

Geopolitics of Eastern Siberia, 1986-2010

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation titled “**Geopolitics of Eastern Siberia, 1986-2010**” submitted by me in partial fulfilment for the award of the Degree of **Master of Philosophy** is my original work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

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

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List of abbreviations:

APR	Asia-Pacific Region
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CPSU	Communist Party of Soviet Union
ESPO Pipeline	Eastern Siberia–Pacific Ocean oil pipeline
EU	European Union
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Map of Eastern Siberia:



Source:<http://geohistory.today/eastern-siberia/>

Chapter 1

1: Introduction and Research Design

1.1: Background of the study

The study deals with the geopolitical importance of Eastern Siberia. The region has been historically unexplored and has a huge hydrocarbon reserve. It is of immense importance for Russia because of its strategic location, having China in South; Japan and South Korea in the east. Russia wants to develop this region as a potential market for its socio-political and economic interests and bring the neighboring countries closer in order to build a cordial and harmonious relationship. The region could be ‘a window for Asia’ for the Russians to enter into the Asian-Pacific markets and counter the west. In the changing international world order when the US hegemony is one of the challenging issues and on the other hand the soaring powers like China and Japan posing a challenge to Russia, it becomes very important for Russia to explore and expand economically lucrative projects in order to strengthen its economic front and develop its eastern Siberian region (Itoh, 2011; Lo, 2008).

The mountainous and vast region that lies between Western Siberia and east to Russia is commonly known as the Eastern Siberia (the ‘window for Asia’ concerning Russia). The Eastern Siberian region was taken by Russia and later on it extended till Western Siberian region. The Eastern Siberian region comprises of the new Russian territories of Yakutia, the Republic of Buryatia, the Republic of Khakassia, and Trans-Baikal territory, Irkutsk Region, Krasnoyarsk Territory and Tuva. Nomadic groups such as the Mongols, Tatars, Huns, Evenki’s and Manchu inhabited the region’s south as early as 300,000 years ago (Forsyth, 1992).

Russian expansion into Siberia during the 17th century was part of a search for furs that was loosely organised by the state and implemented by merchants and military leaders with Cossacks under their authority (Forsyth, 1992). Furs had played an essential role in controlling of the aboriginals who reside east of the Ural Mountains. They have given prime importance to the Yasak (fur tribute) to control the extended regions of the East, and the native populations were expected to engage in the production of a particular

amount of furs for the state treasury (Bobrick, 1992). As the Russians moved along the rivers of Siberia, they built fortresses at strategic and convenient locations (Forsyth, 1992). The goal of eastward expansion was to bring new tribes under the authority of the Tsar and impose tribute on Siberian populations (Forsyth, 1992). In the nearly four centuries since the Russian colonisation of Siberia, there have been considerable changes in the Siberian economy and culture (Forsyth, 1992, Baikalov, 193:557-71; Foust, 1961: 469-82; Kerner, 1948: 135-48; Foster, 1963).

With the Tsar ruling, Russia turned into one of the biggest Empires of History and the world's biggest country. The national identity under this rule lied in the territorial expansion defined and interpreted regarding its physical geography. However, in the real sense, it was the Soviet rule that gave Russia its current economic, geographical orientation (Hill and Gaddy, 2003). Under the Tsars the large-scale settlement and urbanisation of Siberia were not possible. Tsars and Soviet rulers had their style of functioning. On the one hand, we see the Tsars had focused themselves in erecting villages, forts and towns in Siberia, while on the other the Soviet rulers with the help of labour camps built factories, big power stations, mines, railways as well as cities in Eastern Siberia. The forceful penetration of Soviet Union into western Siberia was for its natural resources or raw material. In other words, it can be said as the Soviet Union (as a core region of production) utilised western Siberia as periphery region. The political attitudes during the Soviet era were highly centralised which directly affected the cultural diversity of Eastern Siberia (Hill and Gaddy, 2003).

The changed and modified policy towards Eastern Siberia came out after Mikhail Gorbachev became the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in March 1985. In his Vladivostok speech in 1986, Gorbachev asserted that "A greater part of our county's territory lies east of the Urals, in Asia in Siberia and the Far East. The Soviet Union is also an Asian and Pacific Country. It is very much aware of the complex problems facing this vast region. They concern, it directly" (Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech, 1986).

Gorbachev began by emphasising the economic development of Siberia and the Soviet Far East (Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech, 1986). General Secretary Gorbachev laid out a series of proposals concerning the development of Soviet Siberia and Asian security. China was the primary target of Gorbachev's proposals (Shabad, 1989).

With the beginning of the twenty-first century, Russian diplomacy is focusing eastward. The reason of concern for the development of the Eastern Siberian region is to exploit the hydrocarbon potential of the region to fulfil the abysmally rising demand for energy in East Asia including China, Japan and South Korea. However, it is essential to understand that Russia's growing geopolitical desires to exploit the Sino-Japanese rivalry for its advantage is merely turning into wishful thinking, nothing else (Itoh, 2013).

1.2: Review of the Literature

- **Theoretical Framework**
- **Russia's Eastern Siberia a Historical Account**
- **Russia's Eastern Siberia and its Significance**

Theoretical Framework:

This thesis is based on using 'Geopolitics' as a conceptual framework to comprehend Russian domestic and foreign policy towards the Eastern Siberian region. Geopolitics in simple terms deals with the geographical factors that shape the actions of 'States' as they are the primary actors in the international arena (Mackinder, 1904; Mahan, 1918; Kaplan, 2013). This study analyses the Russian policies and initiatives towards the Asia-Pacific (APR) region, as for them the region has been quite unstable and security concerns and apprehensions always prevail which has made the Russian Federation concerned about the security vulnerabilities and had continuously changed its position on the issues of conflict and competition over the energy routes specifically in the Asia-Pacific Region (Itoh, 2011:1).

Kaplan states that "the geography serves to qualify human choice with universal acceptance of fate. Geography must be conceived as the first order of reality, whereas

ideas as second order. Man will initiate, but nature will control. Denying the facts of geography only invite disasters which will make states victims of geography”. The humans play an important role in an international setting by accepting the challenges and exploring opportunities put before by the geography of the region (Kaplan, 2009:20-25).

Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellen coined the term ‘geopolitics’. According to Kjellen ‘Geopolitics’ is “the science which deals with the influence of geographic factors on the creation and existence of the states” (Haggman, 1998:108). With the development of other methods of analysis such as “Demopolitik, Economopolitik, Sociopolitik, and Cratopolitik” goes to Kjellen which defines the cultural aspect of the state. “Geopolitics forms the objective foundation of the state in which subjective creativity of the executive can act” (Tunander, 2008). Kjellen has conceived that the state borders are transient and continuously change with the due passage of time. “The state is a living organism which can expand its influence by geopolitical concerns” (Costachie, 2011).

A founding figure and towering intellectual of the discipline of geography in Germany, Friedrich Ratzel used the term of “Lebensraum” to define the area where the state holds supreme command. He argues that “when a state’s Lebensraum becomes insufficient, the state needs to expand its territories” (Jones et al., 2004).

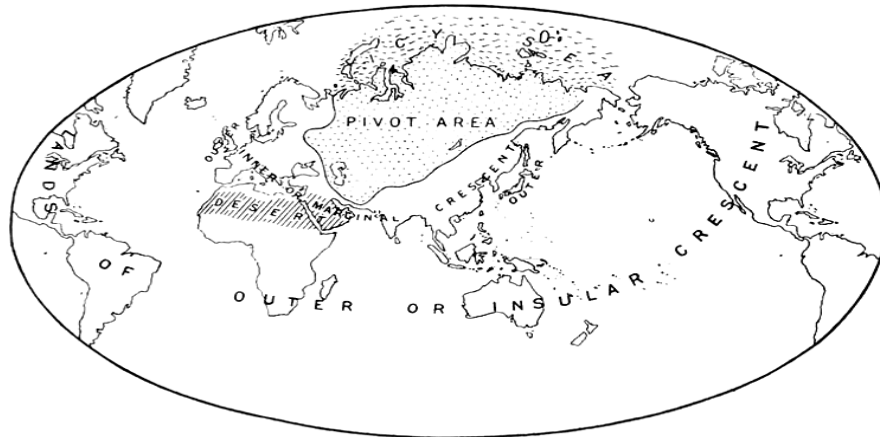
The foundations of ‘geopolitics’ can be traced in the works of Kjellen and Ratzel. The theories propounded by Mackinder ‘Heartland theory’ and by Mahan ‘Sea-power theory’ constitute the major debates in geopolitics. According to Mackinder, “the heartland world is composed of Europe, Asia and Africa. ‘The Heartland’ area covers the Volga and Ural basin, the Lena, the Yenisei and Obi rivers towards northern Asia. The area also coincides with Baltic and the Black Sea, Asia Minor, Tibet and Mongolia”. (Mackinder, 1942: 150) He puts forth that “throughout the history, Europe had to deal with invasion attempts of the civilisations from the Heartland and that indicates the significance of the Heartland” (Mackinder, 1904:150). According to Mackinder:

“Who rules East Europe command the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island. Who rules the World Island command the world”.

(Mackinder, 1942:106)

Whereas, sea, not land, is a defining factor in geopolitics and Alfred Mahan states that the sea is of utmost importance and by controlling them the nation states could play a major role in the international politics. According to him for a nation to become a superpower, it is vital to have a stronghold over the sea.

Map: 1



Source: Mackinder, Halford J .(1904), “The Geographical Pivot of History”, *Geographical Journal*, 23:421-437.

For him “The historical rise of Rome and Britain are examples of this premise. The geographical location gives some littoral states advantage in defending their costs and controlling the seas. For instance, England is placed more advantageous compared to France and Holland because its aim is directed upon the sea, whereas the boundaries of Holland and France are continental”. Mahan argues highlighting its importance for a nation and states that “not only building a strong navy but also controlling naval checkpoints throughout the world for harbouring and repairing the ships” comprise the central necessity to emerge as a superpower (Mahan, 1918). A strong navy and maritime route comprising of various navel checkpoints are of immense importance for an aspiring superpower which benefits its seaborne commerce and provides the great benefit to the

naval power compared to the capacities of other nations who only have the land area (Dueck, 2013).

Mahan's theory heavily influenced US geopolitical strategy concerning control of the sea. It was only through its sharp and swift naval command that the US was able to extend its hegemony throughout the world. The most important strategy of US is control over the world's oceans. Due to the strong global naval power, the United States enjoys a dominant position over the avenues of energy security, world trade route and international trade (Mahan, 1918:23).

The theory propounded by Mahan and Mackinder are compared and evaluated by another scholar Nicolas Spykman. He adds "a new formula that setting control over the air will be important in controlling transportation and communication" (Spykman, 1970). There is a difference between Spykman's theory of 'Rimland' and Mackinder's theory regarding the inclusion of territories as the 'Heartland'. Spykman theorises "the 'Rimland' comprised of European and Asian coasts that encircle the Heartland. The control of the Heartland is related to the control of the Rimland". Spykman has given applicable suggestions regarding having a grip over 'the Heartland' and further illustrates the importance of the control over 'the Rimland' (Spykman, 1970). He further puts forth that the cultural and civilizational waves coming from 'the Rimland' highly influence the Heartland. He reworked Mackinder's formula as for Spykman coastal regions bordering the "Heartland" which he propounded as "Rimland" is major regions where contestation and politics take place. He reworked Mackinder's theory and put it as:

"Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia, who rules Eurasia control the destinies of the world."

(Spykman, 1970)

After the Cold war, '*geopolitical concepts and theory*' has been at bay in the mainstream international relations. Geopolitical concerns still guide State's foreign and domestic policies. For example, according to Michael Klare, "the goal of the war in Iraq is to redesign the geopolitical map of Eurasia to prevent the rise of potential competitors of the USA such as Russia, China". For him, "the new arena of competition is south-central

Eurasia includes the Caspian Sea basin, Persian Gulf area, the Asia-pacific region and the surrounding countries of Central Asia like Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia etc” (Foster, 2006). In International political debate its common claim that Russia uses oil and natural gas resources and their transports routes as a powerful tool for getting more political mileage in the former Soviet states and Asia-Pacific region. The Western media and intellectuals have often described Russia as an “energy imperialist, unreliable energy supplier and incapable of developing its energy assets” (Karaganov, 2007).

According to Huortori, “Russia’s great power politics is often explained in the light of the three geopolitical theories”. The first one has based on Sir Halford Mackinder’s idea of the World Island. Mackinder’s “Heartland” theory highlighted geostrategic factors and rich natural resources of the Eurasian landmass (Mackinder, 1904:430-437). The second one is based on Nicholas Spykman’s thinking. This theory emphasises on the “Rimlands” and sea areas that surround ‘the Heartland’. This description underlines the meaning of Central Asia as crucial for Russia’s security (Heininen, 1991:21-22). The third explanation stresses the meaning of the strategic sea areas and sea routes for Russia’s economic might and great power status. This interpretation is based on Alfred Thayer Mahan’s ‘Sea Power theory’. According to Russian Naval officer, Admiral Sergei Gorskov, “Russia is not only the biggest inland state but because of geography, also a dominant sea power, whose coastline is almost two times longer than the United States’ shore”. Admiral Gorchakov stressed the meaning of the navy as an economic and military powerhouse also during peace, because with the help of the navy, a state can demonstrate its strength outside of her borders (Heininen, 1991:23-24). Russia has been aiming in its so-called ‘eastern vector’ to increase its energy exports toward the Asia-Pacific region as its strategic goal for creation of an “Asia card” and on the other hand, to attract domestic and foreign investments to modernize economic backwardness of Eastern Siberia, which Moscow sees a Russian weakness (Itoh, 2011:1; Hill and Gaddy, 2003).

O’Tuathail (1996) discussed geopolitics as working to de-territorialise and de-politicise international relations. One way geopolitics accomplishes this is through presenting itself as a classical tradition of thought or statecraft when it has always had an unstable meaning and was contingent upon its historical and social milieu. He also emphasised

over the importance of geopolitical terminologies as he stated that “The debate over geopolitics does not mean the term is useless, but rather that geopolitics must be understood in textual context, or within the networks of discourses that they produce and are produced. Historical, geographical, and political specificity help to understand the various purposes of geopolitics within certain discourses” (O’Tuathail, 1996).

Russia’s Eastern Siberia a Historical Account

In the milieu of the above theme of Eastern Siberian development, the study analyses the current socio-economic and political discourse of the region with the help of existing literature and research work. James R. Gibson in his writings explains comprehensively about Tsar Era, from where we will try to get insight about the same. Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy through his writings reflected upon the Russian elites and their attitude towards Siberia. The inhumane attitude of Russian elites towards the development of Eastern Siberia can be understood from above narratives. Theodore Shabad in his writing argues that the development was mostly centralised to Western Siberia. Whereas Slezkine talks about the entire chronological events that took place in Eastern Siberia starting with Russian expansion till the last decade of the twentieth century (Slezkine, 1994). Another scholar Stuart Kirby argues that the development of Eastern Siberia was mostly affected due to the lack of responsiveness and bureaucratic attitude of Russian officials (Hill and Gaddy, 2003).

James R. Gibson (1972) argues that the Tsarist Siberia had socio-economic as well as political significance. It served as a safety valve, for disaffected people in European Russia. He also argues that the tsarist control over Siberia was very poor. The process of colonization and segregation of the Eastern Siberian people during the Tsarist era can be traced with the development of rail transportation whereas the earlier movement of people as political prisoners from Russia had no impact on the indigenous culture.(Gibson, 1972). As the railways became a medium for movement of people, large amount of people started settling down in Eastern Siberia from European Russia. The

society was divided into the group of European Russian, and Siberian in which European Russian culture completely dominated over Siberian natives (Gibson, 1972).

