

Ethno-Regional Divide and Political Transformation in Kyrgyzstan, 1991-2011

Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University for award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “Ethno-Regional Divide and Political Transformation in Kyrgyzstan, 1991-2011” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

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

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Dedicated to my late father

Shri Ashok Kr. Chaudhary

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAREC	Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation
CASA-1000	Central Asia-South Asia Power Project
CEC	Central Election Commission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CLC	Congress of Local Communities
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECO	Economic Cooperation in Organisation
ENEMO	European Network of Elections Monitoring Organizations
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GNI	Gross national income
ICCt	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDLO	International Development Law Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
INTRAC	The International NGO Training and Research Centre
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPP	Institute for Public Policy
KIHS	Kyrgyz Integrated Household Survey
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NSC	National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SDPK	Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
UCLG	United Cities and Local Government
UN	United Nations
UNCC	Uzbek National Culture Centre
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRCCA	United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organisation

TRANSLATED WORDS

Kurultay	Meetings
Jogorku Kenesh	Parliament
Zhogorku Kenesh	Supreme Council
Myizam Chygaruu Jyiny	Legislative Assembly
Aibolot Aidosov	Central Election Commission
Mahallas	Neighbourhoods
Aksakals	Elders
Oqsoqol	White Beards

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I.1 Background

Kyrgyzstan, a state once referred to as an 'island of democracy' amidst other Central Asian authoritarian regimes, became independent in 1991. The country has perceived the growth of free media, independent political parties and civil society with varied views unlike other neighboring countries, which attained independence at the same time. After the independence from the communist superpower Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), it was an immense challenge for Kyrgyzstan to make a transition from a Soviet Republic to a democratic state. The transition has been a rough terrain and saw various ups and downs. The journey of political transition for the former Soviet Union states was challenging. Between 2003 and 2005, a wave of democratic transition seized the Commonwealth of Independent States. In Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, the authoritarian regimes were overthrown by the people of these countries and revolutions were, for the first time, called by the names of the flowers as the Rose, Orange and Tulip Revolution, respectively.

Kyrgyzstan is the only Central Asian country to have experienced two tempestuous regime changes in the appellation of democratization of the country. It is also the only ex-Soviet state to experience overthrow of the authoritarian rulers twice, by the names 'Tulip-I' in 2005 and 'Tulip-II' revolution of 2010. There are encouraging developments mixed with several threats to its stability, making it a country of paradoxes. There is a strong geographical division (due to mountainous topography) into the north and the south, which is considered as one of the main factors for numerous problems in the country. The geographical division has much more dimensions to it. The division is not merely geographical but displays inordinate ethnic, economic, and political disparities. The country's two Presidents were removed from power by popular discontent over such issues as poverty, unemployment, and regional divide. The first President, Akaev (until 2005), was a northerner and after he was overthrown, there was a shift of power from north to the south, because second President Bakiyev was a southerner. The interim government was constituted after the 2010 revolution led by President Roza Otunbayeva. This was followed by an election, when President Almazbek Atambayev won and assumed office from 1 December 2011. They were both perceived as 'northerners'. Kyrgyzstan

witnessed two bloody ethnic clashes in the southern region in a span of 21 years. Even before independence in June 1990, conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks over a land dispute in 'Osh' turned horrid, killing 300 people officially and close to 1000 unofficially. The riots in 'June 2010' again took place in the south of Kyrgyzstan (city of Osh and Jalalabad) between the same ethnic groups. The '2010 riots' were largely seen as an extension of the Color Revolution, which preceded the ethnic riots by two months. In this communal violence, there was a massive loss of life and property in southern Kyrgyzstan. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2011 Report, there was death of over 400 people and the injury of another 2,000, close to 2,000 homes were destructed, the looting of numerous, and the forced displacement of 375,000 people, of whom 75,000 fled into Uzbekistan, while 300,000 were displaced internally (UNHCR, 2011).

The south of the country is the place where the Uzbek minority lives in large numbers. There are 14.4 percent Uzbeks in the total population of the country. Kyrgyz is the major ethnic group constituting 70.9 percent of the population. The Osh province with 28 percent of Uzbek population and Osh city with 44 percent population of Uzbeks makes the region a major hub for the Uzbek ethnic minorities. The provinces of Jalalabad and Batken also have Uzbek population in big numbers. The ethnic-conflict was inexorable in southern Kyrgyzstan on both occasions for similar reasons. The rising ethno-nationalism, the weak political system and the presence of the liberal atmosphere allowing demands to be voiced and the fervour to exploit the historical opportunities to make individualistic gains were cited as few reasons for the conflicts. Ethno-nationalism remains a vital challenge for the republic.

According to Crawford, 2007:

“Ethnic nationalism is the belief that the members of a particular ethnic group are a "nation" part of an extended family with intrinsic rights to a particular piece of land. They believe that other groups that might inhabit or claim that land does not have those same rights. This belief has particular emotive power, providing ethnic groups with a crucial source of solidarity while it reinforces ethnic identity. This ethnic nationalist ideal has been largely realized across the globe. In fact, the current system of nation-states is, for the most part, the product of a violent process of ethnic separation or outright destruction of ethnic groups too weak to claim territories of their own.”

While the issue of ethno-nationalism was always fiercer in the south but the 2010

ethnic conflict between Uzbek and Kyrgyz united the Kyrgyz population of north and south part of the republic. The internal factors like regionalism and ethno-nationalism play a critical role in shaping the country's future and state's resilience to pressure remains diminutive.

I.1.1 History of Political Transformation

The Political Transformation Index (PTI) of Kyrgyzstan is 5.95 and ranks 60 out of 129 (BTI, 2016). The 'transformation' here is considered as an open-ended course of change, which has now substituted the word 'transition' in Social Science discourse. However, what is being transformed has not been well defined or identified. The erstwhile Soviet countries replaced communism with new political and economic system making it essential to study it as a political theory of transformation. According to Nodia, in post-communist countries even though it is preferred that "the transition should be to liberal democracy or a market economy" but the final destination is unknown so the term 'transformation' or just 'change' is preferred (Nodia, 2000). This journey of transformation and democratisation has exhibited the rise of the various ambiguous categories such as "hybrid regimes", "delegative democracies" or "imitative democracies." These unusual political systems are difficult to fit in the democratic or non-democratic regimes or other well-known categories. This situation is clearly manifested in Kyrgyzstan (Shukuralieva, 2007). The Kyrgyz society has seen the transformation across the board including culture, economy and politics. The political transformation of Kyrgyzstan is full of dramatic events during the post-Soviet period, from pursuing the "democratic island" in Central Asia to the "Tulip Revolution" of 2005 and the "April Revolution" of 2010, and from believing in western democracy to centralized regime. It has seen eight constitutional referendums in its twenty-four years of constitutional history. The republic's leadership unswervingly guaranteed to free and fair elections in 2015 and 2017. The elections were held successfully on both the occasions notwithstanding much mayhem. There is a broad-spectrum agreement between the general masses and the civil society that the existing Constitution, however limited, has restricted the emergence of another autocratic regime.

Kyrgyzstan had a working multi-party democratic political system, free media, and an effective political opposition system in place when it emerged from the Soviet

breakup. However, the democracy has its own set of problems. The transition to market economy, due to which the country had to face lot of economic difficulties, and the adoption of Kyrgyz Language Law, which has relegated a lesser role to Russian language have caused the ethnic minorities to migrate in big numbers. Relations between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks are apprehensive. The experiences of the country's economic position, which intensify the 'clan and family' based political conflicts have continued beneath the surface of national life. All these conflicts have left the country in a big turmoil and chaos. The independence of Kyrgyzstan was announced on 31 August 1991, months before the official disintegration of the USSR, after an unsuccessful coup attempt against Soviet leaders. Kiev openly condemned the coup initiators and supported Gorbachev. He became the President of Kyrgyzstan after a massive victory securing 95 percent of the total votes cast (Capisani, 2000). The country adopted a new democratic Constitution in 1993, proclaiming Kyrgyz Republic to be a "sovereign, unitary, democratic republic" with legal secular status (Anderson, 1999). The country became a member of The Commonwealth of Independent States generally dominated by Russia (Warikoo and Singh, 2004; Omarov, 2005). Whilst the other central Asian states charted on pseudo nationalist Presidents who had transformed from the communist party leadership, Kyrgyzstan made an exception by embracing democracy in early 1990s. However, Kyrgyzstan's stint with democracy was ephemeral and many predicted it would meet the same fate as its neighbours. The Kyrgyzstan's democratic transformation has not been a smooth one. It stood out among the countries of the region, as it was more open and receptive to change being addressed as "the island of democracy" (Anderson, 1999).

The reforms that had started since independence started dwindling in the mid-1990s; the liberalization of economy and politics caused more dissatisfaction amongst the people. The country had not inherited the infrastructure for economic reforms and tradition for political restructuring. There were some elements of reforms like introduction of free market, privatization of land and property, which were quickly introduced but others failed as credit from commercial banking, bringing the overall system to a standstill. All of this led to high unemployment and frustration among the masses (Buyers, 2003). The democratic reform also nearly stalled by 1995. There was extensive use of personal executive influence by the President and the political elites for promoting their own economic interests. It was a typical pattern observed in the

other Central Asian countries as well during that time (Bahl and Syed, 2003; Capisani, 2000). Kyrgyzstan's economic production was worst affected amongst former Soviet countries in the initial phase. The country's economy was predominantly agrarian whose traditional livelihood was shepherding. The number of sheep fell from almost ten million in 1991 to only three million in 1996. As a result of declines in industrial and agricultural production, by the mid 1990s, twenty percent of the population was left unemployed (Cummings, 2002). The deepening problem of unemployment led to large-scale migration to the cities, straining the then weak urban social services and threatened political stability. The disenchanted Kyrgyz youth embodied both a threat to stability and a conceivable support base for extremist politics.

In the 1996 and 2003 referendums, the presidential powers were enormously increased by Kiev after amending the Constitution. There are also various reports, which claim that after the constitutional changes, Kiev won presidential elections twice by unfair means (Gleason, 2003). After mid-1990s, the dissatisfaction grew among people relating to strong presidential model and the President himself. The opposition attacked Kiev with various charges and internally within the government he lost popularity due to diminishing economic resources, which were a source of infighting. His position was much more isolated than ever (Elebaeva and Puhavo, 2001; Schlyter, 2005; Omarov, 2005; Buyers, 2003). Conversely, to secure his position, the President grew more authoritarian and was finally ousted by a Revolution on 24 March 2005 popularly known as "Tulip Revolution." Rising nepotism, fraudulent elections of 2005, promotion of family and clan interests, led to a massive unrest and people called for President's resignation. This widespread call for the removal of the President started in the south of Kyrgyzstan (OSCE, 2007). The dissenters seized the main administrative block on 24 March forcing Kiev to flee the country (Bakshi, 2006; Sanghera and Illiasov, 2008). Thereafter, opposition under the leadership of Kurmanbek Bakiyev formed a coalition and he became the President of the country (ICG, 2005; Elebaeva, 2005).

Akaev's 15 years of rule can be recapitulated as the most liberal one in the history of Central Asia. A progressive President in the initial years of independence started displaying authoritarian tendencies towards the second half of the decade. Various

internal and external factors hampered the democratic transition. There were pressures from neighbouring states, western powers, economic deterioration, ethnic frictions and many other problems challenging his authority and status. The new century did not bring any respite and Kiev resorted to the strongest measure to insulate his position. He tried to curtail criticism, free media and contested politics that is the lifeblood of a democratic order (Cummings, 2002). The conditions surrounding the Kyrgyzstan's transition became parallel to other post-Soviet states. Bakiyev repeated the previous regime's mistakes after getting elected in June 2005 on a wave of "anti-corruption rhetoric". In 2006, Bakiyev, soon after assuming Presidency, faced a political crisis when thousands of protesters participated in a series of events in Bishkek showing their dissatisfaction with the current regime. There were allegations that Bakiyev failed to take measures to eradicate crime, corruption and reduce presidential powers which was required for maintaining the stability (Lewis, 2008; Marat, 2006(a); Marat, 2008). Bakiyev despite the protests of 2006, continued to expand his authority in the year 2007 with constitutional amendments through a referendum. In 2009, Bakiyev was re-elected as the President, with 78 percent of the votes casted. The election was not considered to be free and fair by OSCE (2009) and many other international observers. He tried to silence mass media and printing press, and his political opponents were also marginalised. There were countrywide arrests of the opponent leaders, the leaders were even attacked and lived in constant fear of being implicated or charged under false cases. There were attacks on journalists, and two journalists died during 2009 alone that drew massive criticism. The media was suppressed and pressurised by the government. The media hardly published any critical reviews of the governmental policies.

The country was plunged into a deep power crisis as Bakiyev failed miserably to manage water resources. There was rampant corruption in the energy sector that could not be controlled by the government (Marat, 2008). There were evidences even against the state for helping organized crime boom. Rising nepotism was another problem, as Maxim Bakiyev, the son of the President, had become very influential figure in the country. He controlled all the significant assets of the country. Kurmanbek Bakiyev tried to design a special mechanism for filling up the President's office by appointing an interim President, if he left before his term expires but it did

not materialize. In Kyrgyzstan, both Akaev and Bakiyev wanted their children to run for presidency (Fedorenko, 2010).

The Kyrgyz ethnic group in the south supported Bakiyev, but local ethnic divisions played against him. The relations between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks remained strained under his Presidency and these ethnic tensions led to infused local demonstrations. Apart from the internal factors, Bakiyev fully exploited the external factors by playing superpowers alongside each other. The USA's need for an air base near Afghanistan made Kyrgyzstan a focal point of interest not only for the USA but also for Russia. Russia had apprehensions that the USA's presence in the region would affect its hegemony and hamper its regional ties with the Central Asian countries. Bakiyev exploited both sides and promised Kremlin that Kyrgyzstan would expel the US military base in return of 2 billion US dollars from Russia. Bakiyev did not keep his promise and backed out when the US government agreed to pay 60 million US dollars per year in place of 17 million US dollars. His twofold policy of catering to both the superpowers could keep none exultant and he came under immense pressure from both sides. This mounting pressure led to civil unrest and demonstrations on 6 April 2010, in the small town of Talas located in the south of Kyrgyzstan. The movement became so big in the subsequent days that Bakiyev had to flee the country after protestors had captured the White House. This revolution is popularly called "April Revolution" of 2010 ending the Bakiyev era (Chenoy, 2010). There were 86 dead and more than 1000 injured in the protests (BTI, 2012). The Russians provided humanitarian aid and a military cantonment to their Osh military base, to help the Kyrgyz government maintain stability (Chenoy, 2010). In the succeeding days, opposition leaders headed by Rosa Otunbayeva came to power and formed the interim government on 7 April 2010. The events of April 2010 were surprising to many as Bakiyev's position and hold on power looked so secure. Kyrgyzstan witnessed two uprisings in a span of just five years and both leaders met the same fate. The situation is alarming not only for Kyrgyzstan's political and economic stability but also for the Central Asian region. Roza Otunbayeva headed the interim government. The government also comprised of leaders from various political parties like Social Democratic, Ak-Shumkar, Ata-Meken, and some unaffiliated leaders as well.

The revolution of April was followed by the conflicts between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the south of the country in June 2010. The main reason for the conflict was considered to be the Uzbek community supporting the new Kyrgyz government headed by Roza Otunbayeva while the majority of the Kyrgyz people in the region remained loyal to the overthrown President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. The reason for the clashes is the struggle for power between various clans that exist not only in Kyrgyzstan but the entire Central Asian region (Grachev, 2010; BBC News, 2010). Ethnic fighting continued with riots spreading to other areas. The state of emergency was declared by the government in the Jalalabad region of the south (BBC News, 2010). The country became Central Asia's first parliamentary democracy and immunity from the President's office was removed in a new Constitution in 2010. The constitution was approved in a national referendum held just two weeks after the ethnic violence. The referendum, which saw a turnout of 65 percent, brought legitimacy to the interim government. International monitor organisations such as the OSCE approved of the votes (Toktogulov and Boudreaux, 2010). The result was a major victory for Rosa Otunbayeva, a former foreign minister, which is considered unusual with few women in politics in Kyrgyzstan. Roza Otunbayeva was the first President, not only in Kyrgyzstan but also in the history of ex-Soviet Central Asia (Gidadhubli, 2010), otherwise dominated by authoritarian presidents.

Rulers of Kyrgyzstan since Independence

Presidents of Kyrgyztsan	Years of Rule
Askar Akaev	1991-1995
Kurmanbek Bakiyev	2005-2010
Rosa Outnbayeva	2010-2011
Almazbek Atambayev	2011-2017
Sooronbay Jeenbekov	2017-incumbent

Table I.1

On 10 October 2010, the parliamentary elections were conducted. The voters were deeply divided in their views after going through a phase of political chaos and economic insecurity. One wing was disappointed with the democratic experiment and the other was very positive about the outcomes of the Revolution, believing that the changes in the Constitution and in the political system would bring an end to their miseries. The “Super-Presidentialism” where the president had disproportionately enormous powers and a destructive role would be finally put to an end (Abazov (a), 2010). The first two eras saw the rule of three different coalitions, there were disagreements over the distribution of key posts. Almazbek Atambayev who first became the Prime Minister in one of the coalition governments, became the President in a landslide victory in 2011 to succeed Rosa Otunbayeva (Stobdan, 2014). The new President Atambayev showed moves that asserted that he wanted more powers than his predecessor Otunbayeva. There were promotions based on loyalty to the President than the merit. During his tenure, he pursued a multilateral foreign policy. He was always seen as a Pro-Russian President, which became even more evident when he secured the withdrawal of the US from the Manas air base in 2014, implying his closeness to Russia. Kyrgyzstan entered into the Moscow-led Customs Union in 2015, and has maintained good economic relations with the neighbouring countries especially Russia which employs at least 500,000 Kyrgyz citizens. The civil society is anxious about the increasing “russification” of the Kyrgyz politics.

The Country’s last Parliamentary elections were held on 4 October 2015. The political parties were required to meet the following criterion -at least 30 percent people in the party lists should be from each gender and every 4th candidate from a different gender. There was also a requirement of 15 percent ethnic minorities to be represented in party list. The Country’s held yet another referendum in December 2016, which increased the powers of the Parliament and the Prime Minister as well as making reforms to the Judicial System. This referendum created various doubts in the minds of the opponents. In the last Presidential election held in October 2017, Sooronbay Jeenbekov was chosen as the President, who was serving as the Prime Minister from April 2016 to August 2017. The OSCE 2017 reports stated the elections to be lively, competitive, and unique in this region.

Despite two uprisings since 2005, nature of ruling class in Kyrgyzstan remained largely unchanged. Building a value based democratic structure in a society deeply rooted in tribalism therefore remains a major challenge. Three successive coalition governments formed after 2010 events proved unstable due to infighting. Atambayev had asserted to bring about a speedy change, but clan and regional rivalries have hindered such efforts. The fragile coalition system has led to a rise in corruption and nepotism that continued to hinder any meaningful change (BTI, 2014). The political and economic changes in the country after the revolution have raised few concerns: if there is going to be a genuine change and stability in the country or is it a just an eyewash for the masses before the re-emergence of autocratic regime.

Today, Kyrgyzstan has a range of problems in state building and creation of political culture. In the light of the on-going ethnic conflict, these problems will be researched upon. Post 9/11, Kyrgyzstan also had the distinction of being the only country to host two major superpowers till recently, giving it a unique strategic importance on the world map. Thus, any political change ensued to have a great impact not only on the region but also on the world as a whole. It will also take time for the country to understand the constitutional changes, especially those rebalancing power within the government. It becomes an interesting area of study to research for valid explanations to the processes occurring in Kyrgyzstan's present and history. It will help in answering if the political transformation will ever lead to a stable and democratic Kyrgyzstan. The study envisages assessing issues that directly and indirectly affect the transformation process and hinders the stability and transition of the country into a democratic set up. Some questions that arise include: What are the factors leading to political transformation?; what are its main problems?; why the democratic transformation turns into authoritarianism?; whether the "color revolution" means the success of "the second transformation"?; what is the character of Kyrgyzstan's political transformation?; which factors affect it?; what is the result of its democratic transformation?; and what conclusions can be learned from the theoretical development of western politics and the experiences of Kyrgyzstan's transformation?. A policy-oriented approach would be adopted to analyse and comprehend the transformation journey. At the same time, using comparative analysis, systematic synthesized analysis is required to discuss these problems. The country divided on

various lines of conflict, political, regional, urban-rural divide, ethnicity and clan, makes political stabilization a challenging process.

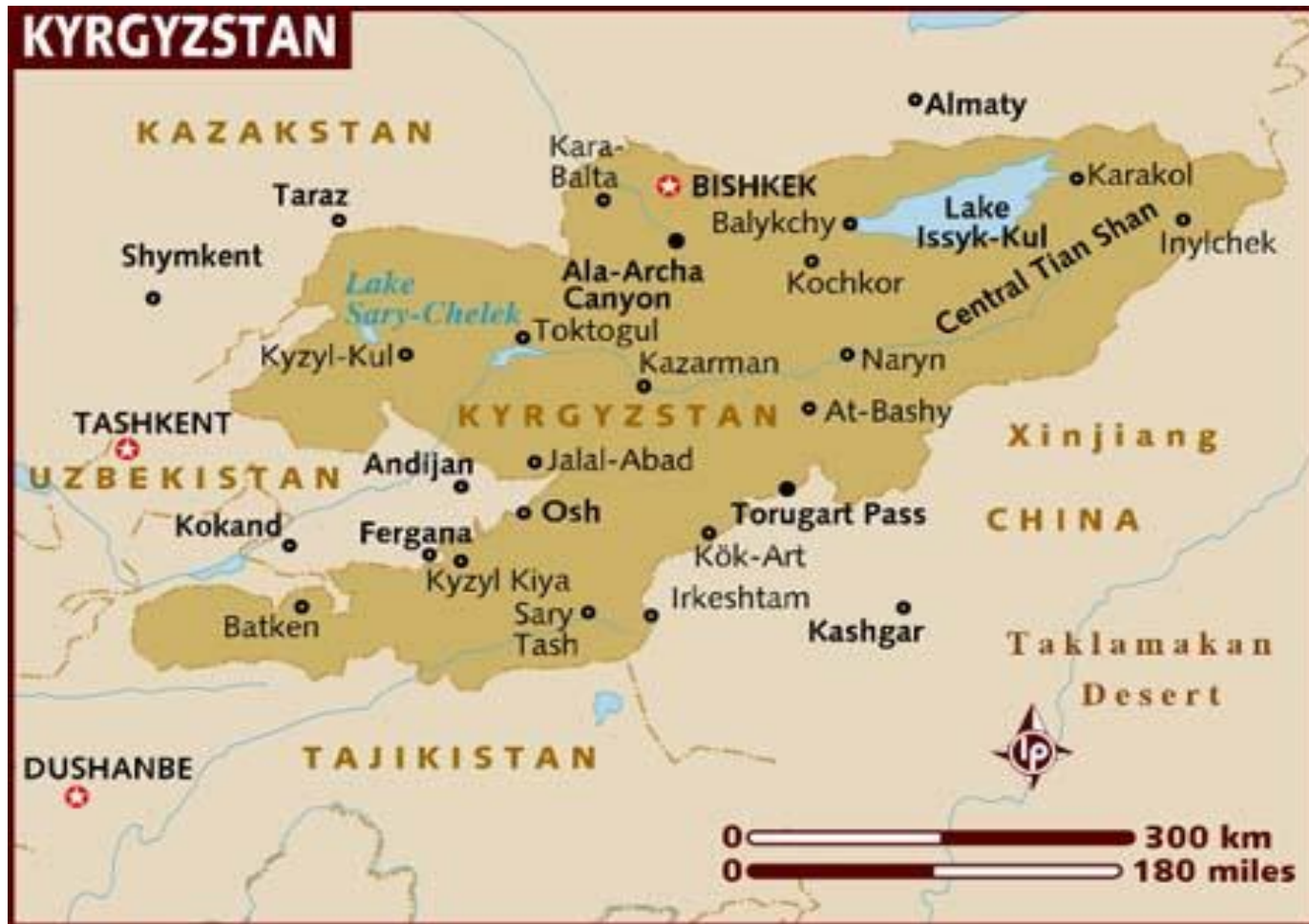
The present study will attempt to study the Kyrgyz political transformation in the history of modernization.

I.1.2 Area of Study

Kyrgyzstan is a Central Asian state of far-fetched natural beauty with old cultural and nomadic traditions. It lies amid the Tien-Shan mountains and has been referred as ‘Central Asia’s Switzerland’ due to its natural magnificence. It has gigantic stretches of unspoiled regions and about 85 percent of Kyrgyzstan itself constitute of mountains. The boundaries with neighbouring countries run along the mountain ranges. The geo-strategic location makes the country an attention-grabbing subject.

I.1.2.1 Spatial Location

Kyrgyzstan has Kazakhstan to its north, Tajikistan to its south, Uzbekistan to the west and China to the east. Kyrgyzstan covers 199,951 square kilometres (77, 201 square miles) of area. It is strategically located between Central Asia and China and is separated from Afghanistan by Tajikistan. Major land features include Lake Issyk-Kul, one of the world’s largest mountain lakes, and fertile region of the Fergana Valley. It is a landlocked country with minimal natural transportation routes, which hinders the economic prosperity of the country. There are two mountain ranges running along Kyrgyzstan i.e. Tien Shan (north-eastern part) and Pamir-Alay (south-western part). The density of population is higher in the north, north-west and south-west in areas like Talas, Chu and Fergana valley. National security is a low priority for Kyrgyzstan as it is aloof from most of the trouble zones of Asia (excepting Tajikistan) (Stewart and Weldon, 2004). The country is rich in natural resources and possesses many minerals including reservoirs of gold. The abundant hydroelectric power has not been captured well enough to make it an asset in the country’s economy. It depends on imports for meeting its energy requirements and has some oil and gas, which is not enough for its domestic needs (Buyers, 2003). Despite being a small state, transportation routes poorly link parts of Kyrgyzstan, and often the degree of social and economic interaction of various parts of the country remains minimal.



Source- URL: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/asia/kyrgyzstan/>

Map I.1

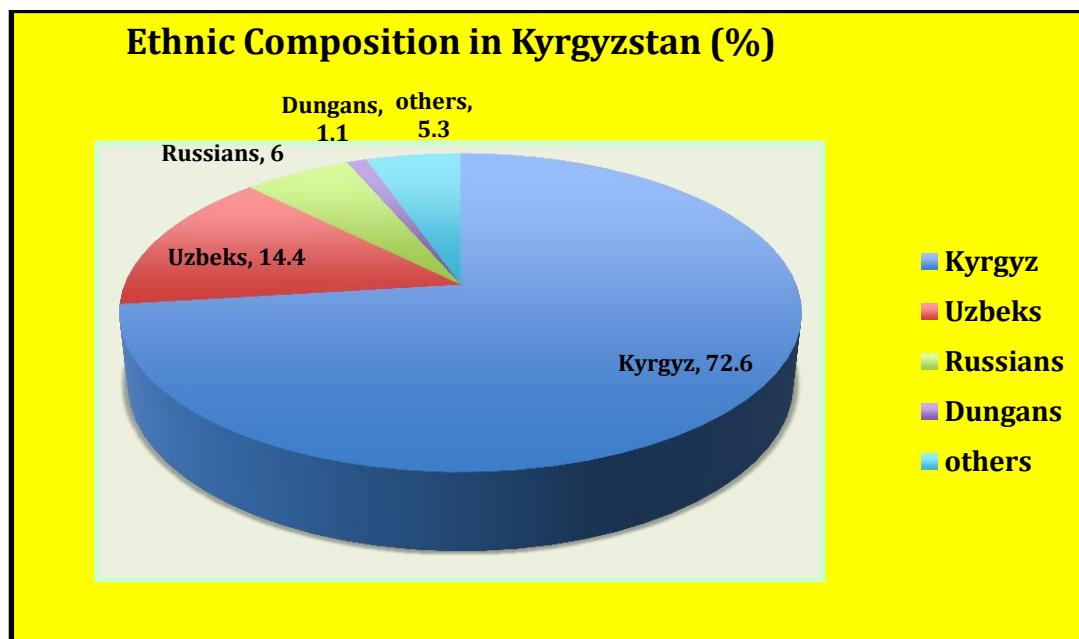
This creates a situation conducive to the persistence of sub-national social groups that are easily manipulated by divisive political rhetoric, especially during elections and other instances requiring public mobilization.

I.1.2.2 Demographic Structure

Kyrgyzstan's population is estimated to be 5.8 million in the 2014 census. According to The World Bank Report 2016, the estimated population of the country is 6.08 million, of which 30.3 percent are under the age of 14 and 5.27 percent are over 65. The female population is 50.4 percent (World Atlas, 2017). There are 75 percent Muslims, 20 percent Russian Orthodox and 5 percent people belong to various other faiths (CIA, World Fact Book, 2017). The state is mainly rural and only about one-third population resides in urban areas (The World Bank Report, 2016). The density of population is 31.7 people per sq. km. Population density of Kyrgyzstan is increasing at an average annual rate of 1.65 percent (World Atlas, 2017). The vast bulk of Kyrgyzstan's population lives in rural areas; the north part in and around capital Bishkek is most densely populated. The second most densely populated region is Osh in the west; the least densely populated region are the east and southeast in the Tien Shan mountains. The urban population is 36 percent (2017) and annual rate of change in urbanization is 2.04 percent is (2015-20 est.), (World Atlas, 2017).

Kyrgyzstan is one of the least urbanized of the former Soviet republics and was among the last to develop its own cultural nationalism. The country has over 80 ethnic groups. The country's major ethnic groups are the Kyrgyz (Turkic people), comprising 72.6 percent of the population, Russians (6.0 percent) mainly concentrated in north and Uzbeks (14.4 percent) residing in the south-west. Other small minorities include 1.1 percent Dungans and 5.3 percent others ethnic groups (2014 census) (stat.kg.). It has been observed that the percentage of ethnic Kyrgyz rose to 72.6 percent in 2014 from around 50 percent in 1979 under the Soviet times. On the other hand, percentage of other ethnic groups (Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and Tatars) fell enormously from 34 percent to 7 percent (stat.kg.). Citizenship was granted to all permanent residents without considering their ethnic origins. Kyrgyzstan retained the official status of Russian language and is the only country except Kazakhstan in the Central Asian region to do it (Taylor and Francis, 2005). The Kyrgyz language was adopted as the official language in September 1991. Majority of the population speak

Kyrgyz, and Russian is the second most used language, which is the dialect of trade and commerce. English is the third language of contact.



Source- Data Kyrgyzstan Census-2014 (stat.kg.)

Figure I.1

Post-independence Kyrgyzstan has seen prominent change in its ethnic composition. There are three major ethnicities: the native Kyrgyz, the Russians and the Uzbeks whose size and role is subject to continual change in politics and policies of the government. There have been conflicts between ethnic groups like Kyrgyz-Uzbek and Kyrgyz-Tajik along the border with Tajikistan. After the ethnic conflicts of 1990, an estimated 10 percent of the Russians left the country (CIA, 2010). The migration rate is 5.1 migrants/1,000 population (2017 est.) (CIA, 2017). In the republic, who all above 15 and over can read and write is considered literate. The total literate population is 99.5 percent out of which 99.5 percent male and 99.4 percent female are literate (2015 est., CIA, 2017). School enrollment rate is 98 percent primary (percent gross) (CIA, 2016). The HDI is measured on these three dimensions of human development: access to knowledge, a long and healthy life and a decent standard of living. Kyrgyzstan's HDI value for 2014 is 0.628, which places it in the medium human development category. It stands at 125th position out of 187 countries (BTI, 2016). The health expenditure is 6.5 percent of GDP (2014). The Life Expectancy at birth is 71 years (2017 est.) (CIA, 2017).

Kyrgyzstan's economy is dominated by minerals extraction, agriculture and dependence on payments from citizens working abroad. These remittances account for over one-quarter of Kyrgyzstan's GDP. It is a lower middle-income state. The GDP composition of the country is like the following; the agriculture sector contributes 14.9 percent, industry sector 29.2 percent and services 55.9 percent (2016 est.) (CIA, 2017). The chief agricultural products include cotton, meat and wool. Major exports include cotton, gold, mercury, uranium, and gas. The country has sought to attract foreign investments but has been through difficult investment climate due to country's unstable political environment and legal battles over country's largest gold mine. The GDP of the country is 6.55 current US billion dollars and GDP per capita is 1,083 current US dollars (CIA, 2017).

I.2.3 Foreign Relations

The Kyrgyz Republic is in constant contact with other Soviet countries, mainly with Kazakhstan and Russia. Kazakhstan is Kyrgyzstan's closest neighbour. It's cultural and historical partner, and all the present or future developments impact their bilateral relations. Kyrgyzstan's physical presence along the southern external of the former USSR places it in the way of its two quite dispute-ridden cultures, i.e., the Chinese and the Russian. The cultural ties with China are visible in the neighbouring Xinjiang province. It comprises mainly the Uighurs, a nomadic tribe coming from the same Siberian descendants as the Kyrgyz people. The region is famous for providing a refuge for Kyrgyz fleeing, subjugation. Currently, it has slightly more than 200,000 Kyrgyz, and this is becoming a major threat to China's security. It is also Kyrgyzstan's one of the main non-Russian trading partners. There is quite an increase in the China's economic influence on Kyrgyzstan if we compare the situation from the past one-decade. Kyrgyzstan became a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at an early stage along with its free economic environment enabled it to become one of the major re-exporters, importers and transporter of Chinese goods. This connection became the major reason for the onset of economic liberalization in the initial phase of independence. Russia imposes the initial push on Kyrgyzstan's economic policy despite China's strong influence.

Kyrgyzstan's relations with its neighbours, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, have been quite rocky. The border confrontations have become quite regular between the

security guards are becoming another reason for the tensions on an inter-state level. Even though most issues have been addressed through diplomatic means, there is always a high possibility of open encounters in the border areas. There have been ongoing clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz and Tajiks and Kyrgyz along the border of Tajikistan. Countries like Turkey are engaging themselves to capitalize on its cultural and ethnic links and have found the Kyrgyz Republic reciprocating in cultivating this two-way relation. The Kyrgyz Republic is a member of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe), the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation), the UN and the WTO. President Akaev, while addressing Russia's worries related to the Russian-speaking minority in the Kyrgyz Republic, was sensitive to approaching views of discrimination. For example, even though the 1993 Constitution authorizes Kyrgyz as the main state language, an amendment to the Constitution in 2001 allowed an official status to the Russian language. The amended 2006 Constitution also asserted the status of these two languages. Because of the credible and consistent approach to Russia, Kyrgyzstan has also become quite dependent on Russia and Russian companies such as Gazprom and Rosneft regarding investment and partnership. The US government gives humanitarian help, non-lethal military help, and support for political and economic reforms. It has even given support to the Kyrgyz Republic's appeals for cooperation from international organisations. The US assisted the Kyrgyz Republic conform to the WTO in December 1998. The US assistance helps the Kyrgyz Republic in applying the required governance, economic, health sector, and educational reforms, and also gives support to the economic development and conflict resolution in the Fergana Valley (US State Department Report, 2011).

Kyrgyzstan's government has made significant strides toward becoming a credible and reliable international partner, compared to the Bakiyev's regime. Moderately the aftermath of its tightening of ties with Russia, Kyrgyzstan has lessened its cooperation with other major development partners, especially the United States and, even Uzbekistan. In 2014, Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy became very pro-Russian, with the government ending the US contract for the Transit Center at Manas and becoming a part of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. The Kyrgyz government was working on a "roadmap" towards joining the Custom Union for quite a number of years facing strong opposition among entrepreneurs. Due to the disagreement among

entrepreneurs, the government may have tried to delay final accession to the union. In October 2014, the chair of Russia's Federal Council, Valentina Matvienko, visited Bishkek and met with the President and Prime Minister Otorbayev. Matvienko came to Bishkek to encourage Kyrgyzstan to join the EACU (Eurasian Customs Union), as per the Kyrgyz experts. There was a major support from the Parliament, yet several MPs openly questioned the benefits of the joint trade agreement with Russia, Belarus, Armenia, and Kazakhstan.

I.1.2.4 Ethnic Tension, Clans and Radical Islam

Kyrgyzstan lies on a drug trafficking route out of Afghanistan. A predominantly Muslim nation is divided into north and south on two lines, regionally and culturally. Each has a varied cultural and economic pattern with a variety of predominant ethnic groups. Clan conflicts and prevalent deference are also some of the major threats to the fragile peace. The government's tenuous control of southern Kyrgyzstan adds to the instability in the Fergana valley region, which shares borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The radical Islam is also on the rise in the valley. Many ethnic minorities like Russians, Germans and Jews emigrated to Russia, Israel and Germany due to the collapse of inter-ethnic relations and dwindling economic avenues in the country (Warikoo, 2006).

The majority of the Uzbek population resides in the southern regions of Osh and Jalalabad. In recent years, Uzbeks have stood up for wider civil rights seeking, for example, the demand for Uzbek as an official language of Kyrgyzstan and support for promoting Uzbeks cultural activities and education. There have been persistent demands for greater Uzbek representation in the important government agencies and organisation like judiciary and law-enforcement agencies (Elebaeva and Omuraliev, 2002; Feischmidt, 2001). Local nationalism has become a major phenomenon, particularly amongst the youth in the rural areas where the Kyrgyz ethnic groups dominate. The dominance of Kyrgyz language as medium of instruction in schools, colleges, science and government sphere gave it an undue advantage over other languages. Thus, the not only the sentiments but interests of various nationalities were hurt (Megoran, 2007). Intensified emigration happened as a result, in which 59.8 percent were Russians in 1990-2005 (Abduvalieva, 2009). The Kyrgyz government took steps to preserve the Russian-speaking population. The country's institutional

reforms were severely impacted as its ethnic policies had a negative effect on the human resource potential. This trend has led to migration of minorities to other states and is marking a modification in the ethnic composition of the populace and gradual formation of the mono national states (Abduvalieva, 2009) can be seen.

