnic society. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and during the civil war AKDN has been engaged in charitable causes in Badakhshan province. As Iloliev states "The Aga Khan Development Network has funded enormous amount to construct the University of Central Asia in Khorog (Tajikistan), four bridges over the Panj river in Tajikistan connecting with Afghanistan, energy company Pamir Energo, hydro-power stations, first Micro-Finance Bank, etc. The Ismaili Centre, Dushanbe was opened on 12 October 2009 by Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, and Imam Agha Khan. It is the first such center in Central Asia. Ismailism in Badakhshan province (Pamir area) of Tajikistan is a fascinating, but comparatively ignored field in research and studies on culture and religion of the minority cultures within the divergent Islamic civilization, especially of Central Asia" (Iloliev 2008).

Influence of IRP in Tajikistan

The IRP till 2003 did not have broader recognition with only a handful members and few opposition figures had government positions. The government sought to sideline the Muslims in other ways, manipulating the "war on terrorism" to put further pressure on the IRP. According to ICG report "In July 2002, after three Tajik citizens were arrested by coalition forces in Afghanistan and sent to

Guantanamo Bay, Rakhmonov travelled to the northern town of Isfara, and made a significant speech, marking a shift in government policy on relations with Islam” (ICG Asia Report N°59, 10 July 2003). The Government criticized the IRP as ‘engaged in indoctrinating people in a spirit of extremism, which may lead to a split in society’. The Government claimed that extremism was being propagated in mosques where IRP members were working as clergy and asserted that there were far more mosques than needed – allegedly more than twice as many mosques as schools. Rakhmonov asserted in one of his speeches, “There has been a significant clamp down on unregistered mosques, many of which have been closed, and a number of imams have been dismissed for *political activities*. Many of the actions and allegations are alleged to be spurious, more an attempt to root out political opposition than seriously to prevent the growth of religious extremism”. Indeed, the restrictions on Islam and over the practices of Imam made Government away from religious leaders and increased dissatisfaction among Muslims.

Map 3: Political Map of Kyrgyzstan



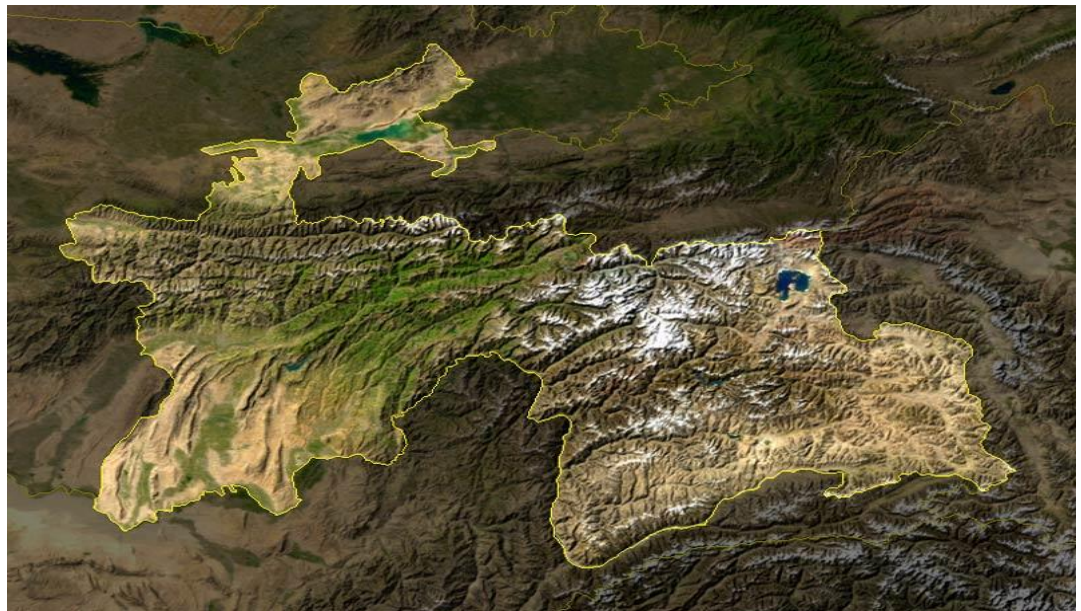
(Source: www.openasia.asia)

Kyrgyzstan since Independence

Kyrgyzstan is on the eastern part of Central Asia and shares a border with China. As CIA puts “It has a population of 5.3 million people, with Kyrgyz the main

ethnic group. Uzbeks are second, with 13.8% of the population, and Russians are third, with 12.5% of the population. Other ethnicities include Dungans, Uygurs, Ukrainians, Germans, Koreans, Kazakhs, and Tajiks. The country is 198.3 thousand square kilometers (about the size of North Dakota), of which 94 percent is 1,000 meters or more above sea level. With a per capita GDP of \$2,200” (CIA 2009, 2008 estimate). According to Levy it is the second poorest of the republics, after Tajikistan. Kyrgyzstan is recognized for its wonderful mountain sites. For a number of years in the late 1990s, its struggling tourist sector tried to popularize the nickname, *the Switzerland of Central Asia*. Kyrgyzstan is also known for its government’s uneven attempts at democratization and economic liberalization. Despite the conspicuous corruption in his regime, Kyrgyzstan’s first president, Askar Akayev, was a favorite of the western development agencies. In 2005, Kyrgyzstan was the site of the last in a series of *colored revolutions* in formerly Soviet nations. Akayev was deposed by a coalition of opposition leaders led by Kurmanbek Bakiyev. As president, Bakiyev continues to court liberal donors and the western development sector, but his administration exhibits unmistakable authoritarian tendencies (Levy 2009).

Map 4: Satellite Photograph of Tajikistan



(Source: NASA World Wind)

The 93% of area (76000 square miles), of Kyrgyzstan is covered with beautiful mountain ranges have always concealed a tougher life for its people. Kyrgyz

migrants were once part of Genghis Khan's golden flock. As Rashid states "Kyrgyzstan's 4.4 million people are outshined five times by their herds of goats, sheep, cattle, and horses, and they have few other properties. In the decade after the Russian Revolution, Kyrgyz battled against the Soviets, famine, forced migration, and collectivization that led to the death of an estimated one-fourth of the entire Kyrgyz population" (Rashid 2002: 23).

The country's first president, Askar Akayev, a former university professor, struggled for ten years to take his country out of the economic crisis. Imamkhodjaeva states "After independence in 1991, financial aid from Moscow dried up, dropping the country into the worst economic crisis suffered by any Central Asian state. Inflation rose to a staggering 1,200 percent in 1993" (Imamkhodjaeva 2007: 339) According to Olcott as industrial production embarked and Kyrgyzstan lost its Soviet market for its dairy products. However, Akayev vowed to turn Kyrgyzstan into a Central Asian Switzerland, announcing a neutral foreign policy and introducing market reforms (Olcott 2005). In 1993, Kyrgyzstan was first in the region to adopt an IMF program and to introduce privatization in return for loans. In the early 1990s, Kyrgyzstan introduced new currency and European states with Japan supported Akayev's reform plan. The lack of resources and dependency on mercy of neighboring states for much needed supplies of oil and gas made Kyrgyzstan weak and vulnerable. As Rashid states about the economic condition of Kyrgyzstan "Multinationals were hesitant to invest in major infrastructure projects, particularly electrical grids and dams for irrigation. Instead, Kyrgyzstan collected a mountain of international debt, which in 1999 totaled \$1.27 billion, the largest per capita debt of any Central Asian state. Kyrgyzstan has now defaulted on debt repayments to some lenders" (Rashid 2002: 69). With the worsening conditions of unemployment, poverty, underdevelopment and political discontentment Akayev tightened his grip on power. However, politically Kyrgyzstan has some good signs as it had been the only Central Asian state to hold free democratic elections, comparatively free press, a developing parliamentary opposition with which Akayev come across frequently.

In 1996 onwards, the political unrest invigorated in the republic in form of dispute over power sharing. Corruption scandals smeared the governance, which resulted in a steep fall in the popularity of Akayev in home and abroad as well. Voices of protest arose not only from political parties, but also from Kyrgyzstan's multi

ethnic groups. Akayev had to acknowledge the demands of a substantial Russian population which is 22% of total population to prevent brain drain out of the republic. To compensate the situation Akayev established a Slavic university in the Bishkek to prevent Russians migration and in 1999, he declared Russian language equivalent to Kyrgyz, but these policies led to more protests by indigenous Kyrgyz people. Inter-ethnic pressure have intensified with Uzbeks control over Osh and Fergana as a protest for their equal status with indigenous Kyrgyz people in the republic.

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan made allegations to Akayev that he adversely influenced their democratization by provoking Islamic fundamentalism. In 1999, in response Uzbekistan restricted the supply of oil and gas to Kyrgyzstan. In an appeasing response, Akayev ordered to arrest radicals and made the registration of all Islamic shrines and institutions mandatory. In summer 1999, an Afghanistan based Uzbek militant group occupied southern Kyrgyzstan, capturing several villages and taking hostages. The invaders made a demand of safe passage to Fergana where they planned to make establishment for invasions against the Uzbek regime. The incident posed a grave challenge for Kyrgyz political regime and about 8000 Kyrgyz army personnel lost their lives in struggle with Uzbek militants

Hansen puts "In July 2000, the Ughyur protesters started sparking a new crisis. In the meantime, China has become a major provider of aid and trade, though pressing Kyrgyzstan to restrain its Uighur minority" (Hansen 2008:220). The issue of Uighurs was still challenging for Kyrgyzstan, as Chinese Muslims community Ughurs were residents of Xinjiang and have long struggled for independence from China. Kyrgyzstan's Uighurs have given underground support by their ethnic members. To appease China numbers of Uighurs in Bishkek were arrested and detained. Militant Islam has brought the anxious states closer together. Stobdan states "In August 1999, Akayev hosted a summit meeting of the five countries, whose leaders assured to cooperate in fighting worldwide terrorism, the unlawful drug trade, arms trafficking, illegal migration, separatism and religious extremism" (Stobdan 2014).

According to Rashid, Kyrgyzstan is now getting military aid from the United States, Russia, and China. During Secretary of State Albright's visit to Bishtek in March 2000, she proclaimed that Washington would provide \$3 million to help equip Kyrgyz border guards (Rashid 2002: 71). However, Kyrgyzstan's government was

surrounded by multiple crises which led Akayev rivaling his neighbors by disagreements, muting opponents, silencing the media, and fixing the home elections. As Rashid mentions “In February 2000, Most opposition parties were barred from taking part in parliamentary elections, provoking strikes and complaints, as foreign donors criticized the elections as undemocratic, financially weak republic equipped with powerless military to defend itself, and affected with ethnic problems, Kyrgyzstan has gone from being a model for others in a country completely dependent on the goodwill of its neighbors” (Rashid 2002: 69).

Map 5: US Military bases in Central Asia and the Middle East



(Source: www.gobalresearch.ca)

Kyrgyzstan and Islam

According to CIA, 2009, Islam is the dominant faith in the republic, with 75% of Kyrgyz citizens professing Islam. (Orthodox Christianity is second, with 20 %.)” (CIA 2009). Islam was first brought to Central Asia in the ninth century by Arab

armies, who were followed, in later centuries, by Sufi missionaries (Beckwith 2009). Central Asia has been already host to a variety of other professions, including Buddhism, Judaism, Nestorian Christianity, Zoroastrianism and tribal practices and beliefs which Soviet scientists called shamanism, animism, and ancestor worship (Foltz 1999). Although socialist publicity reduced religious interest among many classes, religious sentiment and sources of knowledge survived in enervated but determined form (Saroyan 1997). Official attacks on Islam weakened its institutional infrastructure, but a number of underground movements survived, and Citizens maintained a collective sense of Islamic identity and an appreciation for Islam's core doctrines (Fathi 1997;Shahrani 1991; Tett 1994).

21st Century Central Asia is under the process of faith revival. The faith in Islam and Christianity is growing and the missionaries from the surroundings converting faiths freely without any legal boundation. Saroyan says, "Islamic practice was privatized during the socialist era" (Saroyan 1997; Tett 1994), whereas according to Khalid and other scholars its vitality and diversity are increasingly on display today (Khalid 2007; Montgomery 2007; Roberts 2007). Tett throws light on Islam as Islamic practice differs from one city to the next, one neighborhood to the next, even one household to the next. Central Asian maintain a mixed array of rituals, from weekly household performances to prayers at tombs and holly springs. This diversity, grounded in local collective memory and geography, is often described as the reason Islam was able to survive the Soviet era and return with such vitality (Tett 1994).

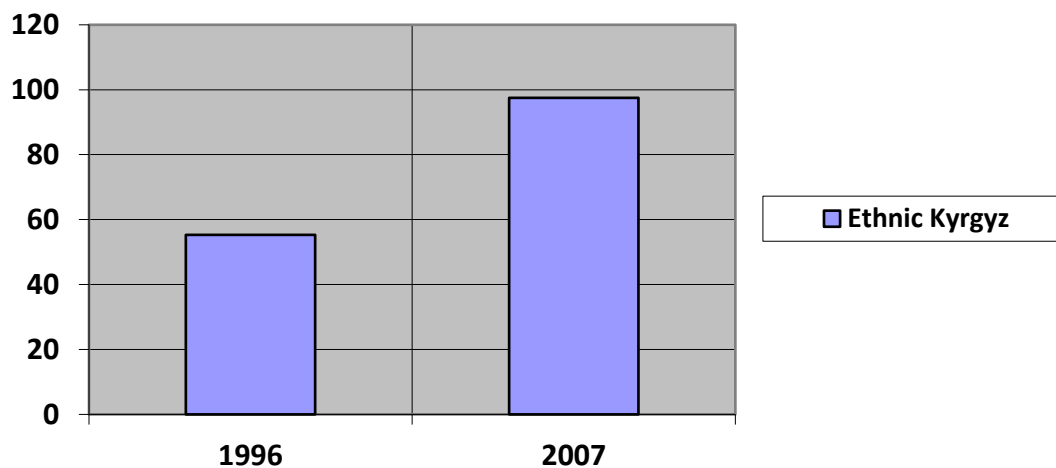
Islamic Revival in Kyrgyzstan

Many scholars envisaged Islam as a threat to the Central Asian states, but close examination suggests that Islam is the way to cope with the problems arising due to ineffectiveness of states. With the announcement of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev on December 1989, during a state visit to the Vatican to all Soviet citizens that "All have the right to satisfy their spiritual needs" (Haberman 1989). Kyrgyzstan started exploring different religious identities, including Islam. The revival of Islam in Kyrgyzstan has a distinct character than that of Tajikistan. Kyrgyzstan's Islamic revival is being shaped by social restrictions, rapid development of international communications and networks. Principal theories about Islamic revival in Central Asia, i.e. Islam as a reaction to western hegemony, as a response to secularism and as

a manifestation of nationalism etc. fail to characterize the Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan. Recent field studies and surveys indicate that the Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan is the product of failing Kyrgyz state rather than trans-national reasons.

In Kyrgyzstan, there are three emerging dimensions of Islam. First is traditional Islam or Muftiate, second is conservative Islam and the third one is Political Islam, i.e. groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir. Most of the literature of the central Asia is now a day focussing on radical Islam (Collins 2008; 64-96). According to a poll commissioned by IFES in November 1996, 55.3% of Kyrgyz identified themselves as Muslim.²⁰ In a decade since 1996, the number of Kyrgyz Muslims expanded dramatically and till may 2007, 97.5% of Kyrgyz reported themselves as Muslims.²¹

Figure 1. Changing Perceptions of Islamic Identity in Kyrgyzstan, 1996 and 2007 (percent)

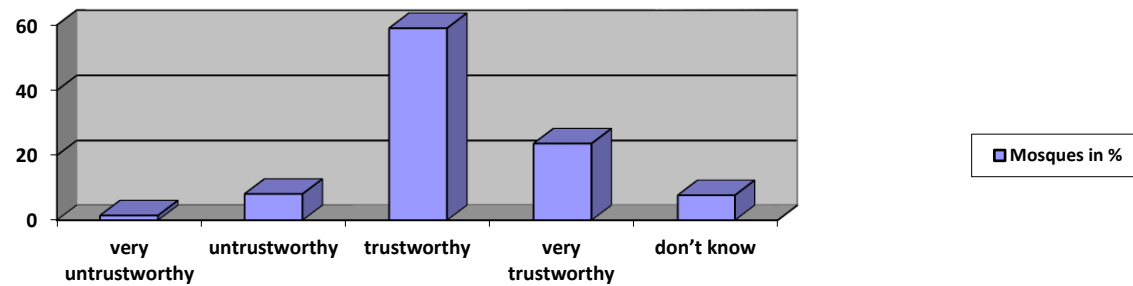


(Source - McGlinchey, Eric (2009), Islamic Revivalism and State Failure in Kyrgyzstan: Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 56, no. 3, M.E. Sharpe)

²⁰ A total of 812 ethnic Kyrgyz were polled in the 1996 survey

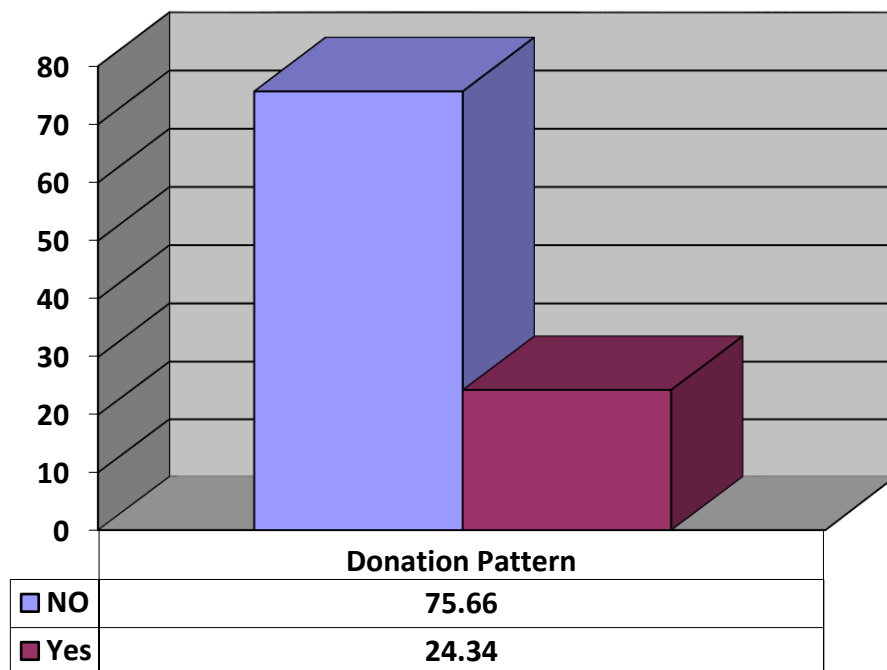
²¹ A total of 645 ethnic Kyrgyz were polled in the 2007 survey.

Figure 2: Perceptions of local mosques in Kyrgyzstan



(Source - McGlinchey, Eric (2009), Islamic Revivalism and State Failure in Kyrgyzstan : Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 56, no. 3, M.E. Sharpe)

Figure 3. Patterns of Time and Money Donation to Religious Charities (% of respondents)

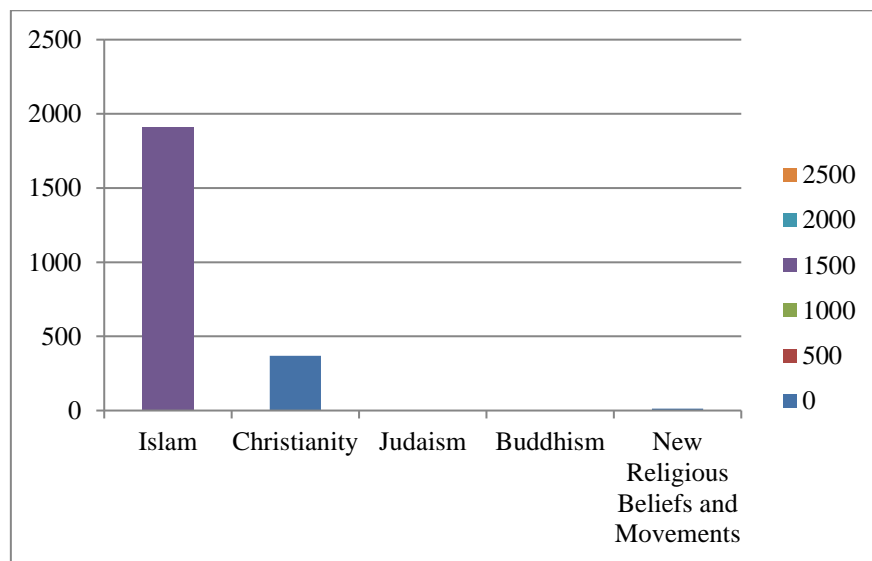


(Source - McGlinchey, Eric (2009), Islamic Revivalism and State Failure in Kyrgyzstan : Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 56, no. 3, M.E. Sharpe)

Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori observe that Islam is not only identified by specific rituals because in the course of time these get modified and changed constantly (Dale F. Eickelman and James P. Piscatori 493; 2001).

Mosques and Islamic charitable organizations, both are playing a vital role in the Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan. 80% of Muslims in Kyrgyzstan are reported to be involved in charity and donation in terms of time and money. (Figure 3).

Figure 4: Religious organizations, religious education and worship institutions in Kyrgyzstan



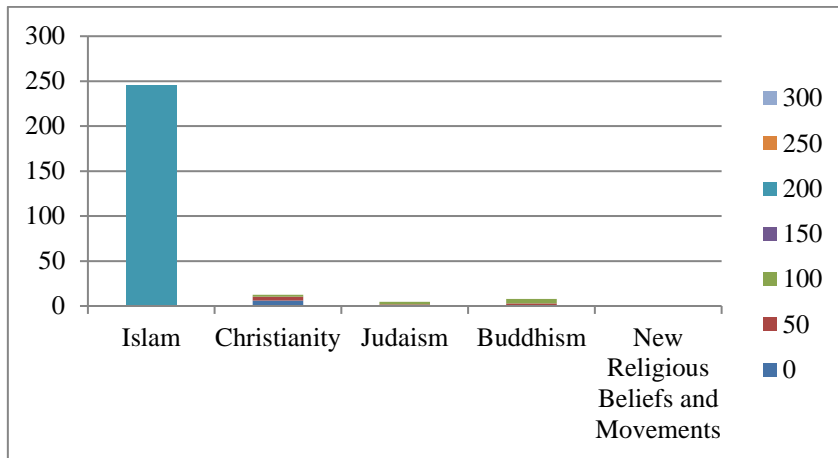
(Source: Open Viewpoint Public Foundation, 2011)

The Religious Movements in Kyrgyzstan

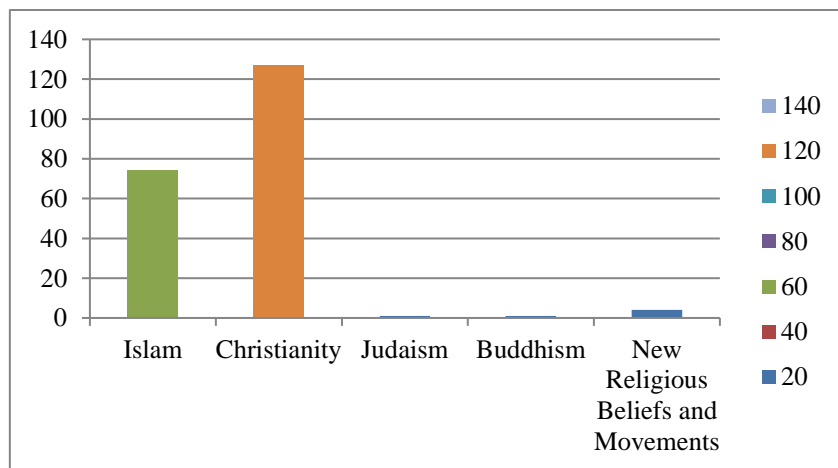
The diagrams below shows distribution of religious movements on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic. These diagrams don't show the distribution of any particular religious followers. These data are based on record of time bound registrations of religious organizations. It should also be noted that the article 18 of the International covenant on Civil and political rights says that atheist people come under secularism. Atheists are considered as a part of religious freedom, but atheistic views were not addressed in this overview.

