

# **A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOFT POWER DURING THE SOVIET AND POST SOVIET RUSSIA**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY*

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "A Comparative Study of Soft Power during the Soviet and Post Soviet Russia" submitted by me for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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## CERTIFICATE

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***“FOR THE LOVE AND PRAYERS OF MY ABALA AND AMMI”***

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance provided by my supervisor Prof. Arun Mohanty, whose wisdom and earnest dedication to his students has always been unsurpassed. His unwavering support and faith in me, kept me going even during the most difficult times while writing my dissertation. He has helped me in deepening my knowledge on the topic. I am therefore sincerely appreciative and thankful to him for presenting his valuable advices, suggestions and inspiration to me that guided me throughout my work. I am also thankful to all the faculty members of my centre, who with their humble suggestions helped me to carry forward with my dissertation.*

*My appreciation also extends to the support and assistance shown by CRCAS office's non-teaching staff Mr Amit Kumar and others who kept us updated with all the necessary information and notices. My sincere gratitude goes to JNU Central Library, which offers a huge collection of books which immensely helped me in writing my dissertation. I am thankful to all my friends for their support, care and encouragement. I am particularly thankful and grateful to Jigme for his uncompromising patience and guidance and above all for believing in me and for providing me with relevant information and materials whenever necessary. I am also truly thankful to Rajkumar and Saurav Sarmah for their sincere help and for clearing away my doubts regarding my topic.*

*Lastly, and more importantly, any work in life is incomplete without the unflinching faith in the sublime divinity of the Almighty and the blessings of one's family. I am truly thankful and grateful to my 'Ammi', 'Abala', my sisters 'Farzana', 'Sajida', 'Farida', 'Bushra', Uzma', my 'Bhaiya', my brother in laws and my two loving nephews 'Idris' and 'Haroon', for all the love and support that they have showered me with, their constant encouragement and for believing in me. Their love and support is what I needed throughout the period of writing my dissertation. All the limitations in this dissertation are mine alone and I humbly hope this work will be of help to many in the future.*

24. 07. 2014

TAHIRA BATT

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

International Relations have undergone changes with passing time which has had an impact on power. This can be seen from different dimensions. Power as we know is one of the most disputed concepts in International Relations. Political power can be described as the power that government and its organs- the police, bureaucracy and the law courts exercise. The Realist view does not take into account the notion of attraction and persuasion with regard to power. According to them a nation's influence in the matters of world lays in their tangible and coercive sources of power, that is basically its hard power (Gallarotti 2011: 4). However, it was Joseph Nye who came up with this new idea of "Soft Power" in contrast to "Hard Power" strategies which is based mostly on military might. This new concept of power therefore relies on sources like culture, values and foreign policy.

For a country like Russia, that has not totally evolved with its political values and there is still need for embracing more democratic practices such as freedom of speech, expression, transparency of governance and others; it is important to turn to culture and foreign policy as the main sources of its soft power formation. It should however keep in mind that political values also form one of the main sources of attraction and should not be neglected. As culture is also one of the main sources of soft power, countries that boast of a rich cultural heritage can enjoy the fruits of soft power. When culture is assorted with foreign policy, it becomes cultural relations where the government or the state of one state tries to build relations with other countries through the help of its culture. Here, both the sources of soft power come at play with one another.

Culture is a very broad concept and it cannot be restricted to any one interpretation. However cultural relations can be expressed in few categories through which people articulate with one another. The first category of cultural relations can be regarded as 'Funded culture'. By its name we understand that 'Funded culture' comes under the ambit of government or any other institution. It is mostly seen in performances such as ballet, visual arts, theatre and others. Funded culture can also be seen as a country's cultural diplomacy; hence boosts its soft power. It helps in promoting a country's culture through tourism. Secondly, there is 'Commercial culture' that is mostly promoted with



the help of market, for example that is seen in the case of America, where Hollywood and music help in promoting American culture and it is the same in the case of some Asian countries as well. Thirdly, there is 'Homemade culture' which mostly involves the talents of the people in promoting their culture abroad. Apart from these categorizations, there are a lot of other aspects of culture that help in creating international cultural relations. Food, radio and television, higher education and the like have all contributed in a country's promotion of culture abroad and in the process have boosted the soft power of a country (British Council 2010: 8-12).

Since, soft power is considered the brain child of Joseph Nye, it is necessary to understand what he considers as soft power and what he does not. He therefore clearly distinguishes soft power from hard power by describing the latter as "the ability to use carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will". Now here, by "carrots" he actually means the concessions such as reduction of trade barriers or providing military protection and by "sticks" he means coercion and threats. He however believes that they are not totally independent of one another. A change in the hard strategies, for example the weakening of its military power might affect its soft power or its image globally. However soft power is completely different from hard power as its main focus is on culture, values, and policies. What is therefore interesting is the kind of soft power that Russia will be employing or has employed in the past, as soft power of Joseph Nye is regarded as a "western construct" and cannot explain everything.

As the world has undergone various changes, there is a change in the functioning of relationship between various countries too. These changes have worked as a force for bringing about a positive change with regard to power relations by highlighting the role of soft power. With globalization the boundaries of each country has been more porous than ever and therefore every country is susceptible to the changes that occurs outside their boundaries. Therefore the countries have started to move away from force or coercion to a more cooperative and interdependent relationships. With the coming of global age there has also been a smoother flow of information, thus making civil society more involved and stronger than before. Along with the social and political changes, there have been changes in the economic sphere too and all of these focus more on

cooperation, thus shoving aside hard power policies. Finally the various international organizations have acted as one of the main forces in building cooperation among various countries which call for a world built on soft power policies (Gallarotti 2011: 7).

Joseph Nye builds his entire theory around this very distinction between “attraction” and “coercion”, in the ability of a State, thus completely differentiating Soft power from hard power. In trying to make us understand the position and role of soft power, world politics is imagined as a three dimensional chess game where a player has to play both vertically and horizontally. He believes that it is in the bottom board where soft power has a major role to play. This explanation of distribution of various aspects of power in different realms by him shows that he clearly disregards the military and economic issues in the making of soft power (Nye 2004).

A further explanation of soft power is brought by mentioning three distinct sources of soft power, culture, political values and practices and lastly foreign policies. He believes that “narrow and parochial” culture will not be fruitful in producing soft power and mentions that US benefits from a more universalistic culture. On the other hand, the Soviet Union and Russia’s culture got a backlash due to their presence and use of military assets. He also looks at Russia and China’s stand on soft power and in a way tries to study why the two countries fail in terms of using soft power. He believes that the reason behind it can be linked to the fact that they both use government as the main instrument of soft power (ibid). Nye also misses out on other components as his theory is narrow, revolves around the United States thus making it difficult to give a universal appeal to the theory.

Soft power is often claimed to be just a reflection of hard power and that the former works only if the latter is strong. Critics also mention about the difficulty in measuring soft power as they discuss that power itself is very difficult to measure and soft power being an intangible concept is impossible to quantify and that its application is rather limited (Liaropoulos 2013). Nevertheless soft power is the emerging trend in the present world and is here to stay as long as the countries and states of the world, and its people are willing to cooperate and believe in a competition that would be fruitful for ones

country but at the same time would not totally rely on hard power policies to achieve their ends.

## A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF RUSSIA- FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOFT POWER

With Russia differing from the west in many aspects, it will be interesting to see how Russia defines soft power. There is a need to understand Russia's soft power through numerous transformations it has undergone. Russia's history is one of strong diversity. From the earliest times it has witnessed the formation of arts that served as a showground for politics, philosophy and religion. The diversity of Russia was seen in its culture, geography, politics and society which altogether made it too complex for a single culture to be regarded as its idea of nationality. Russia's cultural movements involved the five major groups that together made nationhood. Firstly, there were the Slavophiles, who believed in the 'truly Russian way of life' as an alternative to the European way of life, secondly, there were the Westernizers, who tried to rebuild Russia in more in European lines, thirdly, there were the Populists, who mostly believed in the 'village structures' as a model for building a new society and finally the Scythians who saw Russia's culture emanating from Asia and mostly believed in the unity of art, life, man and nature (Figs 2002: xxv-xxx). Russia's culture is diverse indeed but is also unique and rich in its own ways, forming a deep foundation for Russia's soft power capabilities.

Under Peter the Great, Russia's aim was to move towards a more europeanized way of life. He hated the Muscovy way of life, its outdated culture and parochialism, its irrational fear and dislike for the West. Therefore St. Petersburg as the new capital would bring Russia close to a more western way of life. St Petersburg became an epithet of a European way of life for the Russian; it became alien and threatened the Russian way of life. It also affected Russia's art and culture for a long time. However what he did not realize is that even if he tried masking the Russians with European culture, deep within the made surface, laid the old Russia ready to show up anytime. After 1812, there was again a yearning for the national and a more Russian way of life and so the European dream faded to the background and St. Petersburg started to be seen as a foreign civilization. The Muscovites were believed to be more hospitable and relaxed as

compared to the cold and formal people of St. Petersburg. However many would argue that Russia's backwardness lay in the fact that as Russia was cut off from the rest of the Western Europe and the renaissance period. It had been in a state of frenzy due to the constant fear of obliteration and invasions (ibid). Nonetheless this also proves the fact Russia is different from the West and therefore has its own source of culture and attraction.

The earlier Tsarist state of Russia was replaced by the October Revolution leading to the formation of the first ever communist state in the world, in the form of the Soviet Union. Unlike what western media and hostile critics portraying the October Revolution of 1917 as a mere conspiratorial activity involving a minority class or simply as 'Bolshevik coup'; October Revolution was indeed a unadulterated people's movement that fought for the cause of emancipating the masses and workers class that was lying under the tyrannous rule of the Tsars. It was not just any 'coup' against the ruling power but involved much work politically and theoretically to build a strong class, party and mass organization. However what was created in the Revolution did not continue to follow the same revolutionary path and civil war after the revolution minimized in both political and numerical strength of the proletarian class or the heroes of the Revolution. Even by the time of Lenin's death in the year 1924, the situations had started to change already as compared to what it was in 1917; Soviet democracy began to fade in the background (Singh 2011: 176-245).

It is nonetheless true that it managed to build a successful Soviet territory that rested on principles of socialism and acted as strong alternative to capitalism. It had its own rich sources of culture and values that even the disruptive activities of Stalin or any of his successors could not expunge. Soviet Moscow's confidence reflected in the numerous huge architectural buildings and projects of the 1930s, the huge manufacture of motor cars, the first metros and above all the own unique qualities of socialist realism reflected in art, cinema, paintings, architecture and other aspects of Soviet life (Figs 2002: 215). All these definitely acted as a source of Soviet attraction to the global world, even though it was mostly the Communist or the Socialist countries that were attracted to it.

This period was mostly based on the principles of socialism. Its culture also highlighted the proletarian nature in every aspect. The 'Prolekult' or the Proletarian culture, movement dedicated itself towards nurturing new forms of social life. The Soviet culture as a whole appeared to be 'internationalist, collectivist and proletarian' in nature. The Soviet period was also attractive because of other numerous progresses that they had made. The launching of Sputnik I in the year 1957 and the venturing of dog 'Laika' into space in Sputnik II, were steps taken by the Soviets, which appeared to the world that they had moved ahead of the Western world in science and technology. Khrushchev even made a speech with regard to these achievements and claimed those as the triumph of 'Communist idea'. Exactly a year after the speech, a red flag was planted on the surface of the moon and in the year 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first man to leave the earth's surface (Figs 2002: 512). All these indeed added to the great global image of Soviet Union, also making it one of the superpowers next to the United States of America.

However, in 1991 the collapse of the Soviet Union led to the creation of a new Russia which still stands. In each phase, there was the emergence of different images of the Russian state, which led to the creation of its soft power capabilities. What can be equally interesting is the comparative study of the Soft Power of Russia over the phases that it underwent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It can be said that present day Russia is also trying to incorporate images of both its past. There is a need to see the degrees of soft power projections of both the Soviet phase of Russia and present day Russia. The role of the leadership becomes equally important in these projections. The images that need to be taken into consideration are both the positive as well as negative ones. A factor that needs to be taken into account is also the viewpoint of the "others" in accepting as well as creating an image of Russia. While the Soviet period Russia had a strong soft power in numerous third world countries and socialist states, it was perceived to be negative in the West.

The image of Russia overtime has also been driven by events right from the Tsarist period, like the Abolition of Serfdom in 1861, which gave a highly positive image to the then Russia while the Russo-Japanese war dented its image. There is also the socio-cultural and economic aspect of Russia which has made it attractive to others as well as

has had a negative impact on its Soft Power abroad. This is widely seen in the Soviet period as it gets reflected through the various events like the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Five Year Plans or through arts, literature, paintings, novels, the establishment of “Prolekult” (that is the Proletarian Cultural and Enlightenment Organization during the October Revolution), all of which had a positive impact on Russia’s Soft Power. However events such as the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia of 1968, halting of the Prague Spring reforms and the Hungarian revolution of 1956 gave a negative image of Russia.

The present Russia began after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia is a major player in this present period, hence continuing the great role of leaders in Russia. He made it more pronounced in 2013, when he defined Soft Power as a “comprehensive toolkit” for achieving the various foreign policy objectives. This new vision to soft power is supposed to depend on the sources of civil society potential, information, cultural and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy. An organisation called “Rossotrudnichestvo” formed by President Dmitry Medvedev on 6 September 2008, aims to maintain Russia’s influence in the Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS). Ruskiy Mir and Gorchakov Fund are similar organizations working on the Cultural diplomacy aspect. Another effort on the part of the government in its recent Foreign Policy Concept is that the state will provide support to the Russian media for working on Russia’s image abroad. However according to Joseph Nye, though government policies at home and abroad are one of the sources of soft power, the essence of soft power does not belong to the government. It depends upon the willingness of the receivers involving people and society, thus giving importance to image perceptions (Nye 2004).

Soft power might not have been of utter importance during the Soviet period as the race was more about the struggle to retain or to gain super-power status. The two super powers, that is the Soviet Union and the United States engaged in ‘Cold War’ where each tried to outdo the other but never in the form of war. However in this period, the West tried to overpower Soviet Union through innumerable ways and one such attempt was to hamper the image of Soviet Union while the West continued to build its own soft power

resources. However it was only after Joseph Nye coined the term that the world more openly began to focus on it. Nevertheless Soviet Union did possess soft power as it was no doubt very attractive to many countries across the world. With the disintegration, a new Russia was born and it was introduced itself to the world as a disappointment with great failures and of being in the middle of nowhere.

It was only much later that Russia under Putin began to revive its economy. After it achieved a more stable status and understood the importance of soft power in the present world, Putin decided to bring it under the ambit of Russia's foreign policy. Therefore it can be said that whether it was just unknowingly in the case of Soviet Union or knowingly in the case of Russia, there has been a presence of the notion of soft power. Soviet Union was attractive to the world mostly through its ideology. The present Russia does not possess it any more but under Putin and Medvedev, it possesses different other measures to build its soft power. Above all it can be said that Russia's soft power may not be so pleasing at the moment but the fact is that it does possess it. The same was true in the case of Soviet Union because the West continued to view at it through the lens of suspicion but it still managed to gain a lot of supporters and made many countries aspire to become like it. This in itself can be regarded as its soft power which the West including Joseph Nye, the pioneer of soft power will always disprove. Likewise the soft power of Russia can be disregarded because of many reasons by the West. However as long as it is able to attract countries without the use of coercion, it has soft power.

It is interesting to study Russia's soft power in the light of this background, which appears to be a unique country in its own ways as well as the formations of soft power in Russia's foreign policy concept is noteworthy because in reality, it does not build upon Nye's concept of soft power (Liik 2013: 47). Although the case of Russia would not be an appropriate example of soft power nation according to the principles of Nye's soft power, the fact remains that Russia in the Soviet as well as in the post-Soviet period has been attractive to many countries. The ways of it achieving soft power may be different in some respect but as long as it does not break away with the basic tenet of 'soft power', that is attraction through softer means and not relying on force or coercion, it does possess soft power although with much caveats. Russia needs to be understood beyond

the usual Western notions or values as it has every right to be different. The fact that Russia came forward with its own concept of democracy terming it as Sovereign Democracy in the year 2006 by Vladislav Surkov; highlights its own distinct political values other than western liberal democracy (ibid).

The collapse of Soviet Union, left Russia with an ideological vacuum and it also lost the cultural appeal that it earlier enjoyed. However Russia slowly managed to get to a stable position and even build its soft power potential but still has not been able to deliver justice to this new concept as it misinterprets the concept of soft power by equally relying on hard power strategies as a mode of attraction (Cwiek-Karpowicz 2012:5-6). In the case of Russia, in both the periods, it should also be noted that its attraction is based on the combination of both hard and soft power. It is the interconnectedness between the two that forms a decisive element of its appeal (Liik 2013: 54). However this is not to suggest that hard power and soft power are same. The attraction that soft power provides is for a longer period and therefore it is necessary to understand what soft power really stands for. It is true that soft power like any other concepts does have its own drawbacks but it is only through the use of soft power can there be a balance achieved in the world that has seen two unfortunate World Wars. Hence, Russia should not indulge in overbearing hard power policies that would undermine its soft power potential.

With Russia's cosmic and dynamic pasts that define its every period, it becomes necessary to understand its soft power in the light of these past events. While it is mostly seen as a country that is always governed by a strong central authority, be it in the Soviet period or the post-Soviet, it is intriguing to understand the reason behind this call for a 'strong ruler'. Martin Sixsmith (2012) tries to connect the various links to show the yearning of Russians for a strong central authority. He states that from Rurik and Oleg to Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, there has been an argument that states that Russia was 'too big and disorderly ever suited to devolved power' and therefore it could only be ruled by a 'silnaya ruka', the iron fist of centralised power. This has therefore been imbibed by Russia from its earliest times and has been articulated throughout the course of Russian history. It was believed that Rurik, the founder of the first Russian dynasty,



was invited to rule over the ‘warring tribes’ and it was him who is claimed to have united the country (Sixsmith 2012: 5).

While this argument does not stand as a justification for Russia’s strong centralised authority, it helps in understanding why in Russia there is a rise of a ‘strong ruler’ in almost every period. Sixsmith also goes further to argue that Russia always feared annihilation hence there was always a need of a strong centralizing figure to unite the country. It almost became a ‘default’ position in the periods after the Mongol period. During the 1990s when Russia was heading towards Western values, Sixsmith argues that it only brought economic crises, crime, corruption and ethnic strife, instead of prosperity and freedom as was promised by the leaders. In the need of order and stability Russians looked forward to the rise of Putin, even if it cost them few of their rights and freedom. With the rise of Putin, the ‘silnaya ruka’ was back again (ibid).

Although both the Soviet and the post-Soviet period have witnessed the rule of strong centralized authority, both periods have also witnessed the presence of soft power along with their hard power policies. However as history has shown that too much of centralization of power led to the eroding away of true socialist principles of Soviet Union, same can be true of present Russia if focused on much control and no freedom. Nevertheless as president Putin has taken great steps in making Russia a stable country, Russia can evolve its soft power capabilities and become attractive as it was during the Soviet period or even more than that.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

With regard to the previous works done on the matters related to this topic, we first need to understand what soft power is as understood by different scholars. Hence forth a discussion on the works related to the present research is given below. It should be noted that while there have been quite a decent number of works being done on Russia’s soft power, there are not many on the soft power of Soviet Union. However there are a substantial amount of work highlighting the role of its socialist ideology and such related works that may not directly talk about soft power but are relevant as they talk about its

‘attraction’. These available literatures can therefore be divided into various themes which will help in bringing about a proper contribution of these to the present research.

### **Theoretical understanding of soft power**

Zahran and Ramos give a Gramscian angle on soft power and detect striking resemblance between soft power and hegemony. However, they point out that Nye overlooks certain facet of Gramscian hegemony weakening his own concept. He does not identify intrinsic coercive mechanisms within consent, struggle over ideas and institutions in the international system, distinction between spheres of political and civil society and complex relation of behaviours, resources and strategy.

Scholars like Yelena Osipova raise an interesting point about the different nations sharing different world view, yet wanting to share the benefits that “soft power” offers in the present world, Russia being one of these countries. The author believes that Russia too has a different way of looking at various issues; hence its way of dealing with soft power also may not be the same as any other Western country for that matter. On the other hand, Giulio M. Gallaroti tries to understand the complexities of soft power and also tries to situate it in international relations. The prime argument of his article according to our understanding is that soft power is basically a product of “globalisation” because of which there has been flow of information and each nation trying to imitate the other but through cooperation. There is economic cooperation of free trade and capitalist markets, thus, projecting it more as a “cosmopolitan power”.

Christopher Layne problematises the definition and the causal mechanism of soft power. The definition of soft power has expanded to include even a carrot and stick philosophy, especially in the realm of policy-making. Besides, bureaucratic decision-making process of a state can never be influenced by individual preferences, especially those of the civil society (relative autonomy). That portrays soft power totally ineffective. Similarly even a much more balance viewpoint by Ernest Wilson fails to do justice to soft power. Ernest Wilson (2008) however goes beyond the debates of both hard power and soft power and believes that a country’s foreign policy is flawed unless it understands the amalgamation of both. He therefore argues that embracing “Smart power”, that is the combination of

both soft and hard power becomes a necessary for security purposes and for a more balanced and realistic foreign policy objectives. However by trying to bring about a more balance viewpoint and by stressing on smart power, Wilson does not focus much on the strengths and importance of soft power and its contribution to the well being of the nation.

Ying Fan (2008) questions the whole notion of soft power as being very ambiguous and perplexing. She states that the basic connection between 'attraction' and 'influence' creates problems of lack of clarity as to which particular group find a particular aspect attractive. Moreover if soft power does not quite belong to the State or government, Fan argues 'who' possesses it. By arguing that soft power may be appealing to just some people in a certain context, Fan gives a criticism of the structural aspects of soft power. The criticisms of Fan can be regarded as fair as Nye gives a very blur view of soft power. It is also true that by taking soft power away from State or government it totally disregards countries such as the former Soviet Union and present Russia to some extent, where State or government despite being a strong authority, these countries still had or has soft power which Nye fails to acknowledge. However it should also be noted that Fan also gives a very Realist argument as she sees the relationship between 'attraction' and 'influence' as a confusing phenomenon. Soft power is not measurable as hard power but this it cannot be denied that it does play a major role in international relations which the Realists would find it hard to absorb.

Pinar Bilgin and Berivan Elis (2008) view power both hard and soft from a very complex viewpoint and state that power cannot be restricted to just one dimension. They state that the realists stress too much on hard power that focuses on just one aspect of power and neglect the multiple sources of power that are both visible and non visible. With regard to soft power they describe it to be too shallow and unclear especially with regard to its expression of 'attraction'.

While most scholars today do not stress more on hard power, it is also true that they find Nye's notion of soft power problematic as it has some loose ends which pulls it down. Through its lack of clarity it makes one difficult to understand as what makes soft power. Despite the various criticisms on Nye's concept of soft power the fact still remains that it

was Nye who gave a new bend to the Realist way of depending more on hard power resources. It was his analysis that “attraction” can gain more outcomes that may take time but are genuine in the sense that they include the consent of the receiver.

Keohane and Nye (1998) discuss how soft power can burgeon in the information age. With the information revolution and the rise of technologies have made it possible for the NGOs to function more effectively as communications and interactions become smoother. They also state that in the coming days there will be broad array of such technology communication and information flow. The geographical states will rely less on material resources and the main focus will be on the public bearing varied sources of information. Keohane and Nye thus totally disqualify the role of State or the government in the formation of soft power. This would again make it more complicated when applied to countries such as Russia or former Soviet Union as it appears to be more Western centric in approach.

### **Rise and fall of soft power in the Soviet period**

This theme explores the details of Russia’s Soft power capabilities in the Soviet period. Hence it tries to show whether Russia during the Soviet period was attractive for many countries in the world and if it was attractive what were the reasons. There are many scholars who have written about the Soviet era, looking up to it as a great model for different countries while many are critical about its policies, the state control and the presence of a strong one party state which they feel does not give democratic credentials to the Soviet period. However, whatever the criticisms, the fact remains that Soviet Union was undeniably a super power not only because of its military might but also because of its positive and attractive image for many countries. The stability it had offered during hard times, its transformation from a feudal to a socialist society, championing of equal rights for all, its welfare state measures and a grand display of culture are all high points of the Soviet Union. There is a need to first discuss about the scholars who believe that the Soviet Union was indeed an attractive state and even though it is the past, it can never fade away because of its great contribution to history.

In this regard the view of Randhir Singh (1992) is important as he highlights the greatness of socialism. He believes in its basic values and states that socialism's great achievement is its devotion to humankind and to the poor and oppressed. His basic argument lies in the fact that Soviet Union was great because in a single decade it turned itself into the world's second largest industrial power. Its tenacity against capitalist entrenchment along with the defeat of fascism, and the very way it acted in building socialism as its ideology acted as an instrument of Soviet attraction. He however believes that socialism under Stalin did acquire an inhuman face, but for the few "insiders" that is the people of the Soviet Union and to the some countries it was indeed a utopia. Most importantly what he says about Soviet Union's attraction is that the Russian Revolution itself was an inspiration for many anti-capitalist revolutionary movements everywhere. There are others who share similar views to Randhir Singh and who regard Soviet Union as a successful state even though it later suffered disintegration.

Singh's basic argument in favour of Soviet Union was through its ideology and he believed that Soviet Union indeed made an honest attempt in building Socialism, bringing about various changes as mentioned above. However Tom Casier on the other hand talks about Soviet ideology in a different fashion. Casier (1999) sees Soviet ideology as a pillar of power through which the party that is the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) established its monopoly, acquiring a central image. The loyalty of the masses was with the ideology and hence became incapable of forming their own opinions. He also regards their strive for communism as a mythical build up and therefore sees the Gorbachev era as one that brought about reforms which resulted in the fading away of the mythical ideology of communism. It lead to an ideology that focussed exclusively on socialism as an end in itself while skipping all references to the mythical build up of communism. He therefore finally abandoned the monopoly of CPSU. However he is quick to mention that Gorbachev was caught in between defending ideology, making the state still powerful on the one hand and bringing about reforms like glasnost on the other, which ultimately led to the downfall of the Soviet Union.

As socialist ideology was regarded as the main hallmark of Soviet attraction, socialist realism as a form of art that highlights this ideology also becomes an important source of

Soviet soft power. There are several works on socialist realism that help in understanding how it brought a new turn in the Soviet art or 'arts' and how it helped in building Soviet soft power despite the regular criticisms of being a mere tool of a socialist state. Scholars such as Ann Demaitre (1966) and Dray-Novey (2010), in their work regard socialist realism as a tool of the state or the party to extend control over the writers and artists. Dray-Novey gives a more balanced view by discussing about the way the Chinese were influenced by Russian literature and ultimately adopting socialist realism in 1953 as well as regarding it as a means of denying individuals their psychological freedom. Demaitre goes further in criticizing socialist realism and regards the structural changes under Stalin including socialist realism as an act of depriving cultural activities of their rights and freedom.

However Michael Kelly (1983) by arguing that literature can help in transforming a society for better tends to justify socialist realism which according to him paves the way for a 'new literary tradition'. He also disregards the criticism that associates socialist realism merely with Stalinist repression and controlling the artists and writers as he states that it diminishes the true value of socialist realism. On a similar fashion, Efimova (1997) brings out a more vibrant picture of socialist realism and disregards the Western criticisms of describing it as 'lifeless, didactic and colourless'. The writer by drawing examples from various streams of socialist realism like literature, architecture, cinema or even Soviet culture in general, describes lucidly the 'aesthetics' of it. While it is true that socialist realism was mostly used as a tool for the promotion of its socialist ideology, it became one of the main sources of Soviet attraction which cannot be denied. Efimova's work therefore comes as a bolt from the blue as it breaks away from the western way of looking at socialist realism as an art of restriction and control.

We also have scholars like Fyodor Lukyanov (2013) who believes that the Soviet model was quite attractive compared to present Russia because it does not have any attractive model to offer. The Soviet model was based on social progress and justice and it had its ideology as an instrument for attraction. However, he also feels Russia needs to bring out a new model keeping up with the changing times and solely reviving the old Soviet

practices won't make it attractive anymore. This makes it clear that Soviet Union had an attractive image, hence a better soft power strategy.

While we can say that Randhir Singh and Lukyanov view ideology as a positive factor of Soviet Union's attraction, Casier argues that ideology "indeed mattered" to Soviet Union but it also made the Party, the CPSU a central, monolithic entity. To counter the argument of Casier with regard to CPSU as a centrally organised Party, there is Graeme Gill who argues that the image of the CPSU as a tightly organised Party is a myth especially in the 1920s and 1930s as its central axis rested on an unsatisfactory foundation, where the upper organs relied on the lower organs but the latter failed to work efficiently to the commands of the former, resulting in a lack of proper record keeping of members entering the party. He further argues that the party was subordinate to the local power elites.

We can see that Gill's (1987) argument also creates an idea that the Communist Party was not a totalitarian party in the 1920s and '30s. In bringing about this argument he also mentions that the Soviet Union was a rising power and the third world countries looked up to it. This statement of the attractiveness of the USSR to the third world nations is further explained by arguments of Mark N. Katz and Lewis Siegelbaum. While Siegelbaum brings out a clear picture of Soviet Russia as a saviour and a friend of third world countries, with examples such as the Cuban revolution and the close ties that existed with the Castro Government, brokering peace between India and Pakistan in 1966 and building up of University of Friendship of People on the outskirts of Moscow. Katz (1986) on the other hand also talks about the difficulties to be faced by the Soviet Union while dealing with the third world countries. One of such difficulties was the insurgencies of the guerrillas in these regions, facilitated by the west. However, he also admits to the fact that Soviet leaders had boasted that these nations which were under a pro Soviet regime had domestic stability. Thus, we see that both the scholars accept the influence that the USSR had on these countries, of course with some caveats present.

However scholars such as Y. Zhang and F.Xue (2010), Richard Sakwa (1999), P.Rutland and P.Pomper (2011), and M. Petrasova (2003) regard authoritative values, rigid system, out-datedness and over powering by the State as the main reasons for the downfall of the

Soviet Union. Most of these scholars have focussed on how socialist ideology lost its main purpose because of the overpowering of the political authority. These works help in understanding how gradually by deviating away from the principles of socialism; the country was actually coming on the verge of collapse. While these scholars have focussed on the collapse of Soviet Union, the factors for the collapse help in understanding the decline of its soft power which became more evident in the later period of Soviet Union.

The degradation of socialist ideology becomes clearer with the works of scholars such as M.J Bain (2005), T. Mayor (2002) and Hannes Adomeit (1995). While Bain argues that Soviet Union started lagging behind the West in science and technology which became one of the major problems even during the Gorbachev era, Mayor brings to light that it was the rise of class of capitalist owners which led to the erosion of socialist ideology. Adomeit describes the period after the disintegration as a period of chaos and confusion. All such factors indicate a weakening of the socialist ideology that ultimately collapsed. The socialist ideology that acted as a source of Soviet's attraction to other countries thus vanished in thin air with the rise of such factors.

Finally we can bring about the arguments of Aanchal Anand, who brings to our notice "five important things" originating from the Soviet Union and having global influence till date. These are women's right, labour laws, post war re-constructions, anti-colonial drive and lastly scientific discoveries. The scholar goes on to say that through the labour laws, non communist nations adopted capitalism with a human face. The Soviet releasing their first Satellite "Sputnik" also heralded the modern era of Information and Communication Technology. Thus, the legacy of the Soviet Union even after its disintegration is huge, making major impacts which still reverberate with present day Russia especially in its projection of soft power.

### **Russia's image in the West**

There are many articles written by various scholars about Russia's image in the West. Aleksander V. Golubev, Valentina Feklyunina and Vladimir Rukavishikov have tried to understand the various aspects of Russia's global image. Aleksander Golubev tries to bring about various notions of Russia's image and how it was formed, which according to



him is mostly negative. He also shows that in 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century Russia had a negative image and also portray Russia under communist rule lacked proper freedom of thought or expression. He also talks about forced modernization during the Soviet time, especially under Stalin which was impressive to some countries but in the long run, it did prove harmful for the consciousness of the masses. He tries to see it from one angle, especially when he argues that the Soviet rule and modernization controlled the thought process of the people. This is however one way of understanding the negative image of Russia in the west. Here, it is unclear for us to come to a conclusion that either Russia itself was responsible for its negative image or the blame laid with the west for its negative image. It is more complex than it seems to understand the reason behind it but however one thing that the author makes clear is that according to him there has been a negative image of Russia lingering in the West.

Valentina Feklyunina (2008) refers to the concept of “Russophobia”. Feklyunina shows us that the negative image of Russia has been constructed, is not only the product of western way of looking at Russia but also to a greater extent deals with the Russians looking at themselves. As the author says when the Russians see the West as being Russophobic, it tells a lot about how Russia views itself. This attitude of the Russians towards western criticisms only makes it take a tougher stand, which in as the author says is “a securitizing move”, whereby every criticism of Russia is viewed as being a threat to the country. The author believes that this move may have positive effects but in a way it does suppress the voice of the liberal oppositions in Russia. However, the author does not clearly state whether this kind of move will harm the democratic principles in Russia that should go for, if in anyway the present move is affecting the image of Russia.

Hence, what we can understand is that Feklyunina is not focussing on “whether it is wrong or right” or even providing solutions to any problem, because the author does not point out any problem. Vladimir Rukavishikov (2012) is highly impressed by President Vladimir Putin’s contribution to the process of building Russia’s image globally. Improving its internal or domestic problems is the prime focus of Rukavishikov as he points out at various problems of Russia like lack of proper democratic practices and increasing corruption. The matter of concern then for Russia is to improve not just its

foreign policy but also to work on its internal domestic policies too which does contribute in making a country attractive. However, Russia's image as a whole has been improving lately, after being a victim of a period of negative imagery. Russia indeed has a different world view compared to other countries but now it has realized the need for a strong soft power.

Yelina Osipova believes that soft power is very western in its approach and therefore tries to show that Russia's approach towards soft power is very different, for example, there is not much difference between soft power and public diplomacy in Russia. The author is trying to raise a fact that since Russia has its own distinct set of principles, its history and its present working ways or world view, there should be a different kind of theory guiding its ways, which uses different parameters for looking at Russia's progress or failure in achieving success. Hence, in understanding Russia's image, we need to understand that the negative connotations that are tagged to its image especially by the west to a certain extent can be due to viewing or judging it through western perspective. However, we should also keep in mind that, Russia's image has been quite positive in some of the former Soviet regions, again with some caveats.