The country's largest population is Sunni Muslim and follows the Hanafi school of thought (CIA, 2016). Even though, Islam has been the prevailing religion in the Fergana River Valley since the 8th century AD but it gained strong presence among Kyrgyz people only in the 19th century. Today, officially Kyrgyzstan is a secular state, despite the growing influence of Islam in politics. The country has a large population of non-Muslims too. The government has not introduced Islamic laws. The nomadic culture of earlier Kyrgyz society restrained the development of version of Islam in practice in Central Asia. The Kyrgyz ethnic groups were not considered as conservative. The Islam practiced in the south-western regions (where Uzbeks are concentrated) resembles more strictly of what is experienced elsewhere in Central Asia. The increase in the number of mosques from 39 at independence in 1991 to approximately 2,300 in 2017 (Eurasia Review, 2016) shows the rising religious trend in the country. Only with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, nationalist movements emerged from the oblivions across the former USSR. While most of them were moderate, others had a tough, antipathetic facet that can still be faced in Russia and other CIS countries. After independence, the successive administrations did not think about the ethnic problems as was required. The Uzbeks in the south embraced a strategy of quiet accommodation. More urbanised than their Kyrgyz counterparts, Russian and Uzbek ethnic groups could not become well versed with the Kyrgyz language and blamed the poor language teaching at schools. The two groups also gravitated towards each other, often expressing a shared conceit for the less urbane Kyrgyz, whom they confronted in the streets. In the post- independence period, the Kyrgyz ethnic group has started to dominate politics and public life. Uzbeks played an inconsistent role in commercial life and developed a lethal repute in the southern part for living "too well". Islamic fundamentalism has not taken its roots in the north of Kyrgyzstan. The very few minority pockets in the north have restricted the movement of political parties across ethnic boundaries. The prevalent Slavic and western cultures, the high literacy rate and the market economy have brought the fundamentalist movements down amongst the local Kyrgyz.

Uzbeks are the most religious communities especially around Osh. There are ever rising number of mosques and madrassas in Osh and the Fergana Valley. The “Throne of Suleyman” is a vital Muslim monument and has gotten Osh the title of the “Second Mecca.” The Uzbeks have pressure from not only within but also beyond Kyrgyzstan’s borders. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), with its base in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, started targeting Kyrgyz Uzbeks since 1998. The main target for IMU has been to conquest the secular regime of Uzbekistan to create an Islamic state. The IMU’s presence was felt in southern Kyrgyzstan in 1999 when the republic was troubled extremely by the terrorist activities of IMU adherents who had traversed borders from Tajikistan illegally. The country witnessed several attacks in 2001 and 2002. The activities of IMU were apparently cut down after the US services moved their bases in Afghanistan. Another alarming concern for the state was the upsurge in the support of the non-militant Islamic organisation- Hizbut-Tahrir, which is banned throughout the Central Asia region. The activities of Hizb-ut-Tahrir like distribution of anti-regime leaflets and other religious extremist activities by the organisation were taken to be a threat to the republic’s integrity. These activities have led to arrests of its followers, most of them being the ethnic Uzbeks. The Fergana valley with a predominantly Uzbek population has served as a base to a strong conservative Muslim movement (Nichol, 2010).

I.2 Review of Literature

I.2.1 Ethnic Conflict and Regional Divide

According to Chotaeva (2003), the Soviet leadership tried to develop two opposed and alternate tendencies at the same time: the integration of the society into one civil nation and the creation of particular nations in the form of union and autonomous republics. The first tendency contributed to peaceful co-existence of different people for seventy years. The second tendency manifested itself in the creation of particular nations, which resulted in the growth of ethnic self-consciousness and emergence of ethnic nationalism. The national question caused the rise and fall of multinational Soviet empire. The ethnic resurgence of the Kyrgyz people after independence wielded a stout psychological impact upon the other ethnicities, thereby contributing to their feeling of discomfort and even infringement of their ethnic interests, which

finally gave rise to the escalation of inter-ethnic tension. As Kandiyoti places it, “the Soviet Union, while officially espousing the goal of merging nationalities and transcending ethnic particularisms...institutionalised, codified and ossified them” (Kandiyoti, 1996). According to D’Encausse (1979), the provisional disruption of substantial nation-building progressions was the result of institutionalisation of ethnicity marking the territorial and political outlines in the Soviet period determining the political geographies.

The USSR established ethnicity in a federal organisation that conserved the contradictory blend of ethnic and civic nationalism, which also determined access to scanty resources (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996; Brubaker, 1994; 1996). The leaders in the Soviet Union promoted ideas of a nation with fusion of peoples from all ethnic groups. However, the nationality was codified in the USSR with ethnicity as a basis for the institution of republics centered on the main ethnic group. The strategy was to promote squads of titular nationality in each republic over other ethnic groups. According to Smith (1996), this exceptional arrangement was “a pragmatic and short-term solution to problems of state building”, and did not modernize the country and led to the fall of the Soviet Union. According to Tuzmuhamedov (1973), the Soviet national policy in Central Asia and its efficiency was a politically combative matter. He defended such moves by the Soviet government as having fundamentally remade Central Asia. A number of researchers downplayed the effect of nationalities plan, proposing in its place that a politicized well-known “Islamic identity” would mark the identity of Central Asia and undo the Soviet nationality policies (Bennigsen and Broxup, 2011; D’Encausse, 1979). The totalitarian Soviet regime bared open large-scale inter-ethnic clashes, but it was not allowed to speak openly about the clashes until 1986 (Elebaeva and Omuraliev, 2002). The declaration of state sovereignty in 1990 was accompanied by serious changes in the inter-ethnic situation of the republic. The politicisation of ethnic issue, strengthening of political struggle and ‘division of Kyrgyzstani society’ on ethnic ground characterized the new ethno-political situation. Such mono-ethnic coloration of sovereignty in terms of Kyrgyzstani multiple ethnicities brought to the escalation of inter-ethnic tension. On the account of low political culture, opposition of different groups developed into the inter-ethnic violence and became apparent in the tragic events of 1990 Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict (Hiro, 2009). Although many scholars are of the opinion that “it is regional not local

ethnic divisions that caused the 1990 riots, and may provoke further violence in the future.” None of the conclusions are complete in itself. The Uzbek-Kyrgyz clash of 1990 shows tragic support for this case, that the influence of border disputes is also very important to study (Megoran, 2003).

Fergana Valley was disturbed based on ethnic-lines and communal violence spread to Uzgen and Osh region of the valley in 1990 (Abazov, 1999; Asankanov, 1996). The academics and thinkers quickly realized after these riots that ethnicity played an important role during the Soviet times, and predicted “ethnic conflict would become the norm for Central Asia where tensions continue to smoulder” (Fane, 1996). Researchers now documented “the ethnic basis of the new Central Asian countries”, and ethnic-conflicts like Uzgen and Osh (1990) “will no doubt occur in the years ahead” (Clem, 1997). With collapse of the USSR, the dominance of ethnic Russians also declined as there was weakening of institutional support. The new institutions arrived supporting and regulating the access of different nationalities to prestige, resources and power. According to Juska (1999), “In Central Asia an elite-negotiated transformation led to the emergence of ethnocracies in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, while the regimes formed in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were characterized by a mixture of ethnocratic and consociation list features.”

According to Elebaeva (2005), a number of socioeconomic, political, cultural and psychological factors contributed to the deteriorating inter-ethnic situation in the state. However, the unswerving features of the destabilization of inter-ethnic situation were political: the putsch of August 1991 and its consequences such as the break-up of the USSR and the formation of the CIS. The switch to Kyrgyz in the official state, work and education, prescribed by the 1989 law on state language, also contributed to the ethnic tensions. All these factors led to intensification of emigration of minority groups. As a result, Kyrgyzstani economy suffered irreplaceable damage, since tens of thousands qualified specialists especially Russians who worked in various sectors of economy left the republic (Elebaeva, 2005). McGlinchey (2000) wrote of Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations: “ethnic tensions have grown since 1998. Border controls between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have become increasingly draconian, making Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan feel ever more isolated.” Polat (2003) considers that there is a “high likelihood of ethnic issues being transformed into border disputes.” The

International Crisis Group (ICG) cautioned that border disagreements might aggravate “existing inter-ethnic strains in the region between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks” (ICG, 2002). The post-1999 border problems gave a new boost to the ethnic problems of Central Asia especially in the Fergana Valley. According to ICG Report 2012, “The Kyrgyz variety combines an angry edge with the ‘political populism that has been a feature of the country since independence in 1991. While successive governments in Kyrgyzstan tried not to think about the ethnic problem, the south’s Uzbeks adopted a policy of quiet accommodation.”

In Social Sciences, the use of ethnicity and national identity as an explanation of social and political formation and even conflict has been harshly critiqued (Pieterse, 1997), with scholars upholding on the fragmented description of identity, which emphasises “that traits such as gender, race, sexuality, and class are constructed mutually” (Kofman and England, 1997). According to Doty, “The ‘National identity is never a finished project: it is always in the process of being constructed and reconstructed” (Doty, 1996). Identity contends scholar Vila, that identity, is a construct, and not a thing or an object, which an individual has once and always but a social construct built over time and a concept, which experiences continual conciliation with others (Vila, 2000). This condition has stressed on the historical requirement of the ethnic borders and administration’s role in Soviet times and after the disintegration in organising national groups (Allworth, 1990; Adams, 1999; Schoeberlein-Engel, 1994).

However, in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbek representatives believe that the revolution in March 2005 was not a beneficial development for their communities (Abazov, 2010a). As the informal channel of communication was broken between the ethnic group leaders and government officials, the Uzbek discontent reached its peak after Bakiyev became the President (Cummings, 2009). One of the worst inter-ethnic riots that took place was in June 2010. After 2010 ethnic-riots, there were fears that the country will break into two parts, the northern and southern Kyrgyzstan. The violence was shocking as Kyrgyzstan was considered as the most liberal and democratic country in Central Asia. The conflict of 2010 has not been explained well and there are opposing explanations accusing internal and external forces. Many analysts emphasise on the inherited nationalist policies from the Soviet Union, ethno-demographic peculiarities,

regional divide were marked to be the causes of the conflicts of 1990 and 2010. The primary causal factors should be sought in the political and territorial factors particularly the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (Rezvani, 2013).

The political class comes chiefly from the north controlling the greater resources than the people from the south. The north-south divide also comprehends clan and tribal splits (Oraz, 2008). The division is historical and geographical, and two regions have stayed incoherent even before the Soviet era (Anderson, 1999). As for the historical discord Hvoslef (1997) stated, “there has always been a great difference between opinion in both culturally and politically, between northern and southern Kyrgyz. The Kyrgyz from the north accuse the southerners of acting and behaving like Uzbeks while the Southern Kyrgyz on their side, accuse the northerners of behaving like Russians and taking up a dominant role in politics.” Moreover, as Jones Luong (2002) shows, “the southern leaders have acted in a bloc whilst forming a representative parliament based on the population, and the north and the south emerged to compete with each other as two different entities.” According to Chotaeva (2003), national consolidation in Kyrgyzstan is dictated by a number of factors, the most important being multi-ethnic composition of the country, the aggravation of inter-ethnic contradictions manifested in Kyrgyz-Tajiks (1989) and Kyrgyz-Uzbeks (1990) and the lack of intra-ethnic solidarity among Kyrgyz themselves, whose attachment to the northern or southern region and different tribal groups dominates over common ethnic belonging. Kyrgyzstan shows more liberal climate in the north than the south. Mass media and civil society are free in Bishkek as compared to Provinces, especially in the south.

The whole picture of Muslims which comprises 75 percent of the population in Kyrgyzstan can also be divided into two distinctive parts: “A more ‘Russified and ‘politically centrist north’, and a more Islamized and politically radical south which reinforces cleavages amid ethnic communities, even though ethnic, political and territorial borders by no means coincide” (UNESCO Report, 2009). According to Elebayeva et al. (2000), the influence of Islam is heavily coloured by the country's ethnic diversity, and cultural traits that impede the spreads of radicalism. Meanwhile, Kyrgyz and Kazakh are still fresh in their Islamic teachings, and Islam often has a national character for them. The Republic has an emigration rate of 10.5 percent (HDR, 2009). The major factor for mass migration of the population has been because

of inter-ethnic conflicts among various groups of the country (Warikoo, 2006). The migration of ethnic minorities is making alterations in the ethnic composition of the populace and to gradual formation of the mono-national states (Abduvalieva, 2009).

I.2.2 Democratisation Process and the Institutional Framework

The scholars who focus on the erstwhile Soviet countries have also felt that it is important to focus on the democratization process in these countries after independence. The transition in these countries was manifold: political, economic and of other types, which has been portrayed in the literature. In the post-Soviet framework, democratisation “involves three seemingly irreconcilable tasks: breaking with the authoritarian past, building democratic institutions, and yet at the same time finding ways to attach the political losers in the transition to the new order” (Bunce, 1999). According to Bunce (2003), the study of democratization process in the Soviet countries also necessitates adding the inheritances of a socialist past, these countries are enforced to face numerous changes in the same period: “from socialism to capitalism, from dictatorship to democracy, from one nation state to the spatial consolidation of political authority.” The democratization process, shift to capitalism and state building are the separate processes and “uncombinable” (Bunce, 2003).

According to Levitsky and Way (2002), in competitive authoritarian regimes, executives suppress media through manipulation and other unfair recourses. In Competitive Authoritarianism, elections take place and all possible measures are adopted to curb opposition, state resources are used to win elections and they have features, which neither matches full-scale authoritarianism nor democracy. As McFaul, (2002) suggests, “Kyrgyzstan is an example of competitive authoritarianism where elections are regularly held, though results are not accurate with several fabrications.” For McFaul (2002), “asymmetrical balances of power and the ideological orientation of the more powerful party largely determined the type of regime.” He highlights the significance of leader’s beliefs in democratic values, only on their beliefs the formation of democratic institutions is possible; if the leaders believe in autocratic principles, then they execute autocratic institutions. Finally, McFaul proposes that “as post-communist transitions challenge many principal assumptions of third-wave democratization, there is a need for a diverse theory and a separate label,” which he calls “the fourth wave of regime change.”

The ex-Soviet system exerted a great influence on the political development of the erstwhile countries of the Soviet Union. The journey of transition to democracy for them looked as “hybrid regimes” that looks closer to autocracy and did not match with the institutions of western democracy. The presence of parliament and opposition parties could not bring the spirit of democracy in them and Henry E. Hale (year?) labelled them as “patronal presidentialism”. According to Hale, “patronal presidentialism” can be defined by two factors: “Firstly, where the President has more powers than any other state organs. Secondly, the President exercises high degree of informal power founded in patron-client relationships at the juncture of the state and economy.” The “patronal” can be expressed as when political authority is exercised through relocation of resources rather than rule of law, ideology or formal institutional practises. The transition to democracy in the ex-Soviet regimes is not effective as President embraces too much of power both formally and informally (Hale, 2005). According to Kulikova (2007), the “patronal presidentialism” resembles to an extent to “super presidentialism” where wide authorities are exercised by the President controlling formal and informal institutions, and elite groups. These elites close to the President in expressions of a patron-client relationship strengthen his influence in the judicial and administrative institutions. This arrangement remains unstable and this kind of change does not bring about democratization. Even after the overthrow of government, if there is not a radical change there are chances likewise processes to previous authority would come again (Kulikova, 2007).

Neil Robinson (2007), believes that in post-Soviet regimes “democracy exists when political power is not possessed by any individual or group, and as such the renunciation of personalized power is a must for democracy.” He considers that “post-Soviet countries failed to guarantee that political and economic power and pointed out that exercises such as corruption, clientelism and patronage in post-communist countries made formal structures of governance and redistribution insignificant” (Robinson, 2007). As Fish and Choudhry (2007) underline that “institutional and the legal provisions were stressed as important and necessary for the democratization of post-Soviet states”. These encompass elements such as “separation of power and restraints on executive power, especially the president.” As too much of concentration of power in the chief executive may lead to authoritarianism. The chief antagonist of democracy is a Constitution or super presidentialism that invests formidable power in

the presidency. The main problem for transitional post-Soviet states is too much of power concentration in the hands of few, especially the executive at the national level. The opposition to the highest executive shows important role in democratic retreat. In all of the transgressors “political-societal opposition to presidents was mostly poorly organized and inarticulate” (Fish and Choudhry, 2007).

According to Pauline Jones Luong (2000), “the electoral systems in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan bear elements of the Soviet system, though producing different outcomes.” She suggests, “in Kyrgyzstan, electoral system is populist.” She accomplishes that establishments like electoral systems are intended “under transitional circumstances [that] are products of both the individuals’ preceding historical and institutional setting (i.e. structural-historical context) and the dynamic uncertainty that surrounds them (i.e. transitional context)” (Luong, 2000). Authors like Berg and Kreikemeyer (2006) consider that the existing administrations in Central Asian countries should not be conjectured by making a comparison with strengthened liberal democracies of the world because such a comparison will clinch the breakdown of democratization in Central Asian countries. Berg and Kreikemeyer say that “Doubt should be cast on whether we are actually getting closer to understanding political change in Central Asia, or to creating solutions to political problems by talking about ‘failed democratization’ ... what we should investigate ... is not the ‘failure’ of democracy or democratization, but rather the ‘success’ of authoritarianism.” Thus, recognition of political realities in the region makes it a difficult task. As Olivier Roy (2000) suggests that “Central Asian states are Soviet conceptions, as the Soviet regime generated national identities, myths and local solidarity groups based on the reconstruction of traditional groupings.” Some authors have emphasized the uniqueness of democratic transition related to the potential success in the earlier phase and in the context of the CAR. Famous writer John Anderson prefers to call Kyrgyzstan an “island of democracy” since Kyrgyzstan promised to be pursuing economic reforms and fulfilled the requirements for the political transition to democracy, which was appreciated by the global society (Anderson, 1999). However, with time it was realised that Kyrgyzstan’s democratic transition was not going to be successful (Glenn, 1999). Koichumanov et al. (2005), argue, “Political and economic instability creates social instability. Ordinary people hesitate to set long-term personal goals. Uncertainty about the future grows along

with social pessimism. More important factor that led to Kyrgyzstan's failure at democratization was connected to the legal/constitutional framework, which shaped a particular type of executive branch that was dominant over others." The democratic experiences in Kyrgyzstan turned out to be disastrous. The President proved highly incompetent to deliver his role as a guarantor of the Constitution, as the head of the state and as the head of the executive branch. The power distribution between three branches clearly indicated the incompetence of the Constitution to put the division of power into practice.

Akcali (2005) says, "the Kiev regime's position was that political stability was important for country's stability and goal of democratization should be realized gradually." The political stability has been extremely important for foreign investments, and human rights issues were overlooked by western powers, as they also preferred political stability to democratization. Adding to this, Fish opines "Kyrgyzstan, although initially experiencing democratization subsequently regressed to despotism." He puts the country in the category of "backsliders," as all powers were accumulated in the President. He said in the 1990s Kyrgyzstan experienced "super presidentialism." According to O'Donnell (1994), "in delegative democracies, there is weak or even no accountability".

A section of scholars believed that Tulip Revolution did not bring any change rather it just replaced the old set of elites with a different set of elites to rule. To Hale (2005), Tulip Revolution was a contestation phase in a regime cycle and not a "democratic breakthrough." According to Kyrgyzstan Country Report 2012, "Kyrgyzstan faced two transformations, both political and economic, when it achieved independence" (BTI, 2012). According to the UN Women Watch (2012), "The democratization of public life and state institutions created favourable political, legal, psychological, moral and ethical conditions for dignified human development. However, the new economic relations resulting from the transition to a new economic structure, the rapid development of a mixed economy, the accelerating pace of denationalization and privatization of property and the development of the private sector of the economy led to lay-offs, increased unemployment and a decline in the standard of living." The political and economic situation remains fragile since 2005. In April 2010, political instability returned driven by complex political, social and economic factors

(Fumagalli, 2016). In Central Asia, developing democratic culture and institution remains a challenging task because political changes are complexly tied up with ethnic discords and radical economic challenges (UNESCO, 2003; Elbaeva, 2004). The diversity of altering parties and their discord along regional lines obfuscates the task of proclaiming parliamentary versus presidential power. Parliament of Kyrgyzstan underrepresented the countries various ethnic minorities including ethnic Uzbeks. The parliament had the majority of Member of Parliament from Kyrgyz ethnic group, so it could not effectively fulfil its function of representation (Kuchkeeva and O'Loughlin, 2003). This stress on a countrywide united practise of democratic power is demonstrated in the enlarged importance of the apparatus of "popular referendum," which was recognized as a constitutional contrivance in 1994 (Gleason, 2003).

Akaev wanted to preserve the inter-ethnic harmony ever since he attained presidency. He established a "civic model of citizenship" making the motto "Kyrgyzstan is our common home" and made it the basis of his ethnic policy and electoral campaign of 1995 (Kuchkeeva and O'Loughlin, 2003). According to Shukuralieva (2007), Akaev's "democratic reform seemed a victim of that frustration. His regime was marked by intensified exploitation of the constitutional reforms serving as actual reinforcement of the ruling elite. The frequent changes in the rules of the game, feeding the illusion of democratization and the on-going search for an ideal Constitution, as well as its rapid novelizations, gave rise to unusual political situation based on personal ties, interrelations along patron client lines and unofficial rules and institutions" (IRIN, 2006). In Bakiyev's period, inadequate reverence for the law was intrinsic from the preceding system, political forces were not ready to cooperate in stopping the deterioration of the state and power, continuous changes of administration, erratic political choices and intensified instability (Lewis, 2008; Marat, 2006(a); Marat, 2008). "Corrosion of the legal system, the unsatisfactory nature of the legislative acts and their mutual contradiction greatly complicated their application worsening the force of law" (Shukuralieva, 2007). There were charges against Bakiyev for conducting unfair elections, rising corruption and promoting nepotism (Chenoy, 2010).

After the revolution of 2010, the new interim government adopted a new Constitution making Kyrgyzstan the first parliamentary democracy in the region, President's enormous powers were reduced (Toktogulov and Boudreaux, 2010). Roza Otunbayeva was the first female to take over as the President of Kyrgyzstan making it an exception in Central Asian regions (Gidadhubli, 2010) otherwise dominated by authoritarian Presidents. The Kyrgyz politics, as Scott Radnitz (2006) demonstrates, are susceptible to "subversive clientelism" at the regional/local level. This subversive clientelism can be alleviated to a degree by extending representation in the national parliament to local elites from non-dominant areas, for example Kyrgyzstan's northern regions under Bakiyev, and its southern regions under the Otunbayeva interim government.

I.2.3 Civil Society and External Powers

While analyzing the socio-political context of Central Asian society, local as well as Western scholars acknowledge the fact that in comparison with European countries Central Asian states face challenges including human rights violation, ethnic conflict, poverty reduction, corruption, gender and unemployment issues. In this sense, the role of civil society organisations should be very significant in public life. Since the end of the 20th century, when civil society actors triumphed over authoritarian states, 'civil society' has been framed as "a solution to social, economic, and political dilemmas by politicians and thinkers from left, right, and all perspectives in between" (Chandhoke, 2007). It is seen as inherently positive, completely without coercion (Parekh, 2004; Glasius et.al., 2004) and as by default linked to democratic values (Schade, 2002) or "sine qua non of democracy" (Buxton, 2011).

Political researchers focusing on political culture like Robert Putnam, Larry Diamond, and Ronald Inglehart contend, "a vibrant civil society is fundamental to the development and maintenance of democracy" (Putman, 1993). "Civil society plays a pivotal role in the consolidation of democracy" (Ruffin and Waugh, 1999; Mondolsheva, 2007). According to Lomasky 2002, "The liberal approach to civil society focuses on the centrality of voluntary associations in society and the networks among citizens." In the rapport between society and state, liberalism inclines to give importance to the autonomy of the former" (Lomasky, 2002). According to some

scholars, civil society is a western construct with little influence on traditional societies (Gellner, 1994).

During the early 1990s, the unexpected independence led to an economic crisis and an insurgence of non-governmental organisations in Kyrgyzstan. The nascent sector mostly focused on service-delivery, due to the sudden availability of external funding and the state's inability to address the increasing poverty of the population (Buxton, 2009). While other newly independent Central Asian states were equipped with substantial natural resources and larger internal markets and attracted foreign investment, Kyrgyzstan lacks resource wealth and the only branch that flourished in the country was international loans and aid, which led to an increase in the formation of new NGOs (Connery, 2000). By the early 2000s, there were more than 3000 NGOs registered in Kyrgyzstan (Marat, 2005). The explosive growth of NGOs certainly contributed to the general vision of Kyrgyzstan as described by Anderson as an "island of democracy" in Central Asia. During the first decade of independence, the "blooming of the third sector in Kyrgyzstan, coupled with the favorable political and economic trends, attracted international donors. Many of these organisations, whether government funded, like USAID, or privately funded, like the Soros Foundation, began to look for local partners in Kyrgyzstan's NGO community. Donors would give out direct grants based on proposals written by these fledgling organisations or would invest in NGO 'training', which includes workshops on grant writing, management, and fund-raising" (Connery, 2000). According to Chotaeva (2003), Kyrgyzstan declared a course toward building a civil society, where the rights of individual would be of priority regardless of his ethnic, linguistic, racial, gender and religious background, the new ethno political situation was characterized by the politicization of ethnicity and polarization of Kyrgyzstani society on ethnic ground. The country had an unstable political situation and not much experience in developing independent civil society organisation and the non-governmental organisation.

Civil society groups are not divided on ethnic lines and reflect interest of both Uzbeks and Kyrgyz groups (Diuk, 2010). According to Diuk, "Kyrgyz civil society stood for the values of pluralism and tolerance, for the rule of law and democratic elections. The NGOs played an important role in stabilizing the society after the revolution, helping the provisional government to govern, providing input into drafting the

Constitution, and making sure that the election process during the constitutional referendum and the parliamentary elections was free and fair” (Diuk, 2010). Several thousand NGOs were registered in the first decade of the 21st century in the Kyrgyz Republic, and actively worked for the people (Marat, 2008; Jenkins, 2001; Eberly, 2008; Gwartney et al. 2008). Critics (Roy, 2002; Adamson, 2002; Mandel, 2002; Matveeva, 2008) state that NGOs are very distant from being the potential instruments of radical change. They act as the medium of western benefactors or represented by local elites. These elites cannot connect to people whom the civil society programme claims to empower (Powell and Seddon, 1997). There is another trend observed, where NGO activists are joining political parties (Paasiaro, 2009; Buxton, 2009). But the country has a moderately vivacious civil society, which will continue to encourage democracy in the so-called transition compared to the rest of Central Asia (CRS, 2005; Handrahan, 2001; Paasiaro, 2009).

The removal of Akaev from presidency by demonstrations against the unfair parliamentary election of 2005 was largely seen as the uprising of grassroots people’s action; no political wing had an absolute prerogative to power (OSCE, 2007; Bakshi, 2006). Following the revolutions in 2005 and 2010, aid to Kyrgyzstan and the number of registered NGOs continued to increase (Jailobaeva, 2012). It does appear that donor aid may have peaked after the 2010 revolution and has now started to decline (ACSSC, 2013). ACSSC counted 10.627 registered NGOs in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2013, of which 33 percent are rated as “active” (ACSSC, 2013). In general, they note a remarkable urban-rural divide within the NGO-sector in Kyrgyzstan (Buxton, 2009) with 63 percent of the “active” NGOs located in the two biggest cities of the country – Bishkek and Osh. The conceptual discourses that triumphed among civil society after 2010 and has altered from liberal-democratic presidencies of Akaev and Bakiyev, to more varied forms highlighting “nationalist and religious” rudiments. The current trend in NGOs does indicate that they are divided along many factors reflecting political cleavages with in the elite and society (OSCE, 2013). A large NGO sector is generally seen as an indicator of a healthy civil society. However, many analysts criticize Kyrgyzstan’s civil society as dominated and manipulated by donor interests (Petric, 2013). NGO’s in Kyrgyzstan almost after two decades are establishing themselves on both political and social landscape (Paasiaro, 2009).

According to Lane (2009), the color revolution “removed authoritarian leaders from political power. What we have witnessed in the post-communist world, therefore, is an unexpectedly successful diffusion of electoral revolutions ... where their liberal counterparts replaced illiberal leaders”. He says the writers, which project “the electoral model of regime change” demonstrate “Elections are the indicator of democracy – a form of government that has become a global norm.” Such writing borders on the political authorization of an electoral process that is a tool in “neo-conservative politics.” By restraining the definition of ‘democracy’ to a narrowly conceived political mechanism, the model is hollowed of any policy results on, and constant discussion of, public matters. Critics contend that what seems to be popular revolutions are disguised coup d’état (Lane and Stephen, 2013). Kyrgyzstan’s geo-strategic location has always been a prime concern for all across Central Asia as well as the global players (Makhmudov, 2009; Omarov and Omarov, 2009). Kyrgyzstan is facing problems in stabilizing the country and in transformation from “super-presidential political system” into a parliamentary democracy, in this background; the role of international “unbiased players” is precarious (Ishiyama and Kennedy, 2001). According to OSCE Report (2013), “The sources of support for civil society groups have increasingly internationalized, which partly explains the previous point on ideological diversification within civil society. This is an external process, not tightly linked to the events of April 2010. The initial dominance of western donors is now being replaced by a multiplicity of sources, notably Russian, Chinese, Turkish and Arabic, which have been successfully employing soft power. China, for example, established social venues and Chinese language instruction, aiming to increase the number of people among the business community and generally population that look up to China and do not share the traditional perceptions of a Chinese threat.” According to Rothermel (2014), the national government is becoming increasingly hostile to funding from ‘foreign agents’, which limits the prospects of cooperation between civil society and national government, the espoused goal of the IOs who fund these activities.

The regime change in the country twice by the revolution was looked with suspicion. Some claimed Bakiyev leading the southern clans was the key person behind the regime change in the first revolution. However, there were speculations that America wanted to remove Akaev, as he was pro-Russian President (Lamulin, 2012). Many

scholars talk about the American money flowing in through NGO's like Soros Foundation and the International Institute for Democracy and also the American diplomats stationed in Bishkek pointing to their direct involvement in Akaev's removal. It is claimed that it was "western-backed opposition" along activities of organized crime that protested against the government and even the law enforcement agencies failed to control them (Huskey, 2008; Sokolov and Sarygulov, 2010). In April 2010 revolution, Russia is doubted of being influential in eliminating Bakiyev from the Presidency as its grumbles against Kyrgyz Republic were hastily piling up (Lamulin, 2012). The liberal ideas in the country have proved to be futile. "The population has been socialized through different ideas, diminishing the soft power of the US and Europe" (OSCE, 2013). According to the OSCE Report (2013), after the revolution of 2010 "western partners sacrificed too much of their good will with local civil society for the sake of stability. Cooperation with the state was put above the normative principles professed by these donors, generating resentment and leading to the dismantling of the institutional achievements made earlier. To this, one should add that authoritarian powers, Russia, in particular, are popular in the country. Russia is traditionally an object of normative emulation for Kyrgyzstan, and together with China and Uzbekistan presents a counterweight to western governance models."

Kyrgyzstan (CRS, 2002) has used its "critical geo-strategic location of close proximity to the Chinese, Central Asian, and West Asian and South Asian borders" to make benefits. They have leased out military bases to the US and Russia for their operations in return of economic assistance (CRS, 2007; Kucuk, 2009; Tian, 2009; Tolipov, 2009). When Kyrgyzstan felt that the USA is encouraging revolutions it had suddenly asserted that they would terminate the lease to the American base, however it was re-negotiated later at a higher price (Chenoy, 2010; Gidadhubli, 2010). Kyrgyzstan is one of the few countries with the distinction of being a home to both superpowers (Mankoff, 2009). According to Nichol (2010), "The United States has been interested in helping Kyrgyzstan to enhance its sovereignty and territorial integrity, increase democratic participation and civil society, bolster economic reform and development, strengthen human rights, prevent weapons proliferation, and more effectively combat transnational terrorism and trafficking in persons and narcotics." The importance of Kyrgyzstan to the United States became bigger post 9/11 (Nichol, 2010; Schlyter, 2005; Stobdan, 2004). After 2005 Tulip Revolution, the US

government has progressively transferred the emphasis of its Central Asian policy from endorsing democratic reforms to attaining stability in the region (Tian, 2009a; Yigit, 2010; CRS, 2007).

The Kyrgyz Republic preserves intimate relations with other former Soviet countries, especially with Kazakhstan and Russia. The main objective of Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy with Russia is envisioned to safeguard national and regional security (Laumulin, 2009; Stobdan, 2004; Commercio, 2010). According to Paramonov (2009), Russia is concerned and wants stable situation in Kyrgyzstan for conserving the "region's heartland". The 2005 revolution, temporarily affected the limited cooperation among Central Asian countries especially with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan restricting travel and trade (Bratersky and Suzdaltesv, 2009). The neighbouring countries also took steps to avoid a "Kyrgyz-type coup of 2005" (Nichol, 2007). China was also concerned that the developments (Coup) in Kyrgyzstan may incite the democrats in China and encourage ethnic Uighurs, advocating separatism in China's Xinjiang region, which borders Kyrgyzstan (Nichol, 2007). According to Chenoy (2010), "Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations have already had tensions on account of earlier ethnic riots and this round of 2010 is only likely to worsen this." Relations between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in general have been far from cooperative and friendly. Uzbekistan has strong influence in southern Kyrgyzstan due to presence of large Uzbek population in the region and also due to close economic and geographic settings. Kyrgyzstan is dependent on Uzbekistan for natural gas; the Uzbek President has made political gains by closing pipelines. After the inter-ethnic conflicts in June 2010, in which several hundreds of Uzbeks were killed, Uzbekistan had closed its border transit points with Kyrgyzstan. The situation on the state border and in the Sokh enclave of Uzbekistan continues to deteriorate (Stobdan, 2014).

Kyrgyzstan has inherited with its independence a bundle of problems. The country has seen two regimes change, relatively free civil society, and there have been measures taken by the government for democratic reforms. Still the transition to democracy seems a distant dream. After going through the bulk of literature review available on various topics like ethnicity, political transformation and democratisation, it is observed that a lot has been written on the Central Asian

countries transition. The literature is available on the type of regimes, regional problems, economic problems, role of internal and external actors as well. But the country of Kyrgyzstan has not been studied vitally to understand the complex issues the country is facing ever since independence. There are various interpretations of the problems the country is going through, yet there are no solutions, the country has not stabilised even after two revolutions. The ethnic issues, religious fundamentalism, regional divide, external actors all have played imperative roles in this transitional phase of the country. These issues have not been covered at length in the available literature on the topic. The western scholars have primarily focused on Central Asian region as a whole or the regional powers like Kazakhstan. In my area of study, the available literature does not do justice to the intricacies of the problems. Thus, my study aims to focus on north- south divide, which has not been studied at length. This research aims to analyse the reasons for the irreconcilable friction between two major ethnic groups. The country has seen two revolutions in the past; the research will attempt to identify the reasons for the revolution hampering a smooth political transformation of the country.

I.3 Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

The fall of socialist regime in the Soviet Union caused many vital institutional reforms in the CIS countries including Kyrgyzstan. Numerous studies have assessed the causes of the cumulative discontent that convoyed the transition process, including intensifying ethnic divide, widening inequality, regional divide, nepotism and clientelism, and changing norms leading to two revolutions. Kyrgyzstan's two Presidents were removed from power by people's revolution, as they could not sustain the smooth transition to democracy. However, few documents have pursued rationalizations for the transition to democracy; there has been a gap in the studies in comprehending regional specificity, manifested in the current ethno-political, ethno-demographic and ethno-cultural, ethno-political processes, exerting a strong influence on political and economic transformation. After studying the literature on democratization in Kyrgyzstan, it is evident that the researchers have primarily focused on the common problems of the democratization in post-independence era. The accents of social tension in Kyrgyz society have seen inter-ethnic conflicts and riots on the basis of regional divide. Its downward spiral is a warning to its neighbors.

Due to the mayhem of the revolutions, unending political volatility looms its national integrity and unity, the country is yet to find solution to its permanent instability. The country is severely close to permanent flux, skirmishes, and coups with a possibility of its being split into the north and south.

After the collapse of the USSR, ethno-nationalism in the newly independent states became of more radical forms. The transition to democracy and market economy in Kyrgyzstan was accompanied by contradictions and conflicts at a broader regional level. This study assesses the extent and trajectory of political transformation across a range of issues, which have not been fully addressed in the previous studies. It reveals not only the nature and extent of the transatlantic gap, but also identifies the uniqueness in Kyrgyzstan's transition towards democracy and the extent and pace of its transformation among the CARs. The Kyrgyz Republic has been wracked by violence and political uncertainty, thus it is very important that the democracy is institutionalized to prevent any further revolution. The country's economic, political and social stability can provide a better and a stable future. The country's democracy and stability has been not only important to itself and its people. It has been of extreme strategic importance to the United States especially for conducting its military operation in Afghanistan post 9/11. The unwillingness of the US to significantly trim aids to Kyrgyzstan shows the strategic and security importance of the country. The other regional powers like China and Russia unwilling to leave their strong hold and unhappy with the USA's rising role in the country's politics, attaches a great geo-political importance to the country.

Ethnicity, regional divide and political transformation demonstrate a close relationship of one to another and severely complicate the state building in Kyrgyzstan. The post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan leadership is trying to keep a thin balance between the contradictory trends by developing common civil identity and enforcing the sense of belonging to Kyrgyzstan. Thus, it is very imperative to study the ethnic relationship and the regional divide of the country with the on-going political transformation. Since there has been a long gap when I started the research and the present time, the study will incorporate current scenario because the study would be incomplete if the developments after 2011 are not studied, as the situation in Kyrgyzstan is still in the transitional phase, it is very important to critically analyse

the period after the Interim government where lot of institutional reforms have been introduced by the current government. The aftermath period of second revolution could actually help the country strive towards its goal of democracy. The study aims to contribute to existing literature by comparing the Kiev and Bakiyev eras. The political legitimacy of both the leaders would be studied by studying their elections and constitutional referendums. The causes of two revolutions would be identified keeping a track of the background of inter-ethnic relations and the pattern of migration among the ethnic groups in the post-Soviet phase in Kyrgyzstan and why the governments have repeatedly failed to satisfy the public leading to chaos and dissatisfaction.