Yuri Slezkine (1994) discussed the central theme of Arctic Mirrors that the challenges posed over the centuries to Russian officials by the ‘unsettled’ and ‘uncivilized’ aboriginals of northern Eurasia. Slezkine uncovers several significant themes which have repeatedly reoccurred in the Russian conceptualisation of the northern “Other”. The role of ethnic stereotypes and images of the “Other” in shaping colonial policies, literary representations and everyday attitudes of the “large” and dominant peoples towards the “small” and dominated ones. Slezkine argues that the distinction became “clearer during the phase of four hundred years as the binary opposition creates amongst the Russian and Siberian people. The real change came in the early nineteenth century when the Romantic writers (including radical aristocrats exiled to Siberia for plotting against the Tsar) began portraying Siberian natives not as ‘disgusting savages’ but as noble lovers of freedom unconstrained by oppressive Russian laws” (Slezkine,1994).

Scholars Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy (2003) have given their perspective on Eastern Siberia’s past, present, and future. They have put forth that “for centuries, the vast expanse east of the Urals has been a place of mythic promise as its frigid terrain and unending horizons are essential to Russia’s sense of itself”. They further argue that if “Russia has to become prosperous and affluent, they must have to abandon their eastern territories as single settlements do not seem to be economically viable in that area. The Russian dependence on Eastern Siberia’s natural resource wealth adheres to the point that eastern Siberia and its current population are of economic importance and should be supported. Though, if we see from the economic perspective, this makes very little sense. Russia’s economic development path has been seen as something that is harmful in the long run” (Hill and Gaddy, 2003).

Theodore Shabad (1982) in his article points out that earlier Siberian development was focused on the western regions, for the reasons with respect to economy-both the domestic and foreign. Similarly, on the foreign trade front, most of the Soviet Union’s

trade was with its allies in Eastern Europe. Resource development in the western part of Siberia can, therefore, be viewed as an extension of the development of the economy in the European USSR. However, Shabad points out that these isolated mineral projects did not represent a comprehensive regional development program (Shabad, 1982).

Then in the middle 1970s, a program developed in the Eastern Siberian region and the East part concentrated on building the Baikal-Amur Mainline, the BAM. There have been various reasons that led the Soviet Union to undertake such a project far from the centres of economic power in the western part. There was a military-strategic reason that the BAM will represent an alternate east-west railroad at a safer distance from the Chinese border along the Amur than the old Trans-Siberian Railroad (Shabad, 1982). The economic reasons for the BAM are that the railroad will help open up important new mineral deposits that were not accessible in the past. These future mineral developments may, in some cases of rare strategic metals, be of importance for the Soviet Union's domestic economy and export-oriented projects aimed at strengthening the Soviet Union's foreign trade position in East Asia, especially relative to Japan (Shabad, 1982).

Stuart Kirby (1985) argues in his article that Eastern Siberia is a large, significant, distinctive feature which characterised the Soviet Union as a heterogeneous federation. Further, Kirby explains in a critical sense while understanding the approach of Russia towards Eastern Siberia, by saying "Lack of responsiveness towards Eastern Siberia, make it impossible for the remote and distinctly non-humanistic bureaucracy and the dictatorship of Moscow to respond" (Kirby, 1985).

In her book, Hartley (2014) gives us a panoramic picture of life in Tsarist and then colonial Soviet Siberian region. She argues that significant changes were noticed in Eastern Siberia with the introduction of Trans-Siberian railway. Hartley has shown the genuine enthusiasm and zeal felt by the populace in his work "The New Soviet Citizen". The movement of the Komsomol volunteers to Eastern Siberia, the early promise of Akademgorodok, and other positive aspects of life in Eastern Siberia are the examples of enthusiasm that the people are filled with. She has also described the impact of

industrialisation, and population growth on the newly established settlers as well as the native peoples. Her study further extends to analyse in detail and addresses the social, political and environmental problems of the region (Hartley, 2014).

Russia's Eastern Siberia and its Significance

Nature has bestowed on Russia a bounty of natural resources. It has largest reserves of hydrocarbons in the world. It was in the 1950's when the Soviet government massively invested in the western Siberian oil and gas fields in order to increase its oil production and to spur the growth of its economy. This search for new oil fields must begin in the areas of Eastern Siberia, regions of the Arctic and the Far East. These new initiatives increasing the role of Asian investment in Russia's energy sector. These changing conditions of contemporary world order make Russia think towards East Asia as a future trade zone (Itoh, 2011).

Stuart Kirby (1985) argues in his article that China and Japan are the dominant players in East Asia. On the one hand, he argues that USSR has shown its keen interest to improve the transport system, primarily the railways; and this requirement primarily emerged for the further exploitation of Eastern Siberia's hydrocarbon potentiality. And, on the other hand, he suggests that China and Japan are also interested in investing in Eastern Siberian region to exploit the same. Further, Kirby thought that Russia to be able to succeed in its objective to use Eastern Siberia as 'window for Asia' in time to come and thereby making it straightforward for Russia to convert its dream into the reality of becoming the superpower (Kirby, 1985).

Another scholar, Andrew C. Kuchins (2013) argues that Russia is trying to increase economic development in the Eastern Siberian region because of the dramatically growing demand for oil and gas in the Asia-Pacific market. To counter the ambitious "Asia Pivot" policy of USA; in September 2012 Russia started its programme named "Asia Pivot" in which it hosted 'APEC Summit' in Vladivostok. He also argues that "historically, Russia was a primarily European focused power, until the Cold War

confrontation with the United States. Generally, the Asian affairs of Russia create controversies among scholars about its nature, whether it is natural or planned by Russian elites. Vladimir Putin is keenly aware of the shifting global economic balance of power to Asia, and he understands that Russia's integration here is essential for its successful long-term development" (Kuchins, 2013).

The western influence over changing world order brings the new equation among Russia and China. Western critics warn of an authoritarian alliance that would create a new, non-democratic world order. Further Bobo Lo (2008) emphasised over joint Asian strategy as "axis of necessity" instead of "axis of convenience". He also argues that "they share a multi-polar ideology in the security aspect of the Asia Pacific region which is based on the ideas of non-interference, equality, respect for international law and opposing the policies of the cold war period". "Together they had the champion of multi-literalism as the legal foundation for this architecture and advocated for a system that would prioritise collective leadership" (Lo, 2008).

The challenge before Russians in this regard has been illustrated by Shoichi Itoh (2011). Itoh, put forth "a set of recommendations for the Russian government, the energy industry, and the key Asian states, including the United States, to enhance Russian production in as efficient manner as possible that benefits not only Northeast Asian energy markets but the global energy market as well". (Itoh, 2011:1).

The study focuses on how Eastern Siberia can play a crucial role in the Russian geopolitics. This energy exploration of Eastern Siberia can come handy not only in East Asian scenarios of energy scarcity, demand and supply but also for the whole world energy dimensions playing out vis-à-vis other powers in the energy and diplomatic arenas. "A window for Asia" thus can be an opportunity and this dimension shall be explored.

1.3: Definition, Rationale and the Scope of the Study:

Definition:

The present research incorporates terms such as ‘Geopolitics’ and ‘Eastern Siberia’. ‘Geopolitics’ is the study of geographic influences on changing power relationships in international relations. Eastern Siberia is an important part of Russia. The territory constitutes the mountainous region lying between Western Siberia and Eastern Russia.

Rationale:

This research contribution mainly lies within the conceptual and analytical field, providing an in-depth understanding of Geopolitics of Eastern Siberia. The study mainly focuses on policies dealing with Eastern Siberia and energy politics. After the disintegration of USSR, the main focus of its successor, the Russian Federation, has been towards the western countries. The export of Oil and Minerals has been towards the west. With the changing scenario of International politics especially after the Global financial breakdown and the Crimean crisis, now, Russia wants to diversify its energy market towards the Asia Pacific region. The main goal of this research is to unveil how geopolitics, rather in more precise terms, the geopolitics of Eastern Siberia, applies to the Russia-East Asia energy partnership.

Scope:

The study dwells around the period of Gorbachev in which he gave the Vladivostok speech in 1986, Gorbachev asserted that “A greater part of our country’s territory lies east of the Urals, in Asia, in Siberia and the Far East. The Soviet Union is also an Asian and Pacific Country. It is very much aware of the complex problems facing this vast region. They concern, it directly.” When Gorbachev finally delivered his Vladivostok speech on July 28, 1986, it was one of the USSR’s biggest internal and external policy events of the year. The study will analyse the concept of development and geopolitics in the Eastern Siberian region from 1986 to 2010 with a focus on Eastern Siberia as well as strengthening relations with China. The study will also analyse the socio-cultural history of Eastern Siberia. In the Post-1991 era, the work will gaze on the changing attitude of Moscow towards Eastern Siberia. Further, the study shall analyse the Russian foreign policy and the Russian energy policy towards the Eastern Siberia making this territory “a

window for Asia’’. Moreover, the work shall go specifically into the changing geopolitics of the Eastern Siberia and make it an important opportunity for Russia’s foreign policy in contemporary times and beyond.

1.4: Research Objectives

1. To critically analyse the geopolitics of the Eastern Siberia.
2. To examine the energy situation and opportunities in the Eastern Siberia.
3. To find out how Moscow is diversifying its energy trade opportunities shaping via the root of its strategic foreign policy.
4. To analyse that how Eastern Siberia is in the offing to become “the window for Asia” in the Russian foreign and energy policy dynamics.

1.5: Research questions

1. Why is Eastern Siberia important?
2. What are the cultural mosaics of Eastern Siberia?
3. Why is Russia giving importance to Eastern Siberia?
4. What are the factors which determine the geopolitics of Eastern Siberia?
5. How Eastern Siberia is shaping Russia’s foreign policy and carving it as ‘a window for Asia’?

1.6: Hypotheses

1. To bring closer cooperation with China, the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev used Eastern Siberia to promote the country’s foreign policy.
2. The geopolitical location of Eastern Siberia provides Russia with a ‘window for Asia-pacific region’.

1.7: Research methodology

The present study is based on qualitative, historical, analytical and descriptive methods of research. Historically, it will examine the emergence of the geopolitical importance of Eastern Siberia. Analytically, it will try to explore various dimensions of the geopolitics

of Eastern Siberia in detail. The study also focuses on both primary as well as secondary data. Primary sources will include governmental report, laws, documents, etc. Secondary data will include books and articles published in an edited volume, research paper etc.

1.8: Chapters:

1. Introduction and Research Design

This chapter provides a historical background of Eastern Siberia as well as the research design of the study. Research design includes the conceptual framework, literature review, research questions, hypotheses and methodology adopted during the study.

2. Geopolitical importance of Eastern Siberia: Social and Political Dimensions

This chapter deals with the historical background of Eastern Siberia. The complex historical legacy of Tsarist and Soviet rule including the period from the mid-sixteenth century to end of Boris Yeltsin's administration in the post-communist era are discussed.

3. Russia's Internal policy towards Eastern Siberia: From 1986 to 2010

The chapter discusses Russian policy and the manner in which Eastern Siberia is going to get affected. Further, it tries to look into the description of 'how tsar era and Soviet-era had certain distinctive feature' concerning socio-economic and political ambiguity. It also evaluates the Eastern Siberian resource base, geopolitical significance, and development prospects while profiling the diverse socio-economic endowments, political preferences, federal structure, and external entanglement of the individual provinces.

4. Eastern Siberia in Russian Foreign Policy: From 1991 to 2010

In chapter deals with Russian foreign policy and the manner in which Eastern Siberia is affected as Russians already have shown their intention to announce Eastern Siberia as 'window for Asia'. Further, it peeps into the policy prospects of Russia and East Asian countries. It also describes the Eastern Siberia's natural

resources and the geopolitical importance and development prospects while profiling the diverse socioeconomic endowments and political preferences. Discussions are also made on Eastern Siberia's core identity as an integral space with common political, economic and demographics. The re-orientation of the Eastern Siberian economy from European Russia to the East Asian market is also discussed.

5. Conclusion

The chapter with the help of appropriate research methodology, tests the hypothesis in order to reach the concluding remarks based on our analysis.

Chapter 2

2: Geopolitical importance of Eastern Siberia: Social, Political and Economic Dimensions

This chapter will examine the detailed description regarding the tumultuous legacy of the tsarist period and the soviet era, beginning from the colonisation of Eastern Siberia to the end of the Gorbachev administration. I will establish the Eastern Siberia's fundamental identity as being integral space which shares common social, political, economic and demographic traits. This chapter will also analyse the Eastern Siberia's resource structure, geopolitical importance of Eastern Siberia, and have looked into the development of various socio-economic considerations, political choices and its external relations with other provinces. In this chapter, we will stress upon decisive phases occurred in Eastern Siberia impacting the region during colonization of Eastern Siberia, the borderland treaties signed with Qing dynasty, the 'Bolshevik revolution', civil war, Stalin's era, the Sino-Soviet conflict of late 1960's and the disintegration of the USSR (Hill and Gaddy, 2003).

2.1: The Early history of Eastern Siberia

Archaeological evidence traced their existence back to 5th millennium B.C. Horsemen Huns, Turkic tribes, and Mongols had invaded the region after the 3rd century AD though, until the fall of the 16th century, the Eastern Siberia was the place inhabited by the natives and indigenous groups. Trade was apparent among them, and sometimes frequent, occasional fights among these groups were also seen, but for the most part, they lived independently and rescued themselves from any possible confrontation. Few parts of Eastern Siberia also came under the rule of khanates (Czaplicka, 1921:187-188).

2.2: Eastern Siberia: Geography, Climate, Population and the Native People

The territory of Eastern Siberia is one of the least dense human settlements found in the world. The region bears a continental type of climate. This implies that winters are chilling as well as freezing and summers are warm. The region posses various mineral resources like gold, diamonds, aluminium, tungsten, nickel, molybdenum, tin monoxide, antimony, lead, zinc, mica, fluorspar, graphite and salt extensively. Lake Baikal, the

deepest lake in the world also has a massive reserve of fresh water. The local populations are engaged in hunting and fishing, nomadic lifestyle and reindeer herding (Jaehoon, 2013).

2.2.1: Population

Eastern Siberia stretches up to an area of 7.2 million km, which is more than 40% of Russia and as on 01.01.2010 it inhabits the population of about 9.4 million people marking 6.6% of the Russian population. Eastern Siberia has low population density as the population is majorly concentrated towards the southern part of the region, along with the Trans-Siberian Railway. Eastern Siberia is located in Siberian and Far Eastern federal districts and includes six areas (Russian Census, 2010).

2.2.2: Indigenous people of Eastern Siberia

The native population of Eastern Siberia has Mongoloid features predominantly; they are Yakuts, Evenks, Nenets, Buryat, Tuvan. More numerous Neo-Siberian people are the Yakuts, Yakuts speak Turkish language but are racially much mixed. The largest and also the most advanced of the Neo-Siberian peoples are the Buryat tribe, who are harsh and cattle breeders. They intermarry with Russians and practice agriculture (Forsyth, 1992).

2.3: Colonization of Eastern Siberia

The inclination of things which account for the discovery of new places and colonisation is well known: religious zeal, love of adventure, a hunger for riches. Colonization is directly related to the occupation of a foreign land, which taken under cultivation, with the settlement of colonists. Colonialism is a form of domination. According to the Horvath:

“Colonialism is a form of domination – the control by individuals and groups over the territory and behaviour of other individuals and groups. Colonialism has also

been seen as a form of exploitation, with emphasis on economic variables, a sin in the Marxist-Leninist literature, and as a culture-change process, as in anthropology; these various points of departure need not conflict, however, and the choice of domination as a focus here will not exclude the culture-change dimension of the phenomenon. The idea of domination is closely related to the concept of power.”

