

**Status of Muslim Minorities in Russia,  
1991-2013**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
for award of the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “**Status of Muslim Minorities in Russia, 1991-2013**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of **Jawaharlal Nehru University** is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any degree of this University or any other university.

  
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## CERTIFICATION

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Conceptual Framework and Review of Literature

There is no universally accepted definition of a minority. The definition of a minority is one of the most widely debated and controversial topics in the social science. Generally, the term “minority” is used to refer to a particular group that is not only numerically smaller than the majority, or the nation, but also alienated from enjoying the social, political, and economic benefits enjoyed by the majority.

According to the United Nations Report, minorities are based upon national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity. In every state, there is an existence of one or more minority groups within their national territories, characterized by their own national, ethnic, linguistic or religious identity and it really differs from the majority or the dominant group of a state. According to Gurr and Scarritt (1989) “minorities are groups within larger politically-organized societies whose members share a distinctive collective identity based on cultural and ascriptive traits recognized by them and by the larger society. There are many possible bases for separate group identity: common historical experiences, religious beliefs, language, ethnicity, region of residence and in caste-like systems, traditionally prescribed occupations”.

According to Brubaker (1995), national minority is not something that is given by the facts of ethnic demography. It is a dynamic political stance, or, more precisely, a family of related yet mutually competing stances, not a static ethnodemographic condition. Three elements are characteristic of this political stance, or family of stances: 1) the public claim to membership of an ethnocultural nation different from the numerically or politically dominant ethnocultural nation; 2) the demand for state recognition of this distinct ethnocultural nationality; and 3) the assertion, on the basis

of this ethnocultural nationality, of certain collective cultural and/or political rights. And according to Brubaker (1995),

“ For well over A century, the "national question" has been central to politics in the vast and variegated region occupied before World War I by the three great multinational empires Habsburg, Ottoman, and Romanov that sprawled eastward and southward from the zone of more compact, consolidated, integrated states of Northern and Western Europe. With the breakup of the Soviet Union heir to the Romanov Empire and of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia as well, the last of the region's avowedly multinational states have disappeared. Everywhere, political authority has been reconfigured along ostensibly national lines a process that began with the gradual erosion of Ottoman rule in the Balkans in the nineteenth century but occurred chiefly in two concentrated bursts of state-creation, the first in the aftermath of World War I, the second amidst the rubble of the Soviet regime. Yet nationalism remains central to politics in and among the new nation-state”

The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 led to the creation of a new Russia, but this new Russia is not a nation-state rather it is a multiethnic, multi-religious and multicultural state. Like in any other multicultural state Russia faced the problems and challenges from its cultural diversity. Historically, the predominant religion in Russia is Russian Orthodoxy, a branch of the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church. (Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism were divided in the Great Schism of 1054.) Orthodox Christianity is the main religion of the Slav peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. There were other independent Christian churches in the former Soviet Union, the Armenian, the independent Orthodox one in Georgia and now in Ukraine and Belarus. Christianity had come to Russia from Constantinople, the seat of the Eastern Church and the Byzantine Empire.

Russian Orthodox Church accounts for over half of the total number registered in Russia and it has nearly 5000 religious associations. Muslims are the biggest religious minority among the religious minorities in Russia, with a population of 20 million and



it has 3000 religious associations. Islam is one of Russia's traditional religions and its history in its territory is comparable with that of Russian Orthodox.

### **Brief History of the Russian Orthodox Church**

There had been a Christianity community by the mid-10th century among Kievan nobility, under the reign of Greek and Byzantine priests, although paganism remained the dominant religion. Princess Olga of Kiev was the first ruler of Kievan Rus to convert to Christianity, either in 945 or 957. Undoubtedly influenced by his Christian grandmother and by a proposed marriage alliance with the Byzantine imperial family, Olga's grandson Vladimir I (c. 956-1015) prince of Kiev, from among several options, chose the Byzantine rite. Baptized in 988, he led the Kievans to Christianity. Thus the origin or the real existence of Orthodox Christianity in Russia dates from the time of 'Kievan Rus', where Prince Vladimir who was baptized and converted to Christianity in AD 988 made the Byzantine variation of Christianity the state religion of Russia. After Prince Vladimir's conversion, he not only converted his 12 sons and his boyars (noblemen), he also organised mass baptisms in the river Dnieper. Prince Vladimir's effort to establish Orthodox Christianity faced strong opposition and it was achieved through stifling paganism and dissent, forced conversions, and proffering state support to Orthodoxy. Over the years, Orthodox Christianity became so firmly established that on the eve of 20th century, Metropolitan Ioann of St. Petersburg was observed saying, "if Russia is not your mother, God cannot be your father" (Boyle and Sheen 1997).

The Russian Orthodox Church was subordinate to the Patriarch of Constantinople, the seat of the Byzantine Empire. After the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 15th century, the Russian Orthodox Church emerged into an autocephalous branch of Eastern Christianity. In 1448, Metropolitan Jonas was given the title of Metropolitan of Moscow and All Rus. Meanwhile, Muscovite Russia has gained awareness of being the bulwark of the true Orthodoxy. In 1472, Grand Prince Ivan III who reigned from

1462 to 1505 married Sophia Paleologue. Sophia was the niece of last Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI. Muscovite Prince began to use more of the Byzantine imperial ceremonial and he adopted the double headed eagle as his state emblem. The idea of Muscovy as heir to Rome was shaped when a letter was composed by Russian monk Philotheus of Pskov who addressed Vasily III as “tsar” saying, “Two Romes have fallen. The third stands. And there will be no fourth. No one shall replace your Christian Tsardom” (Meyendorff 1996). This sentence indicated that the first Rome was heretical, the second, Byzantium, was under Turkish control and the third was Moscow. These endeavours to live up to the title of “Third Rome” fell short of one last sanction, that is, the head of the Russian church did not have the title of the “patriarch” which was finally accomplished in the late 16th century the Metropolitan of Moscow, Job, received the title of Patriarch and received fifth rank in honour after the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.

However, the Byzantine tradition of authorising the head of state and the government bureaucracy to participate actively in the church’s administrative affairs was retained by the Russian church. Over the years, in 1237 the Russian church experienced a highly significant experience when Kiev was sacked by the Mongol Tatars making to shift its centre early in the 14th century to Moscow that became the centre of resistance to the Mongols making the power to move from Kiev to Moscow establishing the metropolitan of Moscow as the head of the church. From then on the church experienced its status by extending its influence wealth and prestige till the fall of the Constantinople in 1453, thus descending its faith upon the Russian Church. Further The church was strengthened when St Job, the head of the Russian Church was made a Patriarch in 1589, but got weakened under Patriarch Nikon appointed to the post in 1652 amounting a clash with the tsar with patriarch Nikon wanting to make the church preeminent over the state leading to his exile. Orthodoxy in the imperial period (1703-1917) was regulated vigorously by the state where the tyrant, westernized system of government executed by Peter I and his successors demonstrates that secular Russian society lived side by side with traditional Orthodox culture.

In 1721 the office of the patriarch was abolished by Peter the great, and in its place an clerical body called The Holy Synod was set up, the members of which, subsequently chosen from among the bishops, were designated by and responsible to the government. A lay official, known as the chief procurator to watch over the state was attached to the Synod who later in the process of time turned into the virtual leader of the church and the sole intermediary between the Church and the tsar. Amid the rule of Nicholas I (1825-55) who esteemed the Orthodox Church as an arm of the state, not as the repository of outright truth, the procurator of the Holy Synod drastically reduced the bishops' powers, tightened the restriction of religious thoughts, subsequently smothering the church's own intellectual development, and reoriented the clergy towards a more pragmatic, less hallowed part (Engelstein, 2001). The Synodal period endured until the Revolution of 1917. Up to 1917 the church as an original established church enjoyed all the benefits and inconveniences of its position.

Not long after the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917 they started coordinating against established religion, the status of the Orthodox Church in Russian society got to be drastically modified. Amid the last half century of the Russian domain, the revolutionary regime which came to power was almost universally atheist on ideological ground profoundly hostile to religion and particularly to the Russian Orthodox (Murarka 1993). In his "Socialism and Religion", Lenin wrote, "Religion is one of the forms of spiritual oppression which everywhere weighs down heavily upon the masses of the people, overburdened by their perpetual work for others, by want and isolation. Impotence of the exploited classes in their struggle against the exploiters just as inevitably gives rise to the belief in a better life after death as impotence of the savage in his battle with nature gives rise to belief in gods, devils, miracles and the like. Those who toil and live in want all their lives are taught by religion to be submissive and patient while here on earth, and to take comfort in the hope of a heavenly reward. But those who live by the labour of others are taught by religion to practice charity whilst on earth, thus offering them a very cheap way of

justifying their existence as exploiters and selling them at a very modest price tickets to well-being in heaven. Religion is the opium for the people.

Religion is a sort of spiritual moonshine (sivukha), in which the slaves of capital drown their human image, their demand for a life more or less worthy of man” (Lenin 1962). “The deepest root of religion today”, he further expressed, “is a socially down-trodden condition of the working masses and their apparently complete helplessness in the face of blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour inflicts upon the ordinary working people the most horrible suffering and the most savage torment, a thousand times more severe than those inflicted by extraordinary events, such as wars, earthquakes, etc. Fear make the gods. Fear of the blind force of the capital-blind because it cannot be foreseen by the masses of the people – a force which at every step in the life of the proletarian and small proprietor threatens to inflict, and does inflict ‘sudden’, ‘unexpected’, ‘accidental’ ruin, destruction, pauperism, prostitution, death from starvation- such is the root of modern religion” (Lenin 1963).

Concerning religion, Lenin issued a Decree on January 23, 1918 pronouncing the separation of the church from the state and the school from the church putting an end to the hundreds of years old alliance between the church and the state. Initially the religious policy was solely directed towards lessening the Orthodox Church’s capability to challenge the new regime. (Knox, 2005). Bolsheviki considered church as its adversary who defended the Tsarist regime even after the October Revolution. The church also represented a position diametrically opposite to that of Bolsheviki, that is, while the church promised salvation through Jesus Christ, the Bolsheviki promised a “salvation” of their own, that is, freedom from the “opium of the masses” and the constrictions of false consciousness that religion spread to keep the capitalist class in power and the working class obedient, as the suffered in this world in order to inherit the next (Marsh 2011). This scientific-materialist perception was also shared by Trotsky who believed that science and technology had the ability to liberate the people from the shackles of religiousness. He believed in science and technology so much so thought that by distributing mechanised farming equipments to peasants would obliterate their faith. He wrote that, “we shall vanquish the deep rooted

religious prejudices of the peasantry through the electrification and chemicalization of peasant agriculture”(Trotsky 1973).

Therefore, there were many factors which actually shaped the Bolshevik attitudes towards the church and the religion like religion was considered as a reactionary anti-scientific ideology which was born out of man’s fear and lack of knowledge which was manipulated by the powerful and exploiting classes along with the help of clergy with the purpose to hoodwink the drudging masses thereby impeding their revolutionary impulses. The Bolsheviks reckoned the church as a social vice afflicted with moral depravity catering to the needs of the backward and uneducated masses and deflecting them from socially useful ventures. It considered the church as a vestige of the old order bestowing privileges on the clergy who were from the early days antagonistic towards the communist regime. According to the party so long as the society remained an aficionado of the “spiritual sivukha”, the regime could not entirely suppress the religion. So as to achieve this objective, the state considered it prudent to put in place stringent restrictions and surveillance on the church thereby preventing it to use their power over the theists against the interests of the Soviet regime and preventing the former from recruiting and maneuvering the new hangers-on especially children.

The liaison between the church and the state has witnessed many phases from harassment, extermination, weakening to an arrangement whereby the church acquired some legality and toleration in lieu of its unconditional loyalty towards the Soviet state and its policies even to the extent of isolating those clergy and members of the church who deemed this compromise as relinquishing its veracity. Undoubtedly Marxist atheism had an influence on the relationship between state and church but other factors have also played an important role in influencing this association which cannot be ignored like reaction of other countries in the international space towards the state’s attitude towards religion, party’s concern for its own political survival, government’s proclivity to use some religious groups to its own political advantage at home and abroad and most significantly the persistence of religious beliefs among the population despite the government’s ruthless restrictions on any religious activity.

Even though Soviet constitution guaranteed the “freedom of conscience” and “separation of church and state”, but in the absence of an effective legal check on the capriciousness of the government these provisions became constitutional illusions and remained mere ornamental in nature. Modelled on the basis of these constitutional provisions the theories which were portrayed by the Soviet government and loyal religious organisations on the church- state relationship obscured the real state of affairs because since the initial days of the Soviet regime, the government had digressed from these provisions and never implemented these provisions in its letter and spirit. These provisions had only superficial likeness with the western concepts on secularism or the relationship between the church and state because these provisions demonstrated the communist party as an ideologically impartial and unbiased extending support and protection to believers and atheist alike. Therefore maintaining religious beliefs were not proscribed by the Soviet constitution and it always granted the right to believe to the citizens of Soviet Union.

However, religion was considered to be an obstacle in the path of construction of communist society so its annihilation was considered to be an essentially important ideological objective of the state. Unlike the constitutional provisions, the state in practice interfered and controlled the religious organizations with the objective of waning them. Atheism was established as the only scientific truth and vilifying the state’s anti-religious propaganda resulted in incarceration, confinement, punishment or other troubles like high income taxes, loss of jobs, forced retirement etc. Atheists were considered to be more righteous individuals than followers of some religion beliefs. Official legislations were devised to hound religion which created fetters for religion to take hold in the society.

The official harriving was often cloaked under the euphemistic language in the official party documents like struggle against bourgeois ideology, diffusion of materialist ideology etc. The regime was steadfast in its resolve to destroy religion and to achieve it closed and destroyed many churches, monasteries, harassed and executed many

religious figures, inundated educational institutions and media with anti-religious propaganda and promulgated 'scientific atheism' as the truth that society should accept. Since Marx has not delineated the treatment to be meted out to religion in a post-revolutionary state, that is, whether to leave or eliminate it. Therefore the plan drafted by Lenin to deal with religion set an exemplar for the most spiteful attack on religion in the history of the Soviet Union and the world.

Thus was unleashed the most severe attack on religious belief the modern world has ever seen. Just as Prince Vladimir faced immense opposition in his resolve to eliminate paganism in the wake of advocating Orthodox Christianity, now it were the Bolsheviks who had to face confrontation in their thrust to impose Communism. Only desecrating the physical church proved inadequate to turn away the masses from their religious beliefs, so the zealous Bolsheviks embarked upon atheist propaganda to not only convert a believer to atheism but to inculcate atheism into Soviet citizens from their early childhood. Although this campaign evolved through many phases, from intense to fragile, but what remained constant was the conviction to annihilate religion from nook and corner of the Soviet society. This endeavour to totally eradicate the religion proved to be a fiasco, however, this sortie was not without significant successes.

After 1917, the Bolsheviks embarked upon the process of secularisation of Russia. But this process of secularisation was very much different from the process which occurred in U.S. and Europe. According to Kyrlezhev and Shishkov (1999), the soviet type of secularisation is a special type of secularisation along with the European and U.S. type of secularisation. On the one hand, the formal legislative provisions adhered the European secular norms i.e. the principle of freedom of religion and on the other hand, there was factual violation of these norms through the suppression of the religion and religiosity and its displacement not only from the public but also from the private sphere.

Religion was considered as an obstacle for the people in their path towards progress and efforts were being taken to eliminate religion from every aspect of society. In Soviet Union, Powell (1977) argued, individual religiosity was considered to be a major obstacle for believers in terms of professional career and all forms of active participation in public life and activities. There was a continuous violation of the right to openly profess a religious faith in school, university, hospitals, army etc. Although they expected that the secularisation will follow scientific progress and socio-economic change and exhibited confidence that ultimately religion would die down, but they decided to accelerate and hasten this process by the policy of secularisation, with the help of programs of indoctrination and education. So the vital objective of these programs were to get rid of Soviet society and individuals of such “negative traits” as individualism, “bourgeois nationalism”, chauvinism, indolence and “religious prejudices” and create a “New Soviet Man” who will be imbued with feelings of collectivism, proletarian internationalism, socialist patriotism, love of labour and “militant atheism”. The anti-religious propaganda also involved the use of political satire with the use of cartoons. It was said that these have played a great role in combating everything that has encumbered the formation of the communist society. It was used as a political weapon to support the government policies at home and abroad.

The period following the Russian revolution of 1917, the religious believers and groups had to face official excesses at the hands of Bolsheviks. Religion, especially the ROC, was targeted. Monks, clerics, nuns, were exterminated and church property was seized. Therefore, the cost of public affiliation to any religion, religious belief and membership was very high. Therefore, according to Froese (2004), Soviet type of secularism was a “forced secularisation” since it originated from and was enforced by official mandate and not popular appeal. Any systems of belief, religious or atheistic, he asserted, need to engage individuals in order to gain widespread acceptance. On the other hand, scientific atheism confused the population who mistook it as a new religion and not an exit from religious belief because even those who wanted to believe in the ideals of atheistic communism simply ended up praying to the gods of Lenin and Stalin. As a result, it could not secularize Russian society.



The strategy against religion and especially Russian Orthodox Church contrived by the Communist regime varied at different times from moderate to harsh, however, the widespread tactics used to intimidate the believers included harassing believers, depriving the church of its property, disseminating atheist propaganda in the schools etc. Besides, the charitable and social work done by the religious authorities was now taken over by the state. The property owned by church was appropriated by the state and the property which was left with church was now legally declared as the state property which the government allowed the church to use. Orthodox priests and believers were executed, tortured, sent to prison camps, labour camps, mental hospitals. They also faced psychological torture or mind control experimentation to force them to renounce their faiths and religious beliefs in the favour of scientific-materialist ideology. Some believers after the Second World War were even sent to mental hospitals or faced trials and were imprisoned on the grounds of their refusal to conscription. It was outlawed to impart religious instruction to persons under the age of 18 years of age and though theoretically the church had the right to reopen theological schools and release religious publications but prior official sanction became mandatory for the exercise of these rights. To facilitate the propagation of official propaganda that only backward people believed in god a massive purge of the Christian intellectuals was conducted by the regime to take away the intellectuals from the church who have mostly died in the camps or in prison.

The acts of violence were committed against the priests and the churches by fervent revolutionaries. They destroyed and defiled many churches including those inside the Kremlin. They plundered and destroyed the churches with the revolutionaries scribbling on the church walls, defecating in the holiest places, notching gems from consecrated icons and crosses. These were the people who had begrudged the power of the church and the tsarist regime with which it was closely intertwined and began exhibiting militant atheism that brought the church to near destruction. During 1918-1919, the Bolsheviks killed at least 28 bishops and thousands of priests and clerics. This included Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, Bishop Ephraim of Irkustk, Bishop Hermogen of Saratov and Archbishop Vasily of Chernigov, Bishop Adronik of Perm,

all of whom were executed for counterrevolutionary activities. Gabel explains the dreadfulness of initial purge, there “were incidents of eyes being gouged out and tongues being cut off before priests were paraded through the streets, then shot” (Gabel 2005).

In April and May 1922, 54 Orthodox priests and laymen underwent a trial on the charges of counter revolution in connection with more than 1000 riots by peasants protesting the closing of churches and confiscation of church land. Five of the priests were executed and a few months later the Metropolitan of Petrograd and three co-defendants were executed on similar grounds (Conquest 1986). During 1922 alone some 2,691 priests, 1,962 monks and 3,447 nuns “were liquidated.” However, these executions were a part of a clear Machiavellian policy of eliminating important church leaders in order to weaken the church as an institution (Lenin 1979). The government also began emptying monasteries and converted it into concentration camps.

On February 5, 1918, Lenin approved a Decree of the Council of People’s Commissars “On the Separation of the Church from the state and school from the Church” which determined the relationship between the church and the state. It had only superficial likeness to the American and French models. According to this decree, “the school shall be separated from church. The teaching of religious doctrines in all the state and public as well as private educational institutions where general subjects are taught shall not be permitted. Citizens may teach and be taught religion in private” (Barmenkov 1983). The aim of this legislation was not to establish a secular state, a state devoid of any religious prejudices or where equal treatment will be afforded to all religious confessions and atheist alike. In fact this legislation intended to isolate clerical class which was accomplished when under Article 65 of the 1918 constitution priest and ecclesiastics were declared “servants of the bourgeoisie.” This legislation disestablished the Orthodox Church and banned any state or public subsidies to religious groups; legal status of all religious organisation and of believers and non-believers was made uniform, public life and education was purged from the influence of religion, together with any reference in official documents to citizen’s beliefs; all religious associations were made subject to the ordinary legislation

governing private societies and were allowed “free performance of religious rites so long as they do not disturb public order or interfere with the rights of citizens” (Bociurkiw 1969). On the other hand the decree limited the religious activities to the performance of the religious rites and forbade the religious associations from imposing compulsory fees and contributions as well as punishment upon their members.

The decree called for the confiscation of all the property of all the religious groups and the property from now onwards were leased to the believers free of charge by the state authorities. In addition to this, there was one more clause in this legislation unprecedented in any ecclesiastical legislation of any modern state which deprived the churches and all sects of their status of legal person including the right to own property. By 1918 the communist regime through its official objection succeeded in de-establishing the church, vital to tsarist Russia’s identity, for thousands of years. The church was extensively driven underground as churches were obliterated and monasteries were converted to army barracks, some churches defiantly remained opened but were viewed as a ‘cult’ by the ruling authorities. Under the Bolsheviks the Church lost its favored status and most of its wealth.

At the point when Stalin came to power the position of the church deteriorated even more, he propelled an anti-religious campaign to further disperse atheism. The anti-religious policy no longer focused solely on Russian Orthodoxy, but vigorously oppressed and persecuted all religious groups. In April 8, 1929, a law was form disallowing all religious groups from any sort of social, altruistic, or religious educational activity. The fundamental point of the law was to completely eliminate any influence of the church and other religious organisation in society and disengage them. During this period monasteries were closed entirely, church buildings were destroyed or converted in large numbers. It was during Stalin’s period that saw the destruction of the Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Savior, The largest church in Russia in 1931. Stalin’s proposition was to build a massive Palace of soviets on the site however the construction problems and the advent of World War II interceded to

forestall it, making the site winding up as a swimming pool until the Cathedral's inevitable post- Soviet reconstruction in the early 1990s (Johnson 2005).

However the outbreak of World War II turned something of preference for the church as it saw a noteworthy reorientation of the Soviet Government towards the Orthodox Church and other religion by relaxing some restrictions on religious practice. At the point when The German Nazi attack Soviet Russia in 1941, religion was seen as a mobilizing component for Soviet war endeavors as a matter of which Stalin met Sergi in the Kremlin where shortly later Sergi was elected Patriarch of the Church. Moreover a Government Council for the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church was also set up to deal directly with the Church hierarchy. Some way or another the war enhance the religious fortunes of the Orthodox Church as the churches which had ceased to exist started to revive, the theological schools and monasteries had begun to function again, however consequently for these concessions, the church was to embrace the war exertion.

The church solidified its position to an extent till Stalin's death in 1953, yet it brought a wrong turned with the succession of Nikita Khrushchev's in 1956. He propelled a savage and violent five year anti- religious campaign against religion, however the focus was more on The Orthodox Church. Following the anti- religious campaign new limitations were imposed on the church, the state once again closed many monasteries and churches, many priests, including high ranking ones were imprisoned or exiled to disintegration and constraint retirement. With the fall of Khrushchev till the succession of Gorbachev, the Soviet government embraced a marginally tolerant attitude towards registered religious groups and co-operative denominations. Priests were persecuted less often and the pace of church closings also eased down. (Johnson 2005)

In the course of time the most noteworthy changes in the status of religion in Russia started with the accession of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, with the country moving towards democratic practices under the motivation of Glasnost and Perestroika.

During his first year of office, his approach to religion did not bring any progress yet it soon changed drastically alongside the rest of soviet social policy in 1986 with the introduction of glasnost. In late 1987 Gorbachev introduced policies which denoted the start of significant changes in many spheres of Soviet life including the religion. His strategies unequivocally supported the Russian Orthodox Church as of which between- 1987-1991; Orthodoxy emerged as a potent social force (Knox1993).

In 1990, the law ‘On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations’ was adopted:

“The law granted religious organizations full legal status, permitted religious education in public schools ( after regular school hours), allowed religious organizations to own their places of worship and other property, allowed them to import literature from abroad and to engage in charitable activity, and equalized the tax structure for clergy (which had previously been higher than that for ordinary citizens). It also guaranteed freedom of worship, forbade the government interfere in religious activities, and ended the seventy year old policy of officially backed atheism, proscribing discrimination on the basis of religious belief”(Johnson 2005:9).

Through this law, began the process of reclamation of the freedom of the church, of other religious, cults and sects and restitution of church property to its care including the monasteries. In the late 1980s with the Soviet Regimes cessation of the suppression of individual believers and religious communities, emerged a phenomenal religious freedom, Therefore, making a path for The Russian Orthodox Church to secure a prominent position in the post-communist Russia. Gorbachev sought to justify increased religious freedom whilst maintaining Party support was to represent Orthodox believers as potentially useful to the socialist cause.

In April 1988 Gorbachev declared: ‘Believers are Soviet people, working individuals and nationalists, and they have the full right to express their opinions with respect and dignity. Gorbachev’s second legitimization for a changing religious policy was that Christians had high good norms. Uncontrolled liquor addiction, prostitution, drug use, rising crime and other negative social advancements demonstrated that there was

something amiss in the level of ethical quality the Soviet regime motivated. Gorbachev contented that absence of moral teaching was to blame for these negative societal advancements. Gorbachev saw social conditions as a genuine obstruction to the objectives of perestroika and believed that the Church could work with the state to overcome these obstructions, though, for instance, cooperation on the infamous anti-alcohol crusade. The relaxation of Soviet religious policy was to a substantial degree motivated by Gorbachev's desire to strengthen his political position (Knox, 2005).

### **Brief account on the history of Muslims in Russia**

The Muslim population of Volga and Ural regions began to perceive Tatar ethnicity as their source of national identity and Islam had played an important role in preserving their identity. Kazan Khanete was formed in between 15th to the mid 16th century, but with the invasion of Kazan by the Russian in 1552 the fate of Islam was changed from a state religion into a persecuted one as the Russian government converted them to Orthodoxy. The Russian government with their institutionalized ideologies and policies not only converted them but declared the fight with Islam as holy war against "unbelievers". The reign of Peter I and the Russian Tsarist government in the mid 17th century followed a harsh policy of Christianizing the Muslims. It was a planned foreign policy for conquering Central Asia, Crimea, and the Caucasus. With the proclamation of Catherine II in 1787 it returned some privileges to part of Tatar nobility and in 1787 the state legalized the activities of Muslims and rebuilding of mosques within the premises of Orenburg. With all these oppressions towards the Muslims, forcibly converting them into Christianity by different Tsarists and Russian government with their own interest, institutionalized policies and ideologies, the Muslims had been reduced to the biggest religious minority in Russia.

During the Communist rule of the Soviet, their most important policy towards Central Asia, which was predominantly a Muslim state, was to gain Soviet's economic

potential by exploiting the rich natural resources of Central Asia. According to the Soviet they considered the Central Asian as backward, where their traditional and cultural practices were incompatible with their modern ways of life. As the Central Asian people were completely backward with no experience of the outside world, they did not raise any objection or against the rule of the Russian. With the policy of Russification, the Soviet distorted their old practices of traditions, customs and religion. Not only Russian but even the Western powers believe that Islam is far less compatible with their modern society than Christendom. Soviet made some positive implementations for their cultural practices but with the intention to curtail their strong sense of national feeling and also imparting education by rewriting their history. It was not only the rich natural resources that the Soviet were attracted towards Central Asia, but geographically it is located far from the Western power and Central Asia can be used as a vantage point from which the idea of Communist can be extended into the middle East and South Asia.

In the 1980s, Islam was the second most widespread religion in the Soviet Union; in that period, the number of Soviet citizens identifying themselves as Muslims generally totaled between 45 and 50 million. The majority of the Muslims resided in the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union, which now are independent countries. In 1996 the Muslim population of Russia was estimated at 19 percent of all citizens professing belief in a religion. Major Islamic communities are concentrated among the minority nationalities residing between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea: the Adyghs, Balkars, Bashkirs, Chechens, Cherkess, Ingush, Kabardins, Karachay, and numerous Dagestani nationalities. In the middle Volga Basin are large populations of Tatars, Udmurts, and Chuvash, most of whom are Muslims. Many Muslims also reside in Ul'yanovsk, Samara, Nizhniy Novgorod, Moscow, Perm', and Leningrad oblasts.

In any society, it is necessary for any ethnic or minority group to join the mainstream of politics and be represented for their particular group so that their views, interest and grievances can be heard and addressed more effectively. Muslims in Russia have made an attempt to secure representation of their interest as the largest nationwide minority and federal politicians make efforts to play the Islamic card within the

existing culture of conflict for political gain. Nevertheless, over the past decade, several projects to build a political organization of Russian Muslims (e.g., Nur, Majlis, and Union of the Muslims of Russia) have all ended as a failure. Ever since the Romanov Empire and its predecessor granted a privilege status to the Russian Orthodox Church it was granted a privileged position in the country, and this trend was further reinforced under Vladimir Putin when the Education Ministry openly considered the introduction of Russian Orthodox theology into university curricula.

The treatment towards Russia's Muslim minority by the Kremlin was based on its interests and demands. They neglected their Muslim's resentment and demands and treated with great suspicion and outright hostility. In 1999, during the second Chechen war, Yeltsin's administration used ethnic nationalist and Islamophobic frenzy as a struggle against the "Wahhabis" to marginalize his opposition and secure his political status. All these efforts of Yeltsin put the Muslim question at the center in the national political debate. Yeltsin's opponents, made a move in aligning themselves with the leaders of the Muslims autonomous republic but it was not for the benefits of the Muslims but it was solely an attempt by taking the advantage of ethnic diversity and to secure their position in politics which was an opportunistic gestures. The Chechen war was the results of the Muslim being treated unfairly, discriminated, special privilege being given to the Russian Orthodox Church and Russia transforming into Orthodox Christian state, which eventually led to the rise of radical extremist from the Muslims. Thus, Muslim became a great concern in terms of national security and integrity for the state, where the State and individuals aligned with the group of Muslims so that it attenuates the extremes of the anti-Wahhabi propaganda, and for the individuals to get a secured political platform. In modern Russia, state's institutions have been accommodating its differences with its various provisions for the minorities. But, the fact remains that the minorities had been discriminated, limiting their freedom and regulating their religious activities by the state and Russian Orthodox Church in a more refined way unlike during the Soviet period.

This in its turn negates equality between denominations and means that the first place is given to Orthodoxy and then followed by other religion. This triggers resentment



among other religious minorities and challenge the national interest and integrity of a country.

## **Review of Literature:**

In this section, we shall review the existing and important literature out of which only the few important, relevant and accessible works have been discussed here.

### **Defining Minority**

Multicultural society has its own trends of diversity and uniqueness in terms of ethnicity, languages, customs, tradition, cultures and religions. Different groups entertain and cherish different conceptions of the good life. Every modern society includes minorities, some of whose values and practices not only differ from the rest but at the same time it clashes those of its own.

Defining the term “minority” is a difficult task as there is no universally accepted and cannot be conclusively defined as minority. According to (Killian 1996), “the derivation of the word "minority" from the Latin "minor" and the dictionary definition, "the lesser part or smaller number less than half of a total," indicate that it is basically a quantitative term. For a century or more, however, it has been accruing additional connotations, most of them not quantitative although the statistical implications remain constant, particularly in popular usage. The fact that some sociologists discuss "majority and minority relations" while others analyze "dominant-minority relations" reflects the confusion. The history of "minorities" as a topic of interest to social scientists reveals some of the sources of this confusion”. Gilbert (1996) says that International Law has not laid down a conclusive definition of minority, but the author used French sociologist Collette Guillaumni’s approach which recognizes the relativity of the term “minority”, non-dominant majorities which also could well be granted such status of minority. Even Gurr and Scarrit (1989) has

pointed out that the term “minority” is misnomer as minority is not always numerically smaller in some state or society, like for instance the blacks in South Africa and Shiites in Sunni-ruled Iraq where they are the majority. Thus, to qualify the status of minority it cannot be based only on a particular group which is numerically smaller than the rest of the population.

According to Tasch (2010) the definition of minority has been continuously debated for so long and it is considered as one of the most controversial topic in the field of social sciences. The term “minority” generally refers to a particular cultural group that is not only numerically smaller than the majority but they are deprived from all the benefits enjoyed by the majority economically, socially and politically. Brubaker (1995), defines national minority as not by the given facts of ethnic demography. But it is a dynamic political stance, or to be more precise, a family of related yet mutually competing stances, not a static ethnodemographic condition. According to Brubaker there are three characteristic elements of this political stance, or family of stances: 1) the public claim to membership of an ethnocultural nation different from the numerically or politically dominant ethnocultural nation; 2) the demand for state recognition of this distinct ethnocultural nationality; and 3) the assertion, on the basis of this ethnocultural nationality, of certain collective cultural and or political rights.