Figure 5: Ethnic Distribution in Major Regions of Kyrgyzstan

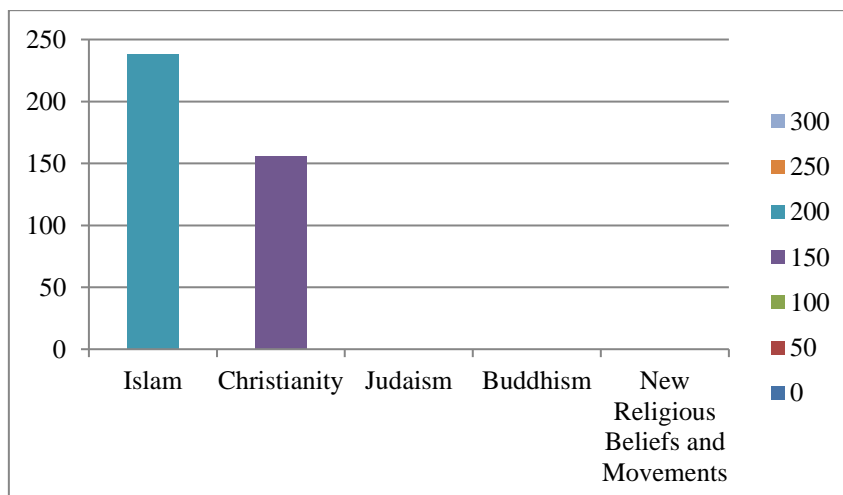
5.1: Batken & Batken oblast



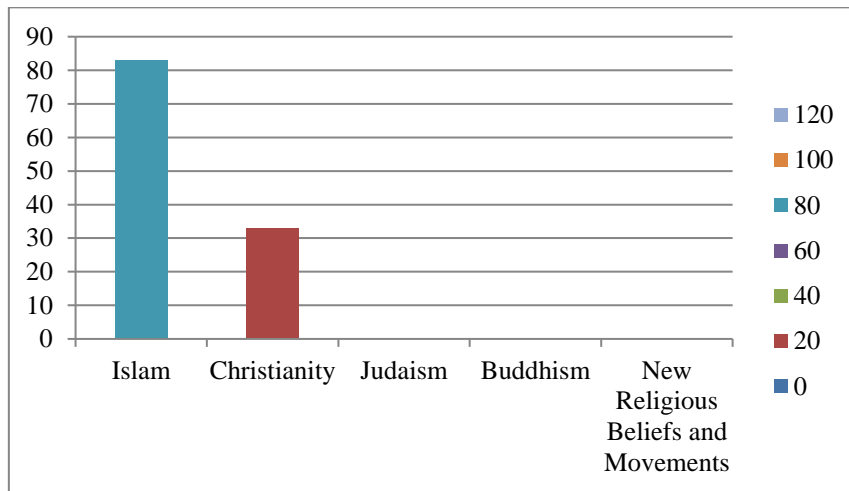
5.2: Bishkek



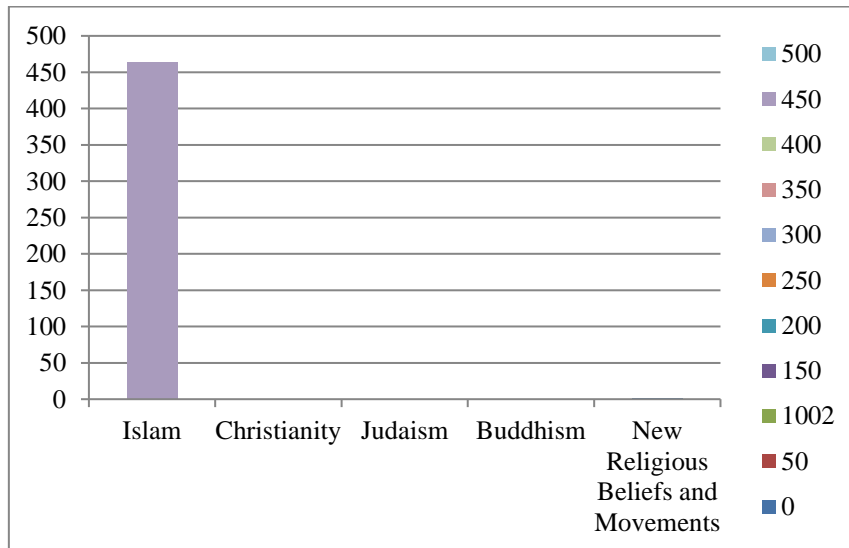
5.3: Chui oblast



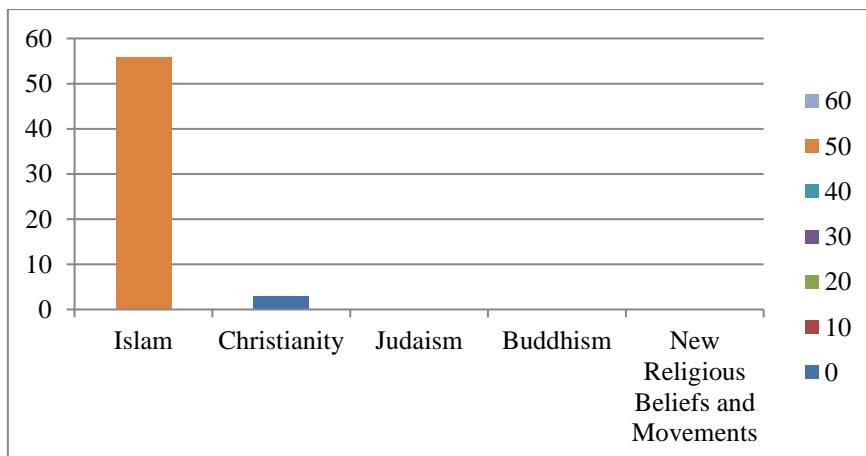
5.4: Issyk-kul oblast



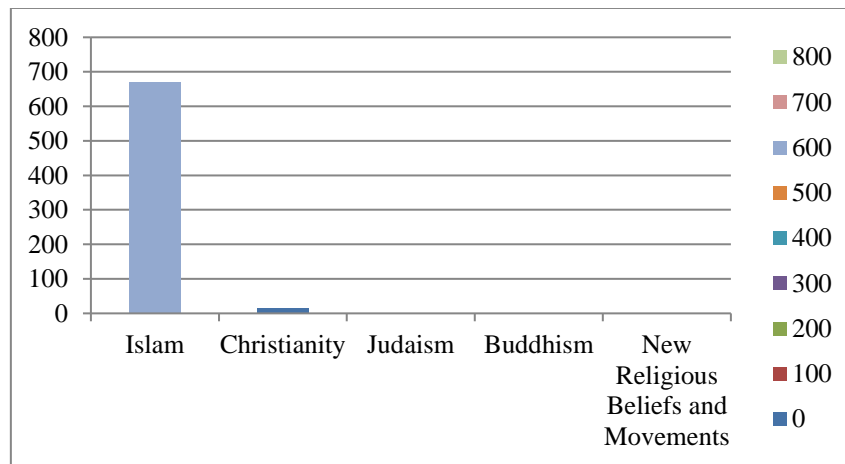
5.5 : Jalal-Abad & Jalal-Abad oblast



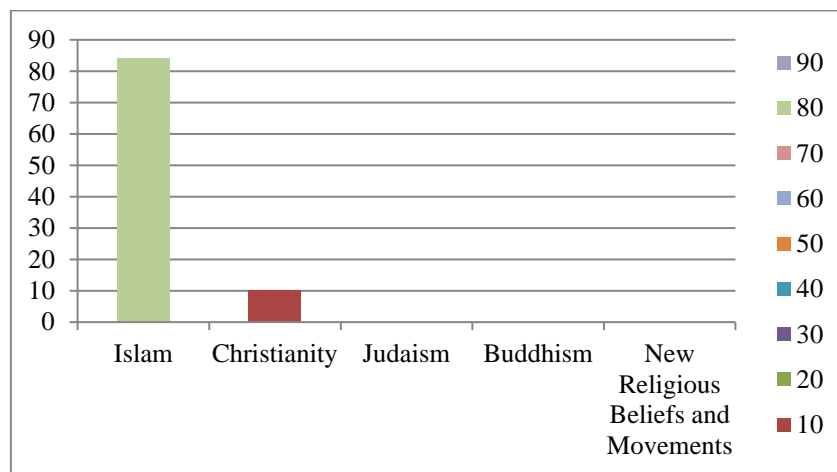
5.6: Naryn & Naryn oblast



5.7: Osh & Osh oblast



5.8: Talas & Talas oblast



(Source - McGlinchey, Eric (2009), Islamic Revivalism and State Failure in Kyrgyzstan : Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 56, no. 3, M.E. Sharpe)

The Muftiate: A Secular Edition of Islam

Second President Kurmanbek Bakiev termed the Muftiate as signifying the ‘true essence of Islam, its tolerance and peaceableness’, and realizes the muftiate’s role as acute in informing Kyrgyz Muslims that ‘true Islam has nothing to do with religious extremist movements’ (Kabar 2006) The true spirit Bakiev is denoting to is Hanafi Islam, one of the four institutes of Sunni Islam, and famous for its tolerance of diversity ‘theological, philosophical, and mystical positions’ (Nasr 1996; 113).

Muftiate is considered as moderate Islam and fit in the Soviet parameter of secularism. Muftiate performs its Islamic practices with reverence to state interests in Kyrgyzstan. Muftiate assigns legitimacy to Imams by examining their Islamic

knowledge of the Koran and Sharia laws. In May 2008, about 2000 imams were called to be tested by Muftiate in Kyrgyzstan from which only half of them agreed to take the Muftiate 'attestation' exam²²(lexisnexis.com May 21, 2008). As McGlinchey states "The acceptance of Muftiate as an Islamic substitute is being questioned by various reputed leaders in Kyrgyzstan. In 2006, many students of the Islamic university protested against a controversial decision of Russia appointed Mufti as to when to celebrate the holiday of Kurban Ait (*Id al-Adha*), instead of, as insisted by Kyrgyzstan's earlier mufti, Sadykzhan Kamalov, to celebrate at the same time as the rest of the Muslim world" (McGlinchey 2009).

Reformist Islam in Kyrgyzstan

The reformists criticize Muftiate for its controversial and un-traditional approach to Islam. In Kyrgyzstan, Dzhumanov is the leading Mufti. Many unsatisfied voices mobilized an institutional protest under the leadership of Kamalov family in Kyrgyzstan's southern Fergana Valley region (Kabar 2006). This family has made loudest protest against Muftiate for deteriorating Islamic values in favor of Russian political interest. Komalovs have often been portrayed as followers of Wahhabism or Salafism. These both sects are known to be working for the purification of true Islam from Soviet influences (Wiktorowicz 2000; 219). Kamalov states that Muftiate is trying to destroy the 1400 years old Islamic values, encourages 'distorted practices' by worshiping shrines and practicing birth and death rites. They are collecting money by exploiting ignorant Islamic people of Kyrgyzstan (McGlinchey 2009). It is worth emphasizing that the Islamic followers of Kyrgyzstan are divided into two groups i.e. Southern clergy and Muftiate. Both the groups are mutually in rift.

The influence of Political Islam in Kyrgyzstan

The objective of Hizb-ut Tahrir in Uzbekistan is to replace secular Central Asian government with a Muslim caliphate uniting all Muslims under one Islamic authority. This objective of Hizb-ut Tahrir led to its outlawed status. In the past few years Hizb-ut Tahrir came to strengthen its influence in the villagers and mobilized many sympathizers at local level in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan. This is not

²² "Koran Test Reveals Kyrgyz Imams with 'Extremist' Links," Kyrgyz Television 1 (May 21, 2008), www.lexisnexis.com. Of those who did take the exam, 982 ultimately passed.

because of anti-Western and anti- Semitic ideology of the Kyrgyz people, but because of Hizb-ut Tahrir's ability to mobilize residents by providing services to the local which the government could not. Hizb-ut Tahrir assisted the villagers to repair the irrigation system of the village's apricot groves and consistently involved in many charities to meet basic welfare needs of society (McGlinchey 2009).

Influence of Tabligh Group (Pakistan Educated Group) in Kyrgyzstan

The large portion of population of Kyrgyzstan, In general, follow the traditional Hanafi school of Islam. Whereas, minority follows Wahhabism, but they are relatively rare. Hizb ut-Tahrir is popular in the southern part among ethnic Uzbeks some groups are influenced by students who have studied abroad. Tabligh group is one of that group which includes mostly young men who studied at madrasas and Maqtabas in Pakistan. According to 2003 ICG report "Tabligh carry out what they call *Dawaa*, the call to Islam. They travel around the country in traditional Pakistani dress, knocking on doors or approaching people on the street and telling them to go to the mosque. They are particularly concerned about social and moral problems and claim to have a positive impact on issues such as prostitution and drug-trafficking" (ICG 2003).

Tabligh has been registered as a group in Kyrgyzstan since 1996. The showcased their Islamic service to people and receive special permission from the Muftiate for their movement in the region. But some of their activities seem worrisome for government officials who find their dresses and attitudes alarming According to 2003, ICG report "Some are concerned that they are not controlled strongly enough, If the Muftiate controlled even 10 percent of them that would be good. The Muftiate gives just one of them a certificate, the rest of them join him. Others find their ideas, particularly their attitudes towards women, is of great concern. Their ideology seems to be fanatic and of medieval age. They say that if your wife doesn't pray, she should be beaten, and you should divorce her" (ICG 2003). Their activities are results of mixed training of Western education and Islamic fundamentalism. Pakistan itself is the victim of Islamic terrorism and known for its terrorist activities in Kashmir in India. The Taliban has its stronghold in Pakistan as a representative of Saudi Arabian Wahhabism. Kyrgyz government is concerned about

the Wahhabi connections with Tabligh community which might be resulted in terrorism and extremism.

Comparing Legal restrictions over Islam between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan a constitutional amendment proposed in 1995 was blocked by State Commission on Religious Affairs (SCRA) due to insufficient public support. The present law, which is effective, is attracting criticism to be too generous, not providing sufficient authority to the government to control religious fundamentalism. The healthy relation between state and religion remains difficult to be developed due to absence of a precise legal framework. Foreign religious sects and missionary activity is going on without any supervision of state authority. Anyway, the Ruling class is happy to keep the current blurred situation.

The legal situation of Tajikistan is comparatively clearer than that of Kyrgyzstan. Although, the law on religion does contain restrictions on political activism of religious leaders, institutions and educations, the law also regulates the literature contents. Till 1997, the religious parties were banned, but 1997 peace agreement allowed the activities of Islamic Parties. The 1997 peace agreement opened the door to allow political parties with religious base. In 2002, the new constitutional amendment imposed several restrictions on religion, political parties on their registration processes, unregistered political parties membership, marriage to underage girl, unregistered religious activities or religious education and polygamy etc. which were placed under the punishable offense after 2002 in Tajikistan.

Comparing State Restrictions Over Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

State Commission on Religious Affairs (SCRA) is the main government body to promote religious freedom and tolerance and oversee government policies in Kyrgyzstan as well. SCRA at the time of formation chaired by Omurzak Mamayusupov who was a close ally of President Akayev. According to a government official “In Kyrgyzstan we say that the state does not interfere in the affairs of religion, but if there is an instruction from above, Imams will carry it out completely” (ICG 2003). SCRA’s main job is to register the religious organizations. This registration was introduced in 1996 and mandatory for all mosques, churches, missionary organizations and worship places. But registration policies and the legal

proceedings for unregistered religious organizations are muddled and unclear. Often, may be out of political reasons, SCRA often refuses registration of the religious organizations without giving any solid reason. The state considers unregistered religious Islamic organizations as threats to socio-political stability of the republic (Ministry of Internal Affairs report on religious situation, 2001).

According to the official report of registered mosques, in 2003, 85% of total mosques were registered in Kyrgyzstan, but in practice the actual percentage of registered mosques were 12% only (Ministry of Internal Affairs report on religious situation, 2001). State policy clamps down on missionary activity in the republic, which is the other main restriction came into effect in 1990s. From 1999 foreign Islamic missionaries were legally banned in the republic, which adversely affects the imports of Islamic religious clergies from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The donations and charitable funds coming from Saudi Arabia also dropped considerably (ICG 2003). The political dominance over Islam is more widespread in southern part of Kyrgyzstan than Northern part. In May 2003, many mosques were closed down and their Imams were replaced by the candidates of local authority 'to control the mood of believers on his territory' (Mitchell 2015). The victimized Islamic organizations were accused of conducting Islamic marriage despite of their unregistered status. This exercise is not actually the part of state procedure, but quite a reflection of political norms and client – patron dealings that are common in Kyrgyzstan.

Tajikistan somewhat follows the reformed version of the old Soviet state structure and represents similar attempts to control religious activity in the interests of the state. State bodies constantly intervene in religious affairs in Tajikistan. Though, the main body of religious affairs is Committee on Religious Affairs (CRA), it only follows and executes the president's orders. CRA imposes the government pressure and control on the religious organizations through its registration process. However, legally, it is unclear whether registration of religious organizations is mandatory or optional, but government officials impose it as legal requirement to be formalized in any new upcoming religious organization.

The most disputable clause of the registration is that a Friday mosque should gather at least 15000 Islamic followers to offer Namaz only then the government officials declare the mosque eligible for registration. If the mosque fails to do so in

future it can be closed after deregistration process. One more controversial official practice is not to register any second mosque in that area where already a full functioning registered mosque exists. This disputable rule of registration process discriminates Islam from other religions, since there is no such rule for other religions. This discriminatory rule led unrest in Isfara and Chorku districts of the republic in 2002.

In July 2002, Rakhmonov claimed that many mosques of the region are involved in extremism (Johnson 2004:159). By October 2002, many mosques were closed by local authorities for lack of registration, which triggered violence in the region. One more dispute erupted when Imams of Islamic mosques went under vigorous attestation process and examinations to check their Islamic knowledge (McGlinchey 2009). Many Imams got dismissed after observing their inadequate knowledge of Islam. This was the pretty clear intervention of government in religious sphere. In Vose district in Khatlon province, more than 45 mosques were reportedly closed (McGlinchey 2009). Nevertheless, mosque registration process is very complex and unclear. CRA has to take care of the registration of Mosque in the provinces. CRA works to contain local political authorities and at the same time keeps its high handedness towards Islamic Institutions because Islam is emerging in the republic as a political alternative and source of legitimacy.

Repression of Islam by Security Forces: Comparing Tajikistan & Kyrgyzstan

According to a government official of Tajikistan interviewed by International Crisis Group (ICG) “There are no problems with wearing a beard, religious clothing, or the *hijab* (head covering for women) in public places, or visiting the mosque. We do not have lists in the MB (Ministry of Security) or MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) of religious people, and everybody is free to attend religious institutions. We understand that *forbidden fruit is sweet* and so do not outlaw what people have in a democratic country” (ICG Interview 22 may 2003). But the reality is opposite. The security person intervenes freely in lives of religious people where they feel a doubt of potential security threat. Security personnel often call the religious people to ask security related questions and gives them a verbal warning to improve their socializations (Johnson 2004:167). Even some asserted that they don’t, feel free to

talk with outsiders without official permission (ICG Interview 2003). The government allegedly brought new cases against former fighters of Civil War.

One former fighter stated that “Police officers demand bribes of up to U.S. \$1,000 to stop investigation of crimes committed during the civil war. Despite the fact that the Islamic fighters were amnestied (The Ministry of Internal Affairs 1997). Police say that some of their crimes do not fall into the amnesty. Most former fighters are almost uneducated and cannot protect themselves. They are afraid of prosecutions (ICG 2003). Tajikistan government wants to undermine the public reputation of Islamic organizations by accusing them as the very reason of Civil War.

In Kyrgyzstan, the nature of repression of Islamists by security forces is somewhat different. National Security Services (NSS) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) are central official organizations to keep vigilance over religious groups. They monitor mosques and missionary activities. Repression of the Muslim community in republic is mainly oriented at radical Hizb ut-Tahrir. MIA maintains the hit-list of suspected Islamic extremists, especially those who have staunch support for Hizb ut-Tahrir. Police act as state tool and attempts to plant drugs or arms on suspected activists. Due to this suppression tool, common Muslims lack their faith in security system and in reciprocation gets mobilized against them (ICG Asia Reports no 42, 2002).

Apart from this, police also suspect Uighur groups which are often blamed for Islamic extremism. Uighurs were involved in triggering separatist movement in the republic and for this, they maintain links with Islamic activists and terrorists. The stand of government for such groups is based on the need to maintain advantageous relations with China than any real possibility of a threat. In both the Central Asian Republics, we find the common attitude of security groups towards Islamists. State authority is using the security machinery to control the rise of Islamic radicalism and extremism, as per the official versions.

Comparing Religious Structure of Tajikistan & Kyrgyzstan

Unlike other Central Asia states, Tajikistan has no Muftiate and the Islamic responsibilities are met by government recognized organization, Council of Ulema, which consists 27 leading official Muslim leaders, who are elected every 3 years. The

responsibility of regulation and control of Islamic organizations is upon the Council of Ulema. But in practice Council follows Government's head rather than the requirements of Muslim organizations and set Rules and regulations (The Diplomat 17 April 2015). Legally, Council is responsible for attestation of *Imams* but, in practice, it attests, those whom the government wants to be attested (Putz 2015). The governments will depend on the consent of the local authority. The local authority thus has an effective veto.

One deputy Imam in Dushanbe said, "The decision on appointing somebody as *Imam* will be considered positively only with approval of the local administration: a politically reliable candidate will pass the test of the Islamic Centre and get support from local *hukumats* (local authorities) without which even local elders will hesitate to recommend such a candidate. People choose which mosque to go to, as in some mosques imams suffer weak proficiency, although they may be (politically) trusted clergy" (Tajikistan 2013 International Religious Freedom Report).

The weaknesses of Council of Ulema pushed Muslims to other options to take religious management in their own hands. Many Muslim leaders are seeking the creation of a Muftiate, an institution dedicated to fulfill Islamic people's needs in an authoritative way. The government opposed this strongly, afraid that this could create alternative centers of authority. One of the 27 leading members of the Ulema council warned that- "despite the benefits gained from establishing a weak religious organ instead of the traditional institution of the Muftiate, the government has given space for the emergence of other religious leaders with various theological interpretations, political ambitions, networks of patronage and financial power. They have groups of followers and these leaders are not always visible. Such a development will lead to the destruction of the national unity of Tajiks around the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam" (Abdullaev & Akbarzaheh 2010).