### **Russia's soft power in the former Soviet regions**

The final theme looks into Russia's soft power in the former Soviet regions and building up an image. There are some scholars who feel that Russia's policies and approach towards soft power will only undermine the country's attractiveness in the "post-Soviet" regions. Jaroslave Cwiek-Karpowicz (2012) argues that Russia does have great soft power potential and enjoys a very advantageous position in the former Soviet regions. Numerous factors like their common nostalgia for their lost Soviet world as well as are other factors like language that keeps them somehow together and of course its energy potential and its popular culture are attractive. He however believes that it was only after the Colour Revolution that Russia realized the need for soft power. He also states that Russia's policies in these regions have mostly to do with its own people and their interest, for the sake of Russian Diasporas. He also stresses on the improvement of the domestic/internal policies of Russia for setting an example for the post Soviet areas, instead of just making them dependent on them. His basic argument is that Russia instead

of attracting those who do not share similar views; it tries to please those who already agree with them. Only by changing Russia internally, by building on its economic potential can it really attract the former Soviet regions.

On the other hand there are scholars like Fiona Hill, Andrei P. Tsygankov and Kristina Liik, who provide us with a more balanced view. Kristina Liik's (2013) basic argument focuses on the role played by Putin and states that many opinion polls show Putin in a positive light. While dealing with the countries Moldova and Armenia, her research suggests both affinities towards Russia as well as repulsion to the "brotherly" act of Russia. While Tsygankov's (2006) main argument lies in Russia's economic potentialities which in a way gives us the idea that Russia's soft power in these former regions lies in its stable economy, when he states that Russia's economy is being pretty attractive to foreign labour from Caucasus. He too brings out a positive role in building Russia's stable image in these regions. While Kristina Liik focuses more on culture, Tsygankov relies on Russia's economy for its soft power in these regions. Fiona Hill too believes that Russia's soft power potential lies in its "oil and gas" strategies and it can lead to its earlier superpower status at least as an energy superpower. Therefore some scholars are highly optimistic about Russia's soft power in the former Soviet areas, especially through its economic potential and the leadership of Vladimir Putin. However, they have not talked much about whether the economic attraction will be beneficial for the former Soviet regions too and whether by relying more on economic potential will lead to more dependence of these countries on Russia. As some have mentioned about the various policies that the government has been planning to undertake there is no mention about the application of such policies on these regions and its implications.

#### GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Soft Power is a very western centric theory and is very difficult to be measured. Hence, it's difficult for us to understand whether countries like Russia has been working towards its soft power goals as it has its own history and the present world view also differs in some degrees. Hence, it may not be completely following Nye's way as then it will be unfair to look at the outcome of Russia's soft power measured on western scale.

There is quite a lot of literature focussing on Russia's negative image in the West which highlights mostly the role played by Russia's policies of imperialism or "controlled" ways for such an image of Russia. A gap now can be seen from the perspective for a one sided analysis, where a country is put to test in terms of "western liberal democracy" or western ideals but if viewed from the angle of the other country's ideals, there might be a different outcome than what has been emerging. A vast array of literature on the Soviet period focuses on the role of ideology and the CPSU. Although these two features are essential to understand Russia's soft power image, there are not many literature that focuses on its culture as Soviet Union is known for its richness in culture. There are literatures on its culture but not through the prism of soft power.

Regarding literature available on Russia's soft power in the former Soviet regions, we see that there are many scholars who are highly optimistic about its potential but what has been missing is the focus on what has been already done, that is a gap in theory and practice. The literature seems to highlight what the government or the leader has decided to do, but not on what has already been done and where have they lacked or progressed. A gap is also seen in terms of its economic potential. Much literature highlights the role of Russia's booming economy in achieving its soft power image in these regions but what has been missing is the fact that whether such focus on economic potential can lead Russia again to its "Hard power" strategies of "giving concessions" which is similar to Nye's "carrot and stick" method.

#### SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research will compare the soft power of Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. It begins with the notion of soft power as propounded by Joseph Nye and it will look into its basic tenets. However due to his work mostly being US centric, there has been a need to look at the soft power of Soviet and post-Soviet Russia from a different perspective. This is to say that the research will show a broader perspective of soft power whereby countries like Soviet and post-Soviet Russia will also be included in the ambit of soft power, which Nye would generally disagree. Nye in his analysis of soft power mentions about the sphere of soft power being detached much from the state. It is not an activity that the state will not directly be involved in promoting. This is typically the case of Western countries

such as United States, United Kingdom and Germany, where these countries' soft power is not directly monitored by the government/state. Therefore Nye through such an analysis tends to limit the exercising of soft power by only few countries, terming it as a monopoly of the West. Through this research there will be an attempt to problematise the concept of soft power as brought forward by Nye.

The research will highlight the role of ideology as a source of soft power. While much work has been done on the importance of socialist ideology, there have been not many studies on socialism as a soft power tool for countries. Hence, it would be interesting to see ideology act as an important source of soft power when the west sees it as the root of all problems in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. Even though ideology of free market capitalism is seen to be dominant in the west but being inflected with many flaws, the west has boasted it to be one of its great assets. After the disintegration and de-ideologization, 'New Russia' faced a lot of problems and portrayed itself to the world as a failed nation. This happened because the main problem of Soviet Union was not its ideology but the decline of the actual principles of the ideology. The root causes of corruption, bureaucratization and socio-economic and political problems did not vanish with de-ideologization. With the rise of such problems the soft power of Russia was also shoved to the background.

However it was only after the rise of Putin that Russia had a stable economy and could be brought out of the chaos. There are still a number of issues to be solved but with the economy retaining its stability, Russia can focus on the other issues with equal determination. As from the days of the Soviet Union till the present period, Russia has been known for its hard power strategy and not much has been focused on its soft power, even though it has its own sources of soft power that makes the country attractive to its neighbours. It was only in the second term of Putin that he brought to the notice the importance of soft power. It therefore becomes interesting to study Russia's soft power in this light as it has taken a step forward towards puncturing the regular image of being associated with hard power alone. While the soft power of Soviet Union mostly concentrated in its ideology, soft power of Russia will not be bound by any single aspect.

Hence through this research there will be an attempt to understand the differences and similarities in the way both Soviet period Russia and present day Russia has tried to project their soft power and to trace the legacies of Soviet Union in present day projection of Russia's soft power. Soviet Union was one of the heroes in the bipolar world that existed once, therefore emerging as a superpower. It is a different fact all together that its "super power" status was not only because of its Soft Power capabilities but also relied a great deal on its military might. It also provided the world with a model based on social progress and justice, fighting the hostility of many capitalist countries and emerging as an attractive power for the Third World. The Soviet Union was indeed an attractive country with its ideology as the backbone and with it was richness in culture. However, the disintegration of the Soviet Union took away with it the charm of Russia, especially in the immediate period after the break-up, which created a negative image which was also a result of the cold war period. Russia is however taking major steps to create a new "softer" image. This is clearly seen by the policies formulated by Putin. This clearly shows that Russia will be focusing on soft power strategies which earlier did not have much significance in the Russian way.

This research will attempt to make a comparative study of soft power in the Soviet and the Post-Soviet period. It will also focus on the years following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and how has it affected Russia's image. While a comparison is made, it will also try highlighting the role of the leaders of Russia in both the periods as well as try to look into the policies of these leaders such as Lenin, Stalin, Gorbachev and Putin steering the soft power image of Russia in the West as well as in the non-Western world. This research will not look into the other aspects of power in Russia and will not follow a chronological pattern in understanding its soft power image. The primary objective of this research is to analyze how the various factors like culture, leadership, perceptions of the other countries have shaped the soft power capabilities of Russia in the Soviet and the post Soviet period. It will therefore try to bring out a unique picture of Soft Power in Russia which is different from the western notion of Soft Power. By studying the differences and similarities in both the period of Russia, the research will try to analyze the degree of Soft Power in both periods.

By looking at the soft power strategy of Russia in the Soviet period, this proposed research will try to understand how ideology has mattered to Russia during that period in creating its soft power image and whether a lack of clear ideology has affected present-day Russia. It will also take into account the nationality issue of Russia in understanding its image that had been created in the various republics of Soviet Union and how it has changed in the present day Russia.

The role of leaders will also be taken into consideration for their contribution in the making of Russia's image, with special reference to the role of President Vladimir Putin in trying to revive the image of Russia. It will also try to analyze how the policies of the various leaders have changed with different circumstances and how this has affected the image of Russia. The research will also focus on culture as the main source of soft power in the Soviet period and whether the Post-Soviet Russia lays importance to culture as a factor in generating a positive image. It will also try to analyze how the soft power image of Russia along with the image of the leaders of Russia has differed in the western and non-western countries.

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this research will be to bring forth the differences and similarities in the degrees and levels of soft power in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. It will also try to highlight the role of culture, leadership and the perception of other countries in the image of both Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. By focussing on 'socialist realism' as an important source of Soviet soft power, the research will therefore aim in stressing the significance of 'ideology'. Socialist ideology will thus be portrayed as the main source of Soviet soft power. In the same light, the research will also try to explain the cause of decline in soft power of Russia by showing that the process of de-ideologization affected the soft power of Soviet Union and ultimately Russia negatively. It will also try to examine the kind of Soft Power present in both the period and to examine how it is different from western notion of Soft Power. The research will also focus on the role of west in the negative image of both Soviet and post-Soviet Russia.

However its main objectives will be to argue how the Soviet socialist art, literature and culture acted as one of the main sources of Soviet attraction despite the antagonism shown by the western countries towards the socialist ideology of Soviet Union. The argument will follow in the case of Russia too and thus will aim in explaining the decline of Russia's soft power in terms of the decline in socialist ideology. The research will also highlight the role of leadership, especially in the form of the leadership of Vladimir Putin in attempting to revive its soft power through the help of various policies and institutions. It will also try to bring forth the various shortcomings on part of Russia and its leaders with regard to its soft power. However the research will thus end in the light of optimism that is created through various events and actions undertaken by Putin. Therefore the research will aim to bring about a picture of Russia that is different from what is portrayed by other countries especially western countries.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From these various objectives the research will thus begin by posing various significant questions that will help in forming a particular framework or a research problem with which the research can be carried forward.

- Hence to begin this research it is important to stress on question such as, what are the ways in which the Russian soft power strategies differ from Joseph Nye's concept of soft power and in what ways is it similar?
- What are the main sources of Russia's soft power in the Soviet period?
- Apart from the ideology what are the other sources of Soviet Union's soft power?
- What role has the Soviet Union's legacy to play in Russia's Soft power?
- Has the change in the political and economic structure in Russia after the disintegration of Soviet Union affected its soft power credentials in any way?
- Has the negative image of Russia in the West affected its soft power image?
- Lastly, what is the role of the Russian leadership in the creation of an image of Russia?

#### HYPOTHESES

With these research questions in mind, this study is based on two hypotheses:



- The first is, ‘Socialist Realism in Soviet art, literature and culture reflecting in society promoted its positive soft power’.
- The second is, ‘Soviet disintegration and de- ideologisation of state resulted in the weakening of Russia’s soft power abroad.’ These hypotheses will be tested in the core chapters of this research.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In undertaking this research project, I will follow a comparative research structure. It is an act of comparing two or more things to discover something about the things being compared. For this I will take help of both primary and secondary sources. The former includes Government papers, documents, statements and data. In this I will also look into the different programmes and projects that Russia undertook in other countries, seeing what impact it has on Russia’s soft power. The research will be thematic in approach and it has not followed a strict chronological pattern as it is a comparative study of Russia in two periods.

To explain it further, I will also look at it from a quantitative as well as qualitative way focussing on the available data and putting it in a statistical manner. The secondary sources will include books, news articles, articles from journals and empirical study reports.

The independent variable is the leadership and ideology while the dependent variable is Soft Power in the Soviet and post Soviet phase and the intervening variables are the perceptions by the other nations. With the help of these variables, it will try to critically investigate the hypothetical propositions about the given relations among the variables.

## LIMITATION OF THE WORK

While pursuing this research, there have been many factors that acted as an impediment thus making the research restricted and limited in some ways. As the research is a comparison of soft power in the Soviet and post-Soviet Russia, the research will be limited to soft power alone and will not emphasize on the other aspects of soft power.

The first limitation with regard to this research has been the ‘language factor’, that is the inability of the researcher to study and read materials in Russian language.

The second limitation has been the paucity of time which makes it unable for the researcher to look into intricate details that would have made the research more lucid. It also makes it difficult for the researcher to address all the research objectives and questions.

The third limitation is the vastness of the scope of this study. While a comparative study of soft power in the Soviet and post-Soviet would definitely help in understanding the rise, fall, ‘resurgence’ and redefinition of soft power in the case of Russia, it makes it equally difficult for the researcher to explain and argue in great details. As a result, there is bound to be a lack of focus into many events that would help in a better understanding of soft power in this regard. However the research includes the necessary elements that fostered the growth of soft power as well led to the decline of soft power in both the periods.

The fourth limitation would be with regard to the stereotypical image of Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. The fact that it has often been seen in the perspective of ‘hard power’ makes it challenging for the researcher to look into its soft power aspects in a positive way. This is so because not much work has been done on this subject matter and the ones that are available or mostly written from the Western perspective. This dilutes the soft power capability that the Russian actually possess. With this research trying to break away from the regular western notions of soft power and to argue that Russia despite its involvement with hard power does possess soft power and is equally true in the case of Soviet period.

Finally, the fact that the research begins with the concept of ‘soft power’ as propounded by Joseph Nye but diverts from his notions of soft power wherever the need has arisen, acts as a limitation. In this regard it can also be said that the research lacks a proper ‘theory’ to guide it through till the end as it will not correspond to Nye’s notion of soft power. Nye does not quite take into account countries such as Russia or Soviet Union in the ambit of his soft power theory. His approach to soft power has been United States

centric and therefore it makes it difficult for the research to come with an argument that would defy the theory with which it started.

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The independent variable is the leadership and ideology while the dependent variable is Soft Power in the Soviet and post Soviet phase and the intervening variables are the perceptions by the other nations. With the help of these variables, it will try to critically investigate the hypothetical propositions about the given relations among the variables.

## CHAPTERIZATION

Through the chapters of this research, a comparison shall be made between the soft powers of Soviet Union and Russia, after the disintegration of Soviet Union. Starting from the Soviet period till present Russia, these chapters will include the important aspects of soft power of Russia in Soviet as well as the post Soviet period and will focus on the growth as well as decline of its soft power. Accordingly then chapter one will focus on the soft power of Soviet Union through the concept known as socialist realism, chapter two will look at Russia after the disintegration of Soviet Union, which will therefore focus on the decline of Russia's soft power and chapter three will deal with the resurgence of Russia's soft power. Hence the chapters are interconnected to each other as they show the flow of soft power of Russia from Soviet to the post-Soviet period. However the flow in the chapters does not suggest that the research will follow a chronological pattern.

Chapter one: ‘Socialist Realism’ and Soft Power during the Soviet period- will examine the role of socialist realism in promoting the soft power of Soviet Union. Socialist realism was a form of art that highlighted the role of socialist ideology in the different spheres of culture in Soviet Union, especially through art or paintings, literature, cinema, architecture. Starting with the embracing of socialist realism by the Writers’ Union, involving prominent writers such as Gorky, socialist realism later gave birth to other organizations that managed its propagation. The primary aim of socialist realism being the promotion of socialist ideology, it was often disregarded as being a mere propaganda of Soviet Union, by some countries. Socialist realism being surrounded by the clouds of qualms and cynicism of the West and other non Communist countries, the chapter will try to discuss how it still managed to work as a source of Soviet attraction to many nations. The chapter will also highlight its dissemination in countries like China, Cuba, India, as well in Germany. The entire chapter will then be an attempt to test the hypothesis, which is “socialist realism in Soviet art, literature and culture reflecting in society promoted its positive soft power”. Through this chapter what will also be highlighted is that socialist realism has been a manifestation of the socialist ideology which nurtured the soft power of Soviet Union. Hence, the problem that Russia faced after the decline of its ideology will be dealt profusely in the next chapter.

Chapter two: Decline of Russia’s Soft Power in the Post-Soviet period- will trace the reasons for the decline of Russia’s soft power and will therefore include both Soviet and post-Soviet period. It will try to explain the decline of Russia’s soft power due to some factors that started from the early Soviet period and continued till later Soviet period, after which it suffered the disintegration. This chapter will discuss the factors that contribute to the decline of Soviet Union and will try to make a link between these factors and the decline of the Socialist ideology. Factors such as bureaucratization, Stalin’s excesses or emphasis on militarization such as the Afghan war and others contributed to the erosion of the true principles of socialism. Hence, the chapter will be an attempt to test the hypothesis which is, “Soviet disintegration and de- ideologisation of state resulted in the weakening of Russia’s soft power abroad”.

Chapter three: Resurgence and redefinition of Russia's Soft Power- will focus on the soft power of present Russia. As the name of the chapter suggests, 'Resurgence and redefinition of Russia's soft power', it will discuss the various factors that are re shaping Russia's soft power image especially after its decline in the aftermath of the disintegration. With Putin's decision in his second term, to focus his attention on focussing on soft power of Russia, by calling it "soft power as a comprehensive toolkit" and also its inclusion in the Concept of Foreign Policy 2013, was a new leap towards attaining its soft power. The chapter will therefore see a new dimension to the soft power of Russia as this time it is without its 'socialist ideology' which was one of its main sources of soft power during the Soviet period. This chapter will also examine Russia's soft power in the former Soviet regions and will also illustrate the factors that act as hindrances in its attempt to please these regions. Russia's soft power has not been able to achieve a global stance and is concentrated mostly in its neighbouring countries. The reason for this is obviously because of soft power not being a top priority in Russia's foreign policy.

The stereotypes attached to Russia that mostly arise from West also to a great extent affect its soft power negatively. The chapter will therefore discuss how Russia's soft power has been managing to rise against the hostility of the West and other countries. While the recent Sochi Olympics must have had positive impact on Russia's soft power, the Ukraine crisis must have been seen by many countries including the west as an imperialist act, which might act as a hindrance in its growing soft power capabilities. However the chapter tries to highlight that soft power never follows a linear pattern. There are a lot of fluctuations in a country's soft power. A particular country's soft power is not always at the same level. As stated by Nye and many others, soft power indeed is intangible and cannot be measured. Likewise in the case of Russia, it will fluctuate and that it is incorrect to give a final judgment that Russia does not possess soft power.

Finally, there will be a conclusion of what the other chapters have tried to argue and will therefore test the hypotheses on which the research is based. It will examine arguments discussed in the previous chapters. It will try to show that although the term 'soft power' was not coined during the Soviet period, it did possess soft power which made it highly

attractive to many countries. The socialist ideology itself became a great source of soft power which was highlighted in the form of socialist realism. However the degradation of its true principles led to the decline of its soft power which continued till Putin began its revival in his second term. Russia's soft power is different from that of Soviet Union as it does not have socialist ideology as a source of attraction but through different institutional and cultural mechanisms it has managed to attract its neighbouring areas.

The present Russian state can be seen to be partly embracing globalisation as a mode of increasing its soft power. The prime argument of this research is to show that from the beginning of the Soviet period and even prior, till the present, Russia has had soft power capabilities but it has been changing with the passing time. The conclusion will also show that the research has started with the notion of soft power as expressed by Joseph Nye but it has deviated from it wherever necessary. This is so because Nye's view of soft power is too constricted in case of both Soviet and Post-Soviet period. Nye strongly criticizes the soft power in the case of Soviet and post-Soviet Russia as his understanding of soft power is attuned to that of the United States of America.

**CHAPTER ONE:**  
**'SOCIALIST REALISM' AND SOFT**  
**POWER DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD**

## **CHAPTER ONE: ‘SOCIALIST REALISM’ AND SOFT POWER DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD**

To understand soft power in Soviet Union, one requires an understanding of the whole process and events that took place in this region. It is important to understand the base on which it stood so firmly for a period of almost seven decades, that is to say from 1922 till 1991. Socialism was the main hallmark of Soviet Union and it is through the development and understanding of this ideology that it strongly stood, defending the rights of the working and the oppressed classes, bringing about their emancipation in ways that were never done before. The 1917 October Revolution therefore brought an end to Tsarist Russia and the creation of the Soviet Union in the year 1922. From that period onwards it had unflinchingly stayed firm against capitalism of the West, thus balancing the world order, as it stood on the one end of the spectrum while the United States was on the other. Both Soviet Union and the United States emerged as ‘super powers’ making the world order into a bipolar system. It is the ideology of the Soviet Union that shaped its soft power to a very large extent. It becomes important to understand the ways in which the socialist ideology had penetrated various realms of the region, whether it was economic, social, political and cultural, thus affecting the region’s power of attraction and acting as an important source of soft power. This attraction as Joseph Nye puts forward should not include coercion but merely attract the other regions of the world by building an image that would be an example for the others to follow and by making them want what you want, thus building a strong soft power ( Nye 2004: 1-206).

Whether it has been casted in a stereotype or deemed as truth, the Soviet Union is widely known for its use of “hard power” as it is associated mostly with the use of economic and military means for achieving its goals. While this may be true to some extent, it still remains that the Soviet and even Tsarist Russia was culturally very rich and this itself acted as an attraction to many countries in the world. Russia’s rich culture was something that Soviets boasted throughout, especially in the post-war period. Russia’s culture was highlighted through various activities and it became highly popular across the world. The Russian ballet was regarded as the best, the Russian classics in literature and music also



became highly popular in the world. Russia's cultural dominance was spread across the East European regions and the other republics, with Russian language becoming a compulsory language in all the schools (Figes 2002: 505).

Russia's cultural diplomacy in the Soviet period reached great heights with the leaders taking measures to ensure good ties with other countries through various cultural activities, education programmes and delegations. The opening of the Albanian school in the year 1955 by the Albanian-USSR Friendship Society and the Albanian Ministry of Education highlight the effort of both the governments in fostering good ties through education. The school offered Russian language courses to the students which definitely boosted Soviet soft power. Similarly the same year also marked the coming of the 'Iranian Cultural Mission' to Moscow, led by the head of the department of Construction engineering. This was also a result of the invitation by the Soviet Ministry of education. Here, it can be observed that education has been an important tool in the Soviet cultural diplomacy which certainly had positive results for its soft power. Apart from education, there were several other cultural activities that bolstered Soviet soft power. However, the exchange programs acted as a win-win situation because both the participating countries benefitted from each other. An example of this can be seen from the delegation of representatives of the Moscow Stanislavsky and Nemirovich Danchenko Theatre that was sent to Yugoslavia in October 1955 for studying new approach of ballet (FBIS 1955: BB 15). These cultural ties indeed helped in shaping the soft power projection of Soviet Union to the world.

As culture had always been the core essence of Russia, in the pre-Soviet as well as in the Soviet period, the introduction of "socialist" ideology gave a different face to the culture of Russia. Socialism in the Soviet Union was its strongest feature as it is this feature that made it a hope for the weak and oppressed classes of the world. In this context if we try to understand the soft power of Soviet Union, we have to take into consideration the role played by "socialist ideology" as a source of soft power and its amalgamation with the cultural, social, economic and political realm. This can be understood through the concept "socialist realism" that emerged in Soviet Union gradually and became official later.

For this there is a need to understand the basic contour of socialist realism. Socialist realism is not a simple term used to explain a singular thing and there are different ways of understanding this phenomenon. Many scholars have put forth their views in trying to give the required meaning so as to bring out its true essence as well as to understand its origin. However the theoretical aspect of this term 'socialist realism' might seem complex or might need a very in-depth analysis, in practical terms it is very simple. It took many discussions and debates through the twenties and the thirties, for the term 'socialist realism' to be accepted, keeping in mind all the factors that would bring out the true purpose of it and would give it a true meaning. There were different names suggested: 'proletarian realism', 'tendentious realism', 'monumental realism and communist realism'. However, socialist realism came out to be the most appropriate after much deliberation (James 1973: 86).

Socialist realism as a term was not used in public until 1932 (Clark 1981: 27-46). It was actually a 'tendency' in the mid 1890s that determined the rise of the proletarians and the beginning for struggle against the oppressors. Only after formulation and promulgation at the 1934 Congress of Writers did it become the officially sponsored 'method', first in literature and then in the arts in general (James 1973: 87). Socialist realism reflected deeply in arts that derived itself from the rich culture of the past as well the Soviet period. It brought together two key features of earlier Russia and the Soviet Union: culture and socialism in its formation. It is therefore the reflection in the arts of the struggle for the victory of socialism (ibid). Thus, theoretically at least, socialist realism indeed was a very strong phenomenon as it not only furthered the goals of the socialist ideology but in doing so it also gave a strong message of emancipation especially of the oppressed classes which very much included the working class. Socialist realism also gave importance to the common masses as is seen through many of the socialist realist paintings, literature, cinema as well as other such fields where this concept had successfully managed to penetrate. Socialist realism therefore had strong roots in the culture of Soviet Union as it is through culture that it furthered its goals.

Before going into the details of the various fields that socialist realism penetrated and left a very strong impact, an understanding of the Ideology 'socialism' as seen in Soviet

Union is needed because as said earlier, the basic aim of socialist realism is to further the goals of socialism. Whether it was done as per the basic principles of this ideology is a different debate all together. After the October Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union, socialism became its guiding principle ruled by a single party called the Communist Party of the Soviet Union or CPSU. This October Revolution was not only successful in bringing about a transition from capitalism to communism in the world order, but also in its process of demolishing the 'prison house' that was Tsarist Russia, ending age-old oppressions and freeing vast masses of human beings, people and nationalities, within its extensive frontiers (Singh 1992: 1623-1627). Therefore it gave the common man a chance to free itself from the bondage of oppressions from above. It gave the people their freedom and everyone a chance to have their right to ownership, especially understood through its principle of "ownership of the means of production".

As rightly put forward by Marx, socialism basically is about man. Marx's concept of socialism follows from his concept of man and that it is not a society of regimented, 'automatized' individuals, regardless of whether there is equality of income or not, and regardless of whether they are well fed and well clad. It is not a society in which the individual is subordinated to the state, to the machine, to the bureaucracy. Even if the state as an "abstract capitalist" were the employer, even if "the entire social capital were united in the hands either of a single capitalist or a single capitalist corporation," this would not be socialism. Therefore Marx clearly tries to show that the aim of socialism is not fulfilled unless its aim is 'man' itself. That is to say that socialism's aim is to create a society or an organization where man is no more alienated from his means of production, his work, his labour, from the society, from other fellow men, from himself and from nature, where he can have his power to grasp the world, and becoming one with the world (Fromm 1961).

Socialism in the Soviet Union is another great topic of discussion as many scholars have different views about how it was carried forth by the leaders. The concept of socialism as believed by Marx may not have been totally replicated in Soviet Union but the fact that it gave a new turn to the earlier mode of autocratic control of the Tsarists speaks for itself that it did view 'man's freedom' from the oppression as one of its aims and thus indeed

tried to live up to the principles of socialism. Maxim Gorky (1934) in his speech in the Workers' Congress explained what socialist Soviet truly stood for: "... In our Union of socialist Soviets, there should not, there cannot be superfluous people... the workers and peasants government has called upon the whole mass of the population to help build a new culture... that means that our criticism must really be self-criticism; it means that we must devise a system of socialist morality as a regulating factor in our work and our relationships". He further adds, "... fathers are beginning to show more care and tenderness for their children, which in my view is quite natural, as children for the first time in the whole life of mankind are now the inheritors not of their parents' money, houses and furniture, but of a real and mighty fortune- a socialist state created by the labour of their father and mothers (Gorky 1964). However it does not mean that socialism in the Soviet Union was an ideal one. It did have its drawbacks especially depending on the leadership and the policies formulated under them. Therefore there are many diverse views regarding this.

Soft power of Soviet Union is very deeply rooted in its ideology and culture. This can be seen in socialist realism which is associated mostly with the arts which in itself is rooted in culture and has an aim of furthering the goals of socialism, thus can be regarded as a source of its soft power. Whether it affected the soft power of Soviet Union positively or negatively is to be discussed, that has been done below. However before we look into socialist realism in particular we need to first understand the soft power of the Soviet in general and the ways in which it was attractive to many regions of the world thus increasing its soft power. The ways it failed to act through the principles of soft power, and to show that the kind of soft power that existed in Soviet might not have fulfilled some of the criteria of the idea of soft power as put forward by Joseph Nye but it was successful in attracting many countries of the world and thus building a very positive image. Soft power as an idea had been present since early times but it was coined and theorised by Joseph Nye in the year 1990 in his book 'Bound to lead' and in 2004 was further explained in his book "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics" laying down the basic tenets of this term coined by him. Soviet Union also had strong soft power even though the term was formulated later.

The October Revolution affected not only Russia, but the whole world. It brought an end to autocratic Tsarist rule and in doing so it made a great impact on the other regions. It raised its image in the eyes of some countries while for some it may not have been an impression rather a loss as it paved the way to socialism as many were in favour of capitalism. The whole notion of Soviet Union's soft power can be seen in the context of a West-Non West divide. The features of Soviet Union that attracted the Non-Western countries certainly did not attract the Western countries and vice-versa. However, there are some features and aspects of the Soviet soft power that cannot be denied by both. With regard to the October Revolution, the West especially the United States did not quite appreciate the way it led to a transition from the Tsarist rule to a Proletarian one. However this fact did not prevent the spread of its effect in other regions as well as in the United States. The October Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky, also had the vision of "world communism" or "permanent revolution" that is the global spread of Communism, a view that Trotsky strongly believed in. However Stalin later disregarded it and stressed more on the principle of 'Communism in one country'.

Nevertheless some countries like China and Cuba were highly influenced and inspired by the revolution. Its affect was also witnessed in the United States, however it was relatively less and deemed negative so much so that the term "First Red Scare" or "The Red Scare" was used to describe this fear of communism spreading in the United States and the world. After the October Revolution, the Americans feared and dreaded communism to such an extent that they treated it as plague. It was totally absorbed in the life of Russia and was spreading massively. Accordingly in 1919, the American Communist Party was established in Chicago. The fear of the spread of Communism was so strong that President Wilson of America even failed to recognize the government formed by Lenin and even launched a kind of a war against 'Bolshevism abroad' and increased the level of anti-communist propaganda at home (Wolfe 2013).

This fact also makes it evident that the impact of Russian Revolution and the October Revolution in particular was quite strong and it was attractive to many regions across the world, raising concerns of the United States losing to communism of Russia or later to the USSR. Adding to their fear, the Bolsheviks further accelerated their influence and in

March 1919, Lenin established the 'Comintern', the Third Communist International. Its mandate was to coordinate communist activity worldwide via decree from Moscow. The year 1919 also saw the coming up of books like 'Red Russia' and 'Ten days that shook the world' written by John Reed who was later expelled from the Socialist Party and then formed the Communist Labour Party. Later in the same year, he returned to Russia where he received fund and instructions from the Comintern to further the growth of communist movement in America but he was jailed in Finland on his way. Reed had suffered poor health in the year 1920 and hence he died in Moscow. He was buried near the Kremlin war. He was thus the only American to be honoured in Moscow. In the same year, the first Chinese Communist Manifesto is published in Shanghai. The year 1922 also witnessed the election of Stalin as the General Secretary to the Central Committee and also the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic or the USSR. This was followed by the death of Lenin in 1924 and he was succeeded by Stalin (ibid).

The death of Lenin and the rise of Stalin indeed brought a turn to the earlier path of 'communism abroad' as he deviated from what Trotsky believed and his idea of "socialism in one country" then was upheld. However this did not mean that the influence that the October Revolution had had in the world came to a halt. It was being spread and countries like China and Cuba were continued to be inspired by it. The fact that even America was affected and influenced shows the intensity of its influence. There are many who believe that the movement was indeed a success not just in overthrowing the Tsarist rule in Russia but also elsewhere. The Communist Party had wide appeal to the poor, the downtrodden and the lower classes of society. On March 7, 1975, the American Negro Labour Congress is organised by the American Communist Party, with aid from Moscow to promote civil rights and communist policies (Satanovsky 2012). Thus, America had real reasons to be feared by the spread of communism. Wolfe (2013) also quotes from the book, 'Red Scared! The Commie Menace in Propaganda and Popular Culture', a 2001 book written by Michael Barson and Steven Heller, "These same leaders forged secret alliance with racist, jingoist and other American fanatics in spreading anti-Communist propaganda throughout the nation. In turn, they succeeded in coming a mass of Americans that their lives were threatened by Communists who were nestled among the immigrants entering the United States".

The October Revolution therefore made Russia and the Soviet Union attractive to other regions, especially to those who were struggling against the repressive and oppressive rule. This revolution therefore becomes that important part of their history which they can boast of, and hence also proved that the socialist ideology was indeed attractive and added to the soft power of the Soviet Union. Even in the later years, the October revolution survived to be a source of constant inspiration for the anti-capitalist revolutionary movements elsewhere. It also sent out a message of Marxism to the oppressed and exploited in the remotest corners of the earth, and with it came the Leninist summon to militant revolutionary politics, which have since moved vast masses of people to become effective actors in political life, to make their own more or less successful revolution in China, Cuba, Vietnam and elsewhere (Singh 1992:1623-1627).

Soviet soft power was indeed strong and its sources were mostly its culture and ideology and being dependent on these, the Soviet Union increased its soft power. Soft power of the Soviet Union is also largely dependent upon its cultural diplomacy and often they can be used inter-changeably as it was state-centric and the activities of the state also determined their soft power to a very large extent. However, the Soviet Union used a lot of its hard power strategies too, thus leading to violence in some cases and this did affect its soft power. The early Soviet experience in Central Asia shows the use of both hard and soft power in trying to achieve its aims. They did not hesitate to quickly resort to the hard power strategies when faced by difficulties but soon also learned the softer way of dealing with things. Thus, both soft and hard actions were taken to fulfil its goals of modernization. This was defined as secularism, sex equality, and mass literacy as well as spreading of communist political ideology (Olker 2008). The similar kinds of action have taken place in some other regions too. Since our concern here is to understand the soft power capability of the Soviet Union, it takes us again back to the earlier mentioned term 'socialist realism'. It is true that the Soviet Union had great source of soft as well as hard power but socialist realism (as it associates mostly with arts like the art or painting, literature, architecture, cinema and so on so forth, all those aspects of the region that help in the promotion of the State's desired goals or the goals of its ideology and highlights its culture), stands as an interesting source of soft power and as it holds the two major source of Soviet Union's soft power: socialist ideology and culture, in it. Therefore by looking at

some of the major areas where socialist realism got totally entrenched, we get to know about the soft power of the region and the fact that it really worked made the Soviet Union attractive to the other regions without the use of coercion or force.