(Horvath 1972:46)

The migration of Permanent settlers from the European Russia to the Eastern Siberia was visible with the involvement of the Asian part of the Soviet Union dominated by the European Russian. Russian domination over Eastern Siberia was ‘formal colonialism’. “Formal colonialism refers to that form of intergroup domination those results from the forceful migration of permanent settlers to places other than the metropolis” (Homans,1950:1).

The colonial extension had become an inseparable part of European State’s politics by the middle of the sixteenth century. When the hitherto unknown regions of the globe were being discovered, the continent of America was taken by Spain, Portugal, England, Holland and France by the arrival of the seventeenth century. These discoveries of several unknown regions then provided a strong foundation for subsequent conquest by the Europeans in the African and Indian parts. “Colonizing country became ‘bridgeheads’ for the vast stretch of foreign territories and economic exploitation which were carried out at the cost of the indigenous people” (Kriukelyte, 2012:5).

By the sixteenth century, Russia became the most dreaded state in Europe. “Using similar means of conquest and settlement, Russia participated in this European expansionism by annexing the largest continuous territory of any empire, the Northern Asia which did to be called Siberia” (Forsyth,1992:1). The importance of the northern part of the Russian Empire which extends the east of Urals goes unacknowledged in the evolution of the state and society of Russia. Eastern Siberia and its natural environment put forth strong deterrence for the new arriving colonists. The earliest stages of this process commenced

with the conquest which pushed the natives into the Eastern Siberian region as vindictive exclusion. This lot comprised of convicted criminals, political prisoners and prisoners. Some offences even attracted punishment as an exile to Eastern Siberia during the supremacy of Tsar Alexis I (1645-1676) (Forsyth 1992:1).

The earliest stages of this process commenced with the conquest which pushed the natives into the Eastern Siberian region. This group comprised of convicted criminals, political prisoners and prisoners. Some offences even attracted punishment as an exile to Siberia during the reign of Tsar Alexis I (1645-1676). Some of the prisoners, who were sent to Eastern Siberian exile, had to work hard on the land as bounded peasants and were forcibly engaged as an artisan in the towns, but the majority was pushed to the level of Cossacks (Wood 1957:49).

Map 2:



Source: “Geography of Power in Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1799-1930”; ed. J. Burbank, M.von Hagen, A. Remnev, (Indiana University Press, 2007)

It took three centuries for significant penetration into the vast stretch of Eastern Siberian land. Since the initial stages of the invasion the region gave shelter to unsolicited and unscrupulous individuals like criminals, political convicts and prisoners of society had

been debarred (Forsyth 1992:53). Colonization of Eastern Siberia was remarkably started after the construction of a perennial route from the Urals to Irkutsk. The project “The Great Moscow Trakt came into existence in 1763 which required permission to carry wheeled vehicles and sledges” (Forsyth, 1992:6-10). The land road project was a huge accomplishment, and it had far-reaching results in the coming period. The new land that was opened for the peasant settlers accelerated the growth of towns, such as Tyumen, Tomsk, Yeniseysk and Irkutsk. Migratory population numbering in thousands and lakhs from European Russia arrived to the Siberian Trakt and increased the population of Eastern Siberia manifold. With the construction of the Trans- Siberian railways after 1891, this marked an important event for migrants (Forsyth, 1992:6-10).

Discovery of the immense resources such as coal, natural gas and oil led the more and more exploration of the Eastern Siberian region which continued until the late 19th century and added significantly to the development of the Russian economy. In 1848, massive deposits of coal were found in the Sakhalin which was also part of this exploration. At that time Russia had requirement of coal station in the Pacific region was fulfilled by purchasing the islands (Buel, 1889:377).

Russian had sincerely put efforts to colonise Eastern Siberian region, but its consequences were not well visible as compared to colonies conquered by other imperialist powers. David N. Collins views that:

“It was not incorrect in using the term ‘colony’ concerning Eastern Siberia; this hardly meant that it was a colony in the sense that Spain’s Central American possessions were colonies. The contiguity of Russia and Eastern Siberia meant that the peoples had rubbed shoulders over a long period”.

(Collins, 1982:17-44)

It can be observed in socio-economic and cultural terms that the “The Russian conquest of Eastern Siberia was more like the British colonisation of North America than the conquest of South America by the Spanish and Portuguese”. While the other side “the

Russian economy in historical perspective has been closer to that of Latin America than to the North American economy” (Collins, 1982:130).

Russian colonisation across Siberia spread from northern to southern directions. Russians’ advance was blocked into the Amur River basin after becoming a party to ‘the border Treaty of Nerchinsk’ with China in 1689. However, Russian expanded toward the Northeast up to Alaska. Russia came back to the Amur Region after the mid-nineteenth century (Stephan, 1994:47). Comprising not only Russians but also Chinese, Koreans, Japanese as well as native indigenous groups, Eastern Siberia had immense ethnic and cultural diversity. Immigration reshaped regional development and created a cosmopolitan ambience to the Eastern Siberia (Lukin and Troyakova, 1991).

2.4: Eastern Siberia in Tsarist Russia

Throughout Eastern Siberia’s history, at least since Russia’s colonise the territory of Eastern Siberia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, its natural resources have been exploited by the central and local authorities. Russia had a huge stake in tsarist Eastern Siberia and many socio-political and economic significance. In economy point of view, Eastern Siberia was a main source of furs and the tax, and furs play a significant role in Tsarist Economy. The colonisation of Eastern Siberia provided border security to Tsar from Chinese expansionism towards Eastern Siberia. The contribution of Tribute and taxation in Eastern Siberia furs was about 10% of total state revenue and in the middle of the sixteenth century around as much as 33% of total state revenue. “The Siberia contributed around half of the world’s fur production in terms of value even after the fall of the Tsarist period” (Fisher,1943:237).

The command of the police and administration from Moscow were few in Eastern Siberia during the Tsarist rule. Eastern Siberia was considered “a land of escape and freedom from the serfdom, atrocities and religious persecution” by many people of that time (Wood, 1957:51). Voices for greater economic autonomy in the Eastern Siberia were raised in the post-1992 period. Lately, the demand came down as there were future

requirements made by various private and state investments in the region (Stephan 1992:498).

2.4.1: Fur Tribute and precious metals in Eastern Siberia

Eastern Siberia was an essential resource as it was attractive for the fur trade and drew Russian trappers and explorers for hunting and further, it became the exploiter. 1580's onwards it stretched deep into the Eastern Siberia operated by the Stroganov family. (McNeill & McNeill, 2003:174), "Furs became the main exchange item during the 15th century in the Russian economy which gave a revenue of about 7-10%, and by the end of the 17th century, it accounted for about 10% of resources profiting from the state treasury" (Brobrick, 1992:72).

Fur which contributed significantly to Russia resource since it has a temperate climate zone of Europe; West Asia and Asia Pacific countries have demanded high- quality furs. Furs play a significant role in commanding the life of the native people of Eastern Siberia. In the Tsar period, the regions of Eastern Siberia were majorly controlled by the imposition of the tribute. (Forsyth, 1992) The Russians during this time were attracted towards precious metals such as gold as they established many silver and gold mines in this region. The State monopolised the other sources which were of national importance. Regarding energy politics, the Eastern Siberia dominates as a crucial factor in the modernisation and development of the Russian state (Wood 1987:45).

2.4.2: Social and Political Significance of Eastern Siberia during the Tsarist Era

In the early seventeenth century, the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Eastern Siberia succeeded in converting to Christianity of the aboriginal population. However, before considering the faith introduced to Eastern Siberia, it would be worthwhile to examine the religious or spiritual structure already existing in Eastern Siberia at the time of the Russian arrival (Czaplicka, 1921:187-188).

2.4.3: The Russian Orthodox Church in Eastern Siberia: Russia's Introduction to Christianity

It is not surprising, in the 17th century, contact with the Eastern Siberian natives had been primarily where the commercial interests of European Russia coincided. Although a majority of early references to contact with the natives of these regions are accounts of commercial or military expeditions, some relate to religious matters. The Russian Orthodox Church's desire was to spread the faith of Christianity to natives of Eastern Siberia. Within a relatively short time after their own conversion Russians began sending missionaries to the Eastern Siberia (Zernov, 1945:138).

2.4.4: Native Eastern Siberian Spirituality: Shamanism

In Eastern Siberia, before the seventeenth century, there were no houses of worship built according to specific values to practice the religious faith. There was not a hierarchy of priests, bishops, and other religious interpreters. In a word, Eastern Siberian natives are pagan. Indeed, religion has been defined as "man's attempt to integrate himself, his consciousness, the world, and society in a system of absolute symbols" (Dupre 1975:66). The practical religious orientation not only in Eastern Siberia but Siberia as a whole was shamanism. Shamanism is a pre-eminently religious phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia (Czaplicka, 1914:1).

Majority of the non-Muslim population of the Siberian region were converted to Christianity in the passage of time, yet in Eastern Siberia. However, the Buryats who settled near Lake Baikal somehow managed to carry on in accordance to their Buddhist faith. (Brobrick 1992:326) According to Brobrick:

"The Buryats were swept during the eighteenth century by a Buddhist revival generated by missionaries from Mongolia and Tibet. The monastic temples of the lamas (or priests) were known as Datsuns, or lamaseries, where the sacred white elephant was worshipped, in the early nineteenth century, the great lamasery at Goose Lake, with its Sino-Tibetan architecture, lama orchestra, images, and so on,

was an exotic tourist attraction. Located near Selenginsk (a garrison town founded in 1666 on the far side of Lake Baikal), it had an impressively large library of sacred books, and was the residence of the Grand Lama of Eastern Siberia.”

(Brobrick1992:326)

The various native groups of Eastern Siberia include the Evenki, Yakuts, Tuvan, Nenets, Nanay, Nivkhi, KomiandSelkup. The Evenki and Yakuts are playing an active role in putting forward the demands of the regional and cultural control and improving the standards of environment. The Khanty, however, were consistently asserting their claims in the oil-rich land. Instead of the dominance of Russians, several minorities of Ukrainian, Korean, Chinese, European, Central Asian and Japanese were also inculcated into the cultural ethos of Eastern Siberia (Wood 1987:45).

2.4.5: Muslims in Eastern Siberia:

“The emerging presence of Islamic communities in Eastern Siberia comes from historical, cultural, economic, political, geopolitical, and social perspectives” (Yarkov et al., 2007). Sunni Islam and Sufi orders were the major Islamic traditions observed among people. The Pagan faith that was present among Turkic Ugric ethnic and cultural communities defined the expansion of Islam in this region (Yarkov et al., 2007). The spread of Islam in Eastern Siberia was corroborated by the Soviet Union’s historical period of state atheism and may be classified into following phases:

- “Ugric and Turkic indigenous people imbibed Islam in Siberia in the fourteenth century”.
- “The peaceful relationship between the Islamic and Orthodox populations and mutual coexistence after the annexation of the Siberian khanate to the Moscow Principality and the integration of the Siberian khanate into the structure of the Russian state”.

- “The decision of the Russian state to force Muslims to adopt Orthodox Christianity during the Russian Empire” and
- “The prevailing state policy of militant and forceful atheism during the Soviet Union period;”

(Yarkov, 2004)

Eastern Siberia served as a convenient outlet and safety valve, for disaffected people, a political criminal of European Russia during the Tsarist period. During the period of Tsar, the administration of Eastern Siberia was centralised, hierarchical, and bureaucratic (Hill and Gaddy, 2003).

2.4.6: The Early Relations with the East

The Russian annexed major areas of the middle and eastern Siberia by 1650 and then proceeded to the southern regions finally arriving at the Amur River which is also called as ‘Black Dragon River’ by the Chinese, who also claim it as Chinese territory (Brobrick 1992: 81-83). Early fault lines between Russia and China occurred over possession and control of land in the Amur region (here the northern inland river system was annexed the territory of Russian), as Russian right to deal with China.(Brobrick 1992: 81-83). The Russians became familiar with Chinese through Mongolia and got some knowledge of China but had a dearth of human resources of Chinese linguists. Benson Brobrick describes the state of affairs in the early 17th-centuryBrobrick: -

“The Russians also knew that the Chinese had an appetite for such luxury goods as satins, velvets, and silks, wore gold and silver, and cultivated fields of wheat, barley, and oats. In pursuit of the economic bounty that might flow from relations with such a highly developed state, Ivan Petlin, Russia’s first envoy to China in 1618, had returned with a letter of invitation to trade. However, unfortunately, the Russians were unable to find anyone able to translate it until 1675 that lapse in linguistic competence within the Russian Foreign Service had such drastic consequences for their later relations that seldom have the lack of a little

academic knowledge means so much. For even as hostilities arose, the negotiation of a bilateral trade agreement the Kremlin's original objective remained the principle motive behind Russia's aggressive acts".

(Brobrick, 1992:83-84)

Through tribute relations, the Chinese claimed suzerainty over large regions of Mongolia and southern Siberia, but their strength was in no comparison able to be matched by Chinese and hence their forces were pushed into the northern region. The conflict over the Amur River region proved expensive as the number of casualties occurred on both sides of the forces. Both the countries also signed a treaty which stated "the Chinese came out slightly more dependable in the terms than the Russians" (Brobrick 1992: 93)

Russians presence in the Eastern Siberia and their mastery over the Buryat people of Trans-Baikal was de facto recognized only after they lost control of the mouthpiece of the Amur River. This was followed by a successful pact between Russia and China that allowed 170 years of peace between the two parties. "Russians exchanged furs for imports of silk, stones, gold, silver, porcelain and tea with China" (Brobrick,1992:221). Early Russia-China trade also shaped the formation and the nature of cultural contacts in parts of Eastern Siberia (Stolberg, 2000).

The relations between Russian and China grew more bitter and sour in the latter half of the 19th century. Both Russia and Japan were keen on expanding into the Manchurian territory majorly because of the weakness of the Manchurian Dynasty (Seagrave, 1992). During the same time Tsarist Russia took steps to control the the coast of Siberia, with the area between the Ussuri River and the Pacific Ocean down to the coast of Korea being ceded to them by the Chinese. The port city of Vladivostok was also established by Russians in 1860 (Wood 1987:52-53).

During the same period several efforts were also made by Russia to force the Japanese to make their trade free with the nation. Subsequently, the Japanese signed a 'treaty of

Shimoda' in 1855 due to many ports of Russia were liberalized, and the Kuril Island was equally partitioned (Brobrick 1992:260; Haywood, 2012).

Since 1859 the dispute between Russia and Japan continued over the administration of the Sakhalin. This eventually led to an exchange agreement between Russia and Japan in 1875. Accordingly, Japan took control of Kuril Island and Russia administered Sakhalin region. According to the Brobrick, "The Japanese repossessed a group of islands they regarded as their own, so delaying a dangerous encounter with mighty power, and gaining time in which to recover their direction and strength" (Brobrick 1992: 261). (Wood, 1987:55-56) Russia also applied same tactics to the Alaska region and tried to expand its trade business related fur, but by 1825 (Brobrick 1992: 265). Meanwhile, Vladivostok was also brought under control by the Russian placing their artillery and about twenty thousand men in the Eastern Siberian region. Some 7 million Russian peasants migrated into the fertile southern areas of Eastern Siberia and the Far East between 1823 and 1914 (Wood 1987:52-53).