In Kyrgyzstan, the religious scenario is quite different than that of Tajikistan because of the *Muftiate*. *Muftiates* are independent and preserver of Islamic values in the republic. The orthodox nature of *Imams*, on the other hand, creates miscommunication with highly educated Muslim people commonly having secular religious values. This miscommunication widens the space between the older working Imams and younger Muslims. The old styled *Muftiate* is also incapable to develop effective relations with the international Islamic community. Since they are not aware

of modern world, the average Imam remains never dissatisfied with the state and the regime because the limits of his duties are confined up to Namaz and freedom of faith. One Jalalabad Imam told ICG ‘We pray and we do not need anything else’ (ICG 2003). Muftiate is the main body to appoint and dismiss Imams. But one official admitted that ‘every political hierarchy interferes in appointments of Imams’ (Putz 2015). Basically Imams are political tools in the hands of politicians who used them to build his own political ground. Imam deals with religious and social affairs of common people and those dealing gives him strong grip over them.

State Control Over Education: Comparing Tajikistan & Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan, rigid traditional Islamic education system is incompatible with demand of contemporary time. Traditional Islamic concepts, poor teaching techniques and unqualified teachers or Imams are not capable enough to compete with more modern Islamic movement such as Hizb ut- Tahrir. The interpretation of Islam varies from person to person in Islamic institutions. As one government official puts it, “Illiterate youth goes to the mosque, where illiterate *Imams* teach them. In five mosques you get five different interpretations of the same thing” (ICG 2003).

This low quality Islamic education in the Kyrgyzstan drives many scholars abroad who want to study Islam more deeply. Many Islamic institutions receive foreign funding, mainly from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. But after 9/11, foreign funding dropped sharply (McGlinchey 2009). Lack of secular study keeps students away from the job. Level of teaching is not up to the standard. Even some Imams are ignorant about Sufism (McGlinchey 2009). Poor quality of education creates unemployment. For employment, youth migrate to other countries where better Islamic education is available. This foreign connection makes them Government fear that there are also connections with Islamic terrorists, especially by the students returning back from Pakistan after getting an education. Officially government recommended that for Islamic study willing students should go to progressive Islamic countries like Egypt, Turkey, Syria and Jordan (ICG 2003). Pakistan is most problematic and susceptible state. But the government recommendation seems not to work. Still students are migrating but in a clandestine member so that it is proving more difficult for government to trace them. Kyrgyzstan government is not paying any attention to modernizing tendencies within Islam so far.

Tajikistan's case is also same with some difference as per as state's control over education is concerned. Education and religion are under Government authority. There are 21 Madarsas and one Islamic institute in Tajikistan under the control of the Islamic Centre of Dushanbe, which Centre of Dushanbe is highest educational authority in the republic. It is under the control of the government. The poor condition of Islamic education due to lack of suitably qualified teachers in the state attracts scholars toward secular education which would be rather helpful in finding employment after completing graduation. An Islamic teacher noted that "We are unable to teach about the greater *jihad* (inner struggle) or *ijtihad* (independent interpretation of the *sharia*) at the *madarsa* because, we don't have the pedagogical tools. Instead, we can only teach memorization of the Koran and *hadiths*, rather than Islamic discourse" (ICG 2003). According to Muhiddin Kabiri, IRP Deputy Chairman, "Low quality religious education may have serious negative consequences for society" (ICG 2003).

Unlike Kyrgyzstan, Tajik government is afraid of student's educational migrations to other Islamic states. The government has increasingly attempted to control these migrations. Many migrants who returned back after completing graduation from other Islamic states have been found infected with radical Islamic ideology like Wahhabism. Several other students consider that education is important than ideology (ICG 2003). President Rakhmonov emphasized his concern "If each graduate of these theological schools preaches Wahhabism, it will lead to a religious split and differences and may prepare the ground for destabilization of the situation in the republic" (Asia plus 2002). Lack of quality education promotes the tendency of local Islamic tuitions which attracts unofficial education in Tajikistan. This is the other concern of Government because private tuition is illegal and can provide space for radical ideologies.

Comparing Emerging Social Issues of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

The Western influence in Kyrgyzstan is developing a gap between modern and traditional population of the society. Western influence creates urge for modernization secular values, Westernized life style and English education, whereas traditional mindsets of the society seek more codification of existing cultural and religious practices. Law works under Western inspiration, For example, in Kyrgyzstan

polygamy is legally banned, but socially accepted, since Sharia allows it. Tursunbai Bakir-Uluu²³ introduced a bill to legalize polygamy. However the bill was withdrawn with immediate effect due to heavy protest by members of Parliament. Many religious leaders have four wives each (ICG 2003). Secular law and cultural practices do not match and this is the other source of dispute in Kyrgyzstan.

Social and symbolic issues provoke particular discussion in Tajikistan. There are no legal restrictions on Islamic attributes like wearing Hijab and keeping beard, but some cases of forcing women to unveil do occur. Islamic believers take it as state effort of secularizing the region. However, a relative of a victim said “It is personal disrespect towards strict followers of *sharia* laws rather than an order from the center to secularize them” (BBC Russian Service, Tajikistan, 21Jan 2016). According to The Dawn “President appealed for women to adopt Western-style clothing instead of Islamic popular clothes. Religious dresses are highly discouraged in government workplaces. Religious rituals are actively discouraged in some official structures” (The Dawn 24 Jan. 2016). One IRP official complained in an interview with ICG that the U.S. embassy in Dushanbe was more accommodating to believers who wished to pray than any government structures. Government employees rarely observed outward attributes of Islam like offering Namaz. Even the mosques of the capital are restricted on the use of loudspeakers for announcement of *Azan*. The restriction came into effect on 2002, which caused some resentment to believers. One Imam of such mosque asserts, “The informal ban on the use of loudspeakers in mosques in Tajikistan was issued by our secular government, which tries gradually to limit our influence and visibility in society. It has started resembling the behavior of our bigger neighbor (Uzbekistan). But not all Imams follow the order from above. Some *Imams* have the courage to disregard this oral demand. We believe this is a gradual seizure of our

²³ Tursunbai Bakir Uulu is a Kyrgyz politician. He is leader of the political party Erkin Kyrgyzstan (ErK). He was first elected in 1995 as a member of the legislative assembly, after he helped set up the Erkin Kyrgyzstan Progressive Democratic Party political party. In 2000 he was given a fresh mandate, and two years later was elected Kyrgyzstan's first Ombudsman. He served in the position until February 2008. Bakir Uulu ran in July 2005 presidential elections and lost to former president Kurmanbek Bakiev. Since 2009 he is the Kyrgyz Ambassador to Malaysia. He was elected to the Kyrgyz Parliament in October 2010 as a member of the Ar-Namys party, and was sworn in as a member of parliament on November 10, 2010. (<http://eng.24.kg/politic/2010/11/10/14729.html>)

religious, historical and traditional rights and reasserting of power by the authorities” (Rotar 2003).

Some social questions are under the conflicting arena. One of the most significant conflicts is about the position of women in the state and society. Both, state and society possess different paradigm towards women. Socially a woman is supposed to be inferior to a man. The society structured by *Sharia* law doesn't talk about equality between both genders. But legally woman is equal to man. She enjoys same socio-religious and legal rights as man does. These socio-religious and legal paradoxes regarding women's status in Tajikistan are creating wide conflicts. Some incidents also have occurred in Tajikistan in which Government is encouraging the woman (wife) to take control of the man (husband) to stop migration to earn sustenance. One official opined “Husbands have gone to Russia to earn money, and the wives and children are at home. And to stop them going on the wrong path, they want to control women. Make them sit at home.... from one point of view, that's good, but on the other hand....”. The government's efforts to improve women's social and educational status through international assistance are perceived by some orthodox Islamists as a threat for Islamic culture and religion in Tajikistan. A secularist said, “Many people are using Islam to define new roles for women, even though it's not recognized in the *Koran*. These roles are based on our culture and tradition and not necessarily connected to Islam. But, because of the lack of knowledge of many about our religion, they use it against women” (Heathershaw and Herzig 2013: 122). Nevertheless, the Islamic norms of marriage and divorce (*Talaq*) are different from secular law of the state. The former must formalize so that they fall under the jurisdiction of state legislation. Actually, the Islamic norms can be included in state laws, but the very inclination of these norms must be towards secular legal setups. Tajikistan parliament has to make a balance between traditional Islam and secularism in a manner that no violation of fundamental rights occurs.

Comparing Islamic Revival in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

The one basic difference between political setups of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that Tajikistan is the only Central Asian state with a legal Islamist party. As Khalid says “The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan never had a clear concept of what an Islamic state might be or indeed whether it should be implemented immediately or

through a gradual reform of state institutions. Popular support for political Islam as a solution to problems of economic collapse and social dislocation had shrunk rapidly. Many people, rightly or wrongly, considered the IRP as the fomenters of the civil war” (Khalid 2003:29).

However, the public popularity of IRP declined due to its government pro status. The conformist position of IRP towards ruling regimes defamed it. This paved the way to strengthen of Hizb ut Tahrir in the republic. Largely, Islam in Tajikistan is a life style and way of worship rather than a political consciousness. Traditionalism and conservatism are the characteristics of Islam here. The Islamist with political taste left the republic just after Tajik civil war; others changed their tactics to adapt to the new situation. Nevertheless, the difficult socio-economic condition provided the ground for emergence of political Islam as an opposition. As Johnson states “The other major danger is that, the government’s sometimes heavy-handed approach to Islam and its attempts to control religion may backfire and create opposition even from religious leaders who have no interest in politics” (Johnson 2004:219).

Kyrgyzstan faces a very different Islamic challenge from that in Tajikistan. According to Patnaik there are historical differences in the way the Central Asian responded to Islam, The settled communities of south (Uzbeks and Tajiks) were more traditional and orthodox in their beliefs, whereas for the nomadic Turkmen and Kirghiz, Islam was a loose cultural affiliation rather than a way of life governed by a set of teachings and concepts (Patnaik 1996: 200-201). The influence of Islam is quite limited in the north of the country, religious practices and institutions are relatively absent and people are Muslims in the name only. In south of the state Uzbeks and other militant groups are dominating forces. Hizb ut Tahrir is the main radical political group. The south, in general, is characterized by much greater religious influence. Dzungars and Uighurs also have an active role in religious life. The government’s attitude to religion is somewhat ambiguous. In laws and public statements it conforms to freedom of belief, but particularly when the security services are involved, it invokes the spectre of Islamic extremism as a major security threat. As a result, the state seeks to control religious organizations through direct interference with the Muftiate and mosques. Religion is officially separate from the state, and religious parties have been outlawed since the early 1990s. However, religious movements, organizations, and structures have been allowed to operate

largely unhindered. ICG 2003 report states, “The early years of independence saw a rapid rise in interest in Islam, and it became briefly part of state symbolism. The first time he took office, President Akayev swore his oath on the *Koran*. The second time, five years later, he used the Constitution. One official recalled: At first there was a kind of euphoria, and a manipulation of Islam. In all the villages they built mosques. The club in our village was turned into a mosque. But now nobody goes there” (ICG 2003). According to Asia Report “In the Soviet period there were just 33 mosques in Kyrgyzstan; now there are at least 2,000” (Asia Report 59).

Islam is still republics dominant religion. The ethnic communities are distributed un-uniformly. In northern part of republic Islamic ethnicity is weak and limited, but in southern part Islam remains a major part of everyday life. Most Islamic activity is concentrated in the south, particularly in rural areas, but even there, it is predominantly the preserve of the elderly, with only a small proportion of young people visiting mosques or performing other external rituals.

Chapter 5

External influence in Radical Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

The disintegration of Soviet Union provided the Central Asian republics with the opportunity to establish their own foreign relations. Due to the need for nation state building, international legitimacy, technical and economic assistance and security, the state has been attempting to join the international community through establishing the relationship with a broad spectrum of countries and joining international and regional organizations (Patnaik and Tulsiram 2010).

The seven decades of Soviet dominance over Kyrgyzstan was the time of complete isolation of Kyrgyz citizens from the International Islamic community. The Islamic discourses resumed in Kyrgyzstan after the end of Soviet rule in 1991 when some of its citizens came into contact with the outer world. Kyrgyzstan's main concern was to establish its identity apart from Soviet ideology which shaped the possible interrelationship between Islam and politics. Some scholars perceive secularism and democracy to be the new identity of Kyrgyzstan but some envisaged Islam as a new threat. However, recent surveys and researches find Islam as a provider of spiritual peace and a sense of communal harmony. The newly independent Kyrgyzstan is coping many challenges to meet the basic needs of its populations. Islam seeks to deliver what the Kyrgyz population needs and provide shared norms, social capital, etc. This form of Islamic revivalism is widely embraced by Kyrgyz people.

Islam in Central Asia & Influence of Central Asia to The World

Tajikistan's People have been associated with Islam by their historical legacy and have made great contributions to culture and ideologies of Central Asia. Islam arrived in Central Asia in the 7th century, followed by the conquest of Persia by the Arabs. Khurasan and Mawar-un-Nahr (Trans-Oxiana) gave the Principle of Medicine to the Islamic world. Central Asia produced great scholars, theologians, poets like Mavlana Jalaluddin Rumi of Balkh, Farabi, Imam Bukhari, Al-Ghazali, Imam Abu Hanifa, Abu Ali Ibn Sina, Abu Raihan Beruni, Al-Kharazmi, Imam Tirmizi and many

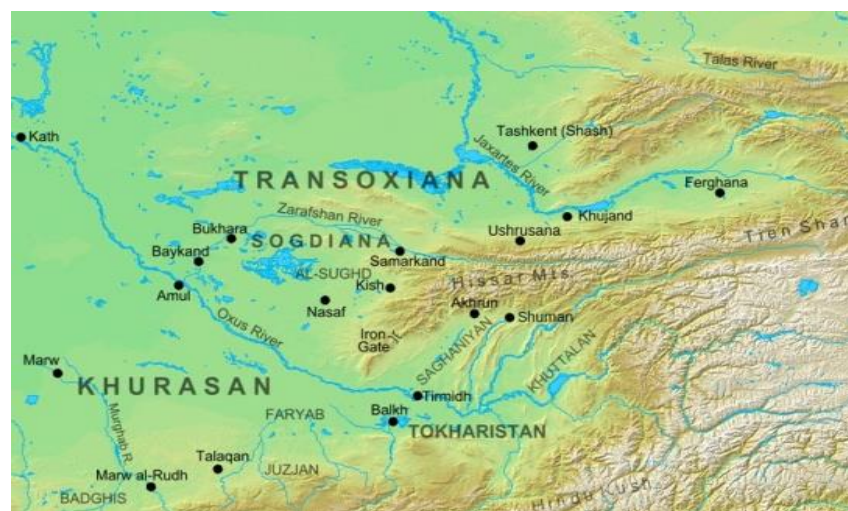
others. They were very renowned and treasured in the Islamic world and well-known globally as well. Scientific inventions of Abu Musa al-Khwarezmi, Ali Ibn Sina Abu Raihan Beruni and Al-Farabi raised fame of the region all over the world and formed a great influence on the European science, e.g. Abu Ali Ibn Sina was the author of many standard medical texts which were taught at numerous medieval universities and Abu Musa al-Kharazmi is recognized as the forefather of algebra. Another excessive personality, Imam Abu Hanifa, is the founder of the Hanafi school of the Sunni sect of Islam, whose foundation was a Tajik / Persian from Khorasan and recognized in the Islamic world as Al-imâm al-a`zam (The Greatest *Imam*).

Hanafi school has the greatest number of followers in the Islamic world amongst the four schools of *Ahl al-Sunna*. The religious legacy of the Greatest Imam Abu Hanifa, mainly in the fields of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *Kalam* (academic philosophy), is a brilliant example of the contribution of Central Asian civilization. Mir Sayyed Ali Hamadani, who made an important contribution to the mystical life of the Muslims in Kashmir, had and still has thousands of followers there and before his death established peace in Kulob, Tajikistan. Mavlana Jalaluddin Rumi, a Tajik, who was born in Balkh (today's Afghanistan and Tajikistan), migrated to Turkey, worked and died in Turkey and is considered a son and great personality in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Turkey. In Ubaidulloev words, "Regrettably, Central Asia, the motherland of such great personalities and rich tradition of great Islamic civilization in the Middle Ages, in the twentieth century faced religious oppression ignorance and was subdued by Soviet policies implemented to abolish the deep roots that Islam had in Central Asia" (Ubaidulloev 2003). The Soviet Union's dominance in Central Asia, for 70 years has proved that any ideology or cultural policy preciously cannot be enforced onto people. President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon has stressed that "Seventy years of the history of the Soviet Union, which mainly supported only a limited national independence have shown that any cultural policy or ideology artificially forced onto people is bound to fail". Since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian states witnessed the revival of Islam intensely. As Rahid and Khalid states, "The progression of Islamic revival was initiated rapidly, due to the fact that Islam has always had deep roots in the region" (Khalid 2007; Rashid 1994).

External Influence over Islam in Tajikistan

Due to the arrival of Christian Protestant groups Tajikistan faced new challenges. According to Van Gorder after independence the Christian missionaries flooded into the region as never before (Van Gorder 2008). This new religious influence led to some of the locals, changing their faith. These Christian organizations arrived Tajikistan from South Korea and US. In the country, where poverty is high, these groups created hostility with Muslim *Imams* and local people. Some offered money to Muslims for conversion. The newly arrived missionaries started taking advantage of the backwardness of Tajik Muslims and the needs of the population. Some government officials stated opinions in the press that minority religious communities, particularly non-traditional religious groups like Christian missionaries weaken national unity. Therefore, on 25 July 2005, the government's committee for religious affairs put temporary restrictions over these three foreign religious communities - Korean Sonmin Grace church, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Union of Evangelist Baptists. The Government also restricted local Christian institutions.

Map 6: Physical Map of Transoxiana



(Source: www.pinterest.com)

Before the advent of Islam, Zoroastrian was the dominant religion of Tajikistan. Hence, after independence the Iranians tried to revive their old religion

with the help of Iranian communities of other countries. This triggered new concerns and potential struggle between traditional and non-traditional religious groups in the region. The State wanted to promote religious freedom, but also to preserve national unity and security. With the arrival of other religious groups, i.e. Christian, this concern of peace and harmony further intensified. Newly arrived groups created unnecessary aggressions and hostility. Christianity is adopted very aggressive ways of its expansion. According to IRFR 2001, the problem is that Tajikistan was the deprived among other USSR republics, rests on the same status now and turns out to be in much poorer economic condition since its civil war soon after independence and lack of investment. The new missionaries often use this factor as the weakest point, providing substantial financial help to new local converts (International Religious Freedom Report 2001).

Terrorism in Tajikistan

Tajikistan has been the part of UN anti-terrorism agreement. Tajikistan's government listed the radical and terrorist Islamic organizations in the region and legally banned their activities. These Banned organizations are-

Table 1: Banned Islamic radical Organizations in Tajikistan

Taliban
Al Qaeda
Al-ikhwān al-muslimūn (Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt)
East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) - an Uygur organization in Xinjiang
Islamic Party of Turkestan (former Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan)
Lashkar-e-Tayiba
Pakistan's Islamic Group (Jamiat-e-Islam-e-Pakistan)
Jamiat-e-Islam-e-Pakistan

(Source : MFA Tajikistan, (2012), "The Republic of Tajikistan and counter terrorism"
URL:<http://www.mfa.tj/index.php?node=article&id=185>)

In Government's observations the major sources of religious fundamentalism are found in 3 neighboring countries. These are Uzbekistan, Pakistan and

Afghanistan. The 'war against terrorism' allowed Tajikistan to keep strong surveillance over every aspect of religious life and restrict any religious action if found alarming in order to maintain communal peace and harmony. As Najibullah states "The Government bans groups it perceives as *extremist* or it believes will *threaten social harmony* and it aimed Islamic radical organizations in particular. In the same manner, Hizb ut-Tahrir and its activities were banned and authorities arrested many of its members. In 2009, the government banned the Salafiya movement after considering such movements dangerous for the secularism in the region" (Najibullah 2009).

Influence of Overseas Islamic Education in Tajikistan

Many students of Tajikistan studying Islam abroad play the role of the medium to bring external influence within. The closest linguistic and cultural relation between Central Asia's only Islamic political party, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), and Shiite Iran has contributed to a healthy public debate and openness concerning the role of Islam in the state and society. As Abramson argued "Tajiks, Iranians and Afghans share mutually understandable language. Whereas Iranians are mostly Shi'ite Muslims and most Tajiks follow Sunni Islam, which they share in common with their Central Asian Turkic neighbors to the west and north. *Ismaili Shi'a* are a minority in the Tajikistan with 10 % strength and do not identify with Iran's mainstream Twelver, or Imami, Shiites. Tajiks are studying in both Iran's center of Shi'ite learning in Qom and in the principally Sunni city of Zahedon and Baluchistan" (Abramson 2010).

During Soviet rule, the absence of religious education intensifies the outsourcing of students willing to study Islam. The difference between Sunni and Shia could play a significant role in identity politics at the local level as well as national level. The large number of students who are studying in Iran after returning to Tajikistan bring in foreign influence on its Sunni Islamic norms. The new national plan for religious education in Tajikistan established 18 *madarsas* throughout the country. Government registration is mandatory for all the *madarsas* (Abramson 2010).

The Tajik government tried to manage the religious flow in favor of state and in this regard the government established *Azam Abu Hanafi Islamic Institute* in 2007,

The institute has the strength of 900 students in which number of women students are about 10 %. With the growing number of students the Institute strives to reclaim its university status in the next few years, once it reaches its targeted capacity of 1500 students launched the 5 year program. By May 2009, the government opened the *Imam Abu Hanifa* high school for *secular-religious* studies, The institute is partly funded by the government of Switzerland till 2010. In these State-run educational institutions, the philosophy department offers the courses on Political Islam, Political Science, history of Islam, history of Islamic philosophy. In Tajik education system religious studies was existed earlier as a separate discipline; but around 1999, it was merged into philosophy department. Though the government's effort aimed educational reforms is welcomed by people, but they are very few and inadequate in comparison to the population of the republic so many students attend classes at local mosques to receive private lessons. Officially, Private lessons are illegal but highly in demand. Though good teachers are insufficient and among available Islamic scholars, none of them are even compatible with the high standards of education at *Al Azhar* or *Medina* universities. The great respect for elder religious teachers is still intact who were able to acquire a religious education during the Soviet period secretly. According to Abramson their awareness of Islamic sources and their understanding may not be as profound as that of students who have studied at esteemed universities abroad, but their affiliations with the persons and families that create the roots of Central Asia's Islamic studentship pre-dating the Soviet period still matters" (Abramson 2010).

The deprived economic condition of Tajikistan also invites foreign influence, especially Tajikistan's economic dependence on huge numbers of its citizens roaming abroad to work and send money home.²⁴ The government is unable and unwilling to exercise control over Tajikistani's foreign travel in general (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, January 14, 2010). The Islam, studying students abroad from Tajikistan is more than any Central Asian country. Abramson states that "Al Azhar stated 156

²⁴ Sources estimate that between 350,000 and 1.5 million Tajik citizens out of a total population of 7.3 million are working abroad, seasonally or on a longer term basis. (Abramson 2010))

Tajikistan students enrolled in its university degree level program only, and some estimates range as high as 1000 Tajiks in total of religious institutions in Egypt. The numbers of Tajikistanis in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran are far more than the number of students from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan” (Abramson 2010).