There are many different interpretations of socialist realism. It is not a single doctrine. It is not in theoretical writings but in practical example that one should look for an answer to the question ‘what is socialist realism?’(Clark 1981:3).The Socialist realist vision of literature had developed gradually. The 19<sup>th</sup> century writers Vissarion Belinskii (1811-1848) and Nikolai Chernyshevskii (1828-1889) were among the first to write about social uses for literature (Dray-Novey 2010: 204-209). The practical examples of socialist realism is therefore seen in the earlier mentioned areas, that is in arts, only then can we understand how it worked as a means for achieving the ends of the state. The first record of its use is in a speech made by Gronsky, the president of the Organization Committee of the newly founded Writer’s Union on May 17, 1932 (Clark 1981: 33). However it was adopted as the official style of Soviet art and literature at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. The doctrine was articulated at the Congress by Andrei Zhdanov and Maxim Gorky (Efimova 1997: 72-80). The viability of socialist realism as a new creative method is borne out by the artistic practice of such writers of world stature as Maxim Gorky, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Mikhail Sholokhov, Konstantin Simonov, Chinghiz Atimatov and Vasil Bykov to mention a few (Dmitriev 1983: 06-100).

Soviet life is most often imagined as the incarnation of the anti-aesthetic, colourless, lacking in style or design especially when compared with the spectacular, colourful and stylish surface reality of commercial capitalism during the same period. Socialist realism traditionally was described by the term “propaganda” and the art was seen to be very dry and lifeless, especially by the West (Efimova 1997: 76). From birth to maturity, living in many lands and working in many historical contexts, socialist realism has had as rich and varied a life as most ideas in modern culture (Kelly 1983: 108-111). Modernism emerged in pre-war Russia out of the fragmentation of symbolism in the fields of literature, poetry and art but it also included international influences as well. Around 1931-33, with the decision of Stalin to make an official style bound the different art and architectural



groups together by the rules set by the State and they also had to be registered (The Stalinization of Post-Revolutionary Soviet Art and Architecture 2011).

The work now had to be under certain rules: firstly, the work had to be proletarian in nature that is to say, the art should be relevant to the workers and understandable to them; secondly, it had to include typical scenes of everyday life of the people; thirdly, it had to be realistic in the representational sense and lastly, it had to be supportive of the aims of the state and the party. Thus, this shows that the vibrant artistic culture that existed in post-revolutionary Russia thrived up until the early 1930s only (ibid). The West and the critics of socialist realism often accused it of rigidity and of being very restrictive, especially because of the norms and conditions as well as rules attached to it. It is true that it is difficult for the writers, artists, architects, directors or all those who come directly under the ring of this system, to always follow a single path and yet to bring forth something that is very creative and attractive at the same time. However, this does not mean the works that are produced this way are not up to the mark. By doing so, the critics are giving a very half-hearted judgement. They should know that the product of socialist realist art, literature and architecture have their own unique taste, but are guided by certain rules to fulfil the aims or the goals of the State.

Maxim Gorky, the most generally quoted exponent of socialist realism (Kelly 1983: 108-111) dedicated himself to the cause of the state and its socialist ideology. It can be called 'propaganda' but it cannot be denied of the appreciation it has received in its chiselled but flair beauty. This beauty goes beyond all the criticisms. Socialist realism may have restricted the boundaries of the arts on which it is based but even though has come out to be meaningful in its result. It was supposed to be under certain premises and to achieve the goals of the state but if the goals also included the emancipation of the working and the oppressed class and to bring the focus of attention to the common masses, the workers and the peasants, its beauty itself gets magnified. Socialist realism therefore has been successful in bringing about this realisation that the common masses and the working class are the most important but often neglected part of the society. It has spread this message of 'emancipation of the working class' through very subtle but effective ways

and has helped in creation of a very strong image of Soviet built on the principles of socialism.

Against the various criticisms associated with Soviet Union, a mesmeric and beautiful image of the Soviet past has been sketched out by filmmakers, writers and exhibition curators. The sparkling gilded stations of the Moscow metro, the sun-drenched 'Fountain of Friendship' at the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibitions, the tanned athlete dressed in white and waving red banners, all form great examples of socialist realism in the Soviet Union and also stand as the cliché images of Stalinist regime replacing the images of the Gulag or communal apartments (Efimova 1997: 72-80).

### SOCIALIST REALISM IN LITERATURE

As it was seen to have had its first stages in the literature and even approved officially in the Congress of Soviet Writers, our discussion should then start with socialist literature. At the Third meeting of Soviet and American writers, Daniil Granin, author of many popular novels, said, "Literature upholds the integrity of the personality and tries to preserve man's inner world. It protects the environment of the soul from being eroded in this life which has fewer mysteries and is so predictable and programmed. That is why we welcome books concerned with moral problems and the life of the soul" (Dmitriev 1983: 96-100). This statement made by Daniil Granin lays down the importance of literature and also stresses on the part that literature should touch the life and soul. Literature therefore is the most important medium to convey any message to reach to the deepest soul and it is through literature that the imagination and the thinking process of a man is made more strong and vivid. Literature makes us think and makes us conscious of the things that need to be changed or are otherwise being ignored. The discourse in socialist realist literature too has its own essence. It can be regarded as being slightly deviated from the normal path which the other literatures follow, in that it is guided by certain rules that are imposed from the state on the writers. Hence, there are different viewpoints given by different scholars and critics across the time either criticizing it or speaking in favour of it. All the views together help us in understanding how it was perceived. This aspect of socialist literature as being under the boundaries of certain rules

and norms appears to be problematic to some scholars and critics of socialist realism and socialist literature in particular.

The great debate on socialist realism that began in the mid nineteen-fifties between the opponents and supporters of Marxist literary orthodoxy gained new momentum as the liberalizing trends in Eastern Europe enabled Marxist ideologist and aestheticians to express more freely their opinion on the highly delicate subject (Demaitre 1966: 263-268). Soviet literature inherited the great tradition of the Russian classical literature but in addition to being a literature of the 'Great World' and 'Great Faith' it became a literature of the 'Great Deed'; the deed being the transformation of life in keeping with the ideal of genuine humanity (Dmitriev 1983: 98). In trying to understand the basic tenets of socialist realist literature, some scholars believe that the most frequent and self evident approach would be the use of concepts such as, 'ideological commitment' (ideinost), 'Party mindedness' (patrinost), 'national/popular spirit' (narodnost) and others. These categories are in spirit deeply ideological and not merely aesthetic (Heller 1937: 51).

However, there are some scholars who try to bring out the aesthetic nature of socialist literature by bringing forth discussion among various Soviet literary scholars and have produced the notion of honest depiction and cognition of life (Dmitriev 1983: 96-100). There are discussions about the freedom of the writers who follow the guidelines of socialist realism and that whether they have enough freedom to express their views or are just mere puppets in the hands of the State and the ruling Party. With regard to this there are scholars of the opinion that much freedom was given to the writers in the Lenin period as compared to the later period. In the article 'Party Organization and Party Literature' written at the end of 1905, Lenin demonstrated that literature should be and cannot be party literature and that it should become an important factor in promoting the Bolshevik cause. For as long as Lenin lived, Soviet writers, poets and artists were given the greatest possible freedom, as long as they did not express politically objectionable opinions. After Lenin's death and the subsequent structural reforms as exemplified by the five year plans, the pressure of the party became more intense (Demaitre 1966: 265).

We see that socialist realism took a different turn after the death of Lenin as it became more state-centric and used for the sole purpose of promotion of the state goals and the

spread of its socialist ideology to the maximum. However, by focussing our attention solely on this aspect deprives us of the whole truth about how socialist realist literature ran its full course. The socialist realist texts were bound to an ideological dominant is exceedingly familiar. At the same time, however, instead of citing differences to attack or reject its representative texts, we can also use them to elucidate how socialist realism was a literary system that operated with distinct evaluative criteria (Carleton 1994: 992-1009). This enables us to broaden our understanding of the socialist literature. Some scholars also feel that the role played by writers is equally important in understanding socialist literature as what and how the writer writes also affects the quality of it. Most importantly, the theme of socialist realism should be clearly and rightly explored by the writer. The theme mostly deals with the emancipation of the working classes, the life of the common people and to uphold the ideals of the state and its ideology. Some also believe that the themes that were taken by mediocre writers failed to do justice to it by being didactic and creating lacking in lifelike credibility (Dmitriev 1983).

Therefore by looking at various literatures that were produced during those times we understand the effect of socialist realism on it. If we look at some of the works produced during the 1930s during the Stalin period, we get an idea that all was not totally lost after the death of Lenin, that under Stalin too there were literature that despite being state-centric were worthy of appreciation. Being state-centric was not that much of a problem rather it was a problem if under Socialist Realism, the literature lost its pure charm. The collection, 'Belomorsko-baltiiski Kanal imeni Stalina' ( The White Sea-Baltic Canal or Belomor) can be regarded as one such example of socialist literature that contained the essence of Engel's theory in 'Dialectics of Nature' that labour has transformed the primate into the human (Carleton 1994: 998-1003). The major aspect of the portrayal of labour even in the later years of the Soviet Union was the concern to show what inspires labour and what effect it has on the human being. The humanism of Soviet literature flows from its links with socialist reality which is blended with historical optimism, striving for the constant improvement of the individual and society (Dmitriev 1983: 256-260).

The above mentioned collection ‘Belomorsko-baltiiski Kanal imeni Stalina’ or ‘Belomor’ was based on the construction of the 220 kilometres canal, extending from Lake Omega to the White Sea. It was Stalin’s one of the major projects as it represented Stalin’s first major plan to expand the Soviet Union’s transportation and was one of the first labour projects. As it was of much importance Stalin wanted the writers of the Soviet Union to capture the moment through their beautiful art of writing. The same month, one hundred and twenty writers were sent under Gorki’s direction to the canal to study it. They had to interview the guards and prisoners and produce a “commemorative” account of their impression and experiences for the series edited by Gorki. This included the participation of noted figures like Gorki, Leopol’d Averbakh, Vsevolod Ivanov, Valentin Kataev, Alexei Tolstoi, Mikhail Zoshchenko, Bruno Iasenskii and Viktor Shklovskii. With its publication planned to coincide with the commencement of the XVII Party Congress (January 1934), the collection itself like the canal, became the product of “storming” (Carleton 1994: 995-999). This collection can be seen as a typical example of a State-centric work, where the leader of the State or the ruling party has directed the writers under it to fulfil a task of writing that highlights the achievements of the state. This state-centric approach of socialist realism towards literature can be criticised by many scholars on the grounds that it restricts the freedom of the writer as it sets a limit on the theme and have to be under the guidelines or the canons of the socialist realist literature. It also makes the work limited to certain set of people who are either sympathetic to Soviet Union or are in anyway associated with it because of the need to do so; otherwise it makes it very dry and factual.

However this will be a lop-sided argument as it also acted as a proof that human energy could transform the environment in accordance with society’s demands and even if this kind of work is to be repudiated as a grotesque making of one of the more brutal episodes of the Stalinist Soviet Union, it remains a most peculiar text because it departs substantially from the norms of documentary chronicles and is a stylistics anomaly (ibid). On the contrary, some believe that the attempt to turn socialist realism into a collection of ‘literary canons’ will only impede the escalation of Soviet art. The concept of the “norm” cannot be conjoined with the assertion of definite sources and policies of creation which have been recognized permanently (Heller 1997: 56). Socialist realist literature

therefore has a state-centric approach in it and mainly features the goals of socialism and the achievement of the state. There are both positive and negative aspects of it and likewise the supporters and critics of socialist realism have their own justification to give. However with regard to the soft power aspect of it and which is the major concern of this chapter, we need to understand how socialist realist literature influenced the soft power of the Soviet Union despite its shortcomings and criticisms.

An editorial in Pravda suggested that the literature in Soviet Union should highlight the great achievements of its great heroes. It highlighted the role of leaders such as Lenin and Stalin and stated that their efforts were to bring about the economic and cultural development of the people of Soviet Union. Therefore, the Soviet literature should reflect on the efforts of those leaders. It also added that the Central Committee of the Party encouraged a lot of spiritual literature (Pravda editorial 1948: AA9). The editorial clearly discusses the role of State in the making of Soviet literature and also brings forth the idea of socialism as being spiritual and fostering the growth of people in all the spheres of Soviet life. However, socialist realism was not just confined to the Soviet Union. As it involved the Socialist ideology, the countries that were sympathetic to this ideology and were highly influenced by the Marxist as well as Marxist-Leninist ideology were attracted to the notion of socialist realism. Likewise the socialist realist literature of the Soviet Union also had a great impact on other countries. By being highly influenced by the literature of some of the great writers like Maxim Gorky, some countries also borrowed a lot from what the Soviet Union had to offer.

The revolutionary romanticism of Gorky's writings after the first Russian Revolution of 1905 added a new dimension to the critical realism which was the dominant literary movement in Europe. Socialist realism in its theoretically developed Soviet form was different from the earlier literary movement as it arose in a socialist society and aspired to be the first stage in a new literary tradition (Kelly 1983: 108-111). The Socialist literature as a source of soft power can be seen in the influence it had on the image of Soviet Union abroad. Countries like China, Vietnam, and Cuba have highly been inspired by the whole concept of socialist realism and its penetration into the literary work was even larger due to the contribution of some of the highly creative minds of the Soviet writers. These

writings acted as a powerful tool to reach the minds of millions of people and spreading the ideals of the socialist realism in literature and other literary works did act as a strong source of soft power in that it was appreciated by many countries and sometimes even in the West. These countries were highly inspired by the credibility of the produced work. However, the main argument is that, socialist realism did act as a source of soft power as it was successful in fulfilling the goals of Soviet Union, with the help of literature that acted as a 'source of attraction and did not use coercion' as according to the definition put forward by Joseph Nye (Nye 2008: 94) to achieve the end. It did act as a strong soft power source despite the great debate on socialist realist literature being of a high quality and value, spreading the goals of the socialist state with the aim of bringing about an emancipation of the workers and the common people on the one hand, and it being deprived of its core essence because of too much of involvement of the State, thus making the literature very dry and didactic on the other hand.

A very strong example of socialist realism of Soviet Union acting as a source of soft power is the case of India, where many writers have been influenced by the socialist realist literature and poetry of Soviet Union. D.Selveraj, of Tamil Nadu, India has been one such writer. His novel 'Thol' (Hide) speaks about the travails and struggles of the Dalit Tannery workers of Dindigul in Tamil Nadu. Almost all his works highlight the plight of workers and the toiling masses and their constant struggle to change the social order. Maxim Gorky is among his role models. When asked in an interview about the relevance of socialist realism today, that whether it has been obsolete or not, he answered, "I don't think that socialist realism has become obsolete. 'Thol', his novel, is living proof of the relevance of socialist realism, which cannot be replaced by any other 'ism'... socialist realism is dialectical, which sees the transformation in individuals, society and nature. It is a scientific approach" (Frontline 2013).

Another example from India witnessing the soft power of Soviet Union in its socialist realist writings is the work of very renowned writer Gopalakrishnan. He spent twenty five years in Moscow, where he translated Russian writings, communist classics and propaganda. In the hot Indian summer, the readers felt the chill of the Siberian winters. They were so inspired by the writings and folktales that even though they were aware of

the terror of 'Gulag', but they were too unreal for people who had been introduced to Russian affairs through its literature. Such was the power that literature of both Soviet Union and India possessed. India was therefore a fertile soil for the Soviet soft power to gain roots (Lal 2011).

Any discussion on socialist realist literature would be incomplete without the mentioning of the great works of Maxim Gorky. This is true even in the case of India where his writings have been explicitly appreciated and adored. Almost all his works have instilled a sense of fervour in the minds of the readers. However 'Mother' (1906) is one such notable and world famous work that made a lasting impact in the minds of the readers across the world. 'Mother' has been translated into many languages and was also made into movies in many countries. Bertolt Brecht, the famous playwright and poet also wrote a play that was adapted from Gorky's 'Mother'. However in India, 'Mother' has received an additional magnitude and has been translated into various Indian languages like Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Oriya, Bengali, Assamese, Tamil, Urdu and the like. Apart from 'Mother' there were other books of Gorky that were translated into Indian languages, these books include, 'Foma Gordeyev', 'Three of Them', 'Artamonovs', 'Lower Depths', 'Miserable or Luckless Pavel', 'Childhood', 'Apprenticeship', 'Enemies' and 'V.I Lenin', to name a few (Indian Literature 1968: 68-73).

Therefore, socialist realist literature was not just confined to the boundaries of Soviet Union but also had its deep effects felt in other regions; one such region being China. Soviet Union and China were not only just two socialist countries, their working and the principles they followed often influenced each other. Socialist realism in the literary work also was one such aspect where Sino-Soviet cooperation and influence was very strong. Today, Soviet Union appears as an episode in Russian history; meanwhile, the People's Republic of China or the PRC of the world's second largest economy, pursues what its former leader Deng Xiaoping called "socialism but with Chinese characteristics". At present, in both the regions, doctrinaire Marxism-Leninism is dead, and changes over the last few decades have facilitated study of the long career of the literary method known as socialist realism (Dray-Novey 2010: 204-209).



However, as we time travel, back into the glorious days of Soviet Union, what we see is that the influence of Soviet Union was very strong and the influence that socialist realist literature had was immense as because of their common attachment through the socialist ideology and also encouraged the Chinese with the concept of ‘emancipation of the oppressed class’ and most importantly of class struggle. The idea of socialist realism that literature can teach and enlighten the mass populace could help to spur social change appealed to many readers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century China. Their attraction to a Russian literary tradition that seemed to share such a vision is, in general, well known (ibid). However, the picture of socialist realism is somewhat blurred on East Germany as they insist on arbitrarily and misleadingly continuing to use the term “objective reality”. Socialist realism is neither new nor an indigenous product of eastern Germany. It is a post war importation from Russia, whence it has also spread to many other countries in the Russian sphere of influence- Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia (Frey 1953: 273-278).

Even in China, Mao Zedong, like other Communists leaders had encountered conflicts over the nature of art during the May Fourth Movement of the early 1920s and after. In 1942, he discussed proletarian realism with Party Comrades at the Yan’an Forum on Art and Literature, intensifying Party literary campaigns in the decades after 1949. In the year 1953, the Chinese leaders adopted the term “socialist realism” (Dray-Novey 2010: 206). Therefore it was after great debate and discussion that the Chinese finally agreed to adopt socialist realism in their country, inspired by the socialist realism in the Soviet Union, although with some caveats. Mark Gamsa, examines the Sino-Russian cultural encounter more closely than ever done before and also tries to perceive it from a viewpoint of a new century. Gamsa sees Russian literature in China through the prism of its translators. This approach is more complicated than may at first appear because most of those translations worked not from the original Russian but rather from English, French, German or Japanese version. However even after the beginning of the phase of socialist realism, many Chinese readers naturally accepted this Soviet view of Russia’s literary past and at the same time the interest of the Chinese readers and translations had extended to a much broad range of Russian literature (ibid).

Nikolai Ostrovsky's 1933 Socialist realist novel, 'How the Steel was tempered' became a centrepiece in the urban and rural areas of China too. It was even made into a film later. This film, 'Pavel Korchagin', in the Chinese context brought the human-machine continuum as a condition and expression of human voluntarism, with commitment to permanent revolution within the shifting spatial alignments of socialism. Korchagin's sick, blind and weak body is juxtaposed to visual images and a narrative that celebrates an enduring humanity forged through the Party, the military, the construction of the railroad and literary production. At the height of Sino-Soviet friendship in the early 1950s, an earlier version of 'Pavel Korchagin' circulated briefly alongside translation of Ostrovsky's novel (Chen 2012: 151-181). Apart from Ostrovsky's novel 'How the Steel was tempered', many of the Soviet works conceived along these lines of socialist realism were equally influential in China, an example of this includes 'Iron Flood' by Serafimovich, 'Cement' by Gladkov (Dray-Novey 2010: 207).

In Eastern Germany, one of the most intriguing peculiarities is the emphasis placed in the Soviet Zone on consciousness of tradition, and this is done not only by the older generations but also by the returnees from exile like Brecht Seghers, Arnold Zweig, Ludwig Renn, Friedrich Wolf, Willi bredel, Ernst Bloch, F. Weikskopf, Wieland Herzfelde and so forth (Frey 1953: 276). Socialist realism in the German Democratic Republic was pointed at educating the rank and file in the spirit furthering the solution of the German problems at hand. Critics have agreed that creative representation of the new life then had not yet been achieved but this did not mean that it did not have promising beginnings. The literature of the Soviet Union was at all times regarded as exemplary and there is a persistent urge among East German commentators to hold the domestic literary output up to the works of the Russian writers such as Gorky, Shlochov, Fadayevev, Aleksei Tolstoi, Fedin and many more, with the inevitable result that they discover great gap in their own literature (ibid).

The case of Afghanistan might be a different one as it started not as a soft power but it later it did act as one and therefore it is interesting to find out how socialist realism ended up influencing this region. Nur Muhammad Taraki was a critic of the socio-political processes in Afghanistan and later on he became one of the founding members of the

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). He also contributed in some ways to a newly functioning free press by writing articles attacking conservatism in general and certain aspects of the traditional Afghan social structure, during the period of relative liberalization from 1947-1953. Re-called to Kabul after serving barely six months in the United States in the Afghan Embassy, Taraki began to write rigorously, producing novels, short stories and essays, including one on Maxim Gorky (1964) (Dupree 1992: 85-114).

Therefore it can be said that Afghanistan was guided by a growing number of Soviet advisors and they persisted in forcing their socialistic ideals on the populace, without dialogue and without compromise. The Soviets invaded during the evening of 24 December 1979 claiming that they had been invited to protect the Socialist Democratic Republic of Afghanistan against imperialist-aided counter revolutionaries and foreign interventionists. In the midst of this tension, socialist realism was officially introduced to the literature of Afghanistan. It was purposely deployed as a psychological manoeuvre designed to defeat the opposition by injecting Afghan culture with Soviet ideological objectives. Afghanistan's political institutions had already been systematically 'sovietized'. Afghan women and Afghan youth were mobilized for the purposes of indoctrination early in 1978. The USSR Writers' Union re-emphasized the activist role expected of Afghan writers in their message to their Afghan counterparts: "The revolutionary masses of Afghanistan are expecting new works from their writers to help them build the new life and a society based on justice" (ibid).

Some critics are of the opinion that socialist realism denied not only the great importance of the psychology of the individual, but even its existence. Topics such as attachment and love were discouraged, only social classes and their struggle really existed (Dray-Novey 2010: 205). socialist realism in literary works, if it brought itself the message of class struggle, a cause for the rights of the working and the oppressed class, their emancipation, to bring them to the equal footing and thus removing their alienation from the society, it also brought with it some elements of rigidity, as it was restricted to a certain theme and it especially took the freedom of the writers to bring out a work, according to their own perceptions.

However, this claim that topics of love and attachment were discouraged (ibid) does not prove that it denied the individual their rights to think or exist in their own way. It is true that it solely dealt with the goals of the state but that was the purpose of socialist realist literature out on the open. If it took away the writers' freedom to write on the theme of her/his own choice it also worked for the cause of freedom of the workers from the bondage. The writer is still producing with his own thoughts and nobody has the right over that because if there are any good works written under socialist realist literature, it comes from him. It might have been rigid and restrictive in that it gave the writers certain theme to write on but it never took the writers' freedom of thought and expression. It is this fact that made socialist realist literature a source of its soft power and therefore without the use of force or coercion it became attractive to many readers in different regions of the world.

#### SOCIALIST REALISM IN CINEMA

Socialist realism was not just seen in literature but also in a more visual part of arts, like cinema, theatre, art and architecture and painting. If literature opened the doors of Soviet Union to reach out to the people of other regions and to spread their views on socialism and Soviet principles, then Soviet theatres and cinema carried it further by adding to it the power of vision and sound. It is true that cinema and theatres are the most effective way of reaching out to the masses of not just one's own region but also to the people of other regions. It not only acts as a source of entertainment but also as a source of learning. Hence, cinema and theatres in a subtle way reaches the hearts and minds of the people and affects their thinking process in many different ways. It therefore can also be regarded as a source of soft power of a country or a region as rightly said by Nye (2004) if it acts as an attraction to many people across the world and in that process fulfils certain goals and aims of the State or government of that region. Socialist realism is also one such way of reaching out to the people of the different regions and this aspect in cinema makes it a perfect example of the soft power of Soviet Union.

“The victorious class wants to laugh with joy. That is its right and Soviet cinema must provide its audience with this joyful Soviet laughter” (Shumyatsky 1935). However, comedy posed some problems for socialist realism precisely because it took neither itself

nor its subject matter seriously. Soyuzkino was the newly centralized Soviet film organization and Boris Shumyatsky became its head in the year 1930. From then on, he set his task developing an apparatus that would produce films that were ideologically correct and acceptable to the Party and its constituent organs (Taylor 1983). Socialist realism in cinema too was, thematic in its approach. Unlike neo-liberalism, socialist realism provided film-makers and authors a small group of themes and areas to work with. The films therefore mostly glorified the industrial worker for his productivity. One of the most famous socialist realist films was 'Chapaev' (1934); it is about commander Vasily Chapayev, who rises from a simple bumpkin to a legendary Russian war hero during the course of the film (Srinivasan 2012).

Socialist realist cinema therefore was seen as a hope to the struggling classes, the working class and the oppressed class. It also fulfilled the purpose of educating the other classes, thus making them more aware of the situation of the working class. Soviet socialist realist cinema outside the boundaries of Soviet Union was also taken positively in many regions and influenced them in the making of their own cinema. It served its purpose of making the people socially aware and conscious on the one hand, and entertaining the masses on the other. The influence of Soviet socialist realist cinema on other regions of the world shows its soft power status then, as along with cinema it brought to those regions some aspect of Soviet life too. It made them look up to Soviet Union as a region that was strongly humanitarian. During the Soviet period, each of the five Central Asian Republics had their own studios that produced films (The Century of Asia 2006). The Soviet cinema in the late 1920s and early 1930s had been based on four principal factors: the aesthetics, the ideological, the technical and the audience factors (Taylor 1983: 441-450).

Like Soviet literature, socialist realist cinema of Soviet Union also succeeded in attracting other regions and their people. In China many of Soviet films were taken as an example not just for building their cinema in the lines similar to that of Soviet Union, but also for building up their own political and social principles. This can also be understood by the fact that the Soviet authorities themselves were concerned with cinema not as a revolutionary art form so much as a revolutionary medium for political communication

(ibid). Nikolai Ostrovsky's 1933 novel 'How the Steel was tempered' which was later turned into a film 'Pavel Korchagin' also had a great impact on the Chinese notions of human-machine connection along the lines of Permanent Revolution. The element of socialism also attracted the Chinese to Soviet socialist realist cinema (Chen 2012: 151-181). In fact it can be said that some elements of socialist realism have been used in the films that were produced in most of the East Asian countries. Park Kwang Su's 'A Single Spark' from South Korea (1996) and Hou Hsiao Hsien's 'Good Men, Good Women' from Taiwan (1995) are such examples of films that used style and ideological value system of socialist realism to bring forth the political struggles that were nationalists in nature and were linked to Communist internationalism. Chinese film 'Two Stage Sisters' by Xie Jin is another example of Socialist Realist film in East Asia. It is a common form of re-flexibility in East Asian cinema, especially in films about traditional opera (James 2007: 72-93).

It can be said that Soviet Union's soft power has been increased through these socialist realist films which had great impact on many countries across the world, one such country was Germany. The Soviet cinema got international acclaim through distribution and exhibition in Germany during the second half of the 1920s. Deutsh-Russische Film Allianz better known by the name 'Derussa', was the German- Russian Film Alliance that was founded in Berlin in late 1927 to market Soviet pictures abroad and co produce films that were suitable for both the Russian and international market (Saunders 1997: 169). Iceland was another such region where Soviet influence could be felt. This country is of interest not only because it not only showed the impact of Soviet Union's soft power through the socialist realist cinema but also because this region served as a zone of competition between the Soviet Union and the United States during the World War II and the subsequent Cold War period. In the case of Iceland, Soviet agencies such as the 'Ruskiy Mir Foundation' and 'The All Union Society for Cultural Contacts with Foreign countries or VOKS' played a major role in popularizing Soviet Cinema. The Mir was founded on 12 March 1950 in Reykjavik, Iceland. For spreading Soviet cinema, it provided free of charge 16mm projectors to all interested Mir divisions, individuals and organizations such as Workers' Union, Farmers' Union, Youth Organizations, schools and hospitals. Films were selected with the aim of entertaining and educating. The movie

screenings were very popular as much of these films were discussed during the screenings as well as afterwards, as seen in the case of *Fagríhvammur* in Iceland (Hafsteinsson and Gre' tarsdottir 2011:361-375).

The case of Soviet socialist realism in both Germany and Iceland shows that its soft power has been increased through the help of its socialist realist cinema. This is so because Soviet films were screened in both these regions and through it the aim of promoting a positive image of the Soviet Union was fulfilled as the people became more aware of the Soviet way of life and its principles of socialism. While Germany was like a partner with the USSR and helped in the promotion of its film abroad, Iceland acted as a zone of competition for the Soviet Union as well as the USSR. Both these superpowers acted very competitively and aimed at furthering their interest. The audience of these “propaganda films” in Iceland attended the film screening not only for political reasons but also because they treated the film screenings as social and cultural events, leisure activities and they offered a window to different worlds. They were highly enthusiastic about screenings of films that were based on land reclamation, machine textile work, car assembly and how to paint the skies with water colours. However, after the establishment of their own State Television, ‘Icelandic State Television’ in the year 1966, the interest of the audience was reduced and the screenings of both the Soviet Union’s and United Nations films slowly reduced and were attended by little audience (ibid).

In Germany, the aim of *Derussa* (the German-Soviet film alliance) was to place German-Soviet film ties on a broad commercial footing like that which linked Hollywood and Berlin. It focussed on the growing recognition of the Soviet Union in general and on the breakthrough of Soviet cinema in particular. The Soviet contribution to Weimar cinema was substantial. Apart from acting as one of Germany’s largest film export markets, it supplied émigré performers, directors and set designers, who were however often employed to produce Soviet films in Germany. Germany even served as Soviet Union’s window to the West (Saunders 1997: 168-169).

While the Soviet socialist realist cinema did prove to be successful to some extent, the case of agitprop theatres in Soviet Union did not have such great impacts after the implementation of socialist realism in the year 1932. Soviet agitprop theatre was not a

cohesive genre, although all of the performance styles that fell under this rubric had clear political aims: they were designed to educate audiences about important policies or events and even to inspire viewers to action. In 1923, the Moscow School of Journalism began its own living troupe called 'Blue Blouse'. Following the Soviet example, many other countries like Germany and even the United States also organised such mobile troupes and organizations. However with the introduction of socialist realism, Soviet Union's cultural policy took a different direction, it came as a message to other regions of the world that Soviet cultural production now had to become more complex (Mally 2003:324-342). Thus, in the case of Soviet theatres, the emergence of socialist realism did not have positive effects, especially with its failure to attract much audience abroad which was done in the case of agitprop theatres. From this it also follows that it also negatively affected the soft power of Soviet Union, although not to a very large extent.

#### SOCIALIST REALISM IN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Unlike socialist realist literature or cinema which presumed a certain degree of active interest on the part of the audience, socialist realist sculpture and architecture require a passive audience (Vater 2009). If we look into some facts and figures that published in the Soviet architectural press and supported by foreign eyewitnesses, it becomes clear that in this field, the Soviet Union is very far advanced. This style of Soviet architecture is viewed by the Western architects with much difficulty to understand as it acts as a double edged sword, fulfilling two contradictory ideas with one style. This is to say that the Soviet architectural style has a double image: it is revolutionary but conservative at the same time and on the one hand there is the use of highly mechanized building technique, on the other there is Russian national style (Voyce 1956: 104-115). Such art, moreover stresses towards a revolutionary transformation of the human worldview: just as didactic materialism's role is to analyze objective reality, so the principles of Marxism- Leninism in art serve to analyze a fictitious reality, which enables artists to examine the historical nature of the described phenomena (Vater 2009).

An editorial in Pravda helps in bringing forth the importance that Soviet Russia placed on Soviet art with socialist qualities. The editorial reads that the declaration of the USSR Council of Ministers on the reorganization of the All-Russian Academy of Arts into the



Academy of Arts of the USSR was a step towards the growth of Soviet culture and that it also marked the beginning of a new form of art that is the Soviet pictorial art. The editorial further suggests that the other forms of arts, especially seen in the school of Formalism and Bourgeois art lack ideology and substance and therefore project human beings as being devoid of feelings and lack the 'ability to think'. In its stead, the Soviet pictorial art has been portrayed as the most forward art in the world. However it also states that there is a constant threat of attempting to influence the minds of the artists, arising from the West that would 'pollute' the originality of Soviet art. The editorial finally states that the key to progress in Soviet art was to 'keep close contact with the ideology of the Soviet people being based on socialist realism' (FBIS 1947: AA1). What can be drawn from the editorial is the role of the government in promoting the ideals of socialist realism. It can also be seen that soviet art has received great importance as it has acted as a tool of influence for Soviet Union over other countries through attraction.

To understand Soviet socialist architecture one needs to understand the fact that even though there many scholars have written on its architecture, it has been limited to some extent as there are many factors that come in the way of their understanding of the socialist realist architecture. One such factor is the writer's origin. Most scholars from the West, if not all, have a negative notion about the whole idea of socialist realism. It can be because of the fact that most of these writings were written during the cold war period and the writings are biased to some extent. It can also be because of the writer's ignorance about the history of Russia's culture, the language or the lack of understanding of the concept of socialist realism.

Many of the architects who led the profession under Stalin were amongst the brightest new graduates of the Imperial Academy of Arts School. Socialist realism demanded from them a critical assimilation of the total heritage of Soviet Union's culture based on Marxist-Leninist principles. This legacy of human knowledge and experience was the foundation on which proletariat would build its new society (Cooke 1997: 145-158). The Russians believed that even if it is for utilitarian purposes, architecture is a form of education that is aesthetic, political and social in nature and this is the reason why the Metro and the stations of the Moskva- Volga and the Volga-Don canals have been

concerned not only as a means of transport but as a source of inspiration, as a symbol of a finer culture and a promise of a happier and more abundant life to come (Voyce 1956: 104-115). They also believed that if the artists used the scientific tools offered by socialist realism in architecture and other such form of arts, they would be able to predict the future which would be a prosperous and abundant one. This way Soviet art making was transformed into a branch of futurology (Vater 2009).