I.4 Research Questions

I.4.1 What are the causes for ethno-regional divide in the country?

I.4.2 What is the historical background of inter-ethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan?

I.4.3 How has the current political crisis affected the socio-economic condition of the country?

I.4.4 How has the falling economy and a failure to adapt from socialistic to a free market economy hampered the political transition?

I.4.5 What is the role of civil society in the democratic development?

I.4.6 What is the role of family clan in the politics of Kyrgyzstan?

I.4.7 How did Kiev and Bakiyev use the official safeguards of democracy (elections and referendums) to authorise their rule?

I.4.8 How does the country's political crisis affect the presence of international players in the country?

I.5 Hypotheses

- Proper representation of minorities is not reflected in the state structure hampering a smooth political transformation.
- Weak institutional reforms have further contributed towards the ethno-regional divide.
- Poor development initiatives in the south have led to a wider gap between the north and the south.

I.6 Research Methodology

The present research will use the approaches mentioned in the literature above. The democratisation process in Kyrgyzstan started with the independence, so the literature on transition will be studied for better understanding of the subject. In order to understand the way to secure free and fair elections, other relevant approaches will be used. The role of elites in the transitional journey will be studied by using the elite-led democratization approaches. In Kyrgyzstan, the two leaders Kiev and Bakiyev have led the process of transition to democracy by using the methods of acquiring political legitimacy to bring in the acceptability and legitimacy. In rhetoric, they claim that they support democratization, which is controversial.

The study is based on secondary sources of information. Some of the major sources of information include UN and the reports by Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reports providing rich data, such as demographic structure ethnic composition and migration trends. Kyrgyz republic elections assessments from Central Election Commission (CEC) of Kyrgyzstan are also considered. Furthermore, legal documents such as the Kyrgyz Constitution, constitutional amendments, texts of various acts and the Election Code of Kyrgyzstan are also studied. Data and reports on the both the revolutions is accessible in various national and international reports; the OSCE, the, European Network of Election Monitoring Organisations (ENEMO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), International Crisis Group (ICG), Human Rights Reports, National Human Development Reports, and the Election Commission of Kyrgyzstan (CEC). The speeches, conference reports as well as presidential rulings and decrees are assessed. Books and journals are referred for various theories available on the topic of the research.

I.7 Chapterisation

I.7.1 Introduction - This chapter gives a background of the theme and present the framework of the thesis.

I.7.2 Ethno-Regional Divide in Kyrgyzstan- This chapter details out the causes for the country's ethnic divisions and the consequences for the same. The regional divide between north and south occasionally leading to violence and ethnic conflict has been discussed at length.

I.7.3 Color Revolution and Political Transformation - This chapter gives the details about the overthrow of the two regimes through the two revolutions in the country and states the steps taken towards the democratization process. The transition of the country towards democracy has been discussed at length.

I.7.4. Democratization Process and Institutional Framework - The chapter deals with the institutional reforms and their impact on the democratization process in Kyrgyzstan. The newly formed civil society organisation and the non-governmental organisations have been identified and their role in the promotion of democracy is highlighted.

I.7.5. External Powers and Ethno-Regional Divide - The role of the external powers in Kyrgyzstan are highlighted in this chapter. The role of such players in contributing to the ethno-regional divide has been studied.

I.7.6. Conclusion - The chapter presents the major findings of the study.

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II.1 Background of Ethnic Divide

Kyrgyzstan is a multi-ethnic state and a multi religious state. The Liberalization of the socio-political life in the late 1980s announced course towards democratization and observance of human rights stimulating the growth of ethnic self- consciousness of all ethnic communities in Kyrgyzstan. These developments gave rise to the formation of national-cultural organisations that directed their efforts at the revival of native language and popularization of titular ethnic history and culture (Cholpon, 2004). In addition, owing to the distributive nature of a Soviet planned economy, competition between political clans and regionalism endured in (post-) Soviet republics even after independence. In the 19th century, the present area of Kyrgyzstan was ruled by Kokand Khanate and was slowly annexed by Russia between 1855-76 that resulted in the formation of its undeveloped borderlands (Allworth 1994). In the beginning of 1919, Soviet power was established followed by the formation of Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast within Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). The term Kara-Kirghiz was preferred by Russians until the mid-1920s to differentiate them from the Kazakhs, who were also referred to as Kirghiz. Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic became a full republic of the Soviet Union on 5 December 1936.

Kyrgyzstan witnessed notable developments in cultural, economic, educational, social and industrial life. A standard literary language was introduced by urging Russian language on the populace (Akiner 1986; Haugen 2003) due to which the literacy was ameliorated. Kyrgyz industry swiftly developed in the 1920s and 1930s by utilizing abundant hydroelectric potential and enormous coal resources. Kyrgyz agriculture, previously in the hands of semi nomads and clans, was collectivized in the early 1930s. However, the Muslim clerics were imprisoned and a pool of academicians and creative intelligentsia was destroyed. The discriminatory policy of the Soviet government intended to push Kyrgyz natives out of main cities for settling new people from Russia and other Soviet republics (Rowland 2007; Capisani 2000). Kyrgyzstan was the most ethnically heterogeneous Soviet republic at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union (Fumagalli, 2007b) 1989. The prominent and largest ethnic groups were the Kyrgyz (52.4 percent), the Russians (21.5 percent), and the Uzbeks (12.9 percent) (Census, 1989). Dungan, Turks, Uighurs, and Tajiks were

several other ethnic groups with a minimal population share, which lived within the boundaries of the present Kyrgyzstan.



Source- Census, 1989

Figure II.1

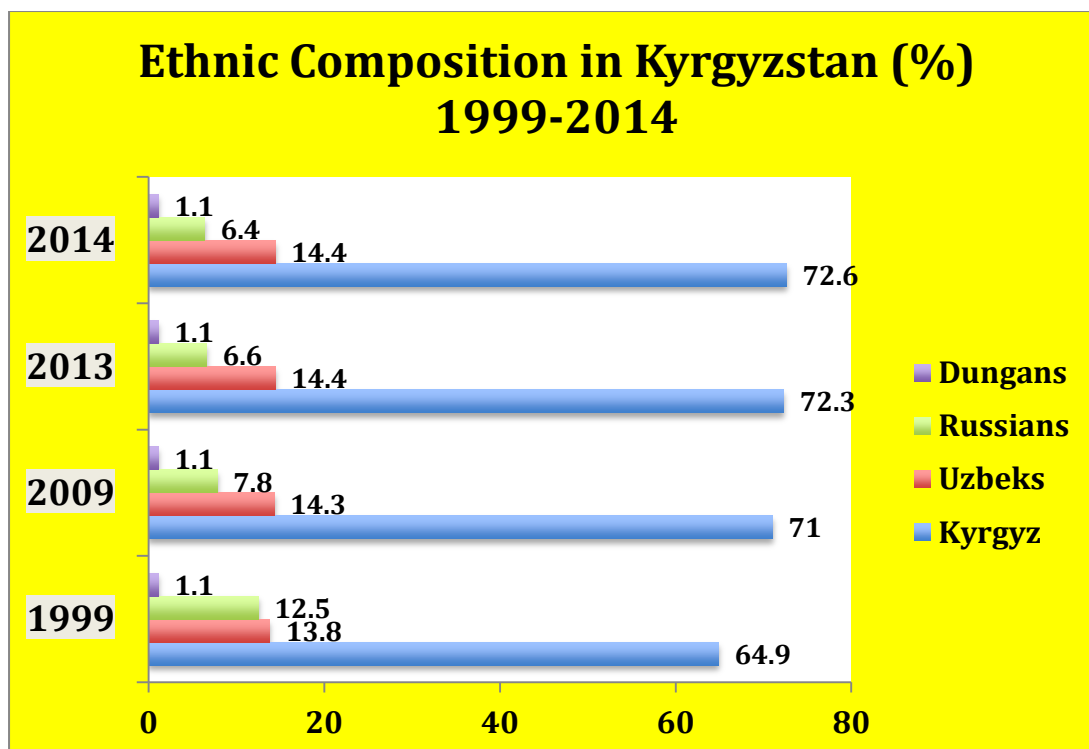
In Kyrgyzstan the perception exists that Kyrgyzstan is only the land of the ethnic Kyrgyz and not that of all ethnic groups living in it. Ethnic nationalism induces solidarity among the members of a particular ethnic group as it reinforces ethnic identity and a belief that members of an 'in-group' are a nation and part of an extended family with inherent rights to a particular piece of land. They perceive that 'out-groups' that might reside or claim a particular land have different rights from the once who already belong to that region. According to such ethno-nationalist discourse the Uzbeks are 'tenants', even in such cities as Osh and Jalalabad that were historically inhabited by Uzbeks and their ancestors (Rezvani, 2014). Askar Akaev's attempts at moulding a civic nation had a positive effect on the modes of ethnic coexistence. However, the abandonment of these attempts by Bakiyev, in addition to the strong regionalism in the country, had the potential to trigger conflict in the times of political instability after Bakiyev was removed from power. Today, the composition of several ethnic groups is Kyrgyz 72.6 percent, the Uzbeks 14.4 percent, the Russians 6 percent, and all other ethnicities are each around one percent or less (CIA, 2017).

Pattern of Ethnic Groups in Kyrgyzstan (1999-2014)

Ethnic Groups (%)	1999	2009	2013	2014
Kyrgyz	64.9	71	72.3	72.6
Uzbeks	13.8	14.3	14.4	14.4
Russians	12.5	7.8	6.6	6.4
Dungans	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1

Table II.1

The social, cultural, economic, and political nature of the world has been immensely shaped by race and ethnicity since the growth of the modern nation-state and the era of colonialism. This includes both the wealthy as well as the poor nations of the world. Numerous modernization theorists and Marxist works foresaw a future in which race and ethnicity would significantly decline as a consequence of the evolution of capitalist industrialization or influence of modern institutions and practices. But contrary to these predictions, the bygone records show that divisions based on race and ethnicity remain a salient feature of contemporary social life in the twenty-first century. The ethno-cultural and religious revival enraged by nation and state building in former socialist countries highlighted the issues of ethnicity. Even after seventy years of Soviet rule, the tenacity of regional, personalistic, patron-client relationships, clan and tribal loyalties, were often made stronger rather than maligned by Soviet rule and its ethnic and national policies. One of the most important mark of the Soviet ethno-Political system is building up of ethno-nationalism. In the Soviet Union several ethnic nations existed adjacent to each other and the sense of civic nationhood was absent or very weak.



**Data from Kyrgyzstan Census-1999, 2009, 2013 and 2014 (www.stat.kg)*

Figure II.2

Ethno-cultural conflicts over land have led to political upheavals in the world after World War II (Warikoo and Norbu, 1992). There is not enough land that can be owned by multiple ethnic groups as their homeland. After the departure of the previous colonisers power from many countries of the world two complementary developments took place. Firstly, the majority population consolidated around a stout ethnic programme. Secondly, the minority groups were marginalised and even demonised, as the majority ethnic groups considered them aboriginal ethnic contenders within the country. This is precisely prevailing in democratic Kyrgyzstan as well as in other Central Asian countries. In Kyrgyzstan it has been observed that post-independence the political elites had to face various complexities existing in the political and social country. There were efforts by the new state class to construct an entirely novel national identity that was actually base upon artificial pre-Soviet Kyrgyz nation that never existed. However, in reality their own existence depended on regional, personalistic and clan relationships, thus the elites do not work for the creation of an authentic national identity and in fact worked for strengthening and reinforcing the personalistic loyalties towards political elites, which the state class apparently pleas to dissolve (Dukenbaev and Hansen, 2003).

II.2 Rise of Ethnic-Nation States

According to Smith (1996), “Ethnic-Nation states refer to an person's identity with a group of people who share physical and/or cultural traits that signal a blood relationship or a common and enduring descent.” It may be comprise the following features like common descent, common language, mutual history, kinship, culture, religion or physical resemblances. When a person realizes that he or she shares these attributes with other people it results into emergence of a common identity with an enduring collectively and diminishes unique individual and personal identities. In world politics, ethnic identity relates to territory believed to be the exclusive “homeland” of a specific ethnic group. This thought is known as "ethnic nationalism” and has been largely accepted across the globe. Several thinkers and scholar have asserted that ethnic conflict over territory leads to rise of ethnic nation states. There are two contradictory viewpoints that explain this, the “primordialist,” and the “constructivist.” The "primordialist" view explains that ethnic identity is part of our essential human constitution and that our desire to identify with a group whose characteristics we possess is simply reflexive. Human beings have an urge to reject and oppose the ethnic groups which are inferior to them leading to xenophobia as well as ethnic cleansing in case of extreme prejudices leading to removal of other ethnic groups who want rights of the same land. Thus, the primordialist argument advocates that ethnic identity, with its indicators of collective exclusivity, and propensities toward xenophobia and fanaticism are natural to the human beings. This explains the influence of ethnic conflicts world politics (Cholpon, 2004a).

The constructivist case, on the other hand, accepts that ethnic identity is capable of being shaped and vigorous rather than intrinsic and unchangeable. This interpretation proclaims that any identity including ethnic identity is built by social, political, and historical factors and those identities of the people alter with time and space. Additionally, individuals display distinctive identities in changed situations, which vanish and reappear (sometimes re-invented). From the constructivist viewpoint, primordial descriptions that call on centuries of amassed revulsions cannot justify the situations in which diverse ethnic groups co-exist tranquilly. Some constructivists consider that ethnic split and skirmish in multi-ethnic societies arises due to the manoeuvring of ethnic identity for the political ends by ethnic entrepreneurs. The

politicians who can be called ethnic entrepreneurs are the one's who appeal to shared ethnic identity to gather political power. These politicians exploit ethnic fissures under conditions of discrimination that their co-ethnics experience.

II. 3 Ethnic Conflicts

II.3.1 The Osh Conflict -1990

The Kyrgyz Republic struggled with internal, occasionally low-intensity conflict before, during and after their independence. The local, informal, community-based conflict resolution mechanisms were able to sustain the low intensity of the conflict. In the recent history country has been interspersed by rioting and fierce civil disorders especially in the southern parts of the country spreading sometimes to the north. The immediate causes of such conflicts were different, but taken together they were indicative of a weak, susceptible state. The southern part of Kyrgyzstan is home to country's biggest minority group Uzbeks residing majorly in Osh province, Osh city, Jalalabad and Batken provinces. The Osh province comprises 28 percent population of Uzbeks and the Osh city, constitute 44 percent of Uzbeks (CIA, 2009). The contextual variable for the southern three oblasts of the Kyrgyz Republic is based on a geographic reality: they are inter-linked with the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tajikistan. This geographic puzzle known as the Fergana Valley connects these three former Soviet Republics without delineated borders. Before contemplating the events of 2010, it is valuable to look back at previous conflicts, especially the Osh-conflict in 1990, which in many ways anticipated the events of June 2010.

The first major ethnic conflict in modern Kyrgyz history occurred in 1990 at the end of the Soviet period. The population of the Osh region of Kyrgyzstan in Soviet Kyrgyzstan constituted Kyrgyz people (54.6 percent), Uzbeks (27.1 percent), Russians (about 10 percent), Tajiks (1.5 percent), Ukrainians (1.3 percent), and many others (Census, 1989). The process of the disintegration of the Soviet Union had begun and the socio-economic situation in Kyrgyzstan degenerated due to the waning authority of central government. Apparently, these conflicts appeared to be the consequence of inter-ethnic conflicts, but the primary causes were contest for control of economic resources. The bulk of the Kyrgyz population lived in the mountain regions, involved in agricultural activities and animal husbandry. Due to dwindling

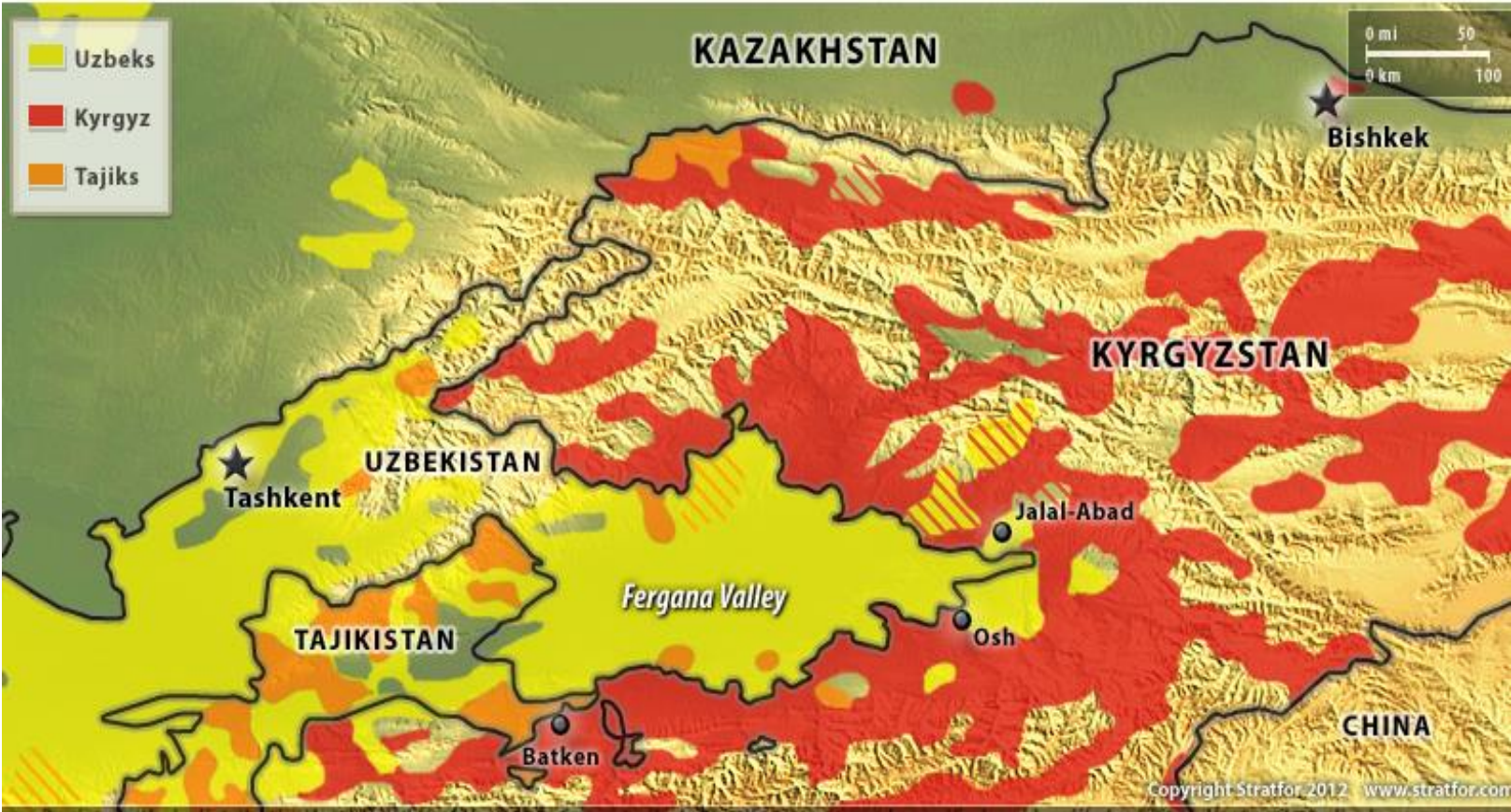
soviet economy and reduced support for agriculture sector many Kyrgyz were left without any work. Whereas the urban areas with majority of the Uzbek population had rich fertile and arable land. They also had profitable commercial enterprises, which were resented by unemployed Kyrgyz youth who migrated to urban areas in search of opportunities. Some Kyrgyz from the Osh region had formed an divergent ethnic association, called *Osh-Aimagy* i.e., Osh-land with an aim to secure their ethnic claims. The Uzbek-Kyrgyzstani population too had its own set of problems. The distribution of agricultural land led to discontentment in the south of Kyrgyzstan among the Uzbek community. They felt they were being under represented in administration and the Uzbek language didn't receive its due status. The concerned Uzbek community leaders demanding the autonomous status for Uzbek dominated region within Kyrgyzstan filed a petition to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. An Uzbek-rights group named '*Adolat*' (ethno-nationalistic group) demanded that Russia to give autonomy to Uzbeks in Osh and ponder its annexation by Uzbekistan. The actual reason behind *Adolat's* claim was land, which was wanted by both the ethnic groups due to shrinking economy and for better job avenues. The final blow came in June 1990, when the Kyrgyz-dominated Osh City Council declared open to construct a cotton processing plant in a collective farm in Osh province dominated by the Uzbeks. The issue instigated widespread violence and led to conflict in the form of mass demonstrations and inter-communal rifts on 4 June 1990, in the city of Osh. The riots took place over six geographical regions throughout Osh city and Osh province. During this "Turkic Self- genocide," massive loss of life occurred, as per official data there were 300 casualties including about two-dozen unidentified people. There were close to three-dozen missing people and over 500 severely injured, the material damage was nearly 100 million roubles. The rioters were young men from Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbek population. A number of criminal activities occurred in and around Uzgen, where the resistance of Uzbeks was the strongest. The situation was brought under control only when some 2000 men of Soviet army contingent and Kyrgyzstan's internal security took charge of the situation. Subsequently when Akaev came to power he tried to promote social harmony by taking care of the rights of the minorities at least during the initial phase of his tenure.

II.3.1.1 Uzbek Mobilization in Independent Kyrgyzstan

The beliefs, perceptions and identities of ethnic groups were decisively moulded by the Soviet experience of 70 years. The legacy of these beliefs carried forward with the people in the independent Kyrgyzstan (Gorenburg, 2003). Uzbeks form a leading ethnic group in the post-Soviet Central Asian region, comprising the largest Muslim and non-Slavic group in Soviet Union. According to the first census that was done post-Soviet collapse, Uzbeks composed approximately 78 percent of the population in Uzbekistan, 15.3 percent in Tajikistan, 13.8 percent in Kyrgyzstan, 2.4 percent in Kazakhstan and 9.2 percent Turkmenistan. While Uzbeks had a favoured position in Soviet Uzbekistan, they played a subordinate role in the life of the adjacent and other republics like Kyrgyzstan because they already owned titular status in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). Kyrgyzstan's Uzbeks or in fact all Uzbeks outside the Uzbek SSR, were not conceded territorial autonomy, which massively hindered the resource mobilization for Uzbeks.

After the collapse of Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan continued to develop as a pluralistic nation permitting some level of political contest, proliferation of informal organisations and candidates contesting in elections. Consequently, the informal organisations that were involved in the riots (*Osh Aimagy* and *Adolat*) were dissolved and political movements constructed on ethnicity were publically banned after the Osh conflict. The two prominent Uzbek political actors since independence have been cultural organisations (the Uzbek National-Cultural Centre, *O'zbek Milliy Madaniyat Markazi*, UNCC, and the Society of Uzbeks, *O'zbeklar Jamiyati*), which depict themselves as cultural and explicitly non-political. The Party of National Unity and Concord (*Partiya narodnogo edinstva i soglasiya*) was established in the southern town of Jalalabad in 1999. The leaders of this party (including Azamjan Azimov, the party's founder, and Adikjan Abildov, the Osh party's representative and former head of the UNCC) vigorously denied it to be an Uzbek party but the majority of leaders agreed that 95 percent of its membership was Uzbek. The root cause of ethnic unrest as interpreted by the Kyrgyz nationalist party *Ata-Zhurt* is due to the failure of Kyrgyzstan government to popularise Kyrgyz language and culture among Uzbeks.

Concentration of Ethnic Groups in Fergana Valley (1989)



Source: <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=6497>

Map II.1

Several Uzbeks have been drawn to militant Islamic organisations such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU, also addressed as the Islamic Movement of Central Asia). The Islamic Hizb ut-Tahrir had attracted adherents in recent years, especially following the IMUs virtual annihilation during the US-led military operation in Afghanistan in which several IMU fighters fought alongside the Taliban.

II.3.2 The Ethnic Conflict- 2010

The first phase of the second conflict took place in April 2010, when the country faced another color revolution. Even though the so-called first phase was devoid of any ethnic dimension but it served as one of the precursor for the June 2010 riots. It was a major victory for those who remained dissatisfied with the democratic change that accompanied the Tulip Revolution of 2005. The political upheaval of April 2010 extended into the deadly ethnic clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in June 2010. It was an uprising in the country's southwest cities of Osh and Jalalabad from Bazar-Korgon to Aravan along Uzbekistan border. In these regions majority of the Uzbek population is located and it was here that a political struggle took the shape of inter-ethnic confrontation. The main area affected was the Osh, but neighboring towns and villages were also badly disturbed, particularly in and around Jalalabad. It reminded and looked similar in many ways of Osh conflict of June 1989, which took place 20 years ago. It sent shock waves, reminding the world how fragile and volatile Kyrgyzstan situation could be. The violence had erupted on 19 May 2010 in Jalalabad and rapidly spread to Osh on 10 June 2017. The groups of Uzbek and Kyrgyz youth came from the neighbouring villages to join the clashes that continued for several days. The new interim government believed that the former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev who fled the country on 7 April 2010 orchestrated it. When the situation went uncontrolled, the interim government declared a state of emergency on 12 June 2010. The Kyrgyz security forces fired at the mobs in which hundreds were killed brutally and thousands fled the cities in the ensuing violence. The media reported brutal cases of rape, burning of children alive, stabbing, etc. In fact, several independent sources claimed the complicity of local military units involved in the ethnic clashes (Stobdan, 2014). The exact number of lost lives has not been assessed properly but different inquiry commissions and reports by the UN gives an estimated data, at least 700 people died as claimed by Uzbek community and more than 400,000

people were displaced, 1,11,000 people crossed the border to Uzbekistan due to conflicts between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan between 10 to 14 June 2010.

Several incidents preceding the conflict resulted into violence. On 7 June 2010, a local businessman and a drug dealer Oybek Mirsidikov (considered close to Bakiyev family) was assassinated with three others. After two days on 9 June 2010 there was a brawl between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in a casino in Osh, then there was apparent rape of a Kyrgyz woman in a university, and territory hostilities concerning crime syndicates. Political instability, elite fragmentation, mobilisation of civil society for liberal and illiberal ends were some of the alleged precursors resulting into ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan in 2010. The efforts of the Interim government to create democratic structure immediately after assuming office weakened the elite status quo. The political entrepreneurs tried to guard their interests through fierce protests. The Otunbayeva government in south Kyrgyzstan decided to dissolve the corrupt parliament and alienated elite dominated constituencies that were unable to maintain law and order. In such circumstances of political instability, political entrepreneur's used street mob as a powerful mode of contention, which should be reckoned with in the Kyrgyzstani politics (McGlinchey 2011; Rezvani, 2014; Akiner, 2010). The parallels between the June 1990 and June 2010 events are consonant. The upsurge of ethnic violence occurred at a phase of political confrontation, when political leaders tried to replace old elites and when the central government had become weak due to political fluctuations.

Concentration of Uzbek Population in Southern Kyrgyzstan (2010)



Source- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10307406>

Map II.2

II.4 Causes of Ethnic Friction

II.4.1 Spatial Factors

The fear that the 1990 and 2010 conflicts might not be repeated is a constant fear and a tangible concern for Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan. The spatial factors for example the terrain and physical environment also play a role in the uprising and dynamism of Nationalism leading to ethno-territorial conflict in regions like Fergana Valley. The Fergana Valley, in which the cities of Osh, Jalal Abad and Uzgen are located, is divided between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The state boundaries do not correspond with the ethnic distribution; many ethnic groups do not possess a titular state and many ethnic groups who do possess a titular state also dwell in a neighbouring republic. It is the most densely populated and heavily exploited regions due to agricultural activities in the Central Asia and a site of dispute amongst the three neighbouring states, both before and after the disintegration of USSR. The Fergana Valley in present-day Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan was an important stop on the Silk Road. The towns here were filled with Uzbeks and Tajiks, who were similar except they spoke different languages. Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan live in condensed communities mainly near the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border. There are considerably large numbers of them in ancient cities of Osh and Uzgen.

The ethnic distribution in the Fergana Valley is fragmented and the ethnic groups customarily live in relatively homogenous areas, the highlands and hills being predominantly Kyrgyz and the city centres being predominantly Uzbeks (Liu, 2012; Reeves, 2010). Fergana Valley and the south-eastern part of Central Asia in general display a mosaic form of ethno geographic configuration, and henceforth are conflict-prone. Kyrgyzstan was crippled with corruption and was politically instable due to disintegration of USSR, which ultimately permitted local authorities to target ethnic minorities in southern region. The Bakiyev government formed after the Tulip revolution in 2005 became authoritarian steadily and relied on ethnic stereotyping thereby leading to severe ethnic tensions. Bakiyev enjoyed strong support from southern Kyrgyz ethnic groups. The violence of 2010 that befell the Uzbeks, display that this group has been subjugated to a continual policy of oppression in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz residing in the South did not see Bakiyev's ouster as a

positive development for them and the Uzbeks who mark up to 28 percent of the population supported the new government. The new government tried to investigate the cause of violence but a deadlock was created in the political situation due to internal opposition movements. The violence may have ceased after the riots but Uzbek's cultural identity is threatened.

II.4.2 Discriminatory Policies of the Government

Uzbeks may have better economic status than their Kyrgyz counterparts but they have been left behind in the political and social spheres of life. The first disaster occurred in June 1990, the main reason identified for the unrest was the claims by the Uzbek minority group that the local administration had conferred plots of land and housing unduly to Kyrgyz (Tishkov, 1995). Tensions and conflicts between ethnic groups are exacerbated by the stark disparity between their social and economic status. In Kyrgyzstan there is clear divide and economic disparity between the north and south. In the initial years post-independence, when there was a significant Slavic population, which was concentrated mainly in, economically more developed north along with the Kyrgyz and in the less economically developed south there were Kyrgyz and Uzbek (Zhang and Azizian, 1998). With the transition to market economy such economic disparity between the north and south has further increased than bridged, leading to violent clashes in the past between the ethnic groups. In urban areas the expenditure of Kyrgyz households is higher than that of Uzbeks but it is similar in rural areas. The Kyrgyz are better educated and has small households in the urban areas causing the gap (Esenaliev and Steiner, 2014). Disputes over land and water resources continue to take place within and across the borders of an underdeveloped country like Kyrgyzstan. The Fergana Valley region has a high population density and high birth rate. It encompasses 20 percent of Central Asia's population but only 5 percent of the landmass. Overpopulation combined with lack of arable land and water supplies are the causes that have steered to growing tensions and conflict. Uzbeks also suffer from extreme poverty in some regions like the underdeveloped Batken province in which there is a bulk of population (close to 80 percent) living below the poverty line.

The share of the Kyrgyzstan's population residing in South's Osh and Jalalabad is 44 percent and out of which 54 percent are poor. Issy Kul region has the highest intensity of poverty but only 14 percent of the population is poor due to the modest population

density. In the last two decades, the state experienced an economic deterioration from having less poverty to a condition where more than 60 percent of the population lives beneath the official poverty line. Even necessities such as gas and electricity have become unaffordable for various households. In rural areas, poverty poses a serious threat to stability. After Akaev's regime not all political and social forces within Kyrgyz Republic endorsed Akaev's idea to accommodate minorities. Ethnic Uzbek were not given appropriate representation in parliament from 1991 to present. Uzbeks faced discrimination in civil services jobs and prejudices related to political and judicial hearings. The ethnic Uzbeks had a limited access to higher education as students who wanted to apply in universities must have proficiency in Kyrgyz as per the Kyrgyz law.

In April 2013, President Atambayev agreed to a legal and official ethnic plan aimed at removing ethnic divisions. The plan proposed to form a national identity by eliminating ethnic identification on government documents and practise a shared language but unfortunately the government did not implement the plan. The Uzbek students were deprived of educational opportunities given to Kyrgyz as the government had closed the schools that taught in Uzbek language. In the memory of the victims of June 2010, a bell was placed in Osh by the initiative of the ex-mayor Myrzakmatov. The inscriptions on the bell are in Kyrgyz, Russian and English language only, but not in Uzbek even though the riots took place between Uzbek and Kyrgyz. Kyrgyz authorities cancelled the secondary school test in Uzbek language to promote tests in Kyrgyz and Russian in March 2015. Uzbeks had to fill a special form to be permitted in instructive classes imparted in Uzbek language. Many activists feel that such action of cancelling secondary school tests in Uzbek language; have been taken in the light of ethnic violence in 2010.

The Kyrgyz Republic failed reaction to violence and atrocities conducted on the Uzbek minority population (Osh Conflict- 2010) disregard the International Obligations and Covenants of which Kyrgyz Republic is a part. For example Kyrgyzstan acceded to the "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights" in 1994 which asks for action on part of Kyrgyz government in case of any inconsistency regarding such rights of the people. Uzbek population is still feeling the implications of ethnic conflict that flared up in June 2010. Kyrgyz government has

attempted to minimize educational scope to the Uzbek minority by limiting their educational opportunities. In Kyrgyzstan scarcity of housing and land has been a perennial source of unrest. Prior to the Tulip revolution the state began to encourage the homecoming of ethnic Kyrgyz as it tried before in 1995. A rule was passed in 2007 that guided kairylman to obtain citizenship and social rights. This policy of repatriation has the potential of increasing the demographic liability on already strained and limited assets of the country, which have led to ethnic frictions over housing access, land and other contentious issues (Laruelle, 2012).

II.4.2.1 Land Reforms

At the time of economic transition and early land reforms there was an emphasis on the ethno-nationalist perspective among hierarchical groups within the republic. The parliament passed a 'Law on Land' to grant the right of land and wealth of the republic's territory to the ethnic Kyrgyz with the help of grass roots nationalist organisations in May 1999 (Luong, 2002). Special consideration was given to the traditional farming techniques by the peasant farms created by National Land Fund. Even though the ethno-nationalist achieved some symbolic concessions immediately after independence, Akaev's policies became inclusive for the most part of his career. The land laws lacked the exclusionary language and the President's stint displayed some achievement on the agenda of status of minorities relating to socio-economic development.

In the year 1994, the traditional Kyrgyz ways of farming were eliminated (Mudahar, 1998). There was more nationalist pressure on the regime in 1994 after the removal of the language. An early sign of nationalist resurgence was felt in 2001 after the cessation on land sales was elevated. The Parliament member Azimbek Beknazarov, who is known to be a strong opponent of Land reforms, brought up accusation accusations against Akaev for covertly yielding 90,000 hectares of Kyrgyz land to the neighbouring China in order to decide a border dispute. The incident shows that the apprehensions of Kyrgyz nationalists were not pacified in the first decade of attaining independence, despite the President's realization in enunciating an integrated nationalizing discourse. The Kyrgyz ethno-nationalist politician were able to obtain novel echelons of political power by having access to a considerable manifesto to offer different nationalizing visions, thereby creating a support base for new President

Kurmanbek Bakiyev and breaking the former unified nationalizing discourse. For instance, after 2005, Adahan Madumarov who infamously responded to Akaev's slogan that "Kyrgyzstan is our common home" by retorting that "Kyrgyz are owners of the house, the rest are tenants" took numerous positions of power including deputy PM and State Secretary. The socio-economic grievances of the people following the independence have been tapped by the nationalist politicians and the press who misleadingly supported them. The agricultural land market could not develop in the southern region of the country in spite of successful land reforms. After Bakiyev's ouster Kyrgyz residents attacked ethnic Russians and Meskhetian Turks in the north village of Kyrgyzstan (Mayeveka) (Hierman, 2010). The squatters purported to have screeched "Kyrgyz land for the Kyrgyz". Flyers with hate with messages like "Down with Turks, go away from our land" for Turks were left on the entrances in the village of Meskhetian Turks (Novopavlovka. village). In the south there have been numerous incidences of, embattlement of Uzbek land by Kyrgyz squatters, a few months after deadly inter-ethnic violence in the south. There were close to 500 ethnic Kyrgyz who grabbed land, which belonged to Uzbeks in the peripheries of Osh. Thus, it is clear that over the past two decades there has been both an escalation of ethno-nationalist discourse countrywide and an increasing number of instances in which pressures over access to land at local level augmented.

II.4.3 Exclusion of Uzbeks from Politics

Much as the 2005 parliament privileged Akaev's allies and northern Kyrgyz interests, the parliament that Interim President Otunbayeva disbanded in April 2010 was a stronghold of Bakiyev supporters and southern Kyrgyz interests. Although this parliament was ostensibly the product of proportional representation and countrywide single-party lists rather than regionally based single-member districts. But the reality was that 71 out of the 90 parliamentarians elected in December 2007, were members of Bakiyev's Ak- Zhol party. Thus, the dissolution of this parliament in April 2010 was not merely a strike against corruption rather, this dissolution was an attack on the economic and political system which Bakiyev had gradually and carefully built over the past half-decade leading to increase in rift between Kyrgyz and Uzbek. The Interim President Otunbayeva although born in Osh, could not cut deals with elites who could exert power in the south. A prominent Uzbek ethnic leader Kadyrjan

Batyrov, created his own de facto police force in Jalalabad as a counterweight to local security services, which remained loyal to the ousted President Bakiyev. The government's failure to secure the south by co-opting alternative regional and familial networks increased the voice of political entrepreneurs such as Batyrov and pro-Bakiyev forces in Jalalabad threatening the ethnic Kyrgyz. Uzbek complaints include a plea for better involvement in the political activities, improved economic opportunities, language rights at schools and greater state support for education. Uzbeks had qualms that they were not recruited or promoted in army, judiciary or the secret services of the Republic, which lamented, the manner in which a sect of media and political elites projected the Uzbek community. The sectors in which Uzbeks remain are the police, trade, retails and mass media etc., after being framed as potentially treacherous. The incapacity of the state to address the Uzbek demands and grievances has been exploited by Uzbek elites to drive more number of Uzbek people against the government.