Table 2. Estimates of Central Asians Studying Islam abroad, 2009

	Egypt	Saudi Arab	Turkey	Iran	Pakistan
Kyrgyzstan	100-200	100-150	100-200	Unknown	20+
Tajikistan	500-1000	350-700	Insignificant	200+	300
Uzbekistan	100-600	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

(Source: Abramson, David M. (2010), *Foreign Religious Education and the Central Asian Islamic Revival: Impact and Prospects for Stability*, Singapore: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program)

Anora stated “In 2000, after the political situation in Tajikistan had stabilized, the Pakistani government expelled 700 Tajiks, many from religious schools” (Anora 2009). According to the press, a 2005 Pakistani Ministry of Interior report discussed on *madarsa* students from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Though, in 2009 there were an expected 300 Tajik students in Pakistan, the Tajik government was working to cut that number” (<http://www.rferl.org>). Anora further puts, “In August 2009, Iran expelled for visa violations 20 Tajik citizens, maybe at the request of Tajikistan” (Anora 2009). Dushanbe Government is alarmed that these students were likely to fall under extremist influences. However, half of these were studying in the ²⁵ *Makki madarsa* in Zahedon. Sources underline that there are still many Tajiks in Iran, although the majority studies in secular institutions. Authentic sources assessed that external migrant labor releases to Tajikistan in 2008 constituted between 35 and 50% of GDP. The government has initiated discussing efforts to limit Islamic study abroad, possibly

²⁵ Zahedon’s Makki madrassa is reputed to have ties to members of terrorist organizations such as the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) and Islamic Union of Uzbekistan (IMU).

through bilateral pacts on education with foreign governments, but this is only in an emerging stage.

Given the high numbers, especially in ratio to the total population, the question of what kind of influence these students will have in Tajikistan is actually important. Abramson states “One can accept that the large number of Tajiks studying Islam abroad is generally a reflection of the existing economic conditions in Tajikistan today; that is, slowing economic growth (2.5% in 2009 down from 8% in 2008), high unemployment, widespread corruption and short foreign investment” (Abramson 2010). Many Tajiks are eyeing for the opportunities to study abroad is one route. Modern Tajik youngsters, who seek educational prospects abroad, are not really wanted to study religious programs. However, still the number of migrated students is high, who are interested to go foreign to study Islam.

Civil war compelled hundreds of Tajik refugees to go across the border to Afghanistan. Several went further to Pakistan and enrolled their children there in Pakistan. Pakistan’s *madarsas* provides free facilities to its poor students. By 2000, after stabilizing political situation in Tajikistan, the Pakistani government was lacking in interest in Tajik refugees. Due to a government decision to close unregistered Islamic institutions in a few years, the job opportunities of foreign returning students have become very limited. The government refused to recognize foreign educational qualifications. Meanwhile, the Tajik committee on religious affairs decided to send such students to *Al Azhar*, but the government’s new decision of spreading secular education of 2004, snatched this opportunity from students too. This way, all the scopes of students to get foreign fellowship has been stopped officially. However, some returning students joined Islamic institutes and started giving private tuitions. Remaining students started their own business or joined their family business for their livelihood.

The outer Islamic study abroad shapes, different Islamic norms leading to tensions. The young Pakistan or Afghanistan returned Tajik scholars create their different socio-religious networks. They like Pakistani styles of dress and prayer, which segregates them in public from the native people of Tajikistan. As Abramson and Karimov state, “Tajiks view these alien practices as politically offensive and often accuse their co-religionists of Salafism or religious extremism. Additionally,

those who studied about their religion overseas had been taught that many Islamic practices are common all over Central Asia, particularly the rituals extensively observed at saints' shrines and other holy sites, are un-Islamic" (Abramson and Karimov 2006). These social differences have created social splits in the post-Soviet generation of Tajik youth.

The isolation of the Salafists unites them into an association which challenged the older generation of conservative religious leaders who still control the religious power in Tajikistan. The government found the Salafists community to be an appropriate instrument in its efforts to weaken the opposition Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan. In the words of Najibullah "After a series of public allegations and counter accusations, the government assisted on January 8, 2009, Tajikistan's Supreme Court, which banned the Salafi religious movement's activities" (Najibullah, 2009).

Najibullah states about the current scenario that "Tajikistan's unofficial religious leaders will continue to command a position of respect within Tajik society. It is likely that the government will carry on to developing Islamic educational institutions under its control whose ex-students it hopes will serve the state by teaching newly established compulsory high school level *Knowledge of Islam* courses". In the meantime, students returning from overseas with more refined training in Islam, combined with growing popular demand for religious education starting from childhood, will continue to offer the expanding religious population more prospects to learn about and exercise Islam. If the government does not meet these challenges effectively, it will have to deal with a growing movement of secret religious education, likely taught by those who are educated abroad (Najibullah 2009).

Radicalization of Islam by Foreign Forces in Tajikistan

The instability in Tajikistan gave external forces unprecedented opportunity to intervene in the state affairs and to establish their influence to safeguard their strategic, political and economic interests in the region. Russia, China, USA (The great game players), Saudi Arab, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey (significant Muslim countries), Afghanistan and Uzbekistan (immediate neighbors) are key interest holders in Tajikistan. Islam is also expanding its influence within Tajikistan. Tajik

civil war was envisaged by commentators as an effort to establish 'Islamic State' through backing by foreign forces, i.e. Iran and Afghanistan. The civil war erupted in May 1992, in Dushanbe between the governments supported former communist regional elites from Kulob and Khujand and Islamic supporter clans of Gharm and Badakhshan. In December Islamic forces were defeated by Russia and Uzbekistan backed forces (Khodjibaev 1996, 67-76). In 1992 the militant Islamic group of Tajikistan developed into a radical group with the support of militant Iranian and Afghan Islamists, which resulted in Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) with the intention to fight against old communists. With the end of civil war the state took measures to suppress radicalism. By 1992, state puts legal ban on press, Islamic parties and protest activities in the region. Islamic supporter journalist arrested, opposition leaders were held, remaining opposition leaders either disappeared or found dead.

The 1994 truce was kept behind and Islamic democratic alliance started guerrilla war from its base in Afghanistan. In this fighting thousands were killed and hundreds were compelled to escape from their native places. The ban from opposition political parties were removed in November's elections to reinstall the constitutional system. A member of the ex-Communist Party Imamali Rakhmonov eventually elected as President. In 1995 parliamentary elections, many former communists won effectively un-opposed. In early 1995, around 25,000 combined troops from Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan attacked on the militant's base in Afghanistan and destroyed the base.

Negotiations began between armed militants and official army. By January 1996, militants captured the cities of Tursunzade and Kurgan-Tyube and reached within 12 miles of Dushanbe. The Tajik Government responded the demands of the militants and removed some members of the government, including the prime minister Jamshid Karimov. Meanwhile, The Taliban captured the nearby Afghanistan's capital, Kabul and, negotiations took on an unprecedented turn. In December 1996, President Rakhmonov agreed to eradicate ban from the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) on a development for getting a final peace settlement. While peace was being negotiated Russian troops were trying hard to safeguard the country, but Tajik-Afghan border was still unstable and under the control of Islamic militants.

However, in spite of the presence of Russian troops, Tajikistan is still experiencing continuous terrorism.

Thus, the Russians, the Tajiks and the Uzbeks have shaped a 'troika' devoted to work against the rise of religious radicalism and meet repeatedly to develop a plan to curtail it. The political involvement of the Muslim-based groups can diminish the probability of radical infiltration and agitation against the political structure. The new Law on Political Parties was initiated by a Peacemaking Commission, established by the president, and accepted into law, letting the legal functioning of the IRP. Designating Islamic fundamentals in legitimate fashion will possibly prove to be the best policy, as opposed to positioning more troops which is sure to provoke extremism and violence.

Influence of USA in Tajikistan

According to Patnaik, Central Asia draws the attention of not just two big powers Russia and the US. Its resources, ethno-linguistic composition, or geographic location near Afghanistan have made some regional powers take interest in Central Asia. Three powers- China, India and Turkey- are economically and militarily emerging powers. Iran is potentially a regional power and once the international sections are lifted, it could play a much bigger role in the region, Central Asian states share some common threat perceptions with their Asian neighbors" (Patnaik 2016: 123).

The "new great game" refers to competition among the powers for supremacy over Central Asian states due to the unprecedented discovery of hydrocarbon and petroleum resources there. The war against terrorism after 9/11 gave USA the opportunity to establish its military bases in several strategic places in Central Asia (Rashid 2002;5). As a protective measure against the increasing Islamic terrorism in the region and also increasing U.S. influence, Russia sought influence in Central Asia. The region attracted long term investment of oil companies (Brig 2004). From this perspective US is trying to contain both Iran and Russia.

Iran is threatened by the US presence in Central Asia and, to counter it, Iran is enhancing its ties and cooperation with Tajikistan (Eugene 2011). Tajikistan allowed NATO forces in its territory. Apart from that the Uranium richness of the Chalovsky region of Tajikistan is a major interest of the US in the region. US is also afraid of the

terrorists gaining access to Uranium in Tajikistan. Tajikistan shares a 750 mile border with Afghanistan and due to this Tajikistan allowed NATO facilities over its land ([http// www. Our world. Compusrve.com](http://www.Ourworld.Compusrve.com)).

During the early years of the Clinton Administration, the Caspian Sea region and developments in the Caucasus did not receive much attention. The new geopolitical map of the Caspian Sea region, marked by the emergence of newly independent states, did present a useful opportunity for the US companies, strategists and diplomats. Besides, the issue concerning a redefinition of relations with Russia, the new Caspian states also faced new actors seeking to make inroads into the region. First, countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan vied with one another to establish and promote a cultural, political and economic foothold in the region. Secondly, more powerful entities such as China, the European Union and the US were involved in making cost- benefit analyses to spread their influence into the region (Huasheng 2007:161).

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated that the Caspian Sea region was strategically located and energy rich. In addition to the question of energy security, America also calculated other traditional security benefits of the region. The end of the Cold War did not suddenly change the Cold war mindset in the US. It was argued that a carefully crafted Caspian policy could weaken Russia's influence in this region, prevent the re-emergence of a Russian Empire and forestall excessive Chinese influence in the region. Such a policy, according to US policy makers, should include buttressing the national strength and sovereignty of the Caucasian and Central Asian states. Some Americans advocated that before the Chinese and Iranians make their entry into this region in a big way and secure their presence, the US must plant its flag in the Caspian Sea region. In fact, as Mahapatra states "Clinton Administration was already trying to stop foreign companies from joining with Iran's national oil company, NIOC, to construct the energy export outlet via Iran"²⁶ (Mahapatra 2007: 162).

Problems Created by the US Presence in Central Asian/Caucasus Region

²⁶For detail Visit [http// www. Our world. Compusrve. Com/ HOMEPAGES/ USAZERB/333.htm](http://www.Ourworld.Compusrve.Com/HOMEPAGES/USAZERB/333.htm)

According to Nurdaletiva, the Said US interests in Central Asia include fostering democratization, human rights, free markets and trade; assisting the development of oil and other resources; combating terrorism, the proliferation of weapon of mass destruction and drug production and trafficking (Nurdaletova 2011). However, the US presence created some problems for regional development like ‘war against terror’ that has been going on in Afghanistan since 2001, but Afghanistan is still a source of instability. Moreover, its neighbors, Pakistan and Tajikistan have problems with militant insurgence and overwhelming narcotic drug trafficking. Central Asian countries are facing growing narcotic drug trafficking and the still existing and spreading extremist Islamic movement. Coalition’s military presence in CA countries, the beginning of which was defined in Central Asia during the war in Afghanistan, had ambivalent consequences. Thus Uzbekistan closed base in Khanabad after Andijan events²⁷, Kyrgyzstan has constant and sharp discussion in its own civil society about Gansi base²⁸ and finally closed it. All countries are forced to keep in mind the Russian reaction to their every step towards America. In fact Russia gained vis-a-vis American in Uzbekistan after the Andijan events; however Uzbekistan, still following its own independent course, is now taking steps to woo USA.

Contemporary NATO policy in CA and US-CA relations use bilateral agreements in an attempt to restrict SCO and CSTO influence in the region. The contemporary situation around the Iran nuclear program and the US blockade of Iran’s external economic relations (especially in energy sphere) led to an unpredictable scenario as well. One of the undisclosed priorities of Washington policy in Central Asia can be the creation of counterbalance to both China and Russia in the region and at the global scale. On the other hand, due to bases in Iraq, Afghanistan, Caucasus and Tajikistan, US can be in full control of the Persian Gulf and Caspian

²⁷ The Andijan massacre occurred when Uzbek Interior Ministry (MVD) and National Security Service (SNB) troops fired into a crowd of protesters in Andijan in the Republic of Uzbekistan on 13 May 2005. Estimates of those killed on 13 May range from 187, the official count of the government, to several hundred. A defector from the SNB alleged that 1,500 were killed.

²⁸ Gansi Air Base is a former U.S. military installation at Manas International Airport, near Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. It was primarily operated by the U.S. Air Force. The primary unit at the base was the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing. On 3 June 2014 American troops vacated the base and it was handed over back to the Kyrgyzstan military.

Sea hydrocarbon resources and handle the possible deteriorating scenario in Iran (Dundich 2010:338). The US wishes to diversify energy transit through Nabucco²⁹ and BTC pipelines³⁰, its effort to undermine Russia's and Iran's energy positions can create another source of instability. Kazakhstan is the most reliable partner for US and Russia and is also a gateway for Russia to the region. At the same time, US led development of the infrastructure in the Western regions of Kazakhstan and strengthening Kazakh navy on the Caspian Sea can cause negative reactions from the neighboring countries. Central Asian and other post-Soviet countries take the anti – terror coalition and American military help with enthusiasm. On the other hand, American politics in region threaten to make new cracks on the regional stability map.

US Agenda in Central Asia / Caspian Region After September 2001

US policy in Central Asia and Caspian region is oriented towards the US global policy of consolidation of a unipolar world, and reorienting regions within this framework. It is based on three basic considerations; first, the region should provide enough energy resources so that US could leave its dependence on Persian Gulf resources. It would contribute in weaning the region away from Russian influence by providing alternative routes to the landlocked energy resources of the region, and, lastly US wants its direct presence in the region to be able to observe the rise of

²⁹ Nabucco would be good for the US and EU in various ways. It would make Central and East European countries a lot less dependent on Gazprom and increase the energy security of the US and EU as a whole. It could help reduce intra-EU divisions over Russia. It would underpin stronger ties between the EU and potential supplier countries such as Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. It could help improve EU-Turkey relations. It is easy to be pessimistic about the prospects of Nabucco, a pipeline designed to bring Caspian and possibly Middle Eastern gas to the EU. The financing is not yet secure, European gas demand is down, and the question of where Nabucco's gas will come from is open. Russia, meanwhile, is pushing hard for its rival South Stream pipeline. (Barysch 2010)

³⁰ The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline is a 1,768 kilometres long crude oil pipeline from the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oil field in the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. It connects Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan and Ceyhan, a port on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey, via Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. It is the second-longest oil pipeline in the former Soviet Union, after the Druzhba pipeline. The first oil that was pumped from the Baku end of the pipeline reached Ceyhan on 28 May 2006.

China. Certainly, regional presence helps the US to promote its global unipolar regime and to consolidate its war against terror.

After 9/11, the US assured both Russia and Central Asian states that the US use of former Soviet bases in the Commonwealth of Independent states (CIS) was only temporary since the bases in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were needed for US operations in the Afghan war. As the outcome of the war became clear and the Taliban regime³¹ fell, the US secretary of state said in December 2001 that the US did not intend to withdraw from the region even after the war in Afghanistan since America had long-term interests in the region.

It is argued that energy acted as a factor in the regime changes that took place in this region through the *color revolutions*³², so that with regime change, the energy map of the region could be reoriented (Pant 2007:28). In 2001 US leased bases in Central Asia to support the military campaign in Afghanistan. The primary US interest in Central Asia is more geo-strategic. Which includes security, in preventing the “Afghanization” of Central Asia and the procreating of most terrorist groups with a global reach that can hover the stability of all the interlocking regions and strike the United States. As Makhmudov states “In Central Asia, the US focus is now on creating strong security ties with the state building on the military- military contacts established in the late 1990’s, and on securing long term access agreements to regional bases and military amenities, which can be used to answer the current and future security dangers in Afghanistan. However, the goal of US policy also is supposed to enhance Central Asia’s development not just its military role. Like Afghanistan, if they are to change themselves from latent breeding grounds for

³¹ The Taliban recently changed their name and identity to Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), is a Sunni Islamic fundamentalist political movement in Afghanistan currently waging war within that country. Until his death in 2013, Mullah Mohammed Omar was the supreme commander and spiritual leader of the Taliban. Mullah Akhtar Mansour was elected as his replacement in 2015 and following Mansour's killing in a May 2016 U.S. drone strike, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada became the group's leader.

³² Colour revolution is a term that was widely used by worldwide media to describe various related movements that developed in several societies in the former Soviet Union and the Balkans during the early 2000s. The term has also been applied to a number of revolutions elsewhere, including in the Middle East. Some observers (such as Justin Raimondo and Michael Lind) have called the events a revolutionary wave, the origins of which can be traced back to the 1986 People Power Revolution (also known as the "Yellow Revolution") in the Philippines.

transnational militants into viable, stable states, the Central Asia countries must follow the US conditionality to liberalize economically and democratize politically” (Makhmudov 2010; 309).

Russian & US Competition in Tajikistan

Russia and Tajikistan are close allies and members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Collective Security Treaty Organization, (CSTO) and the Commonwealth of Independent State (CIS). Tajikistan is also a member of the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).³³ Russia does not feel happy with Tajikistan’s ties with the West, though the threat of Islamic extremism can bring Central Asian countries under its own influence.

Islamic mobilization in Tajikistan is one of the major concerns of Russia. During the late 19th Century the Jadidists³⁴ emerged as an Islamic social movement in Tajikistan. The Russians analyzed the Jadidist’s movement as a threat. Russia is seeking its influence over the Central Asian region and Tajikistan is centre of its concern due to its instability in terms of Islamic extremism and fundamentalism (Barnet 1994:86). However, Russia is well aware of this fact that if Tajikistan would get unstable Russia also would not remain secure. Russia is trying hard to create its political influence in the Tajikistan. However, Russia has to pay for it; On 13 July 1993, Russian troops were attacked by Tajik Islamic militants and Mujahidins, killing 25 Russian Guards (Poujol 1999:99). Yeltsin declared “Withdrawing the Russian army from the Tajikistan, would mean to leave the whole nation to perish, something Russia would never allow” (Poujol 1999:99). To facilitate Russian intervention into Tajikistan four legal documents were signed by both the countries which legitimize the direct role of Russia in Tajikistan (Warikoo 1996:211).

A large segment of Tajikistan’s population is pro-Russian (Wagner 1997). 1926-1959 witnessed growth of Russian population in Tajikistan from 1 to 13 % (US Library of Congress). Tajiks who speak Tajik (a dialect of Persian) are the main ethnic group, although there are sizeable minorities of Uzbeks and Russians, whose

³³ In Jan. 1995 the CSCE became the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

³⁴ The Jadids were Muslim modernist reformers within the Russian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th century. They normally referred to themselves by the Turkic terms *Taraqqiparvarlar* ('progressives'), *Ziyalilar* ('intellectuals'), or simply *Yäşlär/Yoshlar* ('youth').

numbers are declining due to emigration (BBC News, 23 November 2005). In 1989, ethnic Russians in Tajikistan made up 7.6% of the population, but they are now less than 0.5%, after the civil war spurred Russian emigration (US Library of Congress). However, 9/11 redefined Russo-Tajikistan bilateral relations. Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, French troops have been stationed at the Dushanbe Airport in support of air operations of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. United States Army and Marine Corps personnel periodically visit Tajikistan to conduct joint training missions of up to several weeks duration. Russia continues to maintain a large base on the outskirts of Dushanbe (Jane's 2014). Russian border troops were stationed along the Tajik–Afghan border until summer 2005. In 2015, Russia sent more troops to Tajikistan (Stratfor.com 24 November 2016).

US was using Dushanbe and Kulob aerodromes for deploying its army to assist fight against terrorism and drug trafficking. The hope was at its climax when U.S. Congress allowed arms supplies to Tajikistan. However, the U.S. did not get permission of Tajikistan to deploy its bases in the country. The Washington Post writes “This was partly because, after taking a look at Kulob (a former Soviet base), the U.S. Central Command deemed it inefficiently equipped and too small, although it could have provided the best access to the strategically significant Panjshir Valley” (The Washington Post, 9 February 2002).³⁵

Furthermore, Dushanbe began talks on Russian military base in 1999 to resolve the problem. However, in anticipation of financial benefit president Rahmon, was potentially in favor of deploying the American military base. But the Americans have objection to have their bases beside the 201st Russian division. Yet, American government concentrated to deploy functioning systems in Tajikistan to strengthen control over drug trade and to support the US military in Afghanistan against Taliban or other Islamic terrorist group. This way, Dushanbe could have claim benefit from US interest in the region even without positioning of a military base. As reported in official site of the US embassy, “In 2003, Tajikistan was the last Central Asian

³⁵ The Panjshir Valley is a valley in north-central Afghanistan, 150 kilometres north of Kabul, near the Hindu Kush mountain range. Located in the Panjshir Province it is divided by the Panjshir River. The valley is home to more than 140,000 people, including Afghanistan's largest concentration of ethnic Tajiks. In April 2004, it became the heart of Panjshir Province

country to join NATO's Partnership for Peace Program, which provided a new development in military cooperation with the Western countries. The republic's Interior Ministry received a total of 15 million dollars in aid from the U.S. under this program" (dushanbe.usembassy.gov).

By 2005, the Defense Ministry had been allotted a total of approximately 25 million dollars in free aid. And between 2005 and 2007, Washington granted approximately 40 million dollars for the reconstruction, repair, and equipping of 15 posts on the border with Afghanistan (dushanbe.usembassy.gov). the Ministry of Interior, U.S. Embassy Team up for Antiterrorism Training, Press Releases, 19 February, 2008 states "The U.S.'s willingness to accept responsibility for infrastructure development of the Tajik border is largely related to the experience collected in training the republic's law-enforcement and governmental structure employees. Beginning in 2002, more than 326 Tajik government officials went through training costing more than 6 million dollars" (Ministry of Interior, U.S. Embassy Team up for Antiterrorism Training, Press Releases, 19 February, 2008, (dushanbe.usembassy.gov/). The Tajikistan's intension to increase ties with the U.S. was invigorated and Tajikistan did not extend the cooperation with Russia and created Tajik-American border posts.

The US with patrolling the Tajik border, did participate in modernizing the Tajikistan's border services. Obviously, this US assistance resulted in withdrawal of the Russian border guards. In 2003, meeting with Russia and US regarding extension of the treaty on the conditions for the stay of Russian border guards, Tajikistan was being offered to have more beneficial conditions by US.

The prospects of cooperation between Moscow and Dushanbe on the status of the 201st division are very less. Tajik authorities transferred the headquarters of the 201st division and other military contingents from the center of the capital to its peripheries. While US established a base by investing 63 million dollars, apart from this US also granted a billion-dollar loan and reconstructed military airport near Kulob. Thus Tajikistan is going to be even more dependent on US in the near future.

According to Usmanov, "2001 to 2004, the military cooperation between Tajikistan and Russia constantly got declined. The arrival of the American military in the region and the financial acquirements for U.S. military bases in Kyrgyzstan and

Uzbekistan forced Dushanbe to be away from Moscow. Military-economic bargaining began on *the principle of investments in exchange for the base*” (Usmanov 2007).