The Stalinist architecture of Soviet Union have been highly criticized by Western critics and architects by portraying it as monotonous and undifferentiated and its history as static, that in themselves rehearse colonial appraisal of cultural inferiority. This can be regarded as a very half-hearted and biased judgement on part of the West as it denied all appreciation that is deserved by the Soviet socialist realist architecture, despite its rigidity and high-handedness at times. Soviet expansion in the Central Asian and other such regions was driven by a program to replicate a formula for rectifying class stratification. Soviet architecture, devised to serve that goal, documents the confluence of anti-colonialism, socialism, nationalism and imperialism: the seemingly incompatible cultural strategies which intermingled in the Socialist Realist deployment of Orientalism (Castillo 1997: 33-36).

It is true that under Stalin, Soviet Union undertook many big projects that were worthy of praise despite his strict imposition of certain rules on Soviet architecture. However, the fact remains that Stalin's death ushered in a more liberal approach to not just architecture but also to whole political and socio-economic system of Soviet Union. The first sign of liberation were already discernible in 1953, when the field of the arts was slowly broadening under the impact of the new government policies (Voyce 1956: 108-113).

The death of Stalin was followed by the process of de-Stalinization that was undertaken by Nikita Khrushchev who succeeded him. In his speech on 7 December 1954, Khrushchev proclaimed the urge to modernize the architectural techniques, the need to change the way architecture was designed under Stalin and emphasised on the standardization of building types. He argued against 'monumentalism', which is the building of Church or other such institutions and favoured social and common dwelling instead. Thus, the 'housing scheme' of Khrushchev is widely known and appraised. His

ideas differed totally from that of Stalin in that he stressed more on machines and said, “Why wasting manual labour when there are machines and mechanisms to do that in more efficient way”? (Loan and Lapudat 1999). He therefore definitely had a more social approach towards the question of architecture but his emphasis on machines rather than man power certainly did strain the Sino-Soviet relations. It resulted in increased tension between the Soviet Union and China that later culminated into the Sino-Soviet split in 1961. From 1961-1962, one of Mao Zedong’s primary criticism of the Soviet Union was that it “walked on one leg” whereas socialist countries must walk on two legs”, this phrase was used by him to describe the emphasis on technology and cadres over politics and masses. Soviet Union’s claim that steel was the foundation and machinery was the heart and soul was problematic to Mao. He argued that too much reliance on heavy industry and not enough faith in the power of people produced a lumbering socialist body politic (Chen 2012: 161-179).

Whether it was Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev or any other leaders that followed, Soviet Union did have a definite style or method to be followed for pursuing various activities of arts. Socialist Realism did guide these different fields, although the degree and kind did differ from one leader to other. Nevertheless socialist realism after penetrating these fields of arts like architecture in this case, did gain some kind of appreciation both in the region and even beyond its boundaries. This is understood by the fact that the whole idea of socialist realism was taken by some countries that were attracted to this aspect of Soviet Union. Likewise, different countries were attracted to what Soviet Union had to offer, some were attracted to its culture as a whole, some to its socialist realist literature, cinema and some to its architecture and sculpture. Socialist realism did have some major drawbacks in it and critics have not hesitated to criticize it from any angle.

However, despite the criticisms, socialist realism stands out to claim its appreciation that it deserves. It truly remains an educating process even if it failed to get the desired outcomes sometimes. Therefore socialist realist architecture also acted as a source of Soviet Union’s soft power in that it increased the status of the region in the eyes of some countries. While some other countries who did not find reasons to follow what Soviet

Union had done, they definitely felt the impact of the power of Soviet Union through the spread of its architectural techniques abroad.

The impact of Soviet socialist realist architecture could be felt in some parts of the world, where these countries either were influenced by the Soviet model of architecture or were first introduced by Soviet Union in these regions, sometimes even forcefully. Socialist realist architecture seen in this way can be regarded as a source of a soft power but it becomes problematic as it uses force to spread its style or method in other regions. However, our concern is to know whether the imposition of socialist realism in this context increased or decreased the soft power and its image in these regions as well in other parts of the world. Hence, we first need to understand its application in some regions where it was very strong. Socialist realist architecture of Soviet Union moved beyond its boundaries to many different regions like Poland and Berlin are such examples of socialist states that have socialist realist architectural style. In every region that it penetrated, some effects of socialist realism have been felt. In some cases it has been successful while in some case their effects were not so positive.

Socialist realist style or method in architecture was mandatory in all the socialist countries, at least from 1948 to 1955. Poland and Berlin therefore have had experiences of socialist realist style of architecture. The exhibition that was held in Warsaw recently in the year 2011 ‘The Architectural Heritage of socialist realism in Warsaw and Berlin’, celebrating the twenty years of partnership between Warsaw and Berlin, bore witness of the various kinds of such architecture in these regions. The exhibition basically brought forth the kind of urban planning as well as architecture that was seen to be present in these two countries, as a carrier of ideology. The two major development of socialist urban planning were highlighted: ‘Marzalkowska Residential District or MDM’ in Warsaw and ‘Karl-Marx-Alee or KMA’ in Berlin (The Architectural Heritage of Socialist Realism in Warsaw and Berlin MDM/KMA 2011).

These two architectural developments bore all the characteristics of socialist realist architecture. In Germany, this was known as the ‘Wedding Cake style’, especially because of the type of decorations and its richness, which stood as an example of historical models yet treated freely with regard to proportion and scale of grandeur, as

well as combination of styles. Another example of socialist realist architecture that also in some ways acted as an act of increasing the soft power of Soviet Union is the 'Palace of Culture and Science' in Poland. It was given as a gift to Poland from Soviet Union and it is one of the youngest monuments in Warsaw (ibid). Another example of socialist realist architecture in Poland is 'Rotunda bank', opened in the year 1966. It was among the most distinctive buildings then. Its most noticeable feature is the crown like structure. However, there were some major defects in the structure that resulted in the lack of proper ventilation and was thus difficult during summers. Concerned by this fact, the operators of the bank had decided to flattening Rotunda bank but before they could take that action there were wide spread protests by the people with the view that it was a unique piece of architecture and regarded as a part of Warsaw's modern fabric (Poland's architecture: Love them or hate them 2013).

Socialist realist architecture is seen to very regimented and lifeless by many of critics. Massive and dehumanizing, these buildings did not/do not often grace the cover of travel guides but given a closer look, small communist architecture can also be called daring and expressive and reveal a more nuanced story than its stoic face at first suggests. In Slovakia, some of the period's most exemplary buildings however arose after the end of the World War II, which is before the Communist regime properly established itself. An example of such architecture is the 'Post Office Palace', that was established on the northern side of Namestie Slobody Square. It was completed in the year 1951 (Smillie 2005). In Romania, the Casa Presei Libere or 'The House of Free Press', was designed by architect Horia Maicu was completed in the year 1956. This is another example of an architecture that followed the socialist realist style of architecture (Knowlton School of Architecture, Digital Library).

Therefore, socialist realist architecture mostly having its construction in bricks and portraying itself as "bold beauty" did manage to make some impact in some parts of the world, even though the effect must have been negative in some ways as it mostly was imposed on those regions, thus taking away the freedom of the architects. This impact that it had on these regions despite some negative effects cannot be solely regarded as a cause for worsening architecture in these regions. The way it did work on its own

architecture, made the working of such architecture successful in these regions. It did have some kind of purpose with it. In it, an important principle was that architectural elements must be used for their proper structural functions. Artists were therefore expected to bear loads to bring out the best outcome that would serve the purpose of the State and would further the goals of ideology. The ones who received the Stalin Prizes were models of such direction (Cooke 1997: 141-158). Hence, there are many such architectural developments in Soviet Union itself that were great achievements during those times and were themselves attractive to other regions.

The Socialist realist architecture or Stalinist architecture was utilitarian and not just for aesthetic purpose. Stalin's architecture mostly included the power of labour, the working class, which is the main purpose of socialist realism as it tries to bring about the importance of labour, the working class. The construction of a canal by Stalin during the 1930s, which was 222 kilometres long, extended from Lake Onega to the White Sea. It was regarded as one of the major construction and was of central importance in the First Five Year Plan as it was first of Stalin's major plans to expand the Soviet Union's transportation system. This project highlighted the importance of labour as it had with its massive involvement of a labour. It was completed in the year 1933 (Carleton 1994: 1002-1005). The construction of 'The Revolution Square Metro' was another such prestigious project under Stalin. In republics with strong architectural traditions and talent like Georgia, Armenia and Ukraine, the principle of 'National in form, Socialist in content' produced some satisfying and appropriate public buildings and some good low-rise local housing. The Soviet Station of 1935 was another praiseworthy construction of Soviet Union. 'Spaciousness' was the ideal factor of Soviet cities since the 1935 Moscow Plan (Cooke 1997: 998-1006).

Socialist urban infrastructure was also seen in the Islamic Central Asia. Indigenous cities of these regions were composed of residential communities called 'Mohallas' which had their own neighbourhood water pool called 'Khauz', there was a tea house 'Chaikhana' and a Mosque. Samarkhand's Khudzhum Silk Factory opened in the year 1927 served as a State campaign to eliminate the traditional system of women subjugation. This was done so that women too could join the men in labour activities. Likewise, the new factory

would access the untapped resource of female labour, representing an unprecedented advance in social productivity, as well as in the Party's search for a native proletariat (Loan and Lapadat 1999).

Exhibitions held in Soviet Union not only show the art and architectural skills of the artists but also show the status of Soviet architecture, that is to say that it was far advanced than many of the regions in the world and this was itself an attraction to many regions while those who failed to appreciate it also had to at least accept the architectural advancement of Soviet Union. Two exhibitions of the late 1930s held in Moscow bear witness to this fact. At the Tretikov's 1937 exhibition, 'Soviet Folk Art', the gallery itself was the canvas. That is to say those craftsmen from across Russia painted the walls and the door frame in a purposeful experiment. The critics were enchanted by the result of this act. The All-Union Agricultural Exhibition held in 1939 was another example, where two thousand artisans had been brought from their native lands to contribute their mastery of traditional decorative techniques (ibid).

## CONCLUSION

The Soviet experience of its socialist realism in arts through literature, cinema, art and architecture, has not been a linear one. It is very difficult to come to a conclusion about its effects on the soft power of Soviet Union because its effects are not all-white or all-black, but involves shades of grey. First of all, socialist realism as a concept itself is not totally clear. There are different views regarding it and one in the end does not clearly understand what exactly it means. The most apt and widely accepted understanding of socialist realism is of course known to all, that it is a style or a method that originated in the Soviet Union, reflected in the arts, with a purpose of fulfilling the goals of the state and its socialist ideology, thus bringing about the emancipation of the workers and the oppressed classes. It is known to all that there is always a wide gap in theory and practice always and so is the case of socialist realism in Soviet Union.

In the case of Soviet Union, the practice of this concept of socialist realism depends upon various factors that characterized Soviet Union. Russia has a rich culture right from the earlier period and this culture was amalgamated with the socialist ideology after the

formation of the Soviet Union. This socialist way of looking at culture affected every field of culture and thus some writers, poets and artisans had been naturally influenced right from the time of the formation of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the roots of socialist realism was present in the history of Russia's culture, it was only made official later in the year 1934 under Stalin. By this, we should try to understand that socialist realism was not always forced upon people involved in it. It is true that under Stalin, it slowly acquired a very rigid stand and this was even in the case of other regions, where sometimes the use of socialist realist principles were forced upon the people of those regions too. This naturally did not have a very positive effect. The question that now arises is how then it can be regarded as the source of soft power if it is involved with the use of 'force', as it goes against the basic tenets of soft power, as put forward by Nye. This is main area of concern of this chapter where the concept of socialist realism is to positively affect the soft power of Soviet Union. Hence, it now has to be tested, as to whether it stands true or has to be falsified.

If we strictly follow the principles of soft power as provided by Nye, then socialist realism cannot be regarded as a source of soft power, leave alone the task of positively affecting it. However, if we try to go deeper in it, what we get is a picture of Soviet Union with abundant talented writers, artists, artisans, poets, writers, directors and so forth who have in them the art of moving the hearts and soul of millions of people at once. The State might have added the 'compulsion' part to their work, a compulsion of adhering to the principles of socialist realism but it could not have forced ideas into the 'minds' of those very individuals. Those were their very own ideas. The next important thing is that soft power itself is the power of the state to get the desired outcomes from others, by making them want what you want through attraction rather than coercion.

Therefore it cannot be said that socialist realism cannot be regarded as a source of soft power because if it failed to attract some regions to willingly accept its principles, there are also some cases like discussed above in the chapter, where the countries were attracted to the principles of Soviet socialist realism because of the outcome of it, because of the power of attraction that each literature, poetry, cinema or architecture possessed. The spread of socialist realism and its adoption in some countries, even after the same



style was discontinued in Soviet Union, shows that it had an essence that could not be avoided all together. However, as we have seen in many cases, socialist realism did have some negative effects and this cannot be denied. Many critics, as mentioned above have argued about its rigidity and have argued that it took away the freedom of the writers and other such persons involved in this style. This factor also does not prove that it affected the soft power of Soviet Union negatively.

The fact that Soviet writings, cinema, architecture were wide known by many regions of the world proves that it had brought Soviet Union to the limelight and this was not for negative aspects but the contribution that the socialist ideology had had on socialist realist principle itself was a source of attraction. It made Soviet Union stand firmly against the bourgeois class and in favour of the emancipation of the working class and the oppressed and common people. Socialist realism in that was utilitarian in its approach rather than focussing on just the aesthetics, like that of the bourgeois class. As a powerful stimulation of senses, by means of fear or exaltation, life did not need to be beautiful or pleasing to be “aesthetic”. Rather it needed to be affective and “powerfully attractive” (Efimova 1997: 73-79).

However, what has driven it away from being a source of soft power is the fact that it was too rigid, and that it was forced upon some countries. Had there been any room for even a slight change and accommodation of ideas from various countries and individuals it would not have acquired the image which it acquired in later years under Stalin. The whole process of Stalinization took it far away from achieving those ends which could have otherwise been achieved. Therefore what we can understand is that socialist realism did act as a source of Soviet Union’s soft power and affected it positively in that it made the Soviet Union known for its socialist principles and made them follow what Soviet Union believed in. This however did not continue and it slowly started to wane away from what its purpose otherwise might have been.

**CHAPTER TWO:  
DECLINE OF RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER IN  
THE POST SOVIET PERIOD**

## **CHAPTER TWO: DECLINE OF RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER IN THE POST SOVIET PERIOD**

*“The collapse of Soviet Union does not end or modify the structural logic of global capitalism as manifested in poverty, underdevelopment, deindustrialization and exploitation in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It has only made global capitalism all the more powerful and given a new age to its predatory logic.”* (Singh, 2011:41).

Soft power of the Soviet Union was embedded deeply in its culture and ideology. However as these are also linked to the political, social and economic situations, it becomes necessary to understand the soft power of Soviet Union and of Russia later, through the prism of all these factors. The case of Soviet Union therefore does not quite fall into the perimeters of soft power as explained by Joseph Nye because he viewed it mostly from the angle of the experience of the United States. Soviet Union was not the same as United States and therefore its way of attraction and use of soft power was also not the same. However, there is a need to go beyond these defined principles if the soft power of Soviet Union is to be properly explored. If some factors formed the soft power of the Soviet Union, the same factors also led to the decline of its soft power in the later period of Soviet Union and of Russia after its disintegration. The decline of soft power of Russia is not a sudden phenomenon; it happened gradually through the passing of every phase. Although the decline of soft power is more vivid in the aftermath of the disintegration, the beginning of it could be seen in the twilight years of USSR.

The seeds of the decline of soft power of Russia were sown right from Stalin's period, when the Soviet Union was at its great heights of success and was attractive to many regions of the world. The way Soviet Union headed towards its disintegration, its soft power also declined in the same way. Stalin's emphasis on heavy industry and collectivization in agriculture did bring about positive results in the beginning but an over-emphasis on heavy industries, military and nuclear build up added pressure on the economy of Soviet Union. The economy was not sufficient to meet the demands of other important aspects of life like health care, housing, food, transportation and other

requirements of life. The economy of the Soviet Union was beginning to weaken even during Stalin's period (Watson 1998). It has been termed that soft power will lose its support without hard power but too much of reliance on hard power only made Soviet Union face a loss of not just its economy but also its soft power capabilities. Soviet Union exhausted its soft power step by step. The decline of soft power ultimately led to the end of Soviet Union even though there was no direct external invasion (Zhang 2010: 117-120). It is known that Russia is rich in its culture and its cultural past also formed an important aspect of soft power during the Soviet period. Apart from culture, the political values and foreign policy/ public diplomacy acted as a source of soft power to a certain extent. However, with the high involvement of political authority, it only undermined its own soft power (ibid).

Stalin's death brought some changes in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev. He started the policy of de-Stalinization, whereby he brought forth the faults in the Stalinist regime and disregarded all that was rigid and restrictive under him. Nonetheless, Khrushchev was still interested in gaining a strategic advantage over the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In 1961, he declared that the Soviet Union would increase its assistance to the developing Third World countries. However, over ambition engulfed Khrushchev and he became the creator of his "cult of personality". His removal was followed by the leadership of Brezhnev whose prime focus was to change the global balance in favour of Soviet Union at the cost of both NATO and the People's Republic of China. This policy of Brezhnev was referred to as 'The Brezhnev Doctrine'. His death was followed by the leadership of Yuri Andropov. However, he was able to lead Soviet Union only for a short while due to his sudden death. During his tenure he had hinted at bringing about reforms as he once publicly announced that, "the USSR should make use of the experience of friendly socialist countries", which showed that there was a need for Soviet Union to learn from the other socialist countries as well (Watson 1998).

It was under Gorbachev's leadership that Soviet Union underwent major changes and reforms were brought about. His program of reform was called 'Perestroika' or restructuring and 'Glasnost' or openness. His regime however saw inter-ethnic riots

occurring from 1986 to 1989, in the urban areas of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kirghizstan and Uzbekistan. It also saw an outbreak of an extremely bloody civil war in the Caucasus between Armenians and Azeris over the control of an ethnic Armenian enclave called Nagorno- Karabakh. Gorbachev was totally incapable of restoring order despite his attempt to do so. His various political tactics in Afghanistan failed, as did the Soviet military strategy then. The rise of Boris Yeltsin was seen in the Gorbachev period itself, who openly criticized the Gorbachev administration for the slow pace of reform in 1988. Yeltsin and the more radical reformers fostered a “Five Hundred Days Program” of market reform consisting of privatization, creation of a genuine market economy and granting more power to the union (ibid).

It was Yeltsin who thus proceeded with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The decline of Russia’s soft power and the disintegration of the Soviet Union worked simultaneously. It can be said that the seeds of the decline of soft power can be seen in the early Soviet period but it became more patent in the later Soviet period while its disintegration added fuel to the already burning fire. Hence, it can be said that the decline of Russia’s soft power is linked to the economic, social and political factors that was going on during the Soviet period and after the disintegration of the Soviet Union the decline of soft power reached its heights as the main source of its soft power was its socialist ideology. Hence, when the ideology of the Soviet Union was lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it lost its identity for a while because for seventy four years, the Soviet Union had been a socialist state. It therefore becomes necessary to understand the causes of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and simultaneously the causes leading to the decline of soft power of Russia.

#### DECLINE OF SOFT POWER IN THE EARLY SOVIET PERIOD

As we know that Soviet Union’s attraction lied in its ideology which claimed to be the winner of the heart and soul of the weaker and oppressed classes, especially the working class against the high-handedness of the bourgeois class, we need to understand the fact that with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, its soft power suffered a decline. This is so because the disintegration meant the collapse of the ideology too. Hence, it becomes necessary to understand what led to this end of ‘socialism’ which the Soviet Union once

boasted as its great asset. To begin with the factors affecting the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the decline of its soft power, we can first look into the Soviet period where it witnessed the presence of such factors. It was after the death of Lenin, that Soviet Union took a hard and rigid way under the leadership of Stalin. Lenin had taken cultural construction seriously and even believed that “communist society” would not come true if there was illiteracy in the country ((Zhang 2010: 118-119)

In the 1920s, the Soviet Union’s primary, secondary and tertiary education had a great development (ibid). Even under the leadership of Stalin, education and culture as a whole were also given equal importance but it was now totally under the State, hence the term ‘socialist realism’, had evolved, whereby education, literature, cinema and all such things associated to culture had to follow a certain theme, fulfilling the goals of the State. Political authority completely occupied the cultural field during Stalin’s reign and cultural development and innovation suffered harsh repression. The Soviet Party’s decision to purge even the intellectual class only led to its own uprooting of their own ruling (ibid).

Under Stalin Soviet Union suffered loss but also gained many successes. The success achieved during his reign did make the image of Soviet Union very bright to many countries that aspired to become like it. Although Stalin also made a lot of mistakes and some of them can be regarded to be grave ones, Soviet Union still enjoyed the supreme position among other countries of the world. To some extent it can be said that the fate of Soviet Union was largely dependent on the external factors and the ways the leaders dealt with it. It is true that much of the Soviet soft power came from its ideology as it stood against the Western imperialist and capitalist policies and emerged as a strong power against the United States dominance. However many critics of the Soviet Union believed that the ideological indoctrination led to the subsiding of individual rights and pluralism and ultimately prevented the growth of democratic values (Reisinger *et al* 1994: 186-220). Under Lenin Soviet Union to some extent believed that some level of federalism was needed to keep the Union intact, although he was not in favour of it earlier. This was not the same under Stalin who believed in a ‘new state structure’ and the ‘enlargement of Soviet Russia’ favouring a unitary system and continued to believe in strong authoritarian

values. However, he also gave some kind of autonomy for national groups (Sakwa 1999: xix).

The socialist ideology which Lenin believed in came to take a different turn under Stalin and began to have a more harsh face. Whether it was with regard to the peasants or with regard to the party members, Stalin had his own way of dealing with things, thus bringing about a rigid picture of Soviet Union. The collectivisation of the peasants was done ignoring the warnings of Bukharin. Purges of Stalin included party memberships and included the expulsions of nearly 300,000 Communist from the party (ibid). It will be a wrong thing to say that Stalin solely was responsible for the decline of Soviet Union's soft power as it was during his reign that Soviet Union was also looked upon as a super power. His sudden economic and political reforms only added fuel to the already tensed situation, which instead of acting as a safety valve, only made the pressure too much to be handled. Soviet Union under Stalin enjoyed a supreme position but to retain that position, there was a need for a keeping up with the changing times and the changing character of the global system. However Stalin instead of moving ahead of time was trapped in the earlier and outdated times of fear and suspicions with regard to war and power, when the world was far ahead of the assessment of Stalin (Rutland and Pomper 2011: 1-3).

Fear and terror was so prominent during the Stalin period that the loyalty and the submission of people to their leader or the state was questionable, that is whether it was out of their true understanding and agreement or just the fear of being washed away. This way Stalin created a new Soviet man who abided by the laws of the leader with no questioning (Lozansky 1953). Although the terror and fear under Stalin is not the main factor for the downfall of the Soviet Union but we can understand from here that the loyalty of people, if not everyone, was driven by fear of being subjugated and such loyalty was bound to shatter in the long run. Fear can win the loyalty of the people but such loyalty is dubious and fear can never win the hearts of the people of its own country or region, leave alone the hearts of the people outside it. The rise of Stalin brought about many achievements and successes but apart from these, the Communist International or

the 'Comintern', which was for the cause of struggling for the establishment of a World Socialist Society came to a close (Glotzer and Geltman 2013).

The Soviet diplomacy during Stalin's period was at its peak which continued till Khrushchev's period despite many problems that arose and acted as a hindrance to Soviet's success. However from Brezhnev's time, the decline of Soviet Union began to be quite visible and it continued to go on its full speed. Although Gorbachev made attempts to revive what Soviet Union was losing or had already lost, it was too late as the ideology had already begun to receive a backlash. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization program came as a turn in the history of Russia where in a way the authority that Stalin had created was to be demolished. This period if it acted as a "thaw", it also exposed the bitterness that had surrounded the Soviet Union and thus devaluing the ideology, an important factor enhancing soft power. While it is true that Khrushchev's unveiling of the Stalinist repression and terror brought an exposure of the lack of Soviet Union's political and social values to the world, it is also true that the de-Stalinization process was inevitable. This is so because the leaders after the death of Stalin were faced with a huge task of eliminating the danger that would affect not just the people of the Soviet Union but also its leaders through the secret police, thus Beria, its leader was arrested on 26 June 1953 (Sakwa 1999: 150-200).

Therefore, the de-Stalinization process and the Khrushchev's Secret Speech acted as a double edged sword. It did bring about a much needed change in the environment of Soviet Union but it also had its own repercussion that affected the image of Soviet Union in some aspects. An example of this would be the protest in Tbilisi, Georgia on 5-9 March 1956, where several thousand supporters protested against Khrushchev's Secret Speech in support of Stalin's memory (ibid). Unlike his predecessors, Khrushchev wanted to undo with the repressions and mass terrors that were rampant during the Stalin period. He was in support of openness, at least more than what used to be present during Stalin's period but he also never gave up the idea of a closed system and a controlled society (Lozansky 1989).

Khrushchev had a golden opportunity to alter the situation that was present in the Soviet Union and which could have prevented the later threats of disintegration and decline but



he parted his ways just with Stalinism and not with the system (Petrasova 2003: 5-6). This became his major mistake and he slowly got engulfed in his self created problems which eventually led to his overthrow and replacement by Brezhnev. The de-Stalinization program launched by Khrushchev affected the Sino-Soviet relationship and widened the gap in their ideologies and therefore Mao found it to be incorrect. This was also because Mao believed that China could bring about better economic development under 'revolutionary Stalinist lines' (Luthi 2008). The changes that were being brought about by Khrushchev were definitely not seen in good spirits by the communist countries like China and Cuba and mostly by China. The peaceful co-existence policy with the United States of America affected the relations with both China and Cuba and the Vietnam issue leading to the collapse of the military alliance accelerated the conflict between Moscow and Beijing. The lack of interest shown by the Soviet Union with regard to the military and economic support for Hanoi during the second Vietnamese war (1964- 75) clearly disappointed the Chinese (ibid). It can be said that the period after the death of Stalin started the change of relations among the communist countries and transformed the political economic and cultural landscape of all these countries, therefore changing the significance of the term "World Communism" (Lankov 2005: 1-3).

However the confidence of Khrushchev which looked very promising in the beginning started turning into over-confidence in his later period leading to his ouster by his rivals. The oppressive and repressive environment of the Soviet Union gave rise to many dissident groups who started to become very critical of the way Soviet Union was functioning. These groups started enlarging their activities and some even referred to the Western way of criticizing the system that existed in the Soviet Union and borrowed terms such as "totalitarian" to describe what Soviet Union was according to them. The West mostly viewed Soviet Union to be a totalitarian one and they believed that de-Stalinization under Khrushchev did not change in the system or bring about any reforms. This was the view of many Sovietologists of the Western countries (Bergman 1988: 249).

With Khrushchev there was a deviation from the outright terror and suppression that was present during the Stalin period but the system remained the same and the centrality element of the CPSU and the leaders continued. However Khrushchev was more

outspoken as compared to Stalin and in a way started opening the doorway to other countries. He made frequent visits to the United States, Europe and Asia. His overconfidence was seen in his ways of dealing with the countries in matters of foreign relations and many a times also put at stake his own image as well as the image and prestige of Soviet Union while addressing the people or the countries in his speech. In a way Soviet Union was being torn between the hope to have a better economic and political future by better interaction with the West and the fear of betraying communism. Therefore the Vietnam War also explains such dilemma of the Soviet Union to an extent that the fall of Khrushchev was seen as a success for Mao Tse Tung and the other hard Communist line of China (Chamberlin 1996: 3-6).

Nevertheless some of Khrushchev's great achievements have indeed enhanced Soviet Union's soft power. It was during his period that Soviet launched the first satellite in space; Sputnik I in 4 October 1957 and later Sputnik II in 3 November 1957 that left the whole world and especially United States awestruck. The launching of Sputnik by the USSR paved the way for 'Space age', inspiring the whole world to think beyond 'earth' into the space. While the launching of sputnik made Soviet Union internationally famous and champions next the United States, the latter certainly was not impressed with the achievement of the former. It is quite natural given the fact that it proved the worth of USSR as far more superior to United States in technology. However as much as the US were dumbfounded by the launch of Sputnik, it equally inspired them to compete with Soviet Union and thus to prove their worth to the world. This can be seen in the way the United States took immediate steps to 'catch-up' with the USSR, such as the formation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Defence Education Act of 1958. The world then saw the space competition between the US and Soviet Union. However, it should be remembered that it 'all started with the launching of Sputnik', even if the US later tried moving ahead of it (Launius 2007).

It was in Khrushchev period that another major event for the USSR took place. This time it was Yuri Gagarin's journey to the space in a spacecraft on 12 April 1961. With this he became the first man in space and USSR as the first nation to boast this achievement. The Soviet Union had not made huge cry during the flight of Gagarin until it became a

success. However the success achieved by Yuri Gagarin not only made him the hero, it also raised the popularity of Soviet Union once again in the world as it was ushered with 'congratulatory messages' from different parts of the world. However Yuri Gagarin was killed in an air accident during the training of his MiG jet crashed in bad weather. He received a state funeral and was buried with honour in the Kremlin Wall (Flank 2014). The achievements during Khrushchev's period indeed were one of the best moments in Russian history. It raised the image of Soviet Union in the world in just a matter of time. The fact that USSR achieved great heights of success can be understood by the fact that the United States was left worried and burning in resentment; the United States actions that followed the achievements clearly explains this fact.

The United States' reaction was very flamboyant as they justified their loss to USSR with the launching of the Sputnik. An anonymous suggested that had there not been any other and more important expenditures of the US, it would have launched the satellite too. It further stated that the exhibition in Prague devoted to the Hungarian counter revolution explains the cause of United States expenditure, which otherwise could have been used for launching satellites such as Sputnik (FBIS-FRB 1957: HH5). Such a reaction on part of the United States not only shows their insecurities but also the fact that they viewed USSR as a real competitor, which further suggests that the USSR had indeed achieved great success that made it popular enough to be feared by the US. The success of USSR under Khrushchev was thus appreciated by many socialist as well as non socialist countries. Herbert Warnke of Germany on May Day of 1961 raised the achievements of the socialist countries as 'irresistible advance of the socialist camps and all progressive forces throughout the world'. He thus regarded Yuri Gagarin's successful flight into space, the defeat of imperialist invasions in Cuba and the failure of the military rebellion in Algeria as examples of this assertion (FBIS-FRB 1961: EE5).

Another point of consideration can be seen in the achievements of the National Liberation Movement when the United Nations accepted the 'Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and people'. This achievement was also made possible with the help of the support of USSR in working out and introducing the Anti-colonial charter. Soviet Union always associated itself with the anti-colonial struggles

and de-colonization proposals and resolutions and was there throughout lending support during the emergence of independent states in Africa especially in the UN. The Soviet Union recognized its relations with the oppressed people of the East to be based on mutual trust, friendship and equality. Khrushchev in his speech at the XVth session of the General Assembly stated that the USSR believed that the countries of the East could also do away with the backwardness, poverty, disease and also was able to rise to the level of economically advanced countries. The support of the Soviet Union to these oppressed countries could be seen in the activities such as the building of industrial enterprises as well as other installations in these regions by it. The Soviet Union also offered a program of trade and economic cooperation that took into account the interests of the developing countries at the Conference of Trade and Development held in Geneva in 1964 (Fedorenko 1964: 2-8).

It can therefore be seen through these achievements that the USSR was trying to uphold the principles of socialist ideology and that the de-ideologization process had not started in full swing during Khrushchev period even though the process had started much earlier. The Soviet policy with regard to the Third World countries therefore appeared to be quite successful by the end of 1970, whereby the world saw the coming in of fourteen different countries. Soviet socialism had succeeded in fulfilling its task of helping the oppressed people and countries. These countries continued to seek Soviet help and support even though some of these countries did not follow the Marxist Leninist ideologies (Light 1991: 267-269). However the help and aid provided by the Soviet Union under Khrushchev served in forming a positive image of Soviet Union in the world. The magic of Soviet soft power therefore lay in their socialist principles that instilled in them the task to work for the cause of oppressed people and the emancipation of workers and people against the exploitation of the capitalist classes.

Despite the great achievements, Khrushchev had its own weaknesses that consumed him in the end even leading to his ouster. However, the ouster only proved to be a yet another act of weak leadership succession and nothing great change took place as such. This will again be a half hearted statement because Soviet Union was entering a phase of a lot of pressure, the seeds of which were sown earlier. The failure of the leaders to cope with it

showed their inefficiency but more than that, the signs of its decline were ignored or rather were taken too seriously so much so that the leaders made blunders at times under such pressure. However there are some of the views that after Khrushchev, the Soviet foreign policy became as good as non-existent and ‘frozen in a sign of immobilism’ (ibid).

The inefficiency on part of Khrushchev negated the good aspects of his de-Stalinization policy as well as the various achievements of Soviet Union under him. The armed suppression of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1969, made the matters even worse. It was a point where the hopes of reforming Soviet Union lost its ground and during the Brezhnev years began the decline of the true ideological hegemony as it drifted farther away from it (Singh 2011: 537). Another such event that affected the image of the Soviet Union totally and also became one of the main reasons for the Soviet breakup is the Afghanistan war. The Soviet intervened in Afghanistan in December 1979 and it continued through the Gorbachev era until it was withdrawn in the year 1989 (Reuveny and Prakash 1999: 700). The Afghanistan war cost USSR dearly. There was also another cause of major concern for the leaders of Soviet Union by the end of 1985 as the conditions of the Third World countries that relied on Soviet help had started to deteriorate and these countries owed huge debts to USSR. Moreover the Soviet economy was suffering a huge crunch it could not afford to lend support to these countries whose hopes had been raised by USSR earlier (Light 1991: 271).

The Afghanistan war was therefore a grave mistake that made the Soviet Union handicapped from many aspects and also took away from it the attraction that they enjoyed through the act of supporting these very countries. The Brezhnev period continued with the more restrictive line of the later Khrushchev period even in the cultural and social spheres. It became a controlled state and the voices of the dissidents were suppressed more. This continued even after the signing of the Helsinki Accords of 1975 that expected the participant states to maintain and observe ‘higher standards of human rights observance’. Nevertheless greater experimentation in art forms became permissible in the 1970s as the country started to loosen the earlier grip it had on the principles of socialist realist arts. (Skallerup and Nichol 1998: 94-97). Moreover, during

the Brezhnev period there was a stronger bonding between Soviet Union and India. The Indo-Soviet treaty strengthened the relationship between the two countries that had actually been developing from the mid fifties (Imam 1971:2102-2103). However the declines of the socialist principles were quite visible in the period of Brezhnev as it mostly got involved into activities that would not only affect the soft power of Soviet Union but also would not comply with the true principles of socialism.