Representatives of the Uzbek community rejected the label national minority, which indirectly refers to a weakened status that Uzbeks find hard to merge themselves to, especially in areas of compact Uzbek settlement in the south. Denoting local Uzbeks as a 'diaspora/diasporic community' was contemplated more or less a term of abuse. The Uzbek population was discharged from military service, leading to the segregation of the Uzbek community from politics. Uzbeks also built on the bequest of the Soviet nationality policies, where Uzbeks conveyed absolute denunciation of tags like 'Diasporas' and 'Minorities'. There were claims on part of the Uzbeks that they were as indigenous as their Kyrgyz counterparts. The term diaspora to Uzbeks meant that they were being referred as outsiders or from somewhere else, which is related with marginality. Being local meant you are entitled to higher status and access to resources.

II.4.4 Revival of Kyrgyz Ethnic Identity

The name Kyrgyz, both for the people and the country, means 'forty tribes', a reference to the epic hero, Manas. This hero had consolidated dispersed forty Kyrgyz tribes and their subsequent united opposition to foreign conquerors, which is symbolised by the 40-ray sun on the flag of Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz people under the rule of President Askar Akaev, promoted their epic Manas to enter into the world's

cultural arena. In 1995, there were celebrations in the country, which marked the 1000th anniversary of the epic Manas. The celebrations took place in the city of Talas, which is believed to be the homeland of the legendary brave man Manas. There were many other developments, which occurred around the promotion of Manas. The international airport was named after the hero, an gigantic equestrian memorial was instituted in front of the Bishkek Philharmonic Hall, and the creation of the so-called Manas Village in Bishkek. In 2003, the 2200th Anniversary of Kyrgyz Statehood was celebrated. The monumental epic regarded as the epitome of oral creativity, as Kyrgyz were nomads who had no written language throughout the centuries. These two celebrations were seen as the events having some political undercurrents. The Manas epic has also been given undue academic importance and public attention. The Manas factor worked well to consolidate a weak society divided on regional (north-south) and tribal discords. The myth of Manas created certain political inferences in the presence of strong neighbours. It has also been observed that the Kyrgyz state is dominated by northern political elites, who dominate the south and determine their fate. It has helped the political entrepreneurs to retain their power and get rid of internal hostility (Suleymanov, 2003). The notion that the Manas contains a universal rather than nationalist message is a claim built on a amalgamation of Soviet internationalist ideology and the empathies of the President Askar Akaev. It is quite surprising that the notion of Manas mania has grasped the Kyrgyz state once again after President Bakiyev's ousted from power in 2010. The ethnic-riots in 2010 gave a major jolt to the then existing harmony between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek. The intra-ethnic rivalries that came to forefront after the riots, made central government take active steps towards Manasifying the republic by endorsing Kyrgyz national unity. Some examples of such Manasification are installation of Manas statue in Bishkek's central square replacing a memorial to peace, which mounted there since post-Soviet period and gave the city two immense equestrian monuments to the same hero Manas some 500 meters apart, the commitment of an equally monumental Manas sculpture in the city of Osh. In 2012, the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education introduced a graduation course in "Manas Studies" open for every university student of Kyrgyzstan.

As Andrew Wachtel (2013) notes-

“While mainstream politicians, including the current president Atambayev, continue to insist that Manas is simultaneously national and international, thereby implying that the Manasification of the country does not equate with its Kyrgyzification, popular opinion recognizes that Manas is first and foremost a Kyrgyz symbol, the epic itself is in the Kyrgyz language, given that language is the central basis for national identity in the region. Manas is certainly pro-Kyrgyz and others were allowed to live there, but in subordination to the Kyrgyz leadership.”

Therefore, consequence of the violence and the post-violence reconstruction by Manasification weakened Uzbek influence and asserted that the south is Kyrgyz territory. All these developments are a clear sign that Uzbeks are trailing ground in the political, economic, symbolic and cultural realm. It is incontestable that presently the south is being Kyrgyzified.

II. 5 Typologies of Nationalism

There are numerous approaches to and typologies of nationalism in the scholarly literature on the topic. For the Primordialist the nations existed since antiquity, it may be Kazak, German, Greek, Yoruban, Serbian, Jewish, Zulu or Kyrgyz. These nations will always exist, the only conditions, which need to be fulfilled is that its members maintain its distinct, singular and unique identity (implicitly superior). These distinct traits have played an important role in the formation of modern states. The primordialists believe in the natural development of nations from antiquity. This methodology is not colossal and comprises what Anthony Smith calls “perennialist”, “socio-biologist” and “culturalist”. Perennialists discuss that “nations have existed since time immemorial and that modern nations are direct descendants of their medieval ancestors.” According to Hutchinson and Smith (1996), “Primordialism is most often associated with ethnic attachments and thus predominantly ethnic nationalism.” Cultural primordialists on the other hand emphasise on the beliefs and perceptions of the people as the chief reason causing nationalism. The second one is known as Modernist, where nationalism is considered to be a modern phenomenon. The modernity here refers to development of secular, scientific and rational trends; the rise of capitalism, industrialisation and urbanisation; the materialisation of the concepts of individualism and liberty in west in 16th century after the Enlightenment

and the French Revolution. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1996), suggest that both nations and nationalism are outcomes of “invented traditions; not historical practices that have survived into the present, but invented in modern times through repetition and strictly administered rules.”

The third approach Ethno Symbolism highlights that the modern nations are created and continue to exist with the implication of symbols, values, traditions and myths. Most academics agree that since the eighteenth century, the nation has taken on a specific practice and eminence. But protuberant ethno symbolists like Anthony D. Smith contend “early memories, myths and symbols hold a continued importance in the understanding of nationalisms.” Ethno-symbolists accentuate that it is the exchange of beliefs between elites and the people that is important in the formation of nations. Moreover, the ethno-symbolists exploration into nations and nationalism stresses on eras of social and cultural developments. Thus, resulting in ethno-symbolists attaching too much of value to the cultural characteristics of human groups from the history. They emphasise that ‘ethnies’, human groups with a shared ethnic background play a conspicuous role in the nation formation.. In this regard, the exploration of why societies attach to their nation or ethnic group is imperative to ethno-symbolists (Smith, 2001). Smith’s difference between ethnic or ethno-cultural communities, which he has called “ethnies” – and “nations” is commonly recognized as binding in the examination of early civilizations like medieval Islam and Christendom, which display that “ethnic belonging had very strong roots and contributed to nation-formation.”

It has been observed that Central Aisa countries have purposely re-written their histories to solidify and strengthen the ethnic identities of the titular groups. The political elites have manipulated public opinion for fulfilling their goals of retaining power and to counter the problem of regionalism. There are various reasons, which led to the rise of ethno-nationalism, which sometimes turned, into deadly ethnic-conflicts. The typology of Nationalism in Kyrgyzstan assures Nation state is the creation of Ethno symbolism, which has been called as a compromise between the primordialist and the modernist. It is also called a middle ground, as it is an amalgamation of two contradictory views. For instance Smith and other like-minded thinkers call the nations a modern creation that happened after industrialisation and

the primordialists espouse that pre-modern roots are imperative to understand relationship of people with their nations. Imminent nations require taking on ethnic models and mechanisms in order to thrive, but ethnies also adapt to territorial and civic models in the route towards 'nationhood'. Nations have been described as "quasi-kinship groups, regulated by myths of common descent, a sense of shared history, and a distinctive culture" (Hutchinson, 2001).

II.5.1 Cultural Nationalism in Kyrgyzstan

The Uzbek–Kyrgyz conflicts in Osh and other areas were attributed as an ethno-territorial conflict. Culture played a role in the sense that ethnic groups are distinguished from each other by a boundary defined by cultural attributes and denominators. However, an essentialist culturalist explanation of conflict seems to be inadequate. This conflict has been called Turkic self-genocide by Asankanov (1996), and it is in contradiction to the belief that lingual and religious affiliations are the only causes of ethnic conflict. As both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks are Sunni Muslims and speak Turkic language. The emergence of the conflicts casts doubts on Pan-Turkist claims and culturalist explanations that members of an 'ethnic' superfamily (of Turks) show a large solidarity and do not fight each other. History also brings indications of peaceful coexistence between people speaking different languages and confessing different religions.

The Kyrgyz ethnic group belongs to the Turco-Mongol cultural realm and Uzbeks group belong to the Turco-Iranian cultural realm. In history, there have been strains between these two groups. "People belonging to the first realm have traditionally been dwellers or agriculturalists, and have been victims of raids by the latter. Traditionally, nomads regarded themselves as superior and had much contempt for the rural and urban dwellers" (Tishkov, 1995). Many Kyrgyz regard the Uzbeks dwelling in *mahallas*, i.e., the neighbourhoods in the older parts of the cities as conventional and regard themselves as more modern and progressive. However, believing in the typology of 'ancient hatred' explanation for these conflicts means that there should have been continuous wars. The reasons for conflict on the religious grounds between the southern Kyrgyz and Uzbeks is not substantial, as the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks are Hanafi Sunni Muslims. The religious orthodoxy among the Kyrgyz is not as strong as it is among sedentary ethnic groups such as Tajiks and Uzbeks. The Kyrgyz

traditional (popular) Islamic practice is viewed as heterodox by their neighbours and even by themselves (Abazov, 2007). However, most Kyrgyz in southern Kyrgyzstan, similar to most Uzbeks there, are much more religious than their northern co-ethnics. Therefore, different levels of religiosity do not offer a good explanation for this conflict. Conflicts cannot break out without organisation and mobilisation and, therefore, it suggests the existence of ‘conflict entrepreneurs’ as well as favourable political and social opportunity structures. Similar to all other ethno-political conflicts in the post-Soviet space, the explanation of the Kyrgyz–Uzbek ethno-territorial conflict, therefore, should also be sought primarily in political and territorial factors.

II.6 Other Ethnic Groups

The Kyrgyz political republic could not create a state with economic stability based on the rule of law. The country had to face the challenge of restructuring itself from the vestiges of Soviet planned economy and also the demographic balance which was a characteristic of the Soviet times. The demographic balance in the country changed with the swift disappearance of the Republic’s non-Muslim and non-Asian population. There is some disagreement in Kyrgyzstan today regarding the sources of this phenomenon. The Russians in the Kyrgyzstan point toward push factors, which point out that Kyrgyz considered the state “theirs”. There were various policy measures taken in the beginning for example- excluding Russian as state language, discrimination at workplace, occasional street aggression on the Russians. Ethnic Kyrgyz, by contrast, focus on pull or neutral factors like the dwindling economy, which made Russians look for better opportunities outside Kyrgyzstan and their desire to live among their own people. There was a major alteration in the demographic balance of Kyrgyzstan by 1999, and the population grew to almost 5 million. The population of ethnic Kyrgyz was recorded 65 percent while Uzbek remained 14 percent only. However, there was a rapid disappearance of non-Asian and non-Muslims, whose share of the population shrank from some 36 percent in 1989 i.e., before independence to less than 15 percent in the year 1999. The census report in the year 2009, observed continuous change in demographic trends, with the ethnic Kyrgyz population comprising 70 percent of citizens and Bishkek rapidly started becoming a Russian speaking state. Kyrgyzstan has transferred from being a multi-ethnic state with large groups of minorities, to a state demographically controlled by

Kyrgyz ethnic group. The large emigration of Russians contains only one significant minority population, which is a cause of great concern for minorities. It is easier to achieve ethnic solidarity and then develop a liberal state according to the European experience. The Kyrgyz are pursuing the ethnic-state approach unless they have a different workable model. Despite the large emigration of Russians from Central Asia, Russia has been able to maintain a strong influence and the incidents of direct confrontations between local populations and Russians are very few. Thus, the pull factors to Russia remain few. Any manifestation of Nationalism or ethnic frictions, were swiftly repressed during soviet times. The approach of Kyrgyz administration in managing inter-ethnic relations has been redirecting and accommodative, which has not been very popular. Nationalist leaders build support for their organisations from the grievances and incidences of past injustices, which has been suggested in literature on ethnic mobilization.

The ethno-Nationalism in the country has been promoted by weak constitutional representation of the minorities and weak reforms. Kyrgyzification around ethnic symbols and ethnic identities promoted by the political elites and political entrepreneurs is a true visualization of Ethno-symbolism. The legacy of the Soviet ethno-political System and the territorial manifestation of the Soviet nationalities policy brought ethnic competitions, security dilemmas and served as an opportunity structure for ethnic mobilisation, at the same time. The hierarchical ethno-territorial character could function without causing much trouble whenever the Centre was strong and the political situation was stable. However, this system facilitated conflict whenever the political situation was unstable and chaotic. It is Political instability that is responsible for the conflicts in the society, thus the background for outbreak of ethno-territorial conflicts is the country's Political uncertainty. All ethno-territorial conflicts in the Soviet Union and its successor states have emerged at a time when the respective host country was in political chaos. The Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict of 2010 is very much similar to first to the conflict that occurred even before independence in 1989 and both the times country was facing problems and going through a political turmoil.

In independent Kyrgyzstan, Uzbeks had to lend their allegiance to actors perceived to be capable of preserving inter-ethnic stability but not to nationalist leaders so as to

prevent conflict like before. The first President of Kyrgyzstan despite the being an authoritarian showed some respite by displaying interest in maintaining inter-ethnic stability. There have been dialogues between the country's three largest ethnic groups i.e., Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Russians due to efforts made by his leadership to prevent frictions turning into violent conflicts. Akaev was a popular ruler amongst the minorities as he made ethnic harmony one of the keystones of his tenure. He gained from the support provided by ethnic groups especially Uzbek, as they acted as patron and intermediaries for him, helping him retain peace and power in the country. The Uzbeks became patrons of their communities and acted as mediators between their clients i.e., the Uzbeks and their own patrons i.e., the State elites (esp. Akaev). Thus, a system of mutual support created an arrangement of patronage and mutual dependence.

The narrative for 2010 Osh conflict, attributes the clashes to enduring and opposing ascribed identities i.e., to the tinderbox nature of Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations in Kyrgyzstan's southern cities. Thus, rather than being the aftermath of contingency or undeniable ethnic divides, the June 2010 violence was caused by a combination of Kyrgyzstan's enduring political instability and identifiable failures of the interim government to fix coalitions with regional elites to confirm that political variability did not devolve into societal conflict. The Uzbek's grievances supported by their size and geographic concentration in the south of the country has given the idea of emergence of an autonomist state a possibility. The subject of autonomy was promoted by few organisations or a set of elites even though it emerged in 1990 and was revived after 2010 ethnic riots. Now, the perception of Uzbek population is that Kyrgyzstan is as much their home as Kyrgyz ethnic group's. They see their present and future only in the frontiers of Kyrgyz Republic. A very minimal number of Uzbeks were in favour of the belief of institutionalizing autonomy. But recently the demands for autonomy has virtually diminished from agenda of Uzbek organisations and Uzbek mind set became pragmatic about their future in Kyrgyzstan.

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III. 1 Two-Colour Revolutions

Kyrgyzstan has been going under a political transition ever since its independence from totalitarianism to democracy, and is with the oppositions and contradicting forms of development. Around February 2005, a movement inspired by the 'Colour Revolutions' in Ukraine and Georgia pushed the country's first President Askar Akaev who ruled the country for fifteen years. This famous movement started to be known as the "Tulip Revolution" in which the networks and regional institutions were playing a mobilizing role for making decisions. The representative of opposition groups and the NGO's stood against election defaults, social grievances and corruption. On 24th March, 2005, the irate and unruly crowd attacked the presidential palace and Akaev went into exile. His follower Kurmanbek Bakiyev faced the same fate in the succeeding revolution in 2010. But other than the tulip revolution that happened in 2005, the rights that put the Kyrgyz leader down in the month of April, 2010 was an unorganized outburst of rage over Bakiyev's failed policies, suppression of the opponents and audacious nepotism. The vitality of the latter Kyrgyz revolution in 2010 took a shape by the new media, which acted as an assembling tool. They also permitted the disturbance in the presidential palace to be looked into in real time and so it made a huge part of the population a live witness to the happenings of that time.

The second smallest country in the Central Asian republics when talking of population, Kyrgyzstan, is an instance of attracting attention because of the political and economic changes that it went through. The messages it earlier gave to the west in the midst of liberalization resulted in this country to be named as the Switzerland of Central Asia (Anderson 1999); the democratization process had various acts from western countries, which caught a lot of attention (Abazov, 2003 a). The flexibility allowed the civil society in Kyrgyzstan was also much as compared to in other countries there and there were changes of power twice in the period of five years that is different in this country when compared to the others in the region. After the much-unwanted independence from Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz economy did not see any increase. Kyrgyzstan's agreeable tough economic scenario was aggravated by other Soviet traditions, which included most significantly a prevalent culture of clientele and corruption and weak legislative and judicial systems, which were not able to provide effective checks on executive power. Under this situation, the state was not

able to give a powerful centralization ideology and Kyrgyz citizens with all ethnicities soon lost their faith in the Kyrgyz state's institutions resulting into looking out for other bases which included the first and foremost of the tribe. Tendency for change is to an extent a result of the impact of transformation. It is also assumed that wherever the changed policies have resulted to poverty, unemployment and a downfall in living standards then there is a tendency for a change. There appears to be a consensus that the colour revolutions were brought about by widespread corruption, rural poverty, unemployment and alienation of the ruling elite from the masses. All these factors combined with inter-elite struggle for power and outside support culminated in the 'revolution'. The revolutions and the thrust of the common man for change of political regime in Kyrgyzstan shows the country's state of confusion and ambiguity. It has resulted in a struggle within the institutionalization in the country having quite a Soviet tone on one hand and the problem of creating a new nation within the quickly changing conditions. With the dependency on the old Soviet system, from economy to bureaucracy in the primary phase, the effort to move towards the West in the process of nationalization and even the effort to make a dictatorial centre shape the background to this confusion.

Since 1989, a new wave of protest movements elicited a 'revolution in the theory of revolution' (Bauman, 1994), challenging traditional understandings of the term in several ways (Robertson, 1993). Before that period, the term revolution has been understood as 'a total transformation of global significance' (Kosseleck, 1969) or even 'a huge, sudden, and therefore a violent change in government and related structures', as defined by Encyclopaedia Britannica. The revolution and violence have been used synonymously (Rule, 1988) and until recently a revolution that could aid or facilitate democracy was inconceivable (Thompson, 2003). However, scholars like Gene Sharp have long maintained that anti- dictatorship struggles, if carried out in a non- violent way can foster democratic principles (Sharp, 1993). This ambiguity of the word revolution became even more problematic as protest movements started to spread, with increasing frequency and fewer courses to violence. As 'colour revolutions' rapidly became a popular phrase to classify non- violent protests arising from rigged elections, especially in the former socialist world, a term 'electoral revolution' was introduced by (Tismaenanu, 1997; Bunce and Wolchik, 2006; 2007).

The end of authoritarian or totalitarian rule and democratization can take many different paths for example the death of an authoritarian, a popular revolution or simply unanticipated election results and lead to a variety of different outcomes. One tendency has been the deposing of bureaucratic leaders through what have been aspersed 'colour revolutions'. After the independence many of the East European countries saw 'coloured' revolutions: Kyrgyzstan (2005), Georgia (2003), Serbia (2000) and Ukraine (2004). These public protests have taken a colour (orange for Ukraine, rose for Georgia) like a symbol to mark their supporters and also as the character of the movement, although Serbia is called like a 'bulldozer' revolution. The term 'colour revolutions' was called as a single phenomenon by a number of peaceful protests that got success in abolishing authoritarian regimes during the first 10 years of the twenty-first century. This has included thousands of people having coloured symbols going to the streets and displaying their unhappiness with the current regime while the opposition approved by such people who have negotiated political change with the officials. However, the term "Colour Revolution" connotes the only the post-communist states but these movements have been observed in Middle East (Lebanon, 2005), and in Asia (Myanmar, 2007) as well (Beachain and Polis (ed.), 2010). The first such revolution occurred in Portugal popularly called "Revolution of the Carnations" of April 1974 which marked the beginning of such revolutions and has been observed frequently in CIS countries.

These movements were popular as they intended to introduce "democracy from below." The content may be different but most of them shared same strategies, mass protests stayed within constitutional boundaries, which helped in securing the greater participation of the masses and legitimated them as movements demanding greater democracy. These movements precipitate with the objective of removing incumbent political leaderships, fraudulent electoral procedures and the protestors focused on the fraudulent tactic of the government to stay in power. The gathering was the youth of the country especially students. The colour revolutions did not entail any drastic change of Political system, despite these demands by groups it had an intention of installing new political necessities. There have been mass movements, which look more like a "coup d'état." In coup d'état involvement in the revolution is like passive audience and in a political revolution the civil society participates with an optimistic input of bringing about a social change in the society. If the intentions of the people

who were protesting are not consequently understood in the structural change, a political revolution would not be said to have arisen. That is how we might differ between a political or social revolution from a coup d'état that is a result of public protest. Mass participation in colour revolution also must not be amalgamated into 'people's democracy promotion' in every uprising as such input could be encouraged by other hardships of a regional, ethnic, elite or it may be passionate.

International influences have proved to be more effective in promoting democratization in countries of post-communist Europe. Colour revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia, Serbia, and Kyrgyzstan gave rise to huge expectations for countries that were behind the third wave of democratization in East Central Europe and all through the world. In these laggards, the post-communist times were dominated by semi-dictatorial regimes pretending as democracies (Kalandadze, et al, 2009). Seeing thousands of people demanding peaceful and fair elections to put an end to pervert and corrupt regimes brought the trust in people's power reminiscing of the revolutions of 1989 in Central Europe (Kalandadze et al., 2009). Many spectators saw these remonstrations as second-stage revolutions that could bring democracy to countries that could not capitalize on the main democratic breakthroughs of 1989-1991. The interpretations of the Colour Revolutions in CARs have been dominated by various approaches. They are seen as exports of the western ideology of promoting the ideal of democracy in the affected countries, especially post-Soviet countries that are US sponsored. There are other approaches like revolutions taking place in the constitutional structure to expand forms of public involvement in the governments and were recognised as a crusade for 'greater democracy'. The first approach was promoted by Russia and the authoritarian states of the world fearing changes happening from below which are not in their control. These revolutions threaten their authoritarian regimes thus highly critiqued by them. The opponents of the colour revolution see them west inspired and against Russia.

Waves of Colour Revolution



Source: <http://www.thesleuthjournal.com/color-revolutions-ukraine-yugoslavia/>

Map III.1

III.2 Colour Revolution in Kyrgyzstan

III.2.1 Tulip Revolution

It is mandatory to see that the Republic of Kyrgyzstan under the direction of President A. Akaev was seen to be most democratic among the Central Asian republics. The acceptance of Russian as an official language, the tolerant behaviour to the Uzbek community, all this permitted the Kyrgyz class to act itself as democracy supporters. As opposed to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan stood out of process of “Islamic revival.” The post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan had chosen economic and social privatization when market institutes were introduced. Conditions were created for democratic society development but autocracy, nepotism and corruption were sustained. A special variant of democracy was created in the country, which had an authoritative secular mode. The army’s special services and personal authority of elites of the country kept giving them a strong role.

The March upheaval was though triggered by allegations of vote rigging in the 2005 February parliamentary elections. The protests initially began in the southern city of Jalalabad and later spread to the north. The CEC and President stood by the outcome which resulted in flaring of the situation. It was hard as the dwindling economy that was troubling the country for a long time. Kyrgyzstan lacked energy resources like its neighbours, half of the population lied below the poverty line. According to the National Statistics Committee (NSC), the Kyrgyz average monthly wage was 54.9 US dollar in 2005. Kyrgyzstan’s external debts were extremely high as it had reached 1.6 US billion dollars, five times more than the country’s annual income. The Soviet built factories were shut down or privatised falling into the hand of government officials or their relatives (Stobdan, 2014). The World Bank (2004) report cited corruption as the major hurdle in socio-economic development of Kyrgyzstan. President Akaev had controlled one-third of the economy including all financial flows and businesses in the country. The country was facing competition between regional clans for upholding their influence both in north and the south. Akaev towards the end of his presidency started patronising the northerners thus upsetting the hitherto and unspoken power-sharing arrangement between northern and southern clans. This power-arrangement left people dissatisfied and unhappy in southern part of the country. Numerous of Akaev’s confidante fell out with him on various accounts of

Akaev's social programme, territorial concessions made to China, rising nepotism (Akaev brought his son, daughter, extended family in to political process making it look like a preparation for dynastic succession) at the expense of his northern allies. The Bureaucracy also became discontented and Akaev was left alone when even state machineries failed to control street protests. The President was left with only handful of elites supporting him; even his closest confidant switched loyalties and joined the opposition.

In 2005, trailing the flawed February parliamentary elections, the country was captivated by mass protests. The most vociferous demonstrations were in south of Kyrgyzstan. The protesters in Jalal-Abad on 20 March 2005 embarked on a wave of robbery and arson targeting government buildings. Within four days the unrest spread to the capital, Bishkek. The protesters more than thousand in number wearing pink and yellow symbols to signify the "Tulip Revolution" (resonant of the orange posters flaunted by campaigners in Ukraine in the previous year i.e., 2004), snaked on the streets forcing President Akaev's and his government to resign. The loots and riots followed the protests; the damages were estimated at 24 million US dollars. The protests saw three deaths and casualties. The Protest did not display any sign of ethnic discord (Akiner, 2010).

Tulip revolution was led by 'self-regulating business interests and patronage allies that resulted in the exit of President Akaev from the country. In Kyrgyzstan, the Akaev clan was forced out due to the protest that started in the south of the country and other clans took into power. The consequence of the revolution did not affect the former patterns of corruption:

"the March events appear ... mostly to have worsened Kyrgyzstan's political instability, with rising numbers of assassinations and unruly crowd actions" (Radnitz, 2006).

Although Uzbeks supported Akaev regime till the final days they became quite dissatisfied seeing the lack of representation in governing bodies and the absence of retort to their claims (Spector, 2004). The scenario in Kyrgyzstan was fluctuating as an upheaval of new political class followed the kicking out of the old elites. The Uzbek leadership, primarily the UNCC, was defamed because of its alliance with the earlier government.

Students March on the Anniversary of Tulip Revolution (March 2006)



Source:http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2009/07/theres_something_about_kyrgyzstan.html

Picture III.1

The limit to which the Uzbek population played an active role in the occurrences is highly refuted. The primary indulgence of political elites from south and of Uzbek community leaders like Anvar Artykov who was named the governor of the Osh region in 2005, suggested a new era in community and state relations. In fact the development in 2006 appeared to have taken a bad turn when Artykov was pushed to leave the Governor's post in the month of January in 2006. The Jalalabad Cultural Centre led by Kadyrzhan Batyrov (a local businessman) sent an appeal to the authorities stressing the need to look into the upsurge of anti-Uzbek discrimination after the Tulip revolution. However, the turmoil rooted out more from antagonism between individual figures more than from cross-ethnic differences.

III.2.2 April Revolution

In Bakiyev period the common perception existed that the scenario did not differ much from the previous months of the Akaev regime, corruption was rampant in the government offices; the family had usurped all the resources and the incomes were appropriated by the chosen few; there was fight for positions between elites; poverty was at its peak; inflation was rising and people were highly discontent; the media's freedom was jeopardised, journalists were beaten up and even murdered. The government's decision to privatise the economic proficiency contributed to even higher tariffs which was met with severe criticism by the opposition and led to alternative political crisis. Bakiyev recognised a 'dubiously elected' Parliament, the results of which had not been validated by the Supreme Court. The new regime formed under President Bakiyev served as a means to shield its people's private interests.

As Scott Radnitz puts it-

“There was not a regime change, but ‘a transfer of power’. Even in terms of electoral procedures, the 2007 election was faulted – the governing party received 71 of the 90 seats after receiving only 49 per cent of the vote, and the main opposition party received no seats at all. These results were derived from an electoral system that required a qualifying threshold for seats of 5 per cent and another 0.5 per cent in each of the regional voting constituencies: such a system clearly discriminated against regionally based parties.”

The OSCE primary report discussed about the election as ‘a missed opportunity’ and the electoral system as unreal. On the one hand, the government's tried to replicate the dictatorial family-and-clan system of the first President, which gave birth to political instability and on the other hand, the opposition and the civil sector were rigid enough to rock the boat. Their highly differing views on the country's future worsened their ambiguities. Bakiyev remained indifferent to rising opposition and continued using their interests on the foreign as well as domestic scenes. Around 2009, the Bakiyev's clan had a good hold on the state, its finances as well as corruption reached at its highest. Externally foreign policy issues intensified the relations between Moscow and Bishkek. In the beginning of 2010, local opposition media in Kyrgyzstan and Russian media started to issue articles criticizing the Bakiyev government to promote crime

and corruption. On 1 April 2010, Russia increased prices of refined petroleum items which were exported to Kyrgyzstan and cut off some sorts of banking transactions with Kyrgyzstan (Kramer, 2010a). The two regions in southern territory namely Naryn and Talas that have been overlooked by the Bakiyev government and its forerunners saw the uprising of the people, which reached its peak on 6th and 7th April 2010. The discontent came to Talas as people disliked the fact that the most popular people were taken off from the local power structures. The initial stimulus for Bakiyev's departure, however, was a rally of thousands in Bishkek on 7th April 2010. The protestors were complaining of the increasing rates of utility items and government's nepotism and repression. They seized many government buildings pushing Bakiyev to flee first to the south and then out of the country.

Many members of the opposition and activists were detained to stop them from making an appearance at the rallies, which were set for the same day. In Talas, a local opposition leader was arrested and this provoked the crowd and when the Minister of Internal Affairs came to pacify the protesters, he was taken into custody and beaten up. The leaders who got arrested the opponents like Atambaev, Tekebaev and others to pacify the protests badly misconstrued the situation.

Anti-government Protest in Bishkek (7 April 2010)



Source: <http://blog.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/2016/04/06/tracing-political-circles-in-kyrgyzstan/> PC: Vyacheslav Oseledko

Picture III.2

The crowd was left on their own with no one to take care of the protest sentiments, the crowd could not be calmed down. The events in Talas developed into an even bigger occurrence: when the people recuperated from the attack of the police action and the riots. The crowd reassembled in greater numbers on the square having sticks, stones, and Molotov cocktails. The police officials were attacked by the unruly mob, the crowd outnumbered the police ranks by the dozen. The opposition also publicised that they had the backing of four regions out of the total seven regions. As many opposition leaders were imprisoned or were out of capital the people joined to become their own leader and the scene went out of anyone's control. People captured official buildings in temporary assault groups, however, enterprising people made small groups for more ordered action. The riots came into the capital, where the protestors mostly youngsters tried to capture government organisations. The use of force became inevitable and some 80 lives were claimed with several hundreds casualties. The Policemen killed number of attackers whereas the crowd used Molotov cocktails on the policemen to shoo them away. There were several policemen who were attacked by the angry mob. The President's palace, the Parliament, the public prosecutor's offices, the Arts Museum and the building of National Security Service were captured or partially damaged by fire. On 16 April 2010, Bakiyev officially resigned and left Kyrgyzstan taking exile in Belarus. The conflict of April was entered into a second phase when less than month later on 13 May 2017. Ostensibly, ethnic Kyrgyz who were considered pro-Bakiyev seized control of government buildings in Jalal-Abad and expelled the Governor. Subsequently as a counter reaction the armed Uzbek's who supported interim government attacked the insurgents the next day and re-instated the governor after attaining control of the government offices. Uzbeks burnt Bakiyev's family home and his relative's houses in "Teit" which is a village near Jalal-Abad. The Political struggle by then had taken the shape of an ethnic confrontation between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks ethnic groups in the south. The Uzbeks supported the predominantly northern Interim government against the southern faction, which supported Bakiyev. On 19 May 2010, the Kyrgyz protestors some 5000-7000 in number attacked People's Friendship University (a focal point of Uzbek's Cultural activity) founded by Batyrov in 1999. The building was blazed and charred completely, at least 3 people were killed and 60-70 injured during these clashes. The third phase of the conflict took place on June 2010 as already discussed under ethnic conflicts in the previous chapter (Akiner, 2010). The whole movement

for democratisation, which started in April 2010 had taken the form of ethnic conflicts between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks posing a challenge to country's stability and unity.

III.2.3 Tulip Revolution Vis a Vis April revolution

The events of March 2005 and April 2010 when compared show a lot of dissimilarities. In 2005, the opposition demanded stability at a fast pace so that they could present the regime some change as another 'velvet revolution'. However, in 2010 the opponents were different. On 6th-7th April 2010 the dissatisfied public rather than the opponents took charge of the movement. The opponents became a part of the protests at the last hour. The events of April 2010 provided a significantly more pivotal lesson. While it took weeks for protestors to descend on Bishkek in March 2005, the fuming crowds that formed in 'Talas' in April 2010 broke the gateways of the Presidential White House in just two days.

The literature on revolutions and political instability amply demonstrates that the capacity of state militaries plays a critical role in shaping how autocrats manage political protests and whether their actions are successful. The Kyrgyz security services' often had minimalist and non-existent interventions during periods of heightened political protest. When in 2005 the protestors demanded the resignation of the President Bakiyev security services stood by as protestors stormed the Kyrgyz White House. On the contrary in April 2010 during the protests security forces fired on the crowds gathered at the White House. Thus, the events of March 2005 and April 2010 prove that street violence and the attack on government buildings are efficient means for compelling change at the regional and national levels. Kyrgyzstan, once a home to Central Asia's most vibrant civil society, became hostage to flash mobs wielding weapons. The problem that interim government President Otunbayeva confronted after obtaining the authority is that the same learned behaviour that brought them to power also produced the June 2010 ethnic riots spreading at Jalal-Abad, Uzgen, and Osh. Although the power of the mob was a novelty in 2005, it became a norm in Kyrgyzstan. Persuading a populace, particularly younger generations whose only sense of political efficacy is mob mobilization, to unlearn and disavow street violence will be enduring challenge for the successors of Bakiyev.

III.3 Aftermath-Putsch 2010

The Rosa government decided to create formal institutions of democracy undermining the previous illiberal institutions, which helped maintain peace and stability in the country. The decision to dissolve the corrupt National Parliament by Otunbayeva's government alienated elites support to the government, which was extremely imperative for the maintenance of power and order in the country.

As Scott Radnitz (2006) demonstrates-

“Post-Soviet Kyrgyz politics, are endemically vulnerable to ‘subversive clientelism’ at the regional level. These elite-mass ties outside the ambit of the state, which have been termed as *subversive* clientelism, turned out to be consequential in Kyrgyzstan, where parliamentary candidates who had invested in communities mobilized their supporters in 2005 to protest fraudulent elections, culminating in the overthrow of the President. This subversive clientelism can be mitigated to a degree by extending representation in the National Parliament to local elites from non-dominant region.”

The representation should have been given to the northern regions under Bakiyev, and its southern regions under the Otunbayeva's interim government. Otunbayeva's insistence, though, that these southern elites be selected through free election, rather than through localized patron-client relationships, alienated a constituency critical to the maintenance of peace and stability. It was precisely the autocratic elite that could have provided Otunbayeva and her colleagues with the capacity necessary to project centralized authority, specifically into Kyrgyzstan's ethnically mixed southern cities. The negative developments after the April revolution led Uzbeks to work on the relative securities of their own groups. There were signs of Uzbeks often well-educated receding to more traditional practises and conservative forms of Islam like forbidding alcohol, celebrating festivals in traditional way which was not observed before, women being asked to dress up modestly and wear headscarf by their husbands. These practises were not much visible before June 2010 riots. Even though there were instances when Uzbeks affronted by corruption and immorality of the Bakiyev government were drawn to traditions such as arranged marriage and Islamisation of their community but it hastened after the June 2010 violence. There are official claims that after the violence many disappointed ethnic Uzbeks went to

northern Afghanistan and southern Waziristan in Pakistan to joining IMU i.e., Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and other Islamist groups raising tensions in the regions. There were series of raids by police and security agencies to curb such movements and radicalization of Uzbeks youth. The violence and the conflict certainly benefitted the radical Islam groups. The number of Uzbeks may have joined the military training or may have come back but the exact number of Uzbeks to have joined such groups remains a fraction of the official figure.

III.4 Causes of the Revolutions

The causes of the two revolutions are many, complex, and ambiguous. Nevertheless, some important factors are clear.

III.4.1 Internal Factors

The western style democracy adopted by the country did more harm than good to the country's political stability. The political situation of the country was subject to two mutually restricted and opposing trends. On one hand, the country's dependence on its economy persuaded the people that the democracy as a form of government was trivial. On the other hand, the social and economic problems caused acute differences between the government and the opponents over the country's political ideal, which eventually impacted the political dynamics in Kyrgyzstan. Akaev promoted aggressive economic reforms in the succeeding years of his presidency. The state-owned assets were privatized and development of small and medium enterprises was promoted. The Republic was the first among the post-Soviet countries to have introduced the national currency 'Som' in 1993, it became a member of WTO. It initiated private ownership for land in 1998 and built robust relationships with the bordering, regional, western and "far abroad" countries. Many western countries and financial institutions backed the reforms the republic undertook in his Presidency. The total amount of foreign aid in 1991-2004 was stated at 24 billion US dollars. However, the country failed to show any substantive economic growth, the gap between the rich and poor was becoming broader. The majority of the population continued to slide into extreme poverty. The National Statistics Agency reported 50 percent of population being below the poverty line in 2004. Also starting from the end of 1994, Akaev began to exhibit authoritarian attributes through the efforts to contain

political opposition and media, obstructing development of political parties, and concentration of economic and political control in his hands (Kulikova, 2007).

