

**DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AND  
INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN KYRGYZSTAN:  
1991-1998**

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

**SUSHANTA KUMAR ROUT**

**CENTRE FOR RUSSIAN, CENTRAL ASIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI - 110067  
INDIA  
1999**



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**  
NEW DELHI-110067

**CENTRE FOR RUSSIAN, CENTRAL ASIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES**  
**SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

23rd MARCH, 1999

**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN KYRGYZSTAN: 1991-1998**" submitted by **Sushanta Kumar Rout** in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university to the best of our knowledge and this is his bonafide work.

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

  
**Prof Shams-Ud-Din**

**CHAIRPERSON**

  
**Dr. Ajay Kumar Patnaik**

**SUPERVISOR**

***DEDICATED TO ...***

**MY PARENTS**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all I express my profound gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Ajay Kumar Patnaik who was a constant inspiration for me to take my dissertation to logical conclusion and submit to the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University. His deep insight on the subject and sustained guidance throughout the course of my research with his constructive and priceless remarks enabled me to complete this work successfully. I am also thankful to all the professors and faculty members of Centre for Russian, Central Asian and East European Studies for their valuable suggestions, encouragement and advice.

My special thanks to the staff and members of Jawaharlal Nehru University Library and I.D.S.A., whose valuable co-operation made my research really enjoyable.

I also extend my heartily felicitations to my friends, A.M. Patil, Sartik Bhai, Ananta Bhai, Duryodhan (D.K.), Banwari, Asheel, Ambed, Gupteswar, Harish, Nilu, Deepak, Raisa, Sabana, Sumitra, Sakuntala, Sarojini, Sushma, Prasanta, Jibanta and Sabita for giving me a constant inspiration and moral courage during my course of work.

Last but not the least, I owe my thanks to Manoj and Pushkar (Sanjay Photostat, SIS/JNU) for typing my dissertation, without whose support this dissertation would not have completed within the stipulated time.

*Sushanta Kumar Rout*  
**SUSHANTA KUMAR ROUT**



## CONTENTS

		<u>Page No.</u>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>		
<b>CHAPTER I</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>	1-15
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	<b>KYRGYZSTAN UNDER SOVIET RULE . . . . .</b>	16-40
<b>CHAPTER III</b>	<b>INDEPENDENCE OF KYRGYZSTAN AND THE SOURCES OF INTER-ETHNIC TENSIONS . . . . .</b>	41-60
<b>CHAPTER IV</b>	<b>DEMOCRACY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESSES . . . . .</b>	61-85
<b>CHAPTER V</b>	<b>CONCLUSION . . . . .</b>	86-95
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .</b>		96-103

**CHAPTER-I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

Democracy is a concept which is an expression of right, liberty, equality and dignity. The democratic idea has exerted a powerful influence in recent times in Africa, Central Asia, Latin America, where many countries are currently addressing the difficult challenges inherent in their multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-lingual societies. Many of them did not experience democracy because of the authoritarian and totalitarian rule over them. Therefore, the people of these countries are much anxious to taste the fruit of democracy. In this transitional period, these countries' newly adopted democratic institutions are facing many challenges related to ethnicity, language, culture, religion etc. Democracy is seen by the peoples of these countries as a means to resolve various ethnic problems and for the realization of their expected human rights. Kyrgyzstan is one such country among the five independent Central Asian states of the former Soviet Union. After the disintegration of Soviet Union Kyrgyzstan has become an independent republic having a democratic political set up. Kyrgyzstan society is a multi-ethnic society. In this context, the work undertaken will primarily focus on democratic process and inter-ethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan.



## THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY:

Democracy - "government of the people, by the people and for the people" - implies certain standards of understanding, education and tolerance. It is not simply a form of government but also a form of state and society, a method of regulating life and social structure. "In addition to being a form of government and a type of state, democracy is an order of society. A democratized society is one in which the spirit of equality and fraternity prevails".<sup>1</sup> Some argue that democracy consists of two principles, one is popular control over collective decision-making and another one is equality of rights. "Democracy, in other words, entails the twin principles of popular control over collective decision-making and equality of rights in the exercise of that control".<sup>2</sup> Now a days, democracy has often been equated with a method of choosing a government which ignores the main idea of democracy- "the desire to bridge, or even to abolish, the gap between government and the governed, state and society implicit in so much

---

1 Eddy Asirvatham, Political Theory (New Delhi, S. Chand and Company Ltd., 1995), p.447.

2 David Beetham and Eevin Boyle, Democracy 80 Questions and Answers, (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1995), p.1.

conventional political thinking".<sup>3</sup>

Democracy is a word which implies many things. So, it is very difficult to get a precise meaning of democracy. No definition of democracy can adequately comprise the vast history which the concept connotes. To some it is a form of government, to others a way of social life. Men have found it's essence in the character of the electorate, the relation between government and the people, the absence of wide economic difference between citizens, the refusal to recognize privileges built on birth, on wealth, race or creed.<sup>4</sup>

Democracy also implies self-determination, independence from control by any extraneous authority. It necessitates a democratic temper, a spirit freedom of accommodation, secularism and full freedom of expression and of the press. It is the surest guarantee against arbitrary rule, despotism and unbridled, autocratic power; It is the most dependable assurance of justice and individual freedoms. Democracy is both ends and means in itself. The ends ideas, goals, and means are institutions. As regards ends, democracy stands for

---

3 Anthony Arblaster, Democracy, (New Delhi, Book Land Publishing Co., 1997), p.59.

4 International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences edited by David L. Sills, The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, New York, 1972, vol.5, p.76.

government for the people, respect of human dignity, development of each to the best of his abilities, general welfare, liberty, equity and justice etc. And as regards means, it is government by the people, universal adult suffrage, periodic election of legislature and the chief executive or cabinet, independent courts, civil liberties (freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, etc.) and so on.<sup>5</sup>

From the above mentioned definitions of democracy, it may be said that democracy is a complex process which involves more than mere political transformations. The transition to democracy concerns the whole body polity that is to say, all individuals that constitute it and their social relationships.

#### **CONCEPT OF ETHNICITY:**

Ethnic group is a national, racial or tribal group that has a common cultural tradition. A common language, common customs, ceremonies, rites etc. are attributes of ethnicity. According to Shams-ud-din, a common language and folk art and traditions, in short, constitute the minimal objective attributes of an ethnos. A maximalist definition of an ethnos encompasses other attributes such as religion, culture and an awareness of belonging to a

---

5 Ibid., p.316.

distinct historically evolved politico-cultural and socio-economic system.<sup>6</sup> An ethnic group can be defined as a historically formed aggregate of people having a real or imaginary association with a specified territory, a shared cluster of beliefs and values connoting its distinctiveness in relation to similar groups and recognized as such by others. The members of such a group are felt themselves, or are thought to be, bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture.<sup>7</sup> Anthony D. Smith maintains that an ethnic community is 'a named human population with a myth of common ancestry, shared memories, and cultural elements, a link with a historic territory or homeland and a measure of solidarity.'<sup>8</sup> His definition gives six criteria, which must be met, before a group can be called an ethnic community: (a) the group must have a name for itself; (b) the people in the group must believe in a common

---

6 Shams-ud-din, 'Ethno-nationalism in CIS' in A. Pattnaik (ed.) Commonwealth of Independent States: Problems and Prospects, (Konark Publication Pvt. Ltd.), Delhi, 1995, p.70.

7 David L. Sills (ed.) International Encyclopedia of Social Science, The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, New York, 1972, vol.5, p.167.

8 Anthony D. Smith, Structure and Persistence of Ethnicity, in Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex (eds.) The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multi-culturalism and Migration, (Polity Press, 1997), p.27.

ancestry; (c) the members of the group must share historical memories, other myths, or legends passed from generation to generation by word of mouth; (d) the group must have a shared culture, generally based on a combination of language, religion, laws, customs, institutions, dress, music, crafts, architecture, even food, the group must feel an attachment to specific piece of territory; (f) the group members have to think of themselves as group in order to constitute an ethnic community and to have a sense of their common ethnicity. The group must be self-aware. From the structural point of view, ethnicity gives a sense of ethnic identity in order to differentiate it from other groups. However, Paul R. Brass examines ethnicity from the social and political constructions point of view. Instead of considering ethnicity and nationalism to be reflection of primordial identities through history, he defines them as social and political constructions. They are creations of elites, who draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent in order to protect their well being or existence or to gain political and economic advantage for their groups as well as themselves. Further, ethnicity is a modern phenomenon inseparably connected with the activities of the modern state. Ethnic identity and modern nationalism arise out of specific types of

interactions between the leadership of centralizing states and elites from non-dominant ethnic groups, especially but not necessarily from the peripheries of those states.<sup>9</sup>

Besides being a subjective self-consciousness, ethnicity or ethnic identity, claims recognition as a superior group or as a group at least equal to other groups. Various ethnic groups play ethnic cards in politics for gaining political-socio-economic status in interest group politics. Sometimes, the ethnic group recedes as nation emerges. Therefore, a nation, may be seen as created by the transformation of an ethnic group in a multi-ethnic state into a self conscious political entity or by the assimilation of heterogeneous groups and the formation of an inter-ethnic, composite or homogeneous national culture through the agency of modern state.

Ethnic tensions occur if there is some conflict of interests and the consciousness about it either between indigenous and external elites and authorities or between indigenous elites.

Politicisation of various ethnic groups happen, when the ethnic groups become aware of the unequal

---

9 Paul R.Brass, Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison, (New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1991).

distribution of available resources, social benefits and opportunities between distinct ethnic groups. Here the dis-advantaged ethnic groups see the privileged groups as exploiters. So tensions occur between ethnic groups, between the developed urban areas and the underdeveloped rural areas etc. Gradually rivalry expands to jobs, languages, religions etc.

The process of democratization which started in Kyrgyzstan after independence in the sphere of society, economy and politics are remarkable. The development of a civil society free and fair election based on universal adult suffrage, existence of multi-party system, separation of legislative, executive and judicial branches of power, non-interference in private life and private property, liberty of the press, freedom of speech and peaceful meetings, guarantees for human right and secularism are being practiced in Kyrgyzstan.

Like the other Central Asian republics, Kyrgyzstan was created on the basis of ethnic majority by the former Soviet Union. At present it is the home of many ethnic groups like Kyrgyzs, Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Germans, Tajiks, Kazaks, Koreans, Jews etc. As Kyrgyzstan is still marked by traditional society, its people have a greater degree of primordial loyalties towards various ethnic related identities such as languages, cultures, religions etc. The main factors in intensifying inter-

ethnic tensions and conflicts are languages, religions, sharing of powers, distribution of resources and access to services etc. To face these challenges Kyrgyzstan has adopted many conflict resolution mechanisms like constitution, elections and political parties, press, economic opportunities and social justice etc.

The Kyrgyzstan Republic (formerly the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic and between December 1990 and May 1993, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan) is a small, land-locked state situated in eastern Central Asia. It borders Kazakhstan to the North, Uzbekistan to the West, Tajikistan to the South and West and the Peoples Republic of China to the East. Tucked away in a corner of Central Asia and surrounded on all sides by massive mountain ranges, it is the most isolated of all the former Soviet Republics, with the least available resources to create an independent economy.<sup>10</sup>

The ancestors of Kyrgyz were probably settled on the upper reaches of the Yenisei river until about the 10th century. From there, they migrated south to the Tien Shan region. In the past Kyrgyzstan had been ruled by the Turks, Mongols, Chinese, Khanate of Kokand, Tsars of Russia. Due to assimilation of various ethnic groups its

---

10 Ahmed Rashid, The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism? (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1994), p.136.



society has been a multi-ethnic one. Though Kyrgyzs have been under Russian control for more than one hundred years but, they are distinct from the Russian in their ethnicity, religion, language, culture and history. The Kyrgyzs are Mongol people who speak a Turkic dialect called Kipchak which belongs to Altaic family of languages.<sup>11</sup> Major religion is Islam, with the majority of ethnic Kyrgyz being Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. But, a strong streak of pre-Islamic Shamanism is still evident in much of their traditions and daily life.<sup>12</sup>

After the 1917 October Revolution a new stage of the economic and cultural life of the Kyrgyz people began. Recent history has recorded the end of the region of communism but for underdeveloped countries at a certain historical moment, it offered a constructive historical alternative to colonialism and opportunity for economic and social development.<sup>13</sup>

The territory of the present Kyrgyzstan Republic was subsumed in the Turkestan Autonomous Republic of post-

---

11 A. Rashid, p.137.

12 Ibid., p.138.

13 V. Ploskikh, 'Kyrgyz People: History and Culture', in Devendra Kaushik (ed.) Contemporary Central Asia, vol.2, no.2, 1998, p.2.

revolution Russia. In 1924 borders were drawn that delimited the Central Asian Republics and this territory became the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Region with local political and party organization. In 1926 the Kyrgyz Autonomous Republic was established within the Russian Federation. A local government was formed with an independent party organization. But the government was subordinate to the regional government in Tashkent. In the year 1936, the constitution of the U.S.S.R. offered the region which became the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic with a status equal to that of the Russian Republic.

Since the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. the independent Kyrgyz Republic has become a lawful successor to the territory of the Soviet Kyrgyzstan and acquired international recognition.<sup>14</sup> The Kyrgyz Republic adopted its own constitution on 5th May, 1993. The constitution provides a parliamentary system of government with the president as the head of the state. The legislative power is vested in a 105 member Zhogorku Kenesh (the Kyrgyz parliament). The existence of the Kyrgyz Communist Party (K.C.P), the Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (D.M.K) and the Nationalist Party are the strong evidence of

---

14 Ibid..

multi-party system in Kyrgyzstan. Askar Akaev is the President of Kyrgyzstan who is perceived by the outside world as the 'Champion of Democracy' in Central Asia.