The Soviet Party and the State had formulated a lot of aims and objectives. The most important of which was to bring about the emancipation of the masses, especially the working class. In the early Soviet period, the two main aims were to bring about literacy and to create a 'proletarian culture'. The Soviet state was supposed to make the masses well-versed in social science, civics and current affairs for raising their consciousness. Apart from social science the state also emphasised on natural science and arts. While the universal literacy was achieved to a great extent, the creation of proletarian culture began to be a distant dream under Stalin (Paretskaya 2013:55). The Soviet Russia gradually started to drift from the very principles on which it was founded. Yet the ideology had not been totally eroded as it was still following socialist principles in its domestic and foreign policies although with much caveats.

#### THE GORBACHEV AND THE YELTSIN EPOCH

A man who stood out from the rest in the process of thought and action, whose ideas contrasted those of the existing communist leaders or authority, who brought with him great ideas and tried giving a different face to Soviet Union which even in many years had not been done. In a way this man brought with him good intentions but ill luck, and lack of foreseeable foresight for Soviet Union took the better off him. This man known as Mikhail Gorbachev led Soviet Union in its dark times and brought about some necessary as well as unnecessary reforms but at a very vulnerable time. Gorbachev took Soviet Union in a different course and his intentions were obviously to loosen the tight and rigid structure that existed within it but like his predecessors he also made mistakes that could not be undone because it was at the crucial juncture where he undertook a task that was not a cakewalk but a task that required gradual process.

However there is a beginning to everything and even if it was not for Gorbachev, the too tightly drawn closed system needed a safety valve to release its pressure and it would have happened in some way or the other. On the other hand was Boris Yeltsin who was also in favour of reforms but in a more rapid and rigorous manner. He was simultaneously gaining popularity in the later period of Gorbachev and went ahead with the disintegration program of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev era is an interesting phase in understanding the disintegration of the Soviet Union as well to understand the soft power of the Soviet Union. It is indeed intriguing to note that Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union was seen by the West as a very brave and positive step taken. This reaction of the West is natural as Gorbachev wanted a more liberal approach and an opening up of the closed and rigid system that was present in the Soviet Union. The West saw it as a weakening of the ideology of the Soviet Union and this for them was a great achievement. Hence it can be said that the image of Soviet Union or rather Gorbachev was quite positive in the West as compared to his predecessors. However this was not a good sign for the communist countries and they did not welcome the change that was taking place in the then Soviet Union positively.

The Marxist-Leninist ideology was relegated to the background in Soviet Union's foreign policy dealings with the socialist countries like Cuba. The years after 1985 that is when Gorbachev came to power is therefore presided over by the "New Thinking" of Gorbachev. This naturally was improving its relations with the United States. However when he came to power the situation of Soviet Union was not pleasing for him. A lot of serious problems lay ahead of him. These problems were of grave concern as the Soviet was lagging behind the West in science and technology, the political situation was also not that stable and to top it all, the Soviet economy was slowly crumbling down (Bain 2005:769-773).

To deal with all such problems Gorbachev chose a way that would erode all the problems from the root and believed that by bringing about reforms Soviet Union would rise above its problems. Hence even in dealing with the communist countries, Gorbachev believed that the emphasis on ideological aspect should not be more evident. What Gorbachev did not take heed of is the fact that it is the ideology that bound the Soviet

Union and the other Communist or Socialist countries. The positive image of Gorbachev in the West definitely added to the soft power of Soviet Union as it showed that the Soviet Union was now looking forward to improving its political values. This was a positive aspect of Soviet Union's soft power but Gorbachev's act of declining the use of its ideology in relations to the Communist party affected not just Soviet Union but also those countries that were dependent on it and hence the soft power of Soviet Union received a setback again. However even if Gorbachev had its own set of plans and theories to deal with the problems of the country, it clearly deserted the ongoing social and revolutionary movements as well as the Third World countries, depriving them of all support they earlier received. Among his reforms, 'Glasnost', or openness was indeed a more promising one for it granted more freedom of expression and opinion to the people. The increase in the number of public participation in political discussions clearly showed how it worked. However, as much as it acted as a reform granting people more freedom, it also became a misfortune for Soviet Union. 'Glasnost' was used as a platform by the people to express more of their animosity than benevolence or suggestions. The reform thus lost its purpose and it became its own undoing. The effects of 'glasnost' also revealed the inefficiency of the Soviet system, the crimes and brutalities of the past that had been accumulating over a period of time. Gorbachev's reforms were a clear indication of further de-ideologization process as whether it was for good or for the worse, it started creating a vacuum as the socialist ideology started to lose its ground. His reforms instead of reforming the already present ideology opened the door for 'bourgeois' ideology to come and fill the vacuum that had been created (Singh 2011: 563-584).

The Afghanistan war that the Soviets lost and the withdrawal of the Soviet army from there dealt a heavy blow to the Soviet image at home and abroad. Apart from affecting the soft power capabilities of the Soviet Union, it also affected it financially as well as witnessed a lot of loss of life. Soviet Union had to be answerable to such great losses. The Afghanistan invasion that had begun before Gorbachev rose to power proved to be disastrous for him. Therefore on 8 February 1988, he announced the withdrawal of the Soviet army and it continued till February 1989 (Sakwa 1999: 519-525).



As the financial crunches were high, Gorbachev as well as other Party members believed that the aid and support provided to the communist countries were only adding to the burden. Therefore even while dealing with trade relations with Cuba, he decided to continue it but at world prices. The disappointment of Fidel Castro on all these matters was expressed by him in a speech where he did not hesitate to praise the Soviet Union for its support as well as express their distress on the move of the Soviet towards Capitalism by saying, "... if any of the Socialist countries wishes to construct capitalism we respect this right but we will not follow the same path.". This made it clear to the world that despite the Soviet Union's deviation, Cuba would not betray the ideology (ibid).

The abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine by Gorbachev speeded up the process of limiting the role of ideology as the Doctrine also stated the right of the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries to safeguard and defend Socialism in any of the member state of the Warsaw Pact. The foreign policy of the Soviet Union then started to tilt towards the Western notion of capitalism and hence the ideology was bound to lose its significance. Gorbachev believed that these concessions to the West would win the support of them and what Soviet Union now needed was the support to rise up from its problems. However the hope that such concession would bring about a better image of Soviet Union only ended up being mere concessions with nothing in return (Keeran and Kenny 2010: 256-319). With regard to the Third World the opinion that Gorbachev had was that the Third World countries needed development rather than socialist movement. It is true that the Third World countries needed development but this also challenged the whole significance of the Bolshevik revolution (Sakwa 1999: 500-527). Therefore the waning away of the socialist ideology was becoming clearer and more evident during the Gorbachev era.

If Gorbachev initiated the reform process and began the drive of Soviet Union towards the West oriented reforms and market strategy, it was Boris Yeltsin who acted as a catalyst in the already steamed up situation of the Soviet Union. He thus carried on with the process of total reform and transformation and ultimately leading it to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The disintegration though it happened in a peaceful manner brought with it some grave consequences that affected not only the newly born

Russia but also the newly born post-Soviet States. Some of these newly born independent states were not ready to face the consequences of the disintegration as they were dependent on Moscow and the whole Union as such. Yeltsin sought to take Soviet Union into a new destination where everything was supposed to be done in the name of democracy and capitalism. The transition that Soviet Union or the newly born Russia and the independent ones underwent had been highly encouraged by the West. However the sudden journey to a new destination cost Russia as well as other countries cost a lot. Although some would believe that the transition from socialism to capitalism was on its way even before Boris Yeltsin undertook the task of doing it so, it can be said that Russia lost its influence after the collapse of its ideology.

As explained in the earlier sections of this chapter, the decline of socialism and subsequently the soft power of Russia is not solely the fault of Gorbachev or Yeltsin but was an accumulation of various events that made the decline of its ideology and the soft power inevitable. The West would definitely not agree to the fact that ideology was the factor influencing Soviet Union's soft power but that is a superficial view that they hold. The very fact that Soviet Union was at par with the United States and that the latter feared its fall due to the ideology of the former was a known fact to all. In the battle of ideologies, it was the Soviet Union that ended up compromising that led to the breakup of the Soviet Union. This was again due to the misusing of the ideology by the leaders at different point of time.

It was on 8 December 1991, that an accord was signed by Boris Yeltsin representing Russia; Leonid Kravchuk representing Ukraine and Stanislav Shushkevich representing Belarus, which led to the breakup of the USSR and the creation of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). It is seen that the signed accord among the leaders of the three regions neglected the result of the referendum that had taken place in March 1991, where majority of the people, that is to say almost 78 percent of the people living in the Soviet republics backed an improved USSR. This explains that the collapse of the Soviet Union and its ideology was clearly not an inevitable phenomenon. It also shows the heedlessness of Boris Yeltsin and his allies. It is true that he wanted to bring about a Western model of development in Russia for the betterment of its economy and the

political situations but it ended up in a bundle of mistakes and wrong decisions. Russia under Yeltsin therefore had to face the repercussions of the haphazardly undertaken decision although with a good intention. Therefore he is regarded as a creator as well as a destroyer. The ramification of his actions made him leave his post even after getting re-elected (Aristov 2011).

The Constitution of 1993 that was adopted by a referendum in 1993 called for the absence of any official ideology thus ending the role of socialism in New Russia. Russia now called for elections that were however not free and fair. When there were any kind of threats against Yeltsin and his allies, they often resorted to any kind of means to curb it. Even during the time of elections of 1996, there were rumours that the election would be cancelled for the fear of defeat of Yeltsin at the hands of his Communist adversary (White 2002: 35). Yeltsin and his partners used elections to gain political power for attaining their more innermost aim of economic transformation and the Soviet dissolution and it was exactly what started to happen though in a more haphazard manner (Mc Faul and Petrov 1999: 25). Gradually the classes based upon capitalist property became more dominant in all the successor states, erasing the traces of earlier socialist ideology (Mayor 2002: 789).

However the transition was affecting the soft power of Russia immensely and was adding to the already deteriorating image of Russia, which started from the later years of the Soviet Union. The disintegration program was not properly planned and it gave rise to a number of problems in the aftermath of it. In the name of democracy, Russia started its rigorous transformation from a socialist system to a would-be capitalist democratic country. The risks and uncertainties that followed after the disintegration made it very difficult for Russia to evolve from its problems. What Winston Churchill had said to describe Soviet Union- “an enigma wrapped in a riddle” was actually matching the situation of Russia after the collapse of the Socialist system. Russia was thus covered in cloud full of mysteries with confusion and chaos overpowering the whole of country. The policies were baffling and the clarifications for those were even more confusing filled with a state of rejections and self-protective reactions (Adomeit 1995: 35).

Russia's period of uncertainties had just begun. The removal of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and his entire cabinet by Yeltsin on 23 March 1998 only showed the insecurities of Yeltsin and while this act may not have affected the image of Russia greatly; it surely did bring forth the undemocratic nature of Russia (Gidathubli 1998: 1011-1012). Russia after the disintegration was not in a state of confidence and certainties which Yeltsin and his allies had boasted of. Hence, even when the transformation was taking place, according to many surveys and the one cited in Kotz indicated that there was still a support for some form of socialism in Russia during that phase (Cottreli and Cockshott 1993: 183). The support for socialism was also seen to be present in Poland even ten years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Poland had developed a certain pattern of social inequality after the collapse of the socialist system. While the sections that included the upper strata of the society like the managerial class were naturally enjoying the benefits of the new system, the lower sections of the society including the farmers, unemployed, the retirees and the pensioners were definitely at the losing end (Slomczynski and Wilk 2002: 64-65). Therefore this gives us the picture that Soviet socialism despite its drawbacks did not have grave problems of unemployment and social injustice, and there was much less social inequality.

The after effects of the disintegration of the Soviet Union along with the collapse of communism were felt in almost all aspects of New Russia and even in the Post-Soviet States. These included the decline in the standard of living and also the crisis of human security. The mortality rates were increasing after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Although there are many explanations to the cause of such increase in the health issues as well as the mortality rates, the decline in the economic and social conditions of these countries after the disintegration stands as one of the most important reasons. Russia was one of the worst affected countries and the between 1989 and 1994 alone, the approximate death rate in Russia ascended by 45 percent and life expectancy at birth dropped from 64.2 to 57.7 years for men and from 74.5 to 71.3 years for women (Chen *et all* 1996: 518).

The initial flourish of capitalism brought with it many changes in Russia. Along with luxuries to the upper class in the forms of colour TVs and video sets, there also came a

culture of social evils and crimes seen through drug trafficking, smuggling, pornography and black money marketing. The so called more 'open society' also became open to all kinds of crimes and perils. Russia in its initial phase became filled with chaos where crimes kept spreading rampantly. The rise of 'Mafias' were first seen during the Gorbachev era. These activities started mushrooming in Russia through traders and brokers. According to the report prepared in January 1994 suggested that almost seventy and eighty per cent of private businesses were paying protection money. Russia was under the full swing of corruption and crimes that hampered not only its economy but also highlighted the weakness of the various political institutions. The reforms of the new leaders of Russia failed to bring any valid and vigorous results. Even the agricultural sector failed to work efficiently leading to more food imports (Singh 2011: 161-167). The decline of economy and political and social values in Russia deeply dented its image abroad.

However for the 'Westernizers' in Russia, the actions taken by Boris Yeltsin was indeed very positive as they believed that it is only through West that they can achieve democracy, freedom, civil society and a perfect nation-state (Duncan 2005: 278). The West might have been practicing democracy and freedom in a more rigorous manner as compared to the other countries; however it is also true that they also lack these ideals in many cases and their imperialist actions have been often seen in their way of dealing with other developing or the third world countries. It is also true that Russia did not receive the expected help from the West in their transition phase. It can also be said that the Western model did not entirely suit to the Russian society. The transition was supposed to take place keeping in mind the basic factors of Russian past and future prospects. Russia's initial foreign policies towards Western Europe and the United States were based on 'liberal internationalism' strongly expressed by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev. The replacement of foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev by Yevgenii Primakov in the year 1996 was seen as a shift in Russia's policies from Western acquainted to a Eurasian one (Lynch 2002: 167).

In a survey that was conducted in Russia about the earlier Soviet system, the most valued feature of Soviet rule was 'job security' and up to 29 per cent people voted in favour of it.

This was followed by ‘peace between nationalities’ (24 percent) and economic stability (22 percent). When asked about the most detestable feature of the Soviet rule, the votes of the people clearly highlighted that it was ‘too much of bureaucratization’, and almost 32 percent of the people voted for it. Other findings of the research show that people lacked confidence and trust in the newly formed civic institutions including the parliaments, the trade unions more than in the leading bodies inherited from the earlier system or their corresponding Soviet counterpart. This survey does highlight some degrees of yearning for Soviet system, although not in majority but more importantly what it clearly highlights is the decline in the level of trust in the institutions of Russia, that included the Church, the armed forces which usually had experienced the greatest public confidence (White 2002: 37-41).

The mere effort of replicating the West in Russia was a big mistake on part of the Russian leaders and high authorities during that the disintegration phase. Russia was thus struggling with the process of distribution of power and this explains the reasons for a weak legislature of Russia as compared to the presidency. The two branches of Russian political system therefore could not match the level of the Western and the other developed or developing democracies and this was also complimented by the weakness in the legal system of Russia (Shevtsova and Olcott 1999: 12-13). All the factors together contributed to the lack of proper political values and making Russia appear as a closed and a more corrupt system even after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which they believed was the main reason for its closed and corrupt nature. It is true that the people of Russia and even of the Post-Soviet areas have voted after the disintegration which shows greater participation of the people and even greater involvement as compared to the Soviet days. However, elections in Russia under Yeltsin did not bring about any significant changes in Russia and it did not make the political system any less opaque. Elections in fact became less free in 1996 as compared to the early 1990s (Mc Faul and Petrov 1999: 26).

## SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE THIRD WORLD

The connection that Soviet Union had with the third world countries clearly shows the impact of it on its soft power. Third world was an integral part of the Soviet foreign

policy, although the critics of Soviet Union would not agree on an equal footage regarding the role of Soviet Union in the development of these countries. However it should be noted that whether or not it brought about development in real measures on the third world countries, the fact remains that the Soviet Union's image was indeed affected by the relation it had with these countries and that it remained a matter of great debate and concern in the foreign policy of the Soviet Russia. Moreover the soft power of Soviet Russia to a certain extent went hand in hand with the relations it had with these countries. As the Soviet Russia made efforts to help the third world countries with development and aid and also saw in them the great potential to emerge as strong countries later, its image started being highly positive in their eyes; which in turn gave a reason for Soviet Union to boast its soft power to the world. However, as Soviet Russia deviated from its path of assisting these countries, viewing the relationship it had with each country with respect and mutual benefits and as the relationship started tilting more in favour of Soviet interests, its soft power also started getting punctured accordingly.

Lenin as well the leaders of his times believed that the difference between socialism of Soviet Union and capitalism of the West lied in the way they viewed at the aspect of colonialism and semi-colonialism. By trying to bring a connection between in the struggles of the working class and that of the colonised people at the 1920 conference of the Comintern, Lenin clearly showed his support for the oppressed people of the colonised countries (Santo 1988: 32). Lenin's views on imperialism imparted a feeling of connection of the Bolsheviks with the revolutions coming up from the East. He had immense faith on these revolutions and believed that these post-colonial revolutions will contribute in the undoing of the capitalist order. The view of Lenin must have been illusory but it was for the cause of emancipation of the oppressed people against imperialism and exploitation by western capitalism. However this did not continue after his death as Stalin did not continue the revolution in the same spirit. For him, it was the state power that mostly mattered and it was in the rigorous industrialization process and in safeguarding Soviet interest against Europe and Japan that he saw true Soviet victory. He did not see much of an opportunity in the colonial and third world countries. It was only in the later years that he started viewing Soviet policy towards these countries from a different angle but his death did not allow him to carry forward that policy. However

his successors carried forward what could not be done properly under him (Ermath 1969: 32).

However, it should also be noted that it was under Stalin that Soviet Union achieved great success; industrialised and efficient enough to be able to support the other less developed and the third world countries. Khrushchev carried forward with policy of Soviet aid and development in the third world countries. Therefore it was only after the victory in the Second World War and industrialization that Khrushchev could make his commitment to the third world countries as an important aspect of the Soviet foreign policy (ibid). Soviet support for these countries is regarded to be in the interest of Soviet Union in that it can erode the western sentiments in these areas but it also made the Soviet Russia realize that support it provided in these countries was not always favourable for it (Larrabee 1976: 468). The 1950s also witnessed the urge of Soviet Russia to engage into economic relations with the third world countries and initially it was to the extent of facing any kind of loss. In this period there was increased Soviet technical and economic assistance to these countries. This was however followed by expansion of trade based on barter engagements (Kanet 1975: 342).

The years 1955 to 1965 therefore saw an increase in the level of relationship in terms of trade between Soviet Union and the non-communist countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that went up from 5.2 percent of total trade outcome to 11.9 percent of the total trade. While it is true that the Soviet Russia believed that it was in the interest of these countries, it is also equally true that it was highly beneficial for it too (ibid: 338-339). In the initial years of Soviet interest that is until the 1960s, much of its aid was used in the projects of the public sectors in these developing countries (Larrabee 1976: 470). Soviet Russia was also equally interested in the spread of the communist-socialist principles and they also supported the national liberation movement and the struggle of the exploited workers in the capitalist societies. The Soviets stated that the growing strength of the Soviet Union in terms of its nuclear capacity and industrialization would protect these countries from the exploitation of the capitalists and imperialists. Alongside there was also an increase in the economic and military aid to these countries that by the end of



1964, Soviet military assistance was extended to more than fifteen countries (Ermath 1969: 33).

Under Brezhnev- Kosygin partnership, there was an exploration of new opportunities. Under them, the Soviet Russia improved its ties with Pakistan without seriously hampering its relation with India. Moreover, Soviet Union was also successful in preventing conflict between the two countries throughout the Tashkent summit. It also managed to woo both Turkey and Iran and also to improve its position in the Middle East so as to lure them away from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The great proletarian 'Cultural Revolution' of China as well as its intemperate behaviour during the same time proved to be in favour of Soviet Russia as it helped in improving its relation with the other third world countries without facing much competition from China during that period (ibid, 37). However China continued to prove a great competition to Soviet Union in these countries and that gradually made the Soviet role less significant. Nonetheless, the Soviet aid whether economic, military or simply moral not only helped the third world countries, especially Korea, Vietnam, parts of Africa, Cuba and Nicaragua against the exploitative and imperialist interests of the capitalists countries, in the struggle between the two super powers, it also acted as an opportunity for these countries to seek help from these countries as well as it provided them the space to carry on with their own interests too. Although it also remains true that apart from Cuba, Soviet Russia's influence was not very much strong in the other Latin American countries. (Singh 2011: 105-106).

The help in terms of economic aid or assistance and support provided by Soviet Union to the third world countries was indeed one of its greatest strengths as it also was a challenge of the socialist ideology to the capitalist countries. Some critics believe that the support provided by Soviet Russia to these countries is firstly, in the specific interest of Soviet Union and secondly it was mostly provided military aid more than economic aid, technical assistance, trade or other forms of supports like educational exchanges bringing about true liberation of these countries. They also claim that even in the case of Cuba where it achieved much success, its success was restricted to military aids alone (Santo 1988:35-36). However, it should be noted that the positive image that Soviet Union

achieved with regard to its influence in these countries can be regarded as its soft power as did not involve force to achieve its influence over these countries. It in fact supported them against the exploitations of the imperialists and capitalist countries. Yet it is equally true that there began a decline in the support to these countries in the later period of the Soviet Union due to many problems that it faced and also because of the fact that it faced strict competition from China and the United States in these countries. Had the Soviet Union not deviated from the true principles of socialism and truly believed in the cause of bringing about a emancipation of the working class and the oppressed people in the third world, instead of relying more on its interests and gains or competition, it would have truly championed the cause of these countries.

It was the intensifying of the Sino-Soviet split that made the competition between these countries stronger in the third world countries. Both these countries faced challenges from each other and also enjoyed their own advantages. However as China was also a developing country then, its problems were similar to that of many of the third world countries whereas the Chinese often believed that the Soviets were at a disadvantage because those countries viewed the Soviet Union as an industrialised country and that they had lesser similarities. However Soviet Russia had an advantage of being an industrialised nation as it could provide more support in terms of various aids and in many an instance it surpassed Chinese aid but was still less compared to that of the United States (Larrabee 1976: 472-473). However it was in the year 1974 that the Chinese aid to these countries totalled in United States dollars was 237 million dollars whereas the Soviet aid amounted to only 17 million dollars (Santo 1988:34). The Chinese also often criticised Soviet Union's stress on peaceful revolution as they believed that it was a cautious move on part of Soviet Union and that peaceful revolution was only possible in exceptional cases (Ermath 1969: 34).

Therefore the Soviet influence in the third world countries was not a smooth one and was faced with a lot of competition from countries such as china and the United States. A major obstacle during Khrushchev period was the Cuban Missile crisis that greatly affected its influence in the third world as well its image suffered a backlash in the other parts of the world. The Soviet support to Vietnam and Laos during 1962 and 1964 against

the United States did not prove very effective as it could not totally prevent the United States intervention and that it was in a constant threat of United States' attack on North Vietnam. The removal of leaders highly favourable to Moscow by various political coups in some countries of Asia and Africa was again against the interest of Soviet Union (ibid, 36-37). Hence, it can be seen that the Soviet influence in third world countries underwent many tests and in many instances it failed to live up to its own ideological principles. Stalin did not give much importance to these countries and regarded them as 'mere puppets of the West' and did not see them as major players in international politics. Although it had begun to change in the later years of his term and continued by Khrushchev, especially after the Bandung Conference of non-Aligned countries in 1955 (Larrabee 1976:468-469), it still faced many obstacles and some events acted against the Soviet global image. This is true in the case of the Afghanistan war that hampered greatly the Soviet image and highlighted the hypocrisy of Soviet socialist values.

However, it cannot be denied that Soviet Union played a major role in the development of these countries and the support that it provided to these countries truly made them as a friend of the third world as well as non-aligned countries. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the de-ideologisation process has shown that the support that Soviet Union could provide to these countries could not be surpassed by any other countries because after the collapse of socialist principles and Soviet Union, the third world totally suffered great losses. The reports of the United Nations as well the studies done by various scholars suggest that the market driven policies in the third world countries have not helped them overcome their poverty and underdevelopment. Some countries might have gained from the capitalist system but they have entered a new form of indebtedness that is through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Singh 2011: 55, 60).

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the socialist ideology, Russia not only lost its soft power capabilities and influence over the third world regions, but also itself came to a condition where it needed help from other countries. This is again tied to the economic reforms that ultimately carried forward the de-ideologisation process.

## ECONOMIC REFORMS AND THE DECLINE OF RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER

The Soviet economy based on socialist planning model was marked with good and bad days; it reached the greatest heights of success after which it had to witness some of the worst days in the Soviet history and continuing till the new Russia phase. The Soviet economy passed through various phases and in each phase it acquired various changes depending upon the reforms that emerged. During the Stalin period, the Soviet economy reached its greatest heights, whereby it underwent a lot of pressure and yet managed to achieve success that was awed by the whole world. The rigorous methods of war communism in the 1920s did not bring fruitful results and it was thus followed by a new system known as the New Economic Policy or NEP. This brought about a number of effective measures and it also brought with it few elements of capitalist production. In a period of just seven to eight years, Soviet Union could surpass the pre-war production level with the industries in the year 1928 producing 28 percent more than what had been in the year 1913 (Mohanty 2003: 7).

NEP was followed by collectivization of agriculture process and rapid industrialization. While the agriculture suffered a backlash, there was a change in the whole structure of the Soviet economy due to the rapid industrialization process. More than nine thousand industrial enterprises, several new branches of the economy were opened during the years 1929 to 1940. There was also an increase in the gross industrial production that went up by 6.5 percent and ten percent increase in the growth of capital production. Such was the growth in the production that the country managed to remove problems such as illiteracy and unemployment. However the impact of World War II greatly affected the economy of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless it managed to cover up damage done to it in just a period of six years and by 1950 the economy again managed to reach to the pre-war standards. Therefore the 'mobilizing capacity of the State planning' helped Soviet Union to cope up with the damage that was caused to its economy during the war and this came as a surprise to the whole world (ibid, 9). Soviet Union bore all the burdens of war and yet managed to emerge as one of the superpowers. This made a positive impact on the image of Soviet Union and also its economy and ideology that support it throughout. Soviet economy then was indeed an attractive model for many a countries in the world.

Although its growth rate was high, the income of Soviet Union was low and it did not grow at the speed of Japan. However, it still emerged as the second largest economy in the world (Allen 2001: 861) and this made it highly popular in the world having strong influence in many countries of the world. The success of Soviet economy was highly dependent on heavy industries and it was often done at the cost of agriculture. It should be noted that the process of industrialization of Soviet Union was done solely by it without the help of other countries; therefore it required relying on the agricultural productions for its self sufficing needs. The agriculture thus suffered heavy loss. Moreover the rigid administrative policies under centralised economy could not correspond to the post-war demands. Soviet Union in a way focused on the growth rate but not in increasing the standards of living of the people (Mohanty 2003:9). Accordingly there was the slowing down of the growth rate during the 1960s and slowly the great economic achievements of Soviet Union started turning into failure after 1970s with the dramatic fall in the growth rates (Allen 2001: 861).

In each period there were reforms undertaken by the leaders to cope up with the problems that had arisen. After the death of Stalin, Khrushchev tried to revive the stagnating economy. According to Khrushchev economy could progress by focusing on administrative decentralization and therefore his 1957 reforms abolished many central ministries and even subordinated their positions. The plan did not materialize and it in turn led to further degradation of the economy. Khrushchev had also launched his own version of 'glasnost' which was widely known as the thaw that was an attack on the Stalinist ways. He made the discussions on the economic matters more open (Schroeder 1990: 35-36). Khrushchev also emphasised the role of agriculture and consumer goods production and also undertook measures that raised the salaries and incomes of the people considerably. However despite his great intentions of reviving the economy, his reforms did not become noteworthy because they were too unrealistic and it did not take into account the many issues of concern. Therefore the negative factors during 1950s and 1960s further led to the downfall in the national income and the growth rate of the Soviet economy continued to fall from 12 percent in 1958 to 4 percent in 1963 (Mohanty 2003: 10-13).

The year 1965 saw the great reforms of Alexei Kosygin that focussed on “wholesale trade in the means of production” and there was more stress on profit, prices, interest rates and incentive funds but there no real markets were created for the fulfilment of such features. Therefore there were not many changes made in the economic system and the firms continued to run in the same fashion (Schroeder 1990: 37). The Kosygin reforms failed because it lacked a proper outline for it to be implemented. Moreover the reforms ended up being implemented only in the industrial sector and the reforms in turn led to the further strengthening of the administrative system of management. The Kosygin reforms failed to focus on the areas that needed greater attention. It did not concentrate on strengthening scientific and technological progress. Soviet Union missed the technological revolution of 1970s that became a huge are of concern for Soviet production (Mohanty 2003: 16). The reforms were not effective enough to help Soviet economy recover in its early stage of decline but it gave room for further decline. By the time of Brezhnev’s death in the year 1982, the economy needed effective reforms to prevent the Soviet economy from totally crumbling down. The goods produced were not of good quality and sometimes they were even of no proper use. To top it all there were four bad harvests that added to the already huge grain imports and gave rise to a need of formal rationing of food in almost many large cities (Goldman 1988: 332).

After Brezhnev, there were efforts made by Yuri Andropov to reform the economy and in doing so he replaced managers in the party and bureaucracy as well as emphasised on the notion of discipline for improving the weakening condition of the Soviet economy (Schroeder 1990: 38). It was under Andropov that economic reforms received serious attention. After him, Gorbachev also followed the notion of economic reforms to improve the condition of Soviet economy. Therefore the 1985 plenum of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union worked out the strategies for bringing about various economic developments. Accordingly the 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union came forward with the process called ‘Uskoreniye’ or acceleration, that is to say it emphasised on the acceleration of economic reforms. The reforms by Gorbachev also stressed on the use of democratic principles in economic management. This process of acceleration worked on the basis of three key laws- Law on state enterprise, Law on labour collectives and Law on legislation of individual labour activities (Mohanty 2003:

22,33). Gorbachev believed that the declining economy could threaten the super-power status of Soviet Union and that it would altogether affect Soviet image in the world. He supposed that it was possible to bring about quick results in the field of economy. His radical reforms thus paved the way for capitalist structures in the Soviet economy. Although centralised planning was retained, its directives and scopes were supposedly reduced by the early 1990s. Even the central bureaucracies were reduced in size and number (Schroeder 1990:38-39).

Gorbachev's intentions might have been to save the Soviet economic structure but it certainly changed the direction of the economy towards capitalist or market oriented ways. Although the steps taken by him were to improve the condition as well as the image of Soviet Union in the world, it ultimately led to a situation of crisis when Yeltsin took over and continued with the most radical measures to not only change the economy but also to change the whole course of Soviet ideology. An article in the Wall Street Journal highlighted the report of the government study that stressed the fact that by rapidly converting Soviet Union to a market economy could render millions of people jobless and also cut industrial production by more than a third in the year 1991. The article also highlighted that Gosplan (the State Planning Committee) economists had predicted that a shift to a market economy in a short period of time could cut industrial production by as much as 37 percent in 1991 and even more in the following years (ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Wall Street Journal 1991: A15). There were various different ways and models for a transition to market economy that would not have brought about disastrous results during the years 1988 to 1991 (Mohanty 2003: 77). A gradual process was also possible but Yeltsin's initial success made him able to carry forward with the 'Shock Therapy' programme formulated by Igor Gaider.

The journey of Russia from a socialist planned model to a market oriented economy was not a smooth one, in the sense that it brought about disastrous results for the newly formed Russia. The disintegration brought a worsening of the impact of such economic reforms. The rise of mafias was first seen during Gorbachev's perestroika (restructuring programme) and thus the period is also called as the 'golden age of the mafias'. The rising problems during Gorbachev period were further worsened by the disintegration of

Soviet Union and de-ideologisation process. Due to joblessness and price rise after Yeltsin's privatisation policies, there was an increase in the crime and corruption rate. The year 1993 witnessed more than 11000 serious crimes committed against foreigners convincing international organisations to declare Russia 'a zone of special danger for business and tourism' (Singh 2011: 162-163). Between 1992 and 1995, Russia's GDP fell 42 percent and industrial production fell by 46percent. It was situation that was far worse than the downfall of the United States economy during the Great Depression. Privatising mechanisms failed totally in the case of agriculture leading to the falling of agricultural production and a need for more food imports (ibid, 167).

The market oriented reforms or the 'Shock Therapy' brought an end to the 'world's best social security system'. Soviet Union that once was a super power boasting its success stories to the world and helped the third world countries itself became a 'third world'. The market reforms gifted 'new Russia' poverty and social tension. There was a decrease in the overall standard of living of the people. Prices went up by 2176 times but the average wages and salaries went up only by 1547 times during the reform period of 1991-1996 (Mohanty 2003: 172-173, 185). Russia's budding capitalist in the initial years did benefit certain sections of the population. These include the upper classes, a few multinationals, the mafias and the men in power and politics. The market reforms in the course of its time proved to be disastrous for the Russia and its people at large. Shock Therapy then was indeed 'all shock and no therapy' (Singh 2011: 168, 181). Therefore the economic reforms of the Soviet economy only led Soviet Union towards its grave and reincarnated it in the form new Russia that was to carry forward with the ill effects of market reform without a 'motherly' socialist ideology to guide it. The reforms therefore took away Russia's earlier power and glory and left it as an unattractive country filled with innumerable problems and thus incapable of acquiring soft power.

#### THE COLLAPSE OF SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY AND THE DESCEND OF RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER

The socialist ideology of the Soviet Union remained a highly debatable topic both during the dazzling days of Soviet Union as well as during its decline. While many especially the Western scholars and critics have believed this Marxist-Leninist ideology to be the



main reasons for the rigid and imperialist nature of the Soviet Union, there are others who believe it to be its great asset. However, whatever be its merits and drawbacks, the fact is that the socialist ideology of Soviet Union began with the prime motif of bringing about the emancipation of the downtrodden and the working class. The great leaders of the Soviet Union like Lenin and Trotsky brought about a revolution which gave a promise to the Russians for a new awakening that would bring about freedom from the inhumanity of the Tsars and equality to all. They indeed were successful in doing so.