As being defined the term “minority” in the above the minority being non-dominant and also alienated from enjoying the social, political, and economic benefits enjoyed by the majority, the minorities retaliated to this treatment by revolting against the state in different forms in order to achieve their demands. Narang (2002) says the last three decades of the 20th century had witnessed the increasing movement of minority nationalist movement. The project such as the minorities at risk under the direction of Ted Gurr has studied that conflict of minorities has increased tremendously in the world since 1960s where minorities have engaged and struggled for their rights and identity. It cannot be said that the presence of minorities triggered conflicts or as the main source of conflict in a state, but there has to be a specific combinations where the minority members resort to violence or conflict. The minorities are in dilemma and at risk as they are simply outvoted and underrepresented, and suffer disproportionately from a democratic conflict. Thus, the urgent requirement for the minority is to protect them, and Narang pointed out protection based on four requirements; protection of their existence, non-exclusion, non-discrimination and

non-assimilation. Gurr and Scarritt (1989) argue that around 5000 communities in the contemporary world claimed for “national status” on the grounds of common shared history, regions and other practices. Historically, most of these people (minorities) were victims of conquest and repression. The key to indicate whether a particular community’s right is at risk or not is known by the systematic differential treatment of group member by the majority or the deliberate government policy towards them. The most important of their argument is that the differential treatment towards the minority has to be regarded as at risk of violations of its members’ survival right and therefore, their status and treatment are at risk and in need of monitoring. The authors further categorized four types of minorities at risk and they are 1) Groups subject to political discrimination, 2) Groups subject to economic discrimination, 3) Separatist groups and region and 4) Empowered minorities.

Parekh (1996) acknowledges the existence of minorities in every modern society. The author addresses the question of to what extent the rights and practices of minorities are tolerated. Different cultural communities have different historical background and relations with the society vary, thus their demands and protection and safeguarding the interest of minorities varies. The author suggested the best way to decide whether to allow or disallow the practices of minority was by adhering the “society’s operative public values”. According to this, the values are underpinned by the society’s broadly shared conception of how its members should live and conduct together. Whatever their origins and history, these values have become a part of the society’s moral structures and embodied in its major social, economic, political and other institutions. And since the society’s integrity and proper functioning depend on observing these values, it guarantees that all members imbibe it in regardless of what individuals follows it as in their interpersonal relations they are bound to be regulated and abided by the values that the society cherishes.

## Predominance of Russian Orthodox

Historically, the predominant Russian Orthodox Church had played an important role in shaping and retaining the history, identity and culture of Russia. The role of the

Russian Orthodox cannot be ignored as it had stood, defied and adapted to the ever changing policies of different leaders in different period of Russian history. Balzer (2010) says that even during the harsh rule of the Soviet, the Russian Orthodox has been the place to seek peace, solace and for spiritual support for the believers during the rule of the soviet. There has always been a secret relation between the communities and priests, and in Russia secret religious life was in general active and energetic. During the Second World War Stalin's attitude toward the Church softened and called in three Russian hierarchs for a conversion. After this conversion fundamental changes with respect to the Church took place. During the war, the Soviet people found themselves in despair and confusion as they were missing spiritual support and many turned to the Orthodox Church.

After Stalin's death, Nikita Khrushchev's policies did a great damage to all religions and all religious activities were brought under harsh security and direct under state control. In the last years of the Soviet Union, under Mikhail Gorbachev, reform-minded member of the Soviet elite tended to encourage all religious activities, but preference was given to the Russian Orthodox Church and other religions were viewed with disfavor (Tash2010). In modern Russia, the Russian Orthodox and its role has been expanding within and outside Russia. Mitrokhin and Nuritova (2009) says that as the Orthodox has been powerful since from the Communist rule and still they are that they demanded the state to introduce "Foundation of Orthodox culture" into the secondary education system which was strongly against by other religions. The demand grew stronger and some regional authorities positively reciprocated to this demand and introduced it as a mandatory, which really undermined and discriminated other religious minorities.

The Russian Orthodox Church parishes expanded far and wide from North Korea to UAE and from Australia to Norway are connected to globalization, intensive emigration from Russia and also the positive support of the government. Whether during the Soviet or now in Russia, the Tsarists or any leaders of modern Russia always see the real electoral potential and political influence of the Orthodox Church that they always meet the demand that it deserves at any point of time. Krindatch (2006) and Bacon and Wyman (2006), acknowledge the growing importance of the Russian Orthodox and also the relation between the Orthodox Church and State. The Orthodox Church is not only independent but it also has a great influence upon the

state. By the beginning of the 19th century the Russian Orthodox Church not only became a national but also nationalized church with its clergy as state employees. Russia's 1997 legislation which emphasizes the cooperation between the State and religious organization in different spheres takes into account the degree of social and historical significance of the specific religious community in the context of Russian society. This legislation immensely enhanced the status of Orthodox as it was the dominant religion historically and further any bill passed by the State greatly favors the Orthodox Church.

Tasch (2010) seeks to understand the increasing importance of Orthodox Christianity in Russia for the definition of their majority's national identity which may affect the status of other religious minorities in Russia. The provisions of 1993 Constitution and the 1996 Conception of State National Policy defined the Russian as a state of mutual co-existence of diverse religious groups but the Russian government contradicted these provisions by elevating the status of the Russian Orthodox. The law which was adopted in 1997 entitled "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association" which declared Russia a secular state and freedom for the citizens to choose and practice was conversed and it acknowledged that Orthodox Church had "a special role" in development of Russia, in the formation and the development of its spirituality and culture". All these preferences given to the Orthodox threatened and negate the equality of non-Orthodox religions. On the more pragmatic side, according to Vassiliev-Glinski (2001), the Russian Orthodox was granted a privileged position in the country which is close to the status of the official government church, exemplified by its predecessors under Romanov Empire. Also this was further reinforced under Vladimir Putin when the Education Ministry openly agreed to the introduction of the Russian Orthodox theology into the university curricula.

Further the building of nationalism or national identity has been constructed on the basis of religion. All these feeling of hostilities of Russian towards the Muslim has been started since when Soviets were invaded by the Muslims and then until the Bolsheviks revolution the sense of Russian identity was identified based on religion, and that is the Orthodoxy Christianity. The question of Russian national idea is not conceivable without religion, as inclusion of religion certainly dominates in any execution of policies and in which the society of Russia cannot be straighten with a civilizational consensus, where the inclusions of religion, Russian Orthodox Church

became inevitable in asserting the national idea of Russia as inclusion of Orthodox Christianity legitimize the change of institutions and power (Agadjanian 2001).

## Muslim Minorities in Russia

In different period of Russian history, the Russian Orthodox Church and Islam had played an important role in shaping and retaining the history and culture of Russia. The role of Islam holds a parallel position with the Russian Orthodox. In post-Soviet Russia, to talk about the notion of religion the instant general vision that takes place in one's mind is the large presence of Russian Orthodox Society and Islam. According to Malashenko (2006), religion in Russia is difficult to understand, as it is an ideology and institution and still continues to play an important role. Both these religions have been there throughout the Russian history, society and had the potential in influencing the Russian politics. But the fate of Muslims change as the State experienced different terrorist attacks and during Putin's regime it had used the war on terror to identify a wide range of Muslim actors as extremists or terrorist.

As mentioned, the fate of Islam changed with all these number of terrorist activities where some were prompted to say that the war on terror is a war against all Muslims. Braginskaia (2012) and Vassiliev-Glinski (2001) say that after the 9/11, the measures for security was escalated to a great level that the state can no longer ignore the Muslims and therefore it has taken different positive measures towards the Muslims minorities and it has become a great concerns in dealing and the question of a relation between the State and the Muslims. The treatment of the Kremlin towards the Muslim minority of Russia has always been with a specific interest and had always been observing them through the prism of suspicion, and addressing their grievances and meeting their demands solely for the security reasons.

As the matter of security concerns escalated in Russia the state sees the need to bring some changes in aligning towards the Muslims. According to Braginskaia (2012), the state is keen in promoting the interest of the Muslims, to felicitate Christian-Muslim

relations and to mobilize Muslims faith so that it bridges the gap between the Muslim East and Christian West but there lies the complex nature and the prevailing issues of differences within the Muslim communities. Thus, Russia deals Islam based on its geographical location and traditionally diverse Muslim communities. The Chechen conflict in 1994-95 and 1999-2000 has played a significant role in Russia's policy towards Islam and still it is relevant in engaging with the Muslims for security reasons. Russia's engagement with the Muslim communities in the early 1990s was in a state of transition. It was seen that in that period Russia's increased religiosity has nothing to do with the values of religion and social integration but instead it was solely a political strategy to fit state-Muslim relations in a better platform within the well-designed political framework. During the period of Putin-Medvedev the State-Muslim relation follows the semi-authoritarian principle of vertical distribution of power. But this principle is seen as highly centralized and authoritarian in itself.

Though the state changed their relationship towards the Muslim, but it was seen as an opportunistic gesture for individual's gain in the realm of politics. Vassiliev-Glinski (2001) says that the Muslim had been politically manipulated by different leaders for their own benefits but with the guise of promoting their interest in different period. Several projects to build a political organization of Russian Muslims have ended in failure. Taking advantage of these, leaders like Yeltsin unleashed the second Chechen war and the use of ethnic nationalist and Islamophobic frenzy, as a pretext of waging a war against the Wahhabis, with the intention to marginalize his opposition and to secure his political dynasty put the Muslim question in the front. Yeltsin's opposition Yevgeny Primakov and Yuri Luzhkov, played the politics of religion by aligning with the representatives of different Muslim community which was mainly aimed in enhancing their political status. Putin characterized the changes as enhancing national cohesion in the face of a terrorist threat which infact send a message that implicates to all Muslims in Russia, while critics called them another step toward restoring the tyranny of the state 13 years after the fall of the Soviet Union .It was a retaliating step against the attack of a school in Beslan by the Islamic militants or terrorist. Russia witnessed several attacks in 2004, in which the casualties escalated and more than 400 civilians were killed in just a span of two months. With all these gory incidents that had happened in Russia, Putin addressed the nation in which he proclaimed that

Russia had been declared war by the terrorist significantly threatening the integrity and sovereignty of Russia (Gidadhubli 2004).

Yeltsin was eager to get rid of the Union Muslim republic, and accepting to wage cultural war against everything “backward”, “Asiatic” and something which is unconventional. The Muslims were illiterate, population scattered, and differences prevailed within the ethnic community and there is a competition among them to control the flow of financial aid from the Gulf States. Muslims lack unity as there are prevailing ethnic fragmentation and ethno regional differences. Strict restriction of political liberties, supervision of media and prohibition of regional parties deprived them to set up a proper platform in politics. Prazauskas(2007) says that even after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, no single authoritative Muslim centre emerged in Russia. Taking all these into consideration the government takes advantage by tolerating all the activities of Islam, and further tries to promote it by funding them but the real intention of the government was for a combining repressive measures towards extremist groups and rewarding them for the cooperative elites.

### Radical Islam in Russia

The number of Muslims in Russia is more than in the entire Europe. In Russia, the state is keen in promoting the interest of the Muslims, to felicitate Christian-Muslim relations and to mobilize Muslims faith so that it bridges the gap between the Muslim East and Christian West but there lies the complex nature and the prevailing issues of differences within the Muslim communities. As pointed out by Prazauskas(2007) and Vassiliev-Glinski (2001), the Muslims were illiterate, backward, their population is scattered, lacked unity and had strict restriction of political liberties, supervision of media and prohibition of regional parties deprived them to set up a proper platform in politics. Also even during the Soviet invasion of Central Asia, the Russian and the Western nations considered the Muslims as backward which does not fit well into the realm of the so called “modern world” (Wheeler 1955).



The relationship between state and Muslim minorities in Russia have been shaped by historical and contextual factors, nature of Muslim communities, mechanism for the representation of minority and the manners in which the state interacts with the religious leaders. The experience of recent activities of terrorism had made the state to integrate Islam within its institutional framework of state-religion relation and more engagement in granting Muslims citizens equal religious and cultural rights.

According to Braginskaia (2010), Russia follows vertical approach, which is a conservative policy in consolidating Muslims institutions and building strong relation with state officials on national level. During Putin-Medvedev period the vertical distribution of power and selective engagement was only with the top Muslim officials rather than the whole range of Muslim civil society organizations. The Russian Muslim Council, which claims to represent the majority of Muslim populations, interests before state and other religion, is a centralized religious organization. In 1990s the Russian Council of Muftis (RCM) emerged as one of the favorites of the government which is highly centralized hierarchical organization. There are also other organizations under Central Spiritual Board (TsDUM), like in north Caucasus it is largely represented by the coordinating centre of spiritual boards of Muslims. The vertical power distribution became problems when one community dominates in the council and projects its own agenda. This religious pattern of religious governance become unstable as it is built in highly rigid pyramidal structure where it has to undergo a change in the whole setting if there is a need to bring some bureaucratic provisions in it.

Islamic radicalism became an integral feature of the Russian society which has tremendous influence on public policy. Malashenko and Yarlykapov (2009) argue that radical Islam is a close intertwined of two components: a purely religious and political one. Russia's Muslim community is not uniform. Broadly it can be classified into two socio-cultural realms, the Northern Caucasian and the Tatar-Bashkir which was a consequence of increased migration from Central Asia. The fundamentalist or the so called Wahhabites or Salafists has become widespread in Russia. There are differences between Salafists proper and Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islamiyya (HTI) the Islamic Liberation Party, which has come from Central Asia. The main goal of HTI is a political one whereas the Salafists focused on a gradual re-Islamization of society and the establishment of Sharia. The Salafists act very diplomatically gradually

penetrating administrative bodies. The authors acknowledge that the Muslim community lacks an ideal leadership as there are no appropriate political platforms, the security services ready at any time to isolate an exceptional personality and are kept a close watch on Muslims and lastly a majority of Russia's Muslims are not very susceptible to radical ideas and slogans tinged with revolutionist hue. Thus, with all these unfavorable conditions prevailing in Russia, the Muslim remains dormant in the arena of politics and less represented.

The Muslims were neglected by the state, in which the discontentment and resentment of the Muslim were presented to the state by breeding more radicals. Gorenburg (2006) acknowledges that the government in Moscow is facing number of problems from Russia's Muslim minority. The government's relation with its Muslim population has been dominated by the dynamic of North Caucasus. The state was successful in containing the conflict within Chechnya's borders. Russia has experienced number of terrorist attacks which was caused by the separatist movement in favor of forces seeking to establish a pan-regional Islamic state. Moscow blames all these attacks and spread of violent Islamist radicals on foreign influences in this region. Widespread corruption and poverty throughout the region have contributed to the spread of radical Islam.

The powerful clans have monopolized the political and economic resources of the region from the federal government and used these powers to repress any opposition who tries to change the system. Gidadhubli (2004) says that North Caucasian republics remain neglected and it suffers from poor socio-economic conditions in terms of mass unemployment, high infant mortality, and low level of education which provided the fertile ground for the prevailing discontent among the people. Vladimir Putin's policies on North Caucasus and centralization of executive power enhanced the role of central authority and as he prefers to use strength rather than to bring solution through dialogue contributed to the spread of Islamic radicalism in the region. Also Malashenko and Nuritova (2009) say that a critical situation may develop in the North Caucasus because of the poor socio economic crisis in which they became dependent on region's republics for financial aid which will lead to

series of social explosion and emergence of radical Islam on the frontline which leads to political conflict.

## **Rationale and Scope of study**

Soviet's Marxist-Leninist doctrine, which considered religion as ideology, was strongly against religion and associated activities. Thus Soviet under the leadership like Stalin and Khrushchev imposed strong state's action against religious activities and religion was under the direct control of the Communist state. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and under the liberal leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, Russia was ushered into a new liberal world. With his policies and idea of democratization, Russia witnessed different changes in the realm of politics of Russia and society. All activities and freedom of religions were once again granted to every citizen.

Russia is a multicultural state and like in every modern multicultural state it has its own minorities. Muslims has almost equal role with the Russian Orthodox in shaping its history and has become the biggest religious minority in Russia. The predominant Russian Orthodox still plays an important role in every respect as it is given more importance and also granted a privileged status by the state. Other religious minorities were viewed with disfavor and remained neglected. This acts of the state triggers resentment among other minorities and challenge the power of the state. As Russia began to face problems and challenges from its minorities, the state responded with some positive provisions and wanted to integrate Islam within its institutional framework of state-religion, and granting Muslims citizens equal religious and cultural rights.

The proposed study will look into the provisions and institutional arrangement and role of the state for the minorities. Sometimes, the definition of minority is misnomer as minority connotes more than a number. The Muslims, who had historically played an important role, have been reduced to a minority and not many works on Muslim as

a minority has been done. Muslims as a minority in Russia are not a homogenous group. Broadly, it can be classified into two socio-cultural realms and they are the Northern Caucasian and the Tatar-Bashkir. Among the Muslim minority, the Tatar Muslims are the privileged groups and there are deprived groups such as the migrants specially from Central Asia. Therefore, the proposed study will look into the various compositions of Muslims communities in Russia, relation of Muslims with the State and other religions. There are not many studies which delve into the layered description of Muslims as heterogeneous groups. It will also look into the history of Russia to trace the role of Islam, the legacies left behind and the present status of Muslim in modern Russia.

### **A Brief Note on Methods**

The study is interdisciplinary in nature as the entire discourse is located and contextualized within historical developments, sociological insight and contemporary political developments and events. The research uses qualitative methods of social research, which requires both theoretical and empirical analysis. The theoretical part seeks to understand the definition of minority in a general context. It takes into account the various schools of philosophy which attempt to define this concept. Marxist and post-structuralist theories on minority are extremely useful for this research.

With these theories, this study tries to understand the context of Muslims in Russia. These theories have been tested and juxtaposed to the actual context of Russia. In other words, theories will be used to understand the context following a deductive approach, but at the same time the context also illuminates on the relevance of existing theories, following an inductive or verificationist method. A substantial part of this discussion is empirical as it tries to deal with the economic and social status of Muslims in Russia. It also seeks to investigate the political representation of Muslims

in Russia. A layered analysis of various heterogeneous Muslims groups has been done.

This study, like any other study, involves both descriptive and causal methods of inference. Describing the status of Muslims is the main part of this research but this cannot be understood unless we try to make some causal inferences regarding the low status of Muslims, reasons for discrimination and low political representation and ways to overcome these problems. Both structural and agency factors have been taken into account. State institutions, ideological factors, low number and geographical dispersions constitute the former while group mobilization and ethnic parties constitute the agency variables.

The available secondary sources include books, periodicals, journals, articles published from time to time, newspaper coverage, internet sources, reportage, unpublished papers, media and any insightful thoughts expressed by any individual working on this related topic/research etc. Primary sources will include various reports and surveys by different international and national institutions such as USCIRF annual report, Ted Gurr's Dataset on Minority at Risk, United States department of state's report on international religious freedom, surveys carried out by VCIOM and LEVADA, official documents, government publications, constitutional texts, interviews and important speeches delivered by different Russian leaders.

This research hypothesizes that

- A section of Muslim minority in Russia feels discriminated because of the predominance of the Russian Orthodox Church in political and social sphere and repressive state policies as in Chechnya.
- The social status of Muslims in Russia is low because of their low economic status, inadequate political representation and equation of Muslims with radical Islamic groups and terrorist activities.

## Chapterization

The present chapter is an introductory part which outlines and discusses the central idea of the entire thesis.

In the second chapter the trends of multicultural society of Russia have been discussed. It will also discuss the vast geography of Russia which has tremendously enhanced the uniqueness of Russian multicultural society. Modern Russian society comprises of diverse culture, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, and this prevailing diversity of Russia society can be valued enormously for different reasons. Various and unique ethnic composition of Russian society have been discussed at length in this chapter, where it help us to have a clear-cut understanding as this chapter will enlighten us to identify and differentiate the main dominant ethnic groups and the non-dominant groups.

The next chapter discusses some important issues faced by Muslims in Russia. Muslim is considered as one of the oldest religion along with the Russian Orthodox and the most important religion in the history of Russia. Muslim and Russian Orthodox had withstood the real test of time during the anti-religious rule of the Soviet, where religions were prosecuted vehemently. This chapter describes the main issues of Muslim which had historically played an important role in shaping and retaining the culture and history of Russia by delving into the issues of identity, social and economic of Muslims in Russia.

Most of the modern states are heterogeneous society. The modern society or non-nation state comprises of various religious, ethnic, culture and linguistic groups. In any society it is inevitable to have the dominant group or the majority which became a crux in itself as the definition of minority or majority cannot be defined very naively based on only numerical as it is not always determined by numerical or the size of population of one particular ethnic group. Having understood the issues and problems of any multicultural society, where claims of one group began to clash with other minorities or the dominant groups the only effective agent to claim their rights and could heard their voice is through political presentation. Thus in this chapter 4 we will discuss the political representation of Muslims in Russian political institution.

The fifth chapter discusses the role of Russian leaders. This chapter also throws some light on how their programs and provisions for the minorities are made, and how effective they are in promoting the rights and claims of different minorities. This chapter discusses how Muslims as minority who had played pivotal roles had been undermined and the Russian Orthodox had been put to the forefront in every important events and decision making by the state actors. The Muslims were reduced to a second largest religious minority and the resentment of Muslims were further reiterated by the Russian leaders and the predominant Russian Orthodox as their gestures towards the Muslims were for their own interest. Thus, this chapter will discuss and analyze how the Muslims are being treated by the state, whether the Muslims are assimilated or integrated.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Ethnic Composition of Minorities in Russia**

Russia is officially the biggest country in the world in terms of territory. It covers an area of 6.5 million square miles and extends 9660 km miles from east to west and approximately 3200 km from north to south. Russia's vast territory starts from the center of Europe in the west and extends to the continent of Asia. Concisely, the area of Russia is about one-ninth of the total land area in the world. History of Russia is very unique. Its vast size not only played an important role in shaping and retaining its history and culture, but also led to a regular interaction of ideas, politics which were alien to Russians. In the process, it developed a unique multicultural society with diverse norms and cultural traditions.

#### **Historical Background**

The history of Russia and origin of the Russian state can be traced back to the reign of Peter the Great, when he founded the Russian Empire in 1721. Although it was an achievement of the process which had started in 1480 by Ivan III, when he had conquered Novgorod and overthrow the Tatar Yoke, it continued till Khanate of Kazan was completely conquered by Ivan IV in 1552 (Protsyk and Harzl 2013). Kennan (1990) says that Russia had been separated for many centuries from the development and influence of western culture and civilization and had remained backward compared to Western countries, but the 18th and 19th witnessed a considerable progress in promoting modernize society in Russia. According to Crouch (1989), the historical tradition of Russia can be characterized and have been dominated by three distinctive features. They are as follows; Firstly, the Russian had



been repeatedly invaded and conquered by the foreigners, which had led them to develop the feeling of fear and insecurity, which propelled them to conquer and expand their territory as big and far as possible. The conquered Kiev became an important factor geopolitically as it distanced them far away from the Slav people religiously as they had adopted Catholicism. Islam continued in the south and the east. Secondly, the execution of its power by the state was highly centralized in nature, where there is a complete absence of third party between the ruled and rulers. The centralized form of the state was able to control the rich resources which were freely endowed by the nature in Russian soil. And thirdly, history of Russia and its culture have remained almost isolated from the rest of the western world because of its vast geography, self-sufficient in its rich resources and repeatedly invaded by foreigners. These became drawbacks for the Russian politically, socially and economically. Different Russian leaders have acknowledged all these setbacks of Russian society, and so different form of provisions for the Russian society from Tsars to Gorbachev in 1980s have been tried and executed.

With the invasion of Kievan Rus by the Mongols, the Russian felt more conscious about their identity, security and were more determined to expand their territory. Muslim religion was brought into Russian landscape by the Mongols invasion. According to Hunter (2004) Muslims were not part of Russia's religious and political sphere but only a distant neighbor brought by the Mongols invasion. This invasion by the Tatar and Mongols created a perception that the development of the Russian society was completely halted by the Mongols as it had made them to remain isolated from the rest of the world. The perception of Russian towards the Muslim and other countries began to change from this invasion and it still prevails in contemporary Russia.

Russians invaded Mongols and were determined to decide and pursue their own way of life without being dictated from above by any external factors or foreigners. In 1552, Ivan the Terrible retaliated to the Mongols by conquering the Khanate of Kazan in order to determine their own future and further to avoid any rivalries or contest from the Muslims in the future. With the Invasion of Kazan Khanate in 1552 by Ivan

the Terrible, the Russian state was formed which continued its territorial expansion for becoming a powerful nation. Different renowned Russian leaders, from Ivan the Terrible to Catherine the Great initiated policies which completely denounced and dismantled the cultures, traditions and practices of Mongols and Tatars. As the Russian began to establish their empire they began to expand their territories towards Caucasus and Central Asia.

The Soviet had conquered Central Asia because of its strategic location and its potential resources. The conquest of Caucasus by the Russian was also related to its strategic location. The main motive was not to control the administration to thwart the idea of nationalism or the consciousness but to maximize exploitation of the natural resources of Central Asia. Control over Central Asia gave the edge to the Soviet to connect with the Middle East and South Asia which the West had shown interest in it. Thus the main objective of Soviet policy towards Central Asia was its geopolitical influence (Wheeler 1955).

The Russian Revolution of 1917 completely changed the history of Russia. It changed the structure and institution of the Russian state by overthrowing the Tsarists rule which were inefficient and corrupt. The Tsarist reign which had ruled for centuries in Russia became a liability for the Russian state. It became apparent from the onset of the First World War I when the Russian state and society was facing an unprecedented economic and social crisis. By 1917, most of the Russian had shown their resentment against the rule of Tzar Nicholas II as the government was corrupt and the arbitrary. People had lost faith in the system. According to Hunter (2004) the Russian Revolution of 1917 was one of the most significant events in the modern history of Russia, as it brought the awareness or consciousness of political organization and dismantled the Tsarist rule, which was inefficient and corrupt. The inefficient government of the Tsar paved the way for the citizens and the soldiers to lose their faith in Tsarist government, and eventually it was overthrown.

According to Salter (1907), the real purpose of having a government is to serve and protects the rights of the people, where the government and people are

complementary to each other, but in Russia, the government functions on its own terms and conditions where the interest of the people are sidelined and undermined. It was well known and apparent that the fall of Tsarism was not unexpected. The revolution transformed Russia as it brought down the rule of old fashioned imperial rule which was autocratic in nature and negated the ideas and principles of democracy.

The revolution not only brought to an end the last Tsarist regime but it also ushered in and embraced the idea of power of the people in spearheading the motion of political and social changes in Russian state. It can be said that the March Revolution of 1917 which overthrew the Tsarist regime was a result of mass movement directly against the Tsarist regime. It was not well organized and leaderless revolt in history (Chamberlin 1967). Gottschalk (1944) explains revolution as a mass movement where the structure and institution of a state is changed, usually revolution topples the existing inefficient government and would be substituted by a new form of government, and it is followed by bringing wave of changes in the arena of social and economic spheres of a society. Thus with the end of the Tsarist government a new form of government was formed for the first time in the history of Russia. The radical group, Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin overthrew the old Tsarist regime and Lenin, deeply influenced by the ideas of Marxism, began to build Russia and its future.

After the era of Lenin different Soviet leaders held the reign of power. But one leader who is worth mentioning and cannot be ignored was Stalin, the successor of Lenin. History of the Soviet periods cannot be understood completely without understanding or delving into the era of Joseph Stalin. It was during the leadership of Stalin that religion was persecuted and many religious places were destroyed. Stalin brought many changes for the Russian society. Stalin was able to execute all his policies like Five Year Plan from 1928, which transformed Soviet into a highly industrialized state with a good economy. But in the process citizens suffered a lot (Crouch 1990). De-Stalinization was initiated by Khrushchev which led to some relief to the people but the burden of maintaining global influence kept Soviet Union preoccupied with

military and security issues. It ignored the welfare agendas of people and the economy. The reforms became a necessity for the Soviet Union. But reforming a monolithic system is not an easy task.

Mikhail Gorbachev brought radical changes in the Soviet Union. His relative youthfulness, energy, and apparent openness for pursuing and implementing new ideas and policies led many within the Soviet and outsiders to believe that Gorbachev would bring significant changes in Soviet domestic policies as well as in the conduct of foreign affairs. The Cold War which had dominated the world politics for decades came to an end during his tenure. In internal affairs Gorbachev introduced the concept of "Glasnost" (openness) which was a distinct break with the authoritarian past of the Soviet Union. Glasnost led to greater freedom of speech, freedom of worship and a reduction in State control over individual lives. Gorbachev's main aim was to modernize the Soviet, glasnost and democratization were used as instruments to mobilize the mass population against the bureaucratic system (Gooding 1990: 195-231). Gorbachev defines perestroika as a revolution "A decisive acceleration of the socio-economic and cultural development of Soviet society which involves radical changes on the way to a qualitatively new state (Vithal 1988: 3-30). In his campaign for Perestroika or Restructuring was a call for far-reaching departures from the prevailing norms and practices which was followed and abided by almost every Soviet.

## **Ethnic Composition During the Soviet Union**

Gorbachev was the last leader of Soviet Union. The sudden disintegration of Soviet Union took place under his leadership and the dissolution of Soviet Union gave birth to Russia. During the Soviet period, according to the 1977 Constitution, the former 15 union republics were united based on voluntary basis and multinational state. They were all given extensive range of power to maintain their international relations with other states. From the 1944 constitution onwards the union republics were given the

right to maintain their own armed forces. Keeping in mind that it was a voluntary association they were also given the right to secede from the USSR (Art. 72). These fifteen republics were different based on their history, religion, language and social customs of all kinds. Russia as a multinational state also faces the problem of its diversity which existed during the Soviet times as well. For instance, right after the revolution of 1917 Tatar leaders joined the leaders of other Muslim ethnic groups in protesting against the Russian demanding for a greater autonomy for the non-Russian ethnic group. In 1991, the Tatars demonstrated their resentment as the government refused to issue a declaration of independence (Gorenburg 2003).

Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the last official census was conducted in 1989 during the tenure of Gorbachev. The last census confirmed more than hundred nationalities scattered in different parts of the former Soviet Republics. According to White (1990), the largest group of Soviet nationalities was that of the Slavs and they comprised of: Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussian who had shared some common history and heritage and they constituted two-third of the total population and the traditional Muslims people of Central Asia constitute for 15 percent. The Russians who constituted two-third of the population along with Ukrainian and Belorussian were the dominating group during the rule of the Soviet. The major nationalities during the Soviet rule and according to the 1989 census were Slavs, Balts, Caucasians, Central Asians and other nationalities. Slavs constituted more than 80 percent of Soviet population and they are the dominant group during the rule of the Soviet period and also in the post-Soviet Russia. The 1989 census which shows the percentage of population, linguistic group and their traditional religion of the major soviet nationalities are shown in the following tables.

**Table 2.1, The major Soviet Nationalities, 1989**

Census population (1989, m) total	% of group	Linguistic	Traditional/Religion
<i>The Slavs</i>			
Russian 145.1	50.8	East Slavic	Russian Orthodox
Ukrainians 44.1	15.5	East Slavic	Russian Orthodox
Belorussians 10.1	3.5	East Slavic	Russian Orthodox
<i>The Balts</i>			
Latvians 1.5	0.5	Baltic	Protestant
Lithuanians	3.1	1.1	BalticRoman Catholic
Estonians 1.0	0.4	Finno-Ugrian	Protestant
<i>The Caucasians</i>			
Georgians 4.0	1.4	Kartvelian	Georgian Orthodox
Armenians 4.6	1.6	Indo-European	Armenian Orthodox
Azerbaijanis 6.8	2.4	Turkic	Muslim (Shia)
<i>The Central Asians</i>			
Uzbeks 16.7	5.8	Turkic	Muslim (Sunni)
Kazakhs 8.1	2.9	Turkic	Muslim (Sunni)
Tajiks 4.2	1.5	Iranian	Muslim (Sunni)
Turkmenian2.7	1.0	Turkic	Muslim (Sunni)
Kirgiz 2.5	0.9	Turkic	Muslim (Sunni)
<i>Other</i>			
Moldavian 3.4	1.2	Romance	Romanian Orthodox

*Source: Based on Report on the USSR, 20 October 1989, pp. 1-5*

**Table 2.2. Area, Population, and Capitals of the Soviet Republics, 1989 Census**

Republic	Area of Republic (in square kilometers)	Population of Republic <sup>1</sup>	Capital	Population of Capital
Russia	17,075,400	145,311,000	Moscow	8,815,000
Kazakhstan	2,717,300	16,244,000	Alma-Ata	1,108,000
Ukraine	603,700	51,201,000	Kiev	2,544,000
Turkmenistan	488,100	3,361,000	Ashkhabad	382,000
Uzbekistan	447,400	19,026,000	Tashkent	2,124,000
Belorussia	207,600	10,078,000	Minsk	1,543,000
Kyrgyzstan	198,500	4,143,000	Frunze	632,000
Tajikistan	143,100	4,807,000	Dushanbe	582,000
Azerbaijan	86,600	6,811,000	Baku	1,115,000
Georgia	69,700	5,266,000	Tbilisi	1,194,000
Lithuania	65,200	3,641,000	Vilnius	566,000
Latvia	64,500	2,647,000	Riga	900,000
Estonia	45,100	1,556,000	Tallin	478,000
Moldavia	33,700	4,185,000	Kishinev	663,000
Armenia	29,800	3,412,000	Yerevan	1,168,000
TOTAL	22,403,000	286,717,000		24,008,000

*Source: Based on information from Izvestiya [Moscow], April 29, 1989, 1-2.*

**Table 2.3, Major Ethnic Groups, Selected Years, 1959-89 (in thousands of people)**

Ethnic Group	1959	1970	1979	1989
Russians	97,863	107,748	113,522	119,866
Tatars	4,075	4,758	5,011	5,522
Ukrainians	3,359	3,346	3,658	4,368
Chuvash	1,436	1,637	1,690	1,774
Dagestanis	797	1,152	1,402	1,749
Bashkirs	954	1,181	1,291	1,345
Belorussians	844	964	1,052	1,206

Mordovians	1,211	1,177	1,111	1,074
Chechens	261	572	712	899
Germans	820	762	791	842
Udmurts	616	678	686	715
Mari	498	581	600	644
Kazaks	383	478	518	636
Jews	875	808	701	537
Armenians	256	299	365	532
Buryats	252	313	350	417
Ossetians	248	313	352	402
Kabardins	201	277	319	386
Yakuts	233	295	327	380
Komi	283	315	320	336
Azerbaijanis	71	96	152	336
Ingush	56	137	166	215
Tuvinians	100	139	165	206
Moldavians	62	88	102	173
Kalmyks	101	131	140	166
Roma	72	98	121	153
Karachay	71	107	126	150
Georgians	58	69	89	131
Karelians	164	141	133	125
Adyghs	79	98	107	123
Khakass	56	65	69	79
Balkars	35	53	59	69
Altays	45	55	59	69
Cherkess	29	38	45	51

*Source: Based on information from Novaya Rossiya '94: Informatsionno-statisticheskii al'manakh, Moscow, 1994, 110*



The tables above indicate the diversity during the Soviet period which comprised of different ethnic groups. The predominant Russian ethnic group has the highest number of population and also they occupied the largest area. Russia became the core of the Russian population. The other ethnic minorities were driven to the periphery where the predominance of Russian was imposed on them socially, culturally and politically. The issues of multistate had already unfolded during the Soviet period and it still prevails in the new Russian state. The other ethnic minorities were in some sense subordinated by the Russian. The identity of other minority groups became concern for them. Ethnic minority like the Chechens and Tatars began to protest for autonomy and even secession.