Usmanov gives recent development “In June 2004, Russia and Tajikistan agreed to create a permanent base. In August of the same year, the presidents of the two countries signed a corresponding agreement and the 201st division was replaced with the 201st military base. Its facilities are located in three large population settlements— Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tiube, and Kulob. The base has about 6,500 servicemen, 15% of whom are Tajik citizens. But the number of servicemen cannot correspond to the base’s status. There are plans to enlarge it further to 8,500” (Usmanov 2007).

Russia’s need to counterbalance its position against the U.S. made it possible for Dushanbe to acquire Moscow’s consent to participate in restoring the republic’s key hydropower station, Rogun. But the land still belonged to the base and the technology and armaments were also owned by Russia, Russia is not charged rent or electricity fees. The Nurek station was transferred to Russia by way of settling Tajikistan’s state debt. The land on which it is located was rented for 49 years at a symbolic fee of 30 American cents a year. Russia is writing 242 million dollars of the Tajik debt off to the facility, which, according to estimates, is less than its actual cost. After signing these military agreements, Tajikistan retained good relations with Russia and received 2 billion dollars in investments from it. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Vladimir Putin stated that the opening of this military base “Meets the vital interests of the two nations and serves to strengthen peace and stability in Central Asia and security of the entire Commonwealth of Independent States. Along with the air base in Kirgizia, in the town of Kant, the military base in Tajikistan will be a reliable link in the region’s united collective security system. This will be a system that is called upon to create conditions for neutralizing terrorist and extremist raids throughout the entire CIS and in Russia, as well as assist in the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime” (Cyberleninka.ru).

In addition, the importance for Russia of ensuring Tajikistan’s security and the military base, according to Vladimir Putin’s statement, guarantees the stability of Russian investments. But it is not clear why Germany, for example, which invests billions in investments in the Dutch economy, is not trying to deploy a military base in this country (Socor 2004). The Tajik Foreign Ministry, in turn, believes that the

need for Russia's military presence in the republic precedes from the overall concern and interest in resolving the problems in Afghanistan, in particular the illicit circulation of drugs and fighting extremism and terrorism. (www.nakanune.ru)

In exchange for its military presence in Tajikistan, Russia assured to modernize the republic's armed forces. It became obvious that the withdrawal of its border guards from the Tajik border was the price Russia paid for the 201st base and Nurek station. In August 2004, an agreement was signed on withdrawal of the Russian border guards. However, Tajikistan benefited from the presence of the Russian border guards, during their entire stay more than 30,000 Tajik border guards took an education in Russian military academies.

In July 2005, the Russian border guards, with the exception of a group of advisors (consisting of 300 people) from the FSS border service, were moved out of Tajikistan, and the U.S. essentially assumed full responsibility for financing the border service, export control services, and customs, positioning its help as support of sovereignty. It was precisely national control of the border that was the condition for allotting American and other Western aid to its infrastructure development. Training sessions, joint exercises, and deliveries of equipment were carried out for Tajik border guards. Keeping in mind that 50% of the activity of the Russian border guards is financed by Tajikistan, it was easy for Dushanbe to agree financially to "independent" protection of its border with the help of the U.S. government.

Despite the transfer of border patrol to the Tajik military, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed the desire to help, "Our Tajik friends to fortify the state border. We are the ones who are primarily interested in this" said the president during a meeting with the new ambassador to Tajikistan R. Abdulatipov in June 2005. "It is a well-known fact that a large flow of drugs headed both for Western Europe and the Russian Federation is still crossing the Afghan-Tajik border" said Putin (www.kremlin.ru). But things got no further than words. It was the U.S. that rendered the Tajik border services the main assistance. As a result, having created the Russian base, Tajikistan retained fairly good relations with Russia and, after the withdrawal of the Russian border guards, drew the U.S. into security cooperation.

In 2006, with the support of the United States, the World Bank wrote off Tajikistan's state debt and, at Russia's proposal, the republic's state debt to the member states of the G-8. So Tajikistan not only remained on good terms with

Russia, but also wrote off its debt, asked for investments, and received compensation from the U.S. for withdrawal of the Russian border guards, expecting in so doing stronger cooperation with the U.S. Later, when Russia entered advantageous military agreements, problems began with the fulfillment of Russia's investment obligations in the Tajik hydropower industry, which indirectly shows that due to its desire not only not to lose but to increase its control, Moscow agreed to sign agreements on investments in the Tajik hydropower and aluminum industries. (cyberleninka.ru)

In March 2007, for the first time in Tajikistan's history, joint training exercises of American servicemen and Tajik border guards were carried out on its territory. According to Kh. Rakhmatullo-ev, press secretary of the border department of the Tajik Committee of National Security, these exercises represented an exchange of experience between the two countries. "It is all related to drug trafficking from Afghanistan, international terrorism, and religious extremism," he noted. (Ameriki 2007)

Map 7: Russian Military Bases in Tajikistan



(Source: <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/tajikistan-extends-russias-military-presence>)

After intensification of the economic crisis and change of administration in Washington, the United States attempted to sound out the possibility of further intensifying its influence in the region with respect to intensification of the Afghan factor in the U.S.'s foreign policy. The economic crisis has indeed had a noticeable influence on the poorest country in Central Asia. Due to the severe energy crisis, devaluation of cotton, and corresponding decrease in budget allocations, President Emomali Rakhmon was forced to ask for help from the Eastern countries at the International Conference on Financing for Development held in the capital of Qatar, Doha, and ask Russia to increase its Tajik migrant worker quotas and amnesty those migrants who have violated the visa regime. This is also important since Tajik families depend on migrant earnings for their livelihood. But there was no talk about opening a U.S. military base. When talking at the conference during his visit, John Krol concentrated on the U.S. government's assistance in strengthening the security of Tajikistan's borders and supporting the corresponding departments. He talked about how in 2008, within the framework of the Export Control and Related Border Security Program of the U.S. government, the embassy and military engineering corps provided the Tajik customs service with mobile, x-ray, and other equipment totaling 6,729,000 dollars. Nor did John Krol forget that on 22 August, 2008, U.S. Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson and Tajik Minister of Foreign Affairs Hamrokhon Zarifi signed two cooperation documents that provide \$13.4 million of security and law enforcement assistance to the Government of Tajikistan. (Ameriki 2007)

Moreover, at the beginning of May 2009, the both sides signed addenda to the current agreement between the governments of the United States and Tajikistan on Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement which envisage allotting additional means to strengthen security and the protection of law and order in Tajikistan. It is possible that by taking advantage of the financial difficulties Dushanbe hoped to interest Washington in developing military cooperation. In an interview to EurasiaNet, an employee of the state scientific research center, who wished to remain anonymous, said that the Tajik authorities were ready to deploy foreign bases in the country. "Tajikistan can provide not only the technical possibilities, but also its territory for deploying bases. At present, the country is extremely interested in a peaceful neighborhood, but at the moment this can only be guaranteed by America's presence on the border. If the question arises of opening an American air-base in the country,

the decision will doubtlessly be positive”, believes the specialist. The base is also very important for the republic’s survival in conditions of the unstable economic situation. The American base would be an additional source of money for the local economy, says senior economist of the Tajik Ministry of Economy and Trade. Today the situation is not a viable economic model since it makes Tajikistan dependent on the Russian economy. Cooperation with the US, in addition to creating new jobs, will help to improve the information base of Tajik businessmen”, believes Kh. Umarov. (cyberleninka.ru)

In addition, in 2005 Russia made an agreement with the CSTO members, that it would be obligatory for all the member states to make common consent before deploying military bases by any third country in the regions. Moscow was doubtful about the presence of an American base in Tajikistan after the departure of the U.S. military contingent from Kyrgyzstan.

Russia and Tajikistan, both were working on different strategical interests of their own, on the one hand Russian was trying to take control over the Tajik defense industry, whereas, on the other hand Tajikistan wanted to settle its debt and obtain the opportunity to load its factories with contracts for arms modernization. By the way, at the beginning of December 2008, Russia deployed in the Tajik air defense base a Pechora 2M air defense missile system. According to head of the press service of the Tajik Ministry of Defense F. Makhmadaliev, “The complex will be serviced by Tajik specialists who have been through a Russian air defense system training course. Only Moscow and Dushanbe have such missile systems at present”. By December 2006, Russia offered the latest equipment of aero-navigation instruments and air defense automated control systems for the commander of the air force and Tajik defense minister. The installation of the new defense setups was carried out with the participation of Russian experts.

The major deliveries of arms and missile setups from Russia were, of course, dire need Of Tajikistan. Russia was trying to establish itself as a guarantor of security not only for the republic, but for the entire region. The US activation into the region alerts Russia to do as much as it can to ensure that Tajikistan becomes more dependent on it. As McDermott states, “American publications are expressing misunderstanding about the deployment of Russia’s air defense forces in Tajikistan, if the main threats to the republic’s security come from Afghanistan, which is clearly

incapable of threatening with missiles. It is obvious that Moscow is striving not so much to increase its influence in the republic, which is sufficiently strong as it is, as to prevent other players from deploying their bases in the country, which could happen should Russian-Tajik relations deteriorate. At the same time, we forget that Tajikistan is a member of the CIS and participates in the Joint Air Defense System being created among the Commonwealth states” (McDermott 2009).

Russia is undoubtedly winning the race in Tajikistan against the U.S. and Western countries. As Russia granted Tajikistan the two military bases, training institutions for the Tajik military and full grant with weapons which confirms Russia is still a priority of Tajikistan’s foreign policy and it is being offered many opportunities for cooperation. Although both sides are very well aware that the Russia does not have that much resource, nor does it always have the adequate economic conditions to respond positively to these offers. All of this again leads us to conclude that with their multi-billion investments the U.S. and China could become more significant and Russia transformed into just alternative regional player. Still, Russia has the historical ground of the common past of the two countries to increase its influence in the republic, which understands the role the Russian side played in uncertain civil war in Tajikistan.

Russia’s concern is to stop competition for availing nuclear power in that region, but it is concerned about American operations such as Topaz, which was aimed at buying up nuclear material locally in order to prevent it’s leakage to the unsavory regimes. Russia is also concerned with the uranium mining facilities in Tajikistan. Central Asia is also dependent on Russia for its space programmes. Central Asia looks to Russia for launching space crafts. In Tajikistan, Moscow rents a space monitoring radar station ‘OKNO’ at Nurek and uses Kazakhstan’s Baikanour cosmodrome.

Tajikistan as a developing republic is growing its economy steadily. The production of aluminum and cotton and remittance from migrant workers are primary sources of income of Tajikistan. Due to the great hydropower potential Tajikistan has invited foreign investment to establish internal infrastructure which would be resulting in electricity exports. Its neighbor Pakistan has done agreement to import electricity from Tajikistan to complement its shortage of electricity. Apart from these, one of the major unofficial sources of income of Tajikistan is illegal smuggling of

drugs. Tajikistan exports its major amount of manufactured clothes to Afghanistan and geographically it has direct access to South Asia by Afghanistan.

Tajikistan is a cotton rich state and Russia was concerned to gain access to cotton of Tajikistan. According to The Economist nearly 47% of Tajikistan's GDP comes mostly from Tajiks working in Russian Federation” (The Economist 7 September 2013). Today Energy opines “Russia's RAO UES energy giant has been working on the Sangtuda-1 hydroelectric power station (670 MW capacities) commenced operations on 18 January 2008” (Today Energy 5 January 2008) As Eurasianet puts, “In 2014, Tajikistan was the world's most remittance dependent economy with remittances accounting for 49% of GDP and expected to fall by 40% in 2015 due to the economic crisis in the Russian Federation” (Eurasianet.org). According to Ratha, Tajik migrant workers abroad, mainly in the Russian Federation, have become by far the main source of income for millions of Tajikistan's people (Ratha & Mohapatra 2007). And with the 2014–2015 downturn in the Russian economy the World Bank has predicted large numbers of young Tajik men will return home and face few economic prospects (Eurasianet.org). RFE/RL reported in 2009 that the Constitution mentioned Russian as *the language for inter-ethnic communication*, but an amendment passed in 2009 was brought to Russian language official status (RFE/RL-Rferl.org 7 October 2009) The Arab News reported, in 2009 nearly one million Tajik men and many women worked abroad (mainly in Russia) (Arab News 21 May 2007). Russia has its strong ethnic, political and economic links with this region. American presence in the region will only provoke Russia. In CIS, deployment of US troops and bases advanced Russian efforts to establish its stations in different parts of the region. Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), in 2003, decided to have a joint military command in Moscow which is a rapid action force for Central Asia. Russia has negotiated for a permanent base in Tajikistan. The troops will guard the Tajik –Afghan borders.

Russian troops and aircraft are also stationed in the newly created air base in Kent in Kyrgyzstan for use by CSTO's Rapid Reaction force. Apart from these, Russia has acquired for use many strategic military facilities in Kazakhstan such as Sary-Shagan test site, the Engels air base and the Kputsin Yar test site (Chung 2006).

US-Russia in Kyrgyzstan

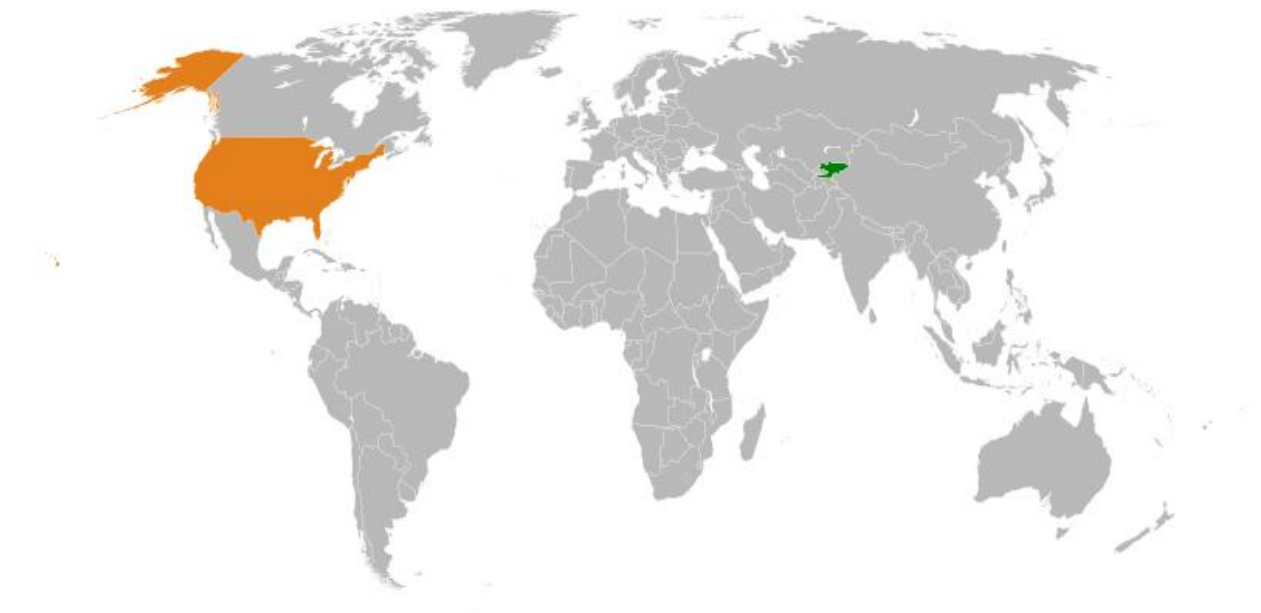
Kyrgyzstan has to rely on Russia geographically and economically. The Islamic extremism on the common border line between China and Kyrgyzstan is a major concern for which then Kyrgyzstan President Akeyev invited Russian border guards to take security charge of Kyrgyzstan-Chinese border. This was a historical revision of Kyrgyzstan's strategic policy towards reintegration (Olcott 1996). 1995 witnessed a series of bilateral agreements to establish deep coordination between both the countries to pursue major economic reforms. In the same year 1995 then Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and then Kyrgyzstan's Prime Minister Apas Jamagulov signed treaty to make Russian the republic's second official language. In 1996, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan made the 'Custom Union'. According to The Diplomat in February 2009 the Russian government promised to write off Kyrgyzstan's \$180 million debt as well as promising to give a advance \$2 billion, give \$150 million in direct aid and subsidize the building of the Kambarata-1 hydropower plant at the Kambaratinsk Dam" (thediplomat.com).

On 20 September 2012, A bilateral treaty was signed between Russia and Kyrgyzstan in which Russia is permitted to have a joint military base, for 15 years starting from 2017, in Kyrgyzstan. The pact was signed in Bishkek between Vladimir Putin and Almazbek Atambayev. Putin asserted that "The mutual military base will be an important factor adding to the strength in the country and the whole region" (www.rt.com). However, Putin is also alert about the sovereignty of Kyrgyzstan Putin States- "If Kyrgyzstan someday says that its armed forces have been developed to the extent that there is no need for the base anymore, we will leave the place right away. The presence of the Russian military base in Kyrgyzstan is an important factor of stability and security in the Central Asian region" (www.rferl.org).

9/11 turns the geopolitical strategy of Kyrgyzstan in US interests and in December 2001, The US established a transit center at Manas regarding the war against terrorism. The voices against US intrusions in the region are more common in Kyrgyzstan, However, According to the 2012 U.S. Global Leadership Report, "34% of Kyrgyz people approve of U.S. leadership, with 43% disapproving and 23% uncertain" (U.S. Global Leadership Project Report - 2012 *Gallup*). In July 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan took strong steps against US and

terminated the bilateral cooperation pact signed in 1993 (RFE/RL 21 July 2015). As Solovyov states, “The US has since warned Kyrgyzstan of the termination’s consequences regarding the provision of charitable and security aid” (Solovyov 2015) Dave reports, “Three months later, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry visited Kyrgyzstan to ease bilateral ties” (Dave 2015). US assisted the Kyrgyz Republic in executing economic, health sector, educational developments and conflict resolution in the Fergana Valley.

Map 8: US-Kyrgyzstan



(Source: BlankMap-World6, compact.svg)

Chinese influence in Tajikistan

Bilateral relation between China and Tajikistan established in 1992. Tajikistan is among three major trade partners of China. (Jane’s 2014) In Tajikistan, China is exploring investment in the construction of a 350 km long, south-North power transmission line (Pant, 2007; 28). Both the countries are members of SCO. China

firmly supports Tajikistan's determinations to preserve national security and stability and also helps Tajikistan in economic development. In 2012, Tajikistan got from China the promise of almost US \$1bln in the form of grants, technical support and credits on special terms (The Gazette of Central Asia, Satrapia. 3 September 2012).

Xinziang, The Muslim majority province of China shares border with Kazakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The Muslim majority provinces of these states often rebel against the political regimes which are different from Islam (Barnet 1996). IMU and Taliban provoke Islamic extremists of Xinjiang to assault over Chinese army. China provides military assistance to the government of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to protect himself from Islamic militants.

The Chinese and Kyrgyz governments increased security along their borders with each other and Tajikistan on 11 January 2007 after Chinese government officials expressed concern that 'international terrorists' were traveling through Xinjiang and Central Asia to carry out attacks. The warning followed a high profile raid on a training camp in Akto County, Xinjiang run by East Turkestan Islamic Movement members. General Sadyrbek Dubanayev, deputy chief of Kyrgyzstan's border guards, said, "After the announcement of the special operation by the Chinese side, we briefed everyone (security authorities on the Kyrgyz side) and then Kyrgyzstan and China decided to increase security along the border" (RFE/RL).

President Rahmonov addressed representatives of SCO member states in St. Petersburg, Russia on 7 June 2002. He warned that the three evils were still a danger to Afghanistan's security and that they are fueled by 'hunger, misery and poverty' in addition to drug trafficking. He urged SCO members to support the Afghan government to deter terrorism. He also expressed his support for the establishment of the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure force (Patnaik 2016: 125). Yury Baluyevsky, the Chief of the Russian General Staff, asked the chiefs of the General Staffs of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine to unite against "terrorism, cross-border crime and the drug mafia". The Tajik Defense Ministry held their first joint counter-terrorism drill with China, entitled 'Cooperation-2006' from 21–23 September 2006, on the Mimirak training grounds, in Khatlon region, Tajikistan. Defense Ministry spokesman Faridun Muhammadaliev said Chinese special forces worked with Tajik air and land forces with the Tajik army contributing ground forces artillery, one special forces company of its rapid-action-

force brigade, and one air forces company. The drill took place under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (RFE/RL). The threat of religious extremism in Central Asia fuelled by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan triggered stronger coordination between the five states. In fact, going beyond the border issue made the organization open to membership of other neighboring states (Patnaik 2016).

Map 9: Xinjiang Province of China



(Source: <http://www.whatsonweibo.com/islaminchina/>)

Xinjiang province and the Uyghur inhabitants are the major concern of bilateral relation between China and Kyrgyzstan. Relations between the two nations are hindered by the fact, that China did not want the independence of Kyrgyzstan, to which he considers a Turkic state, to encourage Turkic populations of China's Xinjiang region, to pursue their own liberation. There is some anti-Uyghur sentiment in Kyrgyzstan. Megoran states, “In 2009, then Prime Minister, Daniar Usenov, received appreciations from many leading Kyrgyz newspapers by expressing the fear that Kyrgyzstan would become ‘Uyghurstan’ through a so-called Chinese plot of miscegenation” (Megoran 2004). Kyrgyzstan rejected permission of the formation

of the Uyghur party to avoid the Pro-China campaign in the republic”(Olcott 1996). According to Peyrouse, in the 1990s, trade and commerce with China raised vastly. Particularly important is the re-export of Chinese consumer goods to the neighboring Uzbekistan and to Kazakhstan and Russia” (Peyrouse2007:18). Recently China is suffering with two parallel concerning issues, first is the issue over the Uyghurs, and second is narcotic trafficking. By 2005 Tulip color Revolution China and Kyrgyzstan signed a pact to exercise combined military forces. In 2010 Chinese spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that, "We are deeply concerned over the developments of ISI Clandestine Operations in Kyrgyzstan and hope to see early restoration of order and stability in the country and that relevant issues can be settled through the legal means”.

Gomez states, “A joint anti-terror exercise was scheduled for the autumn of 2010 between the two countries that was to include 1,000 army and air force officers and soldiers from China” (Gomez 2010).

External Influence on Radicalization in Tajikistan

Scholars believed that fundamentalism and civil war of Tajikistan is the extension of Islamic incidents in Afghanistan. There are cultural, religious and ethnic continuity between the population of Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Tajiks are second largest nationality in Afghanistan after Pashtuns. According to Dr. Dani “It was during the Afghan jihad that Islam was politicized and fundamentalist movements in Tajikistan started. The Mujahideen have been sources of inspiration of the Tajiks. The Soviet intervention tightly established links between the Afghans and Tajiks” (Menon and Barkey 1992-93;81). These connections were fostered by ‘same language, same culture, same religion and same ancestors in common’. Disintegration of USSR connected Central Asian people with the *Ummah*. Islamic missionaries from Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran visited Tajikistan and established many Islamic institutions and mosques and supported political parties with Islamic ideology.

Iran

There are two sets of concerns of Iran in the region, first economic and cultural and second political and security. In the socio-cultural dimension, common historical legacy of Iran and Central Asia could play a significant role; at the political

and security level Tajikistan's conflicts and instability became great concern for Iran. According to Patnaik "Iran has not developed much military-security ties with the Central Asian republics, however, it has played an active role in conflict resolution and mediation in the case of Tajikistan" (Patnaik 2016). For Iran the Central Asian region can be used as an opportunity to meet its economic needs, whereas, the landlocked Central Asian states see as passage to sea. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have mutual interest with Iran in transportation and power sectors because Iran has the technology and infrastructure which could be beneficial for these countries to develop their oil and gas industries and pipelines. The cultural and language similarities of Iran and Tajikistan are also helpful in establishment of multilateral relations between both the republics. In Tajik civil war Iran has played significant role and signed a ceasefire in Tehran in 1994.