What began with a great revolution started to develop some serious problems with every small mistakes being made on part of the leaders of Soviet Union. This brought with it the problem of rigidity and lack of transparency. Too much of bureaucratization started becoming entrenched in the entire system leading to more corruption and the deviation from the basic ideals of its ideology. The ideology has guided through the working of Soviet Union in its economic, political and social spheres. There are many instances where the Soviet ideology has failed to satisfy the goals of a proper Socialist country and at times the limitations of the ideology itself has hindered the growth of Soviet Union.

It is in this understanding that we see the ideology as the maker of Soviet Union's soft power and with its deterioration comes the decline of the soft power of Russia. The attraction that Soviet Union held was vastly due to its ideology. The 1917 October Revolution is a strong aspect of Russia's soft power and in a single decade it made the country to be world's second largest industrial power and also led to the formation of the mighty Soviet Union. The ideology guided the Soviet Union all through and made it survive against the resentment of the capitalist countries. It did not matter whether they could out do the capitalist countries in all respects, what mattered was that it evolved and it continued to fight against capitalism and its exploitation. Socialism was not just limited to the borders of Soviet Union but it also inspired other countries like Cuba, China, Vietnam, East European countries and many others. This very fact that it spread to other countries does in some ways explain its attractiveness and along with the defeat of fascism, Soviet Union surely had immense soft power to boast of (Singh 1992:1624-1625). This Marxist-Leninist ideology of the Soviet Union had the potential of mobilizing and motivating the Soviet foreign policy to an extent of contributing in the

creation of an empire (Adomeit 1995: 37). However, it is also true that later the same also resulted in the rise of imperialist tendencies in Soviet Union.

However the image of Soviet Union was largely at stake with the rising political and economic problems. The internal problems were adding to its external policies. The soft power that Soviet Union possessed was slowly losing its grip at every level with the inefficiency of the leaders. It cannot be said that the decline of soft power started with a particular factor or a leader. It was declining with the erosion of the original ideals of the ideology with which it evolved as the Soviet Union. This erosion was taking place as the leaders were taking advantage of the fact that the State has a major role to play in a socialist society. This in turn led to power concentrated in the hands of a leader and few groups or elites enjoying it. Socialism was then starting to lose its colour and its charm. The Socialist model of development that was highly attractive also contributed to its soft power but with the increase in the gap between the ideology and practice created disillusionment among other countries and the model started appearing less attractive to them. This was pursued to the extent that the Central and the East European countries started protesting against the existing model in favour of 'Market Socialism' and 'Socialism with a human face' (ibid) which also shows that Soviet Union was both lagging behind the other big powers as well becoming too bureaucratic. Basically Soviet Union was deviating from the very principles with which they promised to bring about the emancipation of the working class and the people. Those principles were slowly eroding and as the West described, it became totalitarian and lacked political values. The criticisms of the Western countries are indeed biased but the fact remained that the Soviets were losing their ideals of emancipation and struggle.

In their strife of becoming a super power they killed the humanity of socialism wherever and whenever possible. The 'weekly institutionalised process of succession' (Mills 1981:591) was also one of the factors that added to the poor political values of the Soviet Union. This led to the uncertainty of not only the present leader's tenure but also the future leader's. This also led to more biasness and the selection of the next leader became more preferential on part of the influential groups inside the party or even outside it. This has been present at every stage of leadership succession but is more visible in the case of

Khrushchev's ouster. It can also be understood by the leadership-elite nexus that was starting to dominate the Soviet politics. However the question was not about the leadership and their relationship with the elite but the required changes or reforms at the correct time, be it with the elite influence or without. This positive change was exactly what was not happening in full swing (ibid). Therefore the political values were going down slowly with the moving away from the actual socialist principles. The internal problems of the Soviet Union being highlighted to the world, for e.g. Khrushchev's secret speech that highlighted the horrors of the Stalin era might have been viewed positively by some as it showed that the coming era would not definitely undergo the same horrors but it massively affected the image of Soviet Union.

The three things that were adding to the great image of Soviet Union, that is its ideology, its economy and its nuclear power were starting to suffer a huge downfall. Therefore the period right after the disintegration of the Soviet Union under Yeltsin can be regarded as one of the worst phases in the history of Russia as it no longer had its ideology or its nuclear power status, it just had economy to look forward to which had also crumbled down pathetically. Russia during the 1990s was also lacking the essential features that constituted the civil society. There was a lack of inter-personal trust in the Russian society and also did not possess a great range of non-state voluntary organizations (Gibson 2001: 53). Hence the transition to democracy of Russia was incomplete with the lack of such basic elements of civil society that together contribute to the process of democratization.

Russia's move towards liberal democracy followed by market economy after the disintegration can be considered to be a mere act of imitating the West without understanding the depths of the Western model. Such kind of imitation is considered to be misleading as in their act of imitation they have neglected the social and cultural aspects that was more evident in the earlier Soviet Union as compared to the Russia after the collapse. The West was not keen to caution the Russian leaders and the political elites who were undertaking the task of such transition. Hence with the lack of such cautions shown by the West, the Russian leaders then carried on with the transition without realizing the fact that the base or the foundation for a liberal democracy or market

economy were not properly laid (Shevtsova 1997: 20-33). Russia thus was covered in the clouds of confusion and was torn between the ambition of replicating the West and the fact that such Western ways were unsuitable for Russia in many aspects.

It is true that the seeds of the decline of the socialist ideology began right from the Stalin period but it still continued to be a source of attraction in many ways. It made its development model attractive not only to the other socialist countries but also to a large number of Third World countries. Social security, the security of jobs, health care and housing facilities were well taken care of in the Soviet Union. This was possible because of such humaneness present in the socialist ideology. By 1965 Soviet life expectancy approximated that of Japan and the United States. It is also true that the gap between Soviet and the United States kept increasing after that and it became quite stagnant during the 1970s and 1980s because of the systemic failure and the partying ways from the ideology. Nevertheless the Soviet Union's fairly egalitarian system of health care and social equality made it rise up to the level of the Western countries (Chen et al 1996: 520-523).

However this was not the same after the disintegration for the obvious reason that it no longer had the ideology to provide such facilities for a large number of people. Instead there appeared a number of health issues and there was an increase in the mortality rate in Russia as well as in the other Post-Soviet States. This rise in the mortality rate is connected to the Russia's poor economic condition after the disintegration, which brought about inflation in the country, leading to many people becoming unemployed. This obviously gave rise to poor standard of living and poor health. There also began in Russia the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor because the public sectors which encompassed a lot of people under it were no longer present leading to social-inequality. The political institutions were not strong enough to withstand the weakening of law and order which further gave rise to corruption and violence (ibid). Such picture of Russia naturally appeared unattractive to the countries in the world. It therefore lost the attractiveness that the Soviet Union possessed despite the major blunders that it made. All these factors greatly contributed in the decline of Russia's soft power.

Soviet Union under Stalin did take the lives of the people for granted but still emerged as a modern industrial state. There was a problem of deviation from the ideals of socialism but everything was planned in Soviet Union. The leaders managed the whole system and the economy through the Five Year Plans in the beginning and therefore each enterprise were made to produce the required quota which was in turn managed by the Gosplan or the Central Planning Agency (Petrasova 2003). However the decline of Russia's soft power was inevitable after the process of de-ideologization completely covered Russia and the other former Soviet states. The demise of socialism and the creation of New Russia left them without their mother. The new born babies, New Russia and the other newly independent states that together formed the CIS or the Commonwealth of Independent States were the ones to be affected the most. Earlier everything was planned under one umbrella but with the last few years of the Soviet Union moving towards market economy and the disintegration bringing a complete halt to the earlier planned economy, New Russia found itself in disorientation.

New Russia was therefore used for the experiments to be conducted by Yeltsin and his allies. His intentions might have been to bring about a change in the way Soviet Union was functioning but he was unsure of the future. He went ahead with his economic and political reforms without bearing in mind the consequences of it. Blinded by Western chimera, Yeltsin turned Russia into a failed experiment, an example for the other developing countries. He therefore totally got rid of the Socialist ideology as it stood as a hindrance on his journey towards capitalism. Yeltsin's claim to bring about democracy in Russia was far from becoming a reality. The very fact that his practices were not any close to democracy made the task even more difficult. In fact the democratic principles were present during Lenin and Trotsky's time but it started declining after Lenin's death in 1924. Soviet Union thus started losing its charm and slowly the attraction for market started rising. With the reform of Gorbachev turning the tables in favour of market economy, Yeltsin took advantage of the situation to bring about a complete transformation. He started with a strong support for independence. However this is contradicted by his action in the year 1994, only three years after coming to power, he stood firm against the national revolt in Chechnya by sending troops to crush the movement (Doyle 2007).

What was happening in Russia was making it very unpopular although the West would still find it better than the socialist days for the very obvious reasons that Russia/Soviet Union with socialist ideology was a greater threat to them than Russia without it. The hope that Yeltsin showed the people were going in vain as there were too much of problems cropping up. His call for democracy was going down the drains due to his own greed for power. His undemocratic practices in Russia is also highlighted by the fact that he used the constitution for extending his power to defeat the voices of the opposition and even ending up sending troops to bombard the Parliament which stood on his way as a hindrance. With regard to his economic policies, the “Shock Therapy” indeed proved to be shocking as it did not work out the way he had planned or convinced the people that it would. With the Shock Therapy prices were liberated and market practices were introduced. He had asserted that-“life will be hard for six months” after which the prices would fall. However instead of the price falling, prices in the year 1992 ascended by 2,529 percent (ibid).

The dilution of the principles of socialist ideology started in the Soviet period and it started increasing with every passing phase. This led to the rise of decline of ideology as it appeared to be more tyrannical and rigid. The leaders focussed more on the concentration of power and used the ideology to justify their acts. However when the decline of ideology reached its saturation point, Gorbachev brought about reforms that paved the way for de-ideologization and hence was carried further by Yeltsin. What the leaders failed to understand was that the fault lied in the whole structure that had become too bureaucratic, rigid and commanding and not in the ideology. While the leaders tried to do away with the ideology which they thought would bring a new dawn for Russia and the other post-Soviet states, they retained the structure which was corrupt and faulty. This made the democratization of Russia an incomplete process.

The economy also crumbled and thus emerged a weak country that lacked political values and an attractive economy. On the one hand, Russia lost its ideology which was its source of attraction and on the other it did not emerge as a country with true political values. The West encouraged the transformation and the de-ideologization process but after it

happened it abandoned Russia. Now they weigh it in terms of the Western liberal values and claim that Russia is nowhere close to it.

## CONCLUSION

Along with the successes of Stalin or Soviet Union as a whole, people till today highlight the horrors of Gulag or the misgivings of the whole system. It brought the Soviet Union in the flashlight but for wrong reasons and this also added to the declining soft power image of Soviet Union. Had the system brought about changes after the whole de-Stalinization process, there was still a chance of coping up with its negative image but the system continued to lack the ideals of a proper Socialist country. Instead the de-Stalinization strained the relationship between Moscow and Beijing as Mao was more connected with the Stalinist ways. Hence, the soft power of Soviet Union is more complex than it appears as the Soviet Union was caught up between their commitment to Socialist or Communist world and their urge to rise and remain as a super-power next to the United States.

When the de-Stalinization program was undertaken or the decision to follow a peaceful co-existence policy with the West was taken, the communist countries for obvious reasons found it very betraying at least to their ideology. However on the other hand, Soviet Union is always criticized by the West on being “socialist” and for the authoritarian nature as they believed it to be. Gorbachev started with changes and reforms that would bring about a change in the Soviet state of rigidity and closeness but later on it continued to the extent of keeping the ideology at stake and led into the complete substitution of the ‘ideological paradigm’ (Adomeit 1995: 42). To counter this rigidity and the closed nature of the Soviet structure, Gorbachev introduced “glasnost” as the main part of his reforms in 1980s (Bain 2005: 775). Even after the reforms undertaken by him and his rigorous attempts to cope up with the West, Soviet’s performance kept declining. The performance of the Soviet was less not just compared to its earlier days but also with regard to other leading countries it was not inspiring (Sakwa 1999: 440-523). The attack on socialism by Gorbachev was not out in the open. It came about in a more subtle way. The decline of the importance on the ideology under him was done under the pretext of improving socialism. He believed that the obstacles on his way to

reform the structures lay in the Party. Therefore his main focus was on diminishing the role of the Party and the new policies also focussed on doing away slowly with centralized planning in favour of market and encouraged the influence of private property (Keeran and Kenny 2010: 483-560).

The decline of Socialist ideology in Soviet Union began with Stalin's decision to dismantle the 'Comintern' or the Communist International which was an association of socialist countries across the World. The shutting down of it only made the Socialist or the Communist movement weak in the world. This was one of the great mistakes committed by the Stalin which hindered the Communist movement. Therefore the Communist International could not carry forward the task of spreading equality and striving for a 'World Socialist Order'. This led to the undervaluation of the earlier October Revolution. Soviet Union under Stalin thus slowly started to deviate from the main objective of Socialism and instead of the Workers emancipation began the rise of increased bureaucratization possessing and taking control of the nationalized property (Glotzer and Geltman 2013: ). The legality of the system prevalent in the Soviet Union lied in its ideology but as the state coercion and control increased with the rise in powers of the state, the Red army and the KGB or the Secret Police, the ideology started losing its main purpose of equality and a fight against exploitation and oppression of the Working class (Petrasova 2003).

The Socialist ideology indeed accelerated the soft power of Soviet Union. However as the Soviet collapse became a reality, the de-ideologization process became inevitable as the makers of New Russia supported the new market economy. The impact of this de-ideologization process on Russia and the former states of the Soviet Union was disastrous as it nearly crushed the image of Russia. The failure on part of the leaders to estimate the upcoming tragedy of Russia and the former Soviet countries can be regarded as one of the main causes for such a state of Russia. It was the socialist ideology of the Soviet Union that brought about equality, health care, security, housing, education, employment and culture for majority of its citizens especially the working class. It is also a great achievement on part of the Soviet Union that although it's level of consumption could not match that of the United States, it had succeeded in providing the majority of its citizens



with a good standard of living and consumption in such a short time. This was viewed by many countries as a great achievement and made the Soviet Union attractive to others.

After the disintegration, Russia was deprived of this attraction as the ideology had collapsed. Instead the disastrous outcome of the failed market reforms of Yeltsin and his allies made it more unattractive. The disintegration therefore came as a loss and pain for those who believed in the ideals of equality and were against poverty, oppression and Capitalist exploitation (Keeran and Kenny 2010: 491-520). Russia was in the middle of nowhere, as it had neither fully acquired the status of a proper democratic country and a market economy and nor was it following the earlier ideology. The decline of Russia's soft power is therefore connected to its socialist ideology. The beginning of de-ideologization had its roots in the Soviet period and to a certain extent did accelerate the disintegration of the Soviet Union. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the de-ideologization process reached its logical end.

It was with the rise of Gorbachev that Soviet Union started moving from the ideology. He neglected the socialist and the Third world allies for the sake of gaining the support of West. Although the West and some socialist countries did appreciate the move of Soviet Union towards West as it was sweetening the sour relationship between the two, Soviet Union was moving farther away from its socialist ideology. This paving of way towards de-ideologization was seen as a betrayal of Socialism by the Soviet Union and therefore it was already losing its appeal which became even more prominent under Yeltsin. This also made the disintegration of the Soviet Union simpler (ibid).

The writings of Alexander Solzhenitsyn also became highly critical of Soviet Union. Through the help of his influential words in his books such as the 'Gulag Archipelago', he unveiled the brutalities of Soviet Union especially under Stalin. His words attacked the image of Soviet Union massively. It is said that the 'pen is mightier than sword' and in this case too his pen acted mightier than the viciousness of the 'Gulag' or the labour prison. Solzhenitsyn also received the 'Nobel Prize for Literature' in the year 1970 for his contribution to 'the ethical force which he has pursued the indispensable traditions of Russian literature' (Nobelprize.org). Even after the disintegration, his writings bring the

horrors of Soviet past in the reader's mind. This highly affected the soft power of both Soviet Union and later Russia immediately after the disintegration.

The Socialist ideology of the Soviet Union was its main source of soft power in many aspects as mentioned in this chapter. By entering all the realms of Soviet Union, that is the economic, the political, social and cultural it indeed brought a different approach of looking at these things. It perfectly stood against the evils of Capitalism fighting for the equality and the rights of the working class. It's very basic principles emphasising on cooperation, equality and fairness gave it a missionary outlook. It worked as a social organization as well as an economic system from the time of its inception. With the disintegration and de-ideologization came the end of the Socialist regime, which also bore serious consequence to the ongoing socialist movements in the rest of the world. However this would only comprise one side of the argument as it is also true that the Soviet Union in many respects failed to live up to the standard of the communist or the socialist ideology. There were in fact many criticisms arising from some of the prominent Marxists, that the Soviet Socialism different from the Socialism of Marx or Engel (Khan 2009: 81-99).

As the decline of ideology started, Soviet Union started losing its attractive image although it continued to follow the ideology half-heartedly. Soviet Union despite the drawbacks was still a Socialist country and hence its soft power though very weak with the decline of the actual values of the ideology, was still present. However the ideology started becoming too shallow that even the reforms were not enough to bring about a change. The rigidity of the Soviet system stood in the way of a strong socialist future. This also made the Soviet Union outdated and there was too much of emphasis on the military and the hard power. During the later years of the Soviet Union, especially under Gorbachev, there was an attempt to make Soviet Union more liberal and democratic. The leaders then started believing that it was ideology that was the main hindrance on Soviet Union's way towards being a more open society and a stable economy. Hence, the rise of some features of the Capitalist society was seen. The letter of Alexander Solzhenitsyn to the leaders of Soviet Union on 5 September 1973 also argued that the roots of the evil of

Soviet Russia rested entirely in the ideology (Sakwa 1999: 235-300). Therefore the ideology was also losing its ground in the later period of Soviet Union.

It is true that Soviet Union was deviating from the principles of socialism and had become too corrupt and coercive to be called as one. However, what the leaders as well as great writers such Solzhenitsyn failed to realize is that the fault was in the way the Soviet Union was moving farther away from the ideology and that the fault did not lay in the socialist ideology as such. The main reason for the fall of the morale of Soviet Union was the decline of true socialist values that ultimately led to the decline of its soft power. However with the disintegration came total elimination of the ideology and therefore this de-ideologization process deprived the New Russia of the socialist tag that Soviet Union boasted of, if not always followed it.

Even though the Soviet socialist ideology was deviating from the essential principles of the ideology, there was still a room for improvement, for the rise of an alternate planning method which would have been more reasonable and politically efficient. The downfall of the Soviet planning and the economy did not indicate the failure of the whole socialist idea of planning (Cottreli and Cockshott 1993: 168). Hence, the de-ideologization process was not inevitable. It only deprived the new Russia of an ideology that would make it attractive by improving what was degrading in the Soviet Union and not discarding the ideology altogether.

The Soviet collapse and the de-ideologization process did not end the problems that were associated with it. It did not end poverty, underdevelopment, de-industrialization and exploitation in countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America; it indeed increased all of these as de-ideologization only accelerated the processes of global capitalism. The fact that some 'third world' countries managed to do well with the process of globalization and market policy, does not erase the fact that the gap between the rich and the poor, the core and the periphery has kept widening from then on. The capitalist classes continue to exploit the working and other lower classes. The policies of capitalism have been against the developing or the 'third world' countries and the debts of these countries in the 1980s and 1990s were said to be an average of 12.5 billion dollars per month (Singh 2011: 41-56). The decline of Soviet Union and de-ideologization therefore deprived New Russia of

all those qualities that had attracted many countries of the world during the Soviet period, therefore making its soft power weak and feeble.

**CHAPTER THREE:  
RESURGENCE AND REDEFINITION OF  
RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER**

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESURGENCE AND REDEFINITION OF RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER**

*“Soft Power, a comprehensive toolkit for achieving foreign policy objectives building on civil society potential, information, cultural and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy, is becoming an indispensable component of modern international relations. At the same time, increasing global competition and the growing crisis potential sometimes create a risk of destructive and unlawful use of “soft power” and human rights concepts to exert political pressure on sovereign states, interfere in their internal affairs, destabilize their political situation, manipulate public opinion, including under the pretext of financing cultural and human rights project abroad.”*  
(Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013)

Soviet Union had its days of enjoying immense soft power capabilities. However with its disintegration came the decline of its soft power, as its ‘ideology’ crumbled to the core. It is true that “socialist ideology” of the Soviet Union was its greatest source of soft power but it collapsed. The collapse of this ideology as well as Soviet Union, brought disastrous results in the aftermath of the disintegration, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Russia therefore faced the most troubled times, as it was a new born child without a mother to guide it. Earlier it was the socialist ideology that had taken the role of a mother, guiding through all the spheres of Soviet Union. Russia’s path towards capitalism, the other alternative after socialist model ended, was a very difficult one, filled with obstacles. It is in this period that it lost its identity, where one could not evolve properly in the new model. It also started losing its positive image in the world. Lost and aimless, Russia frantically needed a strong ruler like in the early Soviet period, to come out of this situation. It needed to rise again and to wake up from its slumber, if not as a superpower, at least as a stable country that would not fall into its earlier situation of chaos and confusion that was created after the disintegration. Hence, it was President Vladimir Putin who undertook the task of building a more stable Russia. However it was only after focussing on the task of stabilizing the economy that he focussed on the task of rebuilding the soft power capabilities. It is a known fact that Russia has been associated

with its hard power capabilities and that it has not hesitated to use power involving military actions, force or coercion whenever the need has arisen.

Therefore, Vladimir Putin in his second term brought with him a substantial change in the way Russia had been functioning and thus focussed his attention on a need to re-build its soft power capabilities. Earlier even under President Medvedev, the emphasis had been made on such aspect of power but it was under Putin that it has been included officially in its concept of foreign policy and it states, "soft power", a comprehensive toolkit for achieving foreign policy objectives building on civil society potential, information, cultural and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy, is becoming an indispensable component of modern international relations. At the same time, swelling global competition and the rising crisis also build a threat of mishandling and unlawful use of soft power and human rights concepts to exercise political pressure on sovereign states, impede in their internal matters, abate their political situation, manage public opinion, together with the ploy of financing cultural and human rights projects abroad (Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013).

It is true that the soft power which was present during the Soviet Union had its limitation but it was enough to create an attractive image in the world. This image however differed from one country to another. It is known to all that the Soviet Union was seen as an example of success by the non-Western countries rather than Western ones. Present Russia under Putin has to re-acquire that attraction and influence which it enjoyed during the Soviet period. The recent crisis in Ukraine again has made the matter more complex because it can act as a hindrance in Russia's path towards a positive image in the world through the application of its soft power. This is however another debate altogether, which will be focused later in the chapter. The argument still remains that Vladimir Putin has shown some hope of improving its soft power. Like in the Soviet case, the present Russia too has its own limitations and the situation is in fact more complex after the collapse of socialism, which will also be discussed in this chapter.

## PUTIN AND THE RE-DEFINITION OF RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER

Yeltsin was unsuccessful in his attempts to take Russia towards development and to make it a stable politically and economically but it was Putin who brought some hope to this declining power. He believed that Yeltsin had left Russia in a susceptible position and it therefore needed to be vigilantly taken care of. The swelling of NATO and European Union activities in the former Soviet space acted as a great impediment in the revival of Russia. While Yeltsin had reacted to the developments of the NATO and European Union, Putin resorted again to all the Leninist disciplines for dealing with 'a stronger enemy' (Sherr 2013: 54-57). Some of the actions that Putin undertook were good for Russia but were obviously not appreciated by the West as it went against their geopolitical interests. However it was Putin who brought Russia to its stable form although there is still a lot more to be done. Putin has been doing well in making the economy stable to quite an extent and has made use of its energy diplomacy in achieving it. In the 1990s, Russia had lost its competence to even continue providing financial subsidies to other states of the former Soviet Union and therefore it also lost its source of economic magnetism (Hill 2006: 355-356).

Despite the earlier crisis and the economic crisis of 2008, we can say that it was Putin's efforts as a strong and pragmatic leader to make Russia a strong and stable country when compared to the Yeltsin years where his market policies only brought a crisis in Russia. Putin therefore can get the credit of taking Russia's economy to this height, rising from the position of twentieth to the seventh largest economy in the world (World Bank 2007). It was indeed the spring up of Russia's economy after the financial crisis of 1998 and then 2008, that has given Mr Putin new leverage with which he countered and is still counteracting the economic and political incentives the West is offering Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to tempt them out of Moscow's domain (Myers 2004).

Russia's influence through energy and industry is sizeable and in doing so it takes into concern both hard and soft forms of power and sometimes without much balancing. Energy resources provide Russia with a source of economic attraction and a way of achieving economic and political influence using sometimes non-traditional and non-transparent methods too (REP Seminar summary 2011). Russia has the second largest



coal reserves in the world; it is the fifth largest producer and third largest exporter. In 2009, 20 percent of the European Union's coal imports came from Russia. Russia should also give State the key role in most of the matters. It is true that the State is an important player in its diplomacy concerning energy but there are other group of actors too in Russia that are important (Sherr 2013:58-60).

With regard to the political situation in Russia, it can be said that the journey towards democracy has not been a smooth and an easy one. Political value, which can also be regarded as one of the sources of soft power is also very low as compared to other democratic countries. The situation was even worst during the Yeltsin period and the early recovery period under Putin and Medvedev. Many Russians are of the view that it was under Boris Yeltsin that the devaluation of the idea of democracy took place thus resulting in the poor standing of Russia in global affairs. Russia of the 1990s period is therefore described by some as 'anocracy' rather than democracy. Under Vladimir Putin, Russia has shown some signs of growth, although it has not evolved as a proper democratic country if measured by the Western standards. Under him, however it became a quasi-democracy with some definite overbearing qualities (Rukavishnikov 2012: 9- 18).

Putin's approach to building Russia into a strong and stable country has not been as expected by the West. His methods have been that of a strong ruler, who is ready to do anything for making his country rise and sometimes even resorting to very harsh and coercive means. Pragmatic as always, he has left no stone unturned to try to gain the earlier status of Russia back. However, his actions sometimes add to the negative image of Russia. It is a different fact altogether that Russia has been attractive to some countries and Putin can take the glory of this success. It was in the end of Putin's first term that Russia had steadily tailored to the alternate model, which it had acknowledged following the fall down of the Soviet socialist model. Russia under Putin was sprouting to be one of its own kinds. It neither looked like the Gorbachev years as it promised success, nor slightest close to the Yeltsin years as Russia under Putin was essentially Russian (Sherr 2013: 57).

There are a series of events which show the effort put by Putin in making Russia soar again to great heights and also in making its soft power strong. Although it was very

recently, in his second term of Presidency that he officially announced Russia's intentions of increasing soft power, there are many actions taken by him before which suggest Russia's increasing soft power. His focus has been mostly in the surrounding areas and the former Soviet regions with regard to its increasing their soft power capabilities. His actions have served him precisely in many matters whereas some cases have turned out to be a total letdown and have in fact affected the soft power of Russia. Putin has exposed to be very level-headed leader in his moves and has acted very pragmatically in these regions in that he has even supported some the candidates who have promised to secure acquaintance with Moscow, in the elections of the former Soviet regions like in the case of Kiev (Myers 2004). Putin being re-elected in May 2012 issued a new decree on Russia's foreign policy demanding the intensification of global public diplomacy efforts. This has included Russia's efforts in broadcasting sports and cultural projects thus promoting Russia's culture abroad.

Putin has also undertaken the task of opening up many new institutions, agency and foundations that are responsible for spreading Russia's culture and language. Rossotrudnichestvo is an agency set up by presidential decree under the former President Medvedev, on 6 December 2008. Earlier it was largely responsible for international cultural cooperation, promoting Russian language and maintaining a network of Russian Houses of Science and Culture. However in 2013, Rossotrudnichestvo was transformed into Russia's national agency for international development. With its expanded powers, it is expected to shift Russia's approach to international development from passive to active (Sherr 2013:62-63). President Vladimir Putin in his speech addressed to the representatives of this institution discussed the role of it various organizations in building the country's foreign policy as well as in making a positive image of the country abroad. By calling Rossotrudnichestvo and its branches as an important means of Russia's soft power, Putin has prioritized the activities involving culture, science and media in Russia's foreign policy. It also shows his interest in promoting Russia's culture, traditions and legacies as mentioned by him in the speech (President of Russia 2012).

With the aim of transforming itself into a world class development institution, Rossotrudnichestvo has accelerated its development pave in the first half of 2013. With

unremitting effort put by this agency and the support provided by Putin, Russia can achieve great success in maintain a strong cultural image abroad. However, according to some views, Rossotrudnichestvo should find a way to widen a customer service culture and even the name of the agency needs to be changed as it is difficult for any non-Russian speaker to pronounce it (Dolinsky 2013: 8-11). Whether it is through institutions like Rossotrudnichestvo or through his speeches delivered to various Russian representatives abroad, Putin has been mentioning about soft power and its importance. In one of his speeches addressed to the ambassadors and permanent representatives in international organizations, he brought forth the importance of soft power but also stressed upon the fact that 'Russia's image abroad is formed not' by Russians and therefore it is often 'distorted'. Putin's statements indicate that Russia's image is highly dependent on how the 'other' views Russia and through his statement it is clear that it is not quite good. However, his positivity is highlighted in his speech as he talks about 'Russia's contribution to global civilisation, science and culture' and that emphasis should be placed on the Russian language and the Compatriots policy for fostering Russia's soft power (President of Russia 2012).

However, it should be noted that the former President Medvedev had also contributed greatly to the building up of Russia's soft power through the opening of various organizations other than Rossotrudnichestvo. One such organization is the Baku International Humanitarian Forum that was initiated by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the then President of Russian Federation Dmitriy Medvedev in the year 2010. The main objective of the forum has been to look in humanitarian problems that have arisen in the rise of globalization period. The forum comes in operation every once a year and involves the participants and representatives in to various dialogues and discussions (Baku International Humanitarian Forum 2011). He had also ordered for the establishment of two other institutions that would further Russia's foreign policy goals, the Gorchakov Fund for public diplomacy support and Russian International Affairs Council (Shakirov 2013). President Dmitry Medvedev in his address to the participants of the forum in 2011 compared the activities of 'Humanitarian cooperation' with soft power, as according to him such activities would help in promoting greater

cooperation between countries. Medvedev's stress on humanitarian cooperation indicates Russia's outlook in the matters of influence abroad (President of Russia 2011).

Putin took a step further towards improving the functioning of various institutions and activities that would help in building a positive image of Russia abroad when in May 2013; he signed an order that would bring an increase in the budget for the institution from two billion roubles to 9.5 billion roubles by the year 2020. The Finance Ministry of Russia under Putin in 2012 spent more than 500 million dollars on a "program of international development assistance" through international organization such as the World Bank (The Moscow Times 2013). However despite the various support and funding made by Russia, it has not added to the positive image of Russia in those beneficiary countries. This is true as most of Russia's funding is given to international organization such as the World Bank, which in turn invests the money accordingly. Despite many contributions made by Russia, it is believed that in African countries, nobody knows that there is 'donor' support from Russia too. Russia also has given financial support up to 32 million dollars annually to educational projects in Mozambique and other countries. However, due to its indirect investment, Russia does not get the credit it deserves (ibid).

Russian literature, artists, music and theatre, philosophy, ballet, painting, folklore and architecture are known all over the world right from the Soviet days and even in present day Russia they form an important source of soft power. Patriarch Kirill I of Moscow has made himself a chief actor of the Russian World or the 'Ruskiyy Mir' project. Kirill, Putin and Medvedev are also willing to make religion a major factor abroad (Sherr 2013:87). Russian Orthodox Church and the Patriarch hold central positions in the Russian society. It is estimated that Moscow Patriarchate has over 150 million members in more than sixty countries around the world (Liik 2013: 40-44). This shows the influence Russia can have over these countries through the hold of Russian Orthodox and the Patriarch. The Ruskiyy Mir (Russian World) Foundation, headed by Vyacheslav Nikonov, was set up by a decree of President Putin in 2007. This organization too is mostly used for the promotion of Russian language and culture. Along with it there are numerous institutions that carry out similar kind of roles and they help each other in their

work. One such institution is the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation, which also works as an NGO and was also established in the year 2007 (ibid).

Public diplomacy is one of the means for promoting soft power which takes into consideration aspects like sincerity, self condemnation and civil society. It helps in the encouragement of all such factors that produce soft power in other countries. In the case of Russia, soft power is mainly improved through the help of its public and cultural diplomacy. However, if any country's culture or policies are illicit or unpleasant, mere promotions or public diplomacy cannot produce soft power (Nye 2008: 95). Therefore in the case of Russia, public diplomacy has a vital role to play. Sometimes due to the events where Russia has taken the help of hard power to achieve the ends, has only diminished the soft power of Russia.

With the various changes that have come about in the world it becomes necessary for Russia too to keep pace with the fast moving countries of the world. Therefore Russia under Putin can also be resorting to measures such as internet to further their goals in the world and modernize the traditional way of diplomacy. It started with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs bringing about certain changes in their official website in 2011 and making it more user-friendly. This followed by the opening up Ministry's first 'YouTube' account in the year 2012, which have been used to upload videos by the ministry. Twitter is another social networking site that is used by the government. However all the ministries and embassies are not comfortable with the new technologies and sometimes the accounts opened in these various social networks have not been used fully. Nevertheless, the attempt made by Putin, especially in the year 2012 when in a meeting with Russian ambassadors, he emphasised on the need to use technologies more actively by them to increase country's attractiveness 'domestically and internationally' (Shakirov 2013).

Education has always been a major factor of Russia's foreign policy in Russia and in Putin's Russia it has only increased. According to the Minister of Education and Science, the number of international students at Russian Universities in 2012-2013 nearly exceeded 250,000 and almost 40,000 have been receiving funding from the budget of the Russian Federation. If the value of education continues to improve then more number of

students from different regions of the world will enrol in Russian university and can be in touch with the Russian society and culture. Under Putin, the exchange programs have also been taken seriously, although it was much greater during the Soviet period. Most of the international students who enrol in Russian universities are from the former Soviet regions and China. Among the developed countries, it is the United States has been the most represented country in Russian universities. However the number has not exceeded more than approximately 2000. This is followed by Germany, France and Japan with 1300, 850 and 700 students approximately (Dolinsky 2013: 12-15).

Apart from the CIS regions, students from India, Mongolia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Myanmar also come to Russia in good numbers. The increase in the number of reservations for the students from the foreign nationals has been due the rise in need for 'training specialists for foreign countries in Russia'. Resolution number 891 drafted by the government has furthered the cause of cultural cooperation and also to implement the State Migration Policy Concept until 2025. Apart from education schemes in the university levels, there have been policies that have focussed on the training of foreign students in Russian schools under the outline of state needs for the condition of government work at the cost of federal budget (Ministry of Education and Science, Russian Government 2013). Russian language has been used by Putin to foster a strong influence over other countries, especially the former Soviet regions.