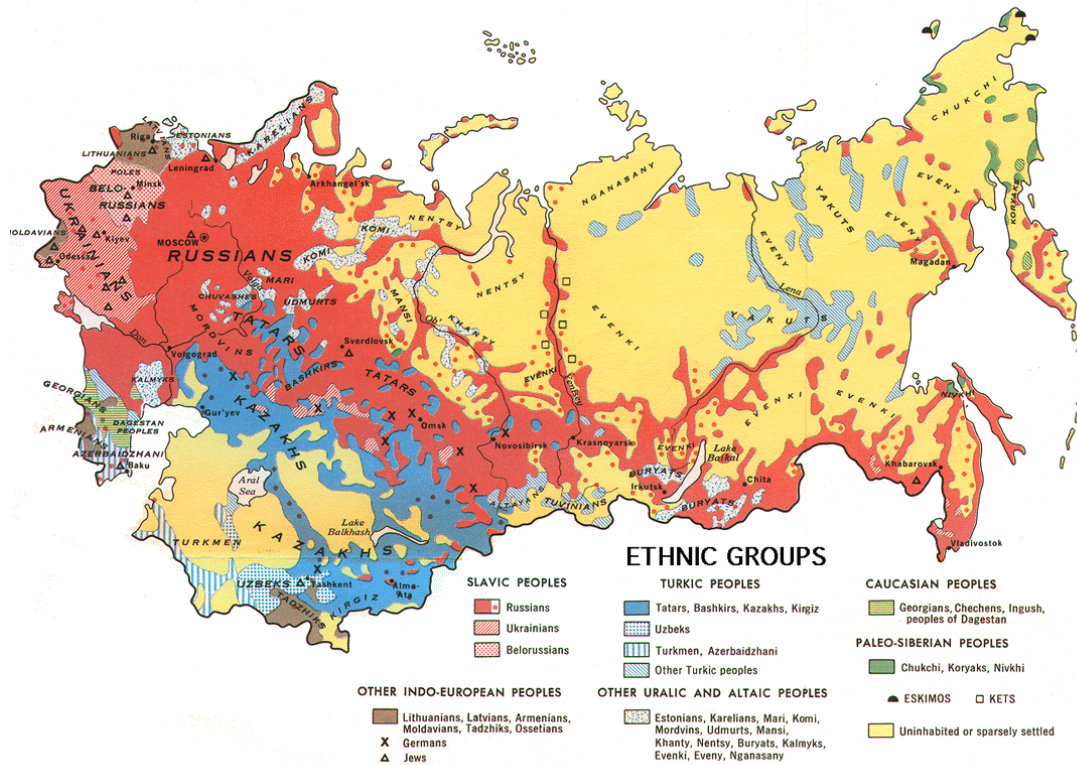
### **Ethnic Composition in Russia**

The breakup of the Soviet Union made Russia conscious of its own identity and nationalism. Russia, though a multistate, became less diverse compared to the old Soviet period. It sought to develop a homogenous society in terms of language, culture and religion. The Slavs, the dominating group from the Soviet Rule still dominates the post-Soviet, Russian society. Russia has 83 subjects of the Federation and 21 of them are ethnic republics. The new Russian society is predominated by culture, religion and languages of Russian ethnicity. The Slavs, whose main religion is Russian Orthodox is still followed and practiced by majority of the Russian population. Russian Orthodox in post-Soviet began to achieve new status in Russia like it had been in the soviet period. It began to play an important role as the state government and actors gave more priority and importance to the Russian Orthodox. Concisely, it can be said that the Russian Orthodox are now parallel to the state , as some important decisions at national and international level are made by the Russian Orthodox directly or indirectly. The special privilege and status given to the Russian Orthodox Church by the state negates the idea of equality and justice in modern secular world. This special treatment given by the state made other religious minorities feel neglected and subordinated.

The secession made by Chechnya was followed by north Caucasus, Volga and Ural region, Ingushetia and Siberia. But the demand for greater autonomy was not granted or executed by the government. The dominance of the Russian ethnic group was revolted by the smaller ethnic groups where the demand for greater autonomy was enchanted as they feel that their identity and cultures have been undermined by imposing the Russian ethics and cultures upon them. The ethnic minorities are at risk as the imposition of Russian cultures upon the minorities only enhances the legitimacy of Russian to rule and in promoting it further indefinitely. The demand to the central government for granting greater autonomy was made under the consideration of indigenous groups. Russia has a unique ethnic composition and significant minority population. It has more than hundred nationalities and more than 185 ethnic minorities, so significantly it has big minority population. In Russia around 20 percent of minority lives in a similar size as of many small countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia but unlike these states the non-Russian constitute only small groups (Moser 2008).

Among the minorities in Russia, Tatar ethnic group is considered to be the biggest minority. The population of Tatars is so small that they constitute less than four percent of the population. The major ethnic groups in Russia are: Russians about 79.8 percent, Tatars 3.8 percent, Ukrainians 2.0 percent, Bashkirs 1.2 percent, Chuvash 1.1, Armenians 0.8, and Others about 10.2 percent (Protsyk and Harzl 2013).

Map 2. 1: Map showing different inhabitant ethnic groups in Russia.



Sources: <http://www.lehman.edu/faculty/rwhittaker/Day02-Writing/02Thinking-Writing.htm>

**Map 2. 2: Map showing the major ethnic groups of Russia**



Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnic\\_map\\_of\\_Russia\\_2010.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnic_map_of_Russia_2010.png)

According to Yazkova (2006), National minorities in Russia can be broadly divided into two groups,: firstly, those minorities who have territorial autonomy in the form of national republic or autonomous region and secondly, those minorities who are deprived of autonomous region or territorial autonomy, and the majority of the minorities in Russia are situated at Central Siberia, North Caucasus and Volga-Ural region. The situation of Central Siberia is comparatively calm, and the only conflict in Central Siberia is power sharing and distribution of property. The Volga-Ural region comprises of six national republics: Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Mari-El, Chuvashia, Kalmykia and Udmurtia. And all these republics are diverse in terms of the cultures and tradition, history and even their religion. In most of these republics ethnic Russian population has the highest population. And one of the most controversial regions in contemporary Russia is the Northern Caucasus which is most prone to ethno-conflict. Northern Caucasus region comprises of seven national

republics and they are Daghestan, Ichkeriya-Chechnya, Ingushetia, Northern Osetiya, Kabardino-Balkariya, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Adyega.

This North Caucasus region has poor socioeconomic conditions. This region is a great concern for the Russian state as most of the terrorist group and activities originated from it directly or indirectly. Northern Caucasus remains completely backward when it is compared to other regions of the Russian Federation. The state has failed to provide the required facilities and allotment of funds, and it's a matter of concern for the state to look into the issues for the betterment of the citizen residing in the Northern Caucasus. There is a mass unemployment, the infant mortality is high, literacy rate is very low and the per-capita income of this region is two-third of the national average. Among this seven national republic of Northern Caucasus, Ingushetia remains the most backward region in the country (Gidadhubli 2004). The failure of the state in addressing all these poor socio economic issues of this region made them to rebel and fight against the state for its apathy and it also let them to support the idea of secession or greater autonomy from the state. It also let them to endorse the means of violence as a means to protest and agitate and demand their rights from the state. It also become a great concern for the state in terms of national security, sovereignty and integrity as this region become the breeding ground for all the terrorist groups and all other terrorizing activities. According to Yazkova (2006), Northern Caucasus became one of the most explosive regions in Russia , and the and the principle destabilizing factors are as follows:

Firstly, a number of armed conflicts typical of the colonial history of the region during the pre-Soviet and Soviet era were accompanied by the forced changes of borders between ethnic regions. Secondly, the mass deportation of several key ethnic groups in 1943-44, such as the chechentsy (Chechens), ingushi (Ingushs), the balkartsy and karachaevtsy. These peoples are now expected to live 'in peace' with the same people that misappropriated their lands and properties in the past. And thirdly, the diffusion and embedding of organized crime within governmental structures. These factors have contributed to the internal instability in the region.

## **Religious Minorities in Russia**

The Russian Orthodox is the predominant religion in modern Russia. Majority of the Russian populations are believers of the Russian Orthodox. The Russian Orthodox was adopted by the Vladimir of Kiev in 988 and since then it had become the most dominant religion in Russia. Like in other society, religion in Russia still plays an important role in the society and state. The importance of the Russian Orthodox was put to the forefront by the state actors as the state began to give more importance by accommodating the ideas and views of the Russian Orthodox in secular decisions of the state. Today in Russia, religious association with the Russian Orthodox has increased tremendously. The other religious minorities are Muslim, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Evangelicals, Old believers, Roman Catholic, Krishnaites, Budhists, Judaist, and Unified Evangelical Lutherans. The diversities of Russia's religious communities unfold the questions of the nature of Russian state, whether all religions in Russia have been given the same right to enrich the quality of peaceful coexistence by the state's policies and provisions or not.

There is no conclusive definition of minority that can be accepted and applied universally. Sometimes the general definition of is misnomer, where generally, the term minority is understood based only on numbers or figures. In some states the minority, based on the figures of population, became the dominant group who controls the whole system of the state. For instance, the whites in South Africa are the minority based on their population, but they are the dominating group who controls and regulates the whole state's machinery. So to understand minority of a society, one needs to delve deep into the system of a society, as to become a minority or majority is determined by the political stance and not by its population size of a particular group. Many social and state actors are in constant clash to determine who are minority and majority. The state inclined policies towards the Russian Orthodox made other religious minorities to question the creditability of the state. As it was clearly mentioned in the Constitution of 1993, the policy towards any ethnic group

should be solely based on the legal criteria and no discrimination would be accepted on the ground of religion, race, creed, and the Russian state would accommodate all religions in a very peaceful way (Tasch 2010).

The religious diversity of Russia should be celebrated and acknowledged. In Russia, before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, religion was condemned and prosecuted, and was relegated to private affairs. The affairs of religions were completely shunned from the public domain and went underground until the dissolution of Soviet Union. At one point of time the Westerners had raised the questions whether Russia will be a Godless country in future. For instance, Stalin had made several attempts to wipe out religions from the Soviet Union and had not encouraged it at all as he saw religion as something that hampers the progressive motions of socialism.

Formally, Russia as a secular state, as it is enshrined and mentioned in the 1993 Constitution and 1996 Conception of State National Policy, gives equal importance to all religions, where discrimination cannot be accepted based on religion, sex, race etc. The enshrined and documented of Russian constitution proves that it had adhered and abided by the principles of liberal democratic values. The constitution of Russia had proclaimed that Russia is federal democratic state. The constitution of Russian federation in its preamble says that,

“We, the multinational people of the Russian Federation, united by a common destiny on our land, asserting human rights and liberties, civil peace and accord, preserving the historic unity of the state, proceeding from the commonly recognized principles of equality and self-determination of the peoples, honoring the memory of our ancestors, who have passed on to us love of and respect for our homeland and faith in good and justice, reviving the sovereign statehood of Russia and asserting its immutable democratic foundations, striving to secure the well-being and prosperity of Russia and proceeding from a sense of responsibility for our homeland before the present and

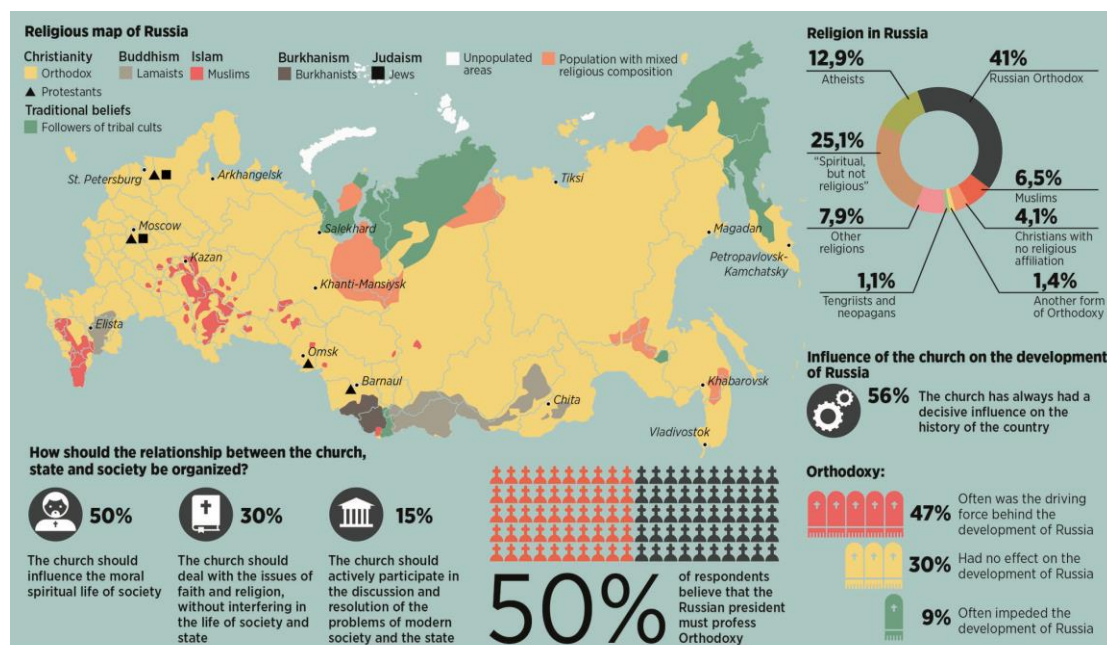
future generations, and being aware of ourselves as part of the world community, hereby approve the Constitution of the Russian Federation”.

The Constitution of Russian federation clearly shows that it has given equal rights and all other social values are well protected. The preamble of the constitution has clearly defined the nature of Russian state as a multicultural state, unified by all social values and heritage of the past and has asserted to observe all the human rights, equality, justice and liberties. But over the time, the issues of religious minorities in Russia have escalated and it remains a problem for the state. The 1996 Conception of State Nationality Policy was enacted to ensure the unity and integrity of the state Russian Federations. According to Warhola and Lehning (2007), the Russian Orthodox during the Soviet period were more accommodative with the Muslims of different ethnic group and also carried a history of mutually interacting which was approved and supported by the Orthodox church, but sees the contemporary Orthodox as a predominant.

Among the religious minorities the Muslim, one of the oldest religion along with Russian Orthodox in the history of Russia became the victim of the predominance of the Russian Orthodox and the apathy of the State. It is difficult to estimate the exact population of Muslim in Russia, as Muslims are scattered in the vast geography of Russia and the heterogeneous society of Muslims determine their various sacred rituals and practices. It can be said that roughly there are about twenty millions of Muslims in Russia. Most of the Muslims and their Mosque are located in Bashkortastan, Daghestan, Kabarda-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya and Tatarstan. Other religious minorities in Russia are Buddhism, which is mainly confined in Tuva, Buryatia, Kalmykia and the Irkutsk and Chits region. Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jews are some important religious minorities in Russia. The map shown below shows that Orthodox is professed by the majority of the Russian population. The role of the Russian Orthodox is immense and it has capacity to play an integral role in the state and society.



**Map 2.3: Religious map of Russia and the predominance of the Russian Orthodox Church.**



Source: <http://i.imgur.com/K8LJcYh.jpg>

### Issues of Minorities in Russia

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was unprecedented. The new Russia was marred by the uprising movements especially by the minorities with the Russian Federation. The Tatars began to revolt against the Russian government for a greater autonomy. The revolts for gaining a greater autonomy by the minority grew bigger. The revolt started by Tatar for granting their greater autonomy disseminated further and it was joined by the Chechens, Yakuts and many other republics. In Russia, which was in transition period from its break up was challenged by the charged and emotionally attached expression of ethnic consciousness. These movements by the ethnic minorities led to many questions on the creditability of the new Russian state.

The agitation of the ethnic minorities against the Russian state led one to wonder the status of democracy and the legitimacy of the state. The legitimacy of a state cannot

be measured by the absence of social and political upheaval, the eminence of a leader and the efficiency of the state actors but significantly from the level of trust to the national institutions (Sil and Chen 2004). The attitude of post-Soviet, Russia towards the minorities has changed. Today, Russia treats some minorities with hostility who are considered as a threat. Political leaders have created ethnic phobia to create their own political platform unlike the Soviet rule where they gave an assurance in protecting them (Pain 2013: 158; Protysk and Benedik 2015). Leaders of post-Soviet Russia began to play the cards of nationalism based on mono-cultural Russo-centrism. The extent of this monocultural Russo-centrism would be problematic in a multicultural society, as Russian being the most dominant in every respect would undermine the culture and other social values.

Right after the sudden disintegration of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev was in dilemma in dealing with the issues of nationalism. The question of nationalism was the simmering issues in realm of Russian politics rights after the disintegration in 1991. It would not be wrong to say that the reforms of Gorbachev, the liberal leader had given enormous amount of freedoms that different ethnic minorities were on the front and more vocal in expressing their thought. The question of nationalism and what has to be attached in defining an ideal of nationalism became a great concern for the Russian society.

Not to say in an absolute manner, but the general understanding and assumption of Russia's nationalism will surely raise questions on, whose nationalism? and on what basis will it define Russia's nationalism ? It would be disastrous for the minority if monocultural Russo-centrism is imposed in order to define the idea of nationalism in multistate Russia. It became very axiomatic that the idea of nationalism would be the nationalism for the Russian and not for non-Russian. Warhola and Lehning (2007) say that the drive for monoculturalism under Putin administration will be dangerous to the identity, security and political order for the society. They further elaborated the increase of ethnic self -awareness, Russian professing Russian Orthodox as they tend to identify themselves as Orthodox which does not really possess an ideal theological character, this in turn affects the other religious minorities.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, in post-soviet Russia, attempts have been made to solve the simmering issues of nationalism demanded by different minorities within the Russia federation. Liberalist leader like Gorbachev could not stop all those agitations and upheavals emanating out of his liberal reforms which was seen as great gestures and hailed by many likeminded western leaders. After breaking it away from fourteen former Soviet's republic in 1991, the tension and issues of nationalism arose within Russia itself and the efforts to define Russia as a nation-state was beyond the reach of the state to really actualize it. The challenge was to the Russian state from twenty one autonomous republics within the Russian Federation. The republics were not given the option to secede away from the Russian federation as they remain within the boundary of Russia, and outnumbered by the Russia (Rutland 1994/95). In Russia, it is difficult to divide ethnicity and religion, as within ethnic Russian there is multiplicity of religious orientations within Christian. It also prevails within Muslims, where there is a significant difference in socio-psychological identity structure (Warhola and Lehning 2007).

As the Russian state has made an attempt to build nationalism based on monoculturalism, in a multicultural state, the question on status of minority and its effects are unfolded and the question on the absence of democratic values in society are interjected. As pointed out by Anna Triandafyllidou (1998), the presence of 'significant others' complicated the issue of nationalism and statehood for Russia. It is not easy to impose monocultural ideas and norms in such a diverse society. It might not be real threat from the 'significant others' but at certain point of time their presence became an important turning point at the time of crisis. This 'significant others' of Anna Triandafyllidou can be equated with the Muslims of Russia in building nationalism of Russia. Russia falls to this pattern of building nationalism as the presence of Muslim minority became the 'significant others' whose presence had enriched the feeling of Russian nationalism by becoming more self –conscious of their own ethnic Russian and became more vigilant and protective for it.

The dominant groups who have been at forefront in every domain of public began to undermine the ethics, cultural values of the other minority groups. The minority who is at the receiving end depends on how the state actors and the dominating group accommodate the existing difference in the society. Minorities in Russia have been subjected to different kinds of discrimination. The state neglected the affairs of the

minority at different points of time. The ascent of the Orthodox Church is resented by the minorities in Russia.

The dominance of one ethnic Russian in Russia became an eyesore for other minorities. The rebellious movement right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union by its republic within Russia was a great concern. The quest for greater autonomy by the republics was not granted by the Russian state. The demand for a greater autonomy became the main main concern for the integrity, sovereignty and security for the Russian state right after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The policies of the state towards the Russian minorities remained indifferent. President Putin was determined to achieve his mission by bringing back the old vertical power and restore it (Protsyk and harzl 2013). The state actors became so powerful that they act arbitrarily and executing it without following the right procedural steps unlike other democratic countries which abide by and adhere to the constitution. Putin's policies in dealing with terrorist activities were indecisive. The breeding of terrorist in Russia which can be linked directly to the apathy of the state government is failing to the address the poor socio-economic issues of the society. He admitted that the state and his administration had failed to address the issues of minorities. A series of terrorist activities had taken place in Russia. In order to check all these terrorist activities he has given the direction to create groups in 13 Oblast which will supervise all anti-terrorism forces, federal security services, defence, to emphasize the need to restructure the security system, reintroduction of death penalty for terrorist act and issued decreed to all the organs of Russian government to increase their control over issuing visas ( Gidadhubli 2004).

## **Conclusion**

Russia is in the process of nation-building. But being a multi-ethnic state, it cannot build a nation-state based on just one dominant majority. It has to take into account the interests and aspirations of all the multi-ethnic groups. The Constitution of 1993 has adequate provisions for the safety and security of the minorities. It grants equal rights to all the citizens with adequate safeguards for the minorities. But the actual

practices of the state are lacking in implementing the principles of the constitution. There are complains of discrimination by the Muslim and other minorities. It is also widely believed that the state policies, directly or indirectly, favour the Russian Orthodox religion. This does not bode well for a multi-ethnic society of Russia.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Muslims in Russia: Identity, Social and Economic Issues**

Soviet Union has been a multicultural society. Its rich heritage and culture has been a contribution of its unique and vastly diverse society. Like India, which is a multicultural society, Russia derives its nation's strength and unity from its diversity. With its different prevailing religious confessions and a long history of its own, the history of Islam in Russia occupies an important place parallel to the Russian Orthodox Church. No history of any other religion comes even close to the history of Islam and Russian Orthodox Church. Islam and Russian Orthodox Church had stood firm without flinching during the anti-religious campaign of the Soviet rule, when the doctrines and principles of Marxism and Leninism were at its peak. Religion was considered as an ideology of the bourgeoisie in order to exploit the proletariat. Both these religions had withstood the harsh politics and policies of different leaders and had shaped in building the nation, and like any other religion it had been the place to seek solace and spiritual strength for the Soviets. Thus both Muslim and Russian Orthodox Church had stood the real test of time and space, and they had remained unshaken throughout in the history irrespective of its harsh environment and Soviet leaders.

During the anti-religious campaign of the Soviet, history of Russia has thrown the light on how powerful the wave of religion is as the anti-religious campaign in Soviet could not stop followers from following it and at some point of time Soviet leaders were aware of the fact that religion has a great role to play in the society. The vital role of religion either in primitive or modern society always came into play in any society and its role and legacy always transcends time and space. In the history of Soviet Union, the Quasi-religion of communism, the harsh and stringent policies against religion could not wipe out religion completely which is apparent that it had survived. The history of Muslims in Russia is as old as the history of the predominant

Russian Orthodox Church. The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to the creation of new state Russia. Now in new Russia, Muslim religion, like the Russian Orthodox Church which had played an important role and contributed in making and shaping statehood had been relegated to the second largest religious minority after the Russian Orthodox Church. The history of Islam in Russia is not only grand and glorious but at the same time it is also a horrifying and dreadful one. The glorious and dreadful experiences of Islam in Russia will be remembered by generations to come as history unfolds it. Numbers of attempts have been made during the reign of the Soviet to control and regulate their religious activities and institutions as the Russian considered Islam as a religion which was brought by some outsiders, and which is not an indigenous one. All these anti-Muslims feeling flares anti-Muslim feelings to such a level that the relation between the State and Muslims became more hostile and incompatible.

The Soviet had taken many stringent steps against Islam. The steps which were taken against the Muslims during the rule of the Soviet and after the dissolution of Soviet Union were no less different, the only difference is that the policy of the Russian state which discriminated and neglected the Muslims in a more refined ways. Those tough and tight measures, however, failed to wipe out the Muslims and their rich cultural heritage. On the contrary, the present position rather confirms the fact beyond doubt that like all other Muslim regions of the world the Russian Muslim areas are also in the grips of a rising wave of awakening. Despite strict Russian censure of the media the entire world has known by now how vigorously the people of the Muslim majority areas of Russia have asserted their separate political identity and revitalized their distinctive cultural heritage. The more recent upsurges in all the Muslim states of Russia are simply eye-opening for everyone. All the awakening movements among the Russian Muslims have always been distinctly Islamic in letter and spirit.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Russian Muslims faced a highly hazardous situation. The leaders of the communist revolution were determined to impose an authoritarian system over the entire Russia which was totally hostile to the religion and traditions, civilization and culture, politics and polity of the Muslims. Around

1924, a tight iron curtain was imposed on the Muslim areas. Consequently, the Russian Muslims got dissociated from the rest of the Muslims world.

Immediately after the start of the regular official moves of Christianity in Russia, a series of organized onslaughts started against the Muslims in 1928. In Spain, the inimical efforts to eliminate Islam and the Muslims after their downfall had yielded a great success. But it was quite different in Russia. All Soviet attempts at uprooting Islam and the Muslims failed flatly. The period of the Russian Iron Curtain from 1928 to 1968 was the most painful tragedy of the Russian Muslim history. During that perilous period attempts to lure Muslims away from Islam and their forcible conversion to communism became a recurring routine with those in power.

Tyranny and oppressive measures gave birth to a wave of new awakening among the Muslims. Movements for independence and self-determination erupted all over the Muslim areas. Among these freedom movements, the guerilla organization called the "Basmachi Movement" is quite well-known. Unfortunately, however, the Russian Muslims got entangled into the wilderness of mutual differences and dissensions, rifts and conflicts. They were then unable to defend themselves as a united block. Consequently, all Muslim areas were forcibly annexed to the Russian territory one after the other.

Ever since Russian occupation of the Muslim territories, the Soviet Union had utilized all possible devices to put an end to the distinct spiritual, moral, cultural and political identity of the Muslims. All sorts of traps of atheism, baits of modernization and lures of lewd recreations had been tried in quick succession. These dirty devices, however, failed in to dissociate the Muslims from the main stream of their religion and traditions, and to get them merged into the strong force of communism.



## **Historical Background**

Historically, Muslim has been there in Russian soil since time immemorial, and also it has been proven that it is as old as the predominant Russian Orthodox Church. No historian can assure or has given conclusively the exact time about the first appearance of Islam in Russia. Owing to different geographical region, when Islam first expanded at that particular place it does not come under Russia, but eventually it got incorporated and merged into the Russian empire in its colonial expansion. But, according to Balzer (2010), Islam is one of the traditional religions of Russia as it had first appeared in Derbent back in the first century, which justifies its comparison to the Russian Orthodox, and Caucasus region has been the centers of spreading Islam. Before the conquest of Tsarist ruler of Russia, Ivan IV, this region on the banks of the Volga River had already accepted Islam around tenth century and had included Bashkortostan into its domain. In fact Islam had spread within the territory of modern Russia earlier than Christendom through the missionaries of Muslims for the Central Asia, and it was believed that around the middle of the 7th century the Russian had contacts with the Muslims. As it is believed that Islam had appeared much before than the Russian Orthodox Church, and Islam was officially declared as the religion of the Volga Bulgarians state.

The Grand Duke of Kiev Vladimir in the year 988 decided to choose religion for his subjects in a very conventional way. Though, Prince Vladimir was happy with the doctrines and principles of Islam and he was ready to endorse it as the religion for his subjects, the prohibition and condemnation of Islam on drinking alcohol made him to reject it and instead embraced Christianity. Wheeler (1955) says that the Muslim region or the Central Asia was considered by the Russian as backward, where they need to be colonized and they do not fit into the modern world. In the tenth century the Russian had this perception like Wheeler had said. The Russian had classified between them and the Muslims on the basis of more civilized people and also in one way it had shaped and molded the formation of one's identity and nationalism.

As the demarcation between the Muslims and Russian Orthodox has started when Prince Vladimir rejected Islam the flare of hostility between them had already begun during the reign of Vladimir. With the invasion of the Kievan Russia by the Mongols in the thirteenth century, it had far reaching consequences and from then Islam become strongly attached with the Mongols conquest. With the Mongol conquest, Islam was introduced and began to spread widely in Russia, in which the Russian began to have the negative perceptions about Islam in Russia and other neighboring Muslims countries. The rule of Mongol-Tatar had attributed the worst political and culture scenario of Russia, and it all contributed to the Russian to overcome the rule of the Mongol-Tatar rule and to adopt their own way (Harrison 1974). The seeds of hostility between the Russian and the Muslims were sown with the invasion of one another. Thus the Russians were agitated and were determined to overcome the rule of the Mongols, as they see the Muslims rule as inefficient and feel that Russian should be liberated from the rule of the Mongols.

These challenges and resentments of the Russian manifested in struggle against Mongols rule. The Russian were determined to achieve their interest and the right to self-determination from the Muslims ruler, as they have felt that the Muslim rulers had exploited and oppressed them. This was the main reason why the Muslims were regarded as an enemy and had seen them through the prism of hostility. During Mongol-Tatar rule, the idea and principle of secularism prevailed. The Russian were not coerced or forcefully converted to Islam. The Russian missionaries were allowed to enjoy some autonomy to preach their doctrines in the Golden Horde.

The agitations and resentments of the Russian against the Muslims contributed to the expansion of the Russian empire into the territory of the Muslim in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Ivan the terrible in 1552 conquered the Khanate of Astrakhan and Kazan. His rule did a great damage to the Muslims. He endorsed a harsh rule upon the Muslims populations, the Russian tried to get rid of the rule of the Tatars and also the Tatars were not allowed in the town. Kazan was literally dismantled and almost all the mosques in Kazan were destroyed. By the time the Russian attained the power, the Tatars had already developed the high value of way of life and rich culture, but they were relegated to start again from the grass root level by the Russian as they

were forbidden from the urban. The Tatars were driven to start and nurture their Islam in remote and aloof areas, where they were ethnically divided and were all replaced by the Russian Orthodox (Conrad and Humphries 2005). All the bitter experiences in which the Russian had faced during the invasion by the Mongol made the Russian to conceive the feeling of hatred and hostility towards the Muslims which is still apparent in contemporary Russia. Therefore, with the invasion of the Kazan in 1552 by Ivan IV, his harsh treatment was unleashed upon the Muslims where he not only dismantled the Muslims institution, but he also forcefully converted them and many mosques were demolished as a an act of vengeance and hatred towards the Muslims. The rule of Ivan IV brought enormously dismantled Muslims in terms of lives and properties.

Muslim, during the reign of Catherine the great was associated with more liberal and treated in a more tolerant manner towards religion, unlike her predecessors. Her policy towards Muslims were more tolerant in nature and more space were given to flourish and this liberal policies of Catherine had nothing to do with the concept of an ideal state, but, rather she assumed it as an empire which had to move along the trends of other emerging European states, rather than the complete existing of a real homogenous nation-state. All these positive policies of Catherine enhanced the nature of state relation with religion, especially the Muslims, and among citizens of different religious sects as her policies compatibly endorsed the idea of accommodating the plurality of Russian society. The reign of Catherine gave enormous freedom to the Muslims, as they were treated equally like any other citizens. Mosques were allowed to be built and it was protected during her reign. Religious leaders were given their own autonomy to run their institutions and also to perform their religious rite. Relation between Russian and Muslims during her rule enormously improved as they were well protected and given their own spaces without intruding and infringing other religious beliefs and principles, and Catherine was completely against the conversion of one's religion, especially the Christian proselytizing being the majority and which had become the predominant gradually.

Thus, the Muslims during the rule of Catherine had been a glorious year for the Muslim as they can live as a law abiding citizens like any non-Muslims and they were not to be converted to any other religion. Catherine, with all her liberal policies for her subjects not only facilitated the idea of respect and peaceful coexistence in multicultural society, it ushered Russia to step into a new modern world where it conceived the idea of unity in diversity.