Iran projected initially Russia and Uzbekistan as an intervener into internal affairs of Tajikistan and accused Moscow of supporting communists in Dushanbe. Tajikistan proved to be a fertile territory to spread Iranian influence and to adopt the Persian culture (Muriel 1994:93). Iran was providing vast amounts of teachers, books and publications to Tajikistan. Both the countries had mutual cooperation in various dimensions since 1989, especially to spread Islamic values and norms in Tajikistan. People of Tajikistan considered it as a triumph of the Muslim people of Tajikistan (Financial Times, London, 23 June 1992). Iran supported Tajikistan by funds, foods and other supplies (Rashid 1994). Iran also provided ultra modern technology to Tajikistan's for its economic uplifts (Central Asian Significant, No 105, July 1993).

Iran is an important player in the foreign relation of Tajikistan. Since Iran has been the first nation-state who came forward to establish an embassy in Dushanbe. However, both the countries pose differences also as Tajikistan's government is secular while Iran's government is Islamic. Still, Iran's major population follows Shia Islam while Tajikistan's majority is follower of Sunnism. President Ahmadinejad of Iran has remarked that "Iran and Tajikistan are one spirit in two bodies". He also added that "There are no limits to the development of relations between the two countries. We do not feel that we have a non-Iranian guest with us thanks to the many commonalities our two countries share" (CAUCAS.COM).

The relation between Iran and Tajikistan started to descend after the wanted opposition leader Muhiddin Kabiri, accused in terrorism in Tajikistan, was invited to a

conference in Tehran entitled “Islamic Revival” on December 27-29, 2015 and was warmly received by Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Tajikistan immediately issued a note of protest to Iran (www.rferl.org). Tajikistan's Foreign Ministry has summoned Iran's Ambassador to Dushanbe to express ‘regret’ against this act and the head of the Council of Ulema of Tajikistan described Iran’s invitation to Muhiddin Kabiri as supporter of terrorism (News.tj). The year 2016 evidenced the lowest relations between the two countries since Tajikistan obtained independence in 1991 (breitbart.com).

Turkey is considered as a bridge between Asia and Europe by Central Asian countries. In the beginning, West supported Turkey to counter Iran. As Patnaik states that “Iran’s regional rival in West Asia and to some extent in Eurasia is Turkey. While Iran tries to use its Persian identity to draw countries like Tajikistan and Afghanistan, Turkey uses its own brand of identity to gain advantage over others in the Turkey – speaking Central Asian States” (Patnaik 2016: 134). Tajikistan may prove an obstacle in its endeavor of Pan-Turkism hence, Turkey is playing its Sunni card to oblige Tajikistan. Many bilateral agreements were signed by Turkey and Tajikistan (Asian Central Significants, No. 91, April,1993). Turkey is providing economic and political support to Tajikistan. Turkey is promoting the teaching of secular Islam over radical Islam, however Uzbekistan alleged that Turkey, promoted radical Islam and banned many madarsas in its territory (Rashid 1994: 222). Patnaik points out that “In the early 1990s, Western writings in general projected the *Turkish Model* as the most suitable path of development for the Central Asian region”. He further explains, “As a concept, the idea of the Turkish Model arouses outside Turkey with the implication that Turkey is a model of a *secular democratic* Muslim country aiming to achieve Western standards, in partnership with the West, by applying liberal free market policies” (Patnaik 2016: 135).

Pakistan’s Influence over Tajikistan

Pakistan strategy in Central Asia had been shaped by two distinct theories, first is its rivalry with India and next is the consequences of the American model of containing radical Islam. Pakistan is seeking the support of Central Asian states on the issues of Kashmir and Afghanistan. In Rashid’s words “Tajikistan’s interest in

Pakistan is in its international trade, for which Tajikistan can use the Karachi port which is 1500 miles away from it” (Rashid 1994: 222). Tajikistan and Pakistan have signed many of mutual economic agreements. Pakistan’s *Ulemas* were providing Islamic values in deep rural areas of Tajikistan through many institutions. It had a strong influence over rural population where Islamic revival is strong in Tajikistan. *Tajik-Hejb-i-Ayay-i-Islami* was being developed according to Pakistan’s *Jama’at-i-Islami* pattern. (Pandit 1992:99)

According to *Jama’at* chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, to confront US imperialism and new world order by using Central Asian republics for a combined fight, Pakistan must provide Central Asia with Islamic guidance rather than economic aid (Rashid 1994: 215). In March 1993, *Jama’at* was accused of providing radical training to the Tajik people and spreading the links upto Arab world by Tajikistan’s government (Rashid 1994:215). Russia also accused Pakistan of creating hurdles for communism in Dushanbe. Many Central Asian leaders are having skepticism about the Pakistan’s role in the Central Asian region and suspecting ISI’s objectives to spread radicalism (Rashid 1994:210). Economic cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan is growing steadily. (Dawn.com 3 June 2002). Many Tajiks refugees from Tajikistan lived in Pakistan (unhcr.com). As The Dawn reports, “Tajik President and Pakistani Prime Minister affirmed plans to connect Pakistan and Tajikistan through road networks, such as from Chitral-Ishkashim-Dushanbe” (Dawn.com).

Saudi Arabia is spreading Wahabism in Tajikistan to counter the Iranian influence. Perhaps Sufism is against Wahabism and minimizing the intensity of Wahabism in local people. There is plenty of evidence about Wahabi institutions of Arabia, which are providing funds, literatures and other means to Tajik people. IRP visited Arabia to seek funds during the civil war. Muslim countries, especially in the Middle East, have had external Islamic influences on the region as well. After independence, as seen in the literature written soon after 1991, the Middle East was predicted to have a large impact on the development of the region because of the religious ties. Later literature places less emphasis on the Middle East as it became evident that Middle Eastern Islamic influences were restricted. Arab countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia have unquestionably played a role in the Islamic revival of the region, but their efforts have not caused major changes. Countries like Egypt are

geographically far away, and do not have the economic resources to get profoundly involved in the Islamic revival of Central Asia. In addition, the Egypt administration is facing its own problems with the Islamic Brotherhood.³⁶ Projects such as the creation of the Egyptian Islamic University in Almaty have developed between the Egyptian and Kazakh governments and are examples of government controlled Middle Eastern Islamic impacts. These kinds of influences tend to have less radicalizing affects, and surely do not encourage political or radical Islam. Arab countries have played a great role in offering Islamic education to Central Asia students. Alima Bissenova gives a good account of this and the problems that can arise as a result of mixed Russian and Islamic identities. Since independence a large number of Central Asians have travelled to Al-Azhar University in Cairo to learn Islam. These persons return home, bringing with them Islamic influences from the Middle East, which can slowly affect the culture of their society (Akiner 2004:86).

As a result of its financial means, Saudi Arabia has played a considerable role in the revival of Islam in Central Asia. The Saudi Arabian government and Saudi Arabian wealthy individuals have played a role in this. After independence some of the Central Asian leaders were eager to form ties with the Islamic Kingdom in the hope of receiving financial assistance. The Central Asian leaders were willing to allow the Saudi government to ship millions of Korans to the region and to construct numerous religious establishments and madaras (Akiner 2004:86). In the early 1990's and in 1999, the Saudi government paid all expenses for those who wanted to go on the holy pilgrimage to Mecca (Olcott 1996: 31-33).

The main Islamic threat coming from Saudi Arabia was from missionaries. These missionaries flocked to the region to preach and open schools. At first they were welcomed, later the Central Asian authorities realized the radicalizing affects these people were having on their population and put entry restrictions on them or expelled them (Olcott 1996: 87). One of the most radicalizing external Islamic influences has come in the form of Wahhabism. The origins of this movement come from Saudi Arabia and have had some impact on Central Asian politics and society. During the Soviet-Afghan war, many Arab volunteers went to Afghanistan to help fight the Soviets. They reached Afghanistan through Muslim Brotherhood networks

³⁶ The Islamic Brotherhood is an Islamic organization that was founded in Ismailia, Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in March 1928 as an Islamist religious, political, and social movement.

funded by Saudi Arabia. In the 1990's some of the most religious movements became even more radicalized and anti-Western. These were the movements that Arab volunteers came in contact with when they travelled to Afghanistan and Pakistan after the downfall of the USSR. These volunteers became further radicalized once in Afghanistan and have consequently played a large role in Wahhabi teaching in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia. The education funding almost entirely come from Saudi Arabian sources. Saudi Arabia was also eager to lead the way in the Islamic revival of the region out of fear that Iran may get involved.

The Iranian priests were aware that they could not export an Iranian styled revolution to Central Asia for a variety of reasons and exhibited caution in their relationship with Central Asia, even towards the ethnologically Persian Tajiks (Fuller 1998:220-236). Iran realized that building Shia Islam in a deeply Sovietized, predominantly Sunni region was almost impossible. In addition, it was concerned not to antagonize Russia.

Tajikistan and Pakistan were provinces of Iranian Empire that's why Turanian culture is common now a days in both the countries. 1.2 million Tajiks are reported to live in Pakistan. Pakistan and Tajikistan Governments are working on road connectivity from Chitral-Ishkashim-Dushanbe to enhance bilateral cooperation (www.dawn.com).

Radicalization of Islam in Kyrgyzstan

In this state, the Kyrgyz Qazi has rejected to entertain the notion of a distinct muftiate. Haghayeghi puts "His rejection is based on spiritual concerns, arguing that the Islam is an idea which surpasses state boundaries, and as such, the establishment of a separate muftiate goes counter the nature of Islam" (Haghayeghi 1995:158). Though, then President Akaev remained doubtful of religious involvement and highlighted the significance of secularism. For this reason, the preamble to the 1993 constitution mandates a secular state, forbidding the intrusion of any belief or religion in the conduct of state business. Curtis argues that "The non-Central Asians have also uttered anxiety about the potential for a fundamentalist Islamic uprising that would imitate Iran and Afghanistan by involving Islam straight into the making of the new state, to the disadvantage of the non-Islamic people" (Curtis 1996: 137). Due to the

concern about a sustained out flow of skilled or trained Russians, Akaev had taken pains to assure the non-Kyrgyz that no Islamic insurgency threatens the state.

Throughout the summer of 1995, a presidential declaration prohibited the teaching of religion or atheism in public schools and a state body to monitor religious organizations was established, a move that may have been due to the development of Islamic aggressiveness along the border. So far, there have been a few expressions of Islamic militancy. On August 1999, a large group of Uzbek radicals, numbering between 500 and 1000, held several Kyrgyz villages hostage. They also arrested four Japanese geologists employed at a gold mining site in southern Kyrgyzstan and a notable official from Kyrgyzstan's Interior Ministry. The group, crossed over into Kyrgyzstan during 22–23 August, saying they would bring holy war back (“Kyrgyzstan: militants test regional security”, 31 August 1999). These episodes clearly established the existence of radicalism in the country. Though, these violent acts of extremism in the name of Islam are very far from emerging into a political noticeable movement that could threaten the state's governance.

Kyrgyzstan, different from many of its neighbors, lacks any important energy resources. Kyrgyzstan depends on Russia and other Central Asian countries for its energy requirements. The natural resources that it does have are: hydroelectricity, gold, mercury, uranium and coal. A big portion of the country's income comes from the export of gold. This country and Tajikistan play no role in the politics of the Caspian region, or in the competing influences over energy resources. Tajikistan, war torn and deficient in energy resources, has not attracted much American investment. This is a country where Russian and Islamic influences have contested, and remain the most noticeable. As has earlier been explained, it was in this country that the Islamic risk appeared the most, especially between 1992-1997. Religious uncertainty in this country posed a threat to the whole region. Tajikistan is known to have been a less deprived republic in the Soviet Union; it has none of the features that attract distant investors. Yet this ‘failed state’ as it is often mentioned - remains close to Russia. Russian investments in this ex-Soviet Republic far outstrip any other foreign investments. In October 2004, Russia invested around 2 billion US dollars in Tajikistan's energy and aluminum segment (World Investment Report 2013).

Russia also decided to complete the creation of the Sangtuda hydroelectricity-generating station. Iran also assured to invest in this power plant as well. Iran's contribution in Tajik affairs has been crucial; they not only assisted to bring the Tajik civil war to an end, but have also been active in helping the Tajik government regain some of its economic power. Iran later tried to avoid any Islamizing stimulus on the ethnically Persian Tajiks, nor on any other Muslim country in the CIS. Russia and Tajikistan also agreed that RusAL-a Russian aluminum company could further invest around 1.6 billion US dollars in Tajikistan's energy and aluminum sectors (World Investment Report 2013).

Influence of Other Religions in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

In the assessment of the power of Islamic movements in Central Asia, an important factor is must be taken into account that up to what extent the Islamic influence is dominant. Globalization and information technology made the republic closer than ever. The isolation of these states is history now. The younger generation is breaking the limitations and approaching beyond the borders in search of better education and livelihood. Furthermore, the republics are signifying a variety of faiths and values. Apart from Muslim organizations, there are also many religious movements like Christian missions, Hare Krishnaism, Scientology and the cults of different Indian spiritual masters which are also attracting followers. The common as well as official attitude towards activities of, such groups is susceptible and they are considered as *disloyal* and *a threat to the integrity* for the established social norms and nation as well. The newly established religious movements are converting number of Kyrgyz and Tajiks hence, the increasing religious heterogeneity posed new concerns also.

Yet this diversity is still a comparatively small scale. The leading influence remains Islam, both as a belief system and a cultural identity. Moreover, as discussed above, Islam, in various façades, is playing a gradually important role in society. This process of 're-Islamization' is taking place against a backdrop of disturbing disruption.

The Impact of Taliban Rise in Afghanistan on Politics and Society in Central Asia

As earlier discussed in this chapter there is a range of factors, which have contributed to the growth of Islamic awareness in Central Asia. External Islamic impacts have played a role in the Islamization of Central Asia. Taliban also acts as an outer Islamic influence with other external Islamic influences coming from the Arab world. The Taliban's shadow over Central Asia did not only inspire a wave of Islamic consciousness and support for Islamic radical movements, in some states it also contributed to the further political suppression of civil rights in the name of containing extremism and terrorism. Consequently, the Taliban regime had an influence on most of the ruling leaders of Central Asia as well as on society. In addition, the Taliban has been damaged but not defeated; their covert existence still contributes to the unsound situation in the region. The presence of Taliban in Afghanistan is demonstrated through their regular attacks on American forces (<http://english.alyazeera.net>).

The Taliban institutes their roots in an Islamic schooling in Pakistan, which invigorated a school of thought called 'deobandism'. The movement's success with the Afghan people was a result of many years of civil war, instability and deep frustration. The exhausted Afghan people were ready to accept the sternest forms of discipline if security was guaranteed (McCauley 2002:78). Instability and the people's despairing need for security and peace brought the Taliban to power. This is a message the Central Asian leaders should not ignore; the more isolated the majority of the population is, the more likely they are to adopt desperate measures to improve the complication they live in. Though there exist many resemblances between the Afghans and the Central Asians, there exists one great difference, which makes them very distinct from one another. The effects of Russification in all its forms have created an environment, which has deterred radical Islamic influences like that of the Taliban. Peter Marsden supports this point when he says that the Soviet experience in Central Asia has shaped a different society to the one that exists in Afghanistan. (Marsden 2002:147).

It has been argued that the Taliban government, and their protection of Al-Qaida has generated a 'new cold war'. A fight between the West (largely the USA) and the Islamic world has extended post September 11 (Halliday 2002:36). This concern is of relevance to this section, and to Central Asia because it cannot be presumed that because this region is so intensely Russified, it will remain immune to

the upsurge of Islamization affecting most of the Muslim world. The downfall of Najibullah's regime in Afghanistan in 1992, and the start of the Tajik civil war marked the start of a period of strong Russian and Central Asian moves against the rise of Islamic movements and radical organizations. During the early 1990's most leaders in the Central Asian States feared that extremism and fundamentalism would spread from one country to another like an infectious disease.

From the three Central Asian republics that border Afghanistan (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), Uzbekistan was the most concerned and dynamic in protecting its borders with Afghanistan. Karimov feared that if the Taliban controlled Afghanistan, then there would be overflows of Afghani migrants trying to gain access to Uzbekistan and other parts of Central Asia. The main fear was focused on the religious extremist influences these refugees would carry with them. He knew that this form of imported Islamization would be greeted amongst certain Islamists in his country (Hyman 2001:110-111).

In 1996, a new stage of concern over the rise of the Taliban appeared. This was a result of the Taliban's triumph in Kabul. An emergency meeting followed in Almaty in October 1996 of four Central Asian presidents and the Russian prime minister (Hyman 2001:106). This further highlights the joint security concerns that bind Russia and Central Asia. This was one of the first incidents where Russia and the Central Asian countries openly spoke about combating the threat to 'regional stability'. The participants of the Almaty meeting issued a warning to the Taliban not to expand beyond the borders of Afghanistan. The Almaty meeting was evidence that the Russian and the Central Asian leaders, were by far more troubled over the emergence of a strong Islamic organization than any other regional or Western country. This fear further strengthened in 1997/1998, when the Taliban won in Mazar i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan. The Tashkent bombing in 1999, and the IMU invasions on Batken in 1999 and 2000 meant to bring down the Karimov regime, marked the rising power of the Taliban.

Even though the Taliban alone cannot be accused for Karimov's increasingly repressive measures against Islamic and non-Islamic movements, they can be ascribed responsibility for Karimov's suspicion in regards to the rise of political Islam in Uzbekistan. The IMU is not a creation of the Taliban, but its forte can be credited to

the support it received from Afghanistan. After the Tajik civil war was over, Afghanistan was used by the IMU as a safe haven and training ground for attacks in Uzbekistan. The two intrusions on Batken would have been harder to implement had it not been for the aid given to them by the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Yuldashev, the IMU leader, had come into interaction with the Taliban in 1997, and was certain that they would help, and train his association against the Uzbek government. Not only did the IMU and the Taliban share similar beliefs regarding the creation of an Islamic state, they both had to gain from the collapse of the Karimov regime, which had declared itself anti-Taliban and had supported the anti-Taliban opposition (Rashid 1994: 147-148).

The IMU's contact with Bin Laden has given it a caliber of training that it would have otherwise never has achieved (Gunaratna 2003:37). A combination of Karimov's continued radical authoritarianism and the IMU's professional training has kept this notorious and feared Islamic organization still alive in the region. The Taliban regime and the civil war in Tajikistan are regularly associated together as if the latter was a result of the former. It has often been argued in Moscow and in the Central Asian capitals that the events in Afghanistan had a direct impact on the Tajik civil war and on the events in Andijan in May 2005. It has been more convenient for the Central Asian governments to put the blame on Kabul, then finding reasons that they were responsible for these events (Hyman 2001:104). Moscow on the other hand has not wished to antagonize any of the regimes by putting the blame on them either. The IRP undisputedly had links with the ethnic Tajik Mujahiddin (especially Massud), and many of its members had been profoundly influenced by the war in Afghanistan. In 1995, one of the UTO's headquarters was in Afghanistan; from there they frequently launched guerrilla attacks on the Tajik government. The ethnic Tajik Mujahiddin and the IRP had similar ideological motives that were more concerned with fighting a communist styled regime than the spread of Wahhabism.

Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby connect these two groups when they say, "In many ways the Tajik opposition correlated with Afghan resistance". There were also those in the IRP with more fanatic views. After the peace agreement in 1997, which ended the civil war, those fanatic members created the IMU. Today the IRP has proved to be a moderate Islamic party willing to live in a secular state so long as it is legal, and has a voice in government matters. The IRP is and always has been a

completely different Islamic organizations to the IMU, HT and the Taliban. Other Islamic parties have not offered room for compromise, nor have other Central Asian governments. There was also fear that the floods of refugees from Afghanistan might help spread religious ideas (See <http://www.irex.org>). Rahmonov was angered by international community's lack of interest with what was happening in his country (Hyman 2001: 109).

This is one of the reasons that further bind Tajikistan to Russia. Russia's military aid and peace negotiations helped pull the country out of further turmoil. Although Kyrgyzstan does not share a border with Afghanistan, it is a country prone to Islamization. The prominent divide between the north and south, in terms of the effects of Russification and Islamic awareness, has caused much concern to Bishkek. This was further intensified with the increasing power of the Taliban. Bishkek's main area of concern was the Gorno-Badakhshan region in Tajikistan, which provides a buffer zone between Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. It was a region notoriously known for being a haven with Tajik Islamic fighters (Nojumi 2002:190). Akayev's concern regarding the stability of his country was further intensified after the fall of Mazar i-Sharif, and the apparent collapse of the anti-Taliban forces. He immediately called an emergency meeting for the other Central Asian leaders and Russia. At this meeting it was decided that a joint military forces and security chiefs AS 7 would make a tour inspection of the Kyrgyz Osh region in the Ferghana Valley. Akayev's fears regarding the safety of his country from the Islamic threat in Afghanistan became a reality in the summer of 1999 and 2000. Kyrgyzstan was targeted by the IMU, which was being protected and nourished by the Taliban, as a route for gaining access to Uzbekistan. The Batken incidents³⁷ automatically made the Taliban regime of grave concern to

³⁷ In Batken region again there was an incident between the citizens of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan Bishkek, May 8 / Kabar /. In Batken district May 7, 2014 at about 19.20 in the locality Jacques Oruk again incident between citizens of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Department of Public Relations and Media of the State Border Service of Kyrgyzstan said that according to preliminary information, the cause of the incident was bullying the citizens of Tajikistan, stoned the car of a Kyrgyz citizen, a drive along the highway Batken Isfana. During the proceedings at the scene on both sides formed a crowd of people to 1500 people, among whom there was a skirmish which developed into mutual stoning. About 21.00 Tajik citizens in areas Cake-Kocho attempted overlap road Batken Isfana, but citizens of Kyrgyzstan prevented that. In order to settle the incident in the countryside Cake Kocho-profit Batken border detachment guards and law enforcement officials Batken region. By the

Kyrgyzstan. Batken was evolving into a recruiting ground for the IMU. It became the location where Kyrgyz extremists found their way to the Taliban and IMU camps. (Rashid 1994:162)

The Taliban regime, even though it did not border all Central Asian countries, was bound to have a limited but noticeable impact on most of the region. As the power of the Taliban became more prominent, the worries of an Islamic spill over or ideological push into Central Asia became a growing concern for all the Central Asian leaders except Niyazov of Turkmenistan. President Niyazov's lack of concern in regards to the volatile and fanatic Islamic force growing next door in Afghanistan is a further reflection of how over confident he was with his own power. Niyazov officially took a neutral position towards the Taliban and abstained from the meeting in Almaty. Turkmen officials insisted that the growing force of the Taliban was not expected to create any complications for Turkmenistan (Hyman 2001:112).