The new regime after the Tulip Revolution called for property distribution but the reforms were short lived. The new political elite from the republic's south and the government officials busied itself in search of resources. The republic faced economic and social crisis in 2008, which emerged from the negative changes due to property redistribution acquiring huge dimensions, and the unforeseeable economic policies of the alternating governments. The economic growth was only due to the increase in custom duties and taxes. The inflation constituent of its growth was huge, as annual inflation elevated from 5 percent in 2006 to 20 percent in December 2007 and to 25 percent in March 2008. Kyrgyzstan switched from being majorly an agrarian industrial country to selling services (which accounted for 44 percent of its GDP). The country was not able to improve its economy as activities like drug trafficking were being carried out which hampered the growth and development. This critical economic crisis was accompanied by an acute energy crisis. The state gets its maximum electric power from hydro-power stations, which accounted for 92 percent during Bakiyev's era in 2007 in comparison to 76 percent in 1993. This acute dependence on hydropower stations for power supply was complemented by corruption, which was the source of energy crisis. There were positive changes too as claimed by Bakiyev's closest circle for instance- the country's external debt reduced as a result of the four-fold increase in the budget, hefty money was galvanized from the shadow to the official sector. The country's economy received a boom after the agreement between company working at the Kumtor goldmine and the government was amended benefitting the country increasing income several times. However, corruption wrecked the positive effects of any development in the country. Kyrgyzstan has acute shortage of agricultural land, which has been a frequent source of discontent amongst the masses and has taken the shape of ethnic conflict.

Kyrgyzstan's two post-Soviet leaders were accused of favoritism that they showed to their children and relatives. One of the main reasons for the overthrow of Akaev's regime was considered prevalent nepotism during his regime and Bakiyev committed the same mistake. Both the leaders paid a heavy price for Nepotism. Many experts have claimed that approximately 20 percent GDP ended up in the hands of Akaev's

family and close associates as they were allotted government positions and also his children ran for parliamentary election in 2005. The fact that Bakiyev intently followed the doomed path of his precursor exhibits the deep roots that corruption and nepotism have in Central Asia. The foundation of Bakiyev's regime laid in Nepotism as family and clan promotion were the hallmark of his Presidency. There was countrywide criticism of him promoting all his brothers and sons in politics. They held prime positions of utmost importance one commanded the security service positioning him in command of the National Guard, one of his son handled the state security, the other controlled the executive organisations, while his youngest son commanded the 'Agency for Development', which holds the executive control in the Kyrgyz Republic. His brothers also enjoyed important and eminent governmental positions including that of Deputy Foreign Minister. Even the economy, business and trade were dominated with the President's numerous relatives. Bakiyev expanded his powers and strengthened the vertical of power. The government's decision to radically reorganise state structure created a public stir as it meant more control by Bakiyev's family and friends.

Askar Akaev, who ruled the country for almost 15 years, could rule the country despite displaying authoritarian tendencies by practically manipulating the constitution of the country in his favor. In 1996, 1998, 2001 and 2003, Akaev introduced constitutional amendments through popular referendum, which provided him with fundamentally unrestricted powers and left the Parliament stranded by stripping away its power of maintaining a check-and-balance. It turned the country from a parliamentary to a purely presidential republic. In early 2000, the Supreme Court resolved that Akaev's first term as the President (1991- 1995), did not count on the constitutional two-term limit for the office, as he served it under the old Constitution. Thus, he ran for the third time in the presidential elections of 2000 and got re-elected in highly rigged and manipulated elections (Kulikova, 2007). Under Bakiyev, the constitutional law was amended thrice by limiting or expanding the presidential powers. The constitutional amendment of 2007 under Bakiyev permitted much broader presidential privileges, which were expanded further by a constitutional referendum of 2009 and brought worst fears amongst the people of dynastic rule. There were other amendments introduced by Bakiyev in early 2010, according to which the right of the Parliament to name President's successor in the event of his

incapacity to complete presidential term was relocated to presidential conference. This Conference was an assembly of local elites and President's confidants. Earlier this right was with the Speaker or the Prime Minister as conceivable acting President in the absence of President's incapability to finish his full term. The Constitutional Court accepted the amendment, albeit with a recommendation that it be further revised. The opposition was convinced that this amendment was contrived to pass control on to Bakiyev's younger son- Maxim since Bakiyev's powers would have expired in 2013 with no third term possible constitutionally. The Constitutional Court, however, annulled the amendment and suggested that this right belonged to the country's State Council. Moreover, Bakiyev became unwell and had to go through treatments in German hospitals hence, his absenteeism added fire to the competition in the corridors of power and in the opposition. The active opposition enabled a strengthened situation in the country. Thus, unsuccessful administration, the rampant corruption and non-transparency in all branches of the government combined with smuggling of electric power and water during the irrigation season to neighbouring countries crippled the country. A social outburst became inevitable in April 2010 because the government overtaxed the population of the republic as well as raised the prices of electricity and heating.

Another significant reason, which led to two revolutions, can be accredited to the Country's geographical divide between north and south. The Republic divided into north and south by high mountains crossed by a single main highway. The government in Kyrgyzstan consistently maintained that any public consideration of ethnic frictions or the regional divide would only make matters worse. The government had decided that it would favour the regions as per its preference and loyalties and try to avoid friction of any kind. This resulted into large populace of agitated, jobless and uneducated young Kyrgyz, easily militarized by nationalist slogans. There were rumours that ethnic Uzbeks were conspiring separation of inhabitants from south Kyrgyzstan. In the north, where the capital Bishkek is located, there is more urbanised and Russified population with an industrialized landscape. In contrast, the agrarian southern regions have a larger proportion of ethnic Uzbeks. There has been a serious scholarly contention on the topic of regional divide in the country. The ousting of Akaev Regime was seen as a victory of southerners against the northerners. This problem of regional divide became more apparent in early 2010

when politicians of south assumed that President Bakiyev was a southerner who was overthrown by northerners to weaken their position. In this period of crises organised crime groups like drug peddlers exploited the situation to consolidate their positions with the support of well-inclined politicians. Thus, southern political leaders became consolidated at the elimination of one of their own from the President's office and they now wanted their undue share in the revised economic and political arrangements after the revolution of April 2010.

III.4.2 External Factors

Guided by the geo-political motive of excluding Russia, Iran and China as important transit routes for the energy resources of Central Asia and the Caspian region, the United States supported the regime change in the former Soviet republics on the pretext of promoting democracy. This stance of promoting Democracy is seen as a handy instrument to serve its objective of acquiring control over the vast natural resources of the developing world. Control of energy routes was also important for the new US goal of world hegemony through its new imperial course of pre-emptive action. This policy also disapproves of consolidation of Russia's power in region, expansions of China and favours seclusion of Iran. The west implied soft power to establish new governments and dissolve the previous one. This policy originated from the ideas of scholars such as

Joseph Nye, who has advocated-

“a shift from the use of military force and coercion to the promotion of internal change through manipulation of the norms and values of citizens, through the use of multiple channels of communication, the projection of the domestic achievements and international performance of the West is likely, to be to the advantage of the USA and Europe.”

The west is promoting political ideals of democracy, freedom and Justice, cultural artefacts (pop music, art, and way of dressing up) and consumption articles like mobile phone, food items (McDonald's food) to these countries. This is an important strategy as the norms and values of the citizens are changed through manipulation (Lane, 2009). So, it is considered that the United States of America and the other western countries are interested in democratization of the region states. The

“Revolution of roses,” “Orange revolution,” “Violet revolution,” “Revolution of tulips,” and “Cedar revolution” are promoted as the revolutions for the desire of Freedom (IRI, 2005). Both the times when there was a regime change there were speculations about involvement of external actors in provoking the revolution. There are assumptions that as Akaev was more close to Russia and regarded as Pro-Russian, Americans were more interested in removing him. There are facts pointing to direct and indirect involvement not only of American NGOs like Soros Foundation and the International Institute for Democracy but also of American diplomats posted in Bishkek. However, technically the southern criminal community together with the western backed opposition (monetarily) gathered into the streets to protest against the government. The law enforcement agencies failed to control the intensive movements of the organized crime groups and the protestors. President Bakiyev made a decision in June 2009 to keep American airbase and Transit centre in Manas, which infuriated Kremlin. As Kyrgyzstan’s President had not fulfilled his promise to remove the American base in return of which Russia was granting 150 million US dollars, a soft loan of 300 million US dollars and even wrote off country’s debt of 180 million US dollars. This aggravated the situation internally also it gave a reason to those who objected America’s presence on Kyrgyz soil for example- Aksakal Council insisted that the American airbase should be moved out on force. The troubles were heaping up on the building of a military training centre by Russia in the republic’s south, which was being delayed. It was going to be Russia’s second military facility in the country and a compensation for the eviction of the Americans. The situation became unpleasant between countries due to some on-going conflicts. The Kyrgyz administration launched an offensive against Russian language websites, access to which was either regulated or blocked and infringement of business activities of Russian businessman. No matter how decisively Russian officials rebuffed Russia’s participation in the Kyrgyz events, there have been evidences that the Kyrgyz opposition and Russia’s agents maintained secret contacts at least in the months that preceded the change of regime. Russia was involved in the revolution as it openly supported the interim government and also provided military assistance after the revolution. The two paratrooper deputations rapidly moved to the Kant airbase, which shows Russia’s intentions of not letting Bakiyev come back to power. The Country’s interim President Rosa Otunbayeva asked for support from Russia and the USA. She was promised support by the USA in exchange of extension of its rights on Manas Air

Base and Otunbayeva promised of honouring the earlier contracts made with the USA.

III.5 Political Transformation

Kyrgyzstan after independence had to face two major challenges of political transformation towards democratisation and economic transformation towards liberalisation of the state economy. According to BTI report 2016, the Political Transformation in Kyrgyzstan has a score of 5.95 on the scale of 10 and the rank of 60 out of 129 countries, which indicates an improvement over previous years. The score is evaluated after evaluating various indicators like standard basic administration, free and fair elections, effective power to govern, assembly rights, freedom of expression and many more, (BTI, 2016). Kyrgyzstan's political transformation is discussed below on the following ground:

III.5.1 State Identity and Elections

The country's state identity is largely consolidated even after two revolutions. Kyrgyzstan is a secular, democratic state where religious dogmas have not marked its presence as it doesn't have legal order or effect on the politics of the country. The constitution guarantees separation of church and state. The state has the monopoly on the use of force, the state administration operates nationwide albeit to fluctuating degrees of success. All the citizens irrespective of region, ethnicity or religion have same civil rights. The Kyrgyz language is the state language but Russian, which is the second most spoken language, has been given the official status. So far, however, the calls by Political groups for discrimination against Uzbek language not having legal status have not turned into a concrete policy. The politicians including President Atambayev have been seen celebrating main Muslim festivals and the Parliament building has its own prayer room. The complex Kyrgyz society is riven along ethnic and linguistic characteristics and these gaps correspond to regional and urban/rural divisions in the State. Almost all Uzbek-language media outlets were shut down in the wake of ethnic violence in 2010. In 2012, only two Uzbek language radio station and one Uzbek language newspaper were reopened with international donor assistance.

Kyrgyzstan has seen the rise of a diverse civil society, opposition political parties, and independent media and institutions that its neighbouring states still largely dearth. Since its independence, the country has seen the two authoritarian regimes and two

violent regime changes, incited by public discontent and unrest. The ouster of President seemed to have been organized by elites for asserting the political power and economic resources. The interim governments struggled to accomplish drastic changes in the constitution keeping in cognizance the multifarious society of Kyrgyzstan driven by nepotistic links. Therefore, the new constitution ensured that no single political arrangement captures too much of power. The country became a parliamentary democracy from a strong presidential type. Even though the parliamentary experimentation has not instantaneously led to efficient policies or reduced corruption, it has produced an atmosphere of political behaviour that avoids the concentration of power in the hands of one political leader or patrimonial/elite network. However, the government continues to face challenges and complex issues, such as reinstating interethnic equality and human rights, placing the economy on a steady progress, improving the administration of justice and the rule of law, and eradication of corruption.

Kyrgyzstan has become the first in Central Asia to successfully transfer presidential power through competitive election twice. In 2011 elections for the presidential position were held in which Almazbek Atambayev secured 63 percent votes in a turnout of 60 percent. International observers attested that the elections were fair and inclusive and the campaign also was open and respected fundamental freedoms. However, there were complaints by the opposition that Akaev had an advantage over others as he profited from his position as Prime Minister in the run-up to the presidential elections and spent disproportionate money. Presidential elections were held in Kyrgyzstan on 15 October 2017 on completion of Atambayev's tenure. Incumbent President was not allowed to run according to the amendment, which stated that President can only serve a single six year term. There were 11 candidates for the presidential race and Sooronbay Jeenbekov of SDPK emerged as the winner by securing 50 percent of the vote and he was sworn in as the President of Kyrgyzstan in December 2017. There were 773 international monitors from 59 different countries and 44 international organisations were registered to observe the presidential election held on 15 October 2017. The election led to change of a President in Central Asia for the first time which was not the result of demise of the President or a revolution, and furthermore, the results of the election were not disclosed beforehand unlike before when the country was ruled by the autocrats.

Kyrgyz Republic has made substantial growth in holding competitive elections. Between the year 2010 and 2012 only the country held three elections (parliamentary, presidential, and local) and a constitutional referendum. The international observers and organisations have praised the presidential and parliamentary elections in the country. However, some problems were also noted by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) like small glitches in voter enrolment lists, there were allegations that Central Elections Commission's (CEC) work lacked transparency. According to election observers the overall outcome of the elections was not disturbed by these discrepancies. In March and November 2012, the country held local elections. All keen political parties had the prospect of registering and competing in the elections, However, majorly no single political party gained a majority. The competitive elections saw political parties SDPK and Republic (a non-ruling party) led by a plurality in most areas. In December 2016, a referendum was approved by 80 percent of voters to strengthen the power of the Prime Minister and to bring Judicial reforms in Kyrgyzstan.

III.5.2 Civil Society and Women

The Kyrgyzstan civil society works relatively free of political force. The political climate in the north especially the capital Bishkek is liberal than the southern part of the country. There is a diverse civil society, independent media and opposition political parties that its neighbouring states still largely lack. The civil society functions relatively free of political pressure in the capital, Bishkek that is located in north. The government officials and civil society have cooperated for various purposes in past and share primarily a positive relationship. The right to freedom of assembly has vanquished the governments in past. The two revolutions in the country are an outcome of a rally of crowd taking a shape of an unruly mob. In Bakiyev's era between 2005 and 2007, there were series of protests by the opposition and the civil society groups that demanded constitutional reforms to diminish presidential powers. In comparison to Akaev's and Bakiyev's era, civil society operates without much political pressure now. The post April 2010 has seen active involvement of NGO's at all levels from investigating crimes by police or military personals and planning reforms in police department. NGOs also lobbied in the legislature for stringent punishments for kidnapping of women into marriage. The NGOss had to face various

challenges in southern region especially conflict prone areas like Osh and Jalalabad as local government keeps a strong vigil and hinders the movement of foreign-funded organisations. Kyrgyzstan's mass media is also freer in north than south and more available and accessible in urban than rural areas. The government reserves the right to ban the content of they find it unsuitable for its people for example- "Innocence of Muslims" and the film "I am Gay and Muslim" trailer were banned as they hurt Muslim sentiments. The Uzbeks channels and media houses banned after ethnic-riots have also begun to re-open. Internet and online content is largely free of censor.

Women constitute more than half of Kyrgyzstan's population. In 2005, Kyrgyz republic was the only country in the world where there was not even a single women representative in the parliament. After much pursuance and national campaigns women were granted 30 percent gender quota in the election code. Kyrgyzstan's constitution adopted in 2010 also grants equal rights to all citizens irrespective of ethnicity, religion, or gender. Women and ethnic minorities are underrepresented at various levels of government. By the law of the land women should constitute 30 percent where as they constitute only 19.2 percent share of seats in Parliament. In the mono-ethnic areas, 60 percent of the marriages are done by bride kidnapping out of which 2/3 are without girl's consent. However, bride kidnapping has been criminalised but it is still practised at many places (UNDP, 2017).

III.V.3 Rule of Law and Democratic Institutions

There was a separation of power between executive and legislative specified in the new constitution. The President's powers and dominance are counterbalanced by Parliament in the new arrangement. The legislative branch comprises of all the most influential political and business elites in the state. The President has boosted his influence since the 2011 elections but he remains within the parliamentary check. The judicial branch, however, is not independent of political forces yet. Many incidents in which the President and Parliament have influenced politicised judges to take decisions in their favour have been noticed. Since 2010, the judiciary has been the most weak and extremely corrupt organ of the state. The Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court consists of various judges selected by a special committee that comprises of legal experts, member of Parliaments and NGO representatives allegedly linked to the political forces. Judicial proceedings over crimes during the 2010 ethnic

conflict have been enormously perplexing. Judicial reform was of no help in to the infamous case of Azimzhan Askarov, an ethnic Uzbek human rights activist serving a life sentence in prison. President Atambayev made the fight against corruption one of his top priorities after being elected to the President's position. In 2012, primarily the specially recognized Anti-Corruption Service under the Committee for National Security arrested several MPs and government officials in huge numbers and many higher-level persons on charges of corruption that never happened in the past. These arrests have not lead to open political score setting but have targeted politicians as well as opposition members. Corruption endures all state institutions, and administrators were generally able to evade trial. Moreover, officials suspected of involvement in serious crimes during the June 2010 ethnic violence in Osh remained free of legal prosecution.

The present political system of Kyrgyzstan is decentralised and provides unequal powers to the Parliament. Conflicting to earlier scepticism, the Parliament has been able to function with relative stability for a complete term. The ruling coalition has altered thrice since 2010, with the Social Democratic Party (SDPK) as one of the leading coalition partners, a party associated with the President. The Parliament continued until the end of its term despite many prediction of its failure were made. The local elections in March and November 2012 showed that the reforms that were made before have strengthened local government and lead to vigorous contest between parties. The Political party SDPK gained the maximum number of constituencies around the country, and its members along with those of another political party Ata-Meken, the closest ally of SDPK occupied most key positions in the government. The Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan is the supreme judicial authority, which independently accomplishes the task of constitutional supervision by way of constitutional legal proceedings. The Kyrgyz politics is not free from external and internal threats and a potential for instability remains a live concern. Different groups pursue moderate politics while some have chosen activist impulses. Several modifications in political institutions at the Union level have resulted in reconstruction of power structure and novice ideas. Thus, it remains a question if the existing system of governance is protecting or simply postponing the re-emergence of a single-party system.

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IV.1 Problems of Transition to Democracy

At the beginning of the 1990s, independence was thrust upon the Central Asian countries. The process of nation building, drawing on elements of pre-Soviet culture, have been promoted by five Central Asian states with an attempt to place themselves in the modern world. The general economic collapse that occurred in the early 90s across the region added more complexities to the issue. The inheritance from the Soviet Union gave them the ex-comrade pioneers of the previous Soviet republics which now needed to discover methods for legitimizing their rule under significantly unique domestic and global conditions.

These newly independent republics started to follow various paths in their transition endeavours. The first President of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov, followed the chief control mechanism of the Soviet system in order to control over the state affairs. In 2007, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov turned into the new President, and despite the fact that there have been assured national changes towards more casual strategies; Turkmenistan still has not stepped toward democratization. In Uzbekistan, President Islam Karimov ruled from 1989 until his demise in 2016 and he had a dominant power structure where political rivals were ill-treated and methodically tormented in jail. With respect to Tajikistan, political turbulence amid the phase promptly succeeding freedom prompted the ruin of President Nazarbayev and to a possible undeniable civil war in the vicinity between the year 1992 and 1997. Emomalii Rahmon, who was the next President in line (became President in 1994), has remained in office ever since then. Indeed Kazakhstan, a nation that is viewed as most democratic in the Central Asian region besides Kyrgyzstan, has set up a "President for life" since 1991. The parliament of Kazakhstan conceded absolute powers in the office of the President Nursultan Nazarbaev. In April 2015, with 98 percent of the votes, he was re-elected. There are divergent views on the future of these countries. Many believed that the collapse of the Soviet Union was followed by the democratization of the successor states. This notion has turned out to be at best premature, at worst imprudent. Nowhere is this more so than in Central Asia, where the first decade of independence has been marked by strong authoritarian presidentialism (Cummings, 2012). The disintegration of the Soviet Union prompted major political, financial and social changes and issues in the recently free ex-Soviet

republics, including Kyrgyzstan. In the light of the view that ethnic and political insecurity in Kyrgyzstan have auxiliary reasons for example- financial, local, regional and faction, it is contended that the current local, financial and ethnic divisions constitute essential deterrents to the country's stability and state-building process. The powerful presidential framework couldn't defeat these basic issues in over two decades. The progress in Kyrgyzstan was not understood by the authoritarian members of the former Communist Party. On the other hand, post-Soviet Republics, with time, wound up plainly tyrant and encouraged the presidential framework by extending the forces of the President. However, then also these leaders failed to institute stability. Since independence, the political circumstances in Kyrgyzstan have been tense, in spite of the fact that the nation is unexpectedly tended to as an "island of democracy of Central Asia" by Western nations and is generally the most liberal one in the area.

The famous figure of Kyrgyzstan literature Chinghiz Aitmatov, and the former diplomat promoted Askar Akaev who retained the Presidency from 1990 to 2005. In March 2005, Bakiyev became the President following the Tulip Revolution. The first color revolution experienced in the post-Soviet space ousted Akaev, who was blamed for defilement and clientilism. As of late, history rehashed itself in this key nation of Central Asia; Bakiyev, who was relied upon to give a conclusion to debasement and nepotism in the nation, was blamed for indistinguishable mistakes as Akaev. Bakiyev beat his predecessor in matters of corruption as it was under his presidency that acts like corruption and criminal activities reached all-time high and that too directly controlled by himself (Marat, 2010). Bakiyev was ousted in April 2010, after the revolution, which was followed by clashes and protests that started in Bishkek spreading to the rest of the country killing dozens of people.

According to Tulsiram and Patnaik (2013)-

“The dynamics of 2005 and 2010 revolutions were different in that the former was more of a result of external factors relating to the mobilisation of non-governmental organisations, while the latter was more of a result of internal dynamics very much shaped by the tradition of *Kurultay*.”

Interim government led by Roza Otunbayeva, was formed to govern until the next parliamentary elections. The decision of Otunbayeva's government to dissolve the

parliament was seen as a mistake, which no other former Kyrgyz executives made. As there were various groups, which bargained, cooperated and formed alliances in the Parliament, after the dissolution these groups turned against Otunbayeva prompting ethnic riots particularly in the South (McGlinchey, 2011). Rosa Otunbayeva was the President of the country until 1 December 2011 till the fresh Presidential elections were held. In spite of these advancements, the parliamentary elections and constitutional referendum took place; nurturing trusts again in the foundation of the parliamentary administration and a law centred Kyrgyzstan after the adoption of the new constitution in June 2010. Incomprehensibly, Kyrgyzstan became a parliamentary democracy with a majority coalition for the first time in central Asia, including political gatherings transparently contradicting such an administration. Akhatbek Keldibekov, a notable figure of Ata-Jurt was elected as the head of Parliament and SDPK (Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan) and Almazbek Atambayev became the Prime Minister. Omurbek Babanov, the leader of Respublika was elected as the first Deputy Prime Minister. However, new challenges were lined up for new democratic Kyrgyzstan.

After a year, before the October 2011 presidential decision, the civil argument about the consistency of the parliamentary administration was still on the agenda, and despite the fact that the difficulties to the parliamentary framework were yet strong after the election of Atambayev as the President, the help given to Atambayev was characteristic of help given to the parliamentary administration by the general population of Kyrgyzstan to put a conclusion to the worries about coming back to the presidential framework. Kyrgyzstan's political history has put the 'State' in the spotlight amongst all the Central Asian countries. The events that resulted in the overthrow of two presidents suggest that the political system in Kyrgyzstan is very dynamic, visibly differing from the notoriously 'stable' regimes in other Central Asian countries. However, the interpretation of these events and their implications varies among observers. For some, the so-called 'revolutions' of March 2005 and April 2010 represented evidence of democratization, as corrupt and authoritarian regimes fell under popular pressure. Others have been less optimistic, treating events as symptoms of a failing state, where state power is primarily seen as an opportunity for enrichment, and where political competition represents nothing more than competition for control over resources (Patnaik and Tulsiram, 2013). Kyrgyzstan's

empirical analysis is imperative to identify the level to which the country has achieved its main tenets of an ideal democracy, freedom and equality.

Huntington (1991) in “The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century”, says that-

“the process of democratization is closely related to a set of institutional changes, such as free, open, fair elections, and provides definitions of the concepts of democracy and democratization.” He says that democracy is a political system in which “most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote.”

Democracy in its true sense denotes the presence of civil and political freedom of speech and expression, freedom to assemble and organise. The political history of Kyrgyzstan demonstrates that the nation has experienced significant social, financial, monetary and political change been driven by autocratic leaders. Still Kyrgyzstan is the lone country in the region where the hope for political transformation to democratisation exists with various reforms and institutional changes introduced by the government and the people of the country. The post-Soviet democratization process in Kyrgyzstan is divided into three phases. The period of Askar Akaev (1991–2005), Kurmanbek Bakiyev (2005–2010), post-Putsch 2010-Interim Government and Atambayev Regime (2010-2017). The specific emphasis on the legitimacy of the first two Presidents as observed by the Kyrgyz people is challenged as they were toppled by the popular revolutions which make Kyrgyzstan’s case a unique one in Central Asia (EBRD 2015). The “Nations in Transit Report” (2017) classifies the regimes toppled by popular movements as “Consolidated Authoritarian Regime”.

IV. 2 Institutionalization and Reforms

The most vital dynamic while breaking down the political arrangement of Kyrgyzstan is the presence of regional clans that upset the standardization and the reforms in the nation. Drompp (2002) says that the tribal culture’s importance is a characteristic of the Kyrgyz Republic’s society, which is reflected in both social and administrative structures. This social structure has just possessed the capacity to make managerial

associations that can join just against a typical adversary, which have their faithfulness to the tribal chief, and in which collusions depend on precarious and delicate relations between families. Another imperative element of the political framework in the nation is that, since the 16th century, the Kyrgyz clans have kept up their reality on two extraordinary geological divisions i.e., north and south. The idea of tribe in Central Asian politics is utilized for the solidarity bunches set up around different variables. In Kyrgyzstan the source of solidarity became the regional tribal unions (Temirkoulov, 2004).

The new patronage networks started shaping up after the dissolution of the Communist Party committees and their administration after the end of the Soviet era. The new tribal alliances had an important role in shaping new patronage networks (Alkan, 2009). According to Abazov (2004), “within this framework this sort of politics served the establishment of the ‘winner takes all’ mentality rather than institutionalization in the country”. Amid the change of the nation into a multi-party democracy after autonomy, the clans and the former leaders of the provincial Communist Party ventured forward and assumed predominant parts in the political procedure. Collins (2002) believes that the weak institutional reforms are the result of the on-going struggle between the tribes from north and tribes from south for acquiring important positions in the administration or political and economic structures. Luong (2002) claims “that regional identities replaced tribal identity during the Soviet administration and emerged from the bottom upwards in the form of a patronage network rather than adherence to a local leader. In this framework, political life shaped around negotiations between the central leaders who wanted to develop nationwide policies and the regional leaders.”

These divergent views demonstrate that geographic, financial and ethnic cleavages are the primary explanations for both the standardization and the issues of change, and that territorial divisions assume a steady part in this procedure. The antagonistic relations between the Russians and the Kyrgyz in the north and Uzbeks and the Kyrgyz in the south, assumed an influential part in the political occasions of the country. Monetary subsidence, defilement, migration and ethnic versatility reflected them in the political stability.

IV.3 Political System

The new Constitution, as adopted on 27 June 2010, constitutes Kyrgyz Republic as an independent, democratic, secular and legal state. The new Constitution establishes the state of Kyrgyzstan as ‘Parliamentary representative Democratic Republic’ where the President is head of the state and the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan is the head of the government. The government exercises the executive power, which is vested in the government, and the legislative power, which is accordingly vested in the parliament. The highest executive body of Kyrgyz Republic is the government, which is headed by the Prime Minister. The government comprises of the Prime Minister, ministers and chairmen of state committees. The government includes ministries and state committees in its core structure. The parliament appoints the Prime Minister at the proposal of the majority of parliament faction (members of the political party which won more than 50 percent of the seats). The President is elected for a term of 6 years by popular vote. He is not eligible for re-election i.e. one and the same person cannot be elected twice as the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. The President being the head of the state is elected for a term of 6 years, this statutory limitation has been brought in to effect from 2010. The new Constitution reduced the powers of the President tremendously. It replaced the previous five-year terms, which was allowed twice to a single term. The President can disband parliament and call an early election if the assembly fails to elect a new premier in three consecutive votes. In the early phase, the President’s powers were expanded at the expense of the Parliament in the 1996 referendum. His powers were further expanded in 2003 under Akaev regime giving President sweeping powers over the parliament, which made it almost impossible to impeach him. This expansion of powers drew heavy international criticism. Akaev’s informal power base shrieked and eroded as his major supporters, business elites and younger politicians, were unhappy with him because he favoured the clans from north (his native place) over the south. Bakiyev promised to restore powers to legislature during his tenure. A southerner Bakiyev won presidential elections with a huge margin in 2005. He continued with almost the same acting cabinet without making any noticeable change. The choice of former security chief Feliks Kulov who was a northerner as Prime Minister emblematically united the north and the south regions of Kyrgyzstan. The two officials maintained an uneasy truce throughout 2006 (CRS, 2007).

After getting elected, Bakiyev failed to reduce the Presidential powers and relocating them to the Parliament. His former associates turned against him, condemning him of taking adequate measures for tackling corruption and form a government based on democratic values. Bakiyev himself was overthrown by people's revolt in April 2010. The current President Almazbek Atambayev was elected in 2011 receiving 63.2 percent of votes whose presidential term got over in 2017. Sooronbay Jeenbekov who won the election with 54.74 percent vote succeeded him. The new President Jeenbekov was inaugurated on 1 December 2017. The process for election of the President of Kyrgyzstan is a two round system. Nonetheless, none of the presidential elections held since freedom from the Soviet Union have seen a 2nd round. Since 2010, parliament is the fundamental decision-making body. Kyrgyzstan would now be able to be known as a blended presidential-parliamentary framework.

IV.3.1 Executive Branch

The government is the most elevated official body of the Kyrgyz Republic. President is the head of the state. In the 1990s, Akaev's power was unchecked in light of the fact that under the 1993 Constitution, the President remained outside the three-branch framework in the capacity of guarantor of the constitutional functioning of each of the three branches. The government comprises of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, priests, administrators of state boards of trustees, and neighbourhood organisations in the Kyrgyz Republic. The structure of the administration incorporates services and state boards of trustees. The head of the government is the Prime Minister, named by the Parliament at the proposition of the parliamentary group of the lion's share (individuals from the political party who won more than 50 percent of the seats). The parliamentary party having more than 50 percent of the seats should nominate the Prime Minister; if no such party exists, the President may select the party that will form a coalition majority and government (CIA, 2017). The present Prime Minister, Sapar Isakov, was elected in August 2017. The executive branch's cabinet and state committee's members are appointed by the Prime Minister and approved by the President and the Parliament. The Cabinet of Ministers is proposed by the Prime Minister and appointed by the President. Solely, the President appoints ministers in charge of defense and security.

IV.3.2 Legislature Branch

Legislative power is exercised by the Parliament, *Jogorku-Kenesh*, that takes all the important decisions of the government. The 120-seat single-chamber Parliament is known as the *Jogorku Kenesh* (*Zhogorku Kenesh*, Supreme Council). The members of the *Jogorku Kenesh* are called deputies, elected for five-year terms. The head of the *Jogorku Kenesh* is called the *Toraga* and is the equivalent of speaker of the Parliament. The deputies of the *Jogorku Kenesh* elect him or her through a closed ballot. The new 2010 Kyrgyzstan Constitution reformed the electoral system. There are 120 members of the Parliament in one nationwide constituency under the new system. Seats are conveyed to parties in extent to the share of the votes they obtain. Be that as it may, no political party can prevail upon 65 seats; next-in-line candidates of a similar party fill empty seats. As changed in 2011, the Electoral Law indicates 30 percent seats reserved for either sex on electoral lists (Code on Elections, Article 60 (3)). The Electoral Law records that neglect to meet the amount necessity will be dismissed by the Electoral Commission (Article 61 (3)).

Kyrgyzstan had a Unicameral Legislature during the Soviet era, which was modified to bicameral Supreme Council (*Jogorku Kenesh*) in the post-Soviet era. The supreme councils power to block legislative proposal of the President has been substantially weakened by referendum in 1998. Not even a single woman was elected to Parliament in the 2005 elections when the country became a bicameral to a unicameral legislature with a majority electoral system. The presidential powers were enlarged at the expense of the legislative branch. The Legislative Assembly (*Myizam Chygaruu Jyiny*) had 75 representatives, chosen for five-year terms from single-situate voting demographics. In 2007, the number of seats in the chamber were expanded from 75 to 90, and the discretionary framework was changed to relative portrayal. The change to one-house Parliament was pushed in a 2003 referendum pushed by Akaev, whose critics said that changes were made to weaken the opposition. The opposition charged him with creating a small legislature that he could manipulate. Akaev claimed that the changes were made to get rid of the Soviet era hardliners for better reforms and decentralization of powers. Bakiyev did not call for new parliamentary elections after his election in mid-2005, despite the anomalies of the previous election.

IV.3.3 The Judicial Branch

The Constitution and the laws build up the judicial arrangement of the Kyrgyz Republic. It comprises of the Supreme Court, military courts, appellate courts of second instance at the second level and local courts of first occurrence. Judicial power of the country is exerted by means of constitutional, civil, criminal, administrative, and other methods of proceeding. The Constitutional Court was annulled with the appropriation of the 2010 Constitution and its powers switched to the Supreme Court, which is presently a constitutional chamber. Furthermore, there are casual techniques for debate determination judged by court elders (*aksakals*) existing outside the formal legal system.

The law may establish specialised courts but the creation of extraordinary court is prohibited under Kyrgyz legal system. The Constitution prescribes for “an independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters.” In the criminal matters, citizens alleged that the civil judicial system was subject to influence from the external actors, and also by the government. Civil, criminal administrative and other cases are litigated in local courts. The Constitution established Supreme Court as the highest judicial authority of Kyrgyzstan. The right to file case in accordance with International Treaties against violation of rights and freedom is well enshrined and protected under Article 41 of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan. The government is under constitutional obligation to provide safeguard to the citizens against violation of fundamental rights. The judiciary as the guardian of the Constitution confirms the obligation reposed on the government. In case of the violation of fundamental rights, the courts can direct the government for restoration and compensation for the loss suffered. But April 2016 referendum made some modifications, which stopped making international treaties, related to human rights binding on Kyrgyzstan, projecting them as a threat to its internal security.

IV.3.4 Local Self-Government

The grassroot democracy is the emblem of a robust democracy. The republic of Kyrgyzstan consists of seven provinces: Chui, Issyk-Kul, Talas, Naryn, Jalal-Abad, Batken and Osh, and 40 administrative districts. “Municipalities are elected by the local citizens to perform public functions. There are four tiers of a local government

system, which are parish councils, small towns, large towns, and counties” (Public Admin Reform, 2007). The Kyrgyz Republic has no legislative gender quota at the subnational level. But the presence of a strong civil society organisation ensures effective participation. The organisation “*Taza Shailoo*” works to encourage efficient local government, inspires citizen involvement in the decision-making procedure, and makes effort in making the working of the local government transparent. Democracy, transparency and accountability of the government establishments are promoted by the coalition of democracy and civil society. The association of municipalities was created with the objective of promoting cooperation between municipalities and consolidation of local governments in 2006. To assist the decentralization efforts of local government, the association of towns and villages were established. Local authorities have the authority to collect tax. On the other hand, regional governments of Kyrgyzstan have a limited role in stabilising tax rates with the union government. By transparent formula regulates the mode in which revenues are reversed back to the region of origin and remaining revenues are transferred to local government (Suvankulov and Guc 2012). In 1991, various localities introduced local taxes and fees and regulated the budget without any intervention of the national government, this came into effect by devolution of self-governing functions at the regional level (Suvankulov and Guc 2012). In the late 90s, the even transfer of state owned properties to rural municipalities was contemplated as a major achievement in Kyrgyzstan’s decentralization program (NIT, 2012). In 2001, the law “On Local Self-government and Local State Administrations” was approved modifying the premises of structures of local state power and local self-government (UCLG, 2008). A rule was made on local governance in 2008 to ensure that the local officials have enough of financial and political resources for effective implementation of their policies.

After the April 2010 revolution administrative change, local nongovernmental associations (NGOs) have possessed the capacity to work all the more unreservedly, without dread of government abuse. While Kyrgyzstan has officially accomplished its objectives on decentralization, most local government authorities do not have the professional skill and experience to oversee as per the new enactment. In this manner, they are censured for an absence of efficiency. Numerous individuals from local councils are not informed of their own parts and duties, while heads of towns don’t pass their insight and experience on to their successors (BTI, 2012).

IV.4 Constitutional Referendum

IV.4.1 Referendum- Akaev Regime

The people of Kyrgyzstan have been given an important right of approving amendments to the constitutional law. It makes Kyrgyzstan the regional frontrunner in employing the referendum since the adoption of post-communist Constitution in May 1993 to change its basic law. People vote on constitutional changes prominently called referendum. They know about protected choices; the last Constitutional referendum held in December 2016 is the eighth in 27 years of Kyrgyz autonomy. As has been the situation in each of the past referendum, it's a yes-or-no choice. Voters can't single out individual revisions from among the more-than-two-dozen proposed changes, some slight, some expansive. The 1993 Constitution of Kyrgyzstan did not at first amass all power on account of the President, in spite of the fact that it accommodated a strong head of the state. Be that as it may, the Constitution likewise joined different systems with which the authoritative and the legal branches would check and balance the presidential forces. The Constitution (embraced in 1993) was changed by a series of referendums, which in the long run brought about reducing the forces and privileges of the legislative branch while at the same time upgrading presidential powers.