2.5: Eastern Siberia in the Soviet Era

After the collapse of the Tsarist Empire in Russia in the later time, the Bolsheviks were present in about every Eastern Siberian province because the Russian masses in the west were encouraged to immigrate to Eastern Siberia. Eastern Siberia is often considered and tagged as a place of Tsarist exile system and then enormous GULAGS, Russian initials for Main Prison-Camp Administration, or concentration camps created by the USSR between 1930's and 1950's by Western imagination and thinkers of that time (Solzhenitsyn, 1973; Wood 1987:51).

Both systems were significant sources of labour in Eastern Siberia. "The GULAG' system became the important instrument of the Soviet development strategy for building Eastern Siberia, in the Soviet period. From 1938 to 1953 the GULAG population peaked at more than 2 million persons, and Eastern Siberia became the burial ground for numerous numbers of political crime, victims of Stalin's terror" (Wood 1987:51).

2.5.1: Social and Political importance of Eastern Siberia in the Soviet Union

In 1918, after the collapse of the Tsarist Empire, The Soviet authority categorised some ethnic peoples of the Eastern Siberia within its Soviet Union into “the numerically small peoples” who use distinct languages. This process of categorization emphasises numbers within populations to determine what is indigenous, without looking at all other ethical contexts (Slezkine, 1994).

Some groups of peoples with a numerically large population are not believed to be indigenous peoples, yet though they possess historical and cultural backgrounds that need to be considered as indigenous. It is necessary to note here that, “ethnic group was synonymous with ‘nationality’ for the Soviet scholars, while neither of which directly meant ‘citizenship’ Multiethnic-societies in the Soviet Union had been reckoned as one of the important political issues for the Soviet authority” (Slezkine, 1994).

2.5.2: Soviet’s Foreign policy towards Eastern Siberia

The formation of the Bolshevik government in 1917 did not take the command of the Eastern Siberian Region. As the civil war ended, combined foreign forces interfered in the Amur region, retaining around 300,000 men. Also, their presence was seen in the Sakhalin Island during 1925 (Stephan 1992: 496). However, the Bolsheviks acknowledged the fact that it was difficult to control and manage the affairs occurring in the Eastern Siberian region from Moscow due to permanent inconvenience. Therefore this led to the formation of an independent Far East Republic government which gave impetus to the idea of freedom to the Siberian region from strong controls of Center (Stephan 1992: 491-500).

As Stalin took to power, he took harsh and bold steps to demarcate the boundary line of the Soviet Union; Around one fourth of the KGB special border guards were deployed to patrol the Far Eastern frontiers” (Stephan 1992: 497). Accordingly, Stalin was satisfied by the fact that the minorities have moved and exist beyond the border, whose figure in

numbers in 1937 came around 250,000 Soviet Koreans and they were shifted from the Eastern Siberia were resettled in the Central Asian region (Stephen 1987: 220).

In the World War II Stalin was very much scared by the thought of war on two fronts, one against Germany in the western part, and the other against Japan in the eastern part. Stalin was permitted to build a huge force of troops and deployed them in the Eastern Siberia during 1931-1941 (Stephan 1992: 488; Erickson 1987: 178-181).). Because of the strategic relevance and the geopolitical significance of the Eastern Siberian region were clearer to Germany, and she attacked USSR in 1941. The various industry of Soviet was shifted eastwards beyond the Urals, which led to setting up of some industries in the western part of Siberia. More than 300 enterprises, manufacturing units and their plants were shifted eastward, creating a large industrial infrastructure, and building fighter planes were manufactured in the Siberian region during the period (Wood 1987:57).

Unfortunately, these regional industries and manufacturing units were shut by the end of World War II. We can clearly understand that Eastern Siberia emerged as the unique player with regard to resources concentration and a strategic buffer zone location during the World War II. The Eastern Siberian region presented a two-way advantage to the Soviet Union; firstly, it was the stockpile of various strategic resources such as petroleum, gasoline, coal, gold, uranium, and strategic metals; secondly, it provided a prime access point into the Pacific Ocean (Conolly 1987:160). Conolly expresses that “even development of trans-Siberian was mainly for strategic reasons which were built early in the century, while the newer BAM line has an important strategic role, as well as missile and military places. Now the question arises that whether Eastern Siberia is remained relevant in this contemporary time keeping in view the strategic assets for Russia, or whether it consists something of a lack of a liability as well” (Conolly 1987:160).

Russians were steadily moving its fleet into the Pacific Ocean during the 1960's to provide deterrence and a blow to the navel superiority of the US. The Pacific Fleet emerged as the most prominent during the 1980's, and they added various new ships and submarines (Erickson 1987: 171). Stephan stated that “Russia had a naval facility on the

Pacific thirty-six years before the United States came into existence”. (Stephan 1992: 494)

The Soviets had created great surface and submarine forces which might break out and represent a substantial attack and constraint to US forces on the high oceans as part of their fears of containment by U.S. military groups and their allies. According to the Erickson, “This was also a component of a well-calculated strategy in which Russia had allies in North Korea, Vietnam and favourable trade and military-grade dealings with India”. The deployment of Soviet troops because of worsening of relations with China resulted in a doubling of army forces in the Soviet Eastern Siberia and the Far East from 15 and then up to 30 divisions” (Erickson 1987:186).

In the late 1980s, military personnel comprised a good number of persons in Eastern Siberia; approximately around 10% of the civilian population, with at least 500,000 men was always available combating mode in the Eastern Siberia. Civilians have often complained that Vladivostok was virtually treated by the navy as if they had it, and the city just became fully open until 1992. Through the 1990s, the numbers of operating naval forces in the Pacific were drastically decreased; there has been the reduction in nuclear weapons and military combating ground forces (Chipman, 1999).

The Eastern Siberia was mostly open to contacts with China, Japan and other foreign countries towards the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century. Migratory labour resources arrived was not only formed from the European part of Russia, but also by migration from China, Korea, and Japan. Under the Soviet Union, the region had not very strong economic and human ties with the outside world. Nikita Khrushchev’s visit in 1959 to Eastern Siberia was an opportunity in the context of his attempt to decentralise the Soviet economy.(Wood, 1987). At that time, he made a promise that Eastern Siberian district Vladivostok would be the second San Francisco after coming few days. These eventual events led to some growth in the regional engagement with the outside world which took place in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1986, USSR leader Mikhail Gorbachev exclaimed a new era of engagement and development with the Asia-Pacific region during

his Vladivostok visit. (Wood, 1987). Gorbachev emphasized that the Cold War era was ending, and new world order was augmenting and shaping the newer nuances, and the Soviet government would seek to open up and liberalise the Eastern Siberian region and develop it as part of a broader Asia-Pacific economy (Wood, 1987).

2.6: Conclusion

Basically, this chapter dealt with the geopolitical importance of the region of eastern Siberia. To holistically understand the nuances and various underpinnings impacting the region, the chapter analyses in-depth, the early history, demography and its socio-politico-economic composition. The chapter talks about the colonization of the eastern Siberian region during the Tsar period. The tsar rule was responsible for the exploitation of natural resources especially the fur tribute and precious materials. Christianity expanded its roots with the support of Tsars but the native population protested this imposition. As a result we see a rise of Shamanism, which has its roots in Buddhism.

Though the eastern Siberian region had been under the Tsar rule, it has always remained an apple of discord as the eastern south Asian countries like China, Japan and Korea tried to capture it. Later on, a treaty was signed between Russia and China acknowledging the original territorial claims. The chapter further discusses how the eastern Siberian region saw different changes in the social, political and economic front after the Bolshevik revolution. After the Bolshevik revolution, the relations of Russia with its eastern neighbours especially China were in strain regarding eastern Siberia. In 1986 as Gorbachev came into power with his liberal outlook it improved Russia's relations with China as well as Eastern Siberia-Russia relations. The next chapter will discuss the policies of Gorbachev regarding eastern Siberia in detail.

Chapter 3

3: Russia's Federal policy towards Eastern Siberia: From 1986 to 2010

This chapter discusses Gorbachev's geographical assertion of the Soviet Union as an Asia-Pacific country and then examines Gorbachev's new diplomatic gestures to China, Japan and the United States. This chapter also explores those determinants, such as the Soviet strategic environment in northeast Asia, security concerns about the Soviet Union's Eastern frontiers and domestic economic development in Eastern Siberia from 1986 to 2010.

During the Soviet period Eastern Siberia's followed the top-down developmental model that persists today. Federal authorities even today are seen as distant colonial masters that seek to gallop even least ounce of rent from the region's rich resource wealth while they share very less benefits to the region, by the regional players. The clash of this interest between federal and regional authorities' over policy issues created a discord between the Centre and Periphery (Hill and Gaddy, 2003).

The Eastern Siberian region is one of the prominent oil and gas reservoirs in Russia after West Siberia. During the 1970s and 1980s, the geologists of Soviet Russia found out many substantial hydrocarbon deposits in the region. However these developments have not taken place in reality (Itoh, 2011).

3.1: The "Turn to the East" in Gorbachev's Policy (1986)

Sixteen months after becoming the general secretary of the Russian communist party, Mikhail Gorbachev made a three-week tour of Eastern Siberia, in July 1986. Gorbachev visited main cities, towns, industrial centres, farming communities and military and naval installations in the Eastern Siberian region. Most of all, on 28 July 1986, Gorbachev delivered an important speech at Vladivostok. In speech apart from domestic government, Gorbachev defined Soviet interests, attitudes and goals in Asia and the Asia-Pacific in a refreshing light. When Gorbachev came into power, the Soviet Union

urgently needed economic reinvigoration at home. Gorbachev predecessors, especially Brezhnev had given less attention to building up a strategy for the Asia-Pacific area. Ross Babbage argued regarding developing an approach of the Soviet leader towards Eastern Siberia “Soviet leaders had failed to appreciate the region’s economic dynamism and had tended to be overly preoccupied with security issues”.(Babbage 1980:10). Soviet leaders approach to build up their military power in the East Siberia, and the Far East had created serious political problems in external relations with China, Japan and the United States. With this type of attitude, the Soviet Union was isolated in the Asia-Pacific region (Babbage 1980:10).

Since Gorbachev took the office of general secretary of the communist party of USSR, he has shown greater flexibility and good attitude and energy than his predecessors in USSR policy-making towards the Asian-pacific region. Gorbachev at the beginning of this sub thesis reflects that the Soviet Union has realized the importance of the Asia-pacific region. Gorbachev in his Vladivostok speech introduced a series of new initiatives, aimed to develop the region (Gorbachev: Vladivostok Speech, 1986)

Gorbachev introduced in his Vladivostok speech a series of new proposals and new initiatives for good and peaceful diplomatic relations with the neighbouring countries. Because of the significance of his speech in Vladivostok, Vladivostok means ‘Rule the East’ in Russian. In his speech, Gorbachev asserted that:

“A greater part of our country’s territory lies east of the Urals, in Asia.... in Siberia and the Far East.... The Soviet Union is also an Asian and Pacific country. It is very much aware of the complex problems facing this vast region. They concern it directly.”

(Gorbachev: Vladivostok Speech, 1986:22-26)

Russia is the world’s largest country. Russia is traditionally divided along the Urals into a European and an Asian country. Because of the geographical fact, Russia is the only country in the world, which can claim to be both a European and an Asian country. There is a growing recognition in Moscow that the Asian and the Pacific part of the country will

pay an ever important role. Gorbachev does not want to see the USSR as “the odd man out” when the economy of the country requires urgent restructuring and reinvigoration which might be accelerated markedly by uniting the region as the most resourceful reservoir (Gorbachev 1986:39).

The Asia-pacific region is a region of direct political, economic and security concerns to Russia. It is also a region of strategic significance to Russia strategy for the increase of Russia influence in Asia and for the continuing growth of Russia global power in the world. In general R. F. Miller and Rigby argued for certain fairly long periods the formulation and conduct of Soviet foreign policy has been relatively less dependent on domestic factors than is true of most major powers (Miller and Rigby, 1993: 1). In the country, the relationship between domestic and external factors is a dialectical one. In Vladivostok speech, Gorbachev focused not only external relations with Northeast countries but for accelerated economic development of the Eastern Siberia. Gorbachev seemed more aware than his predecessors that the country’s foreign policy tightly linked with the domestic policy. In the Gorbachev period, it was clear that in the USSR domestic policy directly influenced foreign policy (Miller and Rigby, 1993: 3).

During the periods of Gorbachev, his predecessors Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Cherenkov focused on military power in Asia-Pacific region. According to Harry Gelman “cumulatively brought about an important change in force, carrying with it an even more radical improvement in the USSR position in the balance of forces in the east than in the west.”(Gelman 1987:1) Ross Babbage argued that the USSR not only failed to achieve a favourable regional balance of power in the Asia-Pacific Region but it had also generated fears of Soviet intentions in the region and undermined Moscow’s bigger economic and political goals (Babbage 1988:9).

3.1.1: The economic slowdown in USSR and Gorbachev’s economic policy towards Eastern Siberia

It is commonly perceived that the comparatively rapid growth of the USSR economy began in the late 1960’s and the early 1980’s had given way to stagnation. At the beginning of 1970’s USSR economy dramatically decreased. The slowdown increased the gap between USSR and the USA economies. In 1961, Khrushchev with the help of

CPSU, adopted a new policy and the new policy proclaimed that the USSR economy would surpass the USA economy before 1970 (Holloway 1983,:168). However, in 1980's the data illustrates that the USSR economy was only 53 per cent vis-a-vis USA economy and by 1988 it had drowned to between 40 and 52 per cent of the USA level (International Institution for Strategic Studies, 16). The Economic growth declined in the 1970's because of the huge amount invested in defence during the Brezhnev era. In the Brezhnev era, USSR's defence expenditure constitutes 12-14 per cent of the total USSR's GDP (Hyland 1982:64).

When Gorbachev came into power, the rate of the economic growth of the USSR decreased steadily. The economic slowdown of the USSR could not but have a major impact on the Soviet civilian economy. Many other scholars stated the same thing that if the USSR economy continued decreased; the USSR would be unable to compete with the USA. The USSR is perhaps strong enough to bear with a limited period of economic stasis, but in the long run, would result to the deceased USSR as a world power.(Hyland 1982:64) Gorbachev's historical Vladivostok speech pointed to the fundamental element of USSR's fear:

“Of course we are aware that the arms race, which is gaining momentum, serves not only the aims of making a super profit and of war preparations but also and this is not of the least importance... other immoral aims, which are essential to exhaust the Soviet Union economically, frustrate the party's course for achieving a further rise in living standers of the people, and hamper the implementation of our social program.”

(Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech, 1986)

In a long-term, development of USSR economy depended more on raw materials of the European part of Russia and the West Siberia. Most of the raw materials originated in Western Siberia. The Eastern Siberian natural resources are unexplored because of lack of technology and Eastern Siberian harsh geographical conditions. The Soviet Eastern Siberia is a reservoir of ample natural resources, more significant social and economic opportunities and immense international importance. Eastern Siberian economic potential

is indeed limitless. However, Gorbachev acknowledged that “the full-scale development of the Eastern Siberia is not an easy job” (Gorbachev Vladivostok speech 1986:18). Another important point is that Eastern Siberia trade relations with the Asia-pacific region are very low. In 1986 the Eastern Siberian trade exports with the Asia-Pacific region was less than 4 per cent, and import was less than 1 per cent (Gorbachev Vladivostok speech, 1986:10-18).