The basic provisions of the Kyrgyzstan constitution have been adopted in accordance with the international standards, the ensuring of human rights, equality of forms of ownership and rights to possess land. The constitutional court of Kyrgyzstan has approved Article 5 of the constitution by which Russian language is the second official language of the state. The new wording of Article 5 does not alter or detract the constitutional status of Kyrgyz language, whose special place remains firm. At the same time, the same article also states that the Republic of Kyrgyzstan guarantees members of all nationalities making up the people of Kyrgyzstan the right to preserve their native languages and to foster conditions for the study and development of those languages, and that citizens' rights and freedoms may not be violated on the grounds that they do not know the state and official languages or do not know the state and official languages or do not speak them fluently.<sup>15</sup>

As it has been stated earlier, Kyrgyz society is a multi-ethnic one. Ethnic Kyrgyz comprise about half of

---

15 The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, 1996, vol.xlviii. No.26.

the country's population. The other ethnic groups are Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Germans, Tajiks, Kazaks, Jews etc. The Kyrgyzs constitute only 52.4 per cent of the 4.4 million population. Some 21.5 per cent of the people are Russians and 12.9 per cent are Uzbeks; some eighty other ethnic groups also make their home here.<sup>16</sup> The Russians and the other European nationalities live mainly in the northern part of the country in the industrially developed areas, especially in the capital Bishkek. The Uzbeks and the Tajiks are concentrated in the South. The ethnic mix in Kyrgyzstan is reflected in inter-ethnic hatredness and rivalry towards each other. This is the reason why many Russians and other European ethnic groups are leaving Kyrgyzstan. It is over language, religion, sharing of powers, the distribution of resources and access to services which are also the main factors in intensifying inter-ethnic tension and conflicts. But the inter-ethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan can not be studied in a vacuum, it has to be studied from the historical perspective. And it has to be examined how ethnic issues are closely related with the modern democratic process of Kyrgyzstan.

The work is based on the following hypotheses.

1. Sudden opening up of the Soviet political system

---

16 Ahmed Rashid, Hoog, p.137.

without creating any viable political alternative brought the ethnic problems to the forefront.

2. In multi-ethnic independent Kyrgyz society the role of language, culture, religion can become sources of ethnic conflict and political mobilization.
3. The evolution of a democratic system in Kyrgyzstan will be influenced by ethnic relations.

The present chapter which is introductory in nature has also tried at the beginning to give a theoretical explanation of various concepts like 'democracy', 'democratic process', 'ethno', 'ethnicity' and so on.

The second chapter goes back to the Soviet days in Kyrgyzstan which was politically rearranged according to the Bolshevik nationality Policy. It will cover the nationalities policy of various Soviet leaders like Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Gorbachev etc. What basic changes took place in social, political, economic and religious milieu of the masses of Kyrgyzstan will be discussed in this chapter. It is essential because the policy and actions of that time are greatly responsible for the present happenings in Kyrgyzstan. The third chapter deals with various sources of inter-ethnic tensions especially language, economy, religion and so on after independence.

The fourth chapter examines democracy and the conflict resolution processes in Kyrgyzstan. Especially

it includes the constitution, election and political parties, the press, economic opportunities and social justice.

The fifth one is the final chapter which will sum up the total research work. Here broad conclusions are to be drawn from tested hypotheses. An attempt will be made to give some concluding remarks.

## **CHAPTER - II**

### **KYRGYZSTAN UNDER SOVIET RULE**

Prior to the October Revolution, the situation in Turkestan and the Steppe Region was conducive to the rapid success of the Bolshevik Red Army to overthrow the Tsarist regime. The inconsistent policies towards Central Asia after the death of Kaufman in 1882 and the enormous increase in Russian and Ukrainians settlements in Muslim lands since the turn of the century had engendered wide spread resentment against Russian rule, which culminated in 1916 revolt.<sup>1</sup> The 1916 Revolt in Central Asia was a land mark in the history of Kyrgyzstan. Following the revolt, and the help of the Bolshevik, Kyrgyzstan got rid of the autocratic Tsarist system.

#### **THE 1916 REVOLT AND THE ROLE OF KYRGYZSTAN:**

The 1916 uprising in Central Asia, then Turkestan was against the Tsarist expanding colonisation and ruthless exploitation. The revolt's epicentre was northern Kyrgyzstan (Pishpek) and Prezheval districts of the former Semirechye region of the Turkestan Military Province).

There are substantial reasons for calling northern Kyrgyzstan as the epicentre of the uprising. The given region was infact the epicentre of colonial policy of

---

<sup>1</sup> Geoffry Gheeler, The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p.97.



Tsarism. Out of 540,000 settler colonisers in the whole of Turkestan, 110,000, i.e, 20% were living in Pishpek and Prezheval districts. In 1916, the Russian-Ukranian colonisers of the Prezheval district controlled over 24% of cultivable land. A similar situation existed in the Pishpek district. Hence, it was precisely in this region that a more active reaction of the local people against colonial oppression unfolded in bloody clashes.<sup>2</sup> During one year about 120,000, i.e. 35-36% of the Kyrgyz people living in these two districts died of hunger, cold, epidemic, diseases or became refugees. About 98% of more than 30,000 who died during the clashes with European colonisers and 66% of the officers and low ranks who got killed were in these two districts.

According to Dzhunushaliev, the 1916 uprising was not simply against the Tsarist rule, but to defend honour, dignity, freedom and land.<sup>3</sup>

#### **KYRGYZSTAN DURING THE REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR:**

Following the October Revolution in Russia, there followed a period of civil war, with anti-Bolshevik

---

<sup>2</sup> D. Dzhunushaliev, "1916 Uprising in Kyrgyzstan", Contemporary Central Asia, 1998, vol-11, No.2., p.35.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.38.

forces, including the Russian White Army and local groups (Basmachi) fighting against the Bolshevik Red Army. Here, question may arise that how the people of Kyrgyzstan who had revolted against the Tsarist rule in the preceding years, could extend their support to the White Army against the Bolshevik Red Army. The answer to this question lies in the impartial careful examination of both the Soviet official accounts and the accounts of the Western historians which, according to Geoffery Wheeler, differ in many respects. The main difference between the two accounts is that whereas Soviet historians assert that, apart from a relatively small minority acting either under the influence of religious or 'bourgeois nationalist' elements, or at the instigation of the imperialist powers, the peoples of Central Asia welcomed the Revolution and gave it their whole hearted and active support, most non-Soviet historians claim that the Muslim attitude towards the Revolution varied from, indifference to violent opposition and that the new regime was only established by force in the absence of any co-ordinated resistance.<sup>4</sup>

Even before 1917, Lenin and other architects of the Revolution had violently denounced Tsarist imperialism and the Tsarist treatment of subject peoples and the

---

<sup>4</sup> Geoffery Wheeler, op. cit., p.98.

October Revolution was quickly followed by promises of entirely different treatment based on racial equality and national self-determination. The problem presented to the Soviet leaders by their sudden inheritance of the Tsarist empire was formidable. Firstly, although the whole concept of empire ran counter to communist theory, the inherited empire happened to contain natural resources vital to the continued existence of the Russian or Soviet state. Secondly, renunciation of the empire, or at any rate of areas populated by Asian peoples, would, according to Soviet reckoning, have laid Central Asia and Transcaucasia open to attacks by Britain and thus have jeopardised Russia's security. Thirdly, there were in Turkestan and the Steppe Region alone nearly two million Russian settlers who, whether they supported the Russian Revolution or not, considered this area to be an integral part of Russia which should not be lightly handed over to the backward indigenous population.<sup>5</sup> While Wheeler criticized the Third Territorial Congress of Soviets, for having ignored the question of autonomy, Devendra Kaushik maintains such a criticism is not valid. Kaushik explains that when the congress met on November 15-22, 1917, only a very small portion of Turkestan territory was under Soviet Control. It was confined in addition to Tashkent,

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.99.

to only major parts in the Ferghna and Samarkand regions. The Semirechye and most of the Trans-Caspian region were still in the hands of the Provisional Government and bourgeois nationalist committees. Under such circumstances the victory of a socialist revolution and a revolutionary organisation of power naturally preceded the question of autonomy on the agenda of the Congress.<sup>6</sup>

The declaration of the Bolsheviks and 'Marximalists' in the Third Congress has been sharply criticised for having excluded the Muslims. The declaration excluded from organs of power not only Muslims but also other representatives of Tsarist colonial empire. It welcomed broad masses to participate in the Congress of Soviets with the local representatives not excluding Muslims to deliberate upon questions of economy and state structure.

The ignorance of the Soviet Congress about Muslim cultural autonomy made frustrated Muslims join the Basmachi Movement. However the Jadid modernizers largely sided with the Bolsheviks. As a result, the Red Army could defeat the White Army and the Basmachi Movement and finally established its power in the region by 1919. In 1918 the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was established within the Russian Soviet

---

<sup>6</sup> Devendra Kaushik, Central Asia in Modern Times, (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1970), p.136.

Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR, or Russian Federation) and included Kyrgyzstan until 1924, when the Kara-Kyrgyzstan Autonomous Oblast (Region) was created.<sup>7</sup>

#### SOVIET NATIONALITY POLICY:

There had been no uniformity in Soviet policies towards the Central Asian states. Even there was no unanimous agreement among the various Soviet leaders on the question of national self-determination. While Marx himself supported anti-colonial movements to hasten the end of European colonialism and so weaken the European bourgeoisie, he never dealt with the question as to how a Marxist party would cope with nationalism once it had seized power.<sup>8</sup> So, the approach towards nationality question differed from leaders to leaders in Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the right to national self-determination as one of the basic principles of foreign policy was proclaimed by the Soviet Union in one of its first decrees, 'the decree on peace'. The Central problem in Soviet nationality policy had been to maintain a delicate balance between the two conflicting interests;

TH-7542

<sup>7</sup> The Europa World Year Book, 1998, vol.11, p.2027.

<sup>8</sup> Rashid Ahmed, The Resurgence of Central Asia; Islam or Nationalism ? (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1999), p.28.

THCC  
DISS  
320.5405843  
R7651 De



TH7542

3)

21



to enable the continued dominance of the Russian majority and at the same time to reduce the alienation of non-Russian nationalities, to guarantee equality between nationalities. In practice, Soviet policy fluctuated between these impulses.<sup>9</sup>

However, one of the most eminent historians on Soviet Union, Prof. E.H. Carr has somewhat different views. According to him, Lenin, the region (Central Asia) was commonly known before 1914 as Russian Turkestan. Except for the small Iranian group of Tajks in the South-East, the population of Turkestan was uniformly of Turkish origin and spoke Turkic dialects. The later division into Turkmen in the West, Uzbeks in the Centre and Kyrgyz in the east was partly a matter of administrative conveniences; it was also a product of local jealousies rather than of profound racial or linguistic or historical differences.<sup>10</sup>

#### **LENIN'S VIEW ON NATIONALITY:**

In the early twentieth century there has been much

---

<sup>9</sup> Gail W. Capidius, "The Soviet Nationality Questions", in Alexander Dallin and Robert C. Rice (eds.) The Gorbachev Era, (Stanford, California, 1987), p.77.

<sup>10</sup> E.H. Carr, History of Soviet Russia, Bolshevik Revolution 1917-23, (Publication books, 1969) vol.1, p.335.

controversy on the issues of Nationalism, National self-determination etc. Lenin argued for the voluntary union of small nationalities in the larger nations. The Austro-Marxist school devised a theory of cultural autonomy within the multi-national state to preserve the Hapsburg empire. Its leading writers, Karl Renner, Otto Bauer and Karl Kautsky, depoliticized the national question by promoting cultural and psychological factors. Bauer's definition of the nation as an aggregate of people bound into community of character by a community of fate, was vague and strongly attacked by Lenin. Rosa Luxemburg the Polish Marxist, went to the other extreme suggesting that the proletariat should not get bogged down in sterile national struggles, a view that was also hotly contested by Lenin. She demanded the right of self-determination only for the proletariat, while Lenin demanded unequivocal self-determination for all oppressed nationalities. Trotsky also thought that the struggle for self-determination would undermine the revolution and that self-determination must always remain subordinate to the proletariat revolution.<sup>11</sup>

The basis of Marxist theory on the nationalities lies indisputably with Lenin. The failure of the 1905

---

<sup>11</sup> H.B. Davis (ed.) The National Question: Selected Writings by Rosa Luxemburg, Monthly Review Press, USA, 1984.

Revolution in Russia had convinced Lenin that only the right to self-determination was a major plank of the revolutionary programme could win over the mass of non-Russians in the Tsarist empire. In Asia the anti-colonial movement and the issue of self-determination were hammering at the door of French and British colonialism. The revolution in Persia in 1906, the Young Turks movement of 1908, the Chinese Revolution in 1911 and the first stirring of Indian nationalism were providing a new political impetus to Asian revolutionaries. Realizing these changes, Lenin went further theoretically than any marxist of his day, he stated that only by giving smaller nationalities the freedom to secede could the larger nations make possible a free and voluntary union. "We want a voluntary union of nations a union which precludes any coercion..... so that the distrust of centuries has a chance to wear off," he said.<sup>12</sup>

The declaration of autonomy by the Fifth Congress signified the victory of the principles of the Leninist nationality policy of the communist party. It created the necessary conditions for the consolidation of Soviet power in Turkestan. The Congress elected the high organs of the Turkestan Soviet Republic- the TSIK (The Central Executive Committee) and the Sovanrkom (The Council of

---

<sup>12</sup> Rashid Ahmed, op. cit., p.29.



Peoples Commissars). Representatives of the local people were elected to these highest organs of state. In the new Council of People's Commissars there were four representatives from the native population.

On 30 April 1918, Kyrgyzstan became a part of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Russian Federation. On October 18, the sixth Congress of Soviets confirmed the first constitution of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. With the declaration of autonomy for Turkestan and the adoption of a constitution, the first stage of the struggle in the party for the implementation of its Leninist nationalist policy ended. Autonomous Turkestan was a multinational republic guaranteeing equality of rights to all nationalities within it. Equality of political rights having been conferred, the task was how to prepare for socialist development and for creation of Soviet national republics. The establishment of the Turkestan ASSR took place in atmosphere of complete co-operation from the centre. At no stage was there any clash between the central and the regional authorities over their respective powers.<sup>13</sup>

The Turkestan Republic became a socialist state at its very inception in 1918. Village societies and

---

<sup>13</sup> Devendra Kaushik, op. cit.; p.147.

people's courts, composed of people of local nationalities who knew the native languages, customs and traditions, were set up almost everywhere in the period 1918 to 1924. Representatives of the local population constituted the majority in the administrative bodies. Soviet power became genuinely popular.