In sixteenth century Russian empire began to expand wider. It began to expand towards Caucasus and in the Central Asia and many Muslims Countries were incorporated under its expansion. As the Russian continue to annex different Muslim countries it laid its interest in conquering Caucasus region because of its geographical location and its proximity to other neighboring countries. As the North Caucasus regions were then backward in terms of unorganized political state or they were at nascent form of a state, and its diverse society could not match and stopped the Russian in conquering them. North Caucasus leader, Sheikh Mansur, who had a wide network of Sufi brotherhood could not succeed in defeating the intruding of Russian military and eventually succumbed to the mighty Russian military and later he was captured by the Russian and died in prison (Zelkina 2000). Sheikh Mansur and Imam Shamil who persistently resisted the advancement of the Russian were defeated by the mighty Russian army. Shamil's nature of resistance against the Russian left remarkable legacies among the North Caucasian. It also strengthened and further spread the faith of the Orthodox Islam among the Chechens. His strong resistance also established a hostile nature of relationship with the Russian, defiance to the Russian rule and repugnant feeling against the Russian which is still prevalent today among the Chechens (Beningsen- Broxup 1992). With the defeat of the Shamil and Mansur the Russian military unleashed its rule and expanded further where it took control of the whole system and institutions of the North Caucasus region.

During the invasion of Caucasian by the Russian, the Caucasians were deeply entrenched in sufi tradition, doctrines, principles and faith of Orthodox Islam. It became the only propelling force for them to be united and resisted the intruders, Russian army, inspite of they were less politically organized state. On the other hand

the Russian empire annexed Central Asia comparatively easier than they had faced in annexing Caucasian region. The Russian tried to annex Central Asia knowing the fact that the Kazakh were not so much into religious commitments and their pride were most on being as the Kazakh origin. The policies followed by the Russian while in annexing Central Asia was that the Kazakh were given the privileged status while being separated from the Russia nobility. Some of the Kazakh elite were earnestly willing to cooperate with the Russian as they see the Russian the way in achieving modernity, and they extended the willingness by accommodating and embracing the Russian way of life, culture, tradition and language.

The Kazakh elite were modernizers where they see Russian as the only channel in replicating the European civilization. Kazakh cooperated with the Russian as they felt the need to have the Russian so that their presence in Central Asia will alienate and contain the pursuit of the Tatars and Bashkar in strengthening and spreading Islam. The complete incorporation of Central Asia took more than thirty years and it was only feasible for the Russian as the revolt against the Russian was controlled from spreading it. The Russian gradually expanded its hegemony and it began to spread further into the central and urban parts of the Central Asia, and finally with the defeat of resistance in the Turkmen region in 1884-85 Russia coerced into accepting its hegemony all over Central Asia.

Muslims as a religion which has been there in Russia and as old as like the predominant Russian Orthodox Church were denounced, condemned and prosecuted by many Soviet leaders and they were almost wiped out from Russia. The fate of the Islam began to change when Kazan khanate was annexed by the Russian in 1552. Some leaders like Catherine the great executed her liberal policies effectively by condemning the conversion of the Muslims into Christianity and giving them the autonomy to control and regulate their religious institutions and activities, her liberal policies could not be continued and followed by her successors as different soviet leaders began to change their policies with their vested interest and according to the given circumstances. With the invasion of the Central Asia by the Russian troops the fate of Islam was changed drastically and the Russian began to regulate and control

their religious institution and even converted them into Russian Orthodox. After the complete control and annexation of Central Asia and other parts of Muslim dominated regions, it was not only Islam where it was prosecuted and banned but almost all religious activities were prohibited when Soviet was entrenched in Communist ideologies. When Soviet Union was at its peak in the ideologies of Communist, Marxist-Leninist, any religion was completely considered as hurdle for the path to communism or socialism, as they comprehend that religion as an ideology where a set of ideas and beliefs of bourgeoisie are imposed upon the working class in order to exploit them and to create a new class of society of haves and have-nots.

During the rule of the Soviet period it almost banned every religion from the public domain, and the prosecution of religion had unleashed many impediments for the growth of religion. Many priests were punished and sacred places were dismantled to rubble

## **Demography**

According to the Hackett (2016), Russia, as of 2010, had a population of 14 million Muslims, which comes to around 10 percent of the total population of Russia. So this tells us that the population is more than any of the European country like Germany and France which have the highest population of Muslims. Also immigration has played an important part in this demography of Russia, according to official data, between 1992 and 2010; 8.4 million migrants entered the Russian federation. The informal statistics suggest a much greater and more realistic estimate of between 15 and 18 million people, approximately 10.5 - 12.7 percent of the total population.

There is no exact data on the size of the Muslim population in Russia. This is a result of a lack of systematic polls and adequate estimates regarding immigration. According to a 2002 census, there were approximately 14.5 million Muslim people in Russia, about 10 per cent of the country's total population. It is clear that even back in 2002, this figure greatly underestimates the true total. President Vladimir Putin has

given a more realistic estimate, around 18-20 million people, approximately 14-15 per cent of the total population.

Based on these estimates, it is possible to speculate on the future of Muslims in Russia. According to estimates by the authoritative Pew Research Center (“The Future of The Global Muslim Population”), by 2030, the number of Muslims will increase by 3 per cent. However, it is important to understand that the authors of the report make estimates based on the most modest figures available, not taking into account the realities of immigration. According to other estimates, in particular the National Intelligence Council of the US, taking into account immigration and the depopulation of the Russian population, it is conceivable that by 2030, the proportion of Muslims in Russia will amount to 20-22 per cent. Thus, in 10-15 years, every fifth citizen of Russia will profess to follow Islam and in Moscow, this figure will be even higher. “It threatens further growth of interethnic and interreligious tensions” said former CIA director Michael Hayden.

### **Identity Issues of Muslims in Russian Federation**

With the sudden disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the state has given the privileged status to the Russian Orthodox Church, and Muslim which had played the vital role along with the Russian Orthodox Church in shaping the nationhood and retaining the culture of the Soviet Union has been relegated to the largest religious minority in Russia. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has led to a tremendous increase in the population of the Muslims and incessantly it has been expanding it near and far. As the State is inclined more towards the Russian Orthodox, and with the increasing population of the Muslims the consciousness and awareness in the realm of its religion, culture and politics has achieved a new level in Russian Federation. According to Malashenko (2009) and Hunter (2004) it would be difficult to determine the exact number of Muslim citizens or to be considered as a Muslim, as

it has to be seen who follows the religious rites strictly and no conclusive official statistics on the number of Muslims has been given.

The Russian Muslim communities mainly hailed from broadly two main areas and that is: the Tataro-Bashkir and the North Caucasus region. As the population of the Muslim began to migrate Muslim communities exist in all parts of the Russian Federation. The Muslim communities in Russian Federation is not homogenous society. According to Malashenko and Nuritova (2009), majority of the Muslims population in the Russian Federation are mainly concentrated in seven territories and they are: Ingushetia (98 percent), Chechnya (96 percent), Dagestan (94 percent), Kabardino Balkaria (70 percent), Karachaevo Cherkesiya (63 percent), Bashkortostan (54.5 percent), and Tatarstan (54 percent). Also significant number of population also resides is Adyega (21 percent), Astrakhan province (16.7 percent), North Ossetia (21 percent), Orenburg province (16.7 percent), Khanty-Mansi autonomous region (15 percent), Ulyanovsk province (13 percent), Chelyabinsk province (12 percent), Tyumen province (10.5 percent), and Kalmykiya (10 percent). It has been estimated that by the year 2030, with the declined of the birthrate among the predominant Russian Orthodox ethnic Russian, the population of the Muslim will reach 30 million or it can go higher, and in which it became a big concern for the Russian, especially for the predominant Russian Orthodox Church (Hunter 2004). Russian has been hostile in their approach towards the Muslim, and with all the terrorist activities that has taken place in Russia and other parts of the world it triggers the feeling of fear and worrisome for the Russian in realizing the growth of Muslims population. The following table 3.1 shows the ethnic Muslim composition in Russia



Table 3.1

The ethnic Muslim population of Russia.

Ethnic group	Total number	Share of the overall population of Russia, percent	Share of the overall population of the region where this group Is a 'titular nationality', percent
Tatars	5,554,601	3.83	36.01
Bashkirs	1,673,389	1.15	72.98
Chechens	1,360,253	0.94	75.84
Avars	814,473	0.56	93.12
Kazakhs	653,962	0.45	N/a
Azerbaijani	621,840	0.43	N/a
Kabardinians	519,958	0.36	95.91
Dargins	510,156	0.35	83.41
Kumyks	422,409	0.29	86.60
Ingush	413,016	0.28	87.42
Lezghins	411,535	0.28	81.82
Karachai	192,182	0.13	88.04
Laks	156,545	0.11	89.26

Ethnic group	Total number	Share of the overall population of Russia, percent	Share of the overall population of the region where this group is a 'titular nationality', percent
Tabasarans	131,785	0.09	83.58
Adygei	128,528	0.09	84.12
Uzbeks	122,916	0.08	N/a
Tajiks	120,136	0.08	N/a
Balkarians	108,426	0.07	96.80
Turks	92,415	0.06	N/a
Nogai	90,666	0.06	42.10
Cirkassians	60,517	0.04	81.95
Abazins	37,942	0.03	N/a
Turkmen	33,053	0.02	N/a
Kirghiz	31,808	0.02	N/a
Rutuls	29,929	0.02	81.19
Aguls	28,297	0.02	82.39
Kurds	19,607	0.01	N/a

Ethnic group	Total number	Share of the overall population of Russia, percent	Share of the overall population of the region where this group is a 'titular nationality', percent
Abkhazians	11,366	0.01	N/a
Arabs	10,630	0.01	N/a
Tsakhurs	10,366	0.01	78.80
Afghans	9800	0.01	N/a
Others	26,789	0.02	N/a

Source: calculated by the author from the official 2002 census data, <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=17>, accessed in January through 7 December 2011.

The communist revolution of 1917 brought a sea of changes in the whole spheres of Russian society. The revolution of 1917 expelled every religion, were prosecuted and in which the state vehemently proclaimed it as an atheistic-religion. Religion was strictly banned and prohibited from the public life and it was relegated to private life. The main antireligious policy of the Soviet in the mid 1920s was targeted towards the predominant Russian Orthodox so that they can dethrone the Russian monarchy, and other religions were relatively tolerated (Krindatch, 2007). According the Balzer (2010), even during the harsh rule of the Soviet and its antireligious policies, the Russian Orthodox has been the place to find solace and spiritual purpose for the Russian, where it set up strong bonds between the priest and believers and it helps to maintain a strong religious life during the Soviet regime. During the Second World

War, the treatment of the state towards the Russian Orthodox changed. Stalin, under his direct patronage called upon the council of bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church to symbolize and legalize the institutional structure of the Russian Orthodox Church.

By allowing the religious institutions and giving them autonomy, Stalin was enabled to regulate and control the religious institutions. The council for religious affairs was not only controlled, but in many cases the internal affairs of various religious organizations were administered and religious leaders were also appointed by the state and religious organization has to get registered from the council for Religious affairs. But after the post-war, the state opened for the Russian Orthodox Church to be integrated into the structures of the state. Religion in Soviet Union from 1917 to 1985 was accompanied by oppression and prosecution of religious institutions. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 there has been a great impact and it propelled a huge political and economic upheaval in the Russian Federation. With this sudden disintegration which had unfolded waves of changes in Russian socioeconomic and political structures has led to a new course which had a great impact on the various ethnic and religious groups living in Russia Federation.

Gorbachev's liberal reform, Perestroika was accompanied by giving more freedom to religion, where religion was granted once again to come to the public domain. His perestroika not only gave freedom to all religion, but it radically changed the status of the Russian Orthodox and its relation with the state, and the state approaches towards religion really favored the Russian Orthodox. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the policies of the state and its approaches changed. The predominant Russian Orthodox Church became an important part of the state, where the state granted the privileged status, and became an integral part of the state. Muslim became the largest religious minorities and along with other religious minorities, the treatment of the state towards them were shaped and modelled based on the Orthodox-state engagement, but most of the time the main priority is being given to the Russian Orthodox (Braginskaia, 2012). However, the state is interested in building a mutual relationship between the Muslim-Christian and to sort it out the gaps with impeccable

dialogues. The revival of Islamic tradition and also the formation of the new Muslims governance were thus accompanied by an asymmetrical shaping of the Muslim space and were required to bring an improvement in state-Muslims relations.

The state engagement and concern with the Muslim is that with their different geographical location their customs and traditions vary. As pointed out by Malashenko and Nuritvo (2009), the Muslim population in the Russian Federation is not a homogenous society but rather it is multiethnic and multicultural society. There are significant differences between Muslim communities in the Volga region and the Muslim communities in the North Caucasus. The most culturally assimilated Islamic community with the Russian Federation is the Tatar Muslims. They are considered to be more accommodating, reformist sect of Islam that has been developed in Tatarstan and has been exposed to political integration through coerced conversion into Christianity and Sovietization during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Whereas on the other hand the Muslim on the North Caucasus is considered as its primary security concern from the days of its colonial expansion, its rebellious movement against the state and the Chechen war which the Russian state had waged war and till date it has not brought any decisive and amicable solution.

As the Muslims were seen through the prism of hostility by the Russian, the Muslims remained subordinate religion to the Russian Orthodox which really undermines the role that they had contributed in shaping and retaining the culture of Russia along with the Russian Orthodox. The Soviet Union or the new post-Soviet Russia has never been a nation-state or a homogenous society. The national identity of new Russia cannot be based upon one religion, culture, and ethnic of one community as new Russia is a modern state and it has its own trends of plurality as a non-nation state. In contemporary world, any modern states adopt and adheres the views and ideas of liberalist, where the main energy and creativity for development and to become a progressive society banks on the prevailing differences in the society not on a particular ethnic values and principles.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, and with the creation of new Russia the question of national identity or Russian identity became difficult to formulate. Russia began to change the nature of its identity based on one culture or the idea of Russification which has been adopted during the Soviet rule during its expansion experimented in converting and imposing the sociocultural and religious values on Central Asia and other Muslim dominated regions. The Muslims were assimilated into the tradition and culture of the Russian society. The Russian considered and justified their annexation of Central Asia by substantiating that people in Central Asia are backward and they not fit into the modern world (Wheeler 1955). It was also pointed out by Prazauskas (2007) and Vassiliev-Glinski (2001) that the Muslims were illiterate, backward and were not aware of the importance of strong political state, and they were rigid in their thoughts and strictly abide by the dogmatic rules and doctrines of Islam.

The assertion of Russian culture and ethics values upon the Muslims in Central Asia had begun during the Soviet rule during its territorial expansion of Soviet's empire. The Muslims were made to depart from their own history, culture and its customs by the Russian by imparting the educational system and teaching the Russian language and history. The main intention of the Russian in imparting their educational system, asserting their values and culture upon the Muslims in Central Asia was to thwart the Muslims in gaining the idea of political consciousness or become more vibrant in claiming their rights. At the same time imparting Soviet cultures values will not stop them in conceiving the idea of retaliating back against the Russian by organizing nationalist and separatist movement. And they would accept the rules and administration of the Russian by adopting and adhering the terms and conditions set by the Russian.

With the rules of the Soviet, the Muslims had been tried by the Soviet to lose the consciousness of their identity by asserting their culture upon them and at the same time they were assimilated into the mainstream of the Russian society. The Muslims in new Russia are becoming more concerned about their identity. As mentioned the Muslims in Russian Federation are not a homogenous society where they differ themselves in many ways. The main factor which connects and inspire among the

Muslims in Russia to come together and to gain the feeling of nationalism or separatist movement is through their religion or being all Islam irrespective of how they sincerely they practice and confess it. The dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991 unleashed many unprecedented issues mainly emanating from the minorities in Russia on the grounds of their deprived rights, identity and their resentment against the government for the unpaid heed or completely ignoring the demands made by the minorities in Russian Federation. The new Russian government tends to recognize a new form of national identity based on religion, where the authenticity of an ideal national identity is being proclaimed to the followers of the predominant Russian Orthodox.

The discourse of national identity in Russia usually tends to take the shape of in the context of cultural debate, in which it uses a wide knowledge of history and the importance of geopolitical arguments as the main importance of national identity. This recognition of national identity and its discourse were discontinued by the Bolsheviks in the early 1920s, and during the Bolsheviks regime the main factor to be recognized as a national identity was to follow Russian communism. The fate of the Muslims identity began to show some improvement with Gorbachev's liberal policies, where there was resurgence of religion in public domain and freedom of religion to be followed by its citizen. Also with this liberal policies the Muslim began to gain the consciousness of their roots, cultural, religion and at the same time the feeling of nationalism and to secede it away from the Russian state, if at all necessary. The liberal policies of Gorbachev was short-lived as it was discontinued with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the identity of Muslims began to be deteriorated and it became more apparent when the state began to used religion as an agent to legitimize in capturing power.

Russia needs to discuss the main component which constitutes the Russian identity or how does national identity is different from other forms of identity. According to Benedict Anderson's (1991) "imagine communities" nation is a cultural-psychological, although it has strong economic motivations. In Anderson's view, the emergence of nations and nationalism is closely related to two modern phenomena and that is the erosion of religion in modern societies, which provided at least partial

answers to the problem of morality, and the development of the print capitalism. The erosion of religion makes it easier to find alternative modes of association and affiliation that helps to overcome the question of morality. And the development of print capitalism paved the way for communication for revolution which makes it possible and easier in associating and affiliations.

During the rule of the Soviet and its territorial expansion of its empire towards Central Asia, the Soviets were also invaded by the Mongols and Arabs, the seeds of hostility was sown by invading upon one another. This invasion upon one another creates the feeling oneness and atrocities towards the conqueror, and eventually the feeling of nationalism will be apparent. These feeling of hostility by Russian towards the Muslim have been started since when Soviets were invaded by the Muslims and then until the Bolsheviks revolution the sense of Russian identity was identified based on religion, and that is the Orthodoxy Christianity. The question of Russian national idea is not conceivable without religion, as inclusion of religion certainly dominates in any execution of policies and in which the society of Russia cannot be straighten with a civilizational consensus, where the inclusions of religion, Russian Orthodox Church became inevitable in asserting the national idea of Russia as inclusion of Orthodox Christianity legitimize the change of institutions and power (Agadjanian, 2001).

The North Caucasus has been considered the main concern for the Russian state as its primary security concern, from the days of its colonial expansion and the rebellions of Mansur and Shamil to the Chechen wars for independence and current instability in Ingushetia and Dagestan. The Chechen Conflict and notably the terrorist attacks within Russia enhance more to develop a single religious society. The terrorist attack in the Russia heartland further increased the hostility towards the Muslims which became a great concern for the Russia's security and identity.

The incidence of terrorism began to increase incessantly from the outset of the first Chechen War and it gained more momentum in its terrorist attack during the leadership of Putin. As the poor social conditions in the North Caucasus region has



contributed to the rise of radicalization of Islam, influenced by radical Islamic organization from abroad has significantly led to rise of radical Islam in Chechnya. All these mentioned factors had contributed to the terrorist activities of Muslims in Russia. All these activities of terrorists had a nexus with international Islamist groups. The Orthodox Church strongly condemns and denounces the activities of terrorist and it has generally supported and endorsed the state execution in its policy towards the terrorism and its policies in dealing with the integrity and sovereignty of Russian Federation.

According to Putin, the idea of nationalism in Russia is to have the feeling of great patriotism, and he believes that Russia will remain great in power. He believes in the idea of strong leadership, ensuring the well-being of its citizen with the idea of new thoughts and with the advancement of sophisticated technologies the country will retain the status of great power and progressive nations. He also stresses the importance of military strength. The dangerous implication of a Muslim backlash for Russia's security and integrity become very conspicuous at early 1991-92. The issue of secession of Chechnya from Russian Federation and the refusal of Tatarstan to sign the Federation treaty and also the first Chechen war of 1994-96 flares the hostility towards the Muslims. The actions of the Muslims were further reiterated by the Russian state to transform Russia into a Russian Orthodox Christianity state and also it attached the national identity of Russia (Glinski-Vassiliev, 2001). The real test of his military strength was shown when the horrors of Beslan tragedy occurred, where Putin reiterated his administration to become more vigilant and to be more determined to stay its course (Warhola and Lening, 2007).

Putin was determined to stamp out Islamic militancy in the North Caucasus and other terrorism associated with it. It can be said that Putin who has been endorsing the idea of great thought for the welfare of its citizen does not differ much from his predecessors on his political stance on Islam despite the fact that Islam has been one of the Russia's traditional religions and has a place in the society, and that there has been a peaceful co-existence with the Russian Orthodox for centuries in Russia.

The treatment of the Kremlin towards the Russia's Muslim minority has been treated with a particular interest and their approach towards the Muslim has been ranged from neglect to suspicions and outright hostility. Like any other leaders of the Soviet Union or new Russia, the treatment and approaches towards the Muslims has been less different. The idea of Russian national or Russianness has always been entrenched deeply on one religion, which they believed that Russian Orthodox has been the traditional religion which it has shaped the statehood and retain the history of Russia. Leader like Boris Yeltsin was eager to get rid of the Muslims republics. Even under the rule of Peter the great, his intention was to homogenize the Russian society. While making the Russian ethnicity the basis for state-building was politically and personally incorrect and unacceptable for the elite-ruling class, but it was agreed to choose on the basis of religion and Orthodox Christian was considered to be the best in building the state or nationhood. Other religions were considered as minorities or subordinate to Orthodox Christianity irrespective and undermining of their histories, population and contributions to Russian history.

As the state acknowledges and had given the privileged status to the Russian Orthodox Church or as the follower of only Orthodox Christian as the prerequisite to be called a the national identity, the Muslims were relegated to the largest religious minorities in Russia. The population of the Muslims before the disintegration of the Soviet Union was much larger than the Muslims population in the new Russia. Muslims are much more numerous than any other ethnic or religious minorities in Russia as the Muslims were a part of the indigenous population and have inherited the institutional arrangement of the Soviet era.

However, as the radical Islam and its terrorist activities unleashed in Russia, the concern for the security and integrity system of Russia were heightened. These terrorist activities of the Muslims in early 1991-92 and the agitation of the Chechens to secede it away from Russian Federation contributed to fuel up the anti-Muslims feeling among the Russia. Therefore the Muslims were alienated or considered as the

negative element in the Society and the feelings of distancing them away from the mainstream of the Russian society was apparently felt. Russia witnessed the worst tragedies in its history in 2004, when the terrorist sieged the school in Beslan killing roughly 340 people and injuring hundreds. The activities of terrorist again stormed the metro station in Moscow, thus in two weeks of August-September 2004 more than 400 civilians were killed (Gidadhubli, 2004). With all these attacks of the terrorist in Russia, Putin viewed extremist Islam which has its connection from abroad considered as an existential threat to Russia and says that a war had been declared by the extremist Islam on Russia which can jeopardize the integrity and sovereignty of Russia, and thus he sees no strong affinity between Islam and Orthodox Christianity.

Ever since the Muslim invaded Russia, the feeling of hatred and hostility towards the Muslims has been developed. The retaliating act of the Russian by invading the Kazan Khanate in 1552, the fate of Muslim drastically changed and they were subjected to the discrimination, oppression and prosecution by the Soviet. They were assimilated and the culture of the Russian society was asserted and imposed upon them. Since then the Muslims rights and identity began to lose its authenticity and essentiality. Till date in modern contemporary Russia, the Muslims in Russia have not been able to be freed from their identity crisis. The identity crisis of the Muslim in Russia is related to the set of relationship with the Russian state and society and on the other hand as the Muslims communities is not a homogenous society and therefore different Muslims minority community has to be dealt differently who are deeply entrenched on the issues on nationalism, separate statehood, like, to secede it away from the Russian Federation, Chechnya case (Hunter, 2004). The crisis of Muslims identity in Russian Federation is not only because of the failure of the state, where the state has discriminated and prosecuted the Muslims. The diversity within the Muslim communities became a big hurdle and issues for the identity of the Muslims.

The problems that the Muslims in Russia are facing related to their identity issue is not only with the relation with the Russian state and the society, but within the Muslim community itself as there is a big stratification on the basis of their religious rituals, practices and their lack of organizational unity. The prevailing disunity within

the Muslim community, instead of forming one united Muslim community they began to have their own set of interest and principles. Their relations eventually differ with the state, and it was made obvious with the outcome of the Chechen war. The disunity within the Muslims only embraces the feeling of hatred, hostility, and discrimination from the state, where the state began to ignore the demands of the Muslims and they are left neglected. It is true to say that injustice and violence can transform any organization or community into an extremist (Warhola and Lehning, 2007). With the outbreak of the Chechen war the state tends to see Muslims with the gesture of suspect and hostility, and some politician began to play the cards of gaining their vote without taking much painstaking into their real grievances and resentments.

The Russian state tends to see Muslims as the ‘Other’, where Anna Triadafyllidou says “significant others are other nations or states that influence the development of an in-group’s identity by means of their threatening presence” (Teper and Course, 2014). These terrorist activities of the Muslim become a threat for the Russian state and the society, and they began to develop a feeling of nationalism much stronger and attached the idea of national identity only on citizens who follows Orthodox Christianity and considered the Muslim as a threat. In most cases the Muslims do not want to separate from the Russian state, but the tension within the Muslim societies, between the ethnic and religious pole, and the dichotomy that had emerged among Russia’s Muslims, between Islam and an ethnocentric and largely pre-Islamic concept of identity has created a juncture where their identity is at great risk.

## **Social and Economic Issues of Muslims in Russia**

The conquest of the Central Asia and other parts of Muslims dominated region was an important step for the Russian as it enhances the geopolitics, economy and political power. With the conquest of Kazan Khanate in 1552, the Russian began to establish their dominancy over Central Asia and Muslim dominated region. The conquest made by the Russian not only dominated these regions but it was attached with more than

their dominancy and controlling the rein of socioeconomic and political power. The Russian set up their empire and began to assert their social culture values upon them. Concisely, it can be said that the culture, customs and other social values of the Muslims were distorted by the Russian as the Muslims were considered backward, primitive and their rigid Islam doctrines were required to be modernized by the Russian. Thus the Russian considered the Muslims need to be civilized as their social and cultural values were not compatible into the so called 'modern world'.

The historic events and conflict between the Muslims and Russian unfolded the hostility feeling which transcends time and space and it still prevails in contemporary post-Soviet Russia. The whole Central Asia came into the dominance and control of the Russian empire in 1884-85. As the Russian began to expand and extend its empire the nature of their rule and control took the shape of a colonial rule. Historically, as mentioned no historians has been able to determine the precise place and time about the appearance of Islam in Russia, but it is considered as old as the Russian Orthodox Church and has given its vital role in shaping and retaining the important culture and other values of Russian society. As Islam has been there time immemorial, some legends and historians had said that Islam had appeared and expanded in Russia before Orthodox Christianity and once it was declared as the official or state religion of the Volga Bulgarians. But, the proclamation of Islam as the state religion could not be prolonged for long as the Grand Duke of Kiev Vladimir was against the rigidity of Islam..

Like in post-Soviet Russia, the inclination towards the Russian Orthodox had been shown during the time of Soviet rule. The national identity and feeling of nationalism had been built upon based on religion. Ivan IV the terrible was very much influenced by the Russian Orthodox that he prosecuted Islam and many mosques were destroyed and prohibited, and at the same time huge number of Muslims were forcefully converted. Russia Federation which is not a nation state but a multicultural society has its diverseness in religion, culture and ethnics, but it tends to give more importance to one religion, Russian Orthodox Church in which it can be said that it has become an integral part of the state. The Russian Orthodox has been given the highest priority,

the privileged status and Russian Political leaders are immensely influenced by the doctrines, principles and beliefs of the Russian Orthodox Church's priest and other Orthodox religious leaders. Muslim being the second largest religious minorities in Russia the resentment and their agitation in fighting for their rights to self-determination become an issue as their nature of demands and rights has to be clashed with the predominant Russian Orthodox and also the nature of relationship between them entered an unprecedented level.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, in contemporary Russia, the Orthodox Church has gained a tremendous power in the administration of the state, though according to the 1993 constitution it declared as a secular state, and 1997 law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" in its preamble the special contribution of the Russian Orthodox in Russian history has been acknowledged (Hunter, 2004). The feeling of nationalism, national identity or statehood was built upon on the basis of religion. It has been started during the rule of the Soviet in conquering and expanding its empire.

So the whole idea of nationalism emerged upon the presence of other religion which they considered as a threat in which it further enhanced the feeling of nationalism by embracing and inclined more towards one's religion doctrines and principle, and thus it was further reinforced by their action in conquering and converting them. The feeling of nationalism tends to be felt drastically or more intensely by the presence of Muslims, as historical events and legacies which has unfolded the enmity between Russian and Muslims and it is still apparent in contemporary modern Russia. The Muslims are considered to be a threat which can deteriorate and jeopardize the security, sovereignty and integrity of Russian state.

On the other hand the Muslims tend to feel discriminated and neglected by the state with all the programs and conduct of the state, as the relation of the state-religion is modeled and shaped according to the nature of the state-Russian Orthodox nature of relationship. This nature of relationship which replicates the exact relationship of

state-Russian Orthodox Church undermines and negates the idea and principles of secularism and equality in any modern society where the state cannot favor or cannot be inclined towards one particular religion. Post-Soviet Russia began to run the nature of relationship between the state and religion in favor of and in consultation with the Russian Orthodox Church despite of the fact of its other religious minorities. The nature of the relationship between the state and Orthodox raised the questions and principle of secularism, in which the working principles of Russian state has distorted the central idea of Secularism by giving more priorities and other religious minorities were relegated to a subordinated religion.

Among all other religious minorities, the policies of the state on religion which negates the idea of justice and equality had a great negative impact on Muslims. Though Muslims in Russia are a heterogeneous society the impact is all on them as they are united only by Islam and its teaching. Muslim is an antique religion but all its important contribution has been undermined and has become religious minorities along with other small religious minorities in Russia by the Russian state.

Muslims and other religious minorities in Russia felt the discriminating policies of the state and began to feel agitated and ready to go against the state. Leaders during the rule of the Soviet or modern Russia was not much different in their approaches towards Muslims in Russia. Most of the leaders in Russia had the preconceived notion that Muslims were an impediment in any progressive reforms and their gestures and approaches towards Muslims were based on conditions. State actors tend to see their presence as a defiance to any policies of the state as they are deeply entrenched in their rigid doctrines and principles of Islam, and become a great concern as they are ready to take any extremes steps in order as a measure in retaliating and resentment against the state.

The increasing population of Muslims in Russia became a great concern for the Russian state as the birthrate of the Orthodox has been declining and it has been estimated that by 2030, the population of the Muslims can go upto 30 million (Hunter

2004). Also the immigrant of Muslims into the capital mainly from the Central Asia and as the Muslims are diverse in their cultural practices, religious beliefs and traditions, and the state has to engage them based on their geographical location. It became a concern for the state as the Muslim immigrant into the capital are associated with the issues of minority and to whom they are to be associated (Braginskaia, 2012). Moreover on the issues of immigrants Medvedev and Putin acknowledged some of the reproaches against the immigrants on non-compliance with Russian laws and customs. Putin reiterated by suggesting to tighten the immigration policies further (Teper and Course 2014).

The main concern for the Russian state is their security reasons as terrorist activities are on the rise globally. With the anti-Islam policies of the state, the Muslims began to feel the consciousness of Islam more and they tend to become very supportive for the Islamic religious movement. As the activities of terrorist began to expand far and wide in all parts of the world and with the discriminated policies of the state Muslims drew closer to the doctrines of Islam or Islamic Militants the state was put into the state of dilemma and become a great concern for the state.

Eventually, the process of Islamization began to take its course by involving more people endorsing and embracing the Islamic doctrine and beliefs in Russia. The retaliating act of the Muslims was apparent with the Islamic nationalist movement in Chechnya where Chechens refused to be a part of the Russian Federation which was followed by the first Chechen War in 1994-96. Since the colonial period and its expansion Chechnya was a great concern for the Russian as the Islamic nationalist and rebellious movement has been vibrant.

The colonial rule of the Russian not only gained their hegemony over Muslims but at the same time it also paved the way for the Russian Orthodox to become the most privileged religion in Russia. With the 1997 law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations” and its preamble only recognizing the history of the Russian Orthodox, the state accommodates the Church as the integral part of the state. It also



began to play the role of advisor of the state, in which the actor of the state hails them and at the same time a place to seek for their spiritual growth. For the Muslims all these close relationship between the state and Orthodox became an impediment for their right to self-determination. The engagements of the state towards the Muslims are based on their geographical location as within Muslims there are diversities in different aspects. Broadly the Muslims in Russia are divided into two, the Volga region and those in the North Caucasus where they are diverse in many respects. As the Russian state follows highly centralized policies, all Muslims are dealt directly from the central authorities in Moscow either directly or indirectly (Warhola and Lehning, 2007). Among the Muslims society the most accommodating and progressive society in Russian Federation is in Tatarstan. Muslims in Tatarstan were exposed to the political integration of the Russian, and though there was a nationalist movement in Tatarstan, Muslims in Tatar region adhered and abided to the law of the state and were opened for bringing changes in their society (Braginskaia, 2012).

As the Russian state engagement with the Muslim society is based on their geographical location and their political culture, the main concern for the Russian state in engaging with the Muslims communities is in the North Caucasus. Muslims in the North Caucasus unlike in Tatarstan are rebellious, defiance to the policies of the state and presence of strong Islamic nationalist movement which become a great threat to the security and sovereignty of the Russian state. The gigantic geography of Russia magnified the differences of any religion or society residing in different parts of Russian Federation. Muslims in Russian Federation live in diverse ethnic groups, but their diverseness is unified on the basis of religion and their Islamic identity and thus the politics of identity has come to the fore.

The idea of national identity in Russia, as a multicultural society becomes critical as the main factor for one to be identified is strongly entrenched with religion which is an impediment for the society to be developed (Warhola and Lehning, 2007). As religion has come into play for identifying, the concept of identity is strongly attached to religion, where the Muslims being the religious minority in Russian Federation where their identity and their social status is at stake as the predominant Russian

Orthodox Church has the edge over all other religions as the Orthodox are backed by the state in various policies. Also the presence of Muslims society in Russian Federation enhances the feeling of nationalism among the Russian as the Muslims are considered as the anti-social element where they are not accommodated in forming any important national program and policies.