It seems Gorbachev has also realized the importance of Eastern Siberia. In Gorbachev period the special priority given to Eastern Siberia in the USSR’s “strategy of accelerated social-economic development” put before by the CPSU Congress. Gorbachev in his Vladivostok speech led down seven immediate development goals. Natural resources in Eastern Siberia will provide the USSR with the possibility of strengthening its status as an Asia-Pacific power. The wealth of Eastern Siberia also will provide both economically and militarily strength to USSR and provided that the restructuring of the economy of USSR. Eastern Siberia was a part of the USSR less affected by the ethnic unrest (Gorbachev Vladivostok speech 1986:10-18)

When Gorbachev took office, he seems to have been bent upon reinvigoration of the stagnant USSR economy through his new formula, *Uskoreniye* (acceleration), *glasnost* (speaking out publicly or right to expression), *perestroika* (restructuring), and *novoyemyshleniye* (new thinking). Gorbachev was committed to building the USSR a superpower with leading economic and technological skills. In 1985, a long-term trade agreement signed between USSR and China in Moscow. The relationship between China and USSR increased in every sphere, particularly in trade (Miller, 1993; Desai, 1989).

3.1.2: Gorbachev’s Social policy towards Eastern Siberia:

The policies of Perestroika, Glasnost and Demokratizatsiya which were announced by Gorbachev in the late 1980s for the first time in the history people of Eastern Siberia got an opportunity to express dissatisfaction and discontent to Moscow (Mote 1998:132). Due to these policies, a sort of indigenous rights movement came out in Eastern Siberia, and the wave of nationalism grew, unsurprisingly, among the people of Eastern Siberia (Forsyth 1992:409-417). Apart from these, many people’s organizations and civil society

groups like the “Association of Peoples of the North,” started to work as an advisory body for the Gorbachev government to support the rights of the native in northern Siberia. In 1989, an agenda called ‘Indigenous People and Political Agenda’ was established which organized its first congress in 1990. There were many agendas proposed including ethnic discrimination, the creation of traditional tribal councils, and the land rights of the native (Mote 1998:174).

The name of the organization later was changed to the “All-Russian Association of the Numerically Small Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East” in 1997 (Mote 1998:174). Many nationalities or native peoples declared their sovereignty; most of them already had their independent regions in the early decade of 1990. However, they do not have a right to veto over land, which is meant for governmental purposes (Sirina 2005:207). Many grassroots activists in Eastern Siberia have requested more political rights over their land to ward off any kind of project which could be harmful undertaken by Russia. The Evenkians, also pleaded the government to make them party in the decision making process on any developmental projects initiated in their native lands (Matveeva et al. 1997:311). A Committee for the North and Minority Peoples was created in 1994 “in the Council and the federal government passed a pro-indigenous law ‘On the Foundations of the Legal Status of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North,’ which was however vetoed by President Yeltsin in 1995, due to pressure from the oil lobbyists” (Matveeva et al. 1997:311).

3.2: Russia’s East Asian Policy from Yeltsin to Putin and Medvedev

The disintegration of USSR and the rise of democratic though weak Russian federation the domestic and foreign policy saw a dramatic shift controlled and driven by Russian political elite. At the beginning of 1990’s the focus of USSR foreign policy was the mainly west. From Early1990 to 2010 we find a complete transformation in Russian foreign and domestic policy which is practical, balanced and focusing primarily on the country’s national interests. The new policy focused on safeguarding the domestic borders, avoiding conflicts with nearby nations, promoting economic cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries and maintaining the stronghold over the Eastern Siberian region. (Voskressenski, 2012:3-6)

After the breakdown, the importance of a promising partner was essential for Russia to ensure its security. Alternatively, this the country tried to maintain good relations with NATO and the USA, which at that time were realized as the only way to hold Russia which was facing crisis after disintegration (Voskressenski, 2012:3). According to Kolotov after the collapse of USSR, several problems gripped Russia. He argues that “The Russian leaders were preoccupied with the internal agenda, including reforming the political system and establishing a market-based economy. As Russia’s GDP roughly declined in Yeltsin’s period (by 60 % compared with 1990), by 1998 Russia had lost its erstwhile role and almost all influence in East Asia” (Kolotov, 2008).

Scholars like Rozman and Nosov have illustrated Russian orientation towards west. They say that “by 1994 President Yeltsin had begun reconsidering Russia’s lean towards the West, and partnership with China was regarded as the centrepiece of Russian diplomacy”. In the late 1990s and the early 2000s the Russian foreign policy saw a shift to a more practical, balanced and concerned stance aiming towards providing the necessary safeguards for Russia’s interests in the bordering regions.(Gilbert Rozman, Mikhail G. Nosov and Koji Watanabe eds, 1999:5).

3.2.1: ‘Center-Periphery’ relations from Yeltsin to Putin in Russian Federation

The Russian Federation is diverse concerning geography, polity, economy and ethnicity of different regions. This diversity has created various disparities regarding the issues of national identity, loop sided development, civic awareness, social and political activity. After the disintegration, the federation which came in Russia lasted for almost a decade and with the weakness of central authority (Polishchuk, 2000).The main political and economic actors, big business tycoons (oligarchs), political parties and regional elites became very assertive. The regional elites took full advantage of Yeltsin’s famous appeal, “Take as much independence as you can swallow”. “Russian variant of federalism in the 1990s as ‘negotiated federalism’, stressing that it contradicts the fundamental principle of a federal state as a fixed and clear division of powers and spheres of activity between the

authorities of the federal and regional levels, each of whom operates autonomously within their sphere of competence” (Polishchuk, 2000).

The collapse of USSR and birth of Russian Federation out of it gave a path to the concept of a weak Russia. The regime of Russian state’s common wisdom about the past and present is as follows: Russia was about to disintegrate in the Yeltsin rule. Yeltsin framed its policy in a way which resulted in making the autonomous republics powerful. Whereas, the relations between centre and regions are gradually return to order under President Putin era. According to the Michael Thumann “Russia went through stormy waters in 1992 and 1993, but then the tide of secessionism receded; Yeltsin developed a practical, though economically inefficient and costly, mode to prevent regions and republics from leaving the federation, and Putin has indeed fundamentally altered Yeltsin’s regional policy” (Thumann, 2011).

The turning point for the centre-region relations and the federal system was the crowning of Vladimir Putin as the president in 2000. After coming to power, he started the centralization process which completely changed the balance of power between the centre and the regions, including the regional elites. Russia again reestablished itself as the centre that has the strong hold on power and resources. We see a decline in the position of regional elites since 2000, which resulted in legal amendments. All these activities changed the legal structure of their action, informal activities, inspired by the Moscow. As a result, Moscow acquired control over the regions’ strategic assets (Kireeva, 2012).

The control of the centre over the regional institutions of force got strengthen with the due passage of time. The president of Russia assumed the task of appointing the heads of their regional structures. Even in 2002, the senatorial status of regional leaders was lost. Their membership of the federal council was lost and there by the lost their influence on legislative process at the federal level (Tsygankov, 2013:175). They were made members of the State Council, which is just an advisory body without much power. In 2005 the president took an initiative to replace general elections to governorships with a system of

direct appointment. The president had the power to appoint and remove the regional elites from the office. A major reshuffle of regional elites was carried out during the presidency of Putin and Medvedev (under Medvedev, a quarter of the gubernatorial corps was replaced) (Tsygankov, 2013:175).

As a result of this policy, the regions were left with politicians having very less influence and charisma. The budget and tax reform were used as a tool to control the autonomous regions. In the changes introduced in 2000-2001, the expense of regional budgets was increased significantly in the share of centre. The share of the centre in the total budget soared from 44% in 1999 to 66.2% in 2007. In the year 2005, a new method was introduced for the sharing of tax revenues (Rogoza, 2014). According to Rogoza, “The taxes with the highest chargeability (VAT, excise, PIT, CIT, and Mineral Extraction Tax) were redirected to the central budget. Regional budgets have lost a significant part of their income; the division of revenues between the regions and the central budget has changed from 50/50 before the reform, to slightly above the 30% of taxes left in the region (35% in 2013). In return, regions were entitled to transfers from the federal budget, although this did not offset the losses caused by the reform” (Rogoza, 2014).

The regional authorities lost their independence and lustre as their appointments were in the hands of Moscow. Even the priorities of the leaders now got changed and shifted from concentrating on the region or the interests of regional actors to seek favours, from the Kremlin to establish their position in the region. “This model is not conducive to increasing the efficiency of regional economies, improving the investment climate or attracting investors. Instead, the regional elites are concentrated on lobbying in the federal offices, usually in the interest of companies linked to regional clans or partly to the federal elite” (Polishchuk, 2000).

Besides, this model failed to make the profit from their complete gains and also do not offer any opportunities to make full use of their natural potential to the regions. The federal Ministry of Natural Resource started to issue the extraction licenses for the extraction of natural resources as the regional governments lost their leverage on the

investment policy in 2004 (Rogoza, 2014). Further, as Rogoza states “Nor do the regions have any impact on the policies of corporations that carry out mining work on their territories: most of the large companies are registered in Moscow, where they pay taxes and negotiate the terms of their activities. It is also up to the federal authorities to grant tax reliefs to those companies, which lowers the tax revenues of the regional budgets and reduces the regions’ income” (Rogoza, 2014).

The classification based on the economic and social criteria has been done by Natalia Zubarevich, a well-known expert on the regions, who classified it into “four Russia’s”. According to the Zubarevich classification:

“First among Russians: the federal cities – large, post-industrial cities, inhabited by about 21% of the population, with a large share of middle class; Russia Two: in search of “stability”- medium-sized cities dominated by heavy industry (including the so-called mono-cities), inhabited by 25% of the population; At the margins, but not marginal: Russia’s Three & Four small towns and villages, inhabited by 38% of the population, who live in an almost autarchic way, and finally (6% of the population) – economically backward regions, with a socio-political culture different from the Russian mainstream – this category includes the North Caucasus and Tuva”.

(Zubarevich, 2016)

Eastern Siberian region, which is the natural resource base of Russia, is an area that is left bereft having huge economic potential especially hydrocarbons. The nature relationship between the Russian Federation and its Eastern Siberian region can be termed as ‘quasi-colonial’. The centrally funded important infrastructure projects like the planned modernization of the Trans-Siberia and BAM railway, the construction of the ESPO pipeline, are mainly concerned with exportation of raw materials in order to improve the process of exploitation on the one hand and on the other is less concerned to improve the socio-economic development of the Eastern Siberia.(Rogoza, 2014). Also, the Eastern Siberian transport system has been designed in such a way to promote greater and easier

access to the centre than to connect the individual regions of the distant land (Rogoza, 2014).

One of the examples of the unequal development in the region could be traced in the development of different projects in the Sakha Republic. The Republic of Sakha is located in the Eastern Siberia. Earlier there was no railway connectivity to Yakutsk. In the summers it is very tough to move from Magadan or Irkutsk, and many travellers including old age people avoid (Thumann, 2011).

Natural resources are in bounty in the Sakha region which makes it a rich, resourceful region. The diamond pits, gold mines, oil and gas fields, coal mines, and precious metals are found in plenty. “It generates 25 per cent of the world’s production of diamonds. Despite its riches, the country is dependent on Russia’s electricity Between Appeasement and Coercion 195 grid. To develop the mining industry, hundreds of thousands of settlers from central Russia and Ukraine poured into the country in the 1960s and 1970s (Thumann, 2011).

Historically, the policy of Russian Federation towards the Eastern Siberia has been based on exploiting and extolling the mineral-rich region. The several projects on the ground are meant only to facilitate the greed of the federation as the ground realities in the region tell another story of development.

3.2.2: The indigenous people of Eastern Siberia and Constitutional Provisions

The indigenous people of Eastern Siberia have been classified in the Russian Federation as a particular multi-sectoral division of Russian law. The Russian Federal government has given constitutional provisions to the native people of Eastern Siberia in articles 71, 72 and 73 of the constitution. The constitutional provisions are divided into two categories, namely federal and regional. The federal legal rule and regulations prevail in the sphere of human rights and liberty which falls in the competence of the federal

authorities and the regional regulation is supplemental. Source (RUSSIAN CONST. Art. 22)

The evolution of “indigenous” legislation has gone through three different phases:

The First Phase: From the early 1990s to 1993

This is a time when the Russian Federation became an independent state after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The native people of the Eastern Siberia got a legal solution. In the new constitution, they were assured rights for the use of land and traditional economic activities (Arts. 4, 14, 51, 89, 90, 94 of the Land Code of RSFSR dated 25 April 1993).

The indigenous language of the native people is protected by the new constitution. State security was given in relation to their cultural diversity in the article 22 (RUSSIAN CONST. art. 22). The new Russian federal constitution also provides them local self-government (Art. 1, 3 of the laws of the Russian federation, “On local self-government in Russian Federation” 1993).

The Second phase (1993–2001): The implementation of the new Constitution

In second phase the Russian federation clearly guarantees “the rights of native peoples in compliance with generally accepted principles and standards of international law and treaties of the Russian Federation” (RUSSIAN CONST. art. 69). This led to the development of the national law. Relevant regulations, applicable to various aspects of indigenous peoples’ life, were legally recognized in a number of federal and regional sectoral laws. During this period, specialized laws were passed, whereby indigenous peoples and persons became a central person in legal relations. Among such laws is, first of all, the Federal law dated 30 April 1999 “On the guarantees of rights of indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation”. This act consolidated the legal basis of the status of indigenous peoples, promoted other specialized federal laws – on the territories of traditional resource management and indigenous people’s communes (RUSSIAN CONST. art. 69).

The ratification of “the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities” (FCNM) by the Russian Federation shall be considered as an achievement of this period. The said Convention, being a part of the Russian legal system in accordance with the Constitution of the RF (part 1, Art. 15), undoubtedly strengthened the guarantees of the legal status of indigenous peoples of the North (RUSSIAN CONST. art. 1-15).

The third phase: Early 2000 to the present

In general, the current situation can be characterized as ‘legal stagnation’ and a step back from former positions. The following examples illustrate the point:

- “The lack of any new notable legal acts in this sphere,
- “The repeal in 2004 of “the Federal Law On the basics of the state regulation of social and economical development of the North of Russian Federation” that may be qualified as a denial by the state of the special policy considering the specifics of Northern regions and indigenous peoples living there;
- “The removal from the federal legislation of several provisions related to indigenous peoples. In particular, at present, it is no longer possible for.” (Kryazhkov, 2013).

The withdrawing of rights of groups of native people of the Eastern Siberia resulted from the uniting of the Autonomous Okrug “Dolgan-Nenets, Evenky and Koryak” with the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. In its place of the former national-territorial units, administrative-territorial units with special status within the constituent entity of the Russian Federation were formed. “Simultaneously, the respective peoples lost their own legislative and other government authorities, their own budget, their direct agency in the parliament of the Russian Federation, and their direct financial and other relationships with the federal governmental authorities. Consequently, a marked deteriorating of guarantees of the social and other rights of indigenous peoples can be observed” (Kryazhkov, 2013).

3.2.3: Russia's social Policy towards Eastern Siberia from 1992-2010

The old collective farm system automatically broke very quickly through Eastern Siberia due to the sudden disintegration of the Soviet Union (Anderson 2002:162). This made some of the indigenous group gains more territory. One such indigenous group is Evenki which came back towards its traditional work culture. Sirina argues that “as the case of reindeer ownership, which was dispossessed by the state and is now legally possessed by multiple ownership (private, municipal and state), Russian government officers have experienced difficulty in distributing land ownership, which is also both collectively shared and private, to the Evenki” (Sirina 2005:205-207). Sirina further states:

“The Russian government gave the right to claim the ownership of the territory for traditional land use to the people who organize themselves into a community and who want to sustain their traditional lifestyle. However, this has resulted to of multiple ownerships due to possible multiple identities from each, village, community, or state farm, which also can be divided by different economic patterns of subsistence. To deal with so many different cases of multiple ownership, the Russian authority recommended that local indigenous peoples create an association of communities based on their traditional clan system to share ownership of the land”.