Lenin's principles of nationalism is based on the core idea democratic centralism. Although, he preferred state administration and management with the basic ideals of centralisation of power at the centre, however his sole aim was to create a socialist state not forcibly but on the basis of voluntary and free consent. In this context Turkestan autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was the first step towards the formation of national states in Central Asia which was based on the principles of free consent. Contrast to the policy of nation state propagated by Tsarist regime, the Soviet government put forward a policy which aimed at building a number of republics with an adequate degree of internal autonomy. Bolshevik nationality policy was a curious mixture of national in form and socialist in content.<sup>14</sup>

Before his death, Lenin understood that the peculiar

---

<sup>14</sup> R. Vaidyanath, The Formation of Soviet Central Asian Republics, (1917-1936), New Delhi: People Publishing House, 1967, p.264.

conditions of Central Asia needed a different liberal strategy to handle the multi-ethnic nomadic society. For that, Lenin, pointed out to the Europeanized and intellectual Bolsheviks, about the peculiar conditions of Central Asia in 1917 in the following manner:

"You are confronted with a task which would require applying the general theory to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries. You must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism.<sup>15</sup>

Lenin's pleas were ignored by the Russian-dominated Soviet in Tashkent, which looked on the local people as reactionary natives. Russian Communists practised such blatant Russian chauvinism in Central Asia that in his last testament Lenin said their attitude was undermining the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the C.P.S.U.

As the Central Asian states were largely composed of peasant, the NEP (New Economic Policy) had important implications for Soviet nationalities policy, which was introduced by Lenin in 1921 to placate the peasantry and to consolidate Soviet rule. The ethnic population would

---

<sup>15</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Address to the Communists in the East", Selected Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968.

have to be wooed through the medium of their native languages and cultures. The more liberal approach in the economic sphere was translated into the area of nationality policy. Therefore, Lenin's principles of nationality policy constituted a standard shield for non-Russians. However, Merle Fainsod's views are somewhat different. According to him, this nationality policy of Lenin demonstrated his determination to exploit and mobilize every possible source of minority discontent in order to undermine the power of the autocracy, while at the same time preserving the integrity of the party itself against the danger of disintegration into its nationality components.<sup>16</sup>

#### **STALIN'S NATIONALITY POLICY:**

On the issue of nationality policy Stalin's approach was totally paradoxical to that of Lenin. Stalin defined nation as a historically constituted community, with a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. Stalin refused to consider any other factors and pushed the Bolshevik interpretation of nationalism into a strait

---

<sup>16</sup> Merle Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled, Times of India Publication, Bombay, 1969), p.55.

jacket that was to create major problems in the future.<sup>17</sup> His nationality policies were to pit one republic and one ethnic group against another.

On 30 December, 1992, the third Congress of the Soviet adopted the Treaty of Union which formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) and under which the republic would enjoy autonomous, but not sovereign status.

By 1922, the Soviet had already realised that the Tsarist administrative districts, based on military-strategic and political exigencies were unacceptable any more. Sultan Galiev a Tatar Muslim Communist holding a high position in the Commissariat on Nationality Affairs demanded the creation of an independent Muslim Red Army to give attention to local problems. Later on he was arrested on Stalin's instruction for treason, Muslim nationalism and collaboration with other Muslim nationalities. There were disturbances in Khorezm Republic between Uzbeks and the Turkmen. Due to these problems Stalin wanted to delimit the whole of Central Asia in 1924 on the basis of nationalities. He also tried to cut off Central Asia from any contact with the rest of the Islamic world. Stalin believed that Islam or Muslim

---

<sup>17</sup> Rashid Ahmed, op. cit., p.28.

nationalism would be a greater challenge to the newly established Soviet power in the region. In Stalin's view nationalism was the chief ideological obstacle to the training of Marxist cadres and creation of a Marxist vanguard in the border regions and republics.<sup>18</sup>

In January 1924 the Turkestan SSR was broken up and over a short period five separate republics came into existence - the Uzbek, Turkmen, Karakyrghyz, Kyrgyz and Tajik Soviet Socialist Republics. On May 10, 1924, the recommendations of national commissions were rescrutinised by the nationality delimitation commission. It favoured the establishment of full-fledged Uzbek and Turkmen national republics and the Tajak and Kyrgyz autonomous oblasts. The territorial Commission concluded its work in September 1924. The Kyrgyzs who had formed only 10.8% of the population of the Turkestan ASSR, constituted 66% of the population of the newly organized Kara-Kyrgyz autonomous oblast within the RSFSR. 86.7% of all Kyrgyzs in Central Asia now lived in their autonomous national oblast which was converted into Kyrgyz ASSR in 1926.<sup>19</sup>

There are diverse views among pro and anti-Soviet

---

<sup>18</sup> Rashid Ahmed, op. cit., p.31.

<sup>19</sup> Devendra Kaushik, op. cit.; p.212.

writers regarding the motives for national delimitation. The Bolsheviks believed that it would facilitate organisation and planning. Another motive was that Turkestan was to become a Soviet showcase for the peoples of the East. This double role was always borne in mind by Lenin and Stalin. In June 1923, Stalin reinforced this view and added that the Soviets wanted to transform Turkestan into a model republic, into an advanced post for revolutionizing the East.<sup>20</sup>

Another reason was that social and economic differentiation between the various Central Asian peoples made it difficult for the successful implementation of uniform regional policies, like industrialisation, education and so on that required mass support. The Bolsheviks also hoped that the formation of national states would temporarily satisfy the demands, and desire, for national recognition, quelling many inter-ethnic animosities.<sup>21</sup>

Geoffrey Wheeler states that the aim was not only the communist desire to eliminate attachments for the old states but primarily to prevent a Pan-Turkic movement or

---

<sup>20</sup> Steven Sabol, "The Creation of Soviet Central Asia: The 1924 National Delimitations", Central Asian Survey, (London, vol.14, No.2, 1995), p.236.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Pan-Islamic movement. Whatever may be the causes of recognition, mainly based on linguistic divisions, republics were created at a critical juncture of time.

#### **KYRGYZSTAN DURING KHRUSHCEV AND BREZHNEV:**

After the death of Stalin in 1953, the process of de-Stalinisation started and vigorous attack against Islam in Central Asia intensified. Kyrgyzstan was no exception to it. But after the twentieth party Congress Khrushchev's nationality policy took a new course. He openly condemned some of Stalin's wrong deeds and admitted that under Stalin there had been 'monstrous' and 'gross' violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationalities policy of the Soviet state. At the twenty-second party Congress in 1961, a declaration was passed that the nationalities problem in Soviet Union had been solved completely between all ethnic groups.<sup>22</sup>

When Brezhnev came into power in 1964, he tactfully addressed the nationality problem. At the twenty-fourth party congress in 1971, president Brezhnev said that fifty years of Soviet rule has produced a new historical community of people, the Soviet people, a people which

---

<sup>22</sup> A.Tahir, Crescent in Red Sky, the Future of Islam in Soviet Union, (Hutchinson, London, 1989), p.35.



are united.<sup>23</sup> Though in the year 1936, during Stalin period, the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) was established as a full union republic of the U.S.S.R. her status as a equal republic was further consolidated under Khrushchev.

#### **KYRGYZSTAN AND GORBACHEV'S NATIONALITY POLICY:**

When Gorbachev came to power in the year 1985, he was faced with economic deterioration, a corrupt and command-bureaucratic system, large-scale military-industrial complex etc. His first aim was to bring genuine economic liberalisation, but it was impossible without bringing any change in political sphere. So, he announced his twin policies of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost' roughly denoting to restructuring and openness respectively. These policies were adopted by the C.P.S.U. and initiated in the 27th party Congress in February 1986. The programme of 'Glasnost' took precedence over that of 'Perestroika'. But Glasnost was a means to the end of Perestroika or reconstruction of the system, especially modernization and democratization.

The term Glasnost implies many things which is associated with freedom of speech and the press, the

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

right to assembly and demonstrations, accessibility of laws and decisions to discussions, transparency of state bodies and openness of their activity, the right to information etc.<sup>24</sup> Glasnost spread like a fire in all areas of public life. The country virtually turned into a debating club. A large measure of dissidence was already allowed, and also the censorship of press, the obsessive secrecy at party meetings and deliberations were lifted. No restriction on travelling was there, direct dialing system, video cassette recorder (V.C.R.) and audio system, etc. greatly helped the hitherto 'iron curtain' people to have greater contact with the outside world. It opened the eyes of millions people. They realized that the Soviet system of rule was the biggest obstacle to the restoration of the country's well being.

After the failure of Perestroika, Gorbachev realized that economic reform would follow genuine federal reform. Hence forth, he changed his priorities by giving precedence to political reform over economic reform. By fearing the opposition from the party he started to bypass the party itself. Thus, instead of restructuring the party first, he chose to concentrate on restructuring

---

<sup>24</sup> V.G. Britvin, M.A. Karakhanian, "Glasnost , Its States, Problems and Prospects" Sociological Research, (New York, May-June, 1992), p.21.

the state apparatus.<sup>25</sup>

In 1989-1990 elections to the republican parliaments were held on different dates. New popularly elected legislatures were convened, which openly began to challenge the predominance of the centre. Then started the 'war of laws'. Republican legislatures vied with the U.S.S.R. legislature on a series of issues ranging from language to migration to economic sovereignty to citizenship, and in a few cases, to the subject of political independence.

Gorbachev reforms created a deep crisis throughout the country. Following frequent changes in policy and personnel and ill-conceived hasty amendments to the basic laws, production suffered, distribution disrupted. Gorbachev's reforms had dismantled the traditional command-bureaucratic system without creating new ones to fill the vacuum. Due to economic shortfalls republican, regional and local governments began to look after their own economic interests.

Production, distribution and employment opportunities, all slumped and affected the population of Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan was exception to it. Glasnost led to the re-assertion of regional grievances and

---

<sup>25</sup> Zafar Imam, "How and why the Soviet Union Disintegrated", International Studies, (New Delhi, vol.29, No.4, 1992) p.385.

highlighted local issues by newly formed ethno-cultural organizations. There was large-scale resentment among the various ethnic groups towards each other. The indigenous Kyrgyz perceived the Russians and other ethnic minorities as their enemies. In June 1986, Tajiks attacked those who looked 'to them like foreigners' in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. In October Kyrgyz students attacked non-Kyrgyz students in Bishkek. The situation became uncontrolled by 1991 when all the Republics declared their sovereignty. Kyrgyzstan was the last republic to declare itself as sovereign in December, 1990.

#### **IMPACT OF SOVIET RULE ON KYRGYZSTAN'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE:**

Immediately after the consolidation of Soviet power and national delimitation the new borders divided the people into separate ethnic groups which they themselves were reluctant to recognize. Kyrgyzstan's political life started since the civil war when the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan (CPK) was established. As Kyrgyz nomads were passive in politics, the CPK was mostly dominated by ethnic Russians.

Throughout the period of Stalin, CPK was dominated by local Russians and the purges of the few Kyrgyz Communists in the party began early. In 1925 a group of Kyrgyz Communists who called themselves "The Thirty"

complained to party chiefs about the over-extensive use of the Russian language. They were immediately purged from the CPK and their leader Abdur Karim Sydykov was exiled. Others were put on trial and imprisoned. Leaders from Peasants' Union were also imprisoned. Education in mother tongue and use of the Arabic script were considered anti-revolutionary; Kyrgyz cadres were refused promotion in the party. More purges of Kyrgyz communists took place during the 'Great Trials' in 1937 - 1938 and Kyrgyzstan swiftly became a political backwater with Russians firmly in control of the CPK.<sup>26</sup>

Due to reluctance to give up their life style, the Kyrgyz remained devoid of a major political role in their own republic. After 1945 Moscow ensured that the first secretary of the CPK was usually of Kyrgyz origin, but the second secretaryship and other important positions related to internal security and the KGB were always held by Russians. In 1961 Turdakun Usubaliev was elected first secretary of the CPK and his long-running compliance with the Russian-dominated party structure enabled him to keep the post until 1985. The first anti-Russian resentment was seen in Kyrgyzstan in 1980, when Prime Minister Sultan Ibraimov was assassinated by Muslim nationalist radicals who were never caught. His murder was ignored by

---

<sup>26</sup> Rashid Ahmed, op. cit., p:143.

the Soviet media.

The Kyrgyz remained the least politicized of all Central Asian nationalists. This was reflected in CPK, whose membership in the 1980s was still equally divided between 37% Russian members and 37% Kyrgyz members, even though the Kyrgyz were a majority of the population. The Russians were all-powerful, and between 1982-87 over 80% of Kyrgyz party leaders in the districts were sacked.<sup>27</sup>

A new constitution was adopted in 1978, and in the 1985 elections to the Supreme Soviet, 350 deputies representing one for every 5,000 people were sworn in. The long-running first secretary Turdakun Usubaliev was dismissed and replaced by Absamat Masaliev, who accused his predecessor of corruption and nepotism and then proceeded to sack Usubaliev's allies in the party. Masaliev was re-elected as first secretary of the CPK on 10th April 1990 when a new Supreme Soviet was also elected. By then, however, the political stalemate and the accumulated ethnic and economic tensions of years of neglect were coming to the forefront.

The heavy losses suffered by the people of Kyrgyzstan during the 1916 revolt, the civil war, the 1923 famines and the Basmachi movement was followed by the 1928 forced collectivization of the nomads and

---

<sup>27</sup> Rashid Ammed, *op. cit.*, p.145.

peasants. In 1920s and 1930s many Kyrgyzs were deported to Siberia and many of them fled to China rather than to surrender to the Soviets.

Islam as a religion came under the general fire directed against supernatural beliefs. As a way of life, communism regarded Islam as more dangerous than any branch of Christianity. Soviet attack was targeted mainly towards the veiling of women, pilgrimage to holy places and tombs, festivals which interrupted work and practices such as circumcision. This attack was still actively maintained in the 1960s.