The first referendum was marked in Akaev's era during 1994. It planned to legitimize the forces of Akaev as per the new Constitution. President Akaev requested that the general population affirm through the referendum their want that he should finish his term. Akaev was permitted to finish his term in office until 1996. As per CEC, 1994 turnout was 95.94 percent and 96.34 percent of the voters had casted votes for the President. There rose a few showdowns between the government and oppositional bunches in the Parliament in 1994. Because of this encounter, the nation faced a political emergency. On 21 September 1994, President Akaev issued a declaration to hold a referendum. The justification for calling on the referendum was asserted to be a failure of *Jogorku Kenesh* to play out its fundamental capacity, legislative activity. Akaev defended this referendum as a mode "to assure equitable balance of three branches of power and strengthen executive branch. The second referendum was hung on 22 October 1994, and it proposed a two-principle amendment to the Constitution.

One referendum was concerning about the future constitutional amendments to make way for changes which were sought to be realised by referendum (as the Constitution didn't allow this). The 2nd amendment sought to establish a bicameral parliament, which will have 35 permanent members, while other house shall have 70 members elected for a fix term to discuss and approve the budget and confirm the presidential appointees. To represent the interest of regions, the 2nd house was created which consist of elites of regions. The third referendum, held on 10 February 1996, saw a turnout of 96.53 percent and 98.6 percent of the people voted in favour of constitutional amendments. In contrary to the hope and desire of the people, the proposed changes actually enlarged the powers of the President instead of bringing order in the country. Akaev got the authority to plan and formulate domestic and foreign policy, manage the functioning of the organs of the government, and directly appoint and remove cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and judges without consulting the Kyrgyz Parliament. The *Jogorku Kenesh* (Parliament) lost its authority to request reports of answerability from the government or from any minister. By the 4th amendment (1998), people were asked whether they supported the law on allowing private land ownership, re-constitution of bicameral Parliament of Kyrgyzstan, limitation on immunity afforded to deputies of Parliament enlargement of freedom for press along with other four amendments made in the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan. The referendum so tabled before the citizens of Kyrgyzstan was approved by 96.4 percent. It is reported that 95.4 percent of the citizens casted their vote to approve or disapprove the referendum. The amendment so affirmed by the general public curtailed and limited the power of the Parliament while it enlarged the President's power to control the formation of the government and its function. The doctrine of check and balance in respect to Kyrgyzstan was withered away by the referendum.

The opposition groups of both parliamentary and non-parliamentary wings of the country united and posed a threat to Akaev's rule and demanded his removal. The pressure groups so united demanded the extension of Parliament's powers and amendment in the Constitution. In 2002, Akaev agreed for preparing draft amendment, a constitutional council composing individuals from both pro-governmental groups, opposition, Supreme and Constitutional Court heads and representatives of civil society was formed.

Constitutional Referendums in Kyrgyzstan

Year	Voter Turn Out	Yes Vote (%)
1994 (Jan.)	95.94	96.34
1994 (Oct.)	86	88.9
1996	96.53	98.6
1998	96.4	95.4
2003	86.7	89.2
2007	80.64	94.4
2010	71.1	90.6
2016	42.1	79.6

Table IV.1

Interestingly an expert group rewrote the draft of the new Constitution, which was presented for referendum. In the southern Aksy district, a protest in help of an imprisoned neighbourhood government official turned violent. Police opened fire on the horde of more than 1,000 individuals killing five and harming many in the crowd. This brought about the abdication of the government. Thus, frightened by mass response, Akaev needed to ensure his stay in control until 2005, despite the fact that the 1993 Constitution restricted the residency of the President to two back-to-back terms. He made a few concessions to enhance the social circumstance by rejecting some of his disagreeable high-positioning authorities, welcoming the restriction leaders to participate in the new government and, most conspicuously, encouraging to surrender some of his selected powers and share authority with Parliament and the administration. The fifth amendment, was scheduled to be conducted on 2 February 2003. The turnout was 86.7 percent, and 89.24 percent of these voters bolstered the principal question and 91.75 percent upheld the second question. The official date of referendum was issued just 14 days before the poll. Voters were given two separate ballots containing two queries: first question was, should the new form of the constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic be embraced? And Second if Askar Akaev should remain the President of the Kyrgyz Republic until December 2005 (until his protected term gets over). The first question covered the whole amendment, which

had a major implication; the 2nd question had its own implication, which was regarding Akaev term as the Constitutional Court had ruled in 1998 that his first term should not be counted as part of the two-term limitation. Thus, Akaev's mandate did not end until 2005, which was ruled by the Constitutional Court, there were speculations that he wanted more powers especially after Aksy events. The main amendments introduced by the referendum included few important developments: The *Jogorku Kenesh* became a one-chamber Parliament once again. The number of deputies was reduced to 75 and they had to be chosen only from single-member districts. Article 54(2) stated that: The *Jogorku Kenesh* shall consist of 75 deputies elected for the term of five years from single member constituencies. There would be a decrease in the number of MPs from 105 members to 75 weakening the party system of the country.

The abolition of "party list" due to the amendment prevented party's effectiveness in the election. However, few powers were given back to the Parliament (*Jogorku Kenesh*), like "power to approve each member of cabinet and to give a vote of no confidence to the government on the outcome of annual report of Prime Minister" (Murzaeva, 2011). However, the President kept his special power to assert a referendum; authority to dismiss government; power to issue decrees with the strength and significance equal to that of a law, including those that can dismiss the Parliament. Presidential powers were also amended with the *Jogorku Kenesh's* powers. The President could now veto legislation and had a say in making changes in the laws made by the Parliament. He could now sign the laws passed by the parliament without consulting them. In the 2003 referendum, the presidential power of issuing decrees was extended. The Parliament may delegate its legislative powers to the President for a period of up to one year following its dissolution. There are no specific restrictions or conditions on the President's right to discharge legislative powers in the new version of the Constitution, and the President may ordain legislative powers for a year if the Parliament may delegate so, increasing further the President's executive powers.

IV.4.2 Referendum -Bakiyev Regime

Just like 2003 referendum, the Presidential powers remained untouched in the 2007 referendum as well. It was the 6th referendum after independence of Kyrgyzstan. In

Bakiyev's era, between 2005 to 2007, there were a series of protests by the opposition and the civil society groups that demanded constitutional reforms to diminish presidential powers. There was a conjoined movement called "For Reforms" formed in 2006 by the opposition groups including leaders of opponent parties, NGO's representatives, and business group leaders. They had a six-day protest, which made President Bakiyev to work in coordination with the Parliament on more number of reforms in the Constitution. In September 2007, constitutional court of the country cancelled both 2006 (November) and 2007 (January) constitutions calling them unconstitutional and went back to 2003 constitution (in reality these two constitutions redistributed the power distribution between government bodies, President and the Parliament). Bakiyev now called for a new referendum to be held in October 2007 calling the previous two constitutions politically and legally not recognized. The new election code and various other changes were introduced including reservation for women and minorities. The Parliament is a unicameral legislature since 2007. Thus, both the leaders used referendums as a means of concentrating and enthraling political power. Both became more and more authoritarian with time, engrossed in consolidating and safeguarding their term as the President. The nation's economic and political developments were secondary to them. The Kyrgyz Republic gave the reminiscent of "Super Presidentialism" of other Central Asian countries. As an expert argues, the core modifications in the Constitution took place chiefly due to reallocation of authority between two popularly chosen government bodies, the President and the Parliament (IPP, 2007).

In many other changes done by the Referendum, *Jogorku Kenesh's* seats were increased from 75 to 90 and the new Election Code was introduced. According to the new electoral system, there was now a "political party-lists with 5 percent threshold". The new Election Code was more inclusive for women, young people and various ethnic groups in the Kyrgyz Republic providing them reservation in the. Article 72.3 specified "no more than 70 percent of the candidates, and a maximum of three consecutive candidates in each list, could be of the same gender." Additionally, it required "15 per cent of the candidates in each list to be below 35 years of age and no less than 15 percent to represent various ethnic groups" (NIT, 2017).

IV.4.3 Similarities in Referendums

Akaev and Bakiyev used referendums for their own means to concentrate political power. Akaev used five referendums to make presidential office the most powerful one. Bakiyev, in the short span in which he ruled, also became an authoritarian just like his predecessor. Kyrgyzstan in those regimes reflected the traits of being a superficially democratic country like other Central Asian countries. The 2007 referendum was moreover criticized for being unfair and manipulated by the standing politicians to win it. According to a wide range of NGOs and spectator groups in the Kyrgyz Republic such as *Interbilim* and *Taza Shailoo*, the turnout was much lower, about 30 to 40 percent of voters.

The economic and political reforms were given as reasons for introducing reforms under both the Presidents. The people were promised that the reforms would bring in the political stability. Another similarity, which has been noted in referendums under both Presidents, is that people were not given much time for holding debates or to understand the amendments. The less informed people about contents of change could not be mobilised by the opposition about the unfair powers, which the President would obtain after referendum. The people never deliberated these changes to be made and went to polling on several occasions just to comply with what was already decided for them. The constitutional referendums of October 1994, February 1996, October 1998 and February 2003 and the referendum conducted under Bakiyev's regime in October 2007 were falsely called as the outcomes of long-drawn-out legal debates. These referendums were often criticised in Kyrgyzstan by international and local monitoring organisations, as they were considered largely unfair and marked with prevalent falsifications. Thus, Bakiyev's one referendum conducted in 2007 was essentially a reminiscent of all referendums conducted under Akaev epoch, (Constitutional Amendments 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2003). These amendments each time made the President's office more autocratic and despotic.

IV.4.4 Referendum Post-Putsch 2010

The seventh constitutional referendum in the country was held in haste. The constitutional referendum was held after June 2010 ethnic riots. The interim government approached the task of radical constitutional modification. The new

Constitution did not give too much power in any single office as Kyrgyz politics is driven by clientilism and nepotism. The President's term was fixed to a single term of six years. The new Constitution introduced parliamentary democracy. It deprived the presidential office of its unchecked powers and has created an environment where concentrated powers in one person would not be possible that may also check elite culture. The provisional government had announced that the country would not make any other amendment until 2020, as the country needed time to consolidate the new parliamentary system. Although there were many inadequacies like ambiguous division of foreign powers but they were taken care of by the Parliament and the President by making revisions at their level. In 2016, breaking the earlier pledge of the provisional government, President Atambayev proposed various reforms to be introduced including expansion of the Prime Minister's powers, judicial reforms, ban on the same-sex marriage and to allow the Kyrgyz Republic to be independent of international rulings regarding violation of individual rights on its land. It generated fierce opposition from critics of Kyrgyzstan President Almazbek Atambayev, voters approved 26 revisions to Kyrgyzstan's Constitution. People were made to believe that these changes would prevent clan-based rule and nepotism. There were demands from MPs and SDPK leaders asking the local elections and referendum 2016 be held on the same day. After the approval from Central Election Commission (CEC), *Aibolot Aidosov*, Parliament decided to hold both the elections together on 11 December 2016. It was done at a very short notice just like all the previous referendums held in the country, as people had less than a month's time to deliberate the changes. The people from the political gamut also claimed to have a very limited understanding of the proposed constitutional changes and the influence it may have in the country. The claim to new constitutional amendments by the Atambayev's government was the rhetoric of democracy and the stability these amendments will bring in the state. The people who were against any amendments in the Constitution to be made now supported the initiative. People from *Ata Meken* and *Bir Bol* political parties were the only faction who opposed the President and the recommended reforms. These parties did not have sufficient seats in the Parliament to prevent the government from taking any decision. The opposition parties combined together held only 23 seats out of 120 seats in the Parliament, hardly a noticeable one. Cholpon Jakupova, a *Bir Bol* political party harshly criticized the referendum.

The opposition and the critiques interpreted the changes as a strategy by the President Atambayev to retain power at a time when his presidential term would get over. President Atambayev denied that he wants to be the Prime Minister and would not violate the Constitution by obtaining the second presidential term. He even confirmed to what he said and did not contest for the Prime Ministerial post. However, there were speculations as the span for the referendum was really small, which suggested that it may be a move by the President to promote a successor. Enhancing the powers of the Prime Minister will lead to more influence for Atambayev's SDPK, which was the majority and was considered the most powerful in the political block (NIT, 2017).

IV. 5 Elections

IV. 5.1 Presidential Elections

For the various official and unofficial reasons, Askar Akaev had occupied the presidential post of Kyrgyzstan uninterrupted for the period of 1991-2005. Though there are many possible official and unofficial interpretations of his continual presence at the helm of the political affairs of the country but this fact also casts a reasonable apprehension about the accuracy, impartiality and reliability of the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan during the said period. The rivals contesting in the presidential election were always defeated until 2005. The political opposition to the President were systematically harassed resulting in the absence of constructive and competent opposition voices till the early 2000. Akaev always tried to use the election results to advocate a popular support to his rein. Though Akaev himself tasted the power under "competitive elections" in 1995 and 2000, but he, after coming to power, altered the rules and laws of the country in order to ensure his absolute political control over the system. He used the periodic elections as a means of legitimisation of his rule. Since elections are ostensibly safe and reliable source of legitimacy, he organised them periodically to use them as an important tool of legitimisation of his rule. Askar Akaev was considered a liberal reformer and had the credential of being an open-minded leader. But with the passage of time, he fell in line with his other Central Asian colleagues and adopted the autocratic strategies to rule the country, the practice that was adopted by many other leaders of the region since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The governments in Kyrgyzstan have changed

so frequently that there were ten governments and twelve Prime Ministers (one Prime Minister served twice) between 1991 to 2005. In this period, an average term for a Prime Minister in the office was about a year. Akaev's reputation turned from being a liberal leader to the one who was often seen infringing civil and political rights as well as threatening the media and opposition leaders during elections.

During his era, the judiciary has absolutely failed to put any curb on the executive power of the state functionaries. Akaev selected both national and regional level judges as state and state prosecutors by judging them on their loyalty towards him and not on their merit. This has jeopardised the courts to perform their duties with freedom and judicial convictions. In addition, Akaev frequently sacked judges and prosecutors on the pretext of the vaguely drafted constitutional provisions that allowed the removal "on the grounds provided by law". When Akaev was permitted to run for the third presidential election in 2000, it was considered as the most conspicuous case of judicial dependence. Article 43, which limits the "Presidential rule to two terms", was clearly violated. After the overthrow of Akaev's government, Kurmanbek Bakiyev was appointed as the acting President and Prime Minister to fill the gap till the time new presidential election could be held. Bakiyev was the most suitable candidate for the post to fill the gap. He emerged as a hero after the Tulip Revolution and his appointment as the interim President was much needed. After his resignation as the Prime Minister, he tried to bargain with his political rivals like Felix Kulov who was given the post of vice Prime Minister to secure his win in the presidential elections.

The new presidential elections were held on 10 July 2005. These presidential elections were also remarkable for the reason of gender issues. It has witnessed the first women participation in the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan. Ms. Toktayim Umetalieva was the first woman in Kyrgyzstan's history to have ever contested for the presidential elections until 2005. There were two other women who were nominated but did not clear the signature collection stage. The low women participation in politics can be accredited to many factors such as traditional societal values and lack of funds. On the count of ethnic inclusiveness, the 2005 presidential elections of Kyrgyzstan had not achieved much. All the seven presidential contenders belonged to Kyrgyz ethnic community, which is in majority and it constitutes almost

two-thirds of the populace of Kyrgyzstan. The CEC released the election results; Bakiyev won the election and secured 88.71 percent of the total votes. As per the official record, the total turnout of vote was 74.96 percent. However, Bakiyev's four years in power were full of conflict between the government and the opposition. The Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan, in one of its significant judgements, allowed Bakiyev to contest the presidential election again as he was elected as the President under the previous candidate. So Bakiyev contested for presidential elections on 23 July 2009. The initial nominations were high and there were 22 candidates but later on only 6 out of 22 candidates were registered with the Central Election Commission. President Bakiyev continued to be the most visible candidate during the entire election process. His party Ak Jol was also very prominent from its inception in October 2007. The party also organized a large-scale election campaign for Bakiyev and has been instrumental in his success. In broad-spectrum, Bakiyev's electioneer focused primarily on the political stability and the socio-economic growth during his presidential years. His campaign also stressed pungently on regional stability and in counter-balancing terrorism in the region. So, for the only female contender, Toktayim Umetalieva, the foremost concerns were socio-economic difficulties and the essential push to increase the status of women in society. She even proposed that the capital be shifted from the north to the south of the country, as it was a necessity to counter terrorism. Atambayev who went on to become the President later in 2011 was nominated as an independent candidate in 2009 elections representing the United People's Movement and the chairperson of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan. His agenda was reforms in legal and economic sector and bringing transparency in working of the government. Later, he withdrew his candidature on the election day due to widespread fraud, calling elections to be illegitimate. Bakiyev won the elections with 76.12 votes and Atambayev ran second with 8.41 votes.

The 30 October 2011 presidential vote was historic in a sense that it marked the first deliberate and peaceful transfer of power in the Kyrgyz Republic. The international observers found the elections to be ostensibly transparent. Atambayev procured 63 percent of the votes with a total 60 percent turnout winning with huge margin. Total 16 candidates had participated in these presidential elections. His chief adversaries, Kamchybek Tashiyev and Adakhan Madumarov took 14.7 percent and 14.3 percent, respectively. Originally, 86 candidates had registered with the CEC, but 50 withdrew

before the official electioneer. There were many who could not collect the required number of signatures or deposit the 100,000 som registration fee to the Central Election Commission or qualify the exam in Kyrgyz language. There were allegations that Atambayev used his Prime Ministerial position, which got him undue advantage over others. Thus, Bakiyev delegated his powers to deputy Omurbek Babanov. Few of his other decisions like teacher's salary hike before the elections and the media attention, which he was getting due to his position as the Prime Minister, brought criticism. The elections were observed internationally by organisations like the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and Non-Governmental Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society. According to OSCE Report 2012, "the candidate registration process was inclusive, and the campaign was open and respected fundamental freedoms." It also identified a number of flaws as "hundreds of citizens were not able to cast their votes because of incomplete voter lists, and some cases of attempted vote buying by Madumarov's supporters were reported." They also noticed that the CEC also lacked transparency in its working. Despite all these inconsistencies, these elections were considered the fairest presidential elections in the history of Kyrgyzstan. The candidates participated in debates on Television; citizens could ask them questions by using the Internet. The debates revolved around important national issues; there was greater unity on the subjects like ethnicity and north-south divisions. They asked for greater rule of law and eradication of corruption. There were problems but the elections over all can be called a good step towards the transformation meeting democratic standards.

Atambayev's major portion of votes came from the northern part of the country. He secured at least 10 percent votes from all the seven Oblasts being the only presidential candidate to have secured that much. Tashiyev secured second highest number of votes who was generally popular in southern Kyrgyzstan especially Jalalabad. He was followed by Madumarov, who was another southern candidate widely popular in the Osh oblast. But Atambayev repeatedly projected himself as someone, who would work for the unity of the country breaking the ethnic and regional divides. After being selected, he supported the idea of removing ethnicity on passports and worked towards building the bridge of ethnic gaps and regional conflicts.

IV.5.2 The Parliamentary Elections

Under Akaev's regime, the country witnessed three parliamentary elections held in 1995, 2000 and the last one in the year 2005. The parliamentary election held in 2005 led to a series of developments ultimately ending Akaev's regime in the country. The country was facing many challenges including dwindling economy, cumulative social tensions and there were optimisms created by the "color revolutions" in the other CIS countries. Akaev had controlled all the parliamentary elections and these elections were very important to him following Aksy event. He wanted to retain his influence and maintain his clan and close circle in power, which was possible by getting majority in the Parliament. He adopted various tactics to be in power and extend his influence. He promoted nepotism in every possible way, both his daughter and son contested for election without even fulfilling the basic requirement of candidature. The number of President's relatives and close circle of friends participating in elections were very high. The elections were conducted according to the 2003 referendum, which meant a unicameral Parliament containing 75 deputies chosen in single mandate constituencies for a term of five years. The other candidates contesting the election were wealthy rich businessmen and the rest were the opposition aspiring to get few seats in the new Parliament. The opposition parties organized themselves into 5 blocs, the most important one led by Kurmanbek Bakiyev known as 'Movement' who was also one of the strongest contenders for the upcoming presidential election. The majority of the winners were Akaev's associates or family members. The OSCE and ENEMO (European Network of Elections Monitoring Organisations) found elections "having failed to meet international norms of fairness and transparency," some NGOs and civil society groups like Congress of Local Communities (CLC) and Association of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan, which were considered close to Akaev, reported elections to be smooth

However, the criticisms to the elections have also emanated from the observers of some of the SCO and CIS countries. These problems created discontent among people causing a stir and dissent against Akaev regime. After the second round of elections, there were protests again which occurred prior to elections and opposition parties demanded the cancellation of these parliamentary elections and early presidential elections. All these developments led to a revolution in the country, which saw the

overthrow of President Akaev in the name of establishing democracy. After the revolution, on 16 March 2005 the deputies (38 members) of incumbent Parliament requested the chairman of the Constitutional Court, UN Security Council and the Chairman of the Parliament stating, “parliamentary elections failed to comply with democratic standards and the President had not fulfilled his functions as a guarantor of the Constitution” (Kiniev, 2005). This led to the end of Akaev’s era post Tulip Revolution.

After the 2007 referendum’s decision to dissolve the Parliament, new parliamentary election was to take place the same year on 16 December 2007. Bakiyev dissolved the Parliament (*Jogorku Kenesh*) and announced new elections will be conducted on party lists, which will help to eradicate the effect of clan and tribal division in the elections. In between, the dissolution of the Parliament and the election of new one, there was political uncertainty and the President’s position became very strong as he was taking decisions for the Executive as well as the Legislative branch of the government. Bakiyev was quick to form his own political party “Ak Jol” (Bright Path) that “embraced virtually all employees of the public sector” to make them contest in parliamentary elections (Murzaeva, 2011). The results were declared by Central Election Commission: Ak Jol secured 71 seats followed by the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan with 8 seats and SDPK got 11 seats. The election saw 73.86 percent turnout of voters (CEC, 2007). The new election system has also proved instrumental in reforming the gender imbalance in the political arena of Kyrgyzstan. The previous Parliament formed in 2005 had not even a single woman representative, which somewhere sparked the nation-wide demands for women representation in the Parliament. In 2007, a 30 percent quota was introduced into the Elections Code, 39 percent of the registered candidates were women in the 2007 parliamentary election, and 24 women were chosen to be deputies in the Parliament making 26.6 percent out of the total number of deputies. Kyrgyzstan became a leader in 2007 in Central Asian region in terms of women representation. There were other noticeable achievements, for example, youngsters below 35 years of age and representatives of various nationalities attained over 20 seats. Despite all these positive developments, the parliament became full of ‘dead souls’ willing to follow the regime. The Parliament, despite having diverse representation, just validated all Bakiyev’s decisions reflecting a pattern observed in Russia and Kazakhstan, where only one party dominated the

Legislature with no representation of opposing parties and henceforth no opposition (Murzaeva, 2011).

After April 2010 revolution, the government led by the interim President Roza Otunbayeva came to power. The country became a parliamentary democracy from a presidential system with the adoption of the new Constitution. After the adoption of the new Constitution in 2010, the Parliament would choose a Prime Minister and an important role was given to it in the formation of a new government. The next parliamentary elections were held early because of the revolution and ethnic riots leading to political unrest. The Parliament elections were held on 10 October 2010, which featured 29 political parties competing for 120 seats in the *Zhogorku Kenesh*, the Kyrgyz national parliament. Due to the tension between north and south after the riots of 2010, there were instances like leaflets being circulated in the south of the country urging people "not to tolerate" parties led by northerners (BBC, 2010). The Ata Zhurt party emerged as the winner and won more seats than any other party. It has gained 8.47 percent of all votes cast. Bakiyev's return was called for by Ata-Zhurt political party, which surprised everyone as the elections took place under the auspices of the interim government. After much deliberations and fall of one coalition on 15 December 2011, a coalition government with SDPK and Ata-Zhurt was formed. SDPK's Almazbek Atambayev became the Prime Minister with 92 seats in the 120-seat chamber. As Kyrgyzstan holds an important geo-strategic location, these developments pleased few and disappointed others. The US welcomed the move, but Russia considered the country as its sphere of influence and cautioned that the first parliamentary democracy in Central Asia could be catastrophic for Kyrgyzstan. The next parliamentary elections were held on 4 October 2015, this time the election was held after the complete term of the Parliament unlike the previous two elections. The elections were peaceful as observed by PACE and OSCE mission. The 120 seats in *Jogorku Kenesh* were elected by proportional presentation with a 7 percent threshold. The 30 percent reservations were made for each gender and party list were required to have 15 percent candidates from ethnic minorities.

IV.6 Implications of Democratisation

IV.6.1 Civil Society

The strong and liberated civil society is a pre-condition for the transition to democracy and liberal market economy. The transition is incomplete without the development of vibrant civil sector. Civil society can be ascribed to include the arena of un-coerced shared action around shared public interests. These groups can be NGOs, self-help groups, religious institutions, worker's unions, social movements, academics, and professional associations, etc. (Fish, 1994). The institutions like United Nations, European Union, INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organisations) and donors from westerns countries have emphasised on the progress of civil society for the democratic transition (Giffen et al., 2004).

The initial period of independence saw some significant developments visible in the evolution of different social organisations and some occurrences like Osh ethnic conflict of 1990s. The NGO sector was under-developed and had not registered its presence in the country. There were NGOs that were registered for only single project and worked like 'fly by night' establishment. Akaev's era started with some encouraging developments in civil sector marking a positive development for democratisation. This positive development continued after the independence as Akaev held frequent meetings with the journalists and the leaders of various social groups, opposition parties, communities and organisations. There was a flare-up of social organisations and it continued to develop. However, critics were of the opinion that Akaev did this to win the support of these organisations and mum their critique (Anderson, 2000). Akaev opened the door for western donors, which was seen as the milestone development in this regard. He also supported the NGO development in the official capacity. This led to active registration and extension of these organisations; this positive development was well applauded internationally. This growth of NGOs was recognised as a constructive sign for progress of civil society and democratisation of the country. This support for the civil society sector by the country's first President in the chaotic times commenced their operations in the initial stage.

The liberal-democratic orientation of civil society was changed from secular to a diverse palette, there were a segment of the organisations, which appeared, nationalist

and religious in nature. The ideological discourses of the civil society groups are very important to understand as they play a vital role in the formation of society. The NGOs got divided along various lines reflecting a deep cleavage within the political-elites and society at large. There has been a rise of other kind of groups, such as religious groups especially Muslim and Christian that do not fit into the criterion of being under civil society. They are refrained by the government from participating in the elections but they continue to be politically inspired and are unofficially part of the political scene. These groups successfully reach out to local people and their roles also grow whenever the country is in some crisis. These groups exploit the sentiments of the people on religious and ethnic grounds. In comparison to the other Central Asian countries, Kyrgyzstan's NGO sector works without much political pressure. There are areas where the government and NGOs cooperate and work towards the development. They have lobbied in the Parliament to take stringent actions against the kidnappers of women for marriage and criminalise the practise. Post Putsch-2010, the NGO sector has become very important and has played an important role in designing reforms in the police sector and has helped the investigation agencies to investigate in crimes committed by the army and police staffs in the ethnic conflict of 2010. The civil society groups are more developed in north than south of the country. The presence of civil society is most visible in the capital city of Bishkek. The NGOs are heavily dependent on external and western funding. Besides western donors, the major portion of funding comes from countries like Russia, China, Turkey, and certain Arab countries. These countries are also using NGOs to export soft power to Kyrgyzstan. China has used mandarin language and other social settings to increase their influence in the region; they encourage students to study in the Chinese universities and opened business avenues for the Kyrgyz population.

The Kyrgyz Republic's NGO development has been studied and explored by the Asian Development Bank Report (2011), which has been divided into various phases- (1991-1994) "characterized by a rapid growth in the number of NGOs, many of which operated from grant to grant, had no long-term strategic program activity, and were mainly based on grant projects. Most of the NGOs active in this period were financially unstable and were highly dependent on the policies and priorities of international donors. The second phase (1995–2004) was characterized by both quantitative and qualitative changes in the NGOs. Its distinctive feature was the

development of civic initiatives using the principles of joint participation of NGOs, creation of partnerships within the sector, and a consolidation of NGOs with common strategic priorities such as women's rights, human rights, environmental issues, etc. The third phase of the NGO development, 2005-2010, was characterized by strong NGOs that not only successfully carried out their project activities and had an impact on various sectors of society, but also knew how to lobby for social and political interests at the state level. NGOs in the Kyrgyz Republic comprise political and institutional-focused organisations, which advocate for democratization reforms, openness, transparency of public bodies, etc. In general, such organisations operate at the central level in Bishkek and are extremely politicized." The civil society groups are an important part of the country and have made vital role in the transitional process. These groups have also played a pivotal role in the two revolutions of the country, largely seen as revolution for democracy.

IV.6.2 Judicial system and Human Rights

Kyrgyzstan's legal system entails civil law system, which includes characteristics of French Civil Law and Russian Federation Laws. The judiciary is an independent branch and there are Subordinate courts, higher courts of Arbitration, and Provincial and City courts. The Kyrgyz Republic is a non-party state to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and it has not yet submitted declaration to an International Court of Justice (ICJ) authority (CIA, 2017). The traditional law system prevails to maintain social control through Islamic law. A woman, Cholpon Bayekova, has served as the head of the highest court for a time. The responsibility of the Supreme Court has been expanded tremendously in criminal, civil, and administrative trials after 2003 amendments in the Constitution (CRS, 2007). The legal system has retained numerous features of the Soviet-system but many protections of western jurisprudence have not been included. The law of the country in theory gives power to the people by allowing the accused a free trial and the presupposition of innocence but they often fail to put it in practise. The trial rate is 99 percent and the juries have been titled "shamefully compliant." There is high level of corruption in judiciary with the judges being dependent on executives for their promotions. The traditional system of delivering justice locally by parochial khans, chiefs or emirs do exist and they are not restricted by the law or do not share power. Local elders play an eminent role in

maintaining social control and exerting public belief widely called as “white beards” (“*aksakal*” in Kyrgyz and “*oqsoqol*” in Uzbek).

The rule of law is not well founded in the country. Judges have often been seen delivering judgements of utmost confusion. For example, once a judge dismissed an appeal by a victim claiming that he couldn't name his torturers. Corruption and nepotism are prevalent making it a domain of rich as they can buy justice with money. The government officials and the public figures have been observed misusing the libel law to repress the press and the public opinion. The laws relating to the regulation of the economy have not been used consistently even by the government. There are irregularities in handling the cases relating to fiscal and jurisdictional disagreements within government organisations and between government organisations and private companies, which is being looked at by the State Arbitration Court. This court also lacks an oversight by any other agency of the government and has been extremely asymmetrical.

According to the US Department of State-

“The law provides for an independent judiciary, but judges were subject to influence or corruption, and there were instances where the outcomes of trials appeared predetermined. Multiple sources, including NGOs, attorneys, government officials, and private citizens, asserted judges paid bribes to attain their positions. Many attorneys asserted that bribe taking was ubiquitous among judges and described trying to use legal arguments to secure justice as “Don Quixote tilting at windmills.” (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2014).

The five-year USAID-IDLO (United States Agency for International Development-International Development Law Organisation) Kyrgyzstan Judicial Strengthening Program is intended to “advance rule of law by shrinking corruption, supporting judicial independence, improving the judicial personnel system and internal management, and restoring integrity through increased public access to judicial information”. The program is implemented in cooperation with the International Development Law Organisation. The human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan today is seemingly contradictory. On the one hand, democratic reforms enacted since April 2010 have created an empowering environment where human rights can be better safeguarded. On the other hand, since the June 2010 ethnic riots, the human rights

situation in southern Kyrgyzstan has deteriorated to a point not seen since the country's independence.

The president Atambayev indicated that the constitutional amendments of 2016 disallowing the ascendancy of international over national law were intended to avert the Office of the High Commissioner for Human (OHCHR) from intervening in Kyrgyzstan's internal affairs. This decision was apparently adopted by the government to stop interfering in the internal matters of Kyrgyzstan. For example, a very unpopular case of an ethnic Uzbek, Azimjon Askarov, imprisoned for life after 2010 ethnic riots was raised by OHCHR. As per the reports, he was denied a fair trial and tortured in confinement. As per the new amendment, only the Parliament had the right to decide if international human rights would be valid under state law. This development has been widely criticised as it may have been adopted, to stop OHCHR's intervention in Askarov's case but it will impact the overall situation of human rights practise in the country. The Kyrgyz Republic is not obliged to accept any international verdict about human right's violation in its borders.

IV.6.3 National Security Concept

The growth of new parliamentary democracy in Kyrgyzstan has been boomed by the key document of National Security Concept. This document is a state secret in the neighbouring states of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and they are not published for the general people. This document will promote democratisation as it is a handful guide in the hands of "Kyrgyzstani defense, security and foreign policymakers and will de facto serve as a guide to international organisations and governments interested in promoting Kyrgyzstan's security or in assisting in democracy building efforts." The concept of NSC is defined in its preamble as an "officially adopted views on the long-term protection of society from security threats and notes its legal basis in the constitution, laws and national security treaties to which the country is a signatory." The documents have been divided into five parts: "considering global development trends and the position of the Kyrgyz Republic in the world; defining the country's national interests; outlining the external and domestic security threats; classifying security of the individual, society and state; and concluding with an explanation of the system of national security monitoring and crisis response." The Defense Council of the country oversees the challenging tasks to be performed by the NSC. After the

announcement of withdrawal of the US troops from Afghan territory, it has come out to be the first official level security manuscript. However, not surprising though for Kyrgyzstan, immediate threat doesn't emanate from Afghanistan or other external actors but the internal threats like the problems of political stability, governance and pervasive corruption. "It strengthened the role of the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) in Kyrgyzstan's security policy, recognizes Moscow's veto on basing rights, and enters into law its, until now, long-term policy of trying to balance its relations between larger or greater powers. Reconciling the high aspirations of the NSC will prove challenging for Bishkek and its partners" (Stobdan, 2014).

The Pattern of Democracy Scores in Kyrgyzstan (2007-2016)

Democracy Scores of Kyrgyzstan	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
National Democratic Governance	6	6.25	6.5	6.75	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Electoral Process	5.75	6	6	6.25	6	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.25
Civil Society	4.5	4.5	4.75	5	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.5	4.75	4.75
Independent Media	5.75	6	6.25	6.5	6.5	6.25	6.25	6	6	6
Local Democratic Governance	6.25	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25
Judicial Framework and Independence	5.5	6	6	6	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25
Corruption	6	6.25	6.25	6.5	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25
Democracy Score	5.68	5.93	6.04	6.21	6.11	6	5.96	5.89	5.93	5.89

Source: Nations in Transit Report- 2017 (Scores on the scale of 10).

Table. IV.2

IV.6.4 Women Empowerment

As seen earlier, the country's independence brought with it multiple problems, which affect the vulnerable section of the society the most. The women's position declined and independence weakened as compared to the Soviet era with the rising influence of tradition and religion. The recent history shows no improvement in discrimination against women in political, social, economic and cultural life. For example, unjust distribution of resources, patriarchal norms and values existing in the family pattern, low employment avenues for women, closing of kindergartens, childcare services and social support establishments, and a worsening of medical services worsen this situation. Rising poverty among females, increasing number of cases in gender based violence and women being marginalized and eliminated from decision-making. According to EBRD (2015), an essential vestige of the Soviet system is the strong leadership role performed by women in the higher education system of the Kyrgyz Republic. Enrolment of women in higher education stands at 55 percent, with women in senior management. There are more number of women graduates than men but despite better educated they are placed in poorly paid positions both in formal and informal economy. There is extreme lack of social policies for protection of women. This patriarchal structure has taken a stronghold in the Kyrgyz society. Domestic violence is rampant and over 60 percent of weddings in rural mono-ethnic areas are conducted through the evil practice of bride kidnapping, 24 percent females are married below the legal age for marriage (UNDP, 2017). However, Kyrgyz women receive much respect than women in many other Muslim countries. They generally do not wear veil and are allowed to pray with men, they are also considered less conservative than women in the neighbouring countries such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In 2009, the Kyrgyz Republic banned head-scarves from schools to protect children from religious influence.

Kyrgyzstan's Gender Inequality Index (GII) ranking for the year 2016 is 90 out of 188 countries, which displays a drop from the previous year rankings. GII is a composite measure reflecting "inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market" (UNDP, 2017). The country's first Constitution adopted on 5 May 1993 reflected all the "fundamental principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as

legal and institutional frameworks for their protection, including women's rights." The Constitution of 2010 promote the principle of equality, including in Article 16 (4), which "refers to not only equal rights and freedoms for men and women in Kyrgyzstan, but also equal opportunities for their realization, an important reference to enabling mechanisms and implementation." This Article also prohibits discrimination based on sex, beside other factors. Kyrgyzstan provides for gender equality by specifying a broad legislative base, it provides for civil, penal, labour and family codes proclaiming equal rights for men and women. According to Kyrgyz Republic Human Rights Report 2015, rape including spousal rape, is illegal. The government failed to enforce the law effectively in previous years and rape cases went underreported. "Sexual assault's penalties for conviction may range from 3 to 8 years imprisonment but prosecutors rarely brought rape cases to court. Police generally considers spousal rape as an administrative offense. While the law precisely bans domestic violence and spousal abuse, violence against females continued and yet underreported.