According to Anna Traindafyllidou (1998), “in examining a national identity, one has to ask not only to which extent it is a form of inward-looking self-consciousness of a given community, but also to ascertain the extent to which the self-conception of the nation in its unity, autonomy and uniqueness is conditioned from outside, namely through defining who is not a national and through differentiating the in-group from others”. Thus the Muslims are considered as the ‘others’ as their presence are being felt as a threat by the Russian, where there is no certainty whether they are the real threat or not but they are perceived as a threat which became an important tool for building the national identity. Muslims are portrayed and defined by the Russian as alien or not a Russian nationality in which their presence enhances and embolden the feeling of nationalism, and considered as the ‘others’ which became an important factor in the formation and transforming the idea of national identity in the post-Soviet Russia.

Central Asia was conquered by the Soviet with the intention to exploit its natural resources and the geopolitics of Central Asia triggers the Soviet to conquer it as has a close proximity with Middle East and South Asia which the West had a great interest in it. The main objectives of Soviet policy on Central Asia was to expend its territory for their natural resources. It is located far away from the West and geographically it is not separated from the Soviet (Wheeler 1955). The Soviet reign of Central Asia began to enhance their economic power tremendously, as then the Muslim in Central Asia were less developed, illiterate and politically weak, thus they could not foresee the impact of Soviet’s rule. As a result Soviet’s rule drained out their wealth and they were controlled. Soviet established their complete dominancy over Central Asia by exploiting their resources and administering them.

The historical events of controlling the Muslims socially, economically and politically is still apparent in modern Russia. It has been said that the poor socioeconomic conditions in the Caucasus region which has been neglected by the state can be considered as one of the reasons for the rise of radical Islam in Russia. As the state did not pay any heed to the resentment and agitation for their poor economic conditions and as an alternative to the state the Muslims seek help and financial aid from other Muslim countries further fueled the Islamic movement and at the same time it deteriorated their relationship with the Russian state further.

The North Caucasian Republics suffer from acute poor socio-economic condition at an alarming level. The poor socioeconomic condition of North Caucasus region is the poorest in Russian Federation. The unemployed population is at an alarming level, infant mortality rate is very high and most of them are illiterate. Per capita income of this region is only two third of the national average. Ingushetia is the poorest and most backward region in Russian Federation (Gidadhubli 2004). Historically, Muslims population in Russian Federation have been fighting for a greater autonomy, self-determination, cultural and religious freedom instead of being integrated or assimilated into the Russian culture and society (Hunter 2004, Yemelianova 2002).

The following table 3.2 shows the poor monthly averages of selected Muslim concentrated areas in Russia, where there is a huge difference with the average monthly salary of Russia federation.

Table 3.2: Monthly salary Averages for Selected Muslim-Populated regions of the Russian Federation (as of November 2001)

Rubles	As a percentage of	
	November 2000	October 2001
Russian Federations	3578.2	143.3
101.8		
Southern Federal District	2381.4	142.4
100.9		
Republic of Adygea	2065.6	143.0
104.4		
Republic of Dagestan	1313.3	140.5
106.7		
Republic of Ingushetia	2431.3	150.5
97.3		
Republic of Kabardina-Balkaria	1718.3	134.5
101.7		
Republic of Kalmykia	1975.1	138.8
110		
Republic of Karachaevo-Chaerkessia	1728.8	129.5
102.1		
Republic of North Ossetia-Alania	1938.0	137.5
104.5		
Republic of Chechnya	N/A	N/A
N/A		
Krasnodar	2806.3	145.4
100.3		

Stavropol Krai 101.7	2249.5	136.6
Astrakhan Oblast 94.6	2723.5	125
Volgograd Oblast 101.1	2636.9	141.1
Rostov Oblast 101	2340.3	148.6
Volga Federal District 99.9	2768.3	138.3
Republic of Bashkortostan 99.7	3134.2	140.5
Republic of Tatarstan 98.3	3080.5	134.8
Orenburg Oblast 99.5	2559.4	124.2
Samara Oblast 100	3385.1	139.8
Saratov Oblast 101.3	2089.5	137.4

*Source:* Adapted from Sostial'no-Ekonomicheskoe Polozhenie Rossii 2001 god (socioeconomic situation in Russia in 2001) Moscow : state Committee of Russian Federation on Statistics(Goskomstat), (2001), pp. 196-97

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 the birth of new Russia was in a state of transition, where the relation of State-Muslims communities was not decisive and amicable for any society or religious minority to become progressive. As Russia was in transition period the nature of state-Muslims relation was not conducive and the policies which the Russian state executed was not for bringing religious minorities to the fore, also the policies did not adhere to the principles of secularism, but the Russian state policies was to control and regulate the Muslims communities so that it will not revolt against the state and will abide to the constitution of Russian Federations.

Moreover, during the period of Putin and Medvedev the state like the Soviet period followed semi-authoritarian principle of distribution of power. During Putin-Medvedev period, their approaches toward Muslims were made on the basis of integrating the Muslim communities into the framework of the political structure and framework. In one way their highly centralized policies have been successful in distributing the economic resources in Russian Federations for a particular period but, as it was highly centralized it became an impediment for other religious communities to be developed and to promote and control their own religious affairs and institutions freely as the state was highly centralized and become more authoritarian in administrating and executing its policies. Also the 'managed pluralism' of Putin administration in identifying the role of religion as a national identity, and the enhanced status of the Russian Orthodox Church has made the management and administration of the state more authoritarian (Warhola and Lehning, 2007). The democratic reforms of Putin which adopted the principle of liberalization unleashed untoward economic crises, stagnation of society, religious freedoms were limited and the whole institution of the state were corrupt and inefficient. The remedy which Putin endorsed to all these shortcoming were to more centralized of the state and controlling and regulating in the activities of an individual.

With all these highly centralized policies of the state it gave immense power to the state by regulating and asserting the power of the state upon the Muslim communities. All these highly centralized policies of the state can be transformed into positive

forces by coordinating it better with the Muslims, more financial resources and support for the Muslim communities, as Muslim communities are not represented and the relation of state-Muslims is based on vertical model of state-society relations (Braginskaia 2012). In Russian Federation, the approach of the state towards the Muslim communities are not uniform but based on their scattered population and their geographical location. It is important to mention that as the Russian state treats Muslim differently, the Muslims of Tatar and Bashkirs are treated and considered as “Russia’s traditional Muslim population and they are not considered as the excluded Muslim ‘other’ where they are assumed as a threat to the sovereignty and integrity of the state (Teper and Course 2014).

The Muslims are being less represented and within Muslim communities their prevailing diversities become an impediment forces to unite among them. Also, the reasons for the Muslim to be less represented is that Muslim leaders are less educated, their population is scattered over wide area, divided by their ethnic allegiance and the rivalry among them to control the flow of funds from the Gulf states for different purposes heightened the animosity and disunity among the Muslim leaders (Prazauskas 2007). All these diversities and disunity among the Russian Muslims are being acknowledged by the state in which the state tends to ignore and began to neglect the Muslim communities socially, politically and economically. The state tends to take advantage and changed their approaches by tolerating all the activities of Islam, it further feigned to promote their religious institution by giving financial aid to one section of the Muslim communities and ignoring the others. The main intention of the state was to fix the Muslim communities into the political framework of the state by granting financial aid to act as a means for repressive measures towards any nationalist or Islamist militants.

In Russia’s republic the population of the Muslims is small except in Chechnya they responded to the policies of Kremlin for its political surveillance, financial neglect and culturally excluding it from the main domain of Russian society. All these resentments of the Muslim could not be represented and voice it at the federal level as they are less represented or does not have any voice at all due to the majority of non-

Muslim representatives and the prejudice that they had against the Muslim. All these became an impediment for the Muslim communities to be ignored by the state by giving out meager amount of financial aid from the government and they were the first to be affected when there was a financial crisis in Russia (Glinski-Vassiliev 2001). Thus Putin administration which is highly authoritarian, which gave immense power to the state began to dictate and control the religious activities in which the Muslim were affected the most.

The main concern for the Russian security and integrity became apparent with the war with Chechnya in 1991-92, when Chechen tried to secede from Russia and Tatarstan refused to sign the treaty. Also this hostility against the Muslims made Russia to consider Russian Orthodox as the facilitating religion of the State (Glinski-Vassiliev 2001). Russia thus gave the privileged status to the Russian Orthodox Church and began to ignore, condemn and neglect the Muslims community in different social aspects. Economically, on comparison to the other religions in Russia Muslims in Russian Federation are less privileged people. Muslim populations in Russian Federation are more backward in almost every respect. The backwardness of Muslim in Russia can be dated back to the rule of the Soviet and its management where their rich petroleum and mineral resources were controlled and tuned by the Soviet and where most of the Muslims were employed as manual laborers.

The poverty rate in the North Caucasus is much lower than the average of Russia and the level of income is lower than the half of Russia (Kosikov and Kosikova, 1999). The percentage of population living under the poverty line is highest in Ingushetia, followed by Dagestan and Karachaevo-Cherkessia. The economic disaster in this region has been contributed by the rule of the Soviet in which the economic disparity began to become bigger, the discriminated policies of the state, and the effects of the Chechen war has made the socioeconomic development stagnant. Among the republics of Russia, comparatively Tatarstan and Bashkortostan have better average income as they are geographically located in a better area of Volga-Ural region and they have been exposed to rich mineral resources, where Soviet had developed many industrial projects for many decades. The most affected region in Russian Federation



is the North Caucasus region due to the separatist movement to secede away from Russia. The acute poverty in this region is region is due to the socioeconomic, political problem and also geopolitics which had contributed to the mass unemployment and poverty (Sanaeva 1999). Table 3.3 shows the acute poverty level of North Caucasus of five years.

Table 3.3: Poverty level in the North Caucasus (defined as the percentage of the population with income below the minimum level)

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<i>Republic</i>					
Adygea	46.3	46.4	56.7	42.0	45.7
Dagestan	–	71.2	64.7	53.8	57.5
Ingushetia	--	--	--	--	76.0
Kabardino-Balkaria	36.7	42.5	40.7	40.5	44.5
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	28.3	45.7	55.3	40.3	52.0
North Ossetia-Alania	33.1	42.8	38.5	34.2	33.8
Chechnya	--	--	--	--	--
Krasnodar Krai	23.7	32.4	25.1	25.0	32.0
Stavropol Krai	36.5	39.6	30.3	34.8	40.0

Rostov Oblast	31.0	33.4	21.2	19.8	33.0
Russian Federation	22.4	24.7	22.1	20.8	21.0

*Source: Adapted from I.G. Kosikov and L.G. Kosikova, Severny Kavkaz: Sotsial'no-Ekonomicheskii Spravochnik (The Northern Causus: A socioeconomic guide) (Moscow: Mikron-Print, 1999), p. 36.*

After the separation of the Muslims republics of the former Soviet Union, Muslim communities have become a substantial minority in the Russian Federation. It can be said that in post-Soviet Russia, Muslims enjoy more religious freedom than during the rule of the Soviet. Historically, Muslims in Russia were viewed with suspicion and Muslims continue to face this problem. The idea of the secession of Chechnya from Russia and the wars between Russia and Chechnya became a great concern for the security and sovereignty of Russia. Muslims and the influx of immigrants from Central Asia flares the anti-Muslims sentiments in Russia.

The feelings of anti-Muslims sentiments and the hostility between the state and Muslims impacted Russian state policies, in which Russian Orthodox religion was given the highest priority and considered as the religion of the state. Also Russian

state follows highly centralized policies to control and regulate the nationalist movement and any Islamic militant formation in Russian Federation. It has to be said that the state not only failed Muslims by ignoring or neglecting the Muslim communities, but within the Muslims communities there is no unity as they are widely scattered and there are differences among the Muslims leaders in their views and approaches.

Thus the prevailing disunity among the Muslims leaders and the discriminated policies of the state has made the Muslim communities the most backward community in Russia. Though Muslims have enjoyed more freedom of religion as compared to the Soviet's rule, they are yet to be recognized and accepted in Russia, as it is apparent from the fact that their identity, social and economic status are at great risk.

## Chapter 4

### Political Representation of Muslims in Russia

During the 4th and 5th centuries B.C. the first and the most celebrated form of democracy was in practice in the Athenian city-state of ancient Greece. The greatest pride that the Athenians had was for their ability to perform and to conduct all task of governance, that is in executing, implementing of rules and regulations. Citizens actively involved in discussions, disputes and in decisions making by the assembly to which all citizens belonged. One can occupy particular office through either election or draw of lots and no officer was allowed to occupy or enjoy perpetual tenure. The idea behind this short -term offices was to ensure that as many people would be able to occupy the same office. And the most important of this model was that it strongly ensured a high level of active participation in politics of state and harboring the thought for political accountability in every citizen. Citizenship entailed duties and active participation for the purpose of common good of the state

In contemporary period, when we talk of democracy, it is liberal democracy which is the dominant form of democracy. It was in the aftermath of the French and American Revolutions that popular democratic struggles emerged. The 19th and 20th centuries had witnessed by the escalating and resentment which was often violent struggles by the working class, African- American, and women demanding and agitating for their extension of suffrage on the very basis of the ideas which was based on individualism that had been invoked by the propertied male to win freedom from the dominant aristocracies and monarchies. These struggles eventually triggered and also let them realize the need of the potential notion of individualism, rights and equality. It should be acknowledged that it was only after the acceptance and implication of basic political rights and that is universal adult franchise that liberal democracy acquired its own course and current form (Bhargava and Acharya 2008: 113).

Thus, liberal democracy is a product of long history and it contains many strands. For early liberals, democracy was a protective measure to protect the rights and safeguard the interest of citizen from the arbitrary and oppressive rule of the state. From 16th century onwards, in the process of liberalism, emerging the context of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, a new class emerged. This newly emerged class bourgeoisie middle class intend to put limits and challenge the absolute power of the feudal aristocracies and the monarchs.

In a liberal democracy, decision making is an outcome of the aggregation of individual preferences or choices. In a protective model, these choices are aggregated over the choices of government personnel and not over the activities of the government. That is, it allows people to choose or reject a representative or political party through vote and electoral process but not to determine what policies the government should undertake. Therefore, the political thought contributed by liberalism was a radical notion of respects for a person and equality among human beings. Liberals defend their constraints on democratic on the basis of its decision making, as the liberals believed that certain values that deserve protection cannot be comprehended or understood by the values served by democracy and thus it should be defended on different ground (McGregor 1988: 334-346 ). Liberals make a distinction between the state and the civil society, the public and the individuals. The role of the government is to create and maintain a system of individual rights, the coercive power of the state is to ensure that every individual in their interaction with each other does not encroach on each other's right.

It is obvious that the age old conception of democracy has changed and it will continue to change. After the Second World War, Socialist countries emerged in Europe and Asia, which rejected liberal democratic pattern of political development. On top of this, most of the underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa have achieved independence in the circumstances which have led them to become one-party states. Though they have decisively rejected both, the ethos and actual

institutions of liberal democracy, yet these countries considered themselves to be democratic in their own unique way. It is obvious that in changed circumstances, the concept of democracy should not be equated with the western liberal political systems only. The non-liberal systems which prevail in the socialist countries and some third world countries have also genuine historical claim to the title of democracy.

### **Politics as an Instrument of Conflict-resolution**

The clash of interests of different large groups of society led to a political situation. Where groups are conscious of their particular interests, and are well or less organized for pursuing their interests. The claims and demands which are conflicting for the 'authoritative allocation of values' emanate from those 'interest groups' which require policy decisions. Political parties appeared on the scene with a view to formulate large policy proposal, accommodating the interests of their supporting groups according to their own ideologies. In every political process the end-product is supposed to be the resolution of the conflict from which the process has started. Where on this point, there is a divergence between Liberal and Marxist point of viewpoints. The Liberal view of politics holds that politics is an instrument of reconciliation of the conflicting interests in society. Whereas on the other hand, Marxist view of politics insists that in any given society, it is comprises of two classes and that are the 'haves' and the have-not. The interests of these two major classes clashed with one another in all existing societies which are irreconcilable, where the latter are exploited by the former for their own benefits, and that, so long as the society remains divided into classes, there is no possibility of conflict-resolution. Thus Marxists, advocate a classless society, which symbolize not only the end of the conflict but the end of politics itself.

Every political system possesses strengths and weaknesses. In any given political system of a state, irrespective of its size, strengths and weaknesses inevitably needs to undergo some important changes, which could be intentional and some imperceptibly, some from deliberate actions and in other case with great hesitation, some because of

development and progress and others because of its instability, some change at rapid speeds and some at a sluggish pace and at different times (Byrnes F.1984: 502-515).

## **Soviet Political System and its Legacy**

The Union of Socialist Soviet Republic, USSR or the Soviet Union, was one of the strongest, and leading power in the world. One of the simplest reason this eminence is the sheer size of the country. The Soviet Union in the 1980s and beyond had faced the requirements to introduce changes throughout Soviet society to resolve issues as critical as like Lenin faced in 1921 where every leaders rigorously discussed the policies they should adopt when first in power. Soviet experienced different phases of political transformation. The main architect of one-party polity in Soviet Political System was not Karl Marx or Friedrich Engels, but it was Lenin who was the main architect and the main source of all ideas about the structure, administrating and in executing the rules of a one-party polity. It was during the leadership of Lenin the Bolshevik overthrew the Tsarist regime in the Revolution of 1917. The Revolution of 1917 brought the consciousness of political activism in the history of Muslims in Russia and it rekindled the Muslim political leaders to make an effort in influencing the course of Russia's post-imperial development (Hunter 2004).

As it is inevitable for any given political system, irrespective of the size of a country, the types of government has to respond to the pressure and the need for changes. Also these changes should remain compatible according to need of the situation. Likewise, the whole Soviet political system radically changed during the regime of various leaders of Soviet. Under the leadership of V.I. Lenin who was the chief architecture of one party polity converted the Soviet Political system into an authoritarian one-party system, and later his successor, with the change of leadership, under Stalin, it was transformed to a personal dictatorship. Later it returned again to an authoritarian one party system under different Soviet leaders like N.S. Khrushchev, L.I. Brezhnev, Yu.V.Andropov and K.U. Chernenko. In the 1930s, it laid down or

enhanced a number of political structures and important socio-economic foundations when the Soviet followed the collectivization of the countryside and highly centralized form of economic planning and management.

The Soviet's highly centralized form of economic planning and management withstood against the test of time and other external factors. It was during the reign of Stalin that Soviet Union was making its progress and developing in different areas. But the step or speed of development which was gaining its momentum could not last long and slowly it was losing its pace of development with the demise of Stalin. The Political recruitment in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republic is a highly structured process. The established patterns of induction into the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and of selection into and also the advancement within the political elite (the nomenklatura officials) are difficult to break, except through the initiative and influenced from the leaders at the top. Where still, they are constrained and controlled by their predecessors' decisions, by the vast scale of the system of political careers, and by societal as well as bureaucratic inertia. Thus remarkable changes in recruitment and advancement are usually associated only with periods of leadership succession.

The outward manifestations of such changes include a slowdown in the growth rate of CPSU membership and a decline in the percentage of party recruits drawn from the Young Communist League (Komsomol), the junior affiliate of the party. This disruption is thought to be caused by the disturbance of patron-client links and by the new leader's purging of personnel associated with the previous administration.

Leader like Lenin who laid the main foundation and initiated all the required steps for the Soviet Political System, and the main characteristics of the Soviet political system initiated by Lenin was: the proscription of different factions in the party; the proscription of associational interest groups; freedom of speech and expression was not given; the limitation of the security police was few : a judiciary system at the behest of the dominating party and the practice of supporting the party leader in



appointing officials, executing or implementing different laws or to be more concise, to support him unconditionally (Hoffman 1984: 227-240).

The Soviet politics in the 1980s was a period of uncertainties and also at the same time a period for transition. It was in both domestic and international affairs that the ruling Soviet oligarchy faced stiff pressures and the need to overcome ample of problems that have been developing for years. And the undergoing change of leadership in the Soviet Union led to a structure crisis. Soviet Union was experiencing according to what political scientists referred to as a political succession. It was in fact the combination of the need to change policies, structures, and leaders at the same time which gives to contemporary Soviet politics its extraordinarily dynamic character. It was not the first time that Soviet Union had been in the grip of a political crisis resulting from the need to cope with major domestic and foreign problems while simultaneously selecting a new political leadership. In fact it was from the 1920s following the death of Lenin, and in the 1950s following the death of Stalin, the Soviet system was faced with comparable challenges. In these prior occasions the results in terms of new leaders and new policies took years to work themselves out. The Soviet political system in every generation has experienced struggle for succession accompanied by pressures for radical changes in domestic and foreign policy. The roots of this pattern are in the political system.

The other explanation for the recurring crises in the political succession lies in the fact that the Soviet political system lacked a constitutional procedure to govern the process of leadership change. Leadership, according to Lenin's view, very much required an understanding of the class antagonisms and power relationships within and among nations, as well as a passionate but pragmatic commitment to create a more harmonious and just social order in Russia and eventually throughout the world. Lenin sought to transform the Russian Marxist movement into a small, secretive, and hierarchically structured political party of full-time revolutionaries, with close ties to the workers and other dissatisfied elements of Russian society and eventually to the laboring classes of all nations. After a "bourgeois" revolution had ended Russia's feudal stage of development and a "socialist" revolution had ended its capitalist stage, a single party was to construct a socialist state and society in Russia and help to

establish a world socialist system. Without effective organization and propaganda, Lenin argued, the discontent of the masses would be dissipated in sporadic acts of violence or in a "trade union" mentality that strove only for incremental economic gains, rather than for the overthrow of the capitalist order.

Now in modern period when we talk of democracy it usually meant liberal democracy as it is the most dominant form of democracy and widely accepted by most nations. In a liberal democracy, decision making is an outcome of the aggregation of individual preferences or choices. It empowers and allows citizen or any section of a particular society and became the only channel to amplify their resentments, to choose or reject a representative or political party through vote and electoral process. Thus it has become an inevitable for any section of a society, especially for the minority group to join the mainstream or to be represented politically so that they are heard and their grievances can be addressed effectively. Wheeler (1955) says that the Muslims region or the Central Asia was considered by the Russian as backward, where they need to be colonized and they do not fit into the modern world. The Russian had considered themselves more superior than the Muslims on the basis of more civilized people and also in one way it had shaped and molded the formation of one's identity and nationalism.

The demarcation between the Muslims and Russian Orthodox started when Prince Vladimir rejected Islam. With the invasion of the Kievan Russia by the Mongols in the thirteenth century, it had far reaching consequences and from then Islam become strongly attached with the Mongols conquest. With the Mongols conquest, Islam was introduced and began to spread widely in Russia, in which the Russian began to have the negative perceptions about Islam in Russia and other neighboring Muslims countries. The rule of Mongol-Tatar had attributed the worst political and culture scenario of Russia, and it all contributed to the Russian to overcome the rule of the Mongol-Tatar rule and to adopt their own way (Harrison 1974). The seeds of hostility between the Russian and the Muslims were sown with the invasion of one another. Thus the Russians were agitated and were determined to overcome the rule of the

Mongols, as they see the Muslims rule as inefficient and feel that Russian should be liberated from the rule of the Mongols.

The Russian were determined to achieve their interest and the right to self-determination from the Muslims ruler, as they felt that the Muslim rulers had exploited and oppressed them. This was the main reason behind why the Muslims were mainly regarded as the main enemy and had always seen them through the prism of hostility. It has been estimated that by the year 2030, with the decline of the birthrate among the predominant Russian Orthodox ethnic Russian, the population of the Muslim will reach 30 million or it can go higher. It became a big concern for the Russian, especially for the predominant Russian Orthodox Church (Hunter, 2004). Russian has been hostile in their approach towards the Muslim, and with all the terrorist activities that has taken place in Russia and other parts of the world it triggered the feeling of fear and worrisome for the Russian in realizing the growth of Muslims population.

Also the hatred towards Muslims began to increase in modern Russia. Post- Soviet, Russia like any other modern state which is usually multicultural state or non-nation-state also has its own trends of minorities where their claims and demands clash with the majority or other minorities group. As the state could not accommodate all the claims and demands of different minorities equally or evenly, demands of one group had to be rejected or ignored, this uneven treatment triggers some group to go against and challenge the system and structure of the state. In some cases it threatens to secede it away from the state.

Russia being a multifaceted country, it faces the difficulties and challenges in accommodating the claims demanded by different minorities at the same time. It is not feasible at all in accommodating their needs perfectly by the state. With the increase of different terrorist attacks in different parts of the world, Muslims became synonymous with terrorist. Muslims being the second largest religious minority in Russia have become a victim and they are always seen and judged through the prism of terrorist and suspicious elements of the society by the citizens and the state. It is a

well-known fact that in the history of Russia Islam also played an important role. And it really deserves a coveted place to be written down in the history of Russia. As every modern state endorsed the idea of liberal principles, the functions and structures of the state should be infested with the principles of respects for the differences which are prevailing in the society. Therefore in modern state, every religion is to be respected equally where the State has no religion and all religions are to be valued and respected equally.

But, on the contrary, the Russian state has given the highest importance to the Russian Orthodox or literally it can be said that it is the religion of the Russian State. With all these privileges and special relationship being given to the Russian Orthodox by the State it really negates equality between denominations and this in turn other religious minorities in Russia are driven to the periphery. This discrimination created by the state vehemently triggers the minds of other religious minorities to go against the state and their voice of resentments is amplified further as the State at times treat the Muslims as synonymous with the terrorists. This discrimination towards the Muslim by the state was retaliated by with all the attacks and terrorist activities. The terror of terrorism was felt by the state and some positive attempts were made for the Muslim but it did not really subside the feeling of their resentment against the state. It only paved the way for them to become more radical or forming other extremist organization which will go against the state and ready to take up any violent steps in fighting for their rights.

The constitution upholds and that Chechnya cannot be divided. It shall remain united and cannot be alienated from the Russian federation. The administration of Putin was fully aware of the fact that the simmering issues of Chechnya cannot be solved until and unless this region become fully fledged secular state or completely it has to be adhered to the principles of secularism. The administration of Putin prohibits the establishment of a particular religion or the privilege religion of a state. The nature in which the Russian state approach towards the Muslims was a vertical one. This vertical approach is typically a conservative one in which the policy in consolidating the whole Muslims institutions, and in order to build a strong relation with state

officials on national level. During Putin-Medvedev period the vertical distribution of power and selective engagement was only with the top Muslim officials rather than the whole range of Muslim civil society organizations (Braginskaia 2010).

## **Islamic Revival**

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, in Russia the presence of Muslims has expanded and also the population has increased. With this increase and its expansion, it can be said that there has been awareness in their intellectual, religious practice and cultural traditions. The ever increasing population of Muslims from different parts of the world in Russia became a great concern for the state. The present increasing populations confirms the fact beyond doubt that like all other Muslim regions of the world the Russian Muslim areas are well connected to them, and also in the grips of a rising wave of awakening. Despite strict Russian censure of the media the entire world has known by now how vigorously the people of the Muslim majority areas of Russia have asserted their separate political identity and revitalized their distinctive cultural heritage. The more recent upsurges in all the Muslim states of Russia are simply eye-opening for everyone. All the awakening movements among the Russian Muslims have always been distinctly Islamic in letter and spirit.

During the Soviet period the influence of Islam (or religion generally) and the number of practicing Muslims declined very sharply. Very few people, especially in the Volga-Urals republics and the cities of Russia proper, attended mosques. The Koran was virtually unavailable, since there was only a limited academic edition in Russian, and an unknown number of copies smuggled from abroad. In 1990 the total number of the Muslim clergy in Russia was limited to 55 mullahs and 12 muezzins, among them only one had higher spiritual education. Thus, in this respect, Islam lagged far behind Catholicism, despite the fact that the number of Muslims was about 10 times greater. The collapse of communism left a spiritual and ideological vacuum for many

individuals and a whole social strata. Despite the opportunities of social and political mobilization after 1990, the possibilities of upward social mobility were mostly monopolized by local bureaucratic and former Communist elites, making many ambitious individuals, members of the lower social strata and intellectuals disillusioned and socially alienated. For a brief period of the late 1980s and early 1990s, nationalism seemed to pose an attractive alternative, labeled as national renaissance, or revival.

However, after the break-up of the Soviet Union, large sections of the population became disillusioned with nationalism, while the continuing economic crisis in post-Soviet republics, including Russia, inevitably drew people towards the church or religious groups. Religious revival took place in all post-Soviet republics, including Russia. A great number of Russians turned to their Orthodox faith, albeit in many cases this trend was a matter of fashion, especially for political elites, as former communists started attending religious festivities. After the fall of Communism, thousands of mosques opened in Russia, the system of religious education emerged and contacts with Muslim countries were re-established. The importance of religion in the life of ethnic Muslims in Russia has grown considerably over the last decades. This phenomenon has been called the Muslim Renaissance or Revival. Curiously enough, the term Renaissance has not been applied to the Russian Orthodox Church, despite obvious parallels and the fact that this church enjoys the support of the state.

The numbers of Muslims in Russia grew thanks to a higher natural growth rate and to intensive immigration from Central Asian countries, especially ethnic Kazakhs, Tajiks and Uzbeks. The growing demand for unskilled labor in the Russian Federation, and the virtually open borders in these regions, make migration easy. The Muslim religious education network consists of over a hundred Islamic colleges and madrassas. The number of mosques was over 7,000 in 2000 (more than in Egypt with its 75 million population), there were 3098 registered Muslim communities and 114 Muslim educational institutions (Mukhametshin, 2001). Russian Muslims maintain

regular contacts with other Muslims abroad. The importance of religion in the life of ethnic Muslims in Russia has grown considerably over the last decades. At the same time, the Islamic "renaissance," which started in the late 1980s, has failed to unite Russia's Muslims into a single Umma, or community of believers. Each of the two main blocks (the Volga region and North Caucasus) is self-sufficient from the viewpoint of their cultural and religious tradition, and preoccupied with their own problems, including relations with the central and local governments.

The government has given in to this pressure to some extent and has, for example, provided funding for the foundation of an Islamic University within Moscow State University. Over 800 students studied at Muslim institutions in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar and Turkey. Probably, the most important aspect of the Muslim renaissance in Russia is the fact that Muslims began to identify themselves as part of the global Muslim community and are striving to overcome the to overcome the minority, or "younger brother" syndrome, formed during the Soviet period (Malashenko 2009). Obviously, for this reason Alexey Malashenko and several other Russian experts on Islam interpreted the initial consequences of the Muslim revival in positive terms. However, several years later there was a growing concern about "the balance of influence within the Muslim community inside Russia shifting towards radical elements of Islamic activism" (Geogri 2005).

## **Radical Islam in Russia**

The phenomenon of 'Islamic radicalism' is an extremely significant one for Russia because of at least two circumstances: a) there are about 20 million Muslims living in Russia (including 3.5 to 4 million migrant Muslims), and b) in the 15 years since the collapse of the USSR, Russia has been shaken by ethno-political conflicts with an apparent confessional component. Islamic radicalism has become an integral feature of the internal situation in Russian society, exerting an influence on the country's public policy. It includes two closely intertwined components – a purely religious and a political one. To ensure a correct assessment of radicalism, however, it is advisable not to combine these two trends into one. In addition, as noted further on, religious

radicals may be loyal to the authorities in respect of specific issues. Not infrequently, information about Islamic radicals' activities is inaccurate. Its source is law enforcement bodies, which for various reasons present it in a distorted form, and therefore this type of information needs to be verified. Information coming from their opponents, who aim at presenting themselves solely as fighters for social justice and for purity of religion, also needs verification. Nor are the mass media always objective in covering issues relating to Islamic radicalism either.

Russia's Muslim community is not uniform or a homogenous society, they differ and vary from one region to another and they remain scatter (Malashenko and Nuritova 2009). The Muslims can be broadly divided into two sociocultural realms, the Northern Caucasian and the Tatar-Bashkir (for simplicity we call it Tatar), which, as a consequence of increased migrations, have recently been in active contact with each other alongside the direct participation of a third force – Central Asian Muslims. Another factor in Russia's engagement with Islam is its geographically dispersed and traditionally diverse Muslim communities, with their individual ethnic and cultural practices, religious beliefs and local political traditions. Migration into capital cities, particularly from Central Asia, and the associated issues of minority integration and belonging have become key concerns for the government. The specific character of Russia's political, regional and social development provides a distinct context which continues to influence state engagement with Muslim communities today. Significant contextual differences in Russia's accommodation of Muslim interests lie in the complex and varied nature of its Muslim communities and their interaction with other confessions (Warhola and Lehning 2007).

As Malashenko and Nuritova (2009) pointed out, the Russian Muslims population is multiethnic and multicultural, as they differ and are scattered in the vast geography of Russia. As the Muslims are not a homogenous society, the rituals and designation of imams are also different. For instance the imams of Tatar did not enjoy the authority



like the imams in the North Caucasus and Muslim clergyman in North Caucasus do not speak in Tatar mosques, and their religious solidarity is very limited as it was proven by the first and second war of Chechnya. Without touching upon the differences between them, we note one characteristic: in the Northern Caucasus, radical tendencies and sentiments are stronger than in the rest of Russia. This characteristic sometimes makes it necessary separately to describe processes and situations related to Islamic radicalism.

The eastern and central parts of the Northern Caucasus – Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, and also the adjoining districts of the Stavropol territory with its substantial Muslim population – are the most radicalised regions. While it is true that radical elements in Chechnya are being squeezed out of the republic, they are settling down in the neighbouring territories. As a result, Dagestan's Islamic jamaats [Muslim communities] are growing stronger, indicative of which is the increasing activity of the republic's law enforcement bodies, which are compelled regularly to carry out special operations against militants. Radical sentiments are quite widespread in Kabarda, Balkaria and Karachai, although the situation there is somewhat quieter than in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia. The level of Islamic radicalism is lowest in the Republic of Adygeya and the Krasnodar territory in which it is located, among other things because ethno-nationalism has not yet been superseded there by religious radicalism. Nevertheless, Islamic radicals have been stepping up their activity in the Republic of Adygeya. In the rest of Russia, there is less activity by radicals and it is not structured.