Education in mother tongue and the use of the Arabic script were considered anti-revolutionary. Latin script was imposed in 1922 and in September 1940 a new Kyrgyz alphabet based on Cyrillic was introduced.

The economy of Kyrgyzstan changed radically in the years of Soviet power. Manufacturing, construction, transportation, communication and trade industries were established. Agriculture was diversified and sedentary farming and irrigation were introduced. At the same time illiteracy and many diseases were eradicated. Skilled workers and intellectuals emerged. A network of secondary schools, secondary specialised schools and higher educational establishments were built, in addition to health service institutions. Science, literature, and culture contributed a lot for the development and

upliftment of the life of the people of Kyrgyzstan. The republic began to acquire the shape and essence of modern civilization. On the whole, living standard of the people improved during the years of Soviet power.

However, inspite many developments in Kyrgyzstan during Soviet rule, a serious researcher cannot overlook the strong central authoritarian rule under which the state sovereignty of Kyrgyzstan became a mere fiction. The people of Kyrgyzstan had lost their freedom to criticize the Soviets rulers for their misrule. Terror played a central role, it showed the weak basis of human rights under state monopolistic socialism.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> A.A. Brudny, "Kyrgyzstan : Island of Democracy", Contemporary Central Asia, 1998, vol.2, No.2, p.6.



**CHAPTER - III**

**INDEPENDENCE OF KYRGYZSTAN AND**

**THE SOURCES OF INTER-ETHNIC**

**TENSIONS**

Even prior to the disintegration of Soviet Union the inter-ethnic tensions began in Kyrgyzstan with the election of Mikhail Gorbachev as Soviet leader in 1985. He introduced the policies of Perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness), which led to the resignation of Turdakan Usubaliyev, the first secretary of the K.C.P. His successor, Abrammat Masaliev, accused Usubaliyev of corruption and nepotism and dismissed many of his closest allies from office. However, Masaliev's commitment to Gorbachev regime's reforms did not extend much beyond criticising the excesses of his predecessor. The problems which erupted during that time were related language, economy, border and religion etc.

**A. LANGUAGE :**

The language problem has become too complicated an issue in Kyrgyzstan since Gorbachev period. The adoption of the language law in September 1989 in Kirghizia brought into the open inter-ethnic tensions. Despite the simultaneous recognition of Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication along with the elevation of Kyrgyz to the status of state language, the most controversial element of the law was Article 8, which required management and professional personnel - a stratum that the slavs dominated - to have the ability to speak Kyrgyz to their workers or clients. Unlike most

provisions of the law, which were to take effect in phases by 1999. Article - 8 was to take effect immediately.<sup>1</sup> The conservative Kyrgyz leadership opposed the emergence of unofficial quasi-political groups, several of which were established in 1989, some with the intention of alleviating the republic's acute housing crisis by seizing vacant land for the construction of houses. One such group, Ashar was partially tolerated by the authorities and soon developed a wider political role.

Osh Aymaghi, a similar organization to Ashar based in Osh oblast, attempted to obtain land and homes for ethnic Kyrgyz in the region. Osh had been incorporated into Kyrgyzia in 1924, although Uzbeks demanded an autonomous region in Osh. Disputes over land and housing provision in the crowded Fergans valley region of Osh precipitated violent confrontation between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in 1990, in which, according to official reports, more than 300 people died (although other sources claimed that as many as 1,000 people had been killed). A state of emergency and a curfew were introduced in the region, and the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border was closed. The state of

---

<sup>1</sup> Ajay Patnaik, "The CIS: Who Needs It ?" in Commonwealth of Independent States, Problems and Prospects, (ed.) by the same author. (Delhi, Konark, 1995), p.96.

emergency remained in force until September, 1995.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that Kyrgyzstan is a multi-ethnic society has wide-ranging implications for the development of a democratic political culture. The Russians and other Europeans started migration to Kyrgyzstan over various periods. First migration began with the resettlement of landless Russian peasants during the Tsarist periods and reached its climax with the imported labour used in the construction of development projects during the 1960s.

Migration of Russians and other European nationals peaked in 1960, though the process had been reversed since 1980, with a rising Kyrgyz birthrate and a reduction of Russian and other European populations by out-migration. The following table explains the ethnic structure of Kyrgyzstan since 1926-1994.

---

<sup>2</sup> "Kyrgyzstan, Introducing Survey", The Europa World Year Book, (London, vol.2, 1998), p.2027.

Table 1:  
Dynamics of the changing ethnic structure of Kyrgyzstan's population

Nationality	1926	1936	1959	1970	1980	1989	1994
Kyrgyz	66.8	51.7	40.5	42.6	51.0	52.4	56.0
Russians	11.7	20.8	30.2	29.2	25.4	21.5	16.7
Uzbeks	10.6	10.4	10.6	11.4	11.9	12.9	n/a
Ukrainians	6.4	9.4	6.6	4.1	3.0	2.5	n/a
Germans	0.4	0.8	1.9	3.1	2.8	2.4	n/a
Tatars	0.5	1.4	2.7	2.4	2.0	1.6	n/a
Other Central Asians	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	n/a
Others	1.4	2.1	4.5	3.1	3.0	3.2	n/a

**Source:** Narodnoe Khoziaistvo Kirgizskoi SSR (Frunze, 1982), p.16; Vestnik Statistiki, 1991, no.4, pp.76-78; Dasmia, 1994, vol.6, p.5, cited in Rakhat Achylova "Political, Cultural and Foreign Policy in Kyrgyzstan", in Karen Dawisha (ed.), The International Politics of Eurasia, 1995, p.328.

Kyrgyzstan society is a patchwork of many nationalities. The 1989 census shows, Kyrgyz constituted 52.4%, Russians 21.5%, Uzbeks 12.9%, Ukrainians 2.5%, Germans 2.4%, Tatars 1.6%, other Central Asians 0.9%, and others 3.2% in Kyrgyzstan. While the Kyrgyz constituted 56% of the total population in 1994, it was less than half of the total population in the late 1930s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s.

Thus, at present now the indigenous Kyrgyz is majority in Kyrgyzstan. Excepting the Uzbeks, the share of other minority nationalities like the Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Tatars, have reduced in Kyrgyzstan

since 1980s. For example, the Russians, Ukrainians, Germans were 25.4% 3.0% and 2.8% respectively in the year 1980 in Kyrgyzstan. However, in 1989, their percentage reduced to 21.5%, 2.5% and 2.4% respectively. Same has happened to the other ethnic groups like Tatars and other Central Asians.

"By the year 1989, the Kyrgyz population had increased by 250 percent. The out-migration of Russians from 1979 to 1988 was 46,656; from 1989 to 1992 it was 31,900. In 1992, 65 persons left Kyrgyzstan, while 13,237 arrived. The following year 106,456 persons left and 11,076 arrived. From 1991 to 1993 a total of 163,384 persons left Kyrgyzstan. In 1994 the Russian population stood at 750,000, down from the 917,000 of the year before.<sup>3</sup>

The reasons for the out-migration of Russians and other Europeans have variously been given as follows:

1. Worsening inter-ethnic relations
2. Family circumstances
3. Adoption of the law on Kyrgyz as the official language.
4. The ethnic principle as the basis for building new states and appropriate ethnic policy, as well as laws on properties.

---

<sup>3</sup> Rakhat Achylova, "Political Culture and Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan", in Karen Dawisha (ed.), International Politics of Eurasia, 1995, p.327.

5. The economic crisis in Kyrgyzstan and a relatively higher standard of living in Russia.

The first problem was manifested in the Osh and Uzgen (Fergana Valley) events, although the inter-ethnic situation has since become more tranquil. Subsequently, the problems in inter-ethnic relations have been sparked by debates, particularly among the Russian population over the adoption of Kyrgyz as the official language of state and government administration. However, according to the report obtained from F.B.I.S, the migration of Russians from Kyrgyzstan is comparatively less than other Central Asian Republics. While the Russian migration rate was 75% in Uzbekistan, 66% in Kazakstan, it was 62% in Kyrgyzstan in 1996.<sup>4</sup> It is because of the Kyrgyzstan government's attempt to take less nationalistic approach towards other minority nationalities living in Kyrgyzstan. Through the signing of the new decree on Measures of Regulating Migration Processes in the Kyrgyz Republic established equity for the Kyrgyz language in the collectives (where there are many Russians) and in health, technical sciences, and other sphere, President Askar Akayev had aimed to soften the inter-ethnic tensions over the issue of languages. The change in the

---

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Sov -96 -160. 16 August -1996, p.46.

situation of Russians in Kyrgyzstan from the culturally dominant group to a national minority following the reinstatement of Kyrgyz as the official language in 1993 was indeed psychologically unsettling for the Russians. Many Russian speakers have complained that they have been treated as second class. A middle-aged Russian woman in Osh put it the following way:

"Russians are scared by the introduction of the state language. Young people can learn the language, but just try to teach me! I live alone, and have to work all the time. And I am always afraid. If all office work has to be done in the Kyrgyz language, I'll be left without work! It's hard to live on a single pension. This problem may force me to leave the country, too."<sup>5</sup>

However, the Kyrgyz have a different kind of opinion. A young Kyrgyz worker said, "Why do I, a Kyrgyz, speak Russian and foreign language? It means that I respect them! I want to understand and communicate. As for the Russians (living in Kyrgyzstan), no offence intended but they don't try to speak the Kyrgyz language. This shows a lack of respect toward the local population".<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Richard B. Dobson, "Kyrgyzstan in a Time of Change" Central Asia Monitor, No.1, 1995, p.21.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



Notwithstanding of problems related to enormous language issues, the Russians and other European minority feels secure because of the democratic constitution of Kyrgyzstan. The issue of democracy will be dealt in the next chapter.

## **B. ECONOMY**

Economy is also another important source of inter-ethnic tensions in Kyrgyzstan. During the Post-World War - II period, the Soviet Union introduced modern industrial enterprises into Kyrgyz society, while preserving the primitive physical infrastructure. The Central ministries were reluctant to train the indigenous Kyrgyz working class, preferring instead to import Slavic workers. Large mills, factories and hydropower facilities were built and staffed mainly by Slavs and managed by all-union Muscovite ministers. This industrialization accounted for 38% of the republic's economy, and yet the Kyrgyz made up only about 3% of the work force. In heavy industry (machine construction, energy sector, manufacturing, and so forth) only 13% of the engineers and technicians were Kyrgyz. The process of industrial modernization thus bypassed the indigenous working class and did little to improve the economic condition of the

Kyrgyz.<sup>7</sup>

After the disintegration of USSR, the rapid creation of new nation states seemed to fulfill long-awaited aspirations for political independence. But the sudden breakdown in the complex economic ties between member republics and Soviet Union took it's toll on the economic performance of these new political entities. Making the transition to the market proved harder than the new political leaders expected. According to Jude Howell, "with the break down of Kyrgyzstan's crucial economic link with the former Soviet republics, the leaders enthusiastically embraced transition towards the market, and the role of the western governments plunged the Kyrgyzstan economy into crisis".<sup>8</sup>

The collapse of the complex web of inter-republic production and trade had drastic consequences for the Kyrgyzstan economy. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by 16.4% between 1992 and 1993. The volume of industrial output plummeted by 24.2% in 1993 and 33% in the first half of 1994.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Rakhat Achylova, op. cit., p.329.

<sup>8</sup> Jude Howell, "Poverty and Transition in Kyrgyzstan; How Some Households Cope", Central Asian Survey, (vol.15, No.1, 1996), p.59.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.60.

Unable to secure inputs at low prices or find markets for their final products enterprises drastically reduced production. In 1993 one in four enterprises incurred losses, whilst in the first half of 1994, 12% of industrial enterprises were not operating. This economic paralysis has resulted in an increasing number of layoffs. For example, in the first half of 1994, 19,000 people were laid off, over twice the number in the previous year. With state enterprises reluctant to shed staff, the number of employees working shorter hours or on unpaid leave came to 100,000 at the end of June 1993. Whilst in 1989, 35% of the population were estimated to be poor, by May 1993, over 80% of the population were considered under provisioned.<sup>10</sup>

There were striking difference between rural and urban areas. The disproportionate ethnic structure of the working class was mirrored in the make-up of the urban population. Predominantly Slavs and the European nationalities settled and lived in the cities and towns, while the Kyrgyz remained by tradition in the rural areas. Unless the Kyrgyz held state-resident status, by permit, they were barred from employment in urban

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

enterprises.<sup>11</sup> And settling in the city did not automatically guarantee one employment.

In fact, unemployment exacerbated the plight of the Kyrgyz, more so than in rural areas, where the majority lived. Although the percentage of Kyrgyz in Urban areas rose from 13.3% in 1959 to 29.9% in 1989 the rural population increased as well, from 54.4 to 66.2 percent. In contrast, the percentage of Russians who were urban dwellers during this period rose from 57.8% to 69.9%. Still out of the total population, more than 86% of Kyrgyz lived in rural areas.<sup>12</sup>

The overall decrease in production, high inflation, mass unemployment and so on created an atmosphere of hatredness among the indigenous Kyrgyz towards other ethnic groups especially towards the Russian professionals whom they see as exploiters of their wealth and opportunities. Hence, the internal economic situation has become a major source of inter-ethnic tension in post-independent Kyrgyzstan. That's why many Slavs, particularly the Russians, are leaving Kyrgyzstan.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.329

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.330.

### C. BORDER

Border problem has become an important area of conflict among the Central Asian republics. Kyrgyzstan is not free from that. Numerous arbitrary changes of boundaries of these states had been done by the former Soviet Union which is a source of many conflicts among them at present. Border problem of Kyrgyzstan can not be isolated from ethnic issues. All the Central Asian republics were created supposedly on the basis of their ethnic composition. But till now, every republic is a patchwork of heterogenous population. Their conflict with each other threatens the independence and sovereignty of the concerned state. For example, the ethnic clash between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh region of Kyrgyzstan in 1990 created an inimical attitude between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and Uzbek-Krygyz border was closed. The state of emergency remained until September 1995.