(Sirina, 2005:205)

Many times the proposed plan does not go in favour of the native population, because they do not possess traditional hunting, fishing, or reindeer-herding. They even do not accept the newly forced communities for this (Sirina 2005:205, 213). In this case, “if they do not choose to go back to their traditional activities, they are not regarded as indigenous people despite their strong ties and associations with their nomadic relatives and neighbours” (Turaev 2004:148-9, cited in Sirina 2005:204).

The federal policy emphasizing the traditional clan community for the indigenous has produced another problem to the Evenki and other indigenous peoples in Siberia (Sirina 2005:204). “There was a belief among scholars and politicians that the clan communities were able to be managed freely by the indigenous without any government assistance and remained under the free management system without any direct involvement by the federal government” (Sirina 2005:211).

The Eastern Siberia constitutes more than half of the modern Russian territory. However, its population is around one per cent of the total population of the Russian Federation. Like other indigenous population residing in different parts of the world, the Siberians to have suffered for centuries resulting in the loss of land, cultural identity as well as deprivation for centuries (Sirina 2005:203).

The indigenous, however “have also had to face a new set of challenges, the most important of which, land privatization, threatens the security of their land rights and their aim of creating ‘reserved territories.’ (Matveeva et al. 1997:306). Political issues from the past Soviet regime to the current government of the Russian Federation should have been strongly factored in and considered in the process of making policies for the indigenous. It is also obvious that many local government administrators must have not given enough importance the indigenous knowledge and biodiversity of the indigenous people before deciding on any policy affecting the subsistence system of the indigenous peoples although the governmental authorities from the previous Soviet Union to the current Russian government have tried to approach the indigenous peoples in Siberia based on ethnographical data (Lee, 2013).

3.3: Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the Russian domestic policy towards Eastern Siberia. When Gorbachev came into power as the general secretary of the CPSU in 1986, he visited the eastern Siberia and focused on the development of this backward region. He wants to improve the ties with the East Asian countries especially China. His predecessors had

never thought of this region so kept it at bay; this impeded the development in the region of eastern Siberia. After the disintegration of USSR, the new Russian Federation that came into existence was quite weak in the initial phase. However, when Vladimir Putin came into power, he tried to unite the disintegrating provinces into a single, united and centralised structure. This changed the dynamics of the Russian politics making centre more powerful via-a-vis its constituents.

In the economic front, Gorbachev focused on the holistic development of the Siberian region. He tried to visualize it regarding his long foresight, as he felt that for the development of this region it must be connected to the East Asian countries in a well-mannered way. He felt the necessity for this connectivity as a geo political necessity. After him Yeltsin, Putin and Medvedev also focused on the development of this region.

If one sees the social and political front of Gorbachev's Glasnost and Perestroika policies played an important role in integrating the region with the Federation. Moreover, these policies developed the feelings of oneness or unity among the residents of eastern Siberia. The new constitution which came into being after the collapse of USSR provided many constitutional provisions that gave them ample space regarding cultural and ethnic identity. Russian policy makers adopted the policy of cooperation with the constituent regions. As a result, this left bereft region is getting benefits now. After discussing the historical, socio-political and domestic policy of Eastern Siberia, now this study will move towards analysing the geopolitical importance of Eastern Siberia and how this geopolitical connection benefits Russian federation as a "Window for Asia".

Fourth 4

4: Eastern Siberia in Russian Foreign Policy: From 1991 to 2010

This chapter discusses Russian foreign policy and the manner in which Eastern Siberia is going to get affected as Russian already shown their intention to announce Eastern Siberia as 'window for Asia'. Further, it will also look into the policy prospects of Russia and East Asian countries.

4.1: Eastern Siberia in Russian Foreign Policy

The development of the oil and gas industry of the Eastern Siberia is perceived to be indispensable by the Russian government as per the objective standards. Eastern Siberian energy sector is influenced by its Geo-economic and Geo-political need for which they have to acquire energy. The factors which influence the energy sector of the Eastern Siberian region are as follows:

- “The collapse of the USSR saw strained economic relations between the western regions which resulted in disruption of Russia’s relations with the Eastern Siberia. As a result, the national security concerns in general soared;”
- “Various issues regarding energy provisions came to the forefront from other areas of Russia;”
- “The Socio-economic problems within Eastern Siberia soared;”
- “The region’s affinity with the neighbouring Northeast Asian states (China, Japan, South Korea and North Korea) grew more substantial after the dissolution of the USSR;”
- “Major West Siberian hydrocarbons provinces are simultaneously decreasing, and this negative phenomenon requires the timely development of a new province within Eastern Siberia;

- “Swiftening of the integration processes with the major countries like China, Japan and South Korea of the Asia Pacific Region (APR) is a strategic national economic priority for Russia” (Itoh, 2011).

Russia started to pay attention towards eastward at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The demand for hydrocarbons in the Asia-Pacific region, primarily by China, Japan and North Korea began to rise. This development created a new opportunity for Russia to gain benefits of newly emerging energy markets. For this Russia began to explore the hidden hydrocarbon reservoir in the eastern Siberia. Itoh argues that “Russia begins to export liquefied natural gas from the Sakhalin-2 project in spring 2009. Subsequently, the first crude oil tanker sailed from the Pacific Coast at the end of the same year with the completion of the 2,700-kilometer first phase of the East Siberia–Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline. Russia made a striking debut as a new oil and natural gas supplier in the Northeast region” (Itoh, 2011).

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a setback for the aspirations of Moscow as it wants to firm its position in the Asia-Pacific region, but it has no impact on the oil and natural exports, and they were continuously on the rise. The political and intellectual elites of Russia are concerned about the strategic importance of close ties with the Asia-Pacific region (APR). “The Energy Strategy of Russia for the Period up to 2030 envisioned that Russia would increase its exports of oil so that the use of Russian oil in the Asia-Pacific region would increase from 8 per cent of oil used in 2008 to 22–25 per cent in 2030”.¹ Russia’s eastern vector has four main strategic motives:

- “Western Siberia constitutes the traditional oil and gas production bases of Russia. As the demand went on increasing from the APR region, Russians felt the need to enhance the production from its Eastern Siberian region as they were unexplored and has a huge potential to meet the increasing energy needs.”

¹Ministry of Energy, Energy Strategy of Russia for the Period up to 2030 (Moscow: Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, 2010), pp. 140–141, www.energystrategy.ru/projects/docs/ES-2030_%28Eng%29.

- “China is one of the fastest-growing energy markets in the world. With the decline in the share of its exports with the European nations due to the limited growth of oil markets and straining relations Russia now want to explore new emerging markets in East Asia.”
- “Moscow considers Eastern Siberia as its weakness because of the economic backwardness of the region. That is why Russia wants to mitigate this condition only by attracting huge amounts of domestic as well as international investments in the hydrocarbon industry.”
- “Russia believes that increases in exports toward the Asia-Pacific would create a “window for Asia” (Itoh, 2011).

4.2: Geopolitical Importance of Eastern Siberia

The natural resources and geographical location determine the geopolitical importance of any region. In the case of Eastern Siberia, hydrocarbon reservoir constitutes an area of almost 3.3 million square kilometres. The region extends from the Arctic offshore in the north to Lake Baikal in the south. It is the home of many Greenfield projects rich in hydrocarbons. The harsh climate, lack of infrastructure and its vast size are the major historical obstacles in exploration and development of the Eastern Siberian region. The Russian government has turned its attention to the eastern Siberia because of the decline in production in the western Siberian region. In recent years, the region has seen shown a significant development in infrastructure and soaring licensing activity due to the construction of the ESPO pipeline. ESPO constitutes a direct link between Eastern Siberia and Asian countries like South Korea, China, and Japan (Itoh, 2011:1 10).

Hydrocarbon industry in Eastern Siberia consists of mainly three regions: Southwest of Yakutia, Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk regions. The last few years have seen the major production from Krasnoyarsk region of the eastern Siberia. It is the geographical location of the Russian East that makes it a link between Russian energy resources and East Asian markets. According to the Russian Energy Strategy (2003), “the part of Asia-Pacific region in Russian oil exports will increase from 3% at present to 30% in 2020 and will

reach 15% for natural gas. At the same time, in perspective, a substantial part of oil and gas production will come from Eastern Russia (up to more than 20% of Russian total oil and gas production by 2020)” (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, 2010:140–141).

The production of natural gas in Eastern Russia is also expected to increase as it is growing from less than ten bcm in 2005 to about 150 bcm in 2020 and is expected to reach 162 bcm in 2030 (table 1). The strategy of development of the gas industry in Eastern Russia will be based on the “Program of creation in Eastern Russia and the Far East of a unified system for production, transport and distribution of gas with consideration of possible exports towards Chinese and other Asia-Pacific markets” (Eastern Program), which was accepted by the authorities in June, 15, but is yet to be adopted in actual sense as the legislation is scheduled to table before the end of 2007.

Table 1-Oil exports to Asia-Pacific region, Mt

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
<i>Oil</i>					
West Siberia	20	30	35	35	30
East Siberia	6	20	75	75	75
Sakhalin	18	20	25	27	35
Total	44	70	135	137	140
of which to China	32	50	81	85	90
<i>Oil products</i>					
Total	9	10,2	11,5	11,8	12
Of which to China	8,5	9,7	11	11,3	11,5

Source: Ministry of Energy, Energy Strategy of Russia for the Period up to 2030 (Moscow: Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, 2010), pp. 140–141

According to the Eastern Program project, “the pipeline exports towards the Asia-Pacific region will reach 25-50 Bcm/year by 2030, while the LNG exports are forecasted at the level of 28 Bcm/year. The Program also foresees the sequence of field’s development. However, it is likely to be adjusted about the recent takeover of the Kovykta giant gas field in Eastern Siberia by Gazprom” (Gazprom 2007).

Historically, the Eastern Siberian region was the major storehouse of the crude oil in Russia. Talakan field and his satellites in Yakutia; Verkhnechonskoe, Yarakta, Dulisma in the Irkutsk region and Vankor field in the Krasnoyarsk region are the major fields of oil production in Eastern Siberia. In 2014 it was speculated that about 8% of annual production in Russia comes from these areas which are near about 42 million tonnes.

Table 2- Eastern Russia gas production prospects, Bcm/years

	Energy Strategy (2003), moderated and favourable scenarios		“Eastern Program” project, June 2007	Gazprom (2007)
	Russian gas production, total	Gas production in Eastern Siberia and the Far East	Gas production in Eastern Siberia and the Far East	Gazprom production in Russia (prospects)
1990	640	3		
1995	596	3		
2000	584	7		
2005	610-615	8		555
2010	635-665	31-52	27	550-560
2015	660-705	86-97	85	
2020	680-730	95-106	150	580-590
2030			162	610-630

Source: (Energy Strategy, 2003:72)

The emergence of this oil industry has a strong impact on the economic indicators of growth: investment and GRP, personal income growth and regional budgets revenues (Gazprom 2007).

4.3: The History of East Siberia Pacific Ocean Pipeline

The ESPO pipeline is a very important part of the geopolitical strategy of the Russian Federation. The Yukos did the handling of ESPO pipeline Yukos, a firm supported and funded by the Chinese. In the later period, the management of operations was given to Transneft which is now accountable for all the functioning of the ESPO pipeline. According to the Olcott and Petrov, “this confirmation concerning the operatorship of the pipeline did not end the controversy over its routing. The debate focused on two issues first was environmental and second market access. The environmental issue, which concerned the proximity of the original route to Lake Baikal, was resolved in 2006 when then-President Putin ordered the pipe to be moved 400 km to the north” (Olcott and Petrov, 2009:20).

There had been contestations over its marketing and the route through which the pipeline has to be carried. The current custodian Transneft had favoured the route which passes far eastern coast of Russia through Perevoznaia Bay as the initial terminating point. They believe that this route would provide Russia reach out the Asia-Pacific markets where there is huge competition over oil. In 2003 Japan came out in support of this route, but the capricious relationship between Russia and Japan led the Japanese authorities not to make any confirmed decision on the construction of the route at that time (Itoh, 2010:10).

Phase-one of ESPO pipeline was completed in December 2009. ESPO pipeline travels 2757 km to the extent that Skovorodino in the Amur region of Russia. The capacity of the ESPO pipeline is 600 kbpd. “From Skovorodino a 64 km spur line to the Russian border was completed in mid-2010, with a 960 km line inside China then completing the route to Daqing with a capacity at present of 300 kbpd. The line was tested in November 2010 and received first deliveries under the contract between CNPC and Rosneft as of January 1st, 2011” (Platts, 2009:2).

Map 3: The route of the East Siberia–Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline



Source: (Platts, 2009) ERINA

Since 2011 China has been allocated 300 kbpd of oil. The exports up to the Kozmino Bay on the Pacific Coast from Skovordino are carried out with the help of railway lines. The port facilities at Kozmino Bay are in accordance with the 300 kbpd that could be available under Phase 1 of the ESPO construction plan. There is a plan of ESPO phase-two which is under progress to extend the pipeline a further 2100 km from Skovorodino to the Pacific Coast so that the pipeline's capacity could be expanded to 1 mmbpd. Even though, it will depend on both sides, to the Russian production's sufficient availability from ESPO and to the degree of demand in China, Japan and the rest of the Asia-Pacific market (Platts, 2009).

4.4: Russia's Historical relation with the Asia-Pacific Countries

The politics of Russia has now inclined towards the Asian-Pacific region. Russian policy is now concerned to develop its Eastern Siberian region. Russia is a not a new player in the Asia-Pacific region. Since the seventeenth century, Russia and East Asian countries have strong ties. In the 19th and 20th century, Russia was a major player in the region. The liberation movement of the Asian countries against the colonial powers was strongly supported by the USSR (Orlov, 2011).

Russian foreign policy is increasingly turning its focus towards the Asia-Pacific region as President Putin rightly recognised the importance of the region in global geopolitics (Nikonov, 2011). President Putin has supported an enhanced 'diplomatic strategy' for the region in recent years as he said in his annual address that, "Today, the Asia-Pacific region is becoming the most dynamic centre of world economic development and our foreign policy line on deepening relations with the Asia-Pacific region should be closely tied up with domestic tasks, with the promotion of potential Russian interests towards using these ties to develop the economy of Siberia and the Far East further."(Nikonov, 2011)

Russia has never been considered a traditional colonial power. Russian domestic policy has been highly influenced by the Eastern and the Western counterparts, and these countries have always found Russia with suspicion.. On the other hand, the other theory regards Russia as a Euro-Pacific superpower in terms of geopolitical position. "Euro-Pacific power means it has both Asia-Pacific dimensions and European dimensions in geographical terms. The existence of so many contradictory views makes Russian foreign policy very complicated" (Nikonov, 2011:85-87).