Putin has also concentrated on increasing its soft power capabilities through the help of media and television. Whether it is music, literature or sports, Russian media and television have been an effective means in achieving its desired ends. Television is regarded as one of the most influential media channels in Russia. In the year 2005, Russia even launched an English language channel, Russia Today which is broadcasted in over a hundred countries. According to the European Journalism Centre analysis, production of Television serials based on the classics of the Russian and Soviet literature has become particularly popular in recent years (Liik 2013: 40-43). Through the performing arts, exhibitions, literature and film, Russia delivers the message that the 'distinction between Russia and the West damages the West'. Russian cinema along with the Russian language is perhaps Russia's most potent form of soft power in Russian speaking regions

of the former Soviet regions. However, television news somewhat comes out to be political and biased (Sherr 2013: 90).

With regard to music sales, Russia follows the pattern of Germany, Spain and Italy where music is not as such intended for export. Putin has also focussed on beautification and tourism of Russia and this has acted as a strong indicator of its soft power as the annual number of tourists since the year 2000 has been over 21 million per annum. According to the World heritage list, Russia has a relatively high number of sites that have been included in the list. Sports can be seen as another area where Russia can boast to have a satisfying soft power capability. As to the last two Olympic profiles, one in London in 2012 and the other in Vancouver in 2010, Russia ranked fourth in London and eleventh in Vancouver, according to the overall medals won. The Sochi Winter Olympics 2014, held recently was expected to bring about an increase in Russia's soft power like it was done in China with the Beijing Olympics 2007 (Liik 2013: 42-44). The Sochi Olympics 2014 is another topic which will be discussed in details later in this chapter.

It is true Russia has been deprived of the ideology as a source of attraction that once the Soviet Union enjoyed but Putin has tried to make Russia into a strong and stable country. Although not a socialist state now, Russia under Putin still stress on it being a 'welfare state' and focuses on promoting values that Soviet Union had done to achieve a positive global image. It therefore seeks to emphasise on the free access to all levels of education, a feature that made the Soviet Union's image highly positive (Kreutz 2013). Hence, Russia needs to learn from the great examples of past and strive to improve its soft power. Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Centre also believes that the world has come to a stage where the 'power of attraction triumphs that of coercion' and therefore soft power should be essential to Russia's foreign policy (ibid).

#### **RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER IN THE FORMER SOVIET SPACE**

Even after the break-up of the Soviet Union, the bonds of past is still visible as far as Russia's relations with these regions is concerned. The relationship that they share with Russia is not just cultural but also economic and political as Russia still has a strong hold in these regions. This act of Russia of involving it into the affairs of these regions, have

been viewed from different angles. The West obviously sees the act of Russia's involvement as a big brother who sometimes acts as a bully and has been a major critic to almost all the actions of Russia. This however can also be understood by the fact that the West itself is interested in these regions due to the vast expanse of natural resources available in these regions as well as to counter Russia's moves and interest in these regions. The enlargement of NATO and the European Union bears a strong witness to this fact. It is a fact that the ties of past still bind Russia and these countries together but too much control shown by Russia over these regions can act as a hindrance to Russia's recently growing soft power.

As far as Russia's soft power is concerned, Putin has been focussing more on Russia's immediate neighbours which obviously includes the former Soviet republics, whether it is the Central Asian or the Baltic states. Right from the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia's chief area of concern with regard to its foreign policy has been the Post-Soviet regions. It was cited by the foreign minister Andrey Kozyrev in an article 'Russia: A Chance for Survival', that Russia had a 'special responsibility... conferred by history... and its status as a great power' to strengthen 'centripetal processes' in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), to the advantage of Eurasian integration and security (Sherr 2013:59). Russia's interest in this zone is to be carefully tackled as because of their past as well as the eye of West always on Russia's moves; Russia is bound to be engulfed by criticisms.

The rise of soft power of Russia is seen mostly in this region and this fact itself is enough for anyone to understand that Russia's interest in this zone does not rely solely on hard power. Russia therefore has undertaken various activities in these regions in the form of public diplomacy, development programmes and funds or aids to increase to hold on these regions. However, in some cases there are such instances where without the help of these activities on part of Russia, the post-Soviet regions are attracted to Russia because they see Russia as an example of a successful country and because of their shared past. As it is true that the soft power of Russia mostly relies on its relationship with the former Soviet regions and their activities on these regions try to project Russia as an attractive region. In this regard Putin's signing of a decree in the new Foreign Policy Concepts with



regard to the aid for developing countries will basically focus on the CIS or the Commonwealth of Independent States. This is further explained by the fact that this decree is applicable on two conditions- firstly, the implementation of such policies should try to resolve the economic and domestic problems and secondly, it would be especially for those countries that are close to Russia and are interested in it (Smertina and Koshkin 2014).

In the year 2004, Putin addressed a session attended by Russian Ambassadors, where he stressed that Russia's priority in their interest abroad was "to protect the national economic interests, raise the attractiveness of Russia... and to serve the cause of the overall development and modernization of the country." He also emphasised that his main emphasis was on the CIS. He further added that "relations between CIS and Russia should be made as attractive as possible not only for us but also for them (Hill 2006: 342-344)". Accordingly Putin undertook various activities to bolster their soft power in the economic, political and cultural fields. The Russian electricity provider Unified Energy System (UES) has expanded its markets, especially in the Caucasus and Central Asia, where early energy-sector privatization brought with it foreign investors. Russia's private firms like Wimm-Bill-Dawn Foods have begun to dominate regional markets for dairy products and fruit juices in these regions (ibid).

The policies of Russia like the compatriots policy indicate its interest in the Post Soviet area. Rosotrudnichestvo is also responsible for maintaining good relationship with other countries, compatriots abroad and humanitarian cooperation. It also acts on behalf of the country to promote such activities in the CIS countries that lay emphasis on Russian language and culture. Such kind of activity binds Russia and the CIS countries even after the break-up (Liik 2013: 60-63). However Russia's control when exceeded has only had a negative impact on its soft power. This is so because the CIS is no longer under Russia even though they share common past, culture, religion and language in some cases. Therefore their relationship should not be of control from just one side as soft power is not limited to the capacity to influence or to manipulate public opinion; it also includes a proper idea of partnership with mutual benefits in the near and long term. Russia's need to enhance its soft power capabilities in these regions was arisen because of the

immediate concern with regard to the Colour Revolutions in Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004). Russia realized that the West countered the Russian influence in the post Soviet area with the help of their well developed soft power channels such as international NGOs and media outlets. Hence, to increase their influence in these regions, Russia started undertaking various means like the West to counteract the activities of the West. Russia's state controlled Television news programs were broadcasted across most of the CIS territory to increase their influence on public opinion especially after the Colour Revolutions (Cwiek-Karpowicz 2012: 6).

These kinds of activities undertaken by Russia have been criticized by many Western scholars calling them mere propaganda against the Western efforts in the post-Soviet regions. However, despite the criticisms Russia has managed to increase its influence and maintain a positive image of Russia, in some cases. Due to the great influence of Russian media in these regions, a large segment of Ukrainian society supported Russia's position with regard to the war with Georgia in 2008. This does not imply that Ukraine completely changed its orientation towards economic and political integration with Western institutions (ibid).

The Soviet era movies are considered to be extremely popular in Russia and it is believed that the same is in the case of the post-Soviet countries. The inter-state program for innovation cooperation in the CIS countries is regarded by Russia as its top priority. Russia's relations with Moldova and Armenia show that Russia's soft power capabilities in these regions are quite satisfactory. Russia justifies the stationing of military in these regions as a prevention measure against hostility with Azerbaijan and at the same time to guard the border with Turkey. According to many interviewers, Russia's cultural presence is strong in both Moldova and Armenia. This is illustrated by the fact that Russia's popular culture, the role of music and cultural exchange projects binds these regions with Russia. The influence of popular culture of Russia is stronger in the case of Armenia (Liik 2013: 59-62).

Russia's huge energy potential is its huge asset towards building a strong soft power. However the fact remains that its leading position as an oil and gas supplier is possible mainly because of the Soviet-era development of its energy sector and industry (Cwiek-

Karpowicz 2012: 8) Moldova is entirely dependent on Russia for natural gas supplies. Russia is Moldova's most important trade partner. According to the State Chamber of Registration, 812 Companies with Russian capital operate in Moldova. Armenia too relies on Russia economically. Gazprom stands influential in both Armenia and Moldova (Liik 2013: 73-76).

Television continues to be a strong factor of Russian cultural influence in these regions. It is considered to be one of the most popular media outlets in Moldova. Prime TV which is the rebroadcast of 'Russian Channel One' remains the most popular source of information in Moldova. Russian films and serials are very popular in Moldova. Hollywood is also very much popular but they are viewed with Russian subtitles. This also shows the influence that the language policy of Russia has on these regions. Even in the case of Ukraine, Russia's popular culture industry appears to be an important source of soft power. Television channels like RTV, NTV, and First Channel act as important source of promoting Russia's soft power (Lytvynenko 2013). Russian radio enjoys more popularity than Russian Television in Estonia, with over four Russian music radio channels and two very popular Russian language channels: Radio 4 and Russkoye Radio (Conley *et al* 2011: 16).

In Armenia, the language presence and knowledge is perceived much more positively despite the fact that sometimes it is not left to the choice of the people but made mandatory in schools (Liik 2013: 59). For the older generations throughout the CIS, Russian remains the main lingua franca, functioning in a similar fashion to English in much of the rest of the world (Lytvynenko 2013). However in the case of Latvia and Estonia, since the 1990s itself, there had started a decline in of Russian language among the non-Russian population (Grigas 2012: 13). The Russian social networking site 'Odnoklassniki' is considered to more popular than 'Facebook'(Liik 2013:55). The House of Moscow in Latvia, a cultural centre funded by the Moscow city government has been a key player in promoting Russia's culture from the time it was opened in 2004 (Grigas 2012: 15).

To improve political and social relations with neighbouring countries, the Kremlin tries to use the positive image of the Orthodox Church in the post-Soviet area to its advantage.

The Russian Church also played the important role of the arbiter and offered in practical terms, financial support for the Abkhazian and Ossetian parishes (Cweik-Karpowicz 2012: 7). In Armenia, 98 percent of the populations are considered to be members of the Armenian Apostolic Church but in Moldova it is estimated that 75 percent of its population belong to the Moldovan Orthodox Church which comes directly under the Russian Orthodox Church (Liik 2013: 60).

A large number of the population in Moldova have shown support in favour of European Union in the various opinion polls that have been conducted. For Western Ukraine, people going to the European Union are a crucial factor for European soft power. European embassies have been organizing cultural events such as the French Spring. There is a special Europe Day which has also become an important flagship event (Lytvynenko 2013). The European Union's efforts to establish a free trade area with its Eastern neighbours led the Kremlin to strengthen the development of alternative projects for economic integration in the post-Soviet area. The Customs Union with Belarus and Kazakhstan is one of the most important projects undertaken in many years. It can be said that in many ways the European Union opportunities appear to be more attractive to these regions because of these bringing about modernization projects. However the Russian projects and opportunities are more accessible to these regions (Cweik-Karpowicz 2012: 8). With the entry of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the European Union and NATO in the year 2004, Russian influence in the Baltic region appeared greatly diminished. Russia's use of soft power is epitomized by the creation and maintenance of Kremlin-friendly networks of influence in the cultural, economic and political sectors (Grigas 2012: 10).

Although Russia was deeply hit by the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, it affected the post-Soviet countries in more severe ways. This resulted in Moscow implementing a series of anti-crisis measures that stabilized the labour market as well as the finances of many state-run companies (Cweik-Karpowicz 2012: 8). With the help of business and political elites, Russia has tried to enhance its soft power. In the Baltic business world, many of the elites are former members of the Soviet nomenclature who remain loyal to the Kremlin out of economic interest. The business men are of both Russian origins as

well as from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Grigas 2012: 7). Vladimir Putin is regarded as the most trusted politician by the people of Moldova and in Armenia too he enjoys a positive image due to the fact that he managed these regions well during the hard times (Liik 2013: 79). Lithuanian Ukio bank owned by a businessman of Russian origin, Vladimir Romanov organizes an annual cultural charity event involving Russian arts (Grigas 2012: 11). The importance of labour market is understood by the fact that around 200 thousand people from Moldova migrated to Russia since 2006-2011. The labour market can also be regarded as having a positive image of Russia's soft power (Liik 2013: 58-63).

The "Compatriot Policy" of Russia, with which citizens of post-Soviet republics are enabled to become permanent residents in remote provinces of the Russian Federation is not viewed positively by the majority of the population in Armenia due to the fear of increasing migration of Armenians to Russia (ibid). As part of the Compatriot Policy's coordination efforts, every three years Moscow hosts the World Congress of Russian Compatriots, a high level representative forum for the Russian president and the compatriot leaders from post-Soviet countries to gather and discuss major problems facing the Diasporas. This includes voluntary resettlement, protection of minority rights and preservation of cultural and linguistic ties to Russia (Conley *et al* 2011: 18-19).

It can be said that overall in the post-Soviet regions Russia does have a positive image, which adds to its soft power capabilities but in almost all these regions what is disliked is the fact that Russia sometimes tends to over-indulge in these areas and tries to act like a "big brother" at times. The embargo on Moldovan wine by Russia also did have a negative impact on Russia's soft power. Russia's presence in the Transnistria region of Moldova is also viewed negatively by them (Liik 2013: 78-79). For Russia to improve its soft power capabilities in these regions there is a need for serious internal reforms in Russia as it is faced with enormous problems like corruption, abuse of human rights and the lack of democracy.

In the case of Russia as compared to the United States and European Union, the soft power resources of Russia are deeply embedded in its culture but it is also largely dependent on the hard power resources (Liik 2013: 56). While there is nothing

illegitimate about a foreign state using soft power, lobbying economic policy and forging cultural ties to advance its policy objectives, the problem in this case is that Russia's manner of pursuing these objectives intrudes upon important areas of national sovereignty and undermines core interest of target states (Grigas 2012: 9). The only way for Russia to become a real soft power in the post-Soviet area is to introduce serious internal reforms that focus on the liberalization of its economy and the democratization of its political system. The most influential products of Russian soft power tend to use the rhetoric of fraternity in reference to the common victory in World War II and nostalgia for the lost Soviet empire (Cweik-Karpowicz 2012: 6).

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST

The rise of Russian negative stereotypes in West dates back to fifteenth and sixteenth century when the competition was between Poland and 'Muscovy Rus' for the control of East European plain and the West certainly was supposed to be against Russia. Russian culture was perceived to be a barbaric one. The Western hostility against Russia increased with Russia's rise of interest in the European region, especially after its victory over Napoleon. The Soviet period of modernization was seen by the West with positivism and the defeat of Fascism by Soviet Union also added to its increasing foreign policy influence. However with the start of Cold war, both started viewing each other with distrust and hence the Russian stereotypes thus continued that had started in the early fifteenth and sixteenth century (Golubev 2013: 56-57).

Cold war and the later periods left a negative perception of each other and therefore view each other with doubts. The Cold War period portrays the high level of distrust and detestation between Russia (Soviet Union) and United States of America. The competition that they share is very old one. It is a different fact altogether that after the end of the Cold war and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the two countries are not tough competitors due to many reasons and one being the loss of Russia's superpower status which it enjoyed during the Soviet period. The world has seen the rise of other powerful countries, thus making the world a multi-polar system rather than the earlier bi-polar one. However, Russia and United States have failed to be good allies. These two countries have some differences between them which are not prominent but act as a scar

in their relations. The past differences are no more present but because they were cold war enemies and competitors, the two countries are still not so fond of each other.

The West have also been interested in the former Soviet regions and this is not appreciated by Russia as even after the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia still feels that it has some kind of responsibility towards these regions. Both view each other's activities in these regions with suspicion. It is a different fact that these regions are in need of assistance with regard to their development and modernization but this does not give both the Western countries and Russia to be pompous towards these regions. The former Soviet regions have the right to exist independently but the activities of the West and Russia sometimes take no notice of this fact.

With regard to the image of Russia in the West and especially in the United States, it can be said that it is very negative. The Russians from the very early period have complained about the hostility and indifference of the West to Russia and its culture. They claim that the West do not understand their culture and have often viewed Russia from afar. They have not tried to comprehend the Russian culture in depth like they do with their own. Instead they have often judged Russian artists, writers and composers with stereotypes expecting the Russians to be 'Russians', that is to say their art are easily notable 'by the use of folk theme, by onion domes, the sound of bells and full of Russian soul' (Figs 2002: xxxi). Russia's culture is more diverse and rich and is not limited to the stereotypical image of Russia made by the West.

It is true that even Russia has a negative image of the West but with globalization and the rise of these Western countries, the Russian too have not been out of Western influence. The Gorbachev and the Yeltsin period have not been under much criticism of the West although these periods witnessed one of the most chaotic days of Russia, especially during the Yeltsin period. This is so because in both the periods Russia was more close to the West and was following the Western ideals to a very large extent. What Russia had to undergo after the disintegration explains the tragedy of Russia. However it was Putin who managed to take Russia out of this chaotic situation and made it stable to quite an extent. Russia cannot stay away from the influence of the West because it is a

largely accepted view that the West and especially the United States has a very strong soft power.

From Hollywood to Mc Donalds, United States have been very popular and have touched every aspect of people's life projecting the so-called 'American dream' to the millions of people of the world. The Western countries also claim to have strong political values and represent themselves as models of Democracy. America is known throughout the world for its commercial, rather than state-sponsored culture. By contrast, most Asian and European governments who support public funding of the arts and heritage see a role of the States in cultural relations as perfectly legitimate (Holden 2010). In the case of Russia too, we see a lot of involvement of State with regard to its public or cultural diplomacy for enhancing its soft power. However Nye believes that soft power does not belong to the government or the state in the same degree that hard power does, despite the fact that government policies at home and abroad are important source of soft power (Nye 2004: 29-33). The West also faces a lot of criticisms for the use of its hard power but the image of Russia as solely relying on hard power is a stereotype and the West is responsible for building a negative image of Russia.

Imperialism, Expansion and revanchism are commonly used terms by the West to construct a negative image of Russia (Taras 2013: 1). Valentina Feklyunina also talks about 'Russophobia' to explain Russia's identity in the international relations and how this topic has become significantly more pressing in the second term of Vladimir Putin's presidency. The murder in Moscow of a prominent critic of the Kremlin, journalist Anna Politkaya added to the negative image of Russia in the West and led to more criticism by the West on Russia (Feklyunina 2013: 615). Russia regards NATO as a Cold War construct and its 2010 military doctrine defines NATO's policies as the main 'external military danger' facing the Russian Federation (Sherr 2013: 63).

According to some, the image of Russia in the West is also determined by Russia's own self-perception. Russia's self image articulated by political elites is the vision of Russia as a great power. The aspiration to see Russia as a great power can explain at least to some extent why Putin's foreign policy became popular with the majority of Russians. Unlike during Yeltsin's time, Russia under Putin has been projected as a strong country,



as an independent centre of power in a multi-polar world (Feklyunina 2008: 619). Russia's soft power projections in the former Soviet regions have been criticized by the West as a propaganda tool against the Western countries' efforts to promote democracy and human rights and not as a reliable offer of cooperation with target countries (Cwiek-Karpowicz 2012: 5).

The Western media especially that of the United States acts as a hindrance in Russia's road to soft power. The degradation of the United States press or the media can be traced right from the period after the disintegration whereby the Western media projected the period to be a legitimate period where all the acts of Boris Yeltsin were justified in the name of transition from 'Communism to Democracy'. However on the other hand they portray the present period under Putin as illegitimate politics at home or abroad. The media has thus acted as a barrier in Russia's improvement of soft power image abroad because the United States hegemony is successful in projecting a negative image of Russia, which is taken at face value by some countries. Even during the Sochi Winter Olympics the Western media has been highly pessimistic about its results or anything related to it (Cohen 2014). Thus, the Western media have tried to obliterate the opportunity of Russia to improve its image and to promote its attractive culture. Russia's state controlled television channels reportedly enjoy greater popularity in Belarus and Moldova than the domestic television outlets of the same countries (Lankina and Niemczyk 2014). This can however act in favour of Russia's soft power, although a very limited by many problems as mentioned above.

Igor Yurgens, one of the former Russian president Medvedev's advisor, stated that Russia has not yet built an ideology like that of the Western ideology of democracy and post-industrial system, nor has it gone the other way like that of China and acquired which has become successful as the 'world factory' (Kreutz 2013). It is true that Russia needs to work on its political values in order to create a favourable environment of democracy as soft power cannot be achieved through control and force. The leaders of Russia first need to win the hearts of people at home and only then can they win support elsewhere. However it is also true that Russia can improve on its political values on its own capabilities. Professor Andrej Kreutz, European Geopolitical Forum (EGF) advisor for

Trans-Atlantic Security states that, he would not agree with the wide opinion that Russia can improve its situation by abiding by the Western values. He then further explains that Russia's image in the world and its soft power depends on the position of Russian Federation in the present international system. As the Russian Federation is not as powerful as the Soviet Union, its influence in the world is likely to be less too. Therefore it should also be seen that for improving on its image it would have to avoid unnecessary conflicts and tensions as that would only give rise to its negative image (ibid).

President Putin in his 2012 article, 'Russia and the Changing world', published in the Moscow Times news mentions about how, 'nobody should possess complete control over the sphere of human rights...no country has a perfect record on human rights and basic freedom'. Furthermore, he also mentions about how the Western states especially the United States has politicized and dominates the human rights agenda using it as a means to exert pressure (Putin 2012). Therefore from here, what one can deduct is how the Russian leadership is trying to create an alternative discourse on human rights; thus in a way form a different narrative of human rights forming an alternative image of Russia. Putin also mentions about how Russia has a great cultural heritage, which is recognized by both the West and other nations.

However, he also emphasises that they have made serious investments in their own culture and its promotion around the world. In 2011, the Russian Foreign Ministry had published its first report on human rights in other countries where to a certain extent there was emphasis on a broader and equitable cooperation. Putin emphasised that there is a rush in global interest, ideas and culture which has been sparked by globalization providing new opportunities for Russia also. Therefore Russia under Putin does emphasise on the need to raise the soft power image of Russia to the outside world and in doing so he stresses on factors such as Russian language, culture, international events and education, on the Eastern Europe region and other parts of the world as well (ibid).

Despite the tussle that goes between Russia and the West and the effect that it has had on the image of Russia and its soft power, it should be noted that for many in the West, Russian culture appears to be highly attractive. There are many ways in which Russia's culture still manages to appear attractive to these people and one such way is through

organizations such as Pushkin House in London. It was created in the year 1954 by a group of Russians. It was opened for facilitating and understanding of Russian culture by various nationalities and hence is open to all who have any kind of interest in its culture. Since then it has been working to promote Russian culture and indulge in activities that include art, poetry, literature, theatre, philosophy and politics. It also involves lectures, talks, shows and thus facilitates in the exchange of idea. It has now been functioning as a politically independent and registered charity that is owned and run by Pushkin House Trust. Through various sharing of ideas it becomes a channel of cultural exchange and a link between Russia and United Kingdom ([Pushkinhouse.org](http://Pushkinhouse.org)).

The Institute of Democracy and Cooperation in France becomes another example of the ways in which Russia attempts to improve its influence. It is a think-tank that has been funded by some private Russian donors and aims to further the debate on the relationship between state-sovereignty and human rights, about the East-West relations and the place of Russia in Europe as well as the activities of non-governmental organizations in political life. However the think tank is viewed as being conservative in outlook and its views on international affairs and human rights ([idc-europe.org](http://idc-europe.org)). It can be therefore seen that while Russia attempts to build its positive image abroad, its image in the West is often depicted as being traditional and narrow, especially with regard to human.

The celebration of Russian festival ‘Maslenitsa’, a celebration of end of winter and the beginning of spring, in United Kingdom would also help in spreading Russian culture and make the people in the country more aware of the Russian way of life. Apart from acting as a family event and entertaining the people through good music, food, crafts and celebration as a whole ([maslenitsa.co.uk](http://maslenitsa.co.uk)), it can further enhance Russia’s soft power by making the culture look more attractive to people. Thus, while the relation between Russia and the West is filled with conflicts, competition and misunderstandings, Russian culture through various organizations and events would help in easing the tension between them. This can be a positive step towards debunking the stereotypes that Russia has been associated with in the West as well in the world. Russia has to do take every step possible for improving its soft power potential as the present world has shown that as much as United States have used its hard power resources to secure hold over the world

but its 'hegemony' over most of the countries of the world has been because of its enormous reserves of soft power and so is the case with other successful countries (Kreutz 2013).

#### LIMITATIONS IN RUSSIA'S PROJECTION OF SOFT POWER

After the Soviet Union collapsed, a number of former Soviet States and mostly the Baltic regions articulated their interest towards West and also showed interest in cooperating with some of the Western organizations like NATO and European Union. The Russian Federation perceived this shift towards the West as a threat to its geopolitical power (Roslycky 2011:302). Russia's effort has been to attract these regions for the benefit of both. It is obvious that Russia's high-handedness is seen in most of the cases when dealing with these regions. This sometimes costs Russia dearly. Ukrainian society is divided into two main communities: the Ukrainians and the Russian-speaking population in broad terms. Ukraine's Russian speaking population are receptive to Russia's cultural influence and form a crucial target group for Russian soft power. Both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are efficient levers for Russian soft power. Russian embassy in Kyiv plays an important role in promoting Russian soft power. Since 2010, the Embassy has been organizing the so-called Embassy Evenings that among other cultural and political events are particularly influential (Lytvynenko 2013). In the year 2003, an agreement was made to create the Common Economic Space with Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, to eliminate trade barriers and to formulate shared energy transport policies. However, after the Orange Revolution, Ukraine distanced itself from the agreement but expressed interest in establishing a free trade area with Russia (Tsygankov 2006:1082).

The recent Crimean crisis is an ongoing crisis involving the control over Crimean peninsula which after February 2014 is being controlled by the Russian Federation. However the West and the United Nations has not recognized the inclusion of Crimea into Russia. The West can use it against Russia's soft power by portraying it as an aggression. As Russia's interest in the area of Soft power is just in its initial phases, it has to be very careful with the image that it is trying to build abroad. The Ukraine crisis that started with Kiev's protests in the Independence square that turned violent after the

government cracked down became an international issue with the occupation of Crimea by Russia. While the West might be adamant to use the word “annexation” with regard to Russia’s inclusion of Crimea into the Russian Federation, the Russians only believe it to be the will of the majority who voted to be with Russia in the referendum. The initial protestors in Ukraine were mostly from the Western part of the country but the Eastern and Southern part are closer to Russia and have strong bonds with it because of their deep roots in Russia that dates back not just to the Soviet period but to the time of Peter the Great (Kaplan 2014).

While the Russians and especially Putin might have a reliable explanation to their actions in the Crimean region, with the majority choosing to be with Russia as was expressed by the referendum, the fact still remains that it will and it has affected the soft power of Russia which is still in its initial phase. The impact of the Ukraine crisis might affect the economy of Russia severely with the sanctions being imposed by the West as well as the criticism and the disapproval of the G7 countries to cooperate in various issues. As soft power mostly relies on attraction, such activities will definitely pull down the image of Russia. Brain-drain is another factor that prevents the growth of a country’s soft power. With the Ukraine crisis affecting the economy due to the sanctions from the Western countries might lead to the Russia facing a problem of brain-drain, similar to what happened after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. According to the results of Russia Direct Quarterly, in the early 1990s, Russia lost between 60,000 to 80,000 scientists. Russia also faced the departure of the founder of “Russian Facebook” Mr Pavel Durov who left Russia and did not plan to return because of the presence of political pressure, censorship and the lack of opportunities to do business. While the brain-drain has been taking place even before the Ukraine crisis, the crisis situation might accelerate it (Koshkin 2014). This will be grave loss on part of Russia and will also result in the weakening of its soft power.

Apart from the impact of Ukraine crisis on the soft power of Russia there are activities on the other regions that have proved to be equally damaging to its image abroad. In Chechnya, the Kremlin’s policies remain heavily tilted towards building political and military control over the area, rather than developing its soft power capital (Tsygankov

2006: 1080). The relationship between Russian political system and its international prestige is no longer a favourable one. The urban middle classes of Russia have an impression that the ruling elites of Russia do not care about the interest of the country and this view is being shared by a significant section of Russia's partners and neighbours (Sherr 2013). The Russo-Georgian War tightened Russian policy toward its closest neighbours. The Kremlin decided to widen its influence in the CIS area by mobilizing loyal Constituencies living there despite the negative consequences that would result from such a policy (Cwiek-Karpowicz 2012: 7).

Russia may have some kind of justification to its actions in these regions but too much of indulgence in the old ways of using more hard power for economic and political interest will make the soft power capabilities of Russia very low compared to other emerging soft power countries. Russia's socio-economic model limits its capacity to act as a soft power in the post-Soviet area. Although Russia depends heavily upon its energy potential in building its soft power, its energy sector is very inefficient and needs enormous investments to maintain a high level of crude oil and natural gas production (ibid). In January 2009, Russia ceased the supply of natural gas to Ukraine which also affected energy supplies to Estonia and its economy (Conley *et al* 2011: 3). Russia's ways of dealing with things have only strained its relations with other countries, especially by being too much involved in the former Soviet regions. Estonia-Russia diplomatic ties were strained following the 2007 Bronze Night incident, which refers to the riots on the streets of the Estonian capital Tallinn, where a monument of Soviet time had been moved to a different place. The Estonian Russian community viewed the monument as representing the victory of Soviet Union but the ethnic Estonians perceived the statue as a symbol of soviet occupation (Conley *et al* 2011: 3-4).

The Magnitsky Act of 2012 passed by the United States congress and President Obama is a result of the death of Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky who died in the prison a year after he uncovered the fraud of almost 230 million dollars involving several Russian officials (Kraner and Shevtsova 2012). The death of Sergei Magnitsky has been cited by the official report as a result of heart attack but there are many who believe that the officials that were under Magnitsky investigation might have been involved in his death

(Magnitsky list, rbth.com). However the popular belief apart from the official reports remains that he was deprived of vital medical attention and was left to die in a Russian prison (Kraner and Shevtsova 2012). The Magnitsky act was therefore as a result of various discussions in the international circles about this whole issue. It started with the imposition of ban on Russian officials with regard to the access of visa to enter USA as well as the restrictions on their banking facilities. However, the act ultimately grew to include all people, under the ban who have been accused of human rights violations (Magnitsky list, rbth.com).

In response to the Magnitsky Act that hurt the Russia's soft power image abroad, Russia imposed ban on Americans from adopting Russian children. This ban is a part of the bill called 'Dima Yakolev Law', which is named after a twenty one year old child who died inside a car after his adoptive father left him inside the car alone for nine hours. The Russian lawmakers state that Dima Yakolev is one of the nineteen adopted Russian children who have died in US since the 1990s. However the critics of Kremlin as well as the Russian human rights committee have out rightly criticised the bill and accused the country of putting the future of children at stake for the sake of politics (Elder 2012). The Magnitsky incident and the resultant 'Act' has dealt a severe blow to Russia's image abroad. The Dima Yakolev law depriving the Americans from adopting children might have angered the Americans who genuinely are interested in adoption and are not involved with politics as such. This again adds to the image of Russia as being very rigid and restrictive even in the matters of human rights. The soft power of Russia comes under direct attack with regard to human rights violations and restrictions. The West never leaves a chance to criticize Russia in any matter and when it comes to human rights it becomes more valid. The bill passed by Russian State Duma to prevent the adoption of Russian orphans by gay married couples from other countries as well as single people from countries where gay marriage is legal on 18 June 2013 (Ponomareva 2013), becomes another matter of criticism by the West. It also hinders the growth of soft power of Russia that is now in a very vulnerable position with regard to such issues.

An interview with Mr Andrei Kortunov, General Director of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), and Miss Martina Lebedeva, Head of the department of World

Politics at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), highlighted the major problems that Russia faces with regard to its soft power. These included the instability of the Russian government and the need to resolve the internal problems. If a country is faced with a lot of domestic problems then it cannot project itself as an attractive country. It also highlighted the need for the government's effort to realize the value of soft power in the international relations, for which it needs to resort to such means that would rely on attraction and not force or hard power (Koshkin and Smertina 2014).

This can also be done through the help of institutes that Russia has opened in various countries, like the Rossotrudnichestvo and Russian Cultural Centres that will help promote Russia's culture and eventually its soft power. However, even by the end of 2011, Rossotrudnichestvo had not done a satisfactory job of increasing Russia's influence abroad. The appointment of Mr Konstantin Kosachev as the head of the Rossotrudnichestvo, has raised some hopes of improving the working of the as he has been associated with some form of professionalism and experience as a public figure (Shakirov 2013). Even though Russia has started to focus on its soft power capabilities, much has not been done to give it the significance it deserves. Konstantin Kosachev also mentions that Russia's potential to achieve soft power is very limited as compared to its competitors (ibid). Russia has not spent much on the funding of various organizations that help in promoting Russia's image abroad and this shows that the government has not viewed it as one of the top priorities of Russia's foreign policy. Surveys conducted on the non-governmental sectors of Russia in the year 2007 show that almost one fifth of NGOs in Russia have international and the same survey also reveals that the funding provided to these NGOs has not been up to the mark amounting to only six percent to thirteen percent of their budgets. However, the suggestion made by Putin in the year 2012 to increase the funding of NGOs from the state budget to an amount of three billion roubles, can be seen as a positive effort undertaken by him towards achieving Russia's soft power (ibid).

Another major problem that they highlighted was Russia's fear of the West, when they tend to view everything that involves the West, including soft power as the Western attempt to undermine Russian interests. It is true that the West have been an intruder in



the matters of Russia but such fear only prevents Russia from exploring the opportunities available. The stereotypes that have tagged along the Russian image across the globe also act as a hindrance in Russia attempt to project itself as an attractive country (Koshkin and Smertina 2014).

What Russia needs is to win the support and trust of its own people, especially the huge range of minorities that are present in Russia and amalgamate their culture and thus create a more pluralistic image of Russia. It can have a positive image in the world by placing equal importance to all the diverse ethnic groups and try to eliminate the fear from their mind. For this to achieve, Russia apart from being a strong country needs to follow a proper political value system that would give rights and freedom to the people and to safeguard their interest and simultaneously upholding the values of a Russian state. It would not be correct to say that Liberal democracy of the West the only solution for Russia to achieve the much needed change. It could however achieve success through other alternatives such as by cooperating with other BRICS( Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) members, it could come up with a 'new world order' that would respect democratic rights and market economy but also bring about sustainable development which is the need of the hour (Kreutz 2013).