Besides this conflict over river water has taken place between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan with regard to the use of the Syr Darya river. Through numerous hydro-electric stations and dams such as the Toktogul Dam in the Naryn region, Kyrgyzstan can exercise control over the amount of Syr Darya water flowing into Uzbekistan. A dispute developed shortly after both states become independent, initially over the prices of Uzbekistan's natural gas supplies to Kyrgyzstan. When Kyrgyzstan was

unable to pay the higher prices demanded, Uzbekistan discontinued supply. Subsequently, during the summer of 1993 and 1994, the Kyrgyz filled their water reservoirs capacity to boost the production of hydro-electric energy. Since natural gas shipments had been discontinued, electric power was increasingly used for heating. Uzbekistan was faced with the unpleasant situation during the summer months when considerably less water than before was available for purposes such as irrigation. Conversely, during the winter months, Kyrgyzstan drained its reservoirs more frequently by this process causing flooding in Uzbekistan. This issue continues to place a major strain on the relationship between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

A dispute over claims to irrigation water and farm land led to violence between Tajik and Kyrgyz villages on the border between the two republics in 1989. Although the water dispute was eventually resolved, recriminations between the two groups over the territorial dispute continued into 1991.

Once when the president of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akayev, was asked on the issue of international and trans-border terrorism, he said,

"When there is terrorism in any country, they should fight against it. We have such problem in the neighboring countries, for example in Tajikistan. This is also a

problem for us. The civil war and the terrorism is joined together and the problem of NARCO terrorism coming from Afghanistan, and also we have the problem of Islamic fundamentalism. And these problems are great problems for us. For us today, the priority problems are that of NARCO business and terrorism and the spreading of religious extremism. We spend much time and means in fighting against these problems".<sup>13</sup>

Being a secular democratic state, Kyrgyzstan is opposed to any manifestations of Islamic extremism. In 1992 the Kyrgyz Government participated in negotiations aimed at ending the civil conflict in neighboring Tajikistan between forces of the Tajik government and rebel Islamist groups. In January 1993, however, it was reported that groups of armed Tajiks had crossed into Kyrgyzstan seeking to incite an Islamist insurrection among the local population. The Kyrgyz government intensified controls along the border with Tajikistan, in an attempt to prevent further infiltration by Tajik groups. Kyrgyzstan subsequently contributed troops to a CIS peace-keeping mission on the Tajik-Afghan border.

In January 1995 Kyrgyz peace-keepers came under attack for the first time. In the following month

---

<sup>13</sup> Narendra Kumar, President Akayev of Kyrgyzstan, A Political Biography, (Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, 1998), p.117.

government dispatched a further 200 troops to reinforce the Kyrgyz contingent. In mid-1996, as the civil conflict continued, tension on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border increased, requests were made by the Kyrgyz government for assistance from Tajikistan in the rehabilitation of Tajik refugees who had fled to Kyrgyzstan (estimated to number 15,000 in August).<sup>14</sup>

The escalation of the conflict in Afghanistan in September 1996 was condemned by the Kyrgyz government, fearing that the unrest would spread into neighboring Tajikistan, which was a further cause for concern. The peace agreement concluded by the Tajik Government and the rebel Tajik forces in June 1997 was welcomed by the Kyrgyz authorities. However, the leadership remained concerned at the increase in drugs trafficking across the Tajik-Kyrgyz border, Kyrgyz-China border, requesting international support in combating the illicit trade.

Tien Shah '96 large-scale special operation was held on the Kyrgyz Chinese border. Major General Valering Avdonin, first deputy commander of Russian border guards in Kyrgyzstan told journalists that the aim of the operation was at projecting the national interests of CIS countries, at preventing the violation of Kyrgyzstan's

---

<sup>14</sup> "Kyrgyzstan Introductory Survey", The Europa World Year Book, No.2, p.2029.



state border and the border zone regime, at the illegal import and export of contraband drugs, weapons and at improving joint operation services increasing the reliability of border monitoring.

The result of the operation was overwhelming. Hundred sixty six violators of the regime in the border monitoring zone, including six foreign tourists were detained. Three cases of border violations - Chinese citizens grazing cattle on the Kyrgyz territory - were revealed. About eight kilograms of opium were confiscated. As a rule, hunters illegally penetrate the zone monitored by border guards to look for trophies.<sup>15</sup>

Relations with the neighbouring Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan deteriorated sharply in May 1993, following Kyrgyzstan's sudden introduction of its own currency, the som. The Uzbek Government, fearing a massive influx of roubles into Uzbekistan, suspended all trade and telecommunication links for several days. However, the situation improved in the latter years when Kyrgyzstan signed many agreements with her neighbours. It also reached a series of bilateral co-operation agreements with the Peoples Republic of China in 1996 and with China, Russia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan in April 1997 aimed to improve

---

<sup>15</sup> F.B. I.S. Sov - 96-168, p.12.

joint border security. On July 1993, a five-nation summit of the Heads of States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation (represented by foreign Minister Primakov), the People's Republic of China and Tajakistan was held in Alma-Aty for the preservation of national sovereignty and to fight against international terrorism, crimes, smuggling, drugs trafficking etc. In spite of all these kinds of preventive measures one cannot safely assume that Kyrgyzstan's border problems already been rooted out.

#### **D. RELIGION**

The role of religion in Kyrgyzstan is different from that of the other Central Asian Republics. There are divergent views among the Central Asian scholars on this issue. Some say that religious awareness among the Kyrgyz is not remarkable, while the other say it's visible and influential.

The major religion in Kyrgyzstan is Islam, with majority of ethnic Kyrgyzs being Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi School. The Islamic opposition has remained peripheral largely because of tolerant attitude towards religion amongst the Kyrgyz, lack of Islamic leadership to play political role and suppression of Islamic militancy by the government whenever it emerged. Most people cannot even understand either the Arabic or

Persian in which the Islamic canons are written. Islam thus tends to remain at the level of actual, daily living and does not play a comprehensive role in national consciousness.<sup>16</sup> The Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) has a base but it remains underground and is not widely popular. According to Ahmed Rashid, although it may not be a political force, as yet, Islam is still seen as a source of cultural inspiration and identification, a means to break with the communist past rather than a means to a new political future.<sup>17</sup>

In 1992, however, the dramatic growth of the Wahabi movement in the Ferghana Vally affected Osh and other southern towns. The Wahabis began to found mosques and madrashas to connect the Kyrgyz to Islam and to stop western christian fundamentalist groups, who were active in Bishkek, converting the Kyrgyz to christianity. The following year, the building of a large Wahabi mosque and madrasha began in Osh with a Saudi grant of one million roubles. According to Boljurova, though in Kyrgyzstan the number of working Muslim mosques reached 2000, still we cannot call this process a religious renaissance. It

---

<sup>16</sup> Rakhat Achylova, 1995, No.3, p.327.

<sup>17</sup> Ahmed Rashid, The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism ? (Karachi, Oxford, 1994), p.152.

would be more correct to define it as the legalization of religion."<sup>18</sup>

On the otherhand, Richard B. Dobson maintains that "in recent years, a rising tide of Islamic awareness and assertiveness has washed over Iran, Afghanistan, Tajakhstan, Pakistan and other countries. To some degree this upsurge appears to have carried over into Kyrgyzstan as well. Islam is playing a larger and more visible role in Kyrgyzstan."<sup>19</sup>

"Many people noted the construction of new mosques and such signs of devotion as praying and fasting. Some interpreted peoples' willingness to give alms to poor people, their abstinence from alcohol, or women's wearing the veil as rings of growing Islamic influence. Such signs were more often noted in the South than in the North."<sup>20</sup>

The growing Islamic awareness and anti-Christian feeling among the Kyrgyzs created a fear psychosis among the Slavs and Europeans, especially among the Russians, and many of them left Kyrgyzstan. In spite of many visible

---

<sup>18</sup> I.S. Boljurova, Central Asia - Search for Priorities, Contemporary Central Asia, vol.2, No.2, 1998, p.10.

<sup>19</sup> Richard B. Dobson, op. cit., 1995, p.22.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

role of Islam in Kyrgyzstan today, it has not taken the form of islamic fundamentalism. President Akayev himself criticized it. He said, "I have always been and I am a staunch and consistent opponent of any religious extremism, Islamic fundamentalism included. I declare here with full responsibility that Islamic fundamentalists who acknowledge religious leadership rather than government rule have no chance to set their feet in Kyrgyzstan. 'Islam' for Muslim believers in Kyrgyzstan means a spiritual communication."<sup>21</sup>

To sum up, inspite of Islamic religious awareness there remains strong religious tolerance among the Kyrgyz towards the non-Kyrgyz, non-Islamic community. The President's assurance and the constitution of Kyrgyzstan give adequate quarantee to the non-Kyrgyz, non-Islamic community to stay in Kyrgyzstan.

---

<sup>21</sup> Narendra Kumar, op. cit., p.33.

**CHAPTER - IV**

**DEMOCRACY AND CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION PROCESSES**

While dealing with 'democracy' in the first chapter, it has been mentioned that democracy is not simply a form of government but also a form of state and society, a method of regulating life and social structure within the broader network of democracy. Many conflicts and crises may occur, especially in the states which have not experienced democracy earlier. But, the democratic states try to accommodate such rational demands of various groups, and communities living within their territory, which are indispensable for the upliftment of the state and society as a whole.

For the proper functioning of democracy in a state, efficient mechanisms for the resolution of various conflict is a must. Kyrgyzstan is a democratic state, with a multi-ethnic society. It has adopted many conflict resolution mechanisms like a constitution, election and political parties, media, economic opportunities and social justice etc.

#### **A. CONSTITUTION:**

A constitution "may be said to be a collection of principles according to which the powers of the government, the rights of the governed, and the relations

between the two are adjusted."<sup>1</sup> But, a constitution in modern times is something more than it's political definition. With the emergence of the concept of Welfare state, the nature and scope of the constitution of every democratic state has been widened. Along with government, it has covered wide range of economic and social issues of the citizens in conformity with international standards. Kyrgyzstan being a secular and democratic state is not an exception to all these.

The constitution of Kyrgyzstan was adopted on 5 May, 1993 at the 12th convocation session of the Supreme Soviet of the Kyrgyz Republic. In the language of President Akayev "On May 3, 1993 Kyrgyzstan adopted it's first free and sovereign constitution, which is basically individual-oriented. One of the main ideas of the constitution is that a person as an entity is superior to the state, as a subject is primary, with the state in relevance to him (her) being secondary, also that many human rights, liberties are rooted in man's nature and granted to him from above. According to our constitution the state must acknowledge them, ensure their full

---

<sup>1</sup> C.F. Strong: Modern Political Constitutions, (ELBS ed., London, 1996). p.11.



implementation".<sup>2</sup>

The constitution of Kyrgyzstan contains a preamble, eight chapters and total of 97 Articles. The preamble is the manifestation of the central idea of Kyrgyzstan's constitution that is to provide a secular and democratic Kyrgyz Republic, guaranteeing economic, political, legal and social equality to all its citizens, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, language, creed etc. The preamble is read thus:

"We, the People of Kyrgyz Republic, aspiring to secure the national revival of the Kyrgyz, the protection and development of interests of representatives of all nationalities, who together with the Kyrgyz form the people of Kyrgyzstan, following ancestor's precepts to live in unity, peace and concord; confirming our adherence to human rights and freedoms and the idea of national statehood; full determination to develop the economy, political and legal institutes and culture to insure appropriate living standards for everyone; proclaiming our adherence to national ethical traditions and to moral principles common to all mankind; desiring to establish ourselves among the peoples of the world as a free and democratic civil society; through our

---

<sup>2</sup> Narendra Kumar, President Akayev of Kyrgyzstan A Political Biography, Har Anand Publications, (New Delhi, 1998), p.142.

authorized representatives, hereby adopt this constitution."<sup>3</sup> Article 1 of the Kyrgyz constitution mentions that "the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) is a sovereign, unitary, democratic republic constructed on the basis of a legal secular state".<sup>4</sup>

Chapter one of the Kyrgyz constitution deals with the general principles of the Kyrgyz Republic upon which it ought to function. Chapter two deals with citizenship, rights and duties of the citizen. Thus it is very important so far the citizens' rights are concerned. Chapter three is concerned with the president, his election, powers etc. Chapter four describes about the composition, power of the Jogorku Kenesh (Kyrgyzstan Parliament). Chapter five mentions about the executive power, i.e. the government and local state administration. Chapter six deals with the court and justice system. Chapter seven deals with local self-administration while the last chapter deals with the procedure of amendment of the constitution.

Chapter two is very important, as it contains a wide range of rights of the citizens - starting from Article 13 to Article 41. Article 14 of the Kyrgyz constitution

---

<sup>3</sup> The constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic. (available on internet).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

states "every citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic by virtue of his/her citizenship shall enjoy rights and perform obligations."<sup>5</sup> Article 15, which also deals with citizenship rights gives adequate protection to minority cultural rights:

1. The dignity of an individual in the Kyrgyz Republic shall be absolute and inviolable.
2. Every person shall enjoy the basic human rights and freedom since birth. These rights shall be recognized as absolute, inalienable, and protected from any person's encroachments by law and the court.
3. All persons in the Kyrgyz Republic shall be equal before the law and the court. No one may be exposed to any discrimination, infringement of rights and freedoms, on the motives of origin, sex, race, nationality, language, creed, political and religious convictions or by any other public or personal conditions or circumstances.<sup>6</sup> Article 16,17,18,19, and 21 deal with human rights and various freedoms like freedom of life, security,

---

<sup>5</sup> The Constitution of Kyrgyz Republic, Chapter 2, Section one Citizenship. (available on internet).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

personal development, worship, press and property. Right to equality has been enshrined in Article 22 of the constitution.

Articles 26,27,28,29,30, and 31 deal with welfare measures to be taken by the state for the children, old-aged persons, orphans, poor, labourers so far their material assistance, pension, wage and working conditions are concerned.