Niyazov repeatedly stated that not only do the Turkmen people and the Afghan people have fraternal and historic ties, but also that his country had a good relationship with the Taliban and consequently refused to interfere in Afghan internal affairs (Marsden 2002:138). Turkmenistan's only sign of concern with the Taliban occurred after September 11. It was perhaps only at this stage that Niyazov realized that the threat the Taliban and Al-Qaida had emitted had not only been regional but global as well. At this stage, he supported the development of a permanent UN body under strict guidelines and clear goals to combat the activities of the Taliban and Al-

security forces of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to prevent misconduct were made warning shots into the air, but these actions have not brought results. Approximately 22.30 meters in Kok-Terek Samarkandek village council (CR) Tajik citizens were burned gas station, store and 2 units of trucks belonging to the citizens of Kyrgyzstan. Approximately 03.00 May 8, 2014 as a result of measures taken by border guards and law enforcement agencies, the conflict was localized. During the incident, local meetings were held between the border guards and law enforcement officials in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to develop joint actions in order to avoid escalation of the situation. At this time, law enforcement representatives of the parties held events with other preventive measures to avoid a repetition of what happened. The incident resulted in the Central Hospital Batken were hospitalized nine Kyrgyz citizens with various injuries and two are in serious condition. Department of Public Relations and GPS KR reported that the situation on the Kyrgyz-Tajik state border is relatively calm. Renewed movement on highway Batken Isfana.

Qaida, Though he refused to allow the USA to conduct military operations against Afghanistan from his country (Shams-Ud-Din and Sarkar, 2002:144). There were other advantages for Niyazov in recognizing the Taliban regime and refusing to join the anti-Taliban coalition, which Russia and the other Central Asian countries had helped set up. Niyazov's firm relationship with Russia has not stopped the Turkmenbashi from wanting to divert his energy exports away from Russia, and towards other markets. Therefore, it is not surprising that Turkmenistan was the only Central Asian country willingly to woo the Taliban in order to assure the development of the Turkmen-Afghan-Pakistan pipeline (Rashid 1994:152).

Kazakhstan appeared to be the country least affected by the Taliban regime. Unlike the other four Central Asian countries, it neither shares a border with Afghanistan nor has regions where extremism flourishes, such as in the Ferghana Valley. It is one of the most linguistically and behaviorally Russified countries in Central Asia, and the least Islamic. The fear, however, was not that Islamic movements would suddenly evolve in Kazakhstan, but that the Taliban's influence over the more religious Central Asian countries and Islamic organizations would eventually infiltrate into Kazakh society. Astana regarded the Taliban issue as a regional problem, and not only a threat to the countries it was more prone to influence. President Nazarbayev was so alarmed at the Taliban's elevation to power that he hosted the Almaty meeting after the fall of Kabul.

Assessing Competing Influences in Central Asia

Russia, in spite of increasing challenges from the other two powers, has remained the strongest power. Linguistics and particularly behavioral Russification appear to be deeply rooted in the Central Asian identity and make Russia's cultural influence very strong. The growth of secular Islam is the greatest challenge to Russia's cultural influence, especially as it appears to be gradually rising. Although Russia has strongly tried to maintain an economic presence through organizations such as the CACO/EurAsEC, and recently formed Eurasian Economic Union, what has aided with its economic influence in the region is its political influence on the Central Asian regimes. For example, Karimov facilitated Russia's participation in the CACO as a way of guaranteeing Russian political support at a time when Washington looked to be challenging his internal politics. This is an example of how competing

influences can be interlinked. Although America economically is the strongest power, and can offer more economic assistance to the Central Asian countries than Russia, the Central Asian leaders fear that this may encourage Washington to expand its other influences, particularly its political influence. Russia has maintained its dominance over the region's energy resources and export routes, although the USA's prominence in this sphere is slowly increasing. Politically, Russia is seen as the most favourable power to interact in the region's internal affairs.

The fear of political Islam looms over a large bulk of the population and particularly for the secular regimes. The growth of secular Islam, the rising prominence of organizations such as HT, the continued authoritarianism of the elites and American support of the leaders (as was the case with Karimov before Andijan) has encouraged the rise of political Islam. This has further pushed the Central Asian leaders towards Russian political support. Growing authoritarianism and an increased threat of 'colored revolutions' has also further aligned the Soviet-bred elites to look to Russia out of fear that American political influence will weaken their power base. Russia's security-related influence is strongly challenged by Washington; organizations such as the SCO and CSTO help strengthen Russia's security role. Although the security of the region from the escalation of Islamic extremism is an issue that affects both Russia and the Central Asian countries, it was Washington that reduced the risk of the Talibanisation of Central Asia. American security assistance has been essential to the region and has challenged Islamic extremism. Although Washington's military presence in the region reduces the chances of the Taliban regrouping and thus weakened the strength of some Central Asian Islamic organizations, it also allowed the USA to interfere in the internal politics of the country it is based in. This inevitably means increased economic assistance for the host country, but also exposes the regime to criticism and helps fuel Islamic sentiments, which the regimes fear. Thus Russia's political, cultural, economic and security-related influences enable it to remain the most effective and strongest power in the region

Anti-Terrorism Coalitions

From 1990s onwards, the governments of the Central Asian republic's were continuously attempted to develop a regional response against the terrorism inspired

by 'religious extremism'. In 1993, the Central Asian union was created comprising Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In February 1994, one more trilateral pact was signed among them. In 1996, a joint Central Asian peace agreement came into existence under UN guidelines. However, these cooperative measures were of symbolic gestures rather than part of a comprehensive strategy. At the end of 1990s, Tajikistan also joined the new group emerged as Central Asian Economic Community. Now security concerns were at high on its agenda. In April 2000, a 100-year treaty was signed between the four member states to combat challenges of terrorism, extremism, trans-national organized crime and other common security threats at Tashkent summit. Till Almaty summit on 5 January 2001, the common security agenda was shifted to combat the *religious extremism* in particular and with further modifications in its common agenda the group has been transformed into the Central Asian Cooperation Organization by February 2002.

A second regional alliance that emphasized growing security concerns was the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) actually, originated out of efforts to resolve border disputes. China shares long borderlines with Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and till 1990s, many stretches of the border were disputed due to unclear treaties between Tsarist Russia and China. After the disintegration of Soviet Union, China initiated efforts to settle its border disputes with the four newly born states through bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Thus, the five heads of states started meeting in Shanghai on 26 April 1996 and signed the military treaty to resolve the disputes in border regions. Therefore a new coalition of these states came into existence with the title 'Shanghai Five'. Initially, Shanghai five was focused to resolve the border related issues with mutual cooperation and understanding. The 4th summit was held on 25 August 1999 in Bishkek in which a joint declaration was signed on regional security and cooperation to respond the challenges of transnational criminal activities, international terrorism, illegal immigration, narcotic and arm trafficking, etc. (www.idsa.in). These challenges are grave for all five states that had a direct impact on their internal and external stability. In 5 July 2000 summit held in Dushanbe, The Shanghai five collectively declared its support for Beijing's 'One China' policy, and also for Moscow's actions in Chechnya. The Shanghai five also supported UN efforts for a political settlement of the Afghan conflict. Uzbek President Karimov, who was

present at this meeting, expressed the view, “The security interests of his country coincided with those of the *Five* and I welcome the contribution of Russia and China to guaranteeing security in Central Asia”. As it is reported “Uzbekistan’s application for membership of the organization was approved, and President Karimov too became a signatory to the Declaration. The declared aim of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) included the creation of a new international and political order featuring democracy, justness and rationality. The importance accorded to regional security was underlined by a separate Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, also signed by the six heads of state during the June summit meeting. This document provided a legal framework for increased regional cooperation in police operations and intelligence gathering. It was confirmed that an anti-terrorism centre (under discussion since the previous summit meeting) would be created in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)” (www.idsa.in).

Another security organization, officially came into being on 1 August 2001, was the CIS Collective Rapid Reaction Forces. This organization was aimed to Combat International Terrorism and Extremism. It was the army coalition of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan based in Bishkek. Thus, by 2001, three of the Central Asian states had joined two separate, but overlapping, regional security organizations. How these two bodies were to interact, either in a political or on an operational level, was not clear.

As the security concern of the region deteriorated the move to institutionalize regional efforts to combat terrorism were prompted. The civil war in Tajikistan (1992–97) had not triggered the expected joint war on terrorism in Central Asia, but it exposed the lawlessness and violence in the region. Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan in the mid-1990s added to the instability. Radical Muslims from the Central Asian states (especially Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) started looking for shelter in Afghanistan. Al-Qaida and Wahhabism worked as a magnet for Islamic militants which attracted terrorist from many other parts of the world, and in particular became host to a large contingent of supporters of Islamic fundamentalists. The extremism within the region also invigorated trans-border smuggling of drugs and arms and enhanced the region’s social and economic problems. Patnaik points out, “This is true for all the other countries of Central Asia. Regional stability depends on relations between the Central Asian states and on their ability to control transnational terrorism,

drug and crime, which would depend a lot on the situation in Afghanistan. The external powers can either fish in troubled waters in the region or help the Central Asian states in their effort to resolve problems among themselves. The possibility of using the states of the region to further geopolitical objectives of external powers is quite minimal. Inter-state coordination in Central Asia remains the only option for sustained regional stability. Since the Central Asia remains the only option for sustained regional stability. Since the Central Asian region is not polarized in geopolitical terms, there is hope for greater intra-regional cooperation in the future” (Patnaik 2016).

Impact of September 2001

According to Nurdavletova, “After the 11 September 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, the former Bush Administration established bases and other military facilities in the region to support US-led coalition operation in Afghanistan. The succeeding Obama Administration has highlighted American interests in such continued access as well as the long term security and stability of the region” (Nurdavletova 2011: 173). In September 2001, Taliban’s control over 90% of Afghanistan’s territory intensified the fears of terrorism. Ahmad Shah Massud, who was the chief of The Northern Alliance, was seriously injured in a suicide bomb attack carried out by two Algerians; he died shortly after. On 11 September, terrorist air attacks were mounted against the USA, causing the deaths of thousands of civilians. It was widely believed that al-Qaida was behind both operations.

Meanwhile, the continuing struggle between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance restricted the UN World Food Programme of supplying vital food aid to Afghanistan as it could no longer guarantee the safety of its staff (www.wfp.org). In October 2001, a US-led alliance launched the ‘War on Terrorism’ to start military operations against al-Qaida and Taliban bases in Afghanistan. Most of the fighting was over by the end of November and on 5th December, the Bonn agreement was signed among different Afghan factions to create interim administration. This interim administration was further succeeded by a more representative government with UN assistance to reconstruct the country.

Central Asia steadily reacted to these significant events. Lacking of media coverage was one of the major reasons of popular reaction, which could not provide

people up-to-date knowledge of developments. Another popular anxiety was that the internal war of Afghanistan may pose instability in the region itself. Whereas, the Bonn agreement initially raised optimism, especially in official circles. People of Central Asia started believing that the regional stability would result in peaceful cross-border relations which would later bring economic and social advantage to all concerned. But it became clear that such plans were premature to meet the challenges. The New Administration of Afghanistan was unable to control the regional power struggle entirely. The skepticism rose that this regional struggle might spread to one or more of the neighboring states. Soon the general perception changed the optimism that the basic situation had not, in fact, changed efficiently. As per UN Report. "There were some immediate adverse impacts. The first was a humanitarian crisis, as a million or more refugees fled Afghanistan in the autumn of 2001. Most tried to enter Pakistan or Iran, but tens of thousands headed northwards, to Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; some also tried to reach Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. There were fears that, concealed among the legitimate asylum seekers, militant Islamists, terrorists and drug traffickers would come flooding into these countries. Tajikistan, still scarcely recovered from the civil war, was particularly vulnerable to destabilization rather, traffic was in the opposite direction, as the neighboring states became transit routes for delivering aid to Afghanistan" (www.un.org).

Another impact was the destruction of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) bases in Afghanistan. Many of the Central Asian guerrillas who were fighting alongside the Taliban and al-Qaida appear to have been killed. There were rumors that Juma Namangani, leader of the IMU, had also been killed. However, a year after his supposed death, there was still no confirmation of this, and there was a growing suspicion that he was still alive, though possibly abroad (in Pakistan?). Whatever the truth of the matter, the IMU was on the retreat throughout 2002. The third impact was enhanced military cooperation with the USA. The Central Asian leaders were quick to express condolences and confirm their willingness to support the 'War on Terror'. This was not an unexpected development, since the USA had for some time been providing military assistance to these countries, on a bilateral basis as well as within the framework of the NATO Partnership for Peace Programme (PfP), to modernize their armed forces. Tajikistan offered access to airports in Dushanbe and Kulyab, and these were used as transit points. Kazakhstan opened its air space to allied aircraft,

while Turkmenistan, mindful of its status as a neutral country, provided facilities for conveying humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

However Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan emerged as the key US partners in the region. The US–Uzbek military relationship had been already well established, though previously not greatly publicized. In October 2001, US troops began arriving in Uzbekistan; they were stationed at Khanabad, a former Soviet air base, close to the Afghan border. It was announced that the US military was preparing to spend some \$5 million on refurbishing this base; by mid-2002, it was host to an estimated 1,800 US troops.³⁷ Another base was established in Kyrgyzstan, at Manas, formerly the international civilian airport (close to the capital, Bishkek, and only 300 miles from the Chinese border). Within a few months just under 2,000 troops, mainly US, but also units from other Western allies were assembled there. (Gleason 2006)

The Uzbek and Kyrgyz governments evidently hoped that their willingness to cooperate with the USA would yield benefits, including greater financial assistance and less criticism of their records on such issues as human rights and corruption. To some extent they were rewarded in this way, but this did not satisfy their expectations. Consequently, by 2002, despite outwardly cordial relations, there was palpable frustration and resentment (Kucera 2012).

Among the population at large, too, there were mixed reactions to the US presence. It had brought some local economic benefit through increased trade and employment opportunities, but equally there was anger, especially in Kyrgyzstan, over the way in which the bases seemed to be fueling corruption by the granting of lucrative contracts to highly placed individuals. One further impact of the ‘War on Terrorism’ in Afghanistan was that it raised questions about the role of the two regional anti-terrorist centres that had been created in mid-2001. More broadly, it threw doubt on the usefulness of the parent organizations, namely the SCO and the CIS. Some analysts, Central Asian and foreign, believed that the physical presence of US troops meant that China and Russia had suffered a definitive defeat in the struggle for regional influence. The size of the US bases, and the significant funds that were invested in refurbishment, seemed to indicate a long-term strategic plan. China and Russia, while acquiescing in the US presence in Central Asia, were nevertheless seeking to re-establish their respective positions. For China this was a matter of some

urgency, since the establishment of US bases so close to its western border could not but be regarded as a direct security threat. However, in public the reaction was muted. Instead, efforts were made to maintain the relevance of the SCO; working meetings proceeded as before, though the planned anti-terrorist centre in Bishkek remained dormant.

Bilateral relations between China and the Central Asian states did not suffer, and arguably were strengthened. Relations between Russia and the Central Asian states also were not, in any discernible measure, adversely affected; it was even possible to detect a slight improvement, prompted by a desire to use Russia to counterbalance US influence. The CIS Rapid Reaction Force, based in Bishkek, continued to conduct joint exercises. No active operations were reported, but in early December 2002 Russia announced plans to establish an air unit at Kant, not far from the US base. As this brief account of developments in the immediate aftermath of September 2001 indicates, in Central Asia there was a feeling of anti-climax: at least on the surface, there was comparatively little change. Neither hopes nor fears were realized in any significant degree. Rather, there was a heightened sense of anticipation, of suspense even, as people waited to see what the longer-term effects would be. It was obvious that the Central Asian states were for the moment firmly placed within the Western, and more specifically US, orbit, yet in many circles, formal and informal, there seemed to be a perception that this was perhaps only a transient state of affairs. Questions regarding the future political and ideological orientation of the region remained open.

Undoubtedly Islam is playing a significant role in various processes in Central Asia, i.e. democratization, governance, financial assistance, shaping national identity. People turned towards Sharia law due to state failure. Islam appeared in Central Asia as a manifestation of tension between Western and traditional cultures, response to political secularization, an attempt to create a distinct national identity and a local response to failing autocratic rule. Whereas, in Kyrgyzstan, Islam appeared as an attempt to create a distinct national identity..

A sense of Nationhood among Tajiks was almost non-existent when independence came in 1991. Civil War made Tajikistan dependent upon Russian assistance. The Central Asians' severe economic need bound them to turn to the

global community. Olcott clarifies that with independence, the leaders of the new states hoped to use their ethnic composition to attract global investment and foreign support. According to Olcott “Inner economic forces could be accountable for pushing the republics in the direction of Islam” (Olcott 1998: 31-33). Apart from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, other Central Asian states like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan also renounced their secularist policies and adopted Islam to cope their inner and outer challenges. In one conference, President Karimov of Uzbekistan deliberately stated that “He only eats *Halal* meat which met Islamic Values”. Islam made the Central Asian states vulnerable in terms of financial assistance from Islamic countries like Oman, Saudi Arabia, etc. in the name of Islamic propagation and Mosque building within their ruling territory (Olcott 1998: 33).

The Islamic card of Central Asian states was meant for wealth accumulation in the name of Islamic assistance (Ehteshami 1994: 07). Islam provided them an opportunity to invite investors and profit making companies from Islamic states. The interactions and transactions with the West, on the other hand, opened the door of democratization of Central Asian states, but Tajikistan was afraid of democratization process due to long term impact of Civil War and Tajik people like to be close to their Islamic heritage. They also consider democracy as a new face of communism.

In Tajikistan, severe crisis of legitimacy, lack of clear aims for the state formation and a lack of strategic plans to meet socio-economic challenges, pushes the state to strengthen its authoritarian behavior. Under these conditions, Islam may be used as an efficient tool for mobilizing the people by the state. The existing bond between the state and Islam in Tajikistan is, to a large extent. A result of their own specific development.

The case of Kyrgyzstan is different due to its openness. One of the main weaknesses of democratization in Kyrgyzstan was the failure to create strong political actors. The failure of these political parties to grasp the attention of the population is partially because many officials remained skeptical of alternative power structures. Secondly, these organizations were too often based on personalities and regions with no firm political base. In addition, many of the country’s traditional characteristics of tribalism and clan loyalty also contributed to the failure of an effective pluralistic political system (Andorson 1998:34-38). Which resulted in the failure of

democratization. The political, economic and social situation in the country has not only led to the rise of Islamic sentiments, but also inevitably played a large role in the eruption of the protests that led to the removal of Akayev from power. Though, the debate of the revival of Islam in Kyrgyzstan revolved around many issues. Scholars depict the process as the outcome of a manifestation of tensions between Western and traditional cultures, a response to political secularization, as an attempt to create the distinct national identity and a local response to failing autocratic rule. All these conditions are partially true.

If we compare the revivalism in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the conditions are not similar and therefore, in both the states causes and consequences of Islamic revival are different. In Tajikistan Islam is used as a source of legitimacy. Civil war was considered as a battle between Islamic legitimacy and secular forces (Djalili, Grare and Akiner 1997). Islamic organizations began to take political shapes and new Islamic institutions started playing a vital role in state decision making. The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan now as the key oppositional party is functioning for elementary principles of Islam to be implemented in the ideological and political context of Tajikistan. Instead of working to establish an, Islamic state, Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan is shaping Islamic values to govern the people and state (Najibullah 2012).

However, the struggle between Islamic forces and secularists is widely evident in Tajikistan. The secular political regime is playing a dual character simultaneously. On the one hand, despite of being secular, it supports particular religious groups, (United States Department of State, 2011 Report on International Religious Freedom, Tajikistan, 30 July 2012). However, on the other hand, invited bitter reactions by many Islamic communities for breaking several unlicensed mosques (United Press International Sept 8, 2007). By a law Majlisi Oli restricted the people under 18 years from attending religious services at Mosques (Schwartz 2011). Tajikistan government is trying to proceed towards secularism and strict the Islamic institutions by many laws.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Islam holds its power in Central Asia through its political and cultural influences. The strength and continuing growth of secular Islam is an indication of the religious consciousness in Central Asian society. Secular Islam is becoming more noticeable in Central Asia. This form of Islamic development is particularly remarkable for northern Kyrgyzstan, which do not have a strong historic Islamic culture. It shows how even the least Islamicized countries in the region are gradually interacting with Islam and how signs of religion are frequently seen and felt in everyday life. Secular Islam in Tajikistan and southern Kyrgyzstan is firmly associated. It plays a stronger role on people's identity and the ways they work, dress, etc. The real position of Islam in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, both secular and political, is harder to distinguish because of the severe restrictions on individual freedom. As earlier stated the secular Islamization of society can play a role in the growth of more extreme Islam and an improved tolerance to political Islam, particularly, if political Islam does not inevitably mean the establishment of an Islamic caliphate. In addition, the regimes, and their way of governing has contributed to the intensification of a more extreme and politicized Islam as a substitute to the status quo. This has elevated the position of Islam and given it competing influences capable of leading Central Asian society and politics.

This is mainly the case in Tajikistan where secular Islam is strong and is joined with a regime that encourages aggressiveness through the management of its population. Islamic organizations have been the most active in Tajikistan; therefore control of extremism and fundamentalism in this country could help limit the spread of extremism and fundamentalism in the region. The severe condition in the Ferghana Valley and its history of being the core of Islamic activity means that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are also under strong Islamic influences. External Islamic impacts should not be exaggerated, as they are not the main cause for the increased Islamization of the region; though, the Taliban and Saudi Arabia have added to the strength of Islam in Central Asia.

Kyrgyzstan's varied religious communities normally coexist with significant tolerance. In comparison with Tajikistan, the state has retained a largely liberal approach to religious practice. But fears of Islamic extremism have incited more attempts to control religion, often in a clumsy and chaotic way. This partly reflects a shifting society, in which beliefs are still in fluctuation, and the government is struggling to respond to fast change. Often bureaucrats fall back on old Soviet patterns of governance, looking to use the mosques as a new form of ideological control. In practice, this is unlikely to be effective: society is too diverse, and *Imams* are not sufficiently commanding. Religious authorities themselves have substantial responsibility to promote rational forms of Islam that suits a principally modern state. There is little discussion of modernizing trends within Islam, a closed mentality to younger graduates entering the religious order, and often very traditional views on social issues and women. Religious education needs grave attention to improve its quality. Students at Islamic institutions also need some acquaintance to secular subjects, at the least so to get a job after graduation. The Ministry of Education and the Muftiate need to work together to find a way of refining the quality of education and assimilating it into the national system.

Tajikistan's civil war provided many the impressions that there was a severe risk of a major part of the people supporting an Islamic state. In reality, widespread support for political Islam and for the IRP in particular, is low. Partly this is an inheritance of the war. However, as memories of the conflict decline with time, it is possible that Islamist ideas may once more come back importantly to the agenda. The gradual co-option of opposition forces by the government has formed a vacuum in which Hizb ut-Tahrir has attempted to expand its influence. It has developed particularly in the north of the country, among ethnic Uzbeks, but has also found backing among some Tajiks in other areas. Its quick growth as an alternative opposition is appreciated by some more radical IRP members, but there has been little movement from the IRP to its positions. Continuous compromise with the government, however, or in an extreme case, a prohibition on the IRP, could lead to an outflow of members to more fundamental Islamist groups.

There is little doubt that President Rahmon has used the war on terrorism for his own interests, putting growing pressure on the IRP and manipulating the fear of Islamic extremism to gain more authority for him. In much of this the international

community has been at least complicit. It has given been strong funding for the continued role of the IRP in the political system, but offered little open condemnation of Rakhmonov's increasingly authoritarian style. The danger remains that a progressively centralized political system, by appointing most opposition forces, will create the basis for more fundamental forces to find support. Given the enormous economic problems faced by Tajikistan, the widespread drug trade, and its closeness to Afghanistan, the possibility of radical Islamic groups evolving once more to challenge the state has to be taken seriously. While there is little public support for such groups, the more the government efforts to control religious structures and the more it connects secularism with the present political leadership, the greater the risk that support will develop over time for a different type of legitimizing system altogether.