#### SOCHI OLYMPICS: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RUSSIA

Any event related to sports or culture always helps in shaping a country's image. The player or the participant by winning honourable awards raises the name of their country. Olympics do that in a greater scale and especially is an opportunity for the hosting country to raise its image abroad and thus increase their soft power. Almost all the countries that have hosted the Olympics have tried their level best to bring about good results so that they raise their country's status in the world. Olympics have helped the countries in raising not just their image but also their economy because it is a way to advertise the country's tourism. In any way it is a great honour to host Olympics in a country. Russia had thus got the golden opportunity to make the most for their country. However with it also comes responsibilities and in the case of Russia it was huge mostly because of the internal conflicts and also because of the external factors in the international level. Only time can tell what benefit the Sochi Olympics has brought to

Russia as some effects can be felt only in the long run. However what Olympics could have served as a means to Russia's ends and how Russia was able to do justice is an interesting topic for understanding its soft power.

The Sochi Olympics was an important event in Russia. It was an opportunity to prove its worth and to build a better image. There were many challenges that appeared before Russia, domestic as well as international. Internationally Russia had to face the criticisms and hostility from the West as well as deal with the tag of negative image due to a number of reasons. The Sochi Olympics thus acted as a "Litmus test" to prove its importance and to fight against all odds through attraction and not coercion. With the investment of more than fifty dollars for hosting the Olympics and several countries choosing to boycott or refuse to participate in the Olympics for several reasons, there were huge discussions on it even before the commencement of the Olympics that whether all the investment and hard work is worth it. With Russia's negative image due to the hostility of the West, its firm position on the Syrian issue, the Ukraine crisis, restrictions on LGBT rights within Russia, the Russo-Georgian war and the Pussy riots controversy, it indeed was a chance for Russia to boost its soft power (Timofeev and Makhmutov 2013: 5-7).

Along with the honour of hosting the Winter Olympics, Russia has brought about infrastructural developments in Sochi. In a time period of approximately seven years, Russia has tried to upgrade almost all the parts of the city's infrastructure. With an average winter temperature of six degree Celsius and perfectly lodging between the Black sea and the Caucasus mountains, Sochi has often been a famous tourist spot for most of the Russians. However with the Winter Olympics, Sochi will be promoted as tourist destination place to the people beyond the borders of Russia. The public spending has mostly been on its infrastructure which has brought about drastic changes in the city. Even the Adler Thermal Power Plant (ATPP) has been on the priority list of developments which aimed for an increase in the regional supply of energy by two and a half times its earlier capacity. With the venue of the Olympics being in a vulnerable area of North Caucasus, a huge sum has been spent on the security issues during the Olympics. Russia's investments in the Sochi Olympics have been expected to raise the

investment from abroad and also raising the tourism of Sochi. All these will definitely add to the positive image of Russia thus making it attractive to others (Hartwell and Wilson 2013: 8-12).

The winter Olympics brought with it few essential constructions that would not have been possible had the country not got an opportunity to host the Winter Olympics in Sochi. Hence, the very fact that Russia won the bid to host the Olympics was a great achievement on part of Russia. It took Russia one step closer to success. They also got a chance of highlighting the rich Russian culture and the audience naturally have come to know Russia better than they used to. This gives a plus point to Russia's soft power which also relies on the awareness of the people and the Olympics have certainly highlighted Russia's attractiveness. This can have a positive effect on Russia's image in the long run. However the short term achievements that came with the Olympics, which are visible to the eye, are the various constructions including the construction of the new beltway that has helped in reducing the traffic jam in the city, a new airport and awesome public transformation. The wheel chair ramps, tactile paving for the blind have been few attractive features that Russia definitely acquired (Luhn 2014).

The image of Russia has always been tarnished by the rise of corruption level. The corruption levels started increasing in the aftermath of the disintegration at a very high pace and since then it has been present in Russia. This has made Russia a highly unattractive country for undertaking business or making any kind of investments. With the expenditure level in Sochi Olympics being very high, even spending more than 50 billion dollars, some kind of corruption was bound to take place. There have been criticisms coming from the foreign press on the amount of money spent on the Olympics. One of the opposition leaders Alexei Navalny also criticized the extravagant expenditure that the Russian government spent on the Olympics. He said that the amount spent on the construction of some of the venues was twice as much as was necessary to build. It is also believed that companies belonging to the close friends of President Putin like Mr Arkady Rotenberg were awarded at least 7.4 billion dollars of Olympics contracts (ibid).

The resolution of the Federal Anti-Monopoly service and the Sochi Administration in accordance with the government instructions to reduce the transport price for the

passengers was also a good decision on part of the government to attract more audience (Federal Anti-Monopoly Service, Russian Government 2013). However one of the key features of the Winter Olympics in Sochi that would help in boosting the image of Russia is through the Paralympics team of Russia. Although the Paralympics movement in Russia began in 1996 while the countries like United States had started it in 1950s, it is a great achievement on part of Russia. Paralympics have often proved to improve the situation for disabled people in the host countries and it also shows the inclusiveness of the country leading to their greater integration into the society. The introduction of Paralympics in the Olympics reduces the psychological gap between the differently-abled participants and the other participants and making it more all-encompassing. China's experience in this regard also has been quite a remarkable one (Boyko 2013: 23-24).

## CONCLUSION

Soft Power as described by Joseph Nye, who coined this term, is 'the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment' (Nye 2008: 95). This is the basic premise on which the Soft power is believed to work successfully. It is true that Russian case doesn't quite fit into the scenario of soft power created by Joseph Nye as has been often asserted by him, this however does not entail that Russia does not have soft power at all. There are many instances as mentioned above which show that there is a lot that Russia needs to do in order to raise its soft power capabilities. Russia should also keep in mind that soft power purely relies on its ability to attract and not intimidate other countries. However Russia also needs to make its ambit of soft power wider as instead of winning people over who do not share Russia's foreign principles and goals, the country seeks to mobilize those who already agree with them (Cwiek-Karpowicz 2012: 9).

Russia has often been seen as a country that relies mostly on its hard power tactics. It has also been seen as a country where democratic values are very low with lack of proper freedom of speech or expression. Russia has also been stereotyped as being involved mostly in espionage and nefarious activities as often portrayed through Hollywood movies and the Western press. This also proves the fact that while the negative image attached to Russia might be to some extent because of its own hard power pursuits but a

lot is dependent on the way the West has portrayed it. The Western supremacy has always kept Russia at a disadvantage with regard to its global ambitions.

While it may be true that the West have acted as hindrance in its making of a positive image, Russia can do a lot on itself to fight against such negative portrayals or stereotypes by projecting to the world its reliance on soft power. Like any other country it also has its ambitions of emerging as a regional power if not a global power at this moment and this ambition makes every country sometimes resort to shortcut means to success, which only diminishes the country's reputation in the world. According to Transparency International, Russia is more corrupt than the six Eastern Partnership states. It also has rule of law and media freedom ranking 163 and 140 in the world respectively (Cwiek-Karpowicz 2012: 8-9). As compared to other countries, Russia has to face more challenges with regard to improving its soft power image abroad because of the already tarnished image.

The soft power that the Soviet Union possessed started to decline because of the decline of socialist ideology and waning away of its true principles that ultimately led to de-ideologization. With de-ideologization, after the disintegration came the decline of Russia's soft power capabilities. The Yeltsin government could not bring its earlier image of attraction where some countries looked up to it as a model to be followed. However it was Putin who brought Russia to a stable condition if not its earlier status. It is true that its ideology was indeed its great asset but it is also true that it has lost it. Russia already has chosen a different path and now it should try to get back the old pride through new ways, by keeping pace with the present world affairs.

It is only recently that Russia under Putin has decided to go softer and therefore the value of soft power has been emphasised in the country's official Foreign Policy Concept 2013. Realizing the fact that too much of reliance on hard power in the present century will not bear Russia the desired fruits, Putin has tried to bring about a careful and adept amalgamation of both hard power and soft power. Putin has therefore tried to champion the game of 'Smart Power' (Lankina and Niemczyk 2014).

It is true that Russia's soft power is very little as compared to the other countries that have started to emerge as champions of soft power in recent times. It would be wrong to say that Russia has immense amount of soft power or to say it does not have at all. What is more significant is to bring forth the other side of Russia. While the world only knows Russia more as a hard power oriented country or as a very unyielding or outdated country, as according to its stereotypical image, there is a softer side of Russia amidst its tough sides. This soft side of Russia has not been highlighted much by both the Russians themselves as well the other countries who cannot come out of the clouds of Cold war. By including soft power as a part of Russia's foreign policy objectives, Putin has started the process of being a powerful country again but this time not solely relying on hard power.

Even after raising the importance of soft power by Putin, Russia has not been quite effective in building its soft power capabilities due to a number of factors, both internal and external. The Ukraine crisis has certainly affected the image of Russia abroad even if the intentions of the Russians may be justified to some extent. However, the fact that the majority of the Crimean voted to be with Russia is again an indicator that Russia's focus on the former Soviet regions for improving its soft power has been successful in the case of few regions. Russia should definitely keep up the effort of improving their soft power which it can easily do through its rich culture, by reaching out to the former Soviet regions not as a 'big bully' but through aid and support; by having a stable government and a healthy political environment suitable for Russia.

There is also a need for increasing the parameters of soft power. By viewing a country's soft power through the lens of just Western principles will not be fair on part of the other countries that might have rich sources of soft power but the present definition of soft power is too narrow to include all those. The present world needs the use of both soft and hard powers, although by focussing more on soft power, the world will be a peaceful place. Earlier wars among various countries and regions seemed to be inevitable but the present world shows through various examples that a country can achieve more through its power to 'attract rather than coerce'.

## CONCLUSION

Russia from its earliest times till today has always been a mysterious country and these mysteries have added to the misunderstandings and misconceptions that people have about this place. . Perhaps Winston Churchill had thoughtfully used the words for describing Soviet Union that it is a ‘... puzzle inside a riddle, wrapped in an enigma...’. Whether it in the case of Soviet or the post-Soviet Russia, there is more to it than what people of various countries think it is. The connection of Russia with force, coercion on part of the rulers and its wilderness has been known to all but amidst the rough edges of Russia and its cold weather lie one of the most warm hearted people who care less about tomorrow and more about present. Russia then appears to people as a country of extremes where the incongruity is seen how in the same nation there is seen the richness of culture and the beautiful endowment of the people seen in their ‘artistic originality’ and yet still it is seen as a country that mostly been ruled by a strong ruler (Sixsmith 2012).

A comparison of soft power in the Soviet and post-Soviet Russia brings many key areas of interest to the forefront. By this comparison we not only get to compare these two periods but a kind of continuation can also be seen from the Soviet to the post-Soviet period. While it is true that both these periods have witnessed an involvement of hard power strategies, the chapters in this research have tried to highlight the interplay of soft power along with hard power. This attempts to disregard the fact that Russia right from the early historical times has been associated with hard practices. This research therefore has tried to show that soft power is not subjected to one form of interpretation but has to be more inclusive. That is to say that if Joseph Nye, the founder of ‘Soft Power’ believes that soft power is a ‘power of attraction’ and not involving ‘force’ or ‘coercion’ then through the chapters of this dissertation there is an unveiling of Russia in both the periods, against its usual negative projection.

A comparison of both Soviet and post-Soviet Russia helps in better understanding of the matter with which the research is concerned. Here, by comparing both the periods, we get some kind of link between the two periods which shows how the soft power of Russia has evolved over a period of time. This link between the two periods is the ‘socialist

ideology' that governed Soviet Union till its downfall in the year 1991. Although the ideology collapsed leading to the creation of New Russia was formed along with the Commonwealth of independent States, socialist ideology can still be seen as a link between the soft powers of both the periods.

This is explained in chapter two whereby the chapter tries to show that the disintegration and de-ideologization hampered the soft power of New Russia. However the chapter mostly deals with the reasons for the decline of soft power in Russia after the disintegration. The main reason for the decline is argued as the decline of the true socialist principles that made the Soviet Union weak to its core. The degradation of the socialist ideology from the Stalin period till the Gorbachev period and lastly the rise of Yeltsin resulting into disintegration and de-ideologization, made Russia suffer a period of loss, confusion and chaos. This was the period where Russia's soft power began to decline as its global image also became highly negative.

Therefore the second chapter acts as a bridge that connects chapter two that deals with Soviet soft power and chapter four that deals with Russia's soft power after the rise of President Vladimir Putin. The discussion on Soviet Union's soft power mostly focuses on 'socialist realism', which is a form of art that highlights the role of socialist ideology in the form of paintings, literature, architecture, and cinema and so on and so forth. The chapter focuses solely on socialist realism but this is not to suggest that there are no other factors that affected the soft power of Soviet Union but to highlight the importance of 'socialist ideology' that penetrated all the aspects of Soviet life. Chapter one therefore clearly discusses about the far reaching effects of socialist realism.

The two main hypotheses of the research are tested through chapters one and two. Chapter three basically deals with Russia's resurgence of soft power after the rise of Putin. It examines the role of Putin in making a comeback of Russia with an emphasis on soft power in his second term. As Russia's soft power mainly lies in its former Soviet regions, the chapter basically discusses how it has tried to champion the cause of soft power in most of these regions and it also discusses the limitations to it. It also focuses on the recent development such as the Sochi Winter Olympics and the Crimean crisis briefly



and discusses how the factors have acted as a source of soft power and how it has failed to do so in many respects.

While much cannot be talked about these recent developments, the chapter leaves the room for further discussion as the present Russia is still building upon with its soft power. It should be noted that all the three core chapters have focussed on the role of West, which has mostly acted as a hindrance to Russia's road to success, especially with regard to its soft power. In this regard, through the help of these chapters, the research also tries to argue that soft power as a concept itself is limited, in the sense that it is mostly Western or United States centric. This is explained further in chapter one, that is the introduction of this research, whereby it argues that although the research uses Joseph Nye's notion of soft power but it has deviated from it whenever the need has arisen to widen the ambit of soft power and to understand Russia's soft power in both the periods.

The main purpose of this research has been to understand the Western centric soft power in the context of Russia. As Joseph Nye has explained, 'soft power is a power to make others want what you want through the power of attraction and persuasion rather than coercion', Russia in both the periods has witnessed such attractions at some point of time. Therefore the main argument of this research is not to prove that Russia has immense soft power capabilities or that its soft power is greater than other countries'. In fact the whole argument does not rely on the comparison between Russia's soft power and that of West. The argument of this research is that Russia is different in its own ways and by applying western notion of soft power, the result is bound to be faulty.

If we view Russia's soft power in terms of the Western standards, then Russia will definitely not fit into those standards. It is true that both Soviet and post-Soviet Russia have indulged in activities that affect their image abroad. It is also true that the soft power of Russia in both the periods is quite less compared to many countries. However what the argument of this research seeks to show is that this itself is a very problematic statement as a country like Russia is unique in its own ways and its soft power cannot be measures through standards that are mostly western centric. The research therefore calls for a need to broaden the ambit of soft power, and therefore a country like Russia can also get the credit of exploring its soft power capabilities more explicitly. If soft power is about

attraction without coercion then both Soviet and post-Soviet period have shown various such attractions and have even benefitted from these attractions.

## TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Chapter one has shed light on the soft power during the Soviet period with the help of a concept known as socialist realism, a form of art that highlights the role of socialist ideology and the emancipation of the working class through literature, painting, cinema and architecture. The main purpose of the chapter has been the testing of the hypothesis, 'Socialist Realism in Soviet art, literature and culture reflecting in society promoted its positive soft power.' Socialist realism through its unique style managed to act as one of the important sources of soft power. It is true that socialist realism had mainly used by the State to express the Soviet socialist ideology in the form of art, poetry, architecture and literature. This therefore appeared to many as a mere propaganda of Soviet Union. Despite the criticisms arising mainly from the Western countries, chapter two has managed to bring out various instances whereby socialist realism has championed the cause of attracting various countries and their people. Whether it was through socialist realism or any other aspects of Soviet Union, it was mostly 'socialist ideology' that was the main source of attraction.

Chapter two takes the role of socialist ideology further wherein it mainly revolves around the hypothesis, 'Soviet disintegration and de-ideolisation of state resulted in the weakening of Russia's soft power abroad.' The complete de-ideolization process began only after the disintegration of the Soviet Union but the decline of its true principles began right from the death of Lenin. It would be a half-hearted statement to state that Stalin was solely responsible for the downfall of both Soviet Union and socialism but it was under him that the true principles of socialist ideology started losing their grounds. Socialism was twisted as and when required by him and so the infamous 'Gulag' days and Stalin's other terrorizing massacre of human lives, as well as the neglect of the proletarian class speak out for themselves as to how Soviet Union had started to divert from its earlier purpose of equality and worker's emancipation. From then on, began the degradation of the socialist principles and continued until the Soviet Union crumbled to its core.

Over bureaucratization, rigidity or over emphasis on militarization and coercion made the Soviet Union lose its path to equality and as an alternative to the oppressive exploitation of capitalism of the West. However the problem of Soviet Union lay in the system and not in the ideology as against how the West often portrays it to the world. The problem does not solely rely on the way the 'other' perceived it because Soviet Russia was itself in a certain way getting engulfed by the criticisms of its own misdoings. When Lenin and Trotsky headed the October Revolution, it came as a shock to many countries because this was not how Marx had believed it to be. Russia was neither totally industrialized nor a capitalist country which was required for a proper Proletarian Revolution. However the revolution totally thundered in a way that marked a new beginning for Marxism-Leninism to flourish in Russia. The world looked at it with amazement and the revolution itself was an attraction to some countries as it ended the tyrannous Tsarist rule. It brought a ray of hope for the oppressed classes.

Marxism in the form of Marxism-Leninism carried forward by leaders such as Lenin, Trotsky and others, with the support of the masses including the workers class, was indeed viewed as a powerful agent of change by many countries of the world. However the vigour and true essence of the movement after giving birth to Soviet Union was short-lived and with the rise of Stalin it started taking a different form. It is unknown to everyone what course Soviet Russia would have taken if not the Stalin way but what is known to everyone is that the weakening of the ideology which 'attracted' so many began with the 'inhuman' face of socialism as rightly expressed by Randhir Singh (year).

Stalin's successors even if they did not continue with 'Stalinization' program, they could not evolve above the system that was running faultily. Instead the threads were beginning to go lose and the ties with the allies of Soviet Union began to weaken. Under Khrushchev, China began to go farther away from Soviet Russia because the de-Stalinization process was not taken positively by Mao as well as the deviation of Soviet Union from true socialist principles and Soviet Russia's growing ties with West was not well received by China. With the reforms of Gorbachev in the later Soviet period, there was a move towards a capitalist way of life and socialism gradually began to lose its ground. With the rise of Yeltsin socialism became lost into oblivion. However what the

West and the so called reformers of Russia or Soviet Union did not realize is the fact that the root of the problem was not the ideology. The present Russia is without an ideology but this does not guarantee a problem free Russia. As Singh (2011) has mentioned that with the rise of Capitalist values in the later Soviet Union and in New Russia, corruption and a culture of 'drugs, pornography' and all kinds of malevolent activities became rampant.

The greatest fear and competition of the West was removed with the removal of the socialist ideology of the Soviet Union. It is true that it had its own flaws right from the beginning but it was not the ideology that polluted Soviet Union. It was rather an alternative to the Western capitalism and with de-ideolization, the demise of the 'Opposition' became certain. New Russia was not any better without the ideology but the reformers were too late to understand this fact.

#### ANNOTATIONS

It is too early to predict about the soft power potential of present Russia because it has recently recovered from its massive failure. With the rise of Putin there has been some kind of economic and political stability achieved although with much caveats. Russia now is without an 'ideology' that earlier defined Soviet Union. This is perhaps one of the most significant difference in the 'soft power' capability of Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. The main purpose of this research was to highlight the importance of two important hypotheses as mentioned earlier, which have been tested through chapter two and three.

Nevertheless Russia has the potential to become a champion of soft power because of its rich culture and the 'influence' it still enjoys over most of its former Soviet regions. However it should be noted that it is 'influence' that Russia should focus on with the help of its various policies and obviously by projecting itself as an attractive country and providing the former Soviet regions with opportunities. Russia has been focussing on such activities through the help of various institution and organizations such as the 'Rossotrudnichestvo' and 'Ruskiy Mir'. Lately with President Putin's inclusion of soft power in Russia's foreign policy, a hope of Russia going the softer way has arisen among

many. It can be seen that Russia's soft power mostly relies on its relations with the former Soviet regions. While it is true that Russia's influence is more recognized on these regions, the relationship with these regions is also quite vulnerable to fractures because of the constant interference of the West.

While the greatest fear of West with regard to the soft power of the Soviet Union was its socialist ideology, which through many reasons faced a tragic demise, the fear of West now with present Russia is its relations with the former Soviet regions. Whether it is for the cause of Democracy or safeguarding the interest of these regions, the pretexts that West have used clearly does not hide its interest in these regions against Russia. Hence, Russia's every act in these regions will face a major consequence if not handled properly. While hard power strategies may bring Russia fruitful results but it won't 'win the hearts and minds' of the people, as the basic explanation of soft power by Joseph Nye (2004) goes. If Russia's soft power in these regions continues to grow, it need not bind them with strict measures or boundaries; those boundaries start becoming porous as people will be attracted naturally. Soft power may be a slow process for Russia to gain the possible results it expects but it will be a long lasting one. Moreover by making its image positive in this region, Russia's global image will also gradually become a positive one.

Whereas the soft power of Soviet Union had a wider ambit and it was felt globally, present Russia has not been able to increase its scope of soft power. It can perhaps be because the Soviet Russia was a second super power nation and its influence was felt in many parts of the world including the socialist as well as some non socialist countries. The fact that Russia has not been able to increase its scope of soft power is because after the disintegration it had to restructure itself and only after coming to a stable condition, economically and politically, could Russia think of building its lost cultural foundations. While Russia was busy regaining its lost ground, the world had completely moved way ahead of it. The soft power of West has a wider dimension because it is more of a hegemony that the West enjoys globally.

It is true that socialist ideology was one of the main sources of Soviet attraction but after the disintegration there is no question of Russia enjoying it as a source of soft power. However it should also be noted that the attraction of Soviet Union was mostly restricted

to its ideology as a single source of soft power, although expressed in different forms. When the principles of ideology started declining, the ideology started losing its ground and with de-ideolization Soviet Russia lost its major tool of influence. What the country needed was a reform of the system from the earliest times and the need to connect with the masses and not with that it would not have to do away with the Socialist ideology. There was a need of changes in the way ideology had started to function. Russia after the disintegration and de-ideolization therefore suffered a great loss and there is still a vacuum which has not been filled.

The new market oriented capitalist model had its own negative impacts on Russia's economy, the details of which have not been covered in this research, and it has not worked as a wondrous source of soft power. Nevertheless what can be noted is that despite the fact that present Russia has no ideology, it can look into more opportunities. It has wider options available and through various mechanisms and institutions it can make its soft power even more wide ranging or far reaching.

It can also be noted that soft power in both Soviet and post-Soviet period is not very vivid and vibrant as compared to that of the United States in particular. There is not much of an assertion of soft power seen in Russia. However Soviet ideology was deeply penetrated into all the aspects of Soviet life, whether it was economic, social, political and cultural. It was the ideology that governed each of these aspects. It had its own style, taste and although the central authority of the state made it less independent, it still managed to make Soviet Union the 'other' superpower and an attractive nation. In terms of its soft power, Soviet Union had far reaching goals. It can also be said that even if many a times the Soviet indulged in propaganda activities, there were certain aspects of it which touched millions of hearts across the world.

Through the various examples of socialist realist literature, paintings, architecture, cinema, the Soviet Union managed to have an influence that was not expected of from the Western countries as they continue to regard it as a dull and lifeless form of art that controlled the minds of the people. While it is true that socialist realism was mainly a tool of promoting the socialist ideology, in its process of doing so, it formed a different kind of 'art' with a different taste and this is the reason why countries like China, Cuba,

Germany, India and even Afghanistan were influenced by it. The Western countries like the United States would naturally not see socialist realism as a source of attraction as it highlighted 'socialism' that went against their capitalist and market oriented ideology.

Therefore it becomes interesting to look at socialist realism from a different angle other than the regular notion of it being a mere tool at the hands of the State. Socialist ideology in the form of socialist realism is therefore significant as it can be seen as a source of Soviet attraction or soft power even though it involves the State which defies Nye's notion of soft power, that does not quite take into account the kind of attraction that a State centric socialist realism could possess, even though it was described as being less vibrant or lifeless.

On similar lines present Russia does not have a very appealing soft power like most of the Western countries possess but the whole idea that a country like Russia, that is usually associated with hard power cannot have soft power is a very problematic viewpoint. This is so because in the game of international relations, each and every country indulges in 'hard power' at some point of time but because of Russia's unpleasant past of disintegration and disastrous consequences that followed, it cannot be denied of that what it deserves. However, on the other hand it should be noted that 'soft power' is all about 'attraction' and appeal by softer means and not through coercion. Soviet Union had immense soft power capabilities but as Nye has pointed out in many of his works that it disappeared with the increase in the military and coercive activities of the State.

While it is true that Nye's idea of soft power does not quite fit into other countries other than the Western countries and is United States centric in many ways, it is equally true that the basic notion of soft power relies on 'attraction' and 'persuasion' and not 'coercion', and this remains true for all the countries. By deciding to make soft power as one of the foreign policy goals of Russia, Putin has opened the window to acquiring soft power. However, as compared to other developing countries that have recently been rising as the champion of soft power, Russia still needs to learn a lesson on the importance of soft power as well has a lot to do to increase its soft power capabilities. Its priorities should go beyond 'hard power' and Russia's culture and institutions that

promote Russia's positive image should be made one of the top priorities of Russia. Russia has gone a step further by making soft power as one of the goals to be achieved in its foreign policy objectives but it should also be noted that while soft power is mostly seen in a country's foreign affairs, it generally evolves from a good domestic situation and policies.

During the Soviet period, Soviet attraction was also built through the Soviet aid that it provided to the Third World countries. Similarly Russia's decision to supply fund and aid to various countries will be a major step towards achieving its goals. Russia also needs to build on its political values, even if it does not mean to follow the Western standards of political values, it still can follow its own pattern that will suit the interest of Russia and its people. The key to Russia's soft power growth lies in how the people view their country and their contribution. By trying to resolve the domestic problems and not underestimating the role of its citizens, Russia can indeed emerge as a strong country which cannot be broken by outsiders.

While it is true that everything that comes from the West is not always against Russia's interests, the fear that Russia holds right from the Cold war days is justifiable considering the various activities of the West in the past that have been against the Russian interest. It is also true that a country like Russia that is different from the West in many aspects, has the right to its own way as long as that way brings a healthy environment for political, cultural, social, and economic situation. As long as Russia tries to balance its use of hard power and soft power; as long as it fights for a better system that is free from corruption, injustice and as long as it safeguards the interest of its people, there is no need for Russia to imitate the Western notions of political values that the West have set for the whole world to follow.

The new generation does not solely rely on any one aspect of 'power' and as many theorists believe power cannot be viewed from only one angle. Therefore the new world order seeks to rely on the use of 'smart power' which is a combination of both hard and soft power. It is a very feasible that would even appear realistic to follow. However an emphasis on the combination of hard and soft power fails to fully appreciate the role of



soft power. Soft power is achieved subtly and is not discernible as hard power but in the longer run it soft power that will bring a country a more durable result.

The legacy of Soviet soft power cannot be revived in present Russia as the 'ideology' no longer dominates the country but it can still borrow from the past the 'art' of projecting itself to the world, by focussing on those aspects of Soviet Union that relied on softer means in building an attractive image. Russia might not be as coercive as the Stalinist coercion, which was out in the open but again it is because the whole world has also changed. It is the changing time that demands for an alternative to hard power as and when necessary. Relying mostly on hard power will not function in these new complex international relations where there is a rise of multiple players which make the game of power a little more than just hard power. There are coercive activities taking place in present Russia and the other countries of the world but are not explicit as the case of 'Gulags' or the concentration camps but still people suffer and die. This is where the need for a softer way arises, which fetches the countries their desired results but through influence and peaceful means.

Socialism gave more impetus to State control and many a times misused that power of the central authority in Soviet Russia by suppressing the opposition and making the common masses suffer. The West has also not left any stones unturned in portraying socialism or Communism as an 'evil'. However, although the capitalist model offered by the West gives more freedom to its people and aids in the growth of individual rights and private property, it breeds inequality along with it and thus the gap between the rich and poor keeps increasing. This becomes one of the worst crimes against humanity. While it is true that Russia cannot escape the new 'market economy' or capitalism as such, it still can rely on soft power more so as to lessen the burden of hard power.

To come to a conclusion about present Russia's soft power capabilities would not be easy as it is gradually evolving and whether it will surpass the Soviet days' attraction or will fail to do so is just a matter of time and the course that Russia decides to take. While it is true that it does not possess the socialist ideology that the earlier Soviet Union enjoyed, it still enjoys some kind of State-promoted ideology that rests on various sources of attraction be it in the present economic and political attraction for migrants coming to

Russia in search of better opportunities or in the nostalgia for the Soviet past and cultural attraction. What Russia however lacks is legitimacy and moral and political values, which it has to overcome and the sooner it is, the better it is for Russia's global soft power image (Lankina and Niemczyk 2014).

However this does not prove that Russia's soft power is fraught with tensions and problems alone and that there is room for improvement for Russia. Even majority of the Western countries boast about their political and moral values at home but their actions abroad are not quite in tune with their beliefs. However there is a need to rely more on soft power policies in a world that is now involving more number of players involving a lot of common people. An interview of Andrei Kortunov with Russia Direct correspondents suggests that for improving Russia's global image, there is a need for raising the level of professionalism and increasing the role of public diplomacy (Koshkin and Smertina 2014).

Russia has ahead of it a lot of opportunities and at the same time it has 'Soviet past' as an example and experience for learning as well as brushing aside the mistakes made in the earlier Soviet Union. Hence, the research has been an attempt to problematize Joseph Nye's soft power that appears to be more Western centric and does not take into consideration countries such as Russia and China as he regards them as being more of state centric. While it is true that these two countries do not have the notion of political values as addressed by Nye, yet Russia does and has tried to improve its soft power through numerous means and measures which have been elaborated in my research.

#### FUTURE TRENDS FOR RUSSIA

Through the comparative nature of this research, Russia's future trends can be outlined systematically as the Soviet period can be counted as an experience for present Russia to build up on its soft power. Present Russia although very different from the Soviet period, is still in many ways attached to its past. This can be seen in the way Putin stresses on historical unity and tries to bring out nostalgia of Soviet period in Russia. It is true that after the disintegration Russia lost its ideology and with it there came about a decline of Russia's soft power. However Russia has not lost it all. In fact it has the advantage of the

past experience and by learning from the past success as well as failure stories; it can even evolve to be a champion of soft power. Over militarization and bureaucratization in the Soviet period led to the decay of the true principles of socialist ideology which otherwise would have been its greatest gift to humanity but it eventually led to disintegration. With disintegration and de-ideologization came the decline of its soft power.

However, it has managed to come out of that phase and has now recently been focussing on soft power as a tool to achieve success. In today world, soft power is even more relevant than during the Soviet period. Russia by learning from its past inaccuracies as well as from the great achievements of Soviet Union can be at an even better platform to emerge as an attractive country. Soviet Union was highly attractive to many countries through its achievements in science and technology, sometimes even surpassing the United States. It was popular among the Third World regions because of the support it provided to these countries through development aid and other assistance. Present day Russia should also increase its support to the developing countries and should be in favour of the countries that are used as tools for achieving success by the developed countries; it should refrain from being one of those.

The present world wins not through battles but through soft power which can also be translated as hegemony. Russia from the earliest times had its own cosmopolitan culture which has been appropriated by other countries as well. Russia as it has emerged from the post-communist trauma phase; it can take up the values of the past that were present earlier and deemed as a Russian form of cosmopolitanism. This does not suggest that Russia should try to imitate the Western values but it definitely suggests that Russia in itself has 'liberal' values which need to be brought to the forefront. However it should also be noted that all that arises from West is not always bad or against Russian interest. It is a different fact altogether that there are gaps between theory and practice even in the context of the Western countries. Nevertheless it is necessary for Russia to increase its contact with the masses and to reach out to their needs. Russia in order to improve its image in the world should try to firstly win the support of its own people by making them feel as an integral part of the country. This should however include all the citizens of

Russia. It should be all inclusive and in fact the leaders should try to win the support of those sections of the people who already feel alienated. By trying to control them through force or coercion, they will be further alienated from the rest of the population and the Russian state. It should also take into consideration the matter of human rights as a universal concept and not just as a monopoly of the West.

Russia needs to put more effort in building its soft power. The soft power of United States is cemented deeply into the minds of the masses and this makes them reflexively attracted to the country. It therefore has truly managed to 'hegemonise' the people and the countries. However even the West and United States in particular have not escaped from the fact that wherever and whenever they have used more of hard power, their attraction has also decreased accordingly. Russia is no exception and in fact it needs to improve its image in the world for which it requires soft power. It firstly needs to invest more in the various cultural institutions as well as other institutions that help in promoting its soft power abroad.

It also should encourage more of Russian festivals promoting its culture as well as Russian film festivals in various countries. Soviet cinema and literature were an important means to achieve its soft power as it is an important source of capturing the minds of the people. Russia then should also promote its literature and cinema and the State can translate Russian books in various other languages and sell it the non-Russian speaking public at large. However, Russian language has been an important aspect of Russia's soft power especially in the former Soviet countries but it should also promote it elsewhere in the world. Therefore it should concentrate on opening of various language institutions that are people friendly and are not very exorbitant. Furthermore events such as the 'Sochi Olympics' help in boosting its positive image abroad. Therefore it should focus on improving the sporting prowess which it was known for in the past and it should be re-ignited in present Russia too.

Overall, Russia should try to break away from its hard power image and bring forth what it is capable of through soft power. The world has entered a phase when the competition between countries does not just involve the States, where one could win through battles and force; the present world has moved towards a phase in which there are important

players or actors other than the State that help build power relations among countries. The countries of the present world involve 'the people' and their consent matters more than earlier periods. It is therefore important to respect and value them if a country wants to acquire stability. Russia therefore has to focus more on its soft power than its hard power. Through soft power it can rise and win the confidence of the people and various countries, which hard power alone will not be able to do. For a country to achieve soft power it should keep in pace with the changing needs and demands of the people and therefore an effort should be put to meet those expectations through various sources of its soft power. Russia has immense soft power capabilities that of course have been polluted through the various stereotypes that are associated with it. It is time now to burst all the clouds of doubts and emerge as a champion of soft power.

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