Russia is playing a more prominent role in Asia-Pacific energy market. It does not only desire for the region to diversify its oil imports but also it wants to reduce its dependence on western energy markets. We can trace the strategy in the following factors which are as follows:

- "The natural decline of oil production in West Siberia led to concentration in the new unexplored areas like Eastern Siberian oil regions;"
- "The main aim of Russia was to design domestic policy regarding Siberia in such a way that does not have any impact on its long-term relations with China;"
- "The aim has been to redevelop and regenerate Russia's Eastern Siberia regions through foreign investment and funding in infrastructure in the energy industry;"

- “Promoting a multi-polar global six-party order by maintaining close affinities with Asian countries particularly with China and Japan to counter the American hegemony;”
- “As the global power dynamics has been shifting from west to the eastern part of the world, Russia saw it as an opportunity for itself to play a major role in eastern Asia;
- “The inherent belief that the soft power will be crucial in order to increase the political ties.”

(Kolotov, 2008)

‘The Russian Energy Strategy to 2030’, a document that provides an official guide to Russian government policy and direction to Eastern Siberia. The growing importance of Eastern Siberia is very clearly displayed in that document (Henderson, 2011:8).

4.5: Russia’s Eastern Siberia and China

There is no doubt that the relationship between China and Russia is very intricate. Still, Russia and China share a consensus on most of the issues concerned with the regional and international matters. China purchases most of its arms and hydrocarbons from Russia. We can say Russia and China are natural energy allies as Russia has natural resource fields and raw materials while China provides cheap labour and manufacturing industry (Lo, 2008).

As China plays a significant role in Russia's East Asian foreign policy. Both Russia and China have overcome their past differences that were confronted during the decades from the 1960s to 1980s. In the contemporary scenario, Russia-china strategic partnership has become the “axis” of Russian foreign policy in the east. This partnership’s foundation was considered when the Mikhail Gorbachev visited China in 1989, and subsequently, the 1990s has been the era of when the political and military-technical cooperation between them began.(Lo, 2008).

In 1996 a strategic partnership agreement was signed which intended to promote close ties in the 21st century. A ‘Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation’ was signed in 2001, which led the path in promoting cooperation in political, economic and military areas. In the process of reconciliation in the border, the row was finally settled after long negotiations in 2004, and some border agreements were also signed. In 2005, The “New World Order” vision document was released by both Russian and Chinese leaders and decided to take a joint initiative on strengthening security in the Asia-Pacific region (Lo, 2008).

The first decade of the 2000s saw a gradual advancement in the direction of energy cooperation, the year 2010 was a watershed moment when East Siberia Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline was from Russian Skovordino to Chinese Daqing completed. Treaty of Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions in 1996 led to the establishment of ‘Shanghai Five’ consisting of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan paved the way for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which came into existence in 2001. The Russian-Chinese strategic partnership focused on the opposition to unilateral actions and supporting the multi-polar world system, respecting mutual sovereignty is a good example of this (Voskressenski, 2011:1-2). As been noted by Rangsimaporn, “Trade ties, military exchanges and diplomatic support vis-a-vis the West were used in both countries to underpin their standing in the world, as direct competition with it would have been difficult for both countries if they acted separately. However, as Russian scholar Alexei Bogaturov notes, China has been considered as both “a sea of potentials” and “an ocean of fears” (Rangsimaporn, 2009:111-112).

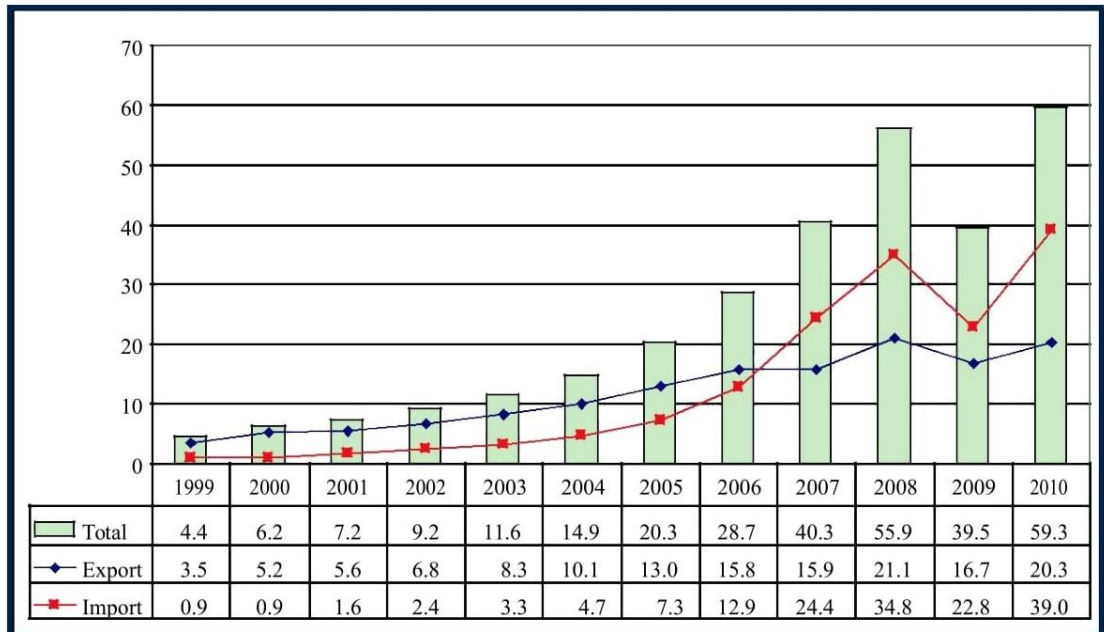
The Russian Chinese engagements also have many dark shades. In the first place, there is an unequal trade structure. If we minutely monitor the trade between the countries Russia is exporting raw materials, fishery, oil, and timber but the Chinese exports constitute machinery and manufactured goods only. Mikheev says, “The Chinese economic orientation generates a threat of Russia becoming a resource appendix, leaving it on the ‘other side of the barricades’ from the leading world, including China itself” (Mikheev, 2011:79).

Experts doubt Chinese engagements with Russia and question the Chinese developmental model which is termed as 'beacon of an innovation-based model of development' or 'supply Russia with high-tech equipment' because China's intentions were only confined to exploiting Russia's rich mineral resources (Verlin and Inozemtsev 2011:63-66). Also, the concept of the "Beijing consensus", which wants to restructure world order with China as a major player, is creating fear in Russia's independent policy in East Asia (Ramo 2012:3-4). Also, experts speculate China intentions to ward off Russia from Central Asian politics by using soft power methods as well as strengthening energy cooperation with the help of organisations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (Mikheev 2011:78-79).

The Eastern Siberia–Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline could be perceived as one of the best examples of the abysmal mistrust between China and Russia. There came many ups and downs in the establishment of this pipeline. Not paying adequate attention to several Chinese pleas Moscow was adamant towards the timing of the construction of the pipeline starting at Skovorodino. Finally, the Russian economic need forced it to come to an agreement with China to initiate the construction of the pipeline (Lo, 2008).

Dmitri Bogdanov, the vice president of Rosneft in November 2006, gave a public statement that his company is planning to export near about 14 million tons of crude oil via pipeline to Beijing annually. He also stated that the remaining 30 million tons of the first stage would be exported to oil terminal on the Pacific side by rail before of the second phase gets completed. In July 2007, Viktor Khristenko, the minister of energy and industry, during his visit to China publicly announced that the ongoing pipeline project would get finished by 2008. A memorandum was signed between the companies Transneft and CNPC to develop spur-pipe-line in the very month (Itoh, 2011)

Table 3: Russia’s Trade with China, 1999–2010 (billion dollars)

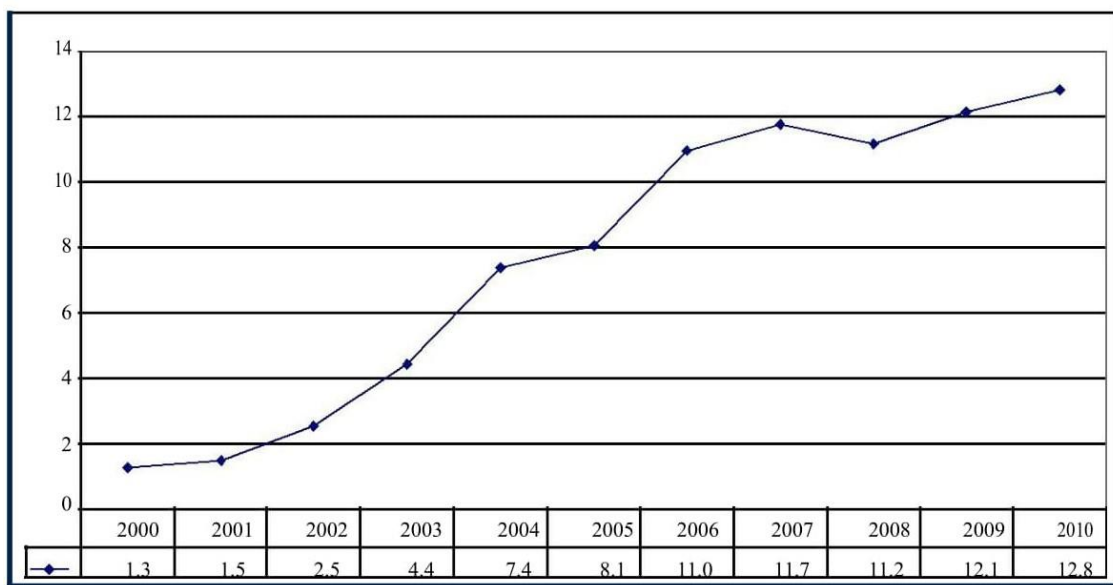


Source: Customs statistics of foreign trade of the Russian Federation; Moscow: Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation, various years (Itoh, 2011:31).

In September 2007, Rosneft announced postponing of the construction of the Chinese route until the second phase initiates. As Belton further describes that “the total volume of the first phase should be delivered by rail to the oil refineries planned for construction in the Primorsky Region. They also began to suggest the possibility that China would be no longer a profitable destination for Russian oil after the expiration in 2010 of the multiple-year contract with CNPC for supplying crude oil” (Belton, 2009).

The global financial crisis hit the Russian economy severely. It led Russia in front of China for financial support to repay its debts and regain short term loans. For this Russia and China agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding for collaboration in the oil sector. This memorandum had a provision that 15 million tons of crude oil will be exported by Russia to China annually for 20 years annually from 2011. Moreover, in return, China will lend 20-25 billion dollars in 2008 (Belton, 2009).

Table 4: Russia's Crude Oil Exports to China, 2000–2010 (million tons)



Source: Customs statistics of foreign trade of the Russian Federation, Moscow: Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation, various yea (Itoh, 2011:31).

The Deputy Premier of Russia Igor Sechin and Chinese Vice-Premier Wang Qishan, in a joint conference in Beijing, in 2009 agreed to expedite the building of spur pipeline on the condition that China Development Bank would provide Rosneft and Transneft with a loan of \$15 billion and \$10 billion respectively. Responding to it the Rosneft and Transneft companies agreed to supply 9 million tons and 6 million tons of crude oil to CNPC. Later on, in April 2009; an Intergovernmental Agreement was signed on the Oil Sector. The pipeline Construction which constitutes 970-kilometre pipeline, including Skovorodino to the Sino-Russian border which is 63.8 kilometres on the Russian side was finished in September 2010 (Itoh, 2011).

As the above analyses reveal the geopolitical strategy of Russia, putting one country against other wasn't a success. It failed to realise the nature of the China-Japan relations. The relationship between the countries worsened very quickly then as predicted by Russia. Though there was an urgent need to develop its Eastern regions, Russia always took a high handed approach to lure foreign capital. Despite the contestations, the oil prices kept booming and reach maximum level in 2008.(Itoh, 2011)

4.6: Russia's Eastern Siberia and Japan

The discourse on energy cooperation between Japan and Russia dates back to late 1960's and 1970's when the idea of a joint project was proposed by the Soviet Union which included the construction of supply lane from Tyumen oilfield which lies in Western Siberia to the Pacific coast.(Curtis, 1977:147-174) It included construction of a 7,000 km pipeline or railway line and in the meantime developing the oil fields in Yakutia. During 1970's when the whole world was in the grip of the oil crisis, the Japan- Russia cooperation felt a blow due to unfavourable international events as well as Russia's unclear stand on the economic proposals were responsible for the failure. The only thing that happened was an agreement signed for exploring Sakhalin oil development project in between the Soviet Ministry of foreign trade and Sakhalin oil development Cooperation in 1975 (Curtis, 1977:147-174).

However, recent developments display a positive outlook about Russia-Japan relation, as Japan is investing quite enthusiastically in energy and infrastructure projects in Russia. Sakhalin project is likely to be started soon (Itoh, 2011).

4.6.1: Crude Oil Pipeline: ESPO, Sakhalin-1 and Sakhalin-2

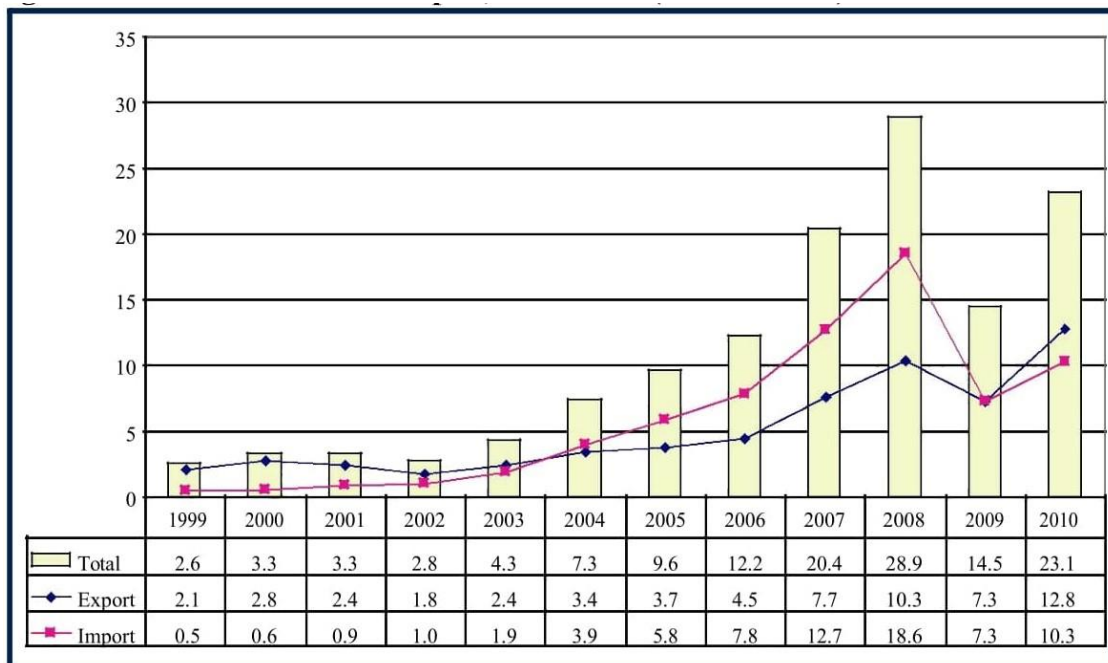
The dawn of the twenty-first century brought liveliness to the vexed pipeline issue. The oil potential in western Siberia which was in peak during the 1970s and the Soviet leadership did not pay adequate attention to develop its oil route in the eastern regions. Itoh argues that "The declining productivity of natural gas in western Siberia is less serious than that of crude oil, but it is also coming to be realised as a long-run problem. Development of untapped hydrocarbon potential in the eastern regions has become Russia's Achilles' heel so long as Russia wishes to maintain its current level of oil and gas production or even increase these volumes in the future" (Itoh, 2010:20)

Russia considered Japan as an important the not only for its financial lending but also in terms of a power against robust China. Also, the close relationship with Japan would

have favoured as a connecting window for its Eastern part towards the North Asian region and potentially increased its political influence against the geographically attached historical rival China which was growing very swiftly.(Itoh, 2010). Russia was very conscious about China's expansionist tendency towards its eastern region. Hence the growing influence of Japan in its eastern region made Russia comfortable as it saw Japan as a balancing power fulfilling its geopolitical need (Itoh, 2010).