In the country, women's participation in politics is not very impressive. In 2005, Kyrgyzstan was the only country in the world with zero representation from women. In 2009, there were 23 women in parliaments representing 25.6 percent of the total number of deputies. This huge improvement was due to the efforts by civil society groups and international organisations. Presently, there are 19.2 percent women in the Parliament (2015 parliamentary elections) failing to achieve the 30 percent criterion of gender quota in electoral legislation. According to forum of women-deputies of local councils over the last twenty years, there has been a steady trend of reduction in the representation of women among the deputies of local councils in Kyrgyzstan. In 2004, women held 19 percent of local council seats, in 2008, 17 percent, and in 2012, 12 percent of the seats. In 2016 election results, women deputies in local municipalities councils constitute 21 percent in city councils and 10 percent in local councils. There are about 20 percent of local assemblies with no women representation. There is a need for reserving seats for women as a temporary measure to ensure the representation of women in legislative bodies of local councils at the level of not less than 30 percent. The participation of women ensure that local development addresses the challenges of all groups of population, which in turn will contribute to reduced social tensions, and the peaceful and inclusive development of

the country. When women are included in political policymaking, they may become active public citizens of the country thereby enhancing women's human rights consequently at the international, national and local level (Handrahan, 2009).

The UN Women in Kyrgyzstan since 2012 (it was Central Asia's first) has advocated for the rights, equality, security, and dignity of Kyrgyzstan's women and girls. In collaboration with the government and the Civil Society Groups, it works towards the fulfillment of national and international obligations advancing women's human rights. The UN Women in Kyrgyz Republic intends to hasten rural women's economic empowerment as they play an important role in the development of rural areas and to national economies. Traditional and cultural norms make it more difficult for women to gain access to public services, markets and institutions, social protection and decent employment opportunities. The rural women face various challenges, which are augmented by the economic crisis, rising prices for food and fuel, low investment in rural development projects and demographic changes. To combat these problems, the UN women in Kyrgyzstan has adopted various policies to improve "rural women's food security and nutrition, build the productivity of women smallholder farmers, improve rural women's access to assets, resources and services expand their income opportunities and access to high-value product markets ensure rural women's participation and leadership in shaping responses to challenges." Kyrgyzstan has ratified over 50 international covenants, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. In 2013, strongly advocated by the UN Women and in cooperation with UNRCCA (United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia) and OSCE, Kyrgyzstan adopted a National Action Plan on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which together with 6 more resolutions of the UN Security Council, forms a part of commitments to women's rights. Kyrgyzstan approved a road map on Sustainable Development for 2013 to 2017 sanctioned by the office of the President. It proposed to reinforce its first long-term innovative gender equality policy (2012-2020) and its 2012 initial National Action Plan. The initiatives by the Kyrgyz government represent a new approach to gender equality in the country. However, the public administration reforms have been difficult and inconsistent. The administrative structure

implementing these policies has often been dogged by high staff turnover at all tiers (republic, oblast, rayon, municipality/local authorities) and by rampant corruption. There is an extensive gap amid policy and practice in the public administration.

IV.6.5 Corruption

In Kyrgyzstan, one of the major problems is the ever-rising corruption in all state institutions and all the sectors of the economy. Kyrgyzstan's reforms included privatisation of land, which was marked by widespread corruption. The rising corruption, years of cronyism, nepotism leading to dynastic rule, clientelistic practises and economic challenges were the main reasons for popular discontent and political uprisings of 2005 and 2010 (Shukuralieva, 2012). There have been weak but some efforts on part of the government groups. Ever since 2011 and the constitutional reforms of 2010, the country has strengthened its efforts to eradicate corruption. Various reforms and policy measures have been introduced to make bureaucracy, other governmental structure and business environment free of corruption. The independence of judiciary and other reforms like making judicial sector more independent was cited as one of the main reasons to introduce Constitutional Referendum of 2016. However, the country is still in its reform phase in the judicial sector and it would be too early to comment if the reforms have been translated into concrete changes.

In 2016, Kyrgyzstan stands at 136th rank out of 171 countries on "Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index" with the same absolute score as in 2015 (NIT, 2017). The Kyrgyz Republic is a major trade route for drug traffickers, which is possible only when the corrupt administration would allow such activities. Corruption is prevalent in law enforcement agencies. There are many occasions when videos of law enforcements officials or police extorting bribes have surfaced online (Marat, 2013). The TNCs (Trans National Corporations) are refraining themselves from doing business in Kyrgyzstan and the reasons for the same is the prevalent corruption, political instability amongst others according to the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index 2017-2018. The Public Administration has seen rise of extensive patronage networks over years affecting its smooth working. Thus, individuals or companies functioning in the country have to deal with highly incompetent public administration. It has been observed doing business in Kyrgyzstan

meant bribes at every tier for the large number of documents clarification and procedures making officials solicit bribes for bending the rules or speeding up bureaucratic processes. Otherwise also citizens are asked to pay bribes in different sectors by public officials.

During Akaev's and Bakiyev's era, nepotism and cronyism were unchallengeable. In Bakiyev's regime, several of his family members occupied prominent positions in the government, his brother was head of the state protection service, controlling security forces of the country including police and intelligence services. Thus, the people in important positions protected criminals, and allowed state institutions to be used for illegal practises and personal gains. The country was plunged into a deep power crisis as Bakiyev failed miserably to manage water resources. There was rampant corruption in the energy sector that could not be controlled by the government. The organized crime also boomed. Bakiyev's son as mentioned in one of the previous chapters misappropriated hundreds of millions of dollars and diverted money from wide range of sectors after heading a rent seeking scheme. He controlled all the significant assets of the country. Kurmanbek Bakiyev tried to design a special mechanism for filling up the President's office by appointing interim President, if he left before his term expires but it did not materialize.

The financial aid granted by western countries and Russia often ended up in the bank accounts of the President or their relatives. There are also accusations that about USD 300 million that came from Russia as aid vanished in Bakiyev's presidency. The money was transferred to various accounts under his control, which could not be retrieved as it may be hidden in bank accounts outside the country. The former President allegedly transferred at least USD 35 million to accounts at banks under his control. In 2011, the interim government has recovered part of the lost money but, according to the Prosecutor's office, a significant amount could still be hidden outside the country. There were media reports in 2010 that political elites and business groups tried to influence decisions about the ownership edifices of telecommunications and mineral extraction companies, which were profit-generating sectors. One such example can be seen in the following incident when there were accusations by former manager of country's largest mobile communications company that the head of the company ostensibly paid 400,000 US dollars to the Prosecutor General to evade

enquiries into corruption implicating the company during President Bakiyev's regime (BTI, 2012).

Shortly after the election of Atambayev as the President in 2011, corruption was declared as a topmost primacy and a concern of national security. In 2012, primarily the specially recognized Anti-Corruption Service under the Committee for National Security arrested several MPs and government officials. In 2013, it was seen in this fight against corruption. People from almost every political party were charged with corruption excluding his own party SDPK. In 2014 also, this trend continued and the district court relieved Isa Omurkulov of all corruption charges who was an ex-mayor from SDPK party. This case was highly disputed and was keenly observed by the opponent parties because of Atambayev's claim to fight against corruption. His acquittal was considered as evidence to the invincibility of Atambayev's loyalists. However, there have been claims by the President that his campaign against corruption was successful. Atambayev has introduced the constitutional referendum of 2016 to batter corruption and judicial reforms for bringing in transparency in the government structure.

The supremacy of informal institutions in Kyrgyzstan, like family, tribal affiliations, and existing social norms have obstructed the development of the rule of law and democratization. The weak state and social constraints like tribalism and corruption hindered transition. This array is visible in reviewing referendums and elections in the country in which we see high levels of corruption, elite clientelism and patronage system making official system of governance immaterial and meaningless. Kyrgyzstan is now a first parliamentary democracy in the countries of the former Soviet Central Asia. The post April 2010 rhetoric, of moving towards a parliamentary system of governance, one capable of eliminating the possibility of a single figure or family usurping power, represents the latest turn of events. These events divide observers into those optimists expecting the emergence of a real functioning democracy. The country is dealing with the political and economic crisis and still in the transit of the democratisation process and strengthening the political system. Some interpreted these events of political rebellion as a 'color revolution' and claimed that a wave of democracy was sweeping the former Soviet Union (Schylter and Cohen, 2005) and to others a new round of the authoritarian regimes which will collapse in the near future, with remaining observers somewhere in between.

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V.1 Revival of Traditional Geo-Politics

The Soviet Union's disintegration in 1991 resulted in the liberation of five Central Asian Republics (CARs). The region became important on the world map because of its geo-strategic location and rich natural resources. Central Asia has always been the centre of Great Powers' interest because of its geographical extent, strategic location, ethnic diversity and conflict potential for the same reason. Russian and British Empires played their 'Great Game', throughout the nineteenth century, where the Soviet Russia had the supremacy. The end of the USSR, the emergence of CARs and discovery of huge quantity of energy resources in the region has led to a new 'Great Game' between competing regional and extra regional players. The US intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq indicates of her future designs and interests in the region, and will have great implications for the regional countries and is likely to get sharp responses from them. Strategic location and influence of Central Asia on neighboring region, mainly on the Indian Sub-continent, has made it the center of extra regional powers (Jaffry, 2016). Every analyst of the region has stressed that in Central Asian states the structures of the inner security are quite delicate. Maximum states of the region are tensed because of the dictatorial rule, which is eventually going to result in an increasing threat to the Central Asian region's peace and stability. Such environment could lead to for example- a following struggle, into a full crisis that could also result in revolution. So, impact of all the powerful International actors such as, the security organisations, and International Financial Institutions (IFIs), like the IMF, World Bank and Asian Development Bank centre, on assisting them to be run-over the discernible signs of political and economic non-development and bad governance.

After 9/11 incident, CARs gained huge importance, both for the USA and Russia, who are blessing them with political, economic and security concessions. The present geopolitical chess game in Central Asia, referred to as "Great Anti-terrorist Game," (Jaffry, 2016) is vastly differing from the previous geopolitical development of the region in various ways. In the current 'Anti-Terrorist Game' along with Russia, the USA is also coming out as a dominant player because of its major military presence in the region. The emerging geopolitical conflict among the major powers of the world is almost a revival of the same traditional geopolitics. The events occurring before

Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the US military action against the Taliban regime created a major turning point in the historical shift from the cold war, the West against USSR, to the new global issue; the industrialised north against radical political Islam. Due to their common borders and geographic closeness to Afghanistan, the Central Asian republics came out as the frontline in US war on terrorism and Islamic extremism. During the military phase of US-led war against terrorism in Afghanistan, the Central Asian countries played a very active role. All except Turkmenistan had provided their air bases to the US and its allied forces. There are various push factors like defense, economic and political issues for the powerful countries vested interests in the state like Kyrgyzstan (Emilian, 2010). There is an emanating threat of Islamic terrorism in the country from nearby states like Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is due to the political importance the country holds because of its proximity with world powers like Russia, the USA, China, India, Iran and cultural ties with Turkey (Talbot, 1997).

V.2 Geo-Strategic Importance of Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan, a landlocked country in the center of Central Asia, is located between 39° and 43° N and 69° and 80° E. Bordering the Kazakhstan in the north and in the east it borders China, to the south lies Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the west. The Government since independence has been dependent on extensive long-term international support to finance its weak economy and dwindling national budget. Kyrgyzstan's political wing has many donors; it has been using international help for bringing about some effective changes in its political and economic transformation. The government's foreign policy tries to attract as many foreign donors for its economic development. The placing of the army in the country's territory from the anti-terror coalition and CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) security alliance has helped country to secure a significant source of income. This has helped the state immensely to stabilize in the short or medium term, but has also acted as a barrier to the economic and political transformations on various occasions. The Kyrgyz government's plausibility was doubted among international alliances, where the commitment to democracy and human rights was concerned. Towards the end of the last decade in 1999 and early 2000, Kyrgyzstan, was the country which benefitted the most by its highest engagement with west from the Central Asian Region. Even such

association could not save it from becoming a debt-ridden state, which functioned on the basis of western aid only. Kyrgyzstan has although stabilized its reputation in terms of improved economic stabilization (in regional comparison) but is still considered high-risk investment place. Kyrgyzstan shares borders with Kazakhstan, China, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Kyrgyzstan's leadership cooperates with neighboring countries in various regional and international aspects. It made many bilateral and multilateral agreements, including the security, trade customs, issues, etc. with most of the CIS countries. These include ones with China, like security related SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) and Europe as in the case of the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe). As a counterbalance, Russia is also an important partner for Bishkek although the western community plays a vital part of the provider of development aid. Kyrgyzstan's conformity with the set of rules by regional as well as international organisations is quite better in the regional context. In the context of accountability, in regard to international human rights or the obligations to the OSCE, however, Kyrgyzstan's attainment has run-down since 2000 and bent downwards to poor regional standards.

Since its independence, Kyrgyzstan has been in a state of inevitable dilemma of nation building. The country had been trying to follow what it termed as a "multivector" foreign policy, but actually it had to pursue a conventional approach to go along with Russian choice of policy direction. It had been proved plenteous number of times that a fragile state like Kyrgyzstan, the so-called multi-vector foreign policy, that essentially brought about manipulation of ties with Russia, the USA, China, and other key countries in the region became indefensible. Realising its vulnerability to external pressure, it had looked for all options pointing at greater flexibility in external conduct. Kyrgyzstan became a member of all important multilateral forums like UN, OSCE, SCO, OIC, CSTO, ECO, IMF, World Bank, ADB, EBRD, CAREC, and CASA-1000 and others. It gave enormous stress on involvement in regional and extra-regional organisations. However, after the revolution 2010, the interim Government President advocated continuity of multi-vector policy. As for a country with authoritarian background it was considered a better policy choice. The country's interim President, Otunbayeva, was against total dependence on one country like Russia. Thus, association with EU (European Union),

China was of equal importance like maintaining ties with neighbouring countries like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan (Stobdan, 2014).

V.3 Fergana Valley- Bone of Contention for Central Asian Republics

The Fergana Valley spreads out to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. On the borders, Kyrgyzstan encompasses three administrative regions, namely, the Jalal Abad Oblast, the Osh Oblast, and the Batken Oblast comprising 51 percent population and 40 percent land of Kyrgyzstan. The valley's around 8,500 square miles of plains, which make it stand apart from nearby regions in Central Asia, where the province is made up of deserts and mountains. It is fertile for agriculture due to the Syr Darya River and its various tributaries that are the now the main controversy in the region. The situation when analysed is said to be critical. It is one of the most densely populated regions and the ethnic composition of the region is very complex with more than 40 ethnic minorities. Except for the prominent ethnic groups, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Tajik, there are more than 40 ethnic minorities. The borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the Fergana valley are quite difficult. Russia developed agriculture and industry all around the valley to make sure that they have the hold on the profits that they made against Great Britain in the prominent "Great Game" in the 19th century. In 1924, the eastern part of the Fergana Valley was divided between the recently formed Soviet republics of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, even when the whole valley had been majorly Uzbek. Even more, the Soviet set up industries in the 1960s and encouraged the local Kyrgyz to move into the city and get jobs in manufacturing and public sector. They also resulted in quite a number of issues amongst the nomadic Kyrgyz and the more settled agricultural Uzbeks. Only little was done to make transport as well as communication better between the republic's divides, divided since long, had always remained very isolated from each other. This helped the tribal identity take on a heightened importance in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia generally. When the Soviet Union started to break down around the latter part of 1980, the relations in the Fergana Valley faced the downfall as well.

A particular approach is seen on Osh, where a tension occurred in 2010, in the month of June, where the maximum of the perpetrators were the young generation. The valley is in a region alongside the borders; there are issues that increase the risk of cross border issues. This can be seen since the time of the Soviet Union, when Stalin

marked the Fergana Valley as borders associated and convoluted crossing ethnicities and natural sources. These borders were a part of the divide-and-rule policy: where the ethnicities were left on the hind side of the border causing ethnic issues because of which the Soviet Union could control the region with ease.

CENTRAL ASIA AND THE FERGHANA VALLEY REGION



Source-<http://geohistory.today/osh-ferghana-valley/>

Map V.1

Villages had been divided by a fence, making it impossible for people to make it to the other side of the border. This led to closing down of cross border collective farms and difficult economic exchange, the region as a whole went into decline. Other border conflicts resulting into the instability in the region these days are trafficking for drugs and extremism in Islam. Both are seen dominantly in the region due to the weak government control and bad socio-economic conditions. The valley witnesses a comfort zone for criminal and Islamic group to perform as they wish. They also get support from the population as the economic and social conditions are very poor. The

people are looking for other means to earn money, majorly the young generation as they are suffering from unemployment. The socio-economic, political and ethnic conditions in countries like Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan influences crisis potential in the Fergana Valley. Kyrgyzstan's socio-economic conditions are worst in comparison to other two; it has highest ethnic minorities if compared. The physical distribution is such that minority ethnic groups reside majorly in the Fergana Valley, which happens to be the most densely populated parts of Central Asia making it a volatile region.

V.4 The External Influences

V.4.1 Russia's Influence

Even after the fall of Soviet Union, Russia has maintained close ties with Bishkek. Russia is linked with cultural as well as economic development in Kyrgyzstan. Fluent Russian language and being in conformity with Russian literature are supposed to be the pioneers of cosmopolitanism and a top notched education for Kyrgyz people. The Moscow universities are very popular among the young people of Kyrgyzstan. In May 1992, the six countries, namely Armenia, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, signed a Collective Security Treaty (CST) (Vassiliev, 2001). Russian President Putin understood the feebleness of CST to excel in the geopolitical developments. President Putin transformed the CST into Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), in April 2003 (Trenin, 2007). After about six months, Russia built its military base in Kyrgyzstan, which happened to be Russia's first new regional military base since the USSR had collapsed (Weitz, 2006). It is about 30 kilometers to the US base, situated at Manas Airport in Kyrgyzstan.

It called for an initial deployment in Kyrgyzstan of about 1,000 Russian troops and 20 military aircraft, whose main job would be to fight the Islamic militants. Russia's major interests in the Central Asian region were to maintain the border security in its southern part, developing the region's natural resources and also securing its dominance on the oil and gas transit routes in the Central Asian region. The earlier named six member states of the CSTO declared that it would fight against trafficking and terrorism in Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan had remained as part of the CIS single strategic space and Russia continued to apply considerable influence in Kyrgyzstan.

Russia does not encourage cultural exchange programs but has major influence on Kyrgyzstan due to Russian TV channels and the legacy it has carried forward (Marat, 2008). Despite Kyrgyzstan following a democratic path, Russia maintained cooperation with it under the aegis of the CSTO. Out of an almost six million population, about one million Kyrgyz nationals are of Russian origin. Almost a million Kyrgyz nationals work in Russia and send remittances home, which contribute to at least 20 per cent of Kyrgyz GDP each year. Kyrgyzstan has been pleasing the world leaders by naming mountains after them. A Kyrgyz peak was named after Vladimir Putin in 2011. A mountain peak in the Pamirs was also named after Boris Yeltsin.

Russia's historical control over the country, its superiority of the power in the region and geographical closeness together create such conditions that its role cannot be undermined. Relation between Russia and Kyrgyzstan got very unstable when Bakiyev wavered on a pledge to expel American forces from Manas, even after getting a 2 billion US dollar loan guarantee from Russia in the year 2009 (Blagov, 2010). However, after Bakiyev was kicked out in the post-Tulip Revolution, little progress was made to regain the Russian trust by the interim government and by the first parliamentary elected government. But, basic mistrust over many issues, including the continuation of the US Military Transit Centre at Manas, non-payment of debt by Kyrgyzstan, Russia's non-payment of rent for leasing the Kant air base, etc. continued to persist between Russia and Kyrgyzstan. By 2011, Russia also started putting pressure on Bishkek to join the Customs Union. In early 2011, as the trouble phase in the country was about to end, the Kyrgyz new leadership was trying to enter again into the Russian orbit. This was on contrary to the belief that Moscow's clout may decline if a new parliamentary system was established in Kyrgyzstan. Many had thought that the second time revolution under Roza Otunbayeva might orient Kyrgyzstan towards the west. However, the first parliamentary election results clearly brought back the same pro-Russian political parties to power though in a coalition format. Only one party Ata-Meken was seen as a pro-western oriented remained in opposition. However, in later years, the relationship with Russia was affected by several internal political developments within Kyrgyzstan such as conflicts over corruption, power struggle among many clans and the Kyrgyz wish to diversify relationship with other countries. Russia has been anti-west especially when the Color

Revolution succeeded in overthrowing corrupt regimes. While these revolutions succeeded in replacing corrupt regimes after rigged elections, Russia's claim was that these revolutions did not bring any democratic reforms especially in countries like Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. These countries experienced uprisings again within the decade following the revolution.

V4.2 The USA's Foray

In the latter part of 1990, with the USA help Kyrgyzstan entered as the first and single Central Asian country in the WTO. The USA aid had launched wide-ranging programmes that supported institutional building, evidently aimed at supporting democracy, open society and a free market economy. Kyrgyzstan became important to the United States only as an aftermath of the 11 September 2001 events. Until then the US was only helping Kyrgyzstan, like it did to other Central Asian states, to expand its sovereignty, political and economic reforms, bolster human rights, prevent weapons generation, and specifically to strengthen capacity to fight the trans-national terrorism and drug trafficking. After what happened on 11 September 2001, it made a more security dominant access by the USA to the Central Asian region, the main aim of which was the building of air bases and entitlements to land for US led operations in Afghanistan. The US led coalition utilized the Uzbekistan bases and an air base in Kyrgyz State. In 2001, the Akaev government agreed to let the United States construct its own military base in Kyrgyzstan as part of its operations against Islamic terrorist forces in Afghanistan led by Taliban. By late 2002, the base, at the edge of Manas International Airport in northwest of Bishkek, already had more than 2,000 troops and was home to both the US and French military aircraft (Kort, 2004). The continuation of the US military facilities in Central Asia became the main issue, and led to an increase in the regional and domestic discord. In the past, despite the SCOs firm opposition, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan had supported transit rights for the affiliated efforts in Afghanistan. In fact, the US had various blueprints until recently for building up several airbases in the region. It is a possibility that it was a deliberate attempt by the United States to have its influence in the region by compelling 'colourful revolutions' like Tulip Revolution. On the political reforms, the US admired the Kyrgyz progress on democracy and the way in which competitive and open elections were conducted by the governments after the revolution of 2010.

President Rosa agreed to extend the contract for the base but with passing years and under Atambayeva's Presidency there was rising political tension over the USA's presence in Kyrgyzstan, thus base was closed in July 2014.

Geo-Strategic Location of Kyrgyzstan



Source: Bond and Koch, 2010

Map- V.2

The Kant Air base is a left-over military installed from Soviet time. The base had helped NATO logistics and acted as the new logistical hub post the cessation of the Uzbekistan's Karshi-Khanabad Air Base in 2005 (or K2 Airbase). However, due to political spat and with completion of the US operation and the withdrawal of the US

troops from Manas Transit Center, the US has lost its impact in Central Asia. The closure of the Transit Center is seen as constructive in Kyrgyzstan. The comeback of Russian influence became the main factor in making the US leave from Manas. After being elected in 2011, Kyrgyzstan's President Almazbek Atambayev made Russia sure that he would shut the base. In fact, the Russian media was quite enthusiastic about the base's closing rather than the Kyrgyz media, since Russia sees the American forces' departure as too important politically, to its aim of establishing itself again as the only major power in Central Asia.

V.4.3 China's Sway

China, also bordering the CARs, has been one of the more successful countries in finding a foothold and ensuring its access to CARs. China and CARs have cemented their ties for fight against ethnic separatism and religious extremism (Hunter, 1996). Kyrgyzstan also shares a border with China and is getting to be important, mainly in terms of infrastructural development and trade too, for Kyrgyzstan. China's plans for large-scale energy and transport links would mean an integration of Central Asia into Chinese economic space. Beijing wants to be a part of the region's agriculture, mineral ore, gold, coal mines, hydropower, and manufacturing sectors. Kyrgyzstan is a witness to this strategy of China and it is Kyrgyzstan's second largest trading partner after Russia in CIS countries. Equivalently, China had been consistently supporting Kyrgyzstan's efforts to establish its military and national defense. There are cultural, ethnic and historical ties with the Turkic Uighurs that are in the far Western Province Xinjiang, which is also called the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. China has even capitalized in Kyrgyz gold mine and gold mine exploration seeing the same consequences as Centerra Gold's KOC which saw protests by local people and more assurances by the Kyrgyz government. Kyrgyzstan has enormous natural resources making it a lucrative location for investors, but with so much of natural wealth, the Kyrgyz has more power to maneuver it. There has been quite an absence of any conflict between Kyrgyzstan and China as many of the long pending border issues between the two had long been resolved. However, Beijing's attempt to push politically and economically in Kyrgyzstan had failed previously due to frequent regime change in Bishkek; resulting in many Chinese economic investment projects getting derailed with negotiations lasting for decades. For example, negotiation over

building China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railroad had been lasting for decades. Kyrgyzstan's offer of valuable gold, iron and aluminum deposits to China for in exchange of the railway though still being criticised by a large section of Kyrgyz intelligentsia is likely to be realised unless Russia seriously decides to scuttle it. There have been numerous incidents where Chinese mining companies violated legal and environmental obligations that brought about strong public reaction in Kyrgyzstan. The common people in Kyrgyzstan were also not happy about quality of commodities being exported to Kyrgyzstan. However, China's earlier attempts to make deeper inroads into Kyrgyzstan were frustrated by the successive periodic revolutions, which occasionally kept the country tied to Russia. Therefore, despite all the good developments taking place, developing a robust relation with China remained uncertain till 2010. After the second Kyrgyz revolution, new Kyrgyz Prime Minister Atambayev in a balancing game consistently signaled to ignore the traditional support base of Russia (and the US). As a result Chinese were attempting for forays into the Kyrgyzstan in a major way. The orientation of Kyrgyz economy towards China had already begun during the period of previous regimes. China had been the main beneficiary in Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet political and economic structures. The Kyrgyz initial adoption of the multi-vector policy facilitated the process. China's has been cooperating with Kyrgyzstan on various bilateral and SCO frameworks, and jointly making an effort to fight terrorism, separatism, extremism and trans-national organised crimes like trafficking, to safeguard security of the two countries and the region. China's interests vis-à-vis Kyrgyzstan centre around pre-empting any support from Kyrgyzstan to the Uighur separatists and in countering US and Russian influence in Kyrgyzstan.

Chinese Scholars were of divided opinion on role of the USA in the Kyrgyzstan's revolutions. Scholars like Zhao and others found the US intervention as one of the causes of the political unrest. However, "fundamentally speaking, the United States did not create the 'Color Revolution' by itself, nor did those 'revolutions' succeed entirely on account of the US endorsement and support." Domestic factors, according to some Chinese scholars were till now the most important factors in igniting the strife. There are other scholars; according to whom the external support provided by the USA augmented the Color Revolutions. Their analysis marked those changes as part and parcel of the US strategy to sustain authority in the post-cold war times.

Specialists of Chinese security mainly stressed that democratization was only a cloak for Washington's ambiguous agenda: even more for Westernizing Eurasia and bringing forth American hegemony in the region. The US government funded not only the state organs but also many NGOs, to spread their ideology of promoting market economy and liberal democracy in the region. Local opposition parties also used foreign funds especially the US to run and wield mass media, disturb political order, and eventually seize power.

V.4.4 India- Kyrgyzstan Relation

India has maintained close relations with regions of Central Asia. People of India and Kyrgyz had begun to interact since the time of the Sakas or the Scythians. Contact happened through Indian traders who visited Fergana Valley to trade along the Silk Route, brought Indian merchants into that region. Kyrgyzstan in return received the influence of Buddhism from India to Central Asia and beyond. The Silk Route had notably served as cultural and commercial contact points between India and China. The archaeological finds of Buddhist complexes in the Chu Valley and the Semirech's region are indication of the historical links that existed between India and Kyrgyzstan (Stobdan, 2014).

In the initial phase of its independence there were socio-economic, political and security challenges mounting on the young republic. During this critical phase, the new leadership of Kyrgyzstan decided to look beyond and have a friendly relation with distant neighbouring countries. India's closeness to the Soviet Union led to favourable relation between India and Central Asia. India signed a Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union in 1971. After Kyrgyz Republic's independence, India stood as among the first ones to develop political relations in 1992. The former Prime Minister of India Narasimha Rao visited Kyrgyzstan in September 1995 and addressed Joint Session of both the Houses of Kyrgyz Parliament. Kyrgyzstan supported India's case for permanent membership of UNSC (United Nations Security Council) then. There have been many Indian ministers who visited Kyrgyzstan from 1999 till 2014. The visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi (11-12 July, 2015) took place after a gap of 20 years. He met both Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev and Prime Minister Temir Sariyev and other important ministers. Prime Minister Modi also visited the

Victory Square; gifted medical machinery to Field hospital, signed four agreements in various fields like defence cooperation, culture, election and others.

Kyrgyz President Akaev visited India four times from March 1992 to November 2003. President of the Kyrgyz Republic Almazbek Atambayev paid a state visit to India from 18-21st December 2016. This was his first visit to India in his capacity as President. He led a high level delegation of Ministers, senior officials, etc. from the Kyrgyz Republic. He held meetings with President of India, Vice-President of India and the Prime Minister. The Kyrgyz President was a part of the India-Kyrgyz Republic Business Forum. Seven agreements in the field of tourism, agriculture, youth development, cooperation between diplomatic academies, broadcasting, exchange of cadets, and investment promotion were signed. India-Kyrgyzstan economic engagement seems below potential despite maintaining cordial relations. Clothing and leather goods, apparel, pharmaceuticals and drugs, chemicals, and tea form the major of the export goods to Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz items exported to India are raw hides and metal scraps, to name a few (Stobdan, 2014). The India-Kyrgyz joint Business Council meeting was held in Bishkek on 19th March 2014 with the objective of promoting trade between the two countries.

India-Kyrgyzstan Trade (Values in US \$ Millions)

Year	Export	Import	Total Trade	% Growth	Trade Balance
2009-2010	26.84	0.64	27.48	NA	26.20
2010-2011	25.79	1.20	26.98	-1.79	24.59
2011-2012	30.55	0.89	31.44	16.50	29.66
2012-2013	34.99	2.09	37.07	17.92	32.90
2013-2014	34.54	0.64	35.18	-5.10	33.90
2014-2015	37.76	0.77	38.53	0.01	36.99

Source: Director General of Foreign Trade, Export Import data bank, <http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/iecmt.asp>, accessed 5 December 2017.

Table V.1

About 950 professionals and more from Kyrgyzstan have taken training in India since 1992. Kyrgyzstan is an important gold producer with an annual output of about 20 tonnes. Tourism played an important role in economic development of Kyrgyzstan and the hospitality sector in India also has the avenues of investment in building a tourist infrastructure in Kyrgyzstan. The low costs and open convenient norms are the reasons that act as an attraction for a large number of students from foreign countries including India. Kyrgyzstan has more than 24,000 Indian students mainly studying medicine. Indian educational institutions could also use their infrastructure of hospitals and hostels.

Culture is another factor that makes the bond between India and Kyrgyzstan stronger. Kyrgyzstan society is mainly spiritual, a large number of students from the country go to the other countries like India to study religion. India has conducted dance workshops and has established India Study Centre. India has also offered to establish an AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) centre in Kyrgyzstan. India has already made headway by sharing its experiences in agro-processing, greenhouse technology, water conservation, and agricultural research.

V.5 The Central Asian Republics and Kyrgyz Foreign Relations

V.5.1 Uzbekistan

Kyrgyzstan shares the longest border with Uzbekistan (1,314 km). The relationship between the two countries has often been fraught over border disputes, natural resources and ethnic conflicts in the southern Kyrgyzstan. The population of the Uzbekistan is huge 29 million (approx.), which is much larger than Kyrgyzstan's 6 million (approx.) population. Uzbekistan is the region's largest economy after Kazakhstan with an annual GDP of 67 billion dollars which is ten times more than Kyrgyzstan's GDP of 6.51 billion dollars. The southern Kyrgyzstan is dominated by Uzbekistan both politically and economically, a large number of Uzbeks also live in south of Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan's late President Islam Karimov on several occasions adopted means like shutting pipelines of gas supply or making adjustments in the

terms of delivery for various political ends. This caused Kyrgyzstan grave inconvenience as majority of the state's gas requirements were fulfilled by gas supply from Uzbekistan hampering the relationship between the two countries. Karimov in his television appearances broadcast in the cities of south Kyrgyzstan was often seen criticising Akaev, although Kyrgyz President remained deferential to his counterpart. However, Uzbekistan lacks irrigation capacity for agriculture, as it is situated down rivers of the region's water provisions. Kyrgyzstan's holds a dominant position in this regard as it controls the region's one-third of water sources. There are differences over Kambarta hydro-electric dam being built over river Naryn in Kyrgyzstan with Russia's support, as it will affect irrigation facilities in Uzbekistan. Uzbek President post the Tulip Revolution often warned about an imminent war if hydropower dams are built on the Amu Darya and Syr Darya. The planned China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway line that will be completed in the coming years will change the geo-economic and political landscape of South and Central Asia.

The Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations have also deteriorated over the years, especially since the June 2010 ethnic riots in Osh. Following the cross-ethnic conflicts in Osh and Jalalabad oblasts in June 2010, in which several hundreds of Uzbeks were killed, Uzbekistan has closed its border transit points with Kyrgyzstan. The situation on the state border and in the Sokh enclave of Uzbekistan continues to see a downfall. The aggression was concentrated mainly in Osh Province, and in two other provinces of Jalalabad and Batken, on the border of Uzbekistan. These are the ones having the largest ethnic Uzbek populations, and by far the highest Uzbek shares of the total population (Rowland, 2002). Closeness of Kyrgyzstan's ethnic Uzbek population to their co-nationals introduces an inter-state dimension to the cross-ethnic issues in Kyrgyzstan including Uzbeks, as agreed by quite a number of Uzbeks who had to reside in refugee camps which were situated across the border, after the June ethnic-riots, Uzbekistan. There were happenings when Uzbek community leader in Kyrgyzstan had appealed the Uzbekistan's President to take some measure against the "genocide of our people" (Conflicting Narratives, 2010). It created fears among the Uzbeks across the region emphasizing the role of "homeland" or "diaspora" (Kaiser, 1992, 2002; Laitin, 1998). It is considered by some that Uzbeks residing in Kyrgyzstan is a serious threat to the territorial and spatial dimensions of the conflict. The Fergana valley region is also seeing the rise of terrorism and institutionalisation

of radicalisation. The movements like Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Hizb-ut-Tahrir are disturbing the peace in the valley, which is an imminent threat to both the countries (Akchurina and Lavorgna, 2014).

Recently, the Kyrgyzstan's Parliament has taken a resolution to get the return of the Severniy Sokh gas storage facility as well as Chongara- Galcha gas and oil fields in southern region to Kyrgyzstan. The controversy erupted after the Soviet Union's fall, when Kyrgyzstan had allowed Uzbekistan to use its facilities, which existed, on Kyrgyz territory. The Kyrgyz government earlier had no resources make use of those facilities. Now, the issue has become a bone of contention between the two states. The non-demarcated area in the south of the Kyrgyzstan have led to brawl and sometimes armed clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Frequent incidents take place along the border with Uzbekistan. In 2010, 26 incidents on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border were reported. The talks on Kyrgyz-Uzbek state border delimitation have been going on since February 2000. The two sides agreed upon 1,058.83 km but differences persisted over the length of 320.3 km. Attempts at resolving a host of issues including the border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan did not succeed. When Atambayev came to power, he vowed to strengthen cooperation and remove all misunderstandings with Tashkent. The visit of Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in September 2017 has brought some positive results in regard to the bilateral relationships between the two countries. It marked a break with the combative policy of his predecessor late President Karimov who ruled from 1989 until his abdication in August 2016. The President's from both the countries signed a formal border agreement. It aims to resolve border disputes in the Fergana valley including eastern Uzbekistan, southern Kyrgyzstan and northern Tajikistan. The two leaders also signed an agreement demarcating 1,170 km out of 1,370 km of border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, which was agreed upon years ago but never ratified. The remaining border dispute of 200 km will also be resolved as expressed by them.

V.5.2 Tajikistan

Kyrgyzstan's ties with its southern neighbour Tajikistan were very critical since many years now. The long border share has been under dispute for more than 26 years. Several thousand families inhabit these disputed areas in southern Kyrgyzstan and

Tajikistan. The major areas of conflict remain property, land, natural resources and roads. Rising nationalism on both sides has only aggravated the tensions in the recent years. There has been an influx of refugees and anti-government fighters from Tajikistan into the territory of Kyrgyzstan, straining relationship between the two countries. The Tajik intruders are also responsible for spreading terrorism in the valley, as the borders are porous making it an easy route for the radical elements. The negotiations over border disputes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have been in progress since December 2002. The Kyrgyz-Tajik border is 970.8 km (stat.kg, 2017) (467.5 km of the border are not demarcated yet), including 564.3 km in Batken Oblast (251.1 km are demarcated and 313.2 km are not delineated) (Stobdan, 2014). Tensions between ethnic Kyrgyz and Tajiks remain high especially along the undelimited border areas in Batken Oblast. The incidents of inter-ethnic strife are often reported. Border towns constantly remained in conflict. It has been seen that both countries often adopt methods like blocking of roads and stopping water canal supply by Kyrgyz authorities.

The Kyrgyz-Tajik tensions over scarce resources have been on the rise in Batken region. These issues are unlikely to be resolved in the short and mid-term period. The Kyrgyz in this area alleged that Tajiks are illegally buying up Kyrgyz land. Inter-ethnic incidents got extremely tensed in December 2011 in Andarak village of Lyalak district followed by Kyrgyz taking hostage of 19 Tajik traders in Batken in June 2012 for release of their relatives who were caught in Soughd province of Tajikistan for smuggling 90 kilograms of red mercury. In 2014 there was a cross-border exchange of fire on the border of the Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan leaving 8 border guards wounded. The firing was the result of an ongoing dispute over partially demarcated border. This led to suspension of trade in a number of border zone areas. The borders were re-opened in 2017 after an official sanction, which permitted Kyrgyz farmers to sell and buy goods in Tajikistan. It has helped trade grown again. The total Tajik import from and export to Kyrgyzstan in 2010 accounted for more than 4 million US dollars and close to 9 million US dollars as per Tajikistan statistics. In 2016 the number grew to 5 million US dollars and 17 million US dollars, respectively. The trade figures don't take into account the informal trade between small traders and local merchants living in the peripheral areas.