Their small groups are scattered across the Volga area, the southern Urals and southern Siberia. Manifestations of radicalism have been noted in Tatarstan (Naberezhniye Chelny, Almetyevsk, Nizhnekamsk and Kukmor), in Bashkiria (Agidel, Baimak, Oktyabrsky, Sibai and Ufa), in Mordovia (Belozerye), in the Samara region (Togliatti), and in the Kurgan, Orenburg, Penza, Perm, Ulyanovsk, Chelyabinsk and Tyumen regions (Malashenko and Yarlykapov 2009). Radicals have

also been detected in Moscow, although no activities on a permanent basis have been observed there on their part. Small, unconnected groups of radicals exist even in cities remote from Islamic hotbeds such as in Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea and Vladivostok on the Pacific. Opposition forces advocating radical Islamic ideology are called fundamentalists and Islamists; the term ‘Wahhabites’ has become particularly widespread in Russia. It would be more correct to call them Salafists, since their ideology goes back to the 8th–9th centuries AD, when those who urged believers to adhere to the norms of religious and everyday life followed by the ‘righteous ancestors’ (as-Salaf as-Salihun) called themselves Salafists. Today’s radicals act as preservers of that tradition, referring to the medieval ideologists of Salafism; adjusted for time, they may be regarded as neo- Salafists.

On the other hand, there exist various schools of thought within the framework of Islamic radicalism. In particular there are differences between Salafists proper and Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islamiyya (HTI – the Islamic Liberation Party) which has come to Russia from Central Asia. The main goal of HTI is a political one – the establishment in the territory of Central Asia (and its subsequent expansion) of an Islamic state, the caliphate, whereas the Salafists are focused on a gradual (re-)Islamisation of society and the establishment of sharia. In addition, the ideology of Salafism places emphasis not only and not so much on struggle against the regime as on its transformation from within. The Salafists, acting very diplomatically, are gradually penetrating administrative bodies, avoiding making outspoken statements that contradict the official precepts (Malashenko and Yarlykapov 2009). But they remain radicals, even though their radicalism is of a more subtle character. In Russia, the authorities turn out to be somewhat disoriented, for in confronting Islamic opposition groups, whose members they call ‘bandits’, they are in fact fighting against one of the movements in Islam that enjoys wide popularity and claims to possess the ‘final truth’ in both religion and the socio-political sphere.

## **Issues of Political Representation of Muslims in Russia**

Throughout the history of Russia, Muslims were hostile and has been discriminated and neglected by the state, in which the discontentment and resentment of the Muslim were presented to the state by breeding more radicals. Gorenburg (2006) acknowledges that the government in Moscow is facing number of problems from Russia's Muslim minority. The government's relation with its Muslim population has been dominated by the dynamic of North Caucasus. The state was successful in containing the conflict within Chechnya's borders. Russia has experienced number of terrorist attacks which were caused by the separatist movement in favor of forces seeking to establish a pan-regional Islamic state. Moscow blames all these attacks and spread of violent Islamist radicals on foreign influences in this region. Widespread corruption and poverty throughout the region have contributed to the spread of radical Islam.

The powerful clans have monopolized the political and economic resources of the region from the federal government and used these powers to repress any opposition who tries to change the system. Gidadhubli (2004) says that North Caucasian republics remain neglected and it suffers from poor socio-economic conditions in terms of mass unemployment, high infant mortality, and low level of education which provided the fertile ground for the prevailing discontent among the people. Vladimir Putin's policies on North Caucasus and centralization of executive power enhanced the role of central authority and as he prefers to use strength rather than to bring solution through dialogue contributed to the spread of Islamic radicalism in the region.

It was during the rule of the Soviet and Tsarist, and their policies which were executed upon the Muslims really weakened traditional educational and institutional foundations, political awareness and properly educated clergy or imams .In the Soviet

Union, the Bukhara madrasah (Institute for Islamic Middle Education) and the Tashkent Islamic University were responsible for training Muslim cadres. These institutions ceased to play this role after the collapse of the USSR, while the number of religious communities (mahallas or jamaats), which desperately need educated imams and teachers of primary mosque schools, mushroomed in the 1990s. During the 1990s, Muslim leaders tried to overcome this lack of cadres by fabricating poorly equipped madrasahs and force-training imams. After the military conflict in Dagestan in 1999, however, the Russian secular authorities began a strict check of the educational and political qualities of these institutions (Hunter 2004, 74). Many madrasahs were deprived of their licenses and turned into private associations that no longer had the right to issue diplomas. A number of lecturers from the Near East were deported back to their motherlands. Moreover, the madrasah education in Russia lacked national standards for a long time.

These setbacks of Russian Muslims were further deteriorated by educating the Russian Muslims abroad where most of the young scholars were inculcated and educated in different manner, and they began to conceive the idea or acquired the knowledge of radical extremist Islam. Also, the social and economic condition of Muslims inhabited and notably in north Caucasus further deteriorated. As the poor social conditions in the North Caucasus region has contributed to the rise of radicalization of Islam. They are also influenced by radical Islamic organization from abroad which had significantly led to rise of radical Islam in Chechnya. These mentioned factors had contributed to the terrorist activities of Muslims in Russia. The activities of terrorists had a nexus with international Islamist groups The North Caucasian Republics suffers from acute poor socio-economic condition at an alarming level. The poor socioeconomic condition of North Caucasus region is the poorest in Russian Federation. The unemployed population is at an alarming level, infant mortality rate is very high and most of them are illiterate. Per capita income of this region is only two third of the national average. Ingushetia is the poorest and most backward region in Russian Federation (Gidadhubli 2004: and Hunter 2004).

Muslims in Russia had formed a political organization during the reign of the Soviet rule to unite the empire of Muslims in order to give them a larger role in determining and shape and pursue their own destiny. The aspiration and determination of the Muslims in forming a robust political organization could not be executed and accomplished as the harsh authoritarian rule of the Tsarist and the Communist rule did not provide the favorable platform to flourish it. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Muslim political organization came into being in Russian federation. However, as the Muslims population are scattered in vast Russian federation they could not be united and other factors are related to Russia's broader political culture which is not conducive.

These diverseness became an impediment for the Muslims political organization as none of the Muslims political movements has emerged as a viable force capable of speaking for the Russian Muslims and acting for their interests. Russia's official approach to managing its multiethnic, multireligious and multicultural diversity has predominantly relied on conservative, and often authoritarian or semi-authoritarian, policies of top-down assimilation. Its engagement with Muslim communities has involved controlling religious or cultural manifestations of Muslim identity, coupled with territorial or ideological expansion. Also, a striking feature of state-Muslim relations in Russia is the historical continuity of Muslim administrative structures and their close ties with government. Although state-Islam relations are largely modelled on state-Church engagement, at times the interests of Muslim minorities come second to those of Orthodox Christians. Russia under Mikhail Gorbachev, reform-minded member of the Soviet elite tended to encourage every religious activities, but preference was given to the Russian Orthodox Church and other religions were viewed with disfavor (Tash 2010).

When Gorbachev came to power he was least interested in nationalities or any questions related to religion, but he was more interested in his reforms or rebuilding the whole system which was at risk and stagnant in all respects. With the priority

being given to economic reforms, he saw the question of religion as a stumping block to his reforms and also in building relationship with other nations. Gorbachev was not so keen on religion, so, his approach towards Islam reflected the old perspective of the communist regime. When Russia was invaded by the Mongols, and when Islam was introduced in Russia by the foreigners the hostile feeling of Russian against the Islam had begun from this invasion. Gorbachev's approach towards the Muslims was not positive, like the old Communist regime he considered the Muslims as backward and corrupt, which will only halt his reforms that he had planned.

When he introduced his reforms, glasnost or openness, which was extended only for some section of the society, and it was devised with a new level of technique to counter Islam and its influences, like in Uzbek society. Different professions, who are powerful and who can influence the masses invited in creating the awareness of new world in which they have to get rid of the old custom, tradition and practices. Also, scholars and academicians were given the space to harbor the thoughts in citizen of the Soviet to denounce and restrict the influence of Islam. Some held the harsh views on Islam, where Islam's doctrine, religious rite and principle were considered as harmful and dangerous for the well-being of the society and it will halt the path of development in the long run, and should not be tolerated at all (Hanks 2001).

In 1987 when he launched reforms in educational system, it was intended mainly or targeted to the Muslims, as he was aware of the fact that, there was a growing influence of Islam in all section of Soviet society. The campaign of anti-Islam grew louder and bigger with the arrest of many Muslims leaders and also Soviet was aware of the consequences of its anti-Islam campaign which can really tarnish its image and would leave a bad impression to the whole world, especially the Muslim state and to the West. His glasnost, not only reached to the Muslim section late, benefit from it at very meager level, but on the other had for the Muslims the introduction of glasnost reignited the anti-Islamic campaign of the early 1980s.

In modern Russia, the Russian Orthodox and its role has been expanding within and outside Russia. According to Mitrokhin and Nuritova (2009), say that the Orthodox has been powerful since from the Communist rule and still they are that they demanded the state to introduce “Foundation of Orthodox culture” into the secondary education system which was not approved by other religions and it violates the 1993 and 1996 constitution. The demand grew stronger and some regional authorities positively reciprocated to this demand and introduced it as a mandatory, which really undermined and discriminated other religious minorities.

Muslims, the second largest religion and considered it as a religious minority in Russia, began to raise their voice in demanding their rights against the state and in contemporary post-Soviet, Russia, their voices of resentment and agitation have become louder. Among all other religious minorities, the policies of the state on religion which negates the idea of justice and equality had a great negative impact on Muslims. Muslim as an old traditional religion of Russia the discrimination and apathy of the Russian state all undermined and become a religious minorities along with other small religious minorities. With all these treatments or discriminations of the Russian state against the Muslims, in one way it led to the Muslims in Russia which is heterogeneous society triggers them to come together and be united. Also all these important privileges being given to the Russian Orthodox and Muslims being driven to the peripheral status helps the Muslim in developing the consciousness of separate statehood or the feeling of nationalism among them. Ever since the invasion of the Tatars, Muslims had never been in terms or had any good relation with the state and Russian Orthodox. The Muslims were never considered as a part of Russia, as it was believed that Muslims as a religion was brought by some foreigners with their invasion in Russia. Also, the idea of nationalism and identity was to be built by the inherent ideas and principles of Russianness, where the Muslims were discriminated and demeaned undermining its important roles played by them.

The Muslims communities are demarcated according to their rituals and practices, so the demands of Muslims society in Russia are not uniform. Most of the demands made by the Muslims were more of cultural autonomy and administrative and not for

complete statehood or complete independent which will remain as a subject of international law. Muslims as a minority in Russia are not a homogenous society. So within Muslims in Russia, a stiff competition or rivalries exist, like for instance ethnic rivalries between Tatars and Bashkirs. This existence of rivalries led them to the formation of different political group. There are significant differences between Muslim communities in the Volga region and in the North Caucasus. For example, a more accommodating, reformist brand of Islam has been developed in Tatarstan (Nabiev et al. 2002). Exposed to political integration through forced Christianisation and Sovietisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Filatov 2002, pp. 93–96; Ro'i2000), the Tatar Muslims represent arguably the most culturally assimilated Islamic community within Russia's borders. In spite of its nationalist aspirations, the region remains relatively open to state regulatory policies towards Islam.

On the federal level, this is largely achieved through close ethnic and political ties between Muslim authorities in Kazan and Russia's Council of Muftis (Sovet Muftiyev Rossii, SMR) in Moscow. The Russian state is keen to present its interaction with Islam in Tatarstan as a good working model of religious tolerance and Christian–Muslim dialogue. The important of forming a strong political group is to help them to have the feeling of oneness and also help them for the growth and consciousness of nationalism is absent within the Muslim communities. With all these feelings of rivalries among the Muslims, there was a constant contest or become more hostile in every aspect.

Under the leadership of Yeltsin, his approach towards the Muslims can be analyzed on his policies and its execution towards formation of Muslims political organization or conceiving the idea nationalism, mainly the republic of Chechnya and Tatarstan. The rise of Chechnya nationalism posed a great challenge to the federal center. Then, Chechnya-Ingush, under the leadership of Dzhokar Dudaev, formed a self-proclaimed Chechen National Congress, and with self-proclaimed autonomy began to elect and declare its own executive committee. Dudaev's leadership and his execution of policies became more radical as he began to seize control of the republic's Supreme Soviet building. He did not pay any heed to the warnings given from Moscow from



conducting any illegitimate election, and instead he contested and won the presidential election in 1991 (Asyuev and Kharchenko 1999). The highly authoritarian ruling policies of Russian state immensely deprived the Muslims of conceiving the consciousness of their Islamic character and in forming a strong political organization. The Muslims are being less represented and within Muslim communities their prevailing diversities become an impediment forces to unite among them.

The reasons for the Muslim to be less represented is that Muslim leaders are less educated, their population is scattered over wide area, divided by their ethnic allegiance and the rivalry among them to control the flow of funds from the Gulf states for different purposes heightened the animosity and disunity among the Muslim leaders (Prazauskas 2007). All these diversities and disunity among the Russian Muslims are being acknowledged by the state in which the state tends to ignore and began to neglect the Muslim communities socially, politically and economically. The state tends to take advantage and changed their approaches by tolerating all the activities of Islam. Putin strongly endorsed the idea of liberals or the force of market in determining the Russian society (Sakwa 2008). He acknowledges that the Russian state lacked the whole notion of the idea of nationalism among the citizens. Concisely, the whole idea of nationalism according to Putin was to move forward with the idea of liberalism, and modernizing the Russian society. Like any other Russian leaders, Putin faced the difficulties in dealing the Russian society, which is a multicultural society, with different ethno, cultural, linguistic, and multi-religious confessions.

As mentioned earlier, ever since the Muslims conquered Russia, then and now, their relationship has been intertwined with hatred and hostilities. And with the invasion of Central Asia by the Russian, the fate of Muslims have been changed drastically, and they were reduced as the largest religious minorities in Russia. Putin's approaches towards the Muslims were not much different from his predecessors. His harsh treatments towards the Muslims were propelled by the terrorist's activities of Islamic militancy in different parts of Russia. Putin's main concern towards the Muslim was the Islamic militancy from the north Caucasus, Chechnya. It can be said that Muslims

communities are distinctly different from each other, in which the existence of its differences are made by the geographical location.

Putin highly centralized policies paved the way for him in hand-picking some leaders in Muslims institutions and removing the ones whose outlooks were incompatible with his liberal ideas, orthodox or whose beliefs and principles are highly entrenched in the doctrines and dogmas of Islam. Putin policies towards the Muslims were more of interested in controlling and regulating the activities of the Muslims as a kind of preventive measures in curbing the activities of the terrorist activities. President Vladimir Putin announced his plans "radically restructured" political system that would bolster his power by ending the popular election of governors and independent lawmakers, moves he portrayed as a response to this month's deadly seizure of a Russian school. Under his plan, Putin would appoint all governors to create a "single chain of command and allow Russians to vote only for political parties rather than specific candidates in parliamentary elections. Putin characterized the changes as enhancing national cohesion in the face of a terrorist threat, while critics called them another step toward restoring the tyranny of the state 13 years after the fall of the Soviet Union”(Baker 2004).

Thus, Putin was determined to take harsh steps in his approach toward the terrorist acts or Islamic Militancy in Chechnya. He publicly denounced the outrageous act of the Islamist Militancy and branded their actions as none other than terrorism who will distort the sovereignty and integrity of Russia. Putin gesture towards the Muslims was to take the rein of controlling the Muslims institutions, in which it will enable him in executing his highly centralized policies in tackling the terrorist activities. The North Caucasus, on the other hand, has been seen by the Russian state as its primary security concern, from the days of colonial expansion and the rebellions of Shaykh Mansur and Imam Shamil to the Chechen Wars for independence and current instability in Dagestan and Ingushetia. Islamic expression in the region is strongly influenced by Sufi traditions and radical Salafi and Jihadist movements.

Hunter's assessment of the situation of the nineteenth century, that there remained a strong 'linkage between the region's religious life and Russia's security concerns', seems still relevant today (Hunter 2004, p. 15). Appreciating the rebellious character of the Caucasus and the primary importance of the clan system, Russia's attempts to control Islam in the region fell short of undermining the traditional sources of local and religious authority. Devolution of power to the Kadyrov family in Chechnya or the Yevkurovs in Ingushetia may have had different consequences, but both moves have their roots in a similar approach of centre-periphery relations in the region. The Chechen conflict, and the aftermath of the two wars (1994-1995 and 1999-2000), played a significant role in Russia's policies towards Islam. Its impact is still evident in Russia's determination to fight real or perceived threats of Islamic extremism and in its policies designed to re-establish a strong grip on the region through administrative centralisation and rebuilding of Muslim institutions. While political liberalisation and decentralisation of the Yel'tsin era encouraged the quest for greater autonomy, any Chechen full-hearted efforts to secure independence were ruled out. Russia's repressive military campaigns and reluctance to satisfy Chechnya's original aspirations for autonomy have strongly contributed to the radicalisation of Islam and the growing instability in the region. On the turn of the century, Vladimir Putin's administration sought to justify its actions by claiming to be waging a war on terror. As early as the summer of 2000, Putin emphasised that Russia was standing alone at the forefront of the war against international terrorism and that Europe should be thankful for her efforts. Russia's engagement with Chechnya holds a mirror to certain policy failures and successes of Muslim integration. It highlights a problematic tension between mainly positive improvement in living standards and support for moderate forms of Islam and a rather negative development of paternalistic, excessive 'domestication' of Muslim communities from above. Russia's heavy-handed approach in bringing Chechnya in line with its ideological agenda has only exacerbated the situation, resulting in greater instability and Islamic radicalism in neighbouring Dagestan and Ingushetia.

The re-establishment of Moscow's control in Chechnya and the squeezing out of Islamist opposition has been accompanied by the Kremlin's drive to tighten its federal control, centralise the administrative structures and consolidate Russia's resurgent

national identity. Putin's administration has brought Chechnya back to the constitutional and political realm of the Russian Federation ((Braginskaia 2010).). The anti-terrorist clampdown has been accompanied by attempts to buy local loyalty by devolving some of the powers to Kadyrov's administration and injecting substantial resources for reconstruction. The grand opening of Grozny Central Dome Mosque in October 2008 was a key marker of the state-managed programme of top-down 'Chechenisation. With all these anti-terrorist programs against the Muslims in Russia, the state was able to control and play the card of favoring the Muslims in their own will which the Muslims will remain loyal to the state and does not jeopardize the sovereignty and integrity of the Russian federation.

In Chechnya, the emergence of the extremist groups, prejudice and discriminated policies of the state and the political instability in the region had direct linked to the power struggle. The state tends to favor more who has been loyal to the state. As mentioned in the above that the Muslim communities are so diverse and as they are inhabited in different part which are not consolidated became a detrimental in their unity and uniformity more difficult. The state, acknowledging all these differences within the Muslim tend to treat and regard them differently based on their geographical location and its closeness and loyalty to the state. The state's main concern is security in which the main threat, Islamic militant or feeling of Islamic nationalism originate from North Caucasus.

There is no unity within the Muslims community, and it further flares the animosity and rivalries among the Muslim leaders following the assassination of the first president of Chechnya, Dzhokhar Dudaev (Hunter 2004). It became a great setbacks and it really deteriorated the feeling of unity in which the state tends to take advantage of all this struggle for power within the Chechen leaders by favoring and handpicking it who favors the state and who can dose off the feeling Islamic nationalism and to idea of seceding it away from the Russian Federation. In Chechnya the syndrome of disunity is strong reiterated within the Chechen leaders struggle for power the Chechnya, which the state considered as the most concern as the feeling of strong nationalism is present since from the time of the Soviet and still the feeling of nationalism is apparent in contemporary period.

The unrest struggle for self-determination and ready to secede it away from the Russian federation became a major concern for the state as Islamic militants from Chechnya are ready to take any steps and push beyond the limit irrespective of the rules, laws and regulation of the Russian federation in order to accomplish their mission became the most concern for the state as Russia had faced the terror of terrorist and all its gory incidents created by the Islamic Militants. Putin in accordance to his new administration followed a policy of recruiting and appointing so that his administration can track and regulate the activities of the Muslims of Chechens. With Russia's military campaign, Putin tries to establish a new elite group in the republic who can be entrusted and loyal to the Russian state and at the same time ethnic Chechens were recruited in state police force so that they maintain the important aspects of maintaining law and order. It was an alternative move to hammer out some positive solutions in which the simmering issues of the Chechens and its policies had been on the fore. This alternative policy of 'Chechenisation' was to divert the conflict of Chechens or to loosen the grip that holds a strong feeling of seceding it from the Russian Federation. This diplomatic policy of 'Chechenisation' was executed by appointing leaders of Putin's choice who are compatible to the state and does not discredit to the policies of the state.

The arbitrary power of Putin and his policy of 'Chechenisation' ostracized Mashkadov and his supporters for the political power and they were replaced by Mufti of Chechnya, Akhmad Kadyrov as the chief of Putin's administration. A stern statutory warning was made to all those who continue to support for the right to self-determination of the Chechens rather than the Russian were to be condemned and branded as terrorists. Chechnya's case flaunted the arbitrary power of Putin. He exemplifies his arbitrary power by dictating the FSB to take the control of the counter-terrorist operation away from the Ministry of defence, which comes under them. Concisely, the whole idea behind the policy of 'Chechnisation' was to hold the rein of control by the state with Putin's hand-picked Chechens leaders to subside the separatist and nationalist movement coated with the idea of bringing a long lasting political settlement in Chechnya (Russel 2005).

Putin's government tries to extend his legitimacy in Chechnya by announcing the plan to hold a fresh referendum in Chechnya, and according to the plan it proposes that, on a legal basis a new election be held for forming a new government and to draft a new constitution of Chechnya. The new legislation guaranteed its citizen to practice their franchise right and to elect their leader according to their own will. Primarily, the intention of this new election was to delegitimize and undermine the influential persona of the last elected president of Chechnya, Mashkadov. Also, it was to redraft their constitution, which was to be replaced by offering an alternative constitution instead of their rather conventional constitution which was deeply entrenched on Islamic principles and doctrines. Thus the whole intention of Putin's policy in giving the rights to the Chechens to participate in the political process of forming a republic government was to delegitimize and dismantle the whole administration of Mashkadov and replaced it by Putin hand-picked, Ahmad Kadyrov, as the head of the administration in Chechnya. The administration of Putin prohibits the establishment of a particular religion or the privilege religion of a state. The nature in which Russia's approach toward the Muslims was a vertical one. This vertical approach is typically a conservative one in which the policy in consolidating the whole Muslims institutions, and in order to build a strong relation with state officials on national level. During Putin-Medvedev period the vertical distribution of power and selective engagement was only with the top Muslim officials rather than the whole range of Muslim civil society organizations (Braginskaia 2010).

The highly centralized administration of Putin not only tries to control the rein of power in administrating and imposing upon Chechnya administration directly from the Moscow but it also sabotaged the inalienable rights and sovereignty of Chechens. Throughout the presidency of Putin, the highest priority was given to the stability and the consolidation of power of the state. For instance like the policy of 'Chechenization' of Putin was to control, eliminate and regulate the autonomy of Chechnya region, it is apparent that Putin is a centrist and every contradictory program and his opponents were to be reconciled by his attitude of centrism. All these stringent rule and highly authoritarian administration of the state became a

stumbling block for the Muslims to become more active in the realm of politics. Also the 'managed pluralism' of Putin administration in identifying the role of religion as a national identity, and the enhanced status of the Russian Orthodox Church has made the management and administration of the state more authoritarian (Warhola and Lehning, 2007).

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Muslim communities have become a substantial minority in the Russian Federation. The Muslims in post-Soviet Russia feel more liberated and enjoy more religious freedom than during the rule of the Soviet. In spite of their freedom of religion, historically as Muslims in Russia were viewed in negative sentiments and thus still Muslims are yet to be fully recognized in modern Russia. The idea of the secession of Chechnya from Russia and the wars between Russia and Chechnya became a great concern for the security and sovereignty of Russia. Muslims and the influx of immigrants from Central Asia flared the anti-Muslim sentiments in Russia. All these anti-Muslim sentiments and the hostile relation between the state and Muslims made the state to attach religion as the national identity, in which Russian Orthodox religion was given the highest priority and considered as the religion of the state. Russian state endorsed the idea of centralized policies in order to curb nationalist movement and any Islamic militant formation in Russian Federation. It has to be said that the state not only failed Muslims by ignoring or neglecting the Muslim communities, but within the Muslim communities there is no unity as they are widely scattered and there is difference among the Muslim leaders in their views and approaches.

The politically less representation of Muslim in Russian federation is not only because of the failure of the state as no modern state is an ideal state which can accommodate all the demands of different minorities. As most modern state is a multicultural state, there has always been a clash and agitation in every society and minority became the main victim as they are at the receiving end. Thus, the prevailing disunity among the Muslim leaders, struggle for power became a hindrance to come as one and united. The discriminated policy of the state has made the Muslim communities the most backward and least advantaged community in Russia. Historically, Muslim as a

religion is an old religion, and though they have enjoyed more freedom of religion as compared to the period of Soviet rule, Muslims are yet to be recognized and accepted in Russia, as it is apparent from the fact that their identity, social and economic status are at great risk.

Also the State-Chechnya war has proven that arms and ammunition cannot bring any solution as this idea has become obsolete, so the only last resort for bring an amicable solution is an open dialogue between them or among them.



## Chapter 5

### State Approaches Towards Muslims

Historically, the predominant Russian Orthodox Church had played an important role in shaping and retaining the history, identity and culture, and in the formation of Russian statehood. The role of the Russian Orthodox cannot be ignored and denied as it had stood, defied and adapted to the ever changing policies and politics of different leaders in different periods of Russian history. During the harsh rule of the Soviet, then, the doctrine of Marxist-Leninist was at its peak, which considered religion as an ideology, with the intention of exploiting the proletariat or the working class with its doctrine and principles. So religion was considered as the “opium” of the mass and thus it was completely against any religions. It was during the rule of the Soviet that religion was placed in worst condition or at a precarious state as numbers of religious places were dismantled, regulated and even controlled by the state. Religion, during the rule of the Soviet was strictly prohibited in public domains and it was completely driven to the affairs of private or individuals. According to Hunter (2004), during the rule of the Stalin, his approach towards on Islam can be viewed as an overall context for paving the way for socialism in Soviet. Stalin advocated that in order to bring Socialism in Soviet Union all citizens had to be freed from the doctrine of religion and Muslims were also encouraged to abandon from Islamic culture, as it was believed that, Islam belonged to the past and it had no place in advanced socialism.

Attempts were made to wipe out from the soil of the Soviet. Russian Orthodox Church, which had retained the culture and shaped the history and identity of the Russian history, had withstood to all these unfavorable conditions created for religions during the reign of the Soviet. The anti-religious campaign of the Soviet enormously affected the faith of the believers enormously, but it could not stop believers in attending their sacred services or holding their faith in their religion completely even during the anti-religious campaign of the Soviet. As Balzer (2010)

says that Russian Orthodox Church has been the place to seek peace, solace and for spiritual support for the believers during the harsh rule of the soviet.

Acknowledging all the important roles contributed by the predominant Russian Orthodox Church, equal acknowledgement and appreciation needs to be given to Islam, which had been there since time immemorial and as old as the existence of the Russian Orthodox Church had also played an important role in shaping and retaining the history and culture of Russia. The role of Islam holds a parallel position with the Russian Orthodox. History of Russia remains incomplete without understanding and appreciating the role of Islam. And it would be impossible for one to delve deep into the history of Russia, and to understand it without taking into an account and acknowledging all the vital roles contributed by Islam, like the Russian Orthodox Church.

In post-Soviet State, Russia, to talk about the notion of religion the instant general vision that takes place in one's mind is the large presence of Russian Orthodox Society and Islam. According to Malashenko (2006), religion in Russia is difficult to understand, as it is an ideology and institution and still continues to play an important role. Both these religions have been there throughout the Russian history, society and had the potential in influencing the Russian politics in contemporary Russia. But on the contrary, only the predominant Russian Orthodox has been placed to a high level or been granted the privilege status. The actors of the state such as the eminent and prominent leaders of the state are deeply inclined towards the Orthodox Church. And usually they drew closer to the Orthodox Church for spiritual or political purposes. As the state favors the Orthodox Church by granting special status the fate of Muslims has been changed drastically.

In the history of mankind the world has witnessed different battles since time immemorial and impact of it, but, it had never heard and seen the gigantic casualties of the two World Wars. With the horrendous experiences of the First and Second World War, mankind unfolds the hope that, after this two World Wars the contemporary world would give peace a chance to prevail was not feasible at all as different gory of events was incessantly unfolding it. After the two World Wars, the world has unprecedentedly witnessed and experienced all kinds of terrorists attack, and in which Russia is not free from it and has become one of the victim from terrorist

activities. All these contemporary attacks by different terrorist and its casualties can be compared to the wars that the world had witnessed. The only difference is that it happened at a smaller scale and it can go on indefinitely without any specific fixed period unlike the two World War and thus eventually at one point the casualties and its impact will surpass the two World War if remain unchecked. Russia has faced the horror of terrorist attacks number of times and it has its own stories to be told and shared to the other world. As the number of terrorist attacks escalated in different parts of the world, the concern for 'peace and security' has become the highest priority for every nation. The concern for 'peace and security' has been dominating the international arena in the twenty first century. All these terrorist attacks became a great issue, as it really hampers the favorable conditions for maintaining peace and harmony in both national and international affairs. Thus, every nation has felt the need to tackle different terrorist groups or the need to contain from forming new terrorist group with different positive provisions, paying heed to their resentments and accommodating the voices and demands of the minorities prevailing in their own state.

The post-Soviet State, Russia, like any other modern state which is usually multicultural state or non-nation-state also has its own trends of minorities where their claims and demands are clashed with the majority or other minorities group. As the state could not accommodate all the claims and demands of different minorities equally or evenly, demands of one group had to be rejected or ignored, this uneven treatment triggers some group to go against and challenge the system and structure of the state. In some cases it threatens to secede it from the state and the increase of ramifying competition among the minorities.

Now, Russia being a multifaceted country, it faces the difficulties and challenges in accommodating the claims demanded by different minorities, and it would be idealistic to have the notion that in accommodating their needs perfectly by the state. With the increase of different terrorist attacks in different parts of the world, and like in any parts of the world, Muslim has become a victim of all these terrorist attacks. Muslim being the second largest religious minority in Russia has already become a

victim and they are always seen and judge through the prism of terrorist and suspicious elements of the society by the citizens and the state. It is a well-known fact that in the history of Russia Islam had also played an important role like the predominant Russian Orthodox. And it really deserves a coveted place to be written down in the history of Russia. As every modern state endorsed the idea of liberal principles, the functions and structures of the state should be infested with the principles of respects for the differences which are prevailing in the society. Therefore in modern state, every religion is to be respected equally where the State has no religion and all religions are to be valued and respected equally.

But, on the contrary, the Russian state has given the highest importance to the Russian Orthodox or literally it can be said that it is the religion of the Russian State. With all these privileges and special relationship being given to the Russian Orthodox by the State it really negates equality between denominations and this in turn other religious minorities in Russia are driven to the peripheral. This discrimination created by the state vehemently triggers to the minds of other religious minorities to go against the state and their voice of resentments amplified further as the State sees mostly the Muslims as terrorist or synonymous with the terrorists. The treatment and discrimination towards the Muslim by the state escalated mainly with all the recent attacks and the states tend to give out different gestures towards the Muslims which did not really subside the feeling of their resentment against the state. It only paved the way for them to become more radical or forming other extremist organization which will go against the state and ready to take up any violent steps in fighting for their rights.

The Russian revolution of 1917 completely changed the history of Russia by defeating the corrupt and inefficient government. It really marked a new beginning of history for the whole Soviet and which they really step into a new history. By 1917, almost every Russian had completely lost his hope and faith in the leadership of Czar Nicholas II. As under the reign of Czar Nicholas, the government was very inefficient and corrupt, the economy was completely backward that people were deprived of their basic needs. As the government was inefficient the miseries and suffering of the

soviet was not heard by the Czarist government. With all these inefficiencies of his government the revolution of 1917 for the first time in the history of the Soviet toppled the Russian monarchy and established a Provisional Government. This revolution put to an end the old, outdated and primitive regime of the last Russian Tzarist rule in Russia. By overthrowing the old monarchial tsarist government it set up a new political form of government for the first time in the history of Russia which had ushered Russia into a new realm with different positive waves of changes in social, economic and political life of Russia. A new set of provisional government was set up where many provisions and laws of the old regime were rejected, and it implemented and enacted many favorable laws which were more liberal and lenient for the whole citizens of the Soviet were enacted and drafted, unlike the old monarchial Tsarist government. And it also ended the era of ideologically based structure, politics and institution. The revolution of 1917 not only changed the history or ushered Russia into a new world but it even changed the nature of its international relations with the rest of the world, and thus it even changed the history of the world.