Article 32,33 and 34 deal with education, housing, health, respectively. Article 37, guarantees economic freedom of the citizens while article 38, 39 and 40 deal with legal protection. According to Article 39 (point 2) the state shall guarantee everyone a protection from arbitrary and unlawful interference with one's private and family life, infringement of one's honor and dignity, breach of secrecy of correspondence and telephone conversations.<sup>7</sup>

President Akayev said, "In the constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, we, I am convinced managed to fully and accurately identify the wonderful ideas of democracy like priority of human rights and liberties over all the other values, firm guarantees of private interests, private property private life, national reconstruction of the Kyrgyz protection and development of all ethnic

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

minorities constituting together with the Kyrgyz, the people of Kyrgyzstan. In the constitution we proclaimed our adherence to universal moral principles and values, national traditions and our inspiration to live among the peoples of the world as a free and democratic member of the community of nations."<sup>8</sup>

Free and fair election and separation of powers are other important features of the Kyrgyz constitution. Article 7 of the Kyrgyzstan constitution states that "The state power in the Kyrgyz Republic is based on the following principles:

- The supremacy of the power of the people, which is represented and ensured by the nationally elected head of the state - the President of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Division of state power into legislative, executive, and judicial branches; and their coordinated functions and interaction;
- the responsibility of state organs to the people and execution by them of their authority on behalf of the people;
- differentiation between functions of the state and

---

<sup>8</sup> Narendra Kumar, op. cit., p.143.

local self government."<sup>9</sup>

President Akayev maintains, "According to the constitution, state power is founded on the following principles; separation of powers, all-country presidential elections (President doesnot represent any branch, but embodies their integrity), state and local governement powers are separate."<sup>10</sup>

From a brief scrutinization of the Kyrgyz constitution, it appears that like any other modern democratic state's constitution of the world, it covers a wide range of social, political, economic and legal provisions to accommodate diverse problems and challenges to the Kyrgyz society.

## **B. ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES:**

### Elections:

Election is a method of choosing the representatives of people. The regular election of the public officials in an open and competitive process constitutes the chief instrument of popular control in a representative democracy. Elections demonstrate that political power

---

<sup>9</sup> The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, Chapter-1. (available on internet).

<sup>10</sup> Narendra Kumar, op. cit., p.143.

derives from the people and is held in trust for them; and that it is to the people that politicians must account for their actions. Kyrgyzstan constitution ensures a free and fair election to the office of the President, to the Parliament and to the bodies of self-government. Point 6 of Article 1 says that "Elections shall be free and shall be held on the basis of universal equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. Citizens who have attained the age of 18 may participate in elections."<sup>11</sup>

Prior to the new constitution of Kyrgyzstan the President's tenure was 5 years Askar Akayev was president at that time. In a referendum on 30 January, 1994, 96% of votes cast favored Akayev, serving out the rest of his term of office. The turn out was 95%.

Divisions within the legislature evolved into a parliamentary crisis in September 1994, when more than 180 pro-reform deputies announced their intention to boycott the next session of the Zhogorku Kenesh in protest at the continuing obstruction by former communists of the economic reforms process. They also demanded the dissolution of the Kenesh and the holding of fresh elections. The entire Government tendered it's

---

<sup>11</sup> The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, Chapter-1. (available on internet).

resignation, and Akayev announced that parliamentary elections would be held forthwith. In a referendum on 22-23 October 1994, of the 87% of the electorate that participated in that referendum, more than 70% endorsed proposals for a restructured Zhogorku Kenesh comprising a 70 member Peoples' Assembly (upper chamber) to represent regional interests at bi-annual sessions, and a permanent 35-member Legislative Assembly (lower chamber) representing the population as a whole. The existing legislature was thus automatically dissolved.

A first real election to the Kyzgyz parliament was held on 5 February 1995. Many political parties took part in this election. More than 1,000 candidates, representing 15 ethnic groups, contested the election to the two chamber of the new Zhogorku Kenesh with the participation of some 62% of the electorate.<sup>12</sup> However only 16 seats were filled, since in many constituencies the large number of candidates prevented any individual from receiving the requisite minimum share of the votes. A second round was held on 19 February again with 62% turn out. Only 73 of the remaining 89 seats were filled. The inaugural session of the parliament's two chambers was held on 28 March, Mukar Cholponbayev. was elected

---

<sup>12</sup> "Kyrgyzstan, Introductory Survey", The Europa World Year Book, Vol.II, p.2028.



speaker of the Legislative Assembly while Almambet Matubraimov, a former First Deputy Prime Minister was elected speaker of the People's Assembly. In April Jumagulov was reappointed Prime Minister.

A direct presidential election was held on 24 December, 1995. "Akayev was re-elected by receiving 71.6% of the votes cast. There were two other candidates : Masaliyev (who had recently been reinstated as the leader of the K.C.P) gained 24.4% of the votes, while Sherimkulov (Masaliyev's successor as chairman of the Supreme Soviet), achieved only 1.7%. The total turnout was 82%.<sup>13</sup>

Akayev was formally inaugurated for a further presidential term on 30, December 1995. One of his first act was to decree that a referendum be held on increasing the powers of the president's office while limiting those of the legislature. As reported, 96.6% of the electorate participated in the referendum on 10 February, 1996, of whom 94.3% endorsed the proposed amendments to the constitution.<sup>14</sup> The Government resigned later in the month; Jumagulov was reinstated as Prime Minister in March, and a new government was appointed by Akayev shortly afterwards.

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 2029.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

In 1996 the first Deputy Prime minister was relieved of his duties on the ground that he had been implicated in corruption scandal. In the following year Cholponbayev was dismissed as speaker of the legislative Assembly after the constitutional court declared his election as invalid.

Government changes in 1997 included in April the appointment of Kulov, the former vice-president, as minister of National Security and the dismissal of the Deputy Prime Minister, Bekbolot Talgarbekov. Karimsher Abdynomunov was appointed in his place. In July the minister of foreign affairs, Roza Otunbayeva was replaced by Muratbek Imanaliyev.

In March 1998, Jumagulov announced his retirement. The Zhogorku Kehesh endorsed the appointment of Kuvachebek Jumaliyev as the new Prime Minister and a Cabinet reshuffle was effected shortly afterwards.

#### **POLITICAL PARTIES:**

A political party is an organized group of persons, who share in certain common principles, motivated to capture political power by constitutional means and should have a view of national interest or common welfare. It can articulate and aggregate demands and interests, recruit and remove leaders, make or unmake government policy, carry out or obstruct the

implementation of a policy decision, effect adjustment on protraction of disputes, and even go to the extent of educating the people.

In Kyrgyzstan there are many political parties to articulate and aggregate the demands of various section of Kyrgyz society. The constitution of Kyrgyzstan approves the existence of multi-party system. Article 8 of the constitution states that "political parties, trade unions and other public associations may be organized in the Kyzgyz republic on the bases of free will and unity or interest. The state shall gurantee the rights and lawful interests of public associations."<sup>15</sup>

Following are important political parties of Kryzgyzstan.

1. **Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan (Partiya Communistov Kyrgyzstana- P.K.K.)**. The P.K.K. was launched in June 1992 as the successor to the former ruling Kyrgyz communist party, which had been disbanded in August 1991. Registered in September, 1992, the party attracted significant support and won representation in february 1995 legislative elections.
2. **National Unity Democratic Movement**

---

<sup>15</sup> The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, chapter-I (available on internet).

*(Demokraticeskaya Dvizhenie Narodnoye Edinstvo-DDNE)*. The D.D.N.E. was launched in October 1991, in the wake of Kyrgyz-Uzbek inter-ethnic clashes on the initiative of (then) Vice President German Kuznetsov, who returned to his native Russia in July 1993. Advocating co-operation between ethnic groups and mixed economy, the party won representation in the February 1995 election.

3. *Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (Partiya Sotsial-Demokraticeskaya Kyrgyzstana - P.S.D.K.)*.

The P.S.D.K. was formed in July 1993 with the political endorsement of President Akayev, supporting the government reformist, pro-market line. It won representation in the February 1995 election.

4. *Democratic movement of Kyrgyzstan. (Demokraticeskaya Dvizhenie Kyrgyzstana - D.D.K.)*.

Founded in May 1990, it served as an umbrella for a number of pro-democracy and pro-independence groups, including the Mutual Help Movement (Ashar), led by Zhumagazy, the Osh Region (Osh Aymaghi) and Truth (Aqiqat). After independence several components broke away to launch independent formations, leaving the rump D.D.K with more nationalist identity. The D.D.K. backed the election of Askar Akayev to the presidency in October 1990, but later withdrew its

support because it opposed his policies of equal rights for all ethnic groups. It formally constituted itself as a political party in June 1993.

5. **Democratic Party of Free Kyrgyzstan**  
**(Demokraticeskaya Partiya Erkin Kyrgyzstan - Erk.)**

The Erk (an acronym meaning 'will') was founded in 1991 as a splinter group of the D.D.K. as a platform of moderate nationalism and for a liberal market economy. It was weakened by 1992 with secession of more nationalist elements who formed the fatherland party. It's subsequent attempts to build a pro-democracy bloc made little progress.

6. **Father land (Alta-Mekel)**, was founded in 1992 by a Kyrgyz nationalist of the Erk.

Other groupings include, the ethnic Russians. Accord a Slavic Association, was founded in June 1995 under the leadership of Usun Sadykov to represent agro-industrial workers. Agrarian party of Kyrgyzstan, launched under A. Aliyev in 1993 was generally supportive of land privatization, although opposing the government's land reform programme as 'unviable'. Still, there are many smaller parties like the Banner of National Revival Party, Ecological Movement of Kyngryzstan, Peoples Assembly of Kyrgyzstan, Republican Popular Party of Kyrgyzstan, Unity Party of Kyrgystan and Uzbek Justice

party based in the Uzbek populated Osh region.<sup>16</sup>

The presence of the above mentioned parties are strong evidence of multi-party system in Kyrgyzstan. All the political parties are contributing to the development and preservation of a healthy democratic political system in the state. President Akaiev once maintained that, "We considered political pluralism as one of the fundamental features of modern democracy, we promoted the formation in Kyrgyzstan, of numerous political parties which do exist and pursue the aim of overt sharing of power."<sup>17</sup>

### C. THE PRESS:

In a democratic country press is considered the fourth pillar. It stands as 'the custodian of all civil, political and religious rights', the mother of all liberties. It also keeps people informed about the programmes and policies of the government and also it keeps the government informed about the wishes and responses of the people.

Liberty of the press paved it's way to Kyrgyzstan as an aftermath of choice taken in favor of the democratic way of development. "The law on Mass media," adopted in

---

<sup>16</sup> Political Hand Book of the World, 1995-96, p. 526.

<sup>17</sup> Narendra Kumar, op. cit., p. 126.

1992, is one of the most democratic laws on the territory of the former Soviet Union. This law creates a legal framework for all activities of the press in Kyrgyzstan. The new constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic provided the press with wide and safe legal guarantees. It declares that in Kyrgyzstan everyone enjoys freedom to openly express and distribute ideas and opinions on liberty of the press, freedom of print, transfer and distribute information. This right refers to the basic rights and liberties of man which according to the Kyrgyz Constitution are inherent, absolute, natural rights protected by law and courts from any encroachment. At present more than 90 newspapers and magazines are published in Kyrgyzstan, of which half is issued in Kyrgyz, 20 both in Kyrgyz and Russian, 10 in Russian, 4 in Uzbek, 5 in German, 1 in Dungan. Ensuring rights and liberties of the ethnic minorities also in the mass media sphere is a constituent part of the democratic orientation in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>18</sup> The Justice Ministry has registered over 150 mass media organizations, 100 of them newspapers and magazines. According to experts at the U.S. Organisation, Freedom House, Kyrgyzstan is the leader among all CIS countries in the realm of free

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

speech."<sup>19</sup> However due to the lack of finances, the major newspapers and magazines are in the hands of the government. The majority of the television stations are also state-owned. There are a few independent T.V. stations in Kyrgyzstan. The most popular one is **Bishkek Pyramid**. Two independent radio stations also exist in Biskek. Now the radio station 'Pyramid' is transmitting BBC news programmes.

The state-owned newspapers in Kyrgyzstan include the **Word of Kyrgyzstan**, the official Russian-language government newspaper, with a circulation of about 20,000, the state newspaper **Erkin Too** (Free Mountains), published in Kyrgyz and Russian and the government news paper **Kyrgyz Tuusy**, published in the Kyrgyz language. The newspaper with the largest circulation is **Evening Bishkek** (Circulation 50,000) which is self-financed, mainly due to the large number of advertisements. **Case Number** is another commercial newspaper specializing in reporting on criminal cases. **Rupublica** is a weekly with the circulation of 5,000 copies. **Asaba** is a popular independent weekly newspaper in Kyrgyz language. **Kyrgyz Rukhy** is an independent newspaper in Kyrgyz that

---

<sup>19</sup> Tolkun Namatbaeva, "Democratic Kyrgyzstan : What lies Ahead?" in Ronald Z.Sagdeev (ed.), Central Asia, Conflict, Resolution and Change, 1995, (available on internet).



expresses the interests of the southerners.<sup>20</sup>

Besides these, there are other newspaper of the trade Unionist ("**El Jarehysy**", "**Tribuna Naroda**"), parties ("**Erk**" the newspaper of the Democratic party and "Erkin Kyrgyzstan"), business ("**Business man**", "**Panorama**") etc.

President Akayev maintains, "our notion of democracy is based on realizing that liberty of the press lies behind it and is it's categoric imperative so to speak. Liberty of the press for us in Mann's common sense, incentive of free thinking, the right to doubt and criticize the established order, liberty of the press is an indisputable absolute that goes together with individual dignity. No one institution, even the Government and Parliament, courts and president can monopolize the truth."<sup>21</sup>

#### D. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

##### Economic Opportunities:

Economic growth is seen interms of expansion of opportunities that individuals in the society enjoy. According to Jean Dre'ze and Amartya Sen "economic development can, infact, be seen in terms of expansion of

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Narendra Kumar, op. cit., p. 140.

opportunities that the individuals in the society enjoy".<sup>22</sup> Therefore, this approach appears more relevant for the strategy of economic development in any society.