The borders are penetrable and serve as easy gateway for smugglers, drug-traffickers and organised crimes. The border checkpoints are often closed for traffic because of illegal detentions and destruction of estate on both sides. Such incidents could overgrow into armed issues that may magnify into serious ethnic conflict making way to entire Fergana Valley. Trans-boundary crime had become serious threat to all the states in the past. The Kyrgyz authorities often accused terrorists and extremists infiltrating from across the Tajik borders. Thus, the dearth of open dialogue between the two countries has hampered the bilateral cooperation in various fields like trade and infrastructure, natural resources, refugees, immigration, border security and rising drugs and narcotics problems in the region. The government in both countries focuses on border issues only in term of a national security rather than helping local communities. The vital issues remain land and water for these two poorest Central Asian countries and both sides viciously protect their access to pastures and cropland.

V.5.3 Kazakhstan

Another important country with which Kyrgyzstan maintains significant relations includes neighbouring state of Kazakhstan; they share a 1,212 km long border. Traditionally, the relationship between these two countries has been quite strong. The similar language, culture and religion bring the Kazakh and Kyrgyz closer. Kazakhstan has always helped Kyrgyzstan in its difficult times during mid-1990s in the event of implicit closure of Airport at Bishkek made Almaty the main point of entry to Kyrgyz State. Kazakhstan has made direct investment in the Kyrgyz economy, which is increasing since 2000s. Kazakhstan remains the largest investor in Kyrgyzstan from the Central Asia region. Kazakh investors own almost one third of the total Kyrgyzstan bank's equity share. Kazakh owns approximately one fourth of business enterprises in Kyrgyzstan (Schroder and Schroder, 2017). The opulent Kazakh-Kyrgyz relationship is beneficial for economic prosperity of both the countries. Kazakhstan invested over 1 billion US dollar into the economy of Kyrgyzstan, which was proposed in 2007 by Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev but implemented only in 2011. The Kazakhstani-Kyrgyz Investment Fund (KKIF) was created with the objective of rendering financial assistance to small and medium enterprises in Kyrgyzstan, which in turn would boost Kyrgyzstan's economy. The trade grew by 27 percent in 2011 and more than 20 large, nearly 300 small, and

little bigger sized enterprises were functioning in Kyrgyzstan with the contribution of Kazakhstan. Kazakh President gave consent to sell gas to Kyrgyzstan at a far lower price than Uzbekistan has been supplying during that phase. However, non-payment of gas supply by Kazakhstan often created tension between the two. Nazarbayev's decision to sell cheap gas to Kyrgyzstan encouraged the Kyrgyz Parliamentarians to propose Kazakh President's name for a Noble Award nomination list in 2011. In 2012, an agreement was signed between the two countries on military alliance, which called for training of Kyrgyz military at educational institutions of Kazakhstan's Defense Ministry. Kazakhstan is a large trading partner for Kyrgyzstan with trade turnover exceeding 750 million US dollars. The Kazakhstan has allowed the stay of Kyrgyz nationals in the country for 90 days with registration to be made within five days after arrival. This was done to boost the cross-border cooperation. In economic sphere, Kazakhstan purchase more than 1 billion kwh of electricity power from Kyrgyzstan and supply thousand tons of coal, petroleum products and grains to Kyrgyzstan.

Kazakhstan has also been wary of Kyrgyz democratic drive and every time there was revolution in Kyrgyzstan, the Kazakh government would close the border points. The new Kyrgyz leadership formed after 2010 revolution accused Kazakhstan for interfering in Kyrgyz internal affairs. There were accusations about the role played by Kazakh secret services in the Osh ethnic conflict in 2010. Kazakhstan provided substantial assistance to Kyrgyzstan; about 10 million US dollars in 2010 and 4 million US dollars were granted in 2011 and 30 million US dollars of humanitarian aid after the riots. During Almazbek Atambayev's visit to Astana in May 2012, President Nursultan Nazarbayev called Kyrgyzstan as an associate and a vital strategic partner in Central Asia. However, the relations between the two countries escalated when Atambayev accused Kazakh authorities of meddling in Kyrgyzstan's internal affairs and criticized the Kazakh President. The stand-off between the two Presidents strained the Russian led-economic bloc. Kyrgyzstan being a land-locked country is dependent on Kazakhstan for flow of goods to other countries. Thus, supplies of Kyrgyz exports to European countries were hampered as the border control was tightened by Kazakh administration. There were complaints made by Kyrgyzstan to the Eurasian Economic Union and the WTO, for imposition of blockade by Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan in return suspended the operations by

Kazakhstan based company operating at a copper and gold mine of the country. The situation eased after the election of new Kyrgyz President Jeenbekov in November 2017. The Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov visited Astana in December 2017. The current two Presidents have promised to work on the border disputes and improve relations between them. The new regime also promises to adopt a mutual respect policy with Kazakhstan. When the Kyrgyz government succeeded in settling dispute with Astana, the WTO was also informed.

V.6 Great Power Reflection in Kyrgyzstan Conflict

After the Tulip revolution-I the situation was like a civil war, it became unavoidable for foreign military forces, to circumvent the aggression provoked by criminal wings, which could have resulted into an Islamic revolution shaking the entire region. After the Color Revolution 2010, internal and external forces were not in sync as they were at earlier times. Recent loyalties and the partnerships have grown up. Kyrgyz leaders found themselves more dependent on Moscow than earlier. People in large number were displaced; there is an estimate that over 1,00,000 Uzbeks fled from the Southern Kyrgyz to Uzbekistan. The Fergana valley where borders of three countries (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) exist was put into the risk after the riots, as the violence hampers the peace and stability in the region.

In April 2010, after the regime change, the Russian officials rapidly made efforts to develop connection with the new government, promising a 20 million US dollar grant, almost 30 million US dollar special loan. It was also offered that Russia would provide 25,000 tons of oil products and fuel to Kyrgyzstan (Blagov, 2010). Russia renounced its support after the violence of June 2010. When the riots broke out on 10 June 2010, Kyrgyzstan government called for help from Russian side. The situation was extremely tensed and beyond the Kyrgyz administration's control so the Moscow was the first hope of rescue for Kyrgyz government. Russian government initially put a condition before accepting the Kyrgyz government request for support. They put forward that the Russian army would protect Kant airbase, a military facility owned by Russia in Kyrgyz state. Thus, they sent help on 13 June 2010 (Schwartz, 2010). Bakiyev knew of Russian government's enormity towards his administration because he extended the Manas contract with the US government. He had apparently wrecked

a promise made to Russia that the American base would be vacated in return of Russia's aid to the country. Russian government got furious when Bakiyev was sent to Belarus. It enraged Russia so much that it became evident in a meeting of CSTO in 2010. They even threatened to withdraw the natural gas supplies to Kyrgyzstan. After 18 June 2010, Kyrgyz officials understood that any assistance from Russia was not to be coming, and took their request back for any kind of help. The United States and the partners who are in Europe stayed silent signalling that Russia must play a role of a leader in a possible intervention (Felgenhauer, 2010).

The Central Asian region is important for both Great Powers to exhibit their presence. The geopolitics in the region is a construct of irrepressible Cold War between the USA and Russia. Due to the difference between these two blocs, the individual regimes had to face the consequence of going against the interests of the Great powers (Heathershaw, 2007). It has been observed that commitment of the Central Asia leaders to a foreign policy direction towards Russia or West has often labelled them as "Pro-Russian and Pro-Western" (Lewis, 2008). Ever since the independence the Central Asia players are often seen displaying tendencies of extorting economic and political benefits from both the wings by playing them against each other. Kyrgyzstan has made advantage of its strategic position and rented out military bases to both Russia and the USA. The Country's second ruler Bakiyev exploited the situation so much that it ultimately led to the end of his political career. Media interaction of the cross-ethnic fight in the year June 2010 have directed towards the Kant and Manas military base, as how important they have been to other international actors. It indicated that the Russian and the US military present there, gave motivation for the indulgence of international actors in the dispute. As understood by elites, the panic mainly was to administer security even if there is a prevalent outlook of the scare as well, where the colour revolutions are linked with confusions and disarray (Kupatadze, 2008). Since the "Colour Revolution," the CSTO and the SCO have functioned as "protective integration" with each other that would make a base for political unanimity among the member countries leaders and against western "democracy-promotion" efforts in the region (Allison, 2008). Although the main force and internal coherence of these organisations mentioned above, display virtual regionalism, which is not understandable and so questioned.

V.6.1 International Community Response and Intervention

Uzbekistan was the only country, which faced directly the heat of the ethnic conflicts due to large presence of ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyz land. The late Ex-President of Uzbekistan Karimov emphasised control of Uzbekistan's border to protect Uzbeks territory from drugs and terrorism. The conflicts in the close border areas were left to be solved on their own. Uzbekistan even restricted the mutual relations with Kyrgyzstan by restricting trade and disconnecting the family ties between people living across borders. The late-President announced that he closed borders for protecting Uzbek's wealth from poor Kyrgyz people, which attracted huge criticism from the media and international community. In fact, various groups imitated the common thought that initiated in recent years, that "in Kyrgyzstan the state is poor and the people rich, while in Uzbekistan the state is rich but the people poor" (Liu, 2012). The late President showed very little interest in getting help for the Uzbeks ethnic group in Kyrgyzstan. In fact, Uzbekistan was unhappy to take the ethnics as refugees in the period of conflict and worked on ensuring their return from Uzbek territory as soon as the violence subsided.

The violence in Kyrgyzstan showed a major challenge for the international community. As Kyrgyzstan staggered on the brink of civil war, the provisional government asked for direct external military intervention. Despite the loss of life, the real possibility of the break-up of Kyrgyzstan, and the potential for the spread of conflict to neighbouring countries, the international community proved unable or unwillingness to respond effectively to the violence and in turn focused on providing the humanitarian aid (Pannier, 2010). The relief efforts by United Nations were satisfactory. The former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of UN has applauded Kyrgyzstan for the "encouraging successes" especially for "mediation and preventive diplomacy." There have been efforts by the Security Council to put an end on the atrocities committed on the Uzbeks and maintaining peace in the Southern part of the country. According to OHCHR (The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), there were few fundamental improvisations and government's slight agreement and wilfulness to take over, in action rather than words regarding the main human rights issues in the south and the other parts of the country as well. Kyrgyz government queried the OSCE on 24 June 2010 to make arrangements for an

international police force (Kramer, 2010). Organisations like CSTO and SCO to which Kyrgyzstan is a member state took stock of the situation. In an emergency meeting of CSTO, it was decided by the member states that no troops will be sent and they highly condemned the situation calling it intolerable (Schwartz and Barry, 2010). The CSTO member states were disunited over Bakiyev being sent to the asylum. On 11 June 2010, in a SCO summit the member states refrained from giving any formal word on the situation in Kyrgyzstan but stated that they were contemplating providing the multilateral aid to Kyrgyzstan (Blagov, 2010).

The quietude of Russia and other SCO and CSTO members after the riots has many possible details. Like Russian media and internet community portrayed Central Asia people as unworthy of sacrifice and support. Russia has always been wary of its Russian population outside the country. It has always supported a protective policy for its nationals or ethnic Russians outside the country (McDermott, 2010). But they could not do it in Kyrgyzstan at least openly, as Russian officials were aware of the legal issues and also the complexities involved in financing this kind of mission. Russian government and media also showed their concern about Kyrgyzstan government's democratic hyperbole. The Russian President warned that the liberal constitutional developments in Central Asia could result in the state's unpleasant downfall (Marat, 2010). The Russian officials saw this development as a move to satisfy the west rather than the democratic measure. Another reason behind regional powers inactivity was the conflict within their organisations on how they should handle the scenario. The structural hindrances to cooperation were many for example- the Shanghai spirit of not interfering in matters of other countries, a huge amount of mistrust among member states of the regional organisations affecting their foreign policies. Russians on the other hand were also concerned about their absence of help that may lead to China's intervention in the region. However, China's President Hu Jintao had little interest in Kyrgyzstan's internal matters at a SCO meeting held in June 2010 (Sharip, 2010). China, Russia and all the security organisations of the region, the member states of the SCO and the CSTO, also have been reserved in meddling with internal affairs of Kyrgyzstan. It highlighted the internal divisions among the member states. In the year 2010, President Otunbayeva ordered an international commission, which was led by Kimmo Kiljunen, to look into the matter and find out the reason and understand the situation of the June 2010 cross-ethnic

conflicts. The government allowed the UN representatives' visits along with other organisations, which included the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe), IOM (International Organisation for Migration), and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. The government delayed the fact-finding mission schedule of the UN report on torture.

Kyrgyzstan was taken as an asset to the European and Western coalition partners. Kyrgyzstan before ending the Manas air base lease was the sole country to have a US airbase as well as a Russian airbase. It represented the struggle between Russia and the US over the strategic area of Central Asia. Differing from Georgia's 'Rose Revolution' and Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution', in Kyrgyzstan's 'Tulip Revolution' the inside factors were taken to be very important. However, we cannot bypass the role of external actors before and after the revolution. There are vested interests of Russia, China and United States in the region. While China and Russia were giving support to the prevalent regimes in Central Asia, the US was on the opposite side, aimed to secure pro-Western elites in Central Asian states. The United States did give some support in the continuation of 'colourful revolutions' in Central Asia. The base in Kyrgyzstan for such external involvement was weak government and great opposition. There are reasons to believe that United States wanted to transfer 'colourful revolutions' to Central Asian region that stood against the interests of China and Russia in the region. The US government privately aided and political NGOs gave monetary help, training, and stipulated logistical alliance for antagonistic forces that the USA took to be worthy of investing for regime change. The US diplomatic and intelligence officials took part in networking discordant organisations of various Eurasian countries to enrich and exchange proficiencies in the assemblage and organisation of non-violent civil disobedience. The outward interests complicate the picture even more. Neighbouring states like Uzbekistan, and regional powers, mainly Russia, could also seek to gain from the issues to extract concessions from Kyrgyzstan's government with little experience and to force it into alliances, which could be in their interests rather than for Kyrgyzstan. The Uzbek authorities have put the Kyrgyz authorities in a difficult stand by the disoriented Uzbeks fleeing into Uzbekistan, with a possibility of Uzbeks turning against the Kyrgyzstan. The Russians also after calculating the political costs provided assistance only through CSTO, which is a multilateral forum.

The governments in Kyrgyzstan have the objective of seizing every economic opportunity, as the resources are less. Kyrgyzstan has made use of its natural resources to attract foreign investors. The natural resources in the country are also determining its relationship with the west, as it may provide them with the opportunity of exploiting the region's natural resources. Kyrgyzstan is also trying to balance its relationship with the USA, Russia, China and other regional partners simultaneously balancing its own economic and political interest. External power interventions, which attempted to take over these local issues through arbitration and appeasement, cannot take care of the structures, which construct them. The efforts to disseminate reconciliation between various ethnic groups cannot be really effective until it is ensured by the Kyrgyz government that all communities live together and promote political, economic and cultural cooperation. Mainly, external actors must take the wider impact of their activities into consideration, including their impact on conflict dynamics in southern Kyrgyzstan. The donors who are providing funds to civil society should also devise some mechanisms for monitoring such international programmes and make provisions to study their impact on conflict potential and governance. After Almazbek Atambayev assumed the Presidency, Kyrgyzstan started looking for diverse strategic partnerships, which was reflected in the fact that Atambayev adopted multi-vector foreign after assuming the power. This is a great escape from the usual Kyrgyz canvassing, as the previous rulers had the policy of playing one superpower against another to extract maximum benefits for themselves. It has led to ouster of two regimes in a span of just five years.

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Conclusion

The present study analysed the transition to democratisation in Kyrgyzstan. The country beleaguered with social, economic and political problems hampers the transition to democracy. This thesis analysed the political transformation keeping in mind the complexities and the challenges in the Kyrgyz society. The period of the study envisages from 1991 to 2011. As political transition is a continuous process and there was a gap between when I started till my submission, features of transformation from the current phase are added.

This examines some major hurdles in the development of the country i.e. the ethnic and regional divide in chapter-II. It discusses the multi-ethnic nature of the country and how after attaining independence, ethnic self-consciousness was revived. There was a race for the popularisation of own ethnic culture, history and language. The Kyrgyz ethnic group believes that Kyrgyzstan's land only belongs to them and not to other ethnic groups residing in it. This sense of ethno-nationalism was inherited from the Soviet times, as several ethnic republics existed but there was no sense of civic nationhood or oneness. The two views about the formation of ethnic-nation states have been discussed. Firstly, the primordial view which says, when a group consolidates on common characteristics and there is a desire to reject the other groups which results in the conflicts and secondly, the constructivist argument which considers identity as a social construct influenced by various factors and it changes over time as social context changes. They also explain that in multi-ethnic societies, conflict is the result of manipulation by "ethnic entrepreneurs" who are actually the politicians who exploit the sentiments of the people to stay in power. The foremost ethnic riot in modern Kyrgyz history occurred in 1990 at the end of the Soviet era. It was a "Turkic self-genocide," as both the ethnic groups belonged to the same Turkic race. Even though belonging to different branches, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz both speak a Turkic language and are Sunni Muslims. This cultural elucidation of conflict is unacceptable to understand this conflict. The ethnic-conflict started as a land dispute between two ethnic groups, which clearly shows that it was a fight for their respective claim to economic resources. The second conflict took place in June 2010, almost 21 years apart from the previous ethnic conflict. The immediate reasons inciting the crowd were many but one of the primary reasons for the ethnic conflict can be

attributed to elite fragmentation. The Otunbayeva's government decided to dissolve the Parliament, which led to dissatisfied political entrepreneurs who mobilised the crowd that ended in riots. Kyrgyzstan's civil society could be mobilised for both liberal and illiberal ends, which resulted into deadly riots. Both the conflicts occurred in the Fergana Valley regions of Kyrgyzstan at a time when the country was going through a political crisis. Both had a similarity that previous ruling elites were being replaced with the new one. The spatial factors also played an important role in the growth and dynamism of nationalism. Support for the President's run along the place of origin of the leader. For example, Akaev was a northerner and Bakiyev a southerner supported chiefly by people from those regions. The violence that ensued the Uzbek group living in the south of Kyrgyzstan in 2010 is indicative of a staunch policy of subjugation that Uzbeks continue to live with in the south of Kyrgyzstan. Despite their economic standing, the Uzbeks have been disadvantaged in the political and social domains of life. In the first ethnic conflict, there were claims by Uzbeks that the local government is distributing plots of land inexplicably to the Kyrgyz ethnic group. A poor country with scarce resources and economic disparity between the regions and the ethnic groups, i.e. the north-south and Kyrgyz-Uzbek, any drastic change either in political or economic life impacts the volatile situation. Such inequalities have led to fierce clashes between ethnic groups. It has also been observed that the leaders preferred their allies in place of merit of the people.

The 2005 parliament favoured Akaev's allies and interests of northern Kyrgyz, parliament disbanded in 2010 was a monopoly of Bakiyev faction and southern Kyrgyz interests. It has also been observed that the consequence of the violence and the post-violence rebuilding by "manasification" is a move to weaken Uzbek influence even if symbolically and it is being done to send the message that the south is a Kyrgyz land. There have been a tectonic shift in country's demography and a large number of minority ethnic groups left the country posing the danger of Kyrgyzstan becoming a monolithic state. Sublimation and accommodation have marked Kyrgyzstan's strategy towards inter-ethnic relations under all political regimes. Uzbeks lend their allegiance not to nationalist leaders of Uzbek community, but to players apparently capable of upholding inter-ethnic stability. For example, Akaev was always supported by Uzbeks as ethnic coherence was one of the cornerstones of his era. Some dissatisfied Uzbeks have been drawn to Islamic

Movement of Uzbekistan or Islamic Movement of Central Asia. The Islamic group 'Hizb ut-Tahrir' has also attracted adherents in recent years, which is a sign of danger in a country like Kyrgyzstan where religion has not gained much popularity as ethnicity.

Kyrgyzstan is the only Central Asian country to have seen President-toppling revolts twice inspired by the wave of colour revolutions in other CIS countries. As 'colour revolution' was a term used to classify non-violent protests, which intended to introduce 'democracy from below.' It is necessary to observe that the Republic of Kyrgyzstan under the direction of President Akaev had the status of being the most democratic country in the region. However, gradually under his presidency, especially after 1998, a special variant of democracy was created which had an authoritative secular mode. The people close to the President were given strong roles in the administrative and economic structure. The country was facing various economic, political and social problems and the President had no intention of resolving them, which flared up the situation. President Akaev had controlled one-third of the economy, including all financial flows and businesses in the country. There was competition between regional clans for upholding their influence in north and south. Akaev, towards the end of his presidency, started patronising the northerners thus upsetting the hitherto and unspoken power-sharing arrangement between northern and southern clans. It left people disgruntled and unhappy in the southern part of the country. Akaev had only few elites supporting him; even his closest confidants left him on various accounts and joined opposition. The nepotism was on such a high and it looked like the country would soon have a dynastic rule.

The March upheaval was prompted by charges of vote rigging in the 2005 February parliamentary elections. The protests began in Jalalabad, a city in the south and soon spread to the north of Kyrgyzstan. However, the country did not show any sign of ethnic discord rather it was north vs south as there were allegations that Akaev favoured northerners over southerners. Akaev's rule was supported by the Uzbeks until its end, there was discontentment among Uzbeks for the lack of representation in the government bodies and their voices and demands remained unheard. The role, which Uzbek community played in the revolution, is highly unclear. But the post revolution phase was certainly not good for the Uzbek community. Uzbek leaders

were removed from prominent positions creating doubts and suspicion in the minds of their ethnic people. However, at that time ethnic problem was not the main problem rather factions between political elites gave rise to the turmoil in the country.

The Bakiyev regime proved to be the incubator of the previous regime mistakes. This regime change was just the “transfer of power” as it did nothing to bring stability and security. Corruption became rampant, nepotism was on the rise, media was not free and high inflation rates led to discontent and instability. The President also recognised a suspiciously elected parliament in 2009, which was invalidated by the Supreme Court. But nothing could stop Bakiyev as he kept using his own interests at domestic and international level and political infighting continued between the people. Bakiyev got many opponents arrested for raising their voices and for participating in the protests. The situation went out of control as the crowd was left to itself, and there was no one to channelize them, it became irrepressible. The protest that started in the north-western towns of Talas and Naryn on 6-7 April 2010 had reached Bishkek. Bakiyev was forced to flee the country on 7 April 2010. There was no element of ethnic-conflict in this revolution as well. It was only during the second and third phase of the conflict, which transpired after ‘April 2010’ in May and June that the conflict took the ethnic colour. The popular revolution of ‘April 2010’ entered into a second stage on 13 May 2010. The Kyrgyz ethnic groups, who were disgruntled with overthrow of Bakiyev, seized the government building in Jalalabad and removed the Governor. The Governor was re-instated by the Uzbeks who were pro-interim government, the Kyrgyz group was attacked to take control of the offices. The southern Kyrgyz supported the ousted Bakiyev regime whereas the Uzbeks supported northern supported Interim Government. The conflict entered its third and the final phase in June 2010 with bloody ethnic-riots. The whole movement for democratisation, which started in April 2010, had taken the form of ethnic conflicts between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks posing a challenge to country’s stability and unity. It was an uprising in the country’s southwest cities of Osh and Jalalabad along Uzbekistan border. It is the region where majority of the Uzbek population resides where the political struggle became ethnic confrontation between two ethnic groups. It reminded and looked similar in many ways of Osh conflict of June 1989, which took place 21 years ago.

The regime changes in Kyrgyzstan because of revolutions were accompanied by suppositions about the role of external factors behind them. It has been observed that American interest remained in removing Akaev, who was considered a pro-Russian leader. The West utilised a form of soft power to exert its authority in the region to weaken established governments. The main concern of super-powers was to maintain their hegemony in the region. After March Revolution of 2005, the government used western money to overcome the challenges of organized crime and the discontented youth that decanted into the streets. The second revolution was apparently supported by Russia, as there were frequent differences over Bakiyev's unfulfilled commitment to Russia; the closeness of Bakiyev to Washington and leasing out Manas air base to the US were not seen as positive signs for bilateral relations between Kyrgyzstan and Russia. Russia was the only country to openly support the Interim Government, which proves many of the claims about Russia's involvements in the revolution.

Kyrgyzstan faced twofold challenge of political transformation towards democratisation and economic transformation towards liberalisation of the state economy. The tribes and the former heads of the Communist Party played an important role in the political process after independence. The country opted for transformation into multi-party democracy. There was tussle amid northern and southern tribes for economic, political and administrative positions, thus, weakening the institutional reforms introduced by the government. There are various indicators like basic administration, fair elections, right to assembly, free media etc., which have been taken into consideration to evaluate Kyrgyzstan's effort towards democratisation. The country's state identity is largely consolidated even after two revolutions. The Kyrgyz state has the monopoly of using force. All the citizens irrespective of their ethnicity have the same civil rights. Kyrgyzstan is a secular republic and state is able to control administration with varied success. Women constitute more than half of Kyrgyzstan's population. In 2005, the Kyrgyz republic was the only country in the world where there was not even a single woman representative in the Parliament. After much pursuance and national campaigns, women were granted 30 percent gender quota in the Election Code. Kyrgyzstan's Constitution, adopted in 2010, also grants equal rights to all citizens irrespective of ethnicity, religion, or gender. Women and ethnic minorities are underrepresented at various levels of the government. By the law of the land, women should constitute 30

percent whereas they constitute only 19.2 percent share of seats in the Parliament. In the mono-ethnic areas, 60 percent of the marriages are done by bride kidnapping out of which 2/3 are without girl's consent. However, bride kidnapping has been criminalised but it is still practised in many places. There is a diverse civil society, independent media and opposition political parties that its neighbouring states still largely dearth. Kyrgyzstan displays a more liberal political climate in the northern part of the country in comparison to the southern part. The civil society functions relatively free of political pressure in the capital, Bishkek that is located in north. The government officials and civil society have cooperated for various purposes in the past and share primarily a positive relationship. The right to freedom of assembly has vanquished the government in past. The two revolutions in the country are an outcome of a rally of crowd taking a shape of an unruly mob.

The new Constitution of 2010, defined separation of powers between executive and legislative branch and it is being practised despite earlier doubts. After the introduction of the Parliamentary form of government in 2010, the President's powers remain checked. The new Constitution reduced the powers of the President tremendously. It replaced the previous five-year terms, which was allowed twice to a single term. The President can disband Parliament and call an early election if the assembly fails to elect a new premier in three consecutive votes. The legislative body usually consists of influential political and business elite thus helping to counterbalance President's dominance. In the early phase, the President's powers were expanded at the expense of the Parliament (in 1996 referendum). The Presidential powers were further expanded in 2003 giving Akaev sweeping powers over the Parliament, which made it almost impossible to impeach him. This expansion of powers drew heavy international criticism. Akaev's informal power base shrieked and eroded as his major supporters, business elites and younger politicians, were unhappy with him because he increasingly favoured the clans of his region i.e., north over the south. The next in line, President Bakiyev vowed that powers would be reinstated to the legislative branch. Bakiyev, a southerner who came from the south, won election with a landslide victory in 2005. Felis Kulov, a northerner, was selected to be the Prime Minister of the country that symbolically maintained truce between north and south.

The law of the land provides for an independent and fair judiciary. The judicial system of the country is resonant. Article 41 of the Constitution “guaranteed citizens the right to apply in accordance with international treaties to international human rights bodies seeking protection of violated rights and freedoms.” The grass root democracy is the emblem of a robust democracy. The republic of Kyrgyzstan consists of seven provinces and 40 administrative districts. The presence of a strong civil society organization ensures effective participation at the grassroots level.

The post-Soviet democratization transition has been evaluated over different eras: the period of Askar Akaev (1991–2005), Kurmanbek Bakiyev (2005–2010), post-Putsch 2010-Interim Government and Atmabayev Regime (2010-2017). The legality of the first two Presidents as perceived by the people of the country is challenged as they were toppled by the popular revolutions, which make Kyrgyzstan’s case a unique one in Central Asia. These regimes were labelled as “Consolidated Authoritarian Regimes.” The rule of Askar Akaev and Kurmanbek Bakiyev has been analysed in chapter-IV. The election and referendums fulfill the requirements of representative democracy. It is the foundation of any democratic transition. The Akaev and Bakiyev period show that both leaders were interested in creating a myth of democratic legitimacy by exploiting the various tools of democratization. There were regular parliamentary elections, the presidential elections and constitutional referendums seeking approval of the people on constitutional amendment.

In 15 years of Akaev’s presidency, there were five constitutional referendums. After gaining independence, the newly adopted Constitution of 1993 did not instate absolute powers in the presidency. It was only with a series of referendums the powers of legislature were curtailed for increasing presidential powers. The 1996 and 1998 referendums were also used as eyewash to seek support of the people on various subjects. After 1996 referendum, “Akaev got the power to personally formulate domestic and foreign policy, coordinate the functioning of the branches of the government, and directly appoint and dismiss cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and judges without consulting the Kyrgyz Parliament”. In 1998, people were asked to vote on subjects like “allowing private land ownership, restructuring of seats in Kyrgyzstan’s bicameral parliament, change in the government’s fiscal decision-making abilities, greater freedom for the media, and limiting the immunity of deputies

in the Parliament.” Furthermore, the powers of the Parliament were considerably curtailed, thus, curtailing legislature’s ability to check the executive. In 2002, Akaev invited civil society representative, opposition leaders, head of Supreme Court and Constitutional Court in order to prepare draft amendments by the Constitutional Council. Alarmed by Aksy events of 2002, Akaev sought to consolidate his stay in power till 2005. He took some preliminary steps and removed some of the corrupt high-ranking officials and promised that he will give up some powers of his seat and share them with the Parliament. In 2003, another referendum was held asking if he should continue as President till 2005 and a switch to one-chamber Parliament again. The referendum again extended enormous presidential powers just like all other referendums, preceding this one.

In Bakiyev’s era, between 2005 to 2007, there were a series of protests by the opposition and the civil society groups that demanded constitutional reforms to diminish Presidential powers. In September 2007, constitutional court of the country cancelled both 2006 (November) and 2007 (January) Constitutions calling them unconstitutional (in reality these two constitutions redistributed the power distribution between government bodies, the President and the Parliament). Bakiyev now called for a new referendum to be held on October 2007 calling the previous two Constitutions politically or legally not recognized. The new election code and various other changes were introduced including reservation for women and minorities. The Parliament is a unicameral legislature since 2007. Thus, both the leaders used referendums as a means of concentrating and enthralling political power. Both became more and more authoritarian with time, engrossed in consolidating and safeguarding their term as the President. The nation’s economic and political developments were secondary to them. The Kyrgyz republic gave the reminiscent of “Super Presidentialism” of other Central Asian countries.

The seventh constitutional referendum was held immediately after June-2010 ethnic riots. The Interim Government approached the task of radical constitutional modification. The new Constitution did not give too much power in any single office as Kyrgyz politics is driven by clientilism and nepotism. The President’s term was fixed to a single term of six years. The new Constitution introduced Parliamentary Democracy, thus, depriving the Presidential office of its unchecked powers and has

created an environment where concentrated powers in one person would not be possible that would also check elite culture. Another important determinant of democracy is the free and fair election. In Kyrgyzstan, there have been regular elections unlike the other Central Asian countries but looking at the record from the past, it can be concluded that elections were rigged and won through unfair means. Akaev ruled from 1991-2005, it is likely to clinch that outcomes of the presidential elections were often disbelieved for their accuracy and consistency. The Constitutional Court permitted Akaev to run for presidential elections for the 3rd time in 2000. It was possibly the most conspicuous instance of judicial dependence as it violated "Article-43" of the Constitution "that limits the presidential rule to two terms". When elected first in 1990, Akaev was credited with the status of being a liberal crusader. With passing time, his love for the country changed into self-preservation and the hunger for power. He adopted autocratic strategies to stay in power. The government changed ten times and 12 Prime Ministers came between 1991 and 2005.

After the Tulip Revolution, Bakiyev came like a protagonist and was chosen as the new President in July 2005. He was quick to make use of the opportunity when the constitutional court announced that the President's term for five years would be applicable only in the next presidential elections. A tense political setting and frequent confrontations between the government and the opposition parties characterized Bakiyev's first four years in power as the President. One major development prior to the 2009 elections was the judgement of the Constitutional Court that was issued on 19 March 2009. According to this decision, President Bakiyev had been elected under the previous Constitution so he had the right to be the presidential candidate again. However, it was only after the revolution of 2010, the country saw the first peaceful and voluntary transfer of power to Almazbek Atambayev in the October 2011 presidential elections. There were three parliamentary elections in Akaev's regime: 1995, 2000 and 2005. The parliamentary elections of 2005 are very important in understanding the series of development that ultimately led to the removal of Akaev from presidency. Akaev did not want to lose the influence he held in politics, thus he promoted his clans in power structure of the government. The candidature was full of Akaev's relatives including his son and daughter and other wealthy businesspersons. The OSCE and ENEMO criticised the election for being unfair. There were protests

centred on the parliamentary elections being undemocratic, all these developments led to “Tulip Revolution”. The 2007 parliamentary elections were also conducted early after the 2007 referendum with the aim of eradicating clan and tribe influence in the election. In 2010, with the adoption of the new Constitution, the country became a parliamentary democracy from a presidential system. Now, the parliament chooses the Prime Minister and plays a key role in the functioning of the government. Seats were also allocated proportionally in the 2010 parliamentary elections. The parliamentary elections of 2010 featured 29 political parties, which reflected pluralistic politics. There was a fight for 120 seats in the Kyrgyz national Parliament. There were few instances reported where people were told not to vote for parties led by people from other parts of the country i.e., north or south. However, it did not disturb the overall conduct of the election. The country’s last parliamentary elections were held on 4 October 2015. The political parties were required to meet the following criterion: at least 30 percent people in the party lists should be from each gender and every 4th candidate from a different gender. There was also a requirement of 15 percent ethnic minorities to be represented in the party list. Biometric voter registration was also introduced to avoid allegations of vote rigging like in the previous elections. Sooronbay Jeenbekov became the Prime Minister who was later chosen as the President in October 2017 presidential elections. The OSCE reports stated the elections to be “lively and competitive” and “unique in this region.”

Thus, it has been observed that the elections, parliamentary or presidential, and constitutional referendums for the first two decades remained a vital instrument in the hands of the autocratic presidents of the country for meeting their personal ends. It was only after 2010 constitutional amendments, the country saw some positive developments and presidential and parliamentary elections have been conducted with much peace and fairness. The indicators of democratisation as seen in Chapter-IV gives a clear picture that in comparison to Akaev’s and Bakiyev’s era, civil society operates without political pressure now. However, mutual suspicion exists between officials and NGOs but they find zones of cooperation. The Rule of Law is still not established and there is widespread corruption in judiciary. Judges continue to serve the interests of the elites and there is 99 percent conviction rate in criminal trials. Democratic reforms enacted since April 2010 have created an enabling environment where human rights can be better protected. On the other hand, since June 2010, due

to ethnic rift between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in southern part, the human rights situation has deteriorated to an extreme low. Corruption is widespread among law implementation organizations. Mass media is generally free from the control of the government. Internet and mobile devices are available to the people easily. The publication of NSC document is another important landmark in the growth of a parliamentary democracy in Kyrgyzstan, which is a positive sign for democracy building efforts.

Since its independence, Kyrgyzstan has been in a state of inevitable dilemma of nation building. The country had been trying to follow what it termed as a multi-vector foreign policy, but actually it had to pursue a conventional approach to go along with Russian choice of policy direction. It had been proved plentiful number of times that a fragile state like Kyrgyzstan, the so called multi-vector foreign policy, that essentially brought about manipulation of ties with Russia, the USA, China, and other key countries in the region became indefensible. A lack of economic resources has urged the elites to be western-friendly for a greater monetarist aid. It would be a mistaken assumption that by pumping money into the republic, the western countries or international influence can change the fate of Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan did receive aid from external actors in form of developmental funds, funding of NGOs and by renting air bases to super-powers like the USA and Russia, but those funds ended in the bank accounts of the President's families and loyalists. Thus, the funding did more harm than good to the development of democratic model.

A democratic and permissive attitude by both the Presidents did not derive from a genuine desire for democracy but was dictated by compulsion. Despite initial efforts undertaken by Akaev, the Bakiyev government failed miserably in this regard. Rather, leaders were often labelled as being northerners, southerners, pro-Kyrgyz or pro-Uzbeks than being 'pro-people'. The state actions have prevented the ethnic groups from combining their grievances into a possibly far more radical mobilising idea. The separatist or autonomist bids have also been eliminated. However, the state institutions have failed to maintain inter-ethnic stability and turned deaf to the needs and requirements of the minorities. The previous governments maintained their stance that moderation with this tantalizing issue could harm to overall working of the country. However, as mentioned earlier, political struggle in the country was given an

ethnic colour much later by the political entrepreneurs. It was always a weak state and instability in the country, which resulted in the ethnic riots in either 1990 or 2010. The political entrepreneurs could be from north, south, Kyrgyz ethnic group, Uzbek minority or political elites, but all are having the same agenda of diverting the real political issue to ethnic issue. Kyrgyzstan can now be called a “mixed presidential-parliamentary system.” The previous titles given to the country like “Super-Presidentialism” “Patronal Presidential” will only be used for Akaev and Bakiyev regimes. However, the social, political and economic complexities, which Kyrgyzstan inherited with its independence, remains challenging tasks. There are major goals which the country needs to achieve to complete is transition to democracy such as inter-ethnic equality, protection of human rights, economic growth, rule of law, and eradication of corruption.

Thus, my study is able to prove my entire hypothesis:

- Proper representation of minorities is not reflected in the state structure hampering a smooth political transformation.
- Weak institutional reforms have further contributed towards the ethno-regional divide.
- Poor development initiatives in the south have led to a wider gap between the north and the south.

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