### **Muslim during and after 1917 Revolution**

It cannot be said conclusively and the exact time when Islam was introduced or appeared in Russia. But it is believed that it is as old as the predominant Russian Orthodox Church, which is a branch of the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church. The fate of the Muslim was altered to a precarious state when the Russian invaded the Kazan Khanate in 1552. Islam which was once a state religion was turned into a prosecuted one as the Russian government controlled, regulated and also converted them to Orthodoxy. The Russian government with their institutionalized ideologies and policies not only converted them but declared the fight with Islam as holy war against “unbelievers”. The reign of Peter I and the Russian Tsarist government in the mid17th century followed a harsh policy of Christianizing the Muslims. It was a planned foreign policy for conquering Central Asia, Crimea, and the Caucasus. With the proclamation of Catherine II in 1787 it returned some privileges to part of Tatar nobility and in 1787 the state legalized the activities of Muslims and rebuilding of

mosques within the premises of Orenburg. With all these oppressions towards the Muslims, forcibly converting them into Christianity by different Tsarists and Russian government with their own interest, institutionalized policies and ideologies, the Muslims had been reduced to the biggest religious minority in Russia.

The Russian revolution of 1917 was a big breakthrough for the whole Muslims in Russia to come under the umbrella of one-united Muslim and to claim for their rights and identity. As the revolution of 1917 set up a new provisional government the struggle for power was between the provisional government and the Bolsheviks. The leadership of Lenin made it possible to overthrow the provisional government by the Bolsheviks. Lenin had the complete knowledge of the complexities and the nature of Russian society. Lenin, in dealing the huge populations of Muslims which was approximately 20 million cannot be ignored and he considered it as a national issues. As Russia had invaded and expanded its imperialism during the rule of the Soviet, it had incorporated different religion, culture, ethnic and races in different period of time. So, recognizing this fact and understanding its consequences, Lenin did not keep them aloof or at peripheral but issued “Declaration on the rights of People”. This declaration gave them the right to equality, sovereignty of the people and also the right to secession (Hunter 2004).

Muslims, with a big population became an important factor during the revolution that, Soviet, then, which follows the principle and ideology of communism was not a threat to religion, Islam. Lenin promised to the Muslims of Russia that they have the freedoms of religion, and also further proclaimed it as:

Muslims of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and Crimea, Kyrg, and parts of Siberia and Turkestan, Tatars of Trans-Caucasia, Chechen and Mountain peoples of Caucasus and all you whose mosques and prayer houses have been destroyed, whose beliefs and customs have been trampled upon by Tsars and oppressors of Russia: your beliefs and usages, your national and cultural institutions are forever free and inviolate (cited in pipes, the formation of the soviet union, p, 155)

The support of the Muslims to the Bolsheviks during and after the revolution was completely ambiguous. As from the very beginning when Central Asia was conquered

by the Russian, the whole intention and objectives of the Russian was to exploit their resources. The Russian considered them as backward, uncivilized, primitive and outdated people which do not fit into the western or modern world (Wheeler 1955). They not only exploited their resources but their identity and culture was assimilated into Russian but educating them, converting them into Orthodox. All these gestures of assimilation and conversion were done to eradicate their feeling or consciousness of nationalism and to stop them from revolting or go against the Russian. The Muslim, from the onset of the Russian landed into their soil, they were against the Russian dominance. The Muslims always wanted autonomy, the right to self-determination, and the freedom to choose their own economy and political rights. During the revolution of 1917, some section of Muslims held the idea of combating with the Bolsheviks against the provisional government will benefit them as they believe that under the Bolsheviks they will able to retain their own identity and culture.

However, as the voices of nationalist and separatist groups grew stronger, and several autonomists began to revolt and doubt the Bolsheviks, and it was reiterated further when Muslims in Central Asia unanimously declared their autonomy for their own people the nature of relation between the Bolsheviks and Muslims changed drastically. With the rise of the separatist or nationalist movements, the Bolsheviks began to snap all the rights which were declared by Lenin for the Muslims. The Muslims were retaliated by the Bolsheviks by prosecuting their religion, conversion, dismantling mosques, confiscating their land and property, and even killing some eminent and religious leaders. The treatment made by the Bolsheviks let the Muslims to harbor the feeling of being alienated, and disrespect to their people and to their religion (Hunter 2004).

By 1924, the campaign for the anti-Islam grew louder, and in this campaign Islam was completely denounced and condemned. The colossal movement of anti-Islam was made with the manifestation of Marxist idea of religion on the society. On the contrary, Marxism viewed on religion was anti-religion or against all religion, but the campaign was targeted only on Muslims. According to the Russian, the Muslim is not an indigenous religion, as it was brought into Russia with the invasion by the

Ottoman, Iranian, Turks, Middle East and Arabs. So the Russian did not accept Muslims as a true religion as they considered it as a backward. Marxist views on religion, which considered religion as a kind of "ideologies" of the bourgeoisie to exploit the proletariat was not applied to all the other prevailing religion in Soviet Union during the time of the anti-Islam campaign, but except to only Muslim as they see Muslim as a reactionary force which can threaten the path to socialism. However, Lenin was aware of the fact that religion has a great role to play so he did not completely declare Bolsheviks to go against religion. Lenin had envisioned the needs to form an ally with Muslims or any other religion to fight against the provisional government, so that the path to socialism will be successful and smooth.

It would not be wrong to say that Lenin did not damage or dismantle much to religion during the Soviet period. Some damages were done as it was the need for that particular time and space. Despite Lenin's insistence and ordered to maintain law and order the Bolsheviks were poorly organized which was unstable, and had the tendencies to break into different faction (Crouch 1990). The revolution of 1917 not only dethroned the Tsarist government, but it also in one way made him to realize the importance and the force of religion which is parallel to nationalism which can be a building block in making the path to socialism a successful one. With this revolution, Lenin acknowledges not only the predominant Russian Orthodox, but the Muslims, who had played and contributed a vital role along with the Bolsheviks in fighting against the provisional government. The revolution of 1917 was a paramount platform not only for the Russian, but also for the Muslims to come together as one. For the first time in the history of the Russia, this revolution made the Muslims to realize the importance of self-determination, to politically organize and to set their own terms and conditions so that they can retain and shape their own culture, identity and other social aspects on their own according to which it suits them.

The fates of Muslims were driven to another height of harsh condition during the reign of Stalin. Unlike Lenin, who was more lenient to religion sees the importance of religion and placed it parallel to nationalism during the time of the revolution. It was during the reign of Stalin that religion was not given that importance. Religion was



almost driven out from the Soviet Union. Stalin gave more priority to for the success of socialism, where he sees that religion would be a stumbling block for the establishment of socialism in Soviet, therefore he encourages to the entire Soviet to abandon their religion and move towards the path of socialism. Infact Stalin did great damages to religion and especially the Muslims were the main victim. Many mosques were closed down or were dismantled in the Russian empire, land and property were confiscated. Also, the Muslims were accused of being not loyal to the Soviet during the Second World War and many Muslims were executed and deported from the Russian soil.

Stalin's successor Khrushchev, who is always remembered as the man who followed the policy of "de-Stalinization" in the Soviet society advocated the anti-religious campaign from 1960 to 1964. His anti-religious campaign was to rebuild the Soviet society which has been brought down by the Second World War. He was deeply influenced the idea of bringing all Soviet together through "Russification", where it could bring socialism in Soviet society. His anti-religious campaign was at its peak by 1963 and it had a great impact on Islam as many mosques were reduced and many religious rituals were absolutely banned. Brezhnev's approach towards Islam was foggy as his relation toward the Muslims was solely based on his foreign policy towards the Middle East or any Muslim countries. So, during the leadership of Brezhnev, the gestures of the state and the provisions for the Muslims was solely based on its Soviet foreign policy, as any foreign policy to be made is determined by national or issues prevailing within the country.

### **Predominance of Russian Orthodox**

The predominant Russian Orthodox Church which had played an important role in shaping the history and acted as a unifying factor in forming for the statehood of Russia still plays an important role in contemporary Russia. There has always been a secret relation between the communities and priests, and in Russia sacred religious

life was in general active and energetic. During the Second World War Stalin's attitude toward the Church softened and called in three Russian hierarchs for a conversion. After this conversion fundamental changes with respect to the Church took place. During the war, the Soviet people found themselves in despair and confusion as they were missing spiritual support and many turned to the Orthodox Church.

After Stalin's death, Nikita Khrushchev's policies did a great damage to all religions and all religious activities were brought under harsh security and direct under state control. In the last years of the Soviet Union, under Mikhail Gorbachev, reform-minded member of the Soviet elite tended to encourage all religious activities, but preference was given to the Russian Orthodox Church and other religions were viewed with disfavor (Tash2010). In modern Russia, the Russian Orthodox and its role has been expanding within and outside Russia. Mitrokhin and Nuritova (2009) say that as the Orthodox has been powerful from the Communist rule and still they are at the forefront parallel to the state had the power to demanded the state to introduce "Foundation of Orthodox culture" into the secondary education system which was strongly against by other religions. The demand grew stronger and some regional authorities positively reciprocated to this demand and introduced it as a mandatory, which really undermined and discriminated other religious minorities.

The Russian Orthodox Church parishes which expanded far and wide from North Korea to UAE and from Australia to Norway are connected to globalization, intensive emigration from Russia and also the positive support of the government. Whether during the Soviet or now in Russia, the Tsarists or any leaders of modern Russia always sees the real electoral potential and political influence of the Orthodox Church that they always meet the demand that it deserves at any point of time. Krindatch (2006) and Bacon and Wyman (2006), acknowledge the growing importance of the Russian Orthodox and also the relation between the Orthodox Church and State.

The Orthodox Church is not only independent but it also has a great influence upon the state. By the beginning of the 19th century the Russian Orthodox Church not only became a national but also nationalized church with its clergy as state employees. Russia's 1997 legislation which emphasizes the cooperation between the State and religious organization in different spheres takes into account the degree of social and historical significance of the specific religious community in the context of Russian society. This legislation immensely enhanced the status of Orthodox as it was the dominant religion historically and further any bill passed by the State greatly favors the Orthodox Church.

Tasch (2010) seeks to understand the increasing importance of Orthodox Christianity in Russia for the definition of their majority's national identity which may affect the status of other religious minorities in Russia. The provisions of 1993 Constitution and the 1996 Conception of State National Policy defined the Russian as a state of mutual co-existence of diverse religious groups but the Russian government contradicted these provisions by elevating the status of the Russian Orthodox. The law which was adopted in 1997 entitled "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association" which declared Russia a secular state and freedom for the citizens to choose and practice was conversed and it acknowledged that Orthodox Church had "a special role" in development of Russia, in the formation and the development of its spirituality and culture". All these preferences given to the Orthodox threatened and negate the equality of non-Orthodox religions. On the more pragmatic side, according to Vassiliev-Glinski (2001), the Russian Orthodox was granted a privileged position in the country which is close to the status of the official government church, exemplified by its predecessors under Romanov Empire. Also this was further reinforced under Vladimir Putin when the Education Ministry openly agreed to the introduction of the Russian Orthodox theology into the university curricula.

Muslims, being the second largest religion, and considered as a religious minority in Russia had began to raise their voice in demanding their rights against the state and in contemporary post-Soviet, Russia, their voices of resentment and agitation have become louder. With all these treatments or discriminations of the Russian state against the Muslims, in one way it led to the Muslims in Russia which is

heterogeneous society triggers them to come together and be united. Also all these important privileges being given to the Russian Orthodox and Muslims being driven to the peripheral status helps the Muslim in developing the consciousness of separate statehood or the feeling of nationalism among them. Ever since the invasion of the Tatars, Muslims had never been in terms or had any good relation with the state and Russian Orthodox. The Muslims were never considered as a part of Russia, as it was believed that Muslims as a religion was brought by some foreigners with their invasion in Russia. Also, the idea of nationalism and identity was to be built by the inherent ideas and principles of Russianness, where the Muslims were discriminated and demeaned despite its important roles played by them and the truth being unfolded by the history, they are ignored by the state.

The whole idea of identity, and statehood and nationalism revolves around with the idea of “Russification” irrespective of other religions, cultures or identity. So the quest for the Muslim to have greater autonomy, self-determination, to shape and retain their culture and identity, and the rights to be recognized by the state led the Muslims to enter a new set of relation with the state and the predominant Russian orthodox. It can be said that all this new set of Muslim relation with the State also determines the Russian State in harnessing or deteriorating their relationship with other state, especially with the Muslim states. In post-Soviet, Russia, the Orthodox Church has gained the entire important social and political position to influence socially and politically (Warhola and Lehning 2007 ). Also, the Orthodox Church has an immense influencing power to the state actor in taking important decision in terms of international or national. The 1993, Constitution of the Russian Federation states that Russia is a secular state, where it is clear that Russia has no religion as state’s religion. The 1997 law on “Freedom of Conscience and Religion Association” in its preamble has placed the Russian Orthodox Church and its important role played at a higher level above all other religions. And thus, all the leaders of the post-Soviet, Russia, have been constantly inclined towards the Orthodox for both spiritual growth and to gain more political powers. The Russian Orthodox Church became more powerful and active in post-Soviet Russia than during the Soviet period. It has become an important body parallel to the government in decision making of the state. The Orthodox Church has been participating in the administration of the state. It has

become an active agent and has become so vocal that it has the power to decide Russia's internal and foreign policies. As the state had given special status to the Orthodox Church, it has remained very cooperative and supportive to the state. The Orthodox Church gave full support to the increasing power of Putin and this shows the increasing relation between the state and the Orthodox Church.

The inclined activities of Russian political leaders towards the Orthodox Church made other religions feel alienated and it really negates the whole notion of equality of all religion. It became inevitable for other religious minorities to raise the question of equality of all religion, and it also prompts them to challenge the State's structure and institution and the whole concept of Russia's secularism. And it also raises some essential questions like, what constitute a nation or nation-state? How does one nation form its national identity? Are nation and ethnos the same? Does a state really need a state religion to be called as a State? With all these special privileges and status being given to the Russian Orthodox by the state, the church began to expand substantially by opening up new ones or rebuilding the old ones which has been dismantled during the communist rule. Numerically, more than 50 percent of the Russian population follows and practices Russian Orthodox religion, where they tend to feel and even impose upon others that the Russian Orthodox bears the real symbols, which had fought and stood in the making of Russian statehood and nationhood, thus Russian Orthodox Church symbolize the real national identity of Russian state.

### **Muslims During Perestroika and Glasnost**

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, the economic, social and political condition of the Soviet Union was almost close to the condition of an irreparable state. To be very concise the Soviet system was facing a wide array of political and social problems. On March 11, 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev took the rein of Soviet Political system, he was the fourth Soviet leader in less than three years. The Soviet politics in the 1980s was a period of uncertainties and also at the same time a period

for transition. The ruling Soviet oligarchy was faced with the need to overcome a number of problems that have been developing for years, both at home and at the international arena.

Moreover the frequent change of leadership in the Soviet Union led to a structure crisis. Soviet Union has been a state where different political leaders, with no continuity of its previous predecessors and successors in terms of their structures and model of its institution, and also the manner in which they executed their policies in the realm of politics and social aspects remained widely different. And in the same manner their political stature before the public remained totally different between its predecessors and successors. As different leaders with different ideologies, principles and semi-authoritarian model have ruled Soviet Union, and had ruled it according to their will without accommodating the opinion and ideas of its citizens. Very often they violated the norms and principles which were laid down by the state. Gorbachev, right after he came to power was placed where he was indecisive about the nature of its political structure and institution that he has to endorse it.

After the Second World War, Soviet Union along with US became the super power and has dominated in the realm of international affairs and politics. Soviet Union, once a super power was driven to a state that its socio-political condition of the Soviet was at its worse and way behind when compared to the West. The Cold War between the Soviet Union and U.S. which has dominated the whole international politics for decades was purely an ideological conflict between Socialism and Capitalism. The two most important factors in which the Soviet faced a wide array of social and political problems was that the political nature of the Soviet, which was highly centralized and the arms race with the U.S. As Soviet Union was competing with the U.S in arms race and forming allies with other States, the state tend to give more priority and investing more capital on arms and ammunitions. This race proved to be very costly and did a colossal damage to the Soviet in every aspect. The arms race had not only drained out all its wealth, but it also destabilized Soviet's political system and institution. Then, the nature of the Soviet Union in its structure and institution were highly centralized with little or no freedom at all for the individuals.

Thus, Gorbachev was left to choose its institution between conservative and liberals in rebuilding the torn-apart Soviet Union, and to bridge it up all with his new policies and its structures of the state. The ideas of his prescriptions for radical change were acceptable and welcomed by many of his countrymen, as they had understood the sluggishness and pathetic condition of their country that had terribly fallen into a disastrous state. The most common view of the Soviet political economic system which has been viewed and analyzed by different specialist was that the essence of the Soviet political-economic system remains unchanged by different successors ever since Stalin died in March 1953 (Bialer 1989: 41).

The collapse of detente had discredited the premises on which Brezhnev's policy had been based. Gorbachev as the new General Secretary tried to transform and bring remarkable changes according to the needs and direction of the Soviet public policy. Changes could not be brought suddenly; in fact Gorbachev needed time to establish himself as the new leader by not ignoring his opponents and building his supporters on the Politburo and Secretariat (White 1990). The impulse for reforms arose from one source above all others, and that was economic stagnation. Gorbachev was aware of the fact that the Soviet system could no longer continue with the path marked by the Brezhnev era, which was a period of stagnation that would only deteriorate Soviet's economy further and future of the Soviet Union.

He emphasizes on the need for radical reforms and changes of the political system, by not just democratizing it, but to emphasize the difficulties in bringing the right solution which was faced by the Soviet society. The political system which got established after the October revolution was undemocratic and it had subsequently undergone serious deformations, which eventually led to the political repression and the development of command-administrative rather than administrating in a democratic ways. The party has become too privilege, undemocratic, unorganized and unrepresentative, and were caught up in bureaucratic ways of decision making, which makes it more difficult to take up the right moves. Also the rigid and unprogressive

control of the government not only deterred the progress and development of political, economic and social life, but it had also become the main obstacle to perestroika

Gorbachev identified that a 'retarding mechanism' had developed in the economy, in which its origin and evolution could be traced back to when the Soviet political system was in tatter, also the situation of the Soviet Union was that every system, structures and setting of the political system proved ineffective and were slow in its pace of development and progress. This not only deteriorated economic performance, but it also hindered attempts to address these other social issues. It also created a legitimacy problem for the regime. By 1985 the legitimacy of the ruling CPSU rested not upon a charismatic personality leader but it was emphasized on the basis of any leader who would be successful in driving Soviet out of economic stagnation.

The reform program or the external reform for the Soviet Union was called by Gorbachev as 'restructuring' or 'perestroika'. The economic side of perestroika includes a wide range of reducing or changing the role of the central planning, in which decision-making was decentralized, the role of the market mechanism was expanded, and the scope and opportunities for the individuals were much enhanced in terms of services and production (Mason 1988). His new thinking encompassed a wide range of interest, about the nature of modern international relations, the nature of interdependence between different states, the interest of human which was above all other interests and to improve or enhance the relation with the United States which has been foggy (Holloway 1988/1989).

Therefore, the Soviet economic system was the first and most notably shaped and built as an instrument for the political control. Gorbachev made it very clear, while addressing the Plenum that the need for economic reform and the means of conceiving it only in close association with a far reaching 'democratization' of the Soviet political system. Gorbachev's main aim was to modernize the Soviet, Glasnost and democratization were used as instruments to mobilize the mass population against the bureaucratic system. The manner in which he holds his power, position,



administering the whole Soviet system and in appointing or removing the party officials was different from his predecessors. In internal affairs Gorbachev introduced the concept of “Glasnost” (openness) which was a complete break away from the authoritarian rule of the past of the Soviet Union. Glasnost led to greater freedom of speech, freedom of worship and a reduction in State control over individual lives.

It is understood that initially Glasnost was articulated and promoted at the highest level of Soviet administration, but it was meant to be applied very selectively within the Soviet state, and in this regard, Muslims in Soviet Union were not benefitted by the reforms of liberal-minded, Gorbachev’s glasnost or openness. As Soviet Union was not a nation-state or homogeneous state, there was an increase in the intensity of ethno nationalism among the Russian and the non-Russian which was driven to an extreme level where it really disturbed the Soviet leaders on the question what constitutes the identity and nationalism of Soviet Union. Gorbachev’s reforms were retaliated by number of protests and demonstrations across the whole Soviet Union.

As Soviet Union being geographically big, so the internal differences of its society were not small as former Soviet Union comprises of many nationalities with vast diverseness which posed a great threat to the integrity and interest of the former Soviet Union. Many nationalities were against the Russian and they were asserting their own identity and nationalism, demanded greater autonomy in social and political life which resulted in many communal riots. All these anti-Russian demonstrations and protests posed a great threat to Gorbachev’s reforms (Lapidus 1989). The last leader of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev ushered the Soviet Union into a new liberal world. His reforms “Glasnost” reformed the Soviet society and paved the way for democratization. Though, his Glasnost not only opened up for the freedom of expression and religion, but it also reduces the role of KGB and the problem of nationalities was put at the forefront of the Soviet politics through public debate, discussion and freedom given to the media. But, on the other hand the assurance of his reforms ‘glasnost’ was not extended for the whole Soviet society, the Muslims were not changed by his reforms and though his liberal policy on religion reached the

Muslims section but it arrived very late. Like, for instance, the important moderate policy and approach towards the Islam reached Uzbekistan only in 1988.

By 1985 when Gorbachev assumed the leadership of the Soviet Union, the Muslim of the Soviet Union had suffered for more than five decades in the hands of the Communist rule with the anti-Islam campaign. The hopes and dreams of Islam have been shattered by the nature of the Soviet's structure and institutions. When Gorbachev came to power he was least interested in nationalities or any questions related to religion, but he was more interested in his reforms or rebuilding the whole system which was at risk and stagnant in all respects. With all the priorities being given to economic reforms, he sees the question of religion as a stumping block to all his reforms and also in building relationship with other nations. Gorbachev was not keen on religion, so, his approach towards Islam reflected the old perspective of the communist regime. When Russia was invaded by the Mongols, and when Islam was introduced in Russia by the foreigners the hostility feeling of Russian against the Islam had begun from this invasion. Gorbachev's approach towards the Muslims was not positive, like the old Communist regime he considered the Muslims as backward and corrupt, which will only halt his reforms that he had planned.

When he introduced his reforms, glasnost or openness, which was extended only for some sections of the society, and it was devised with a new level of technique to counter Islam and its influences, like in Uzbek society. Different professions, who are powerful and who can influence the masses invited in creating the awareness of new world in which they have to get rid of the old custom, tradition and practices. Also, scholars and academicians were given the space to harbor the thoughts in citizen of the Soviet to denounce and restrict the influence of Islam. Some held the harsh views on Islam, where Islam's doctrine, religious rite and principle were considered as harmful and dangerous for the well-being of the society and it will halt the path of development in the long run, and should not be tolerated at all (Hanks 2001). In 1987 when he launched for reforms in educational system, it was intended mainly to educate the Muslims, as he was aware of the fact that, there was a growing influence of Islam in all section of Soviet society.

The campaign of anti-Islam grew louder and bigger with the arrest of many Muslims leaders and also Soviet was aware of the consequences of its anti-Islam campaign which can really tarnish its image and would leave a bad impression to the whole world, especially the Muslim state and to the West. His glasnost, not only reached to the Muslim section late, benefit from it at very meager level, but on the other had for the Muslims the introduction of glasnost reignited the anti-Islamic campaign of the early 1980s. The call for the implementation of his glasnost was further reiterated by the party, like in Uzbekistan, campaign for the anti-Islamic program with the establishment of a committee based on the propagation of new Soviet tradition. Keeping in mind all these are important factors for the Soviet internal and external policies, Gorbachev began to show more liberal principles or more openness towards religion, including Islam.

Gorbachev was convinced that religion cannot be ignored in his Soviet society. Religion which can be used as a variable agent can really determine the development or deteriorate the integrity, polity and economy of a nation. Perestroika was mainly aimed at improving the economic condition of the Soviet Union, but the wave of religion was so strong that it remained a stumbling block for the economic development of Soviet. This hindrance for the economic development was a great concern for the whole Soviet. The need to bring positive changes in Soviet's economy was the paramount, as the economy had been shattered by different Soviet leaders with different ideologies and highly centralized structures and institutions which proved to be hazardous for the Soviet's economy.

Thus, Gorbachev was really determined to bring some favorable provisions for religion so that it paves the way for development in Soviet Union. So in his reforms, perestroika and glasnost, the Soviet policy towards religion softened and more relaxations were given to all religions. It was impossible during that period that the path to have a successful economic reform was not feasible without democratizing the whole system of Soviet, and in which it is inevitable as democratization has to unfold

the freedom to follow and practice any religion to the citizens. His reforms widened the scope and sphere of religion and at the same time there was resurgence of religion and its activities in Soviet Union once again. As mentioned earlier, Gorbachev was not that enthusiast when it comes to religion, but he was more concerned on economic development and to build more stable foreign policy with other states. He was compelled to grant more freedom to religion as it always remained a threat to his reforms. Giving more freedom would gain the favorable condition for the Soviet to have a good relation with other nations and would automatically enhance Soviet's reputation.

Soviet Union had signed the Helsinki Act, where Article 16 of the final Act declares the freedom of religion and it was later approved on 1990. This Act was not helpful for all religions and Muslims were deprived of it. The new liberal law on policy was enjoyed by the Russian Orthodox, and Muslims benefitted the least from it which does not have any major impact at all. Nevertheless, with Gorbachev's experiment on new economic reforms and political liberalization, the scope and space for freedom of religion was also extended and widened. All his reforms in one way helps the Muslims to revive its long struggled and discriminated religion. With the withdrawal of restrictions on religious activities, Soviet Muslims were able to have more contacts with other Muslim states and in the same manner it also helps in bringing more Muslims missionaries and financial aid from other Muslims countries.

Eventually, Gorbachev's actions showed that he was indeed committed to a new, open approach to some religious groups living within his huge nation. Public pledges of more religious freedom and an unprecedented meeting with the pope in 1989 reinforced Gorbachev's standing as a general secretary of the Communist Party who was quite capable of discarding the harsh antireligious policies promulgated since the inception of the USSR. But glasnost', the vehicle for this transformation, was not promoted or applied in an identical fashion to all religious denominations within the Soviet realm. In the early months of 1986, approximately one year after Gorbachev became general secretary, some moderation of Soviet religious policy appeared on the horizon. Religious topics were addressed widely in the Soviet press and a more finely

shaded, variegated approach began to emerge. The clear beneficiary of this new approach was the Russian Orthodox Church, which underwent a remarkable expansion after 1985.

During the period 1985-86, 6228 new religious organizations registered with the Soviet administration, as required by law. Of that total, 4312, or 70 per cent, belonged to the Russian Orthodox. At the same time, 5500 new parishes were established and an even larger percentage of these were Russian Orthodox. Other religions or denomination who had fewer members than the Muslims greatly surpassed them in number of registrations. Baptists and Pentecostals, for example, had registered 2841 groups as of July 1990, while Muslim registrations numbered only 1103 - less than half that figure. This imbalance was not due entirely to differences in tolerance on the part of the Soviet administration, of course. Evangelical Christians, perhaps because of a highly organized administrative structure and a focus on proselytism, already had 2537 congregations registered before the Gorbachev era. Yet Soviet Muslims, unlike these smaller Christian groups, possessed an officially created and officially sanctioned administrative apparatus, which should have facilitated the registration of new groups.

Nevertheless, in July 1990 the Seventh-Day Adventists of the USSR had almost half as many registrations as Soviet Muslims and the Lutherans more than half, although neither of these denominations had even one tenth of the numerical strength of the Muslims. Muslims registered with the Soviet government in much smaller numbers than expected for a variety of reasons. The most important was probably the aggressive, sometimes virulent, stance by the Kremlin, including by Mikhail Gorbachev personally, towards Islam in the USSR. Although he was openly conciliatory towards the Russian Orthodox Church during the first years of his administration, Gorbachev was deliberately hostile towards Islam.

By late 1986 much of the anti-religious propaganda aimed at the Russian Orthodox and other Christian denominations was diminishing in both volume and shrillness; simultaneously, however, both the Uzbek and the Russian press in Uzbekistan (and other Muslim regions) maintained a high level of hostility against Muslim traditions and castigating any who observed them, especially Communist Party members.

Initially then, Gorbachev followed a dual-track policy. Such a divided approach was not wholly unexpected, given the long history of conflict between mostly Christian Slavs and Muslims in the region. Unlike Russian Orthodoxy, Islam, with its strong external affinities and origins, represented a clear danger to the Soviet Union. Islam had served as the main force uniting or consolidating Afghan tribes against the Soviet Army, enabling them to battle that force to a stalemate, and in the mid-1980s the possibility of the conflict spilling across into Soviet territory was undoubtedly real.

With all these facts and the close allies of Islam with other neighboring Muslim states, it became a great concern for the Soviet state in regards to giving freedom to religion and its activities without any restriction and regulation by the state. Thus, Gorbachev was reluctant in extending his liberal reforms of religion and at best was determined that he could not afford the luxury of extending religious glasnost' to the Muslim regions and instead chose to limit the scope of reform there. The increasing intensity of ethno nationalism among Russians and non-Russians alike, sometimes taking extreme and chauvinistic forms provoked increasing alarm among Soviet citizens and leaders, and it has also precipitated a sharp controversy over Soviet policy toward the "nationalities question" and over the nature and future of the Soviet federal system itself. Nationalist feeling also took hold in the Soviet republics of Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Where, Gorbachev's unleashing of accidental force would ultimately destroy the Soviet Union.

## **Muslims During the 1990s**

The Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, and it happened under the last leadership of united Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev. The disintegration of Soviet Union gave birth to new state, Russia. It was inevitable for the disintegration of the Soviet Union as the growing differences within and outside Soviet Union could not be checked or controlled at that particular time and given conditions. The turmoil and chaos created by the failure of the Soviet system which led to its disintegration was watched by the whole world, especially by the West which declared that socialism had failed in the Soviet Union or socialism failed the Soviet Union. Disintegration of the Soviet Union

was a big landmark in the history of the world, as the disintegration unfolds a new phase of settings in international politics. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the West tends to come to the conclusion that with the disintegration of Soviet, socialism has also come to an end or has withered away with Soviet Union.

Boris Yeltsin became the first president of new the state, Russia. He is not only the first president but the first in the history of Russia to be freely and constitutionally elected leader of Russia. He has a towering figure of his time when he presided over the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the demise of the Communist Party. Like Gorbachev, Yeltsin was also placed in a new state, where Russian has never been placed before socially, politically and economically. He was completely opposed to the highly centralized structures and administration of Soviet Union which was obsolete and it cannot be accommodated in his reforms and policies for both national and international level. So, unlike his predecessors, who has adhered to the highly centralized form of administration, according to him the highly centralized model of institution and its execution could not bring positive changes in Soviet society. He was determined to break away from all these conventions and traditional practices of the Soviet, and ready to endorse and introduce the whole new concept of liberal form of administration into the new Russia.

Boris Yeltsin (1931-2007) served as the president of Russia from 1991 until 1999. Though he was entrenched to a Communist Party member for most of his life, he eventually endorsed the institution which will be built under the principle of democracy, and the idea of liberal market reforms in new state, Russia. He was the man who played an instrumental role in the collapse of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin won two presidential elections, the first of which occurred while Russia was still a Soviet republic. He was successfully in ushering Russia into a new form of state, where Russian society was opened up for positive changes and citizens were given more freedom. Despite all his positive reforms his tenure faced economic hardship, increased corruption and crime, a violent war in the breakaway republic of Chechnya, and Russia, once a superpower state with immense power gradually began to lose its influencing power in the realm of international affairs and politics. He was indecisive about the forms of government that he had undertaken. The democratic form of

government that he had established was incomplete in real terms of democracy and his trends of executing his power was unconstitutional and did not adhere to the principle of democracy.

Yeltsin's predecessor, Gorbachev, the man behind in liberalizing the Soviet Union for the first and ending the long cold war, tried his reforms keeping intact the integrity, and principles of Communist party. Whereas on the other hand Yeltsin did the other way round. He helped break the party and the state's hold over the Russian people. As he was the head of the state, the rein of power to control was in his hand, where he had tremendously influenced his eminent political leaders and other ministers in accomplishing to gain more power and to remain unchallenged. By late 1991, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus have unanimously signed an agreement for the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States. This agreement challenged the existence and legitimacy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic. The resurgence of nationalist movement was widely extended in all parts of the Soviet Union, which posed a great threat for the State. As different leaders with different gestures and objective, mainly to get a stable platform for power were involved in all these struggles for reasserting their political rights and self-determination, the state became a mere passive spectator as the waves of nationalism and separate statehood grew stronger and gained tremendous momentum. All these powerful movements for nationalism by the non-Russian groups had a serious negative impact on the integrity and pose a great challenge to the sovereignty of the state, where the state could no longer function smoothly and were left with no other alternative but to disintegrate it.

When Yeltsin was elected as the president of the RSFSR in 1990, he was encouraging the nationalist movement and consciousness among the union republic in an attempt to deteriorate the image and political status of Gorbachev, to be more concise to weaken the power of Gorbachev and his government. He denounced the idea of Gorbachev, and he declared that the Soviet would not comply with Gorbachev's obsolete idea of suppressing against those union republics who want to secede from the Soviet Union. As he was determined to weaken the status and political strength of Gorbachev, he signed a treaty with Ukraine in 1990 to recognize and acknowledge the



sovereignty of each other. He also made an alliance with Estonia to strengthen their strategy in weakening the strength of the central government (Dunlop 1993).