Immediately after his appointment as the president of Kyrgyzstan Akayev declared that the republic would turn toward a market economy. So, the government has enacted laws on privatization, joint ventures foreign trade and investment. With the support from the International Monetary Fund, it was first among the Central Asian countries to introduce it's own currency, the **Som**, in May 1993. By the beginning of 1994, more than 4,000 enterprises from various industries had been privatized. In february 1994, the government announced an ambitious plan to privatize most of the remaining state enterprises. The state property fund was ordered to convert all state enterprises into joint-stock companies with freely tradable shares. In 1995, when some opposition said Akayev is "selling off" the country he replied that "the country is being exported and sold off by criminals and corrupt functionaries. In contrast, the investments and credits are helping us to only consolidate Kyrgyzstan's economic potential. Without them we will be unable to uplift our cities and get our

---

<sup>22</sup> Jean Dre'ze and Amartya Sen, "India, Economic Development and Social Opportunity", Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1995, p.7.

industry and countryside up on their feet".<sup>23</sup>

"Kyrgyzstan occupies the fourth position among all the countries of the CIS in minimum wages, despite the fact that the small republic does not possess it's own strategic raw materials (oil, natural gas, etc.). The minimal pension in Kyrgyzstan is 120 soms (512) that puts it on the second place next to Russia (516).<sup>24</sup>

In Kyrgyzstan, 60 percent of the population works in the agricultural sector. All state and collective farms have ben liquidated and replaced by private farms. According to IMF experts, Kyrgyzstan ranks fourth highest in agricultural reform in the CIS, after the Baltic Republics.<sup>25</sup> In 1996, the service sector contributed an estimated 31.6% of GDP, and provided 38.3% of employment. Restructuring the banking system led to growth in the banking sector by 4% in 1996.

Kyrgyzstan's privatization and liberalization policy is attracting a lot of financial aid and foreign investments from the USA, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, France and other

---

<sup>23</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Sov.-95-058, 27 March 1995.

<sup>24</sup> Tolkun Namatbaeva, op. cit. (available on internet).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

developed countries. Kyrgyzstan has good economic ties with IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Islamic Development Bank etc.

The President has asked the state's crime branch to take stringent action against 'economic criminal', i.e., those who are involved in corruption, drug, trafficking, tax evasion etc. "The new economic policy", said Akayev, "is being implemented on a strong legal basis. We have adopted legislative acts for the regulation of the denationalization and privatization process and business activities, formation of a new banking system and land problems and land reforms. The law on foreign investments in the Republic of Kyrgyztan is, I think the most favourable of all such existing laws in the world."<sup>26</sup>

Various reforms like privatization, introduction of som, implementation of tax, land reforms, law against corruption on 'economic criminals' etc. contributed much to the stabilization of Kyrgyz economy. The rate of inflation decreased substantially between 1992 and 1997. The budget deficit as a proportion of GDP was declining, the exchange rate of som was stable against the U.S. dollar and the level of foreign-exchange reserves had increased. "Inspite of growth in all sector of the

---

<sup>26</sup> Narendra Kumar, op. cit., p. 149.

economy in the first half of 1990's, unemployment and incidence of poverty remained high: in 1996, some 50% of the households, mainly in rural areas, were officially classified as 'poor'. In March 1998 President Akayev emphasized reforms of the social Welfare system as a priority for the government".<sup>27</sup>

#### **SOCIAL JUSTICE:**

In the early '90s in an attempt to offset the decline in living standards that was anticipated following the implementation of economic reforms, the Government strengthened Kyrgyzstan's social security and welfare system, introducing subsidies on many basic consumer goods, services 'freezing' housing rents and maintenance charges. As already examined, the constitution of Kyrgyzstan provides a wide range of social opportunities to its citizens.

Articles 26,27,28,29, 30 and 31 of Kyrgyz Constitution deal with many welfare measures to be taken by the state for the all round development of individual and society. These Articles basically deals with orphans, old aged persons, poor, labourers, so far their material assistance, pension, wage and working conditions are

---

<sup>27</sup> The Europa World Year Book, 1998, Vol.11, p.2031.

concerned. Article 32,33, and 34 deal with education, housing, health respectively. Article 37 ensures economic freedom and Article 38, 39 and 40 deal with legal protection of the citizens. All these steps have been taken by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan to provide a pension his basic minimum, so that he can live in the state with a human dignity.

In the year 1994 most, controls of the price/policies were removed. In the same year the three extra-budgetary funds that had been created to administer the system (the Pension Fund, the Employment Fund and the Social Insurance Fund) were consolidated into one Social Fund. The Social Fund provides old-age and survivor pensions, health-related benefits, unemployment benefit, disability pensions and family allowances. In early part of the year 1998, approximately 778,010 people were the beneficiaries from the Social Fund. The normal retirement age in Kyrgyzstan is 60 years for men and 55 years for women. "In January 1994 it was officially reported that in previous year the birth rate had fallen by 10.6%, while an increase of 6% was recorded in the rate of infant morality. However, a reduction in the rate of infant morality from 17.5% in 1994 to 12.5% in 1997 was subsequently recorded".<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

Education is officially compulsory for nine years, comprising four years of primary school, followed by five years of lower secondary school.

Of total current budgetary expenditure in 1996, about 738.4m soms (14.3%) was for health, and 885.0m soms (17.2%) for social security and 1,228.4m soms (23.9%) on education."<sup>29</sup>

Though, Kyrgyzstan is a home of many ethnic nationalities representing many religions, languages, culture, races etc, it has given equal shelter and opportunities under the protective umbrella of its democratic constitution. The Kyrgyz people have shown much more tolerant and humane attitude towards other nationalities within the country in comparison with other Central Asian republics, to make their country a democratic and secular one, representing a composite culture.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

# **CHAPTER - V**

## **CONCLUSION**



The above mentioned study on the 'democratic process and inter-ethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan : 1991-98' highlights how Kyrgyzstan's democratic system is influenced by the relations among various ethnic groups living within her territorial boundary. Multi-ethnicity and nomadism had been the very nature of the Kyrgyz society since the historic past till it came under the Soviet rule. The Soviet legacy had a varied influence on modern Kyrgyz society, both positive and negative. A new stage of economic and cultural life of Kyrgyz people begun. There had been extensive national development, an increased standard of living for all layers of society, the growth of villages, towns, and cities, modern agricultural and industrial development, increased livestock production and education and the flourishing of state sponsored Kyrgyz culture, including the arts and written literature.

However, during the Soviet rule Kyrgyzstan remained dependent on the centralized power of the Communist Party, its ideology and the totalitarian Soviet political system. As Kyrgyz nomads were passive in politics, the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan was mostly dominated by ethnic Russians. The national delimitation policy of Soviet Union created the new borders dividing the people into separate ethnic groups which they themselves were reluctant to recognise.

Nomadism was forcibly replaced by settlement. Islam as a religion came under the general fire directed against supernatural beliefs. Education in mother tongue and the use of the Arabic script were considered anti-revolutionary. Latin script was introduced in place of Arabic. These developments brought drastic structural and psychological changes, threatening to undermine the Kyrgyz's cultural and spiritual life.

Even before the disintegration of Soviet Union, the inter-ethnic tensions began in Kyrgyzstan with the introduction of Gorbachev's policies of Perestroika (restructuring) and Glasnost (openness). Immediately after independence Kyrgyzstan had to face many inter-ethnic tensions, the sources of which were language, economy, border and religion.

The adoption of the language law in September 1989 in Kirghizia brought into the open inter-ethnic tensions. Kyrgyz got the status of state language while Russian language became the language of inter-ethnic communications. The most controversial element of the law was Article 8, which required management and professional personnel - a status that the Russians dominated - to have the ability to speak Kyrgyz to their workers or clients. Some of the quasi-political organizations like Ashar, Osh Aymaghi, were established for the interest of the ethnic Kyrgyz. These organization were responsible

for various inter-ethnic conflicts. The change in the situation of the Russians and Europeans, especially the Russians in Kyrgyzstan from the culturally dominant group to a national minority following the reinstatement of Kyrgyz as the official language in 1993 was indeed psychologically unsettling for the Russian. Many Russian speakers have complained that they have been treated as second class citizens in Kyrgyzstan.

Economy also has become another important source of inter-ethnic tensions in Kyrgyzstan after independence. The overall decrease in production, high inflation, mass unemployment and disproportionate ethnic structure of the working class - i.e. predominantly Slavs and the European nationalities settled in the cities and towns, while the Kyrgyz remained by tradition in the rural areas created an atmosphere of hatredness among the indigenous Kyrgyz towards other ethnic groups especially towards the Russian professionals whom they see as exploiters of their wealth and opportunities. Therefore, the internal economic situation has become a major source of inter-ethnic tension in post-independent Kyrgyzstan.

Border problem has become an important area of conflict among the Central Asian republics. The drawing of boundaries of these states had been done by the former Soviet Union on the basis of their ethnic composition. But every republic is a patch work of heterogenous

population. Their conflict with each other threatens the independence and sovereignty of the concerned states. There has been violent ethnic clash between Kyrgyz and Urbeks in Osh region of Kyrgyzstan in 1990. Besides that, conflict over river water has taken place between these countries regarding the use of the Syr Darya river. A dispute over claims to irrigation water and farm land led to violence between Kyrgyz and Tajik villages on the border which continued till 1991. The resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism and refugee problems in the neighbouring countries such as Tajikistan, Afghanistan are creating lot of insecurity in the border area of Kyrgyzstan. There are many cases of border violations by Chinese citizens. International terrorism, crimes, smuggling, drugs trafficking in the bordering area are posing great threat to the sovereignty of Kyrgyzstan.

Starting from 1989, there has been numerous religious resurgence in all the Central Asian republics. Gorbachev's Perestroika and the the loosening of communist control allowed the revival and resurgence in this region. By and large the people of Kyrgyzstan in the last eight years have discovered and re-embraced Islam. The desire to catch-up the lost seven decades long religious life, have led to the emergence of fundamentalism among the self-appointed clerics and their followers. Large scale construction of mosques, praying,

fasting, abstinence from alcohol and women's wearing the veil are the signs of growing Islamic influence in Kyrgyzstan. The growing Islamic awareness and anti-christian feeling among the Kyrgyzs is creating a fear psychosis among the slavs and Europeans, especially among the Russians and many of them are leaving Krgyzstan.

Democracy is not simply a form of government but also a form of state and society, a method of regulating life and social structure within the broader network of democracy. Kyrgyzstan being a democratic state is trying to resolve various ethnic, economic and political challenges by her conflict resolution mechanisms like, constitution, election and political parties, media, economic opportunities and social justice.

The emergence of the modern welfare state has widened the nature and scope of the constitution also. Along with government it has covered wide range of economic, social, political and legal issues of the citizens in conformity with international standards. Kyrgyzstan constitution provides for a secular and democratic political system guaranteeing economic, political, legal and social equality to all it's citizens, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, language, creed, colour, etc.

Free and fair election is the main instrument of popular control in a representative democracy. Regular

elections make the politicians responsible to the people who are the real source of political power in a democratic country. In Kyrgyzstan free and fair elections are held on the basis of universal suffrage.

Political pluralism is one of the most essential features of modern democracy. It can articulate and aggregate demands and interests and influence governmental policy decision. In Kyrgyzstan there are many political parties to articulate and aggregate the demands of various section of her society. The presence of political parties like Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan (Partiya Communistov Kyrgyzstan - P.K.K), National Unity Democratic Movement (Demokratcheskaya Dvizhehie Narodnoye Edinstvo - DDNE), Social Democratic Party of Kyrgryzstan (Partiya Sotsial - Demokratcheskaya Dvizhnie Kyrgryzstan - D.D.K). Democratic Party of Free Kyrgyzstan (Demokratcheskaya Partiya Erkin Kyrgyzstan - ErK) and many others are strong evidences of multi-party system in Kyrgyzstan. All the political parties are immensely contributing for the healthy and smooth functioning of democratic political system in Kyrgyzstan.

Press is regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy. It is the custodian of civil, political and other rights of the citizens. "The Law on Mass Media", adopted in 1992 in Kyrgyzstan was an important landmark in the history of Kyrgyz society. It opened the way for the liberty of

press. At present many newspaper and magazines are published in Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, German, Dungan. There are many state owned and independent T.V. and radio stations in Kyrgyzstan which are bringing the Kyrgyz people nearer to the ideas of right, liberty, equality and fraternity of the world citizens.

Without economic opportunities democracy is a mere fiction. For the economic development, a country must utilize her natural as well as human resources to provide economic opportunities to the criss ridden society. Kyrgyzstan government has started reforms like privatization, introduction of *som*, implementation of tax, land reforms, law against corruption and economic criminals etc for the stabilization of Kyrgyz economy. Alongwith economic opportunities the Kyrgyz government is widening it's social security and welfare system by providing subsidies on many basic consumer goods, services, freezing housing rents and maintenance charge. The state is helping the orphans, old aged persons, poor, labourers so far their material assistance, pension, wage and working conditions are concerned. The Kyrgyz government is spending a big amount of it's financial budget on education, health and social security of the citizens.

From the beginning three hypotheses formed the basis of the research. The first hypothesis is that "sudden

opening up of the Soviet political system without creating any viable political alternative brought the ethnic problems to the forefront."

After coming to power Gorbachev declared the economic restructuring prior to political reforms but, he was not able to make real economic reforms till the end of 1985. On the other hand his policy of Glasnost allowed greater dissidence to the people through all types of political and social rights. Numerous discussions were held relating to past Soviet actions, on their rights and status. Citizens under Soviet rule were compared with the citizens of other democratic countries of the world. The first two years of reform were spoiled by Gorbachev in turning the entire country into a debating club. Freedom of speech and the press, the right to assemble and demonstrations etc. within short time put tremendous pressure on the political system which was functioning well only due to the control of C.P.S.U. over all spheres of life. The reforms eroded the authority and monopoly of the party and the debates delegitimised the political system which automatically led to the disintegration of Soviet Union without creating any political alternative. The ethnic issues which were buried under the Soviet rule sprung up their giant heads high throughout every republic. Since then Kyrgyzstan has been also confronted with various ethnic problems.