Under Soviet rule, the level of socio-economic development in Central Asia was not far below that of many industrialized countries. In recent years, still, large sections of the population have seen a fall in standards of living. There are now extensive poverty and lack of entrée to basic social services; indicators of human development are close to those of the poorest countries in the world. Corruption has spiraled out of control. The high hopes of the first years of independence have, for many, not been fulfilled. This has created a 'blow-back' of disappointment and frustration. In these conditions, it is not shocking that people turn to faith for guidance, certainty and above all, hope for a better future. Much of the demand of the radical Islamists lies in the fact that they offer simple explanations and cures for the ills of society.

The debate on this phenomenon generally focuses on security implications. Might radical Islam is a threat to stability? Have particular governments exaggerated, or alternatively underestimated, the seriousness of the situation? Is there a potential 'arc of conflict' from China to the Black Sea? Such questions concentrate attention on individual events, but the lack of reliable information makes it impossible to gauge the importance of such incidents with any degree of assurance. Meanwhile, there is little attempt to identify underlying trends. Yet it is the trends that are shaping the future.

Arguably, the most significant development of the 1990s in Central Asia was the intensifying politicization of Islam. This was not only owing to the activities of radical groups: governments too, especially that of Uzbekistan, engaged in the revival of Islamic legitimacy. The discourse of opposition was likewise cast in doctrinal terms. Consequently, virtually all forms of political disaffection are now subsumed under the umbrella of 'Islamic Extremism'. This has placed Islam in the center of the political arena. It might have been supposed that this would lead to a weakening of the purely religious content of the agenda. On the contrary, doctrinal legitimacy appears to be assuming an ever more powerful role.

The internal dynamics of the situation point to the likelihood of increasing instability, with an escalation of conflict between government and (Islamist) opposing forces. It is difficult to see how this might be averted. Government to resort to the tactics of war is mirrored by the growing militarization of the opposition. This creates an atmosphere of terror, but also of anger; it creates victims, but also martyrs. This cycle of violence will surely lead to a hardening of attitudes on both sides. A more productive approach, it might be supposed, would be dialogue, peace-building and ultimately the inclusion of dissident voices in government. This is the strategy that is favored by concerned International observers. However, efforts at power-sharing have had little success. This is, after all, not simply a power struggle: basic principles of belief are at issue, hence there is little room for compromise. Conflict is not an inevitable outcome.

There are factors that might, in the longer term, influence the course of events in a constructive way. The economic recovery would undoubtedly help to alleviate some of the tensions. However, this cannot happen overnight. Moreover, it will certainly not be a miracle panacea. It could well lead to greater inequalities in standards of living, greater societal fragmentation; this would surely deepen the crisis. Likewise, political liberalization might provide a peaceful outlet for the expression of dissident views, yet the cultural and social traditions of the region, as shaped by both Soviet and pre-Soviet experiences reveal strongly authoritarian, repressive tendencies. Even the Central Asians who currently regard themselves as democrats show little understanding of the principles of liberal democracy. Thus, despite the fact that much lip service is paid to the need for democratization, in reality, there seems little hope that such a transformation will be achieved in the near future.

A nonthreatening momentum might possibly be fostered by the training that is being provided through international aid and development programs. Such schemes do make a positive contribution to the creation of more open, tolerant societies. Yet they cannot be expected to make a significant impact in the near future. These programs are mostly small in scope, duration and catchment area. Thus, they will take some considerable time to achieve critical mass. It is the time taken for graduates of such schemes to reach that priority level influence policy-making.

Another factor that could eventually contribute to regional stability and recovery is the support provided by international organizations for projects on conflict prevention and conflict resolution. However, such undertakings tend to be poorly funded and are often hampered by problems on the ground (such as uncooperative bureaucrats). Moreover, they are not always well designed, being based on limited knowledge of local conditions, and consequently, they have proved to be of limited value. Given such constraints, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, at least in the short term, the Central Asian states will continue to experience severe communal stress. Economic collapse is triggering a process of de-modernization and de-skilling, especially in rural areas (where the great majority of the indigenous population still lives). It is not surprising that in these circumstances people increasingly seek the comfort and reassurance of religious faith. The great majority of the population continues to adopt a passive, traditionalist approach to Islam. On the whole it accepts the authority and guidance of the official religious hierarchy. Even educated Central Asians tend to avoid intellectual engagement with religious issues, revealing little curiosity about modern debates on Islam.

It must be stressed that the radical Islamists are still very much in a minority, both numerically and in terms of geographic spread. Since the mid-1990s, they have been fanning out from their original base in Ferghana Valley and now have a sizeable presence in the adjacent regions of the other four states. This process may well continue, but it will nevertheless be difficult to win over a substantial mass of the population. The militant element that promotes violence – and by no means all radical Islamists are militant – involves even smaller numbers of individuals operating within a fairly narrow corridor from the Afghan border to eastern Uzbekistan. They could expand their activities, especially if funded by drug trafficking and given logistical and ideological support from extremist movements in other parts of the Islamic world.

However, they would find a difficult opponent in the armed forces of Tajikistan and the other Central Asian states. There would be no easy victories for the insurgents and although the incidence of violence might increase, it is unlikely that the present balance of power would be significantly improved in the future.

Russia's influence on culture, economy, security and politics has been analyzed in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Russia's historic legacy has been very significant in allowing it to maintain a crucial role in Central Asia after independence. Analysis of the historic legacy helps explain why Russia is not supposed today as having been an occupant of the territory of present day Central Asia. This aids in explaining the lack of hostility seen between Central Asians and Russians, especially in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

This generally accommodating attitude towards Russia which has resulted in a strong Russian cultural influence in the region. The amount of Russification in Central Asia differs considerably from country to country. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are the most linguistically and behaviorally Russified. Behavioral Russification has played a role in the growth of the Central Asian identity; the Kyrgyz (especially in the north), other than being the Central Asians that are the most linguistically Russified, also is the closest to the Russian way of living, thinking, eating etc.

Politically Russia is also seen as having a strong influence as all the Central Asian countries are imitations of the Soviet political model. Even a "colored revolution" in Kyrgyzstan was not able to help the country break away from its political past. Even if the foreign Policy of a country is oriented away from Russia the domestic milieu still favours Russian political influence.

Russia's influence in security has been challenged by the US. Since independence, and principally before the war on terror, Russia was the most effective security provider for the region. This was particularly seen during the Tajik civil war and various other instances of friction between weaker and stronger Central Asian countries. Its security providing role has not only earned it loyalty from the Rahmon regime and consequently a Russian military base outside Dushanbe, but also helped create regional security structures aimed at fighting regional threats, such as extremism, terrorism, crime and drug trafficking.

Security based organizations have also enabled Russia to remain active in the security sphere of the region, especially when faced with a competing security organization and military bases from the US. Russia's security-related influence was strongly challenged by US's defeat of the Taliban regime, and the creation of an US military base in Kyrgyzstan. The creation of a Russian military base at Kant was a way for Russia to counterbalance US military presence in Kyrgyzstan and remain prominent in the country's security.

Economically Russia also attempts to expand its influence over the region. It faces rising competition in the energy sphere, and tries to maintain strong regional (including other countries of the CIS other than Central Asia) economic organizations such as the SES, and the CACO/EurAsEC. These kinds of organizations have not in the past been very promising, and Russia's influence in this sphere is challenged by US's bilateral economic relationship with the Central Asian countries. Thus, it appears that Russia's strongest and most enduring influences lie in the political and cultural spheres. The former can be challenged by fundamental changes to the political infrastructure, resulting from the death of the or by effective revolutions. The latter can be challenged by other cultural influences on the Central Asian population or by the introduction of either a new culture or the development of an already existing one.

With the establishment of U.S. bases in Kyrgyzstan and the granting of more limited U.S. landing rights in Tajikistan, there is genuine reason for concern that leaders in West and US for fear of the political uncertainty it could cause. War on terrorism in the common agenda for which Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia with other countries sharing same platform. The events of 11 September have in many aspects strengthened the resolve of Russia and the Central Asian countries to create a stronger counter-terrorism defense. Hence they have tried to form a stronger CIS Collective Security System; in May 2002 the Collective Security Treaty became the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) incorporating Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus and Armenia. Uzbekistan had left the CST in 1997, and linked the pro-US coalition known as GUUAM. The CST and the CSTO have the same goal, which is to create a regional security organization. Nevertheless, the CSTO has shaped itself to adapt to the changes that have happened in the international system since 11 September. The objectives of the CST were to pledge regional

security- under the control of Russia. The CST did not only strive to protect the region from external threats, but also to protect members of the CST from one another. This was of vast importance to the fragile countries of Central Asia. What the treaty did not focus was what actions would be taken in case the member states had to fight Islamic militants, religious radicalism and separatism. These were major weaknesses of the CST, weakness that the CSTO has tried to deal with. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), including the five Central Asian countries, China and Russia, is another local organization aimed at providing security for Central Asia.

It is significant to remember that the creation of the SCO happened before 11 September; though this organization today does resemble a device by which Russia and China are able to limit and challenge rising US influences, it was not created on this foundation. Its main challenge at that time came from Islamic radicalism, and the Taliban; therefore the SCO was intended to fight a competing influence in the region, an influence that looked to be a direct challenge to the authority and security of all the members of the SCO. Today the SCO has two challenges to combat, that of Islamic radicalism and considerably enhanced US influences. The SCO's main objectives are fighting with separatism, terrorism and radicalism.

Similar to Russia and Uzbekistan, China has also played the 'Islamic extremist' card after 11 September, as an excuse or justification for its treatment of the Uighurs in Xinjiang. The SCO provides cooperation and understanding, which not only allows China to have more control of its own Uighurs, but also of the Uighurs in Central Asia. It is expected that around one million Uighurs live in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. China wants to guarantee that the whole region works together in fighting a threat that can very easily spread from one state to another and challenge the political and economic milieu of the region. The SCO acts to be another organization binding Russia in the sphere of security to Central Asia. It is a cooperation mechanism based on the two turns of security and economy, of which security is primary. In many sides the idea behind the formation of the CSTO and the SCO is similar. However, the CSTO and the SCO have differences. Russia likes to think of the CSTO and not the SCO, as the main security provider for Central Asia, while the SCO reputation and importance in the region is growing and outdoing that of the CSTO. The method in which the SCO tries to provide security is very much different to that of the CSTO. The CSTO is more a military oriented organization than

the SCO. It has military functional organs, and a joint military force, which is trained to deal with radicalism and terrorism.

The other purpose of the SCO is that it brings the two most influential regional countries together. It unites them in the face of any undesirable guests in the region. This characteristic of the SCO did not evolve until after 11 September, and the entrance of additional competing influences into the Central Asian arena. This has given the SCO additional strength, particularly when SCO's members (mainly Russia and China) make political declarations to be implemented, such as not wanting foreign troops and bases (US) on Central Asian soil. The result of this declaration was followed by an US withdrawal from Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan and a statement by Bakiyev (this came to nothing) considering closing the US military base in Manas. Before the US's amplified interference in the region, the main challenging influences were from Russia and Islam; China was evolving its influences. Had 11 September not happened then China could have developed into the third power in the new great game. Today China cannot (does not want to) challenge Russia over Central Asia when there is a more threatening force that has to be controlled.

So long as the US remains in the region, China will not challenge Russia's role; the focus will be for Russia and China to work together in sidelining the role of the US. The SCO is a dynamic platform for such an operation. Islam has, to a certain extent, helped defuse the tension between the US and Russia; Islamic radicalism is a uniting threat for both Russia and the US. It is in both their interest to fight extremism. Islam has a multi-dimensional role, it can either make US influences more popular, as US is seen as the main fighter in the war against terror, or unite anger against US supremacy³⁸. Hence, Islam has the ability to influence the other two powers are supposed, especially the US one. It appears that Russia remains more favored as this is not always very effective as security is a regional issue. In addition, Russia is a regional country itself and its national security is affected by instability in Central Asia. It is important to remember that Washington provided the most important security-providing role in the region in the post-independence era.

US's operation in Afghanistan, and following collapse of the Taliban regime, alleviated one of the region's most troubling concerns. This gave US additional

³⁸ war against terror is often seen as a war against Islam

influence over other domains concerning Central Asia, consequently fueling competition over the region. The Islamic factor, especially the terror of Islamic radicalism and its threatening potential, has played a key role in shaping Russian policies towards these regions, principally in Central Asia. Russian policy toward Central Asia since 1992 has been influenced by economic and political interests, as well as a genuine fear of the rise of Islamic extremism and its impact on Russian security. Understanding of 'threat' and their cooperation in the war on terror seems to have started and ended in Afghanistan. Russia's war on terror appears more regional than global. This became very clear over the disputes and disagreements regarding the invasion of Iraq. The possibility of nevertheless another US invasion, this time of Iran, is a very penetrating topic for Moscow.

The entire discussion about Central Asian republics, especially, revivalism of Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan concludes that Islamic religion and culture is the integral part of both the republics, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Islam filled the ideological vacuum created after end of communism. Islam works not only as a religion and culture but also as a lifestyle which is deeply rooted in the native people of Central Asia. The independence brought new challenges and prospects. The challenges like poverty, unemployment, ideological vacuum and lack of resources emerged from within, which shaped the republic's political and religious agenda which was naturally inclined towards liberal religious policies, secularism and democratization but financial need of the both republics made them vulnerable to accept foreign aids and assistances as well. The influence over religious ideologies from outside has created space for Wahhabism which drove Islamic movement to radicalism.

Islam is mandatory for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan due to several reasons. Islam would have been their cultural base since Seventh century onwards. Their lifestyle has been governed by Sharia norms. Islam provides them traditional, cultural, socio-religious base. There are three versions of Islam in birth the republics. First is Government sponsored Islam, Second is liberal Islam and third is Radical Islam. 'Government-sponsored' Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia is a continuance of the attempt to co-opt religion to serve the needs of the state. The main concern, at government level, is to promote 'good' Islam (Government Sponsored Islam) which is advantageous to the development of the state and to evict 'bad' Islam (Liberal Islam)

which is having potential to be a threat to stability of the republic. The third tendency in Central Asian Islam, here categorized as 'radical', holds a free grouping of protesters who want to purge Islam of the distortions that have been introduced over time. They are commonly referred to as 'Wahhabis'. The Islamic revival in the Central Asian states, principally in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, is inspired and supported by Muslims in other countries. There is an element of truth in this. Some of the finance for the building of mosques and madarasas, and for the renovation of Islamic shrines, has come from overseas, private sources and government funds. Students from Central Asia have gone in quite large numbers to study in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and Pakistan.

After independence in 1991, some majority-Muslims states most notably Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey - financed projects in Central Asia in order to influence the form that Islam would take in the region. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made perhaps the first attempt to promote its own Wahhabism by building mosques throughout the region, subsidizing pilgrims on the Hajj, distributing copies of the Qur'an and other literature, and subsidizing education.

Wahhabism is a puritan Islamic movement which is against any modification in Sharia norms. Wahhabism is strictly against liberal Islamic norms and advocates the radical way of Islamization of the World. Converting entire World into Islamic State is the prime objective of Wahhabism. ISIS is expression of Wahhabi's extremist ideologies. Wahhabism discards science and other progressiveness of the contemporary World because they are not supported by Sharia.

The radical element in Islam which aimed Islamic state is the prime concern of Tajikistan's and Kyrgyzstan's ruling regime. Radicalism or Wahhabism is spreading its dominance in the republics which is disastrous for the future of the region because radicalism is unable to meet the contemporary challenges emerging due to post Soviet circumstances. Radicalism is unable to respond the burning internal and external issues of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of sustainable growth etc. Rather Wahhabism itself is the reason of many of these difficulties.

The Kyrgyzstan's and Tajikistan's ruling class envisage West to adopt Western progressive economic and political setup to improve their status. They find Islam as an obstacle in their efforts. The Official version of Islam is the counterpart of

Wahhabism provided by Ruling class to check radicalism. This official Islam is pro-secular and progressive; moreover, it is suitable for republic's progressive model. The common Islamic consciousness is nurtured by traditional and Sufi liberal religious ideologies.

Sufism played a very important role in revival of Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In fact, many nomadic tribes were attracted towards Islam due to Sufi cultures and norms of Music or *Sama*. Although the music, chanting, and dancing of Sufis is often considered heretical by Muslims outside Central Asia, it has been argued that this musical dimension is what made it particularly appealing to nomadic tribes. Hence the first hypothesis is proved that the nature of Islamic revival in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan is traditional and radicalism is due to external influence.

Islam in central Asia has links with Turkish heritage except for Tajikistan that has links to a Persian heritage which distinguish it from the other republics as well as those of Russia. In Tajikistan, Sunni Islam is the most widely practiced religion. The Tajiks are the only non-Turkic population in the region. Successors of the ancient Persian Empire in Central Asia, the Tajiks are of Persian origin. Called Sarts in Tsarist Russia, they, for centuries, controlled trade in Central Asian cities, speaking both Turkic and Persian languages and living amicably alongside Uzbeks and other Turkic neighbors. The Tajiks lived in closely knit clans, disconnected and conflicting social units that Soviet collectivization only fortified. Some Tajik clans formed the backbone of the Basmachi Islamic resistance to the Bolsheviks during the 1920s. In the 1980s, Tajiks were extremely affected by the Soviet war against Afghanistan and particularly their fellow Afghan Tajiks. Their proximity with Afghanis made them more orthodox than other Central Asian republics.

With the independence of Central Asian countries, Tajikistan returned back to Islamic ideology. This returning back of Tajikistan into the Islamic world influenced religious ideology of Tajikistan in significant manner and led them to radicalism. An estimated 99% of Tajikistan's citizens are Muslims. From this amount, 97 % of the country's Muslims belong to Hanafi school of Sunni sect of Islam and the remained part; about 3 % of all Tajikistan Muslims belong to an Ismaili branch of Shi'a sect of Islam. The first year after independence of Tajikistan was the toughest period ever due to the civil war. Tajikistan was the only state among Central Asian states which

faced bloody Civil War between 1992-1997. This civil war was between newly revived Islamic groups and Soviet seculars. Some scholars signify this war as “A battle between Islamic fundamentalists and the forces of secularism and stability”.

The first years of independence of Tajikistan brought Islam as a political movement. Islamic renaissance in Tajikistan has played a vital role to fill the ideological vacuum since the collapse of communism. Since constitutionally, Tajikistan is a secular state, however, its government is promoting and patronizing the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam by a new law adopted by Tajik parliament *Majlisi Oli* on religion and religious organization on March 2009 which favors the Hanafi school of Islam. The Tajik government seeks its cultural identity in Hanafi sect. Establishing Islam as its cultural and religious base, Tajik people are fostering their contacts with the outer world and adopting their values to broaden connections with other civilizations. Tajikistan is the only Central Asian state with a legal Islamist party and in many ways it has followed a very different path from that of Kyrgyzstan. The history of political Islam in Tajikistan has been sharply different from the rest of Central Asia. The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan advocates radical Islamic reforms. Many people considered the IRP as the fomenters of the civil war.

Most Islamic belief in Tajikistan is based on orthodox Islam, which has little time for political activism. Freedom to worship and to gain religious education is sufficient for most believers. Many of the more politicized Islamists left Tajikistan after the civil war; others changed their tactics to adapt to the new situation. Nevertheless, the difficult socio-economic situation does provide the basis for social tensions that could in the future be manipulated by opposition Islamic groups. The other major danger is that the government's sometimes heavy-handed approach to Islam and its attempts to control religion may backfire and create opposition even from religious leaders who have no interest in politics.

The revival of Islam in Kyrgyzstan has a distinct character than that of Tajikistan. Kyrgyzstan's Islamic revival is being shaped by social restrictions, rapid development of international communications and networks. Principal theories about Islamic revival in Central Asia, i.e. Islam as a reaction to western hegemony, as a response to secularism and as a manifestation of nationalism etc. fail to characterize the Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan. Recent field studies and surveys indicate that the

Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan is the product of failing kyrgyz state rather than trans-national reasons. there are three emerging dimensions of Islam. First is traditional Islam or Muftiate, second is conservative Islam and the third one is Political Islam, i.e. groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir. Most of the literature of the central Asia is now a days focussing on radical Islam. Kyrgyzstan faces a very different Islamic challenge from that in Tajikistan. Especially in the north of the country, religious observance is quite limited, and many citizens are Muslims in name only. The south of the country is a different matter: here a large Uzbek minority has been the main support of radical political groups such as Hizb ut- Tahrir. The south, in general, is characterized by much greater religious observance. Ethnic minorities such as Dungans and Uighurs also have an active role in religious life. Religion is officially separate from the state, and religious parties have been outlawed since the early 1990s. However, religious movements, organizations, and structures have been allowed to operate largely unhindered. The early years of independence saw a rapid rise in interest in Islam, and it became briefly part of state symbolism.

Kyrgyzstan's main concern was to establish its identity apart from Soviet ideology which shaped the possible interrelationship between Islam and politics. Some scholars perceive secularism and democracy to be the new identity of Kyrgyzstan but some envisaged Islam as a new threat. However, recent surveys and researches find Islam as a provider of spiritual insight and a sense of communal connectedness. The newly independent Kyrgyzstan is coping many challenges to meet the basic needs of its populations. Islam seeks to delivers what the Kyrgyz population needs and provide shared norms, social capital, etc. This form of Islamic revivalism is widely embraced by Kyrgyz people. Hence my second hypothesis is proved that Revivalism in authoritarian Tajikistan is taking radical form due to its historical legacy of being center of Islamic orthodoxy and proximity to Afghanistan as compared to Kyrgyzstan, which has a nomadic legacy and a liberal- democratic political system at present.

In Central Asia, Islam is an element of nationalism; Islamic revival and national rebirth are closely intertwined in each Central Asian republic. Islam is national self-identification, an instrument of spiritual freedom from Russia, distinct identity from the communist system and Slavic culture which were an expression of foreign colonial domination. Nationalism and Islam mutually synergize each other

rather than act as opposing forces. Islamic consciousness shapes the national and regional identity of Central Asia and vice versa.

In Tajikistan, the absence of a center of power due to an incapable and corrupt government combined with a widespread sense of cynicism and poverty carried the country to Civil war. The Tajik civil war, one of the most neglected wars of the contemporary period, was the bloodiest conflict to occur in the entire former Soviet period after the disintegration of the USSR.

In Central Asia, Islamic revival fulfils the basic need of the republics and its people. Islam is not only a religion but it has many forms. Islam can be taken as a manifestation of struggle between Western and traditional cultures where Islam represents traditional culture, as a response to political secularization where liberal Islam (often refer as official Islam) is adoptable against radical Islam. As an attempt to create a distinct nationalist identity different from Soviet or Communism. Islam can also be taken as a public response to failing autocratic rule.

Islamic revival in Central Asia, mainly in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan is due to worsen socio-economic condition of the states. While State is showing concern about the radicalization of Islam and avoiding the basic cause of rapid Islamization. This situation has become graver after 9/11. At the fundamental level, the revivalism is the expression of public sentiment to overcome their basic problems which state can be eradicate through good governance. Though, State is incapable of doing so, people are seeking their solution in Islamic religious and cultural setup. Unfortunately, where state should understand the situation to resolve it, State is adopting repressive methods against Islam in the name of Radicalism. Ironically, in one hand, at home state is repressing the Islam and on the other hand acquiring its legitimacy from it. Getting aids and assistance from neighboring Islamic states are reasons to be influenced by radicalism and Wahhabism. Hence my third hypothesis is proved Rather than improving socio-economic conditions, states use repressive measures, which put pressure on moderate version of revivalism and increase the appeal of radical Islam.

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