The Soviet Union a multicultural society, composed of different nationalities with different entities, and they are all different in their own ways. The tenure of Yeltsin resonated with the call and claim for new nation and the feeling of nationalism reverberated among the Soviet republics as soon as Soviet Union got disintegrated. The relation between the Russian and Muslims have been hostile for a very long time since the Mongols invaded Russia, and at the same time the invasion of Muslims in Central Asia. With the invasion by the Russian, the fate of Muslims has been left with the Russian. Though the Muslims were silent and submissive to the Russian even during the Communist regime, but the feeling of resentment or nationalism and to right to self-determination has been there with the Muslim for ages. When the Soviet Union was on the verge of disintegration the resurgence of nationalism and demand for separate statehood among the Muslims republic became much stronger. The presidentship of Boris Yeltsin was hovered by the awakening of the feeling of nationalism among the Muslims. The awakening of nationalism among the Muslims was triggered by Yeltsin, as he tries to weaken Gorbachev's government by giving the liberty to its various groups in RSFSR, like the right to self-determination.

Yeltsin's policies and its execution during his rule, and the liberal outlook in granting and encouraging other Soviet Republic and even the non-Russian the right to secede or the option to join the RSFSR simply resonates as the struggle for power. His liberal outlook towards the Muslim was a gesture of gaining more power and political platform. He even declared a provision guaranteeing the right of every citizen to self-determination according to the compatibility, norms and practices of the society (Walker 1996). The entire leniencies shown towards the other Soviet republic states really deteriorated the image, status, political stature and power of Gorbachev. The demand for the right to self-determination or the feeling of nationalism arose not because of the hostile relation that they had shared with the Russian throughout in the history of Russia, but it also came because of the economic and political disarray which have been shattered during the united Soviet Union period. Thus, during the

leadership of Yeltsin, the economic disarray of the new state, Russia, was done by the dissolution of the Soviet Union which eventually aggravated the Muslims to become more vocal and vibrant in claiming their right to self-determination.

Boris Yeltsin's presidency witnessed a strong awakening of nationalism among the Muslims. The main concern during his leadership was the awakening of nationalism mainly in the Muslim republic of Chechnya and Tatarstan. The concern for the awakening of this Muslim republic nationalism was that, the role and importance of religion came to the fore. They began to assert their rights by unifying themselves under the growing consciousness of religion, and in which they tried to promote Islam and. Muslims communities were also demarcated according to their rituals and practices. The Muslims in Russia are heterogeneous and therefore the demands of Muslims society in Russia are not uniform. Most of the demands made by the Muslim were more of autonomy for cultural and administrative and not for complete statehood or complete independence which will remain as a subject of international law. So within the Muslims in Russia, a stiff competition or rivalries exist, like ethnic rivalries between Tatars and Bashkirs. This existence of rivalries led to the formation of different political groups. The formations of political group help them to have the feeling of oneness and also help them for the growth and consciousness of nationalism. With all these feelings of rivalries among the Muslims, there was a constant contest and they became more hostile in every aspect.

Yeltsin's approach towards the Muslims can be analyzed through his policies towards the rise of Muslims nationalism, mainly the republic of Chechnya and Tatarstan. The rise of Chechen nationalism posed a great challenge to the federal center. Then, Chechnya-Ingush, under the leadership of Dzhokar Dudaev, formed a self-proclaimed Chechen National Congress, and with self-proclaimed autonomy began to elect and declare its own executive committee. Dudaev's leadership and his execution of policies became more radical as he began to seize control of the republic's Supreme Soviet building. He did not pay any heed to the warnings given from Moscow from conducting any illegitimate election, and instead he contested and won the presidential election in 1991 (Asyuev and kharchenko 1999).

With this election, he declared the state sovereignty of the Chechen Republic. Yeltsin retaliated to Dudaev by sending 650 troops to enforce a state of emergency in Checheno-Ingushetia in November 1991. "Dudaev was ready to denounce Yeltsin's decree and mobilized thousands of armed supporters to challenge the troops. The troops withdrew when Russian lawmakers and the Kremlin made it clear that they did not support military action in the region. So the first attempt using oppressive measures to subside the sentiments of nationalism among the Chechen was a failure as it was not supported by Yeltsin ministers and Kremlin. Again, Yeltsin responded to Dudaev by blocking any aid, economic and political from any external agent. This blockade devastated the condition of Chechens and this led to a political chaos, and opposition began to challenge the leadership of Dudaev. The opposition not only challenges his leadership but began to form an alliance with Russia. The condition of Chechens, which was not stable, was as an issue for Yeltsin.

In 1994, Russian military intervention was made again in Grozny, which was bombarded and destroyed. The Chechen refused to surrender and did not comply with Yeltsin's order. Yeltsin was aware that Dudaev will strike it back again in the future with his guerilla warfare technique. He was concerned about its influence to neighboring Caucasus and other neighboring states by appealing to the Islamist sentiments. Yeltsin was reluctant to grant them the right to secede to Chechen, as unlike the Soviet Constitution, the Russian Constitution, Article 42 says, "The state unity of the Russian Federation will be secured by the integrity of its territory...and the territory of the Russian Federation will be integral and indivisible".

Dudaev was emboldened and encouraged as other fifteen republics were given the right to secede and had gained their own sovereignty and statehood, and at the same time the hostility between the Muslims and the Russian prompted to secede from Russia. For Yeltsin, Chechen became very important because of its geographic location and its richness in oil and petroleum resources which made him to halt them from seceding it from Russia (Dash 1995). The movement of nationalism in Tatarstan though got the flare to some extent but it got resolved peacefully unlike Chechens. With the ratification of 1993 constitution both side agreed to look into the matters which concerned the most and also to establish a cordial relationship with the federal

government. With this ratification, Tatarstan was approved as a state united with the Russian Federation. Tatarstan, under the leadership of Shaimiev agreed to this agreement with Russia. Tatarstan being a landlocked republic surrounded by Russia. Though Yeltsin succeeded in executing some of his policies against the rise of Muslim nationalism, but he failed in stopping the secessionist movement in Chechen. His notion of democracy and its execution did not comply with the basic principles of democracy. He did not pay any respect to his executives, and most of the decisions were taken by him, and the idea of liberalization and decentralization was already drawn by Gorbachev through his political and economic reforms, Yeltsin just pursued it to bring changes in new Russia (Gidadhubli 2007).

## **Muslims under Putin**

Yeltsin was the first president of Russia who was elected constitutionally and at the same time the first to be resigned from his office. Yeltsin's successor, Putin retired from KGB after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991. Then, he became a staunch supporter of a liberal politician, Antoly Sobchak, but it was a fleeting political career as Antoly was defeated in 1996. In 1998, Putin was invited by the then president Yeltsin at Moscow to be a part of his administration. Within a short span of time Putin's political career escalated to a new level by promoting him as the prime minister as the then prime minister Sergey Stupashin was ostracized by Yeltsin. As Putin possessed the qualities of far-sightedness and decisiveness, his stature before the Russians began to take a new promising turn as he had impeccably handled the secessionist groups in Chechnya. Citizens of new Russia were concerned about the impulsive and irrational behavior of Yeltsin, and he was faced with rapid deterioration in the governing power of his administration with the rise of secessionist movement in Chechnya and Tatarstan. Yeltsin abruptly resigned as the president paved the way for Putin to become the head of the post-Soviet Russia.

Putin not only captured Grozny, but at the same time he enormously won the faith and trust of Russian citizens as an ideal successor of Yeltsin. The support of the masses was there with him. There was a huge support by the Russians in his plan for

waging war against the Chechens, as the relation between the Russians and the Chechens were hostile, and had faced many gory incidents. Thus, Putin's idea of war was approved by many, and in which it eventually enabled him to win the presidential election in 2000.

Post-Soviet Russia, which is a multicultural state, faced the harsh of its cultural differences where the claims of one ethnic group began to clash with the claims of other and it also posed a great threat to the sovereignty and integrity of the state. It would be too naïve to have the assumption that Russia as a non-nation state, liberal modern state would be able to accommodate all the claims of its minorities or to bring it to equilibrium. No modern state is absolute in executing its developmental policies or to maintain absolute peace with its existing diversities. So, inevitably some claims of a particular minority have to be granted first and others claim has to be ignored depending the gravity of its situation and taking into an account of the effects which can become a threat to the state. In Russia, minorities, especially the Muslims communities in North Caucasian region including Chechnya were the main threat to the sovereignty of the state. The socio-economic condition of the North Caucasian republic is very poor. There is a mass unemployment, the infant mortality rate is very high, mass of the population under poverty and the level of education is very low. All these miseries of the Muslims communities in north Caucasian made them to agitate, to go against the state, to secede from the state, and at the same time all these poor socio-economic conditions provided a favorable situation to breed any extremist group ready to take any violent steps.

The poor socio-economic condition of the Muslims in North Caucasus region triggers its denizens to take extreme steps and endorsed the idea of terrorizing the whole state and its citizen as the Muslims felt that the state had ignored their resentment and discriminated them continuously. Russia had witnessed the retaliated acts of the Muslims, in which they have carried out many terrorist activities on different times and space. As these activities of terrorist had posed a great threat not only locally but globally, now the world tends to pay more attention as it is a matter of great concern for the security system of a state. Thus in Russia, the relation between the state and Muslims has come to the fore in which the state tends to give more space to

accommodate the demands and also ready to embrace a new relation with the state. The poor socio-economic condition of the Muslims is the main factors for breeding grounds of terrorist elements and movements, and it has come to the notice and also has been acknowledged by different political leaders. Russia had tumultuous period of time in regards to its relation to the minorities, especially the Muslims minorities.

The Russian state or any other state in modern and contemporary period is inherent to act as an agent in order to safeguard the life of its citizens and their property. The discourse on the origin of state is concerned, ranging from Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, the main reason for the existence of a state is to protect the rights, life and property of its citizen. The Russian state which is corrupt and inefficient fails to provide the necessary protection to its citizens, especially the minorities who are at the receiving ends can immensely aggravate the situations into internal conflicts or ethnic conflict. With the laws being kept at bay, the Russian state continues to be more aggressive and the trends of using violence in resolving conflicts provide the fertile ground to breed more growth of extremist movement and to secede from the state (Teper and Course 2014).

Leadership of Putin unfolded many drastic changes in Russia's economy. Like Gorbachev, Putin emphasized the need to liberalize the soviet society or modern state, where he manifested it by incorporating the liberal ideas into his execution of policies and more spaces were given to the individuals to determine one's fate and professions. When Putin became the president, he was able to capture ample power and maximized the decree of his authority so that he drives Russia into progressive nation. With all these promises being made to the citizens he was able to gain the support of the masses. The idea of Putin in modernizing the Russian state through the agent of liberal ideas was not conducive to the old and rich tradition of the Russian society. On the contrary, this liberal idea proved to clash with its traditional values, and the degree of compatibility between the liberal ideas and old social-traditional values remained at a great distance. However, as Putin was completely a reformist mainly in Russian economy, he was adamant to change his mind. Thus, he was determined to bring the needful changes at the cost of refuting or distorting the old traditional, customs and practices of the Russian society. The forces of the market

were allowed to unleash and take its own course in determining the fate of the individuals, so long as it does not hamper the basic life of the Russian society (Sakwa 2008).

On the question of idea of nationalism, Vladimir Putin's view was more of amorphous as the pluralism of Russian society intertwined with many difficulties, and in which it can lead to a complete aberration from normalcy. The idea of unifying factor to develop the idea of a nation was ambiguous in Russia, which is a pluralist society. Putin acknowledges that the Russian state lacked the whole notion of the idea of nationalism among the citizens. Concisely, the whole idea of nationalism according to Putin was to move forward with the idea of liberalism, and modernizing the Russian society. Like any other Russian leaders, Putin faced the difficulties in dealing the Russian society, which is a multicultural society, with different ethno, cultural, linguistic, and multi-religious confessions. As mentioned earlier, ever since the Muslims conquered Russia, then and now, their relationship has been intertwined with hatred and hostilities. And with the invasion of Central Asia by the Russian, the fate of the Muslims has been changed drastically, and they were reduced as the largest religious minorities in Russia. Putin's approaches towards the Muslims were not much different from his predecessors. His harsh treatments towards the Muslims were propelled by the terrorist's activities of Islamic militancy in different parts of Russia. Putin's main concern towards the Muslim was the Islamic militancy from the north Caucasus, Chechnya. Muslims in Russia are not a homogenous society. It can be said that Muslims communities are distinct, in which the existence of its differences are made by the geographical location.

According to Malashenko (2009), the Muslim society in Russia is also a heterogeneous society. The Tatars and the Bashkir are the two large groups, where they have their own religious sects, history and different relation with the state. Also, Muslims in Russia are further divided into three groups based on their geographical location. The first region is the Siberia and the Far East, Central region along the Volga River, the Urals, and Moscow and the third is the Muslim residing in the North

Caucasus (Gainutdin, 2005). The relation between the Russian and Muslims were directly or indirectly affected by the increased Islamic movement in Chechnya.

As Russia faced the horror of different terrorist attacks, the attacks were directly or indirectly related to the treatment of the state upon Chechnya. With all these attacks it flares the relation between the state and the Muslims. Thus, Putin was determined to take harsh steps in his approach toward the terrorist acts or Islamic Militancy in Chechnya. He publicly denounced the outrageous act of the Islamist Militancy and branded their actions as none other than terrorism which will distort the sovereignty and integrity of Russia. However, on the bright side Putin was aware of the fact that all Muslims cannot be branded as terrorists. Putin gesture towards the Muslims was to take the rein of controlling the Muslims institutions, in which it will enable him in executing his highly centralized policies in tackling the terrorist activities.

His highly centralized policies paved the way for him in hand-picking some leaders in Muslims institutions and removing the ones whose outlooks were incompatible with his liberal ideas, orthodox or whose beliefs and principles are highly entrenched in the doctrines and dogmas of Islam. Putin's policies towards the Muslims were more of in controlling and regulating the activities of the Muslims as a kind of preventive measures in curbing the activities of the terrorist activities. And it was clear that the Russian population had been living in terror and traumatized by all the terrorist activities of the Islamic militants. He was the leader to identify the nexus of Islamic insurgencies in different parts of the world. On July 6th 2000, in an interview with Paris Match, he noted: "We are witnessing today the formation of a fundamentalist international, a sort of arc of instability extending from the Philippines to Kosovo. In relation to Chechnya, he added, 'Europe should be grateful to us and offer its appreciation for our fight against terrorism even if we are, unfortunately, waging it on our own'. Although he repeated this warning at the G-8 summit in Okinawa later that month, it was not until 9/11 that western leaders took note" (Russell, 2005: 109).

On the political structures of the Russia, Putin was determined to alter it, and strongly supported to restructure the state structures and its institutions. When he was the



prime minister the simmering issues of Chechnya propelled the need to empower more on the authority of the federal. He then organized a large Russian military operation to restore in the north Caucasus. President Vladimir Putin announced for a "radically restructured" political system that would embolden him to execute his authority by putting to an end of conventionally electing the governors and independent lawmakers. Under his plan, Putin would appoint all governors to create a "single chain of command" and allow Russians to vote only for political parties rather than specific candidates in parliamentary elections. Putin characterized the changes as enhancing national cohesion in the face of a terrorist threat, while critics called them another step toward restoring the tyranny of the state 13 years after the fall of the Soviet Union. It was a retaliating step against the attack of a school in Beslan by the Islamic militants or terrorist. Russia witnessed several attacks in 2004, in which the casualties escalated and more than 400 civilians were killed in just a span of two months. With all these gory incidents that had happened in Russia, Putin addressed the nation in which he proclaimed that Russia had been declared war by the terrorist significantly threatening the integrity and sovereignty of Russia (Gidathubli 2004).

As mentioned earlier Putin was not much different from his predecessors on his approaches towards the Muslims. With the increase of Muslims population, especially immigrants from Central Asia into Russia, there is a general perception that the Muslims are considered as the unwanted and dangerous elements of the society, and they are not included from the national collective. All these negative images which have been harbored in the minds of the Russian against the Muslims were further reiterated by Putin in his presidential re-election campaign acknowledging some of the voices against the immigrants in non-compliance with the Old Russian traditions and culture, and discrediting the state's policies. Putin further extended by endorsing the idea of implementing new immigration policies which will be more rigid and at the same time to shape a new national identity within the new borders. This new national identity was to be built upon through the consciousness of negative identity construction, where the Russians were to have the feeling of oneness, and the Muslims were viewed through the prism of hatred and as a threat which demarcate them from each other (Teper and Course 2014).

The North Caucasian republics were kept at the peripheral state and have been ignored by the state. The North Caucasian region has been suffering from poor socio-economic conditions with respect to high level of mass unemployment, illiteracy rate and infant mortality rate at an alarming level. With all these poor socio-economic condition they are the most backward region in the country in every respect. In Russia, as the Russian had been sharing a hostile relation with Muslims ever since the Muslims invaded Russia, and the Muslims, especially from the North Caucasus was a matter of great concern for the unity and integrity of Russian state. The backwardness and the hostility shared with the state, the Muslims from the North Caucasian were vehemently reluctant to be a part of the Russian state, and were in favor of seceding it away from the Russian state so that they gained their rights to self-determination and form their own state according to which it suits them. Thus the Muslims reiterated their resentment against the state by waging war against the state through an agent of all terrorist activities and strong nationalist movement which was strongly against by the Russian state. The state, responded to the resentment and agitations by changing the structures of its power and institution. Putin altered the whole system by empowering more authority, supremacy and power to its federal, and warned stern actions against any republic demanding to secede it from Russia or any separatists movement.

During the first three years of Putin as the president, the Kremlin had pressed its anti-insurgency campaign with the growing popular support by its citizen for negotiations with the Chechen separatists. But it could not be executed or the negotiations with the Chechen separatists were not successful as the terrorist attacks of Moscow and Grozny in 2002. The Russian state was in fear that, the main objectives of these separatists group were to dismantle the whole structures and institutions and to build their own state based on Sharia law. Putin in accordance to his new administration followed a policy of recruiting and appointing so that his administration can tracked and regulate the activities of the Muslims of Chechens. With Russia's military campaign, Putin tried to establish a new elite group in the republic who can be entrusted and loyal to the Russian state and at the same time ethnic Chechens were

recruited in state police force so that they maintain the important aspects of maintaining law and order. It was an alternative move to hammer out some positive solutions in which the simmering issues of the Chechens and its policies had been on the fore. This alternative policy of 'Chechenisation' was to divert the conflict of Chechens or to loosen the grip that holds a strong feeling of seceding it from the Russian Federation. This diplomatic policy of 'Chechenisation' was executed by appointing leaders of Putin's choice who are compatible to the state and does not discredit to the policies of the state.

The arbitrary power of Putin and his policy of 'Chechenisation' ostracized Mashkadov and his supporters for the political power and they were replaced by Mufti of Chechnya, Akhmad Kadyrov as the chief of Putin's administration. A stern statutory warning was made to all those who continue to support for the right to self-determination of the Chechens rather than the Russian were to be condemned and branded as terrorists. Chechnya's case flaunted the arbitrary power of Putin. He exemplifies his arbitrary power by dictating the FSB to take the control of the counter-terrorist operation away from the Ministry of defence, which comes under them. Concisely, the whole idea behind the policy of 'Chechnisation' was to hold the rein of control by the state with Putin's hand-picked Chechen leaders to subside the separatist and nationalist movement coated with the idea of bringing a long lasting political settlement in Chechnya (Russel 2005).

Putin's government tries to extend their legitimacy in Chechnya by announcing the plan to hold a fresh referendum in Chechnya, and according to the plan it proposes that, on a legal basis a new election to be held for forming a new government and to draft a new constitution of Chechnya. The new legislation guaranteed its citizen to practice their franchise right and to elect their leader according to their own will. Primarily, the intention of this new election was to delegitimize and undermine the influential persona of the last elected president of Chechnya, Mashkadov. Also, it was to redraft their constitution, which was to be replaced by offering an alternative constitution instead of their rather conventional constitution which was deeply entrenched on Islamic principles and doctrines. Thus the whole intention of Putin's policy in giving the rights to the Chechens to participate in the political process of

forming a republic government was to delegitimize and dismantle the whole administration of Maskhadov and replaced it by Putin hand-picked, Ahmad Kadyrov, as the head of the administration in Chechnya.

The constitution strongly upholds that Chechnya cannot be divided, shall remain united and cannot be alienated from the Russian federation. The administration of Putin was fully aware that, the simmering issues of Chechnya cannot be solved or would not be able to bring amicable solutions until and unless this region become fully fledged secular state or completely it has to be adhered to the principles of secularism. The administration of Putin prohibits the establishment of a particular religion or the privilege religion of a state. The nature in which Russia's approach toward the Muslims was a vertical one. This vertical approach is typically a conservative one in which the policy in consolidating the whole Muslims institutions, and in order to build a strong relation with state officials on national level. During Putin-Medvedev period the vertical distribution of power and selective engagement was only with the top Muslim officials rather than the whole range of Muslim civil society organizations (Braginskaia 2010).

The highly centralized administration of Putin not only tries to control the rein of power in administrating and imposing upon Chechnya administration directly from the Moscow but it also sabotaged the inalienable rights and sovereignty of Chechens. Throughout the presidency of Putin, the highest priority was given to the stability and the consolidation of power of the state. For instance like the policy of 'Chechenization' of Putin was to control, eliminate and regulate the autonomy of Chechnya region, it is apparent that Putin is a centrist and every contradictory program and his opponents were to be reconciled by his attitude of centrism. The nature of his leadership in which he has represented is contradictory to the main ideas and principles of democracy or in another way it has become a hurdle for the development of democracy, where the main positive energy in a multi-cultural society banks on the principles of democracy. His policies in many ways can be seen as a contradictory, incompatible and remained foggy to the system that he has built, and cannot be used these policies in bringing amicable solutions, but eventually it will only jeopardize the integrity and sovereignty of Russia (Sakwa 2008).

Like most of the leaders of the former Soviet Union who are authoritarian in administering the system, Putin leadership also represented a distinctive type of neo-authoritarian. Putin's escalating to power in connection to conflicts on different occasion, where his administration successfully seeks for the public opinion on waging a war and his emergence as a new authoritative ruler became a greater concern more than the simmering issues of the North Caucasus. His neo-authoritarian administration undermined the structures and institutions, refuted the idea and principles of democracy, weakened the civil society organizations, and the relations between or among interethnic and intercommunal prevailing within the Russian Federation (Jersild 2004). With the increased power of Putin, his administration completely undermined the separatist and Islamic forces which were reiterated by his idea of Chechenization, where it not only wanted to dictate and impose Moscow's command on Chechnya, but to suppress the nationalist movement and regional autonomy. This suppression of Putin was supposedly to reassert the prerogative rights of his administration and the state.

The policies of the British government in their approaches toward the Muslim in Britain, follows horizontal engagement which is contradictory to Russia's top-down approach in state-Muslim relations where security measures and religious minority affairs are controlled and regulated by through highly centralized policies. The relation between the state and Muslim are closely linked to the history of the Soviet Union where the administration of the Muslim shared a close ties with the state. But, concisely the relation of the state-Muslim are shaped and modelled on state-Church relation, where the privileges are being given to the predominant Russian Orthodox Church (Braginskaia 2012). The state-Muslim relations especially the North Caucasus region and the conflict with the Chechens has a great impact on Russia relation and its policies towards other the Muslim states. The impact of the Chechen conflict is evident that Russia was determined to withstand the treat of the Islamic militants by establishing strong centralized policies so that the administration and institutions of the Muslims are controlled according to tune and the right chord of the state.

Several attempts have been made during the leadership of Yeltsin with his policies of political liberalization and decentralization. He endorsed the idea of granting more autonomy to the Chechens but was completely against their demand of independence or to secede it from the Russian federation. With the state being more inclined and privilege status being given to the the predominant Russian Orthodox Church, the treatment of the Kremlin towards the Muslim minority were very discriminating, neglected, and were looked through the prism of suspicious and hostility. Muslim minorities remained belligerent to the Russian state. It has been attributed by some reliable sources that the demise of the Soviet Union occurred as Yeltsin wanted to ostracize the Union's Muslim republic (Glinski-Vassiliev 2001). Russian state was strongly against the attempt of the Chechens to secure its independence. Russian state retaliated to this with their military campaign which flared the hostility between the state and Chechens. Vladimir Putin's administration tried to justify all its action of military campaign to suppress the nationalist and separatist movement by proclaiming that they are waging war on terror.

All these preposterous acts and justification of Putin's administration on Chechens vehemently led to harbor among the Chechens the feeling of going against the state. It triggered the feeling of nationalist and separatist movement to a higher level and at the same time the state to ignored them which led to more instability in the region. Some Muslims in Russia feel that they have been alienated by the state, as they are seen as unwanted elements of the Russian society and they are neglected. Russian Muslims are not a homogenous community nor they are united under the umbrella of one force, Islamic identity, is still weak. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the question of religion came to fore, where religion became the means to legitimize in the structure of power and also a model of state-religion relation of Russia (Agadjanian 2001)

The conflict of Chechnya and the Russian state has posed a threat to the integrity and sovereignty of Russia. It has triggered nationalist and separatist movement in Muslim dominated region especially in the North Caucasus. Different leaders have implemented different policies in tackling the issues of the Muslims, especially Chechnya. Putin endorsed the policy of highly centralized policies of the state in

tackling the nationalist and separatist movement and Chechnya. Russia being a multicultural society like any other modern society had faced the brutalities of a multicultural society. It would be too naive to have the notion that an absolute modern or liberal society exists. Thus, Russia is not an absolute or ideal modern state. It cannot bring the impeccable justice nor it can accommodate all the differences and their demands. The state has to see that it provides the right conducive environment for different religious minorities to exist harmoniously or concisely to become more secular state.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

The inclusion of Islamic territories began with the Russian imperialism which conquered Kazan Khanate in 1552. Islam made significant contributions to the Russian society. In contemporary Russia, it has been relegated to a much lower status. The hostility against the Muslims began during the Tsarist period, continued in some sense during the Soviet period but increased further in the modern times. Most of the Russians have the notion that Muslims cannot be considered as indigenous or traditional religion as this religion is treated as an import from Arabs, Turks, Mongols and some other Muslim states. Waves of immigration from Central Asia further exacerbated this issue.

According to Balzer (2010), Islam is one of the traditional religions of Russia as it had first appeared in Derbent, which justifies its comparison to the Russian Orthodox. Caucasus region has been the centers of traditional Islam. Before the conquest of Tsarist ruler of Russia, Ivan IV, this region on the banks of the Volga River had already accepted Islam around tenth century and had included Bashkortostan into its domain. Islam played an important role in shaping and retaining the history, identity and culture in the formation of Russian statehood.

The role of the Russian Orthodox cannot be ignored and denied as it adapted to the ever changing policies and politics of different leaders in different period of Russian history. The Soviet regime, based on the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, considered religion as an ideology with the intention of exploiting the proletariat or the working class with its doctrine and principles. So religion was considered as the “opium” of the masses and thus it was against any role of religion in the state affairs. During the rule of the Soviet religion was in a precarious state as numbers of religious places were dismantled, regulated and even controlled by the state. Muslims being the



second largest religious minority in Russia became a victim. But this can be said with equal force about other religions which were also discouraged and regulated by the state. It would be wrong to argue that the Soviet regime gave preference to one religion over the other. It is a different matter that the Russian Orthodox because of its largest following could survive the onslaught of the state. In fact, some of the minorities were safer in the Soviet Union because of two reasons: distance from the Centre and the Soviet policy of protecting culture and traditions. Islam in Central Asia was safer than the Russian Orthodox in Moscow. Religious activities were camouflaged on the pretext of culture and local tradition in many of the Central Asian states.

It is a fact that Islam, like other religions, suffered during the Soviet rule. It weakened their consciousness and ability to form political organizations. They failed to revolt against the Soviet as they were weakly organized. The linguistic preference given to Russian also affected the religious culture of Central Asia. The process of Russification continued during the Soviet regime having a profound impact on Islamic culture.

In the Soviet years, it cannot be said that Islam was discriminated more, compared to the Russian orthodox. But the situation has changed in the contemporary Russia. Here there are instances of state giving preference to one religion over the other. There are a number of complains of Islam being treated as inferior to Russian Orthodox Church.

Russia is in the process of constructing its own nationalism. Being a multi-ethnic state, it cannot build a nation-state based on just one religion or identity. Any such attempt would be futile and dangerous. It has to take into account the aspirations of all the multi-ethnic groups. The Constitution of 1993 is by and large a secular constitution. It has number of provisions for the safety and welfare of the minorities. It grants equal rights to all the citizens with adequate safeguards have been provided for the growth and prosperity of minority culture. Minorities continue to enjoy the autonomy in their republics. There are also provisions for the cultural rights of the citizens. But the actual practices of the state are lacking in implementing the ethos and principles of the constitution. There are complains of discrimination by the Muslim and other minorities. It is also widely believed that the state policies, directly

or indirectly, favour the Russian Orthodox religion. This does not bode well for a multi-ethnic society of Russia.

In modern Russia, because of a number of terrorist activities, there are complains of the state keeping a strict vigilance in all the activities of the Muslims. The harsh policies of the state began with the power of state to control and regulate the religious institutions and activities of Muslims. Russia's engagement with Islam has demonstrated a variety of approaches ranging from co-option to assimilation and alienation. In some cases, the state was very accommodating as in the case of Agreement with Tatarstan in 1994. In the case of immigrants, states have promoted the policies of assimilation. But in the case of Chechnya, it appears to be a case of alienation and forced control.

Some of the authoritarian and centralizing tendencies are visible today. But centralization is an issue for the entire state of Russia and it is not only confined to state's approach towards Islam. The fact that Russia has yet to evolve into a vibrant democracy has affected the life of all communities there. The excessive powers of the president coupled with his control over the Duma through a dominant party system weaken the institutions of democracy in Russia. The party system is weak and the measures of vertical centralization have taken away the powers of many of the federal republics. The federal republics are controlled by the central government through governors and super-federal districts which have been created by Putin.

According to many analysts since the collapse of the Soviet Union, militant Islam remains the most immediate and serious political challenge to the Russian state. According to some analysts, there are now only two major players in Russian politics, and that is Putin's government and the militant Islam. While the domestic political party opposition to Putin ranging from right-wing liberals to the communist is still present in party form, it lost its importance after the rise of United Russia Party.

The growing adherents of various forms of radical Islam, with ability to use force in order to meet their anti-government objectives, are de-facto the only rival political force within the Russian federation in certain certain regions, especially North Caucasus. But as pointed out by Malashenko (2009), the Muslims in Russia are not uniform and they are not homogenous in any true sense of the terms. Some in North Caucasus are radical, but the majority is still moderate or indifferent. The Tatars and

the Bashkir are the two large groups which have accommodated well within the Russian society. Their average income is one of the highest compared to other communities.

Broadly, Muslims in Russia are divided into three groups based on their geographical location. The first region is the Siberia and the Far East, Central region along the Volga River, the Urals, and Moscow and the third is the Muslim residing in the North Caucasus (Gainutdin, 2005). Specific Muslims groups challenge the federal and local authorities, but the Muslim population as a whole is not politically united, mobilized and not capable of social action. The state began to treat the Muslim communities differently based on their geographical location and with the interest of the state by favoring the particular community or leader who were loyal to the state and do not bear any threat to the integrity and sovereignty to the Russian federation. The government tolerates what has been called Islamic revival and of late is making efforts to promote the interest of loyal Muslim elites by means of funding Islamic educational program and establishing official forums. This financial aid made the Muslim elites or communities to go against each other and actually compete among themselves for official recognition and favors from the Russian state.

In the 1990s, the relation between the state and Muslim deteriorated when Chechen tried to secede away from Russia. Also this hostility against the Muslims made Russia to consider Russian Orthodox as the favoured religion of the State (Glinski-Vassiliev 2001). Russia thus gave the privileged status to the Russian Orthodox Church and began to ignore, condemn and neglect the Muslims community in different social aspects. Economically, in comparison to the other religious communities, Muslims are more underprivileged. This poor socio economic condition of the Muslims communities in north Caucasian made them to agitate and to go against the state. Radical Islamic organizations grew rapidly in Caucasus. Poverty and unemployment among Muslims provided a fertile ground for extremist groups.

The Muslim did not only suffer from being economically neglected and discriminated by the state, they are at risk of losing their identity. As the Russian state is skeptical

about Muslims with all the terrorist activities that had happened in Russia the state identify nationality and identity on the basis of religion, and without a doubt it is based on predominantly Russian Orthodox Church. The policies of the State which is highly centralized show that the Russian government does not seem to have a clear-cut strategy for dealing with the Muslims. Its policy is generally reactive, combining repressive measure towards extremist groups, and reward for the cooperative Muslim elites Muslim.

It can be said that it is not only the state who had failed the Muslim in Russia, but the rivalries, disunity and diverseness within the Muslim have failed them too. The principle reasons for the apparent absence of Muslim unity are ethnic fragmentation and ethno regional differences, as well as the present stage of secularization of Muslim society in Russia. Restriction of political liberties, particularly strict supervision of mass media and the prohibition of regional parties, set further limits on articulation of political spirit, demands and the emergence of what is called political Islam, where the existing Islamic political trend have not disappeared , but have gone underground. The state should be aware of the fact that repressive measures cannot provide a long-term solution to the problem of alienation. The state must find a political solution to the problems in Chechnya. In Chechnya, it has failed to bring any amicable and long lasting solution to the problem. If the state tends to continue with its oppressive measures, then extremism under religious garbs are likely to grow.

In this sense, this research confirms the two hypotheses that we formulated for this research. Some sections of the Muslims, especially in North Caucasus, do feel discriminated. However, this cannot be said about all the Muslims in Russia. Tartars have done extremely well in terms of economic transformation and their assimilation into the Russian society. Secondly, this research also proved empirically that the general condition of Muslim community in terms of economic and social status is lower than the other communities. This has been due to two primary factors, the conflict in the North Caucasus and immigration of large number of Muslims from Central Asia who are involved in manual and unskilled jobs. It will take a longer time before these immigrants acquire the status of native Russians.

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