The second hypothesis is, "in multi-ethnic Cargoes society the role of language, culture, religion cannot be undermined as the sources of ethnic conflict and political mobilisation". As we have examined the reinstatement of Cargoes as the official language in 1993, created fear psychosis in the mind of the Russians and Europeans. Many of them left Kyrgyzstan complaining that they had been treated as second class citizens in Kyrgyzstan. The legislature of Kyrgyzstan voted to accord Russian the status of a language of inter-ethnic communication in May 1993 to remove insecurity from the mind of Russian people. President Akayev's attempts to encourage non-Cargoes to remain in the the republic suffered a serious reverse in July, 1993, when Kuznetsov, (the present first Deputy Prime Minister) the most prominent in the government announced his decision to return to Russia, claiming 'isolation' within the Cargoes administration. An apparent effort to restore confidence of the Slav community in the government, a Slavonic university in Bishkek was opened in September 1993. The constitutional court of Kyrgyzstan has approved Article 5 of the constitution by which Russian language has to be the second official language of the state, while Cargoes remains the first official language. At the same time, the same article also state that the Republic of Kyrgyzstan guarantees members of all nationalities making

up the people of Kyrgyzstan the right to preserve their native languages and to foster conditions for the study and development of those languages to enjoy their citizenship rights and freedom.

The revival of Islamic culture and religion is creating fear among the non-Islamic ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan. Certain political groupings are solely based on religion and language like Islamic Rebirth Party (I.R.P), the Ethnic Russians Accord, Slavic Association etc. But, President Akayev's firm commitment and constitutional guarantee to secularism are providing a sense of security among the non-Islamic ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan.

The third hypothesis is that "the evolution of a democratic system in Kyrgyzstan will be influenced by ethnic relations'. As Kyrgyzstan is a multi-ethnic society, it has to deal with various ethnic issues like language, culture, religion and their relations with social tension and cohesion, economic and political instability as well as stability. Societal response and reaction vis-a-vis governmental policies will influence the political system of Kyrgyzstan. In the other word, the evolution of a democratic system in Kyrgyzstan will be influenced by ethnic relations.

# **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

Constitution of Krgyz Republic, (available on internet).

Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press (Ohio, U.S.A., 1991-1998).

Foreign Broadcast Information Service: Central Eurasia, (U.S.A., 1990-1998).

Summary of World Broadcasts, Part-I, Former U.S.S.R., 1990-1998, issued by B.B.C. Monitoring Service (Caversham Park, Reading).

### DOCUMENTS

Chinese President Meets Tajik, Kyrgyz Leaders in Alma-Aty, carried by Xinhua news agency, Beijing, 3 July 1998.

Chinese president Jiang Zemin's speech at Five-Nation Summit in Alma-Aty, 3 July 1998, carried by Xinhua news agency, Beijing, 3 July 1998.

Five Nation Summit in Alma-Aty, 3rd July 1998, carried by Xinhua news agency, Beijing, in English.

### BOOKS

Abel, Aganbegyan, The Challenges: Economic of Perestroika (London, Hutchion, 1988).

Achylova, Rakhat, "Political Culture and Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan", in Karen Dawisha (ed.) International Policy of Eurasia, (Vol. 1, 1995).

Adshead, S.A.M., Central Asia in World History (London, MacMillian, 1993).

Allworth, Edward (ed.), The Nationalities Questions in Soviet Central Asia (New York Preager, 1973).

Anderson, Benedict, Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism (London, Verso and New left, 1983).

Arblaster, Anthony., Democracy, (New Delhi, Book Land Publishing Co., 1997).

- Asirvatham, Eddy, Political Theory (New Delhi, S. Chand and Company Ltd., 1995).
- Bacon, Elizabeth E., Central Asia under Russian Rule: A Study in Cultural Change (New York, Carnell University Press, 1996).
- Beetham David and Boyle Eevin, Democracy 80 Questions and Answers, (New Delhi, National Book Trust, 1995).
- Benningsen, Alexandre and Marie Broxup., The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State (London, Cron Helm, 1983).
- Brass Paul R., Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and comparison, (New Delhi: Saga Publication, 1991).
- Bremmer, Ian and Ray Taras, (eds.), Nations and Polities in the Soviet Successor States (Cambridge, 1993).
- Carr, E.H., History of Soviet Russia, Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-23, (Publication books, 1969), vol.1.
- Chopra, V.D. (ed.) Religious Fundamentalism in Asia (New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1994).
- Dani, A.H., New Light on Central Asia (London: Sang-e-Merl Publication, 1993).
- Daniels, Robert V., Is Russia Reformable: Change and Resistance from Stalin to Gorbachev (Boulder: West View Press, 1990).
- Dash, P.L. (ed.), Russian Dilemma: The Ethnic Aftermath, (Cuttack, Arya Prakasan, 1994).
- Davis, H. B., The National Question: Selected Writings by Rosa Luxemburg, Monthly Review Press, USA, 1984.
- Fainsod, Merle, How Russia is Ruled, (Bombay, Times of India Publication, 1969).
- Gidadhubli, R.G. (ed.), Socio-Economic Transformation of Soviet Central Asia (New Delhi, Patriot Publishers, 1987).
- Goon, Lue Van De (eds.), Between Development and Destruehon: An Euquiry into the causes of conflict in Post-Colonial States (London, Mamillan, 1996).

- Gupta, Dipankar, The Concept of Ethnicity, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Hiro, Dilip, Between Marx and Muhammad: The Changing Face of Central Asia (London, Harper Collins, 1994).
- Hopkin, Peter, The Great Game in Central Asia (New York: Kondasha International, 1992).
- Jalalzai, Musa Khan, Central Asia, Political Situation and Economic Opportunities, (Lahore, Frontier Post Publications, 1992).
- Jean Dre'ze and Amartya Sen, "India, Economic Development and Social Opportunity", (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995).
- Jedic, Synder, (ed). After Empire: The Emerging Geopolities of Central Asia (Washington (D.C): Menair National Defence University Press, 1996).
- Kaser, Michael and Santosh Mehrotra., (ed.) The Central Asian Economics after Independence (London, 1992).
- Kaushik, Devendra, Central Asia in Modern Times (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1970).
- \_\_\_\_\_, Socialism in Central Asia (New Delhi Allied Publishers, 1976).
- Kumar, Narendra, President Akayev of Kyrgyzstan, A Political Biography, (Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, 1998).
- Lapidus., "The Soviet Nationality Questions" in Alexander Dallia (ed.) The Gorbachev Era (Stanford, California, 1987).
- Milan, Hauner, What is Asia for US? Russia's Heartland Yesterday and Today, (London, Unwin Hyman, 1990).
- Patnaik, Ajay., (ed.) Commonwealth of Independent States: Problems and Prospects (Delhi, Konark, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_, Central Asia between Modernity and Tradition (Delhi, 1996).
- Pipes, Richard, The Formation of the Soviet Union, Communism and Nationalism (1917-1923), (Cambridge, Havard University Press, 1984).

- Ram, Rahul, Modern Central Asia, (Delhi, Vikash Publications).
- Rashid, Ahmed, The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1994).
- Rumer Boris, Z., Soviet Central Asia, "A Tragic Experiment" (Boston, 1989).
- Sagdeev, Z. Ronald, and Susan Eisenhower, (ed.), Central Asia, Conflict, Resolution and Change, (P.P.S.S. Press, Chevy Chase, Maryland, 1995).
- Sham-Ud-Din, (ed.) Perestroika and the Nationality Question in the USSR (New Delhi, Vikash Publishing House, 1990).
- Sharma, R.R., U.S.S.R. in Transition: Issues and Themes 1922-1982, (New Delhi: Atlantic Publications and Distributors, 1985).
- Sills, David L., (ed.), International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, (New York, The Mcmillan Company and the Free Press, vol. 5, 1972).
- Smith, Anthony D., The Ethnic Origins of Nations (Oxford, Basic Blackwell, 1986).
- Strong, C.F., Modern Political Constitutions, ELBS (ed.), (London. 1996).
- Tahir, A., Crescent in Red Sky, the Future of Islam in Soviet Union, (Hutchrnson, London, 1989).
- Tuzmuhamedov, R., How the National Questions was solved in Soviet Central Asia, (Moscow, 1993).
- Vaidyanath, R., The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics: A Case Study in Soviet Nationalities Policy, 1917-1936, (New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1976).
- Vos George de and Lola R. Ross (eds.) Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change (Plato Alto, Calif Mayfield, 1975).
- Warikoo, K, (ed.), Central Asia, Emerging New Order, (New Delhi: Har Anand Publishers, 1995).

Warikoo, K. and Narbu, D. (eds.), Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia (New Delhi; South Asia Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1992).

Wheeler, Geoffrey, The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964).

#### ARTICLES/JOURNALS

Abdus, Sabure Akim., "Muslims in the Soviet Union-conflict and Accommodation", Bliss Journal, Dacca, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1986.

Abidi, A.H.H., "Iran and Central Asian States", World Focus, 1993.

Ahmar, Moonis, "Conflict Resolution and Confidence Building in Central Asia", Strategic Studies, New Delhi, Vol. XVI, No. 3, 1994.

Ahmed, Samina, "Political Implications of Ethnicity in Central Asia", Regional Studies, Islamabad, Spring 1995.

Anderson, John, "Constitutional Development in Central Asia", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 16, No. 2, September 1997.

Banerjee, D., "Central Asian Republics Today", Strategic Analysis, New Delhi, August 1994.

Belokrentitsky, U., "Russia and Great Central Asia", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 34, No. 12, December 1994.

Blank, Stephen., "Russia: The Gulf and Central Asia in a New Middle East", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 3, 1995.

Boljurova, I.S., "Central Asia - Search for Priorities", Contemporary Central Asia, Vol. 2, No. 2, New Delhi, 1998.

Borxup, Marie., "The Basmachi", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 2, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Islam in Central Asia since Gorbachev", Asian Affairs, London, Vol. XVII, Part III, October 1987.



- Bozday, Abidan, "Crisis and Democracy in Kyrgyzia" Asian Politik, Hamwig, Vol. 43(3), 1992.
- Britvin, V.G. and M.A. Karakhanian., "Glasnost: It's State Problems and Prospects", Social Research, New York, May-June, 1992.
- Brudny, A.A., "Kyrgyzstan: Island of Democracy", Contemporary Central Asia, 1998, Vol. 2, No. 2.
- Canfield, R.L., "Restructuring in Greater Central Asia: Changing political configurations" Asian Survey, California, October, 1992.
- Chauncy, Harris D., "Ethnic Tensions in Successor Republics in 1993 and early 1994", Post Soviet Geography, Vol. 35, No. 4, 1994.
- Dallin, Alexander, "Causes of the Collapse of the U.S.S.R.", Post-Soviet Affairs, Silver Spring, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1992.
- Danneruther, Ronald, "Creating New States in Central Asia" Adelphi paper, London, March 1994.
- Dobson, Richard B., "Kyrgyzstan in a time of change" Central Asia Monitor, No. 1, 1995.
- Dunlop, John B., "Will the Russians Return from the Near Abroad?" Post-Soviet Geography, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1994.
- Fuller, Graham E. "Let's see how Islamic politicians cope and Learn's", International Herald Tribune, 14 January 1992.
- George, Minsky, "Central Asian Emergency" Current History, October 1992.
- Gleason, Gregory, "The Federal Formula and the collapse of the U.S.S.R." Poblius, Texas, Winter 1992, Vol. 22, No. 1.
- Gooding, John, "Gorbachev and Democracy" Soviet Studies, Glasgow, Vol. 42, No. 2, April 1990.
- Gross Jo Ann, "Cultural and Religious Identities in Central Asia", The Iranian Journal of International Affairs, Fall/Winter 1994-95.

- Haghighayeghi, Mehrdad, "Islamic Revival in the Central Asian Republics", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1994.
- Hiro, Dilip, "Islamist Strengths and Weakness in Central Asia", Middle-East International, London, 5 February, 1993.
- Howell, Jude, "Poverty and Transition in Kryrgyzstan: How Some Households Cope", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1996.
- Imam, Zafar, "How and Why the Soviet Union Disintegrated", International Studies, New Delhi, Vol. 29, No. 4, October-December, 1992.
- Moldokasimtegin, Kiyas, Name Changes of Geographical Locations in Kyrgyzstan, European studies, Vol. 2, No. 4, Winter 1995-96.
- Naby, Eden., "Ethnicity and Islam in Central Asia", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1993.
- Olcott, Martha Brill, "Central Asian Post-Empire Politics", Orbis, Spring, 1992.
- Onaran, Yalman, "Economics and Nationalism: The case of Muslim Central Asia", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1994.
- Pelters, William., "Central Asia and the Minority Questions", Asian Affairs, London, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1991.
- Ploskikh, V., 'Kyrgyz People: History and Culture', Contemporary Central Asia, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1998.
- Robertson, Lawrence, R., "The Ethnic Composition of Migration in the Former Soviet Union", Post-Soviet Geography and Economics, Vol. 37, No. 2, 1996.
- Roi, Yaacov, "Central Asian Riots and Disturbances, 1989-90: Causes and Context," Central Asian Survey, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1991.
- Rumer, Boris, Z., "The Gathering of Storm in Central Asia" Orbis, Vol. 37, Winter 1993.
- Seif-Zadeh, H. S., "The National Identity crisis in Central Asia and the Caucasus", Iranian Journal of International Affairs, Vol. , No. 3 and 4, 1994-95.

Sobol, Steven, "The Creation of Soviet Central Asia: The 1919 National Delimitation", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1996.

The Europa World Year Book, 1998, Vol. 2.

The Political Hand Book of the World, 1995-96.

Weildemann, Diethelm, "The Asian Dimension of the Dissolution of the U.S.S.R. The Central Asia Conflict Constellation - Origin, Structure, Complexity and Specificity," Strategic Studies Islamabad, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1994.

Yavuz, M.H., "The Pattern of Political Islamic Identity: Dynamics of National and Transnational loyalties and Identities", Central Asian Survey, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1994.