Lo argues that “With the passage of time, Russia and Japan interpreted the statement in different ways. It appeared that Moscow took it for granted that the Japanese government officially promised to finance the construction of the ESPO pipeline if Russia would decide to build an oil pipeline extending to the Pacific Coast instead of realising the Sino-Russian route. In other words, Moscow failed to pay serious attention to the fact that the economic viability of the ESPO project was still unsatisfactory from Tokyo's point of view” (Lo, 2008:249).

Table 5: Russia’s Trade with Japan from 1999-2010 (Million Dollars)



Source: Customs statistics of foreign trade of the Russian Federation, Moscow: Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation, various years (Itoh, 2011:45).

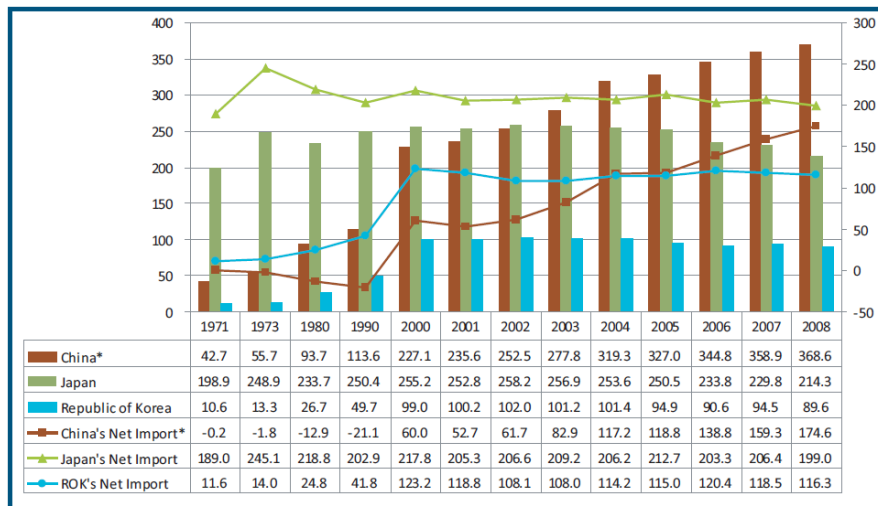
Due to the rapid economic growth of the Russian economy, the Russia-Japanese bilateral trade continued to increase from 2002 to 2008 despite its initial deadlocks. The export of Crude oil brought Russia and Japan closer in the economic front as it happened in the case of the Sino-Russian economic relations. Russia's exports of crude oil to Japan rose from 1.6 million tons in 2006 to 8.1 million tons in 2009 with the increase in production of the Sakhalin-1 project. With the beginning of the first phase of the Eastern Siberia Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline, it reached up to 13.2 million tons (Itoh, 2011:5).

Russia-Japan relation improved exponentially in recent time in every sphere such as economic, political and social. Trade relation increases, as well as Japanese investment in energy infrastructure in Eastern Siberia, lead to greater cooperation in other fields.

4.7: Oil and Gas Markets in Asia-Pacific Region

Geopolitics in the 21st century has been mostly centred on the questions of how global sources of energy are extracted, owned and traded. Securing energy security has become “raison d'être” of modern nation states. Oil, coal and natural gas significantly determine the level of industrialisation and establishment of a robust military-industrial complex. Energy is the most important political apparatus used by the Russian Federation as well as its predecessor USSR. Availability of good amount of energy resources has contributed to fast industrialisation and establishment of high ranked heavy industry, the space program and nuclear program. Apart from economic growth; energy also plays an important role in its regional and international power projection. Russia's energy policy has been inextricably linked with its foreign policy as Russian government described in its policy paper on “Russian Energy Strategy until 2020” (2003) that the nation “has significant energy resources and a potent fuel-energy complex, which are the basis of economic development, tools for domestic and foreign policy, and the country’s role in the world energy markets largely determines its geopolitical influence” (Russian Federation, 2003).

Table 6: Demand for Oil (left axis) and Net Imports of Crude Oil (right axis) in Northeast Asia, 1971–2008 (Mtoe)



Sources: International Energy Agency, Energy Balances of OECD Countries; Energy Statistics of Non-OECD Countries; Energy Statistics of OECD Countries (Paris: IEA, various years).

This Table explains that China is the biggest market for primary energy in the world. It surpassed the US as the biggest consumer of energy in 2009. In the last few years, China demand for primary energy is growing dramatically. While demand for primary energy in Japan has already reached its peak point. It is estimated to decrease in the next few years. Energy consumption in South Korea is almost stable since 2000 when it reached its highest stage (World Energy Outlook 2010: 87).

4.8: Security cooperation in Asia-Pacific region

Eastern Siberia is strategically important for Russia for its security engagement in the Asia-pacific region. It also provides Russia “A Window for Asia”. Importance of the region for Russian security policy ranging from its military deployment to bilateral and multilateral defence exercises. The region is crucial for Russian-Chinese security coordination and peace maintenance in the Asia Pacific. Russian-Chinese strategic cooperation is crucial for understanding Russia’s security policy in the Asia Pacific. The asymmetric relation between Russia's least developed Eastern Siberian region and economically developed region of Asia Pacific poses a potential strategic threat for

stability in Russia. Russia's security policy towards Asia Pacific region is closely related with the development of eastern Siberia as both of frontier and a gateway for Asia. After the disintegration of USSR, Russia revived its relations with the East Asian countries (Kuhrt, 2007:10-45).

Russia is making strategic relations with East Asian countries that are detailed in the following points:

- “Strategic partnership with China (2005)”.
- “Bilateral relations with Japan”.
- “Bilateral relations with South Korea”.
- “Russia’s approach to Multilateralism”.
- “The Russian-Chinese border as a source of insecurity”. (Kuhrt, 2007:10-45).

Russian policy for eastern Siberia as a window for Asia started with famous Vladivostok speech of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986. Putin extended his policy towards East Asia and joined multilateral organisations in Asia for economic and strategic cooperation. The Shanghai cooperation organisation (SCO) is one of the first organisations joined by Russia for security purpose in the region. In 2003 the six-party talks on North Korean nuclear developments joined by Russia. For the economic purpose, Russia has strongly participated in APEC summit. Under the leadership of president Putin Russia is finally shifting its strategy for long-term development of the eastern Siberia while strengthening strategic and economic partnerships with the Asia-Pacific countries (Maeda, 2014).

4.9: The Energy Exploration in the Eastern Siberian Region and Its Impact

Eastern Siberian region emerges as a major area for the production of hydrocarbons in recent years. With the exploration of hydrocarbons and an accelerated drive of foreign oil and gas companies toward the region has lead to the emergence of many socio-economic, environmental, political and developmental issues. These are:

- “Production of hydrocarbons and its export to external market.”

- “The issue of equitable sharing of profits through the production of hydrocarbons with the region.”
- “Securing the rights of indigenous people of Eastern Siberia.”
- “Issue of illegal migration from China and growing radicalisation of the unsatisfied population of Eastern Siberia.”
- “Environmental degradation in the region” (Buccellato and Mickiewicz, 2009)

The growing hydrocarbon demands in the Asia-pacific region, the large inflow of foreign investment in the energy sector of Eastern Siberia and geopolitical importance of the region has prompted Moscow to reinvigorate its policy in eastern Siberia (Suspitsyn, 2012). “Because of the pipeline route and exploration of energy, Eastern Siberia is facing social and environmental problems. Russian federation knew the complexity of the problems, that is why the Russian Federation undertook a number of policies aimed to reorganize administrative structures in the Eastern Siberia” (Hill and Gaddy, 2003).

Russian federation's development programs in the eastern Siberia have the considerable impact on the rights of indigenous people that causes resentment among them against the federation. The government now tries to reconcile the indigenous population's rights with various social, economic and political policies.

4.10: Social, Political and Economic policies of Russian Federation towards Eastern Siberia

For the promotion of social and political rights of the native people of eastern Siberia Russian federation has initiated various development programs and schemes (Kryazhkov, 2013):

- “Land rights of indigenous people were recognised and secured through legal provisions. Instead of ordinary property rights, land use rights were given according to the residence of indigenous people on their respective lands from the time immemorial’.

- “Land rights were made inalienable, and transfer of land of indigenous people was legally prohibited’.
- “Government prioritises the indigenous people for the allocation of land over other peoples for the maintenance of their traditional way of life and traditional economic activities;.
- “There is provision for representation of native peoples in legislative assemblies through quota and establishment of local self-government bodies..
- “The government ensured that local self-governing organisations are suitable for the peculiarities of the livelihood of native people and community ownership of economic activities;.
- “The relationship between indigenous people and development authorities and industrial developers were improved through proper representation of native people in the industry and public development authority;.
- “Public associations of native peoples are given rights in relation to legislative initiatives and for the provisioning of their permanent participation in decision making on issues that affect the rights of native peoples.”
- Cultural diversity was secured through legal provisions, and indigenous languages of local people were also specially recognised through constitutional provision (RUSSIAN CONST. art. 22).

After the collapse of Soviet Union, numbers of schemes were implemented for the development of native people of Eastern Siberia, but some grievances of these people remain such as lack of socio-cultural integration and existence of the perception of “We” and “Other”. The government should progressively integrate local people as the national asset and for the development of a robust strategic policy of using the region of eastern Siberia as the ‘window to Asia’.

Chapter 5

5. Conclusion

In the process of the study, all the aspects of the geopolitics of Eastern Siberia were discussed in depth. Eastern Siberia plays an important role in Russian geopolitical strategy. In the seventeenth century, the region of Eastern Siberia was colonised by Russia. The historical background as well as geography, demography is also discussed in detail. The location, as well as its mineral resources and Fur tribute, attracted the Russian Tsar to occupy the territory. After the Bolshevik revolution, the Soviet Union with the help of 'GULAG system' and labour camps built many factories, big power stations, mines; railway lines which were more colonised than the Tsarist period as the Tsars focused themselves only in erecting forts and towns in the region. The intention of Soviet Union was just to exploit the natural resources of the Eastern Siberia; no work was undertaken for the development of this region during this period.

When Gorbachev came into power, he in his 1986 Vladivostok speech emphasised on the poor condition of the Siberian part and focused on the improving the relationship with China. After the collapse of Soviet Union, the affinity of newly emerged Russian state was towards the western allies. With the passage of time when the relations began degrading, as the western countries criticised Russia for using its 'Energy diplomacy' in infringing the national interests of those countries. Moreover, also Russia searched alternatives as the dependence on the west is not conducive for its geopolitical diplomacy, so it started searching new markets in Eastern Asia for this the development of the Eastern Siberian region was indispensable.

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter mainly dealt with the introduction of the area and research design. It also gives an overview of the research. The research work accomplished the objectives, research questions, hypotheses, definition, rationale and scope of the study. The major research questions which are discussed in this study such as the importance of eastern Siberia, its cultural composition, why the Russian authorities are so interested in this region, what are the major factors that determine the geopolitics of the eastern Siberian region and what role eastern Siberia

can play in shaping the Russian foreign policy as well as towards “a window for Asia” especially in the eastern front.

This study was based on the assumption that in order to promote its foreign policy, eastern Siberia was used as an important strategic area by Gorbachev and to bring closer cooperation with China. The second assumption was that the Siberian region could play an important role in bringing Russia closer to its East Asian allies by becoming “a window for the Asia Pacific region”.

The conceptual framework is building upon various theories of International relations especially the theory of geopolitics. First, we delved into the famous ‘heartland theory’ of Mackinder focusing on the land power, then Mahan's theory was discussed dealing with the sea supremacy, then finally Spykeman's Rimland theory was discussed at length. We are indebted to Huortori and his analysis of how Russia is making use of these three theories in order to play as an important actor in the international arena promoting its national interest.

The second chapter dealt comprehensively with the social, political and economic dimensions of Eastern Siberia. The study found the social composition of the region was not similar to Russia. The indigenous people felt segregated, inferior to the occupier Russians. On the political front, the governing institutions are mostly dominated by the higher echelons of Moscow as the power was centralised. The local populace lack in space in governance and have no autonomy. Since the Tsar period, the region was economically exploited the dominant Russian regimes. After the Bolshevik revolution and Industrialization paved the path for more intense exploitation.

In the third chapter commence with Gorbachev's historical Vladivostok speech in 1986 in which he invokes the urgent need for the development of the eastern Siberian region as well as the need to improve the close ties with adjacent China which was earlier neglected by the regimes and is now an emerging potential partner. Gorbachev in his ‘glasnost’ and ‘perestroika’ recognised the rights of the native population and with this little independence, the political activity began in this part. They started building political organisations, and the feeling of nationalism began to emerge. These rights were not

effective in their true sense and were not being enjoyed by the populace as Moscow has restrained the regional autonomy and centralised the power in its hand. The developmental model of the Russian Federation was in favour of Moscow as the eastern Siberian region has been segregated to the periphery.

With the help of the conceptual framework, the study discussed the geopolitical importance of eastern Siberia in the fourth chapter. The location of eastern Siberia is very crucial from the strategic point of view as it could be the point from where Japan, China and South Korea are easily accessible. The natural resources especially the hydrocarbon reservoir playing a major role in making it a crucial vantage point. As the reservoir of Western Siberia are exhausting and new oil fields are coming into existence in this region, Russia is trying to free itself from the oil export dependency towards West and seek new opportunities in the Eastern region amid emerging powers like China, Japan and South Korea. Eastern Siberia is now playing an important in Russia's foreign policy. The ESPO pipeline project made way for Russian entry into the Asia- Pacific market, thus eastern Siberia turned “a window for Asia”. Through the economic and commercial engagements via Eastern Siberian region, Russia is penetrating itself to SAARC and ASEAN countries.

Thus, this research with the help of extensive study and data analysis has proved it is both the hypothesis. The first assumption that is, ‘To bring closer cooperation with China, the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev used Eastern Siberia to promote the country’s foreign policy has been proved through the various arguments below:

As the cold war was coming towards its end and the seeds of Globalisation were germinating, Russia felt to expand its economic and political horizons. To counter its traditional rival USA and to engage with the newly rising power China, the leadership of Russia began to search new alternatives like Eastern Siberia to obtain resources in order to strengthen its economy. For the first time in history, the Russian leadership fully concentrated towards the development of eastern Siberia, as manifested in the proclamation of Perestroika and Glasnost by Gorbachev in his historic speech in 1986. These developments made Eastern Siberia a crucial point in determining Russia's foreign policy, for example, the ESPO pipeline, SAKHALIN 1, SAKHALIN 2 etc.

The second assumption, 'The geopolitical location of Eastern Siberia provides Russia with a 'window for Asia-pacific region' has been proven through the geopolitical study of the Eastern Siberian region. The location, as well as the presence of natural resources, provides easy accessibility for Russia to connect its neighbouring countries and Asia-Pacific region. The strategic location of the region bordering China, Mongolia in the south, creates a possibility to have better ties between them. The hydrocarbon projects in this region give Russia an easy entry in the Asia- Pacific markets. In a way, it is 'a window for Asia' for Russia.

As per the findings, the study highlights that Russia should enact its policy of development in such a way that strengthens its economy make cordial relations with the neighbourhood without affecting the socio-political and economic status and identity of eastern Siberian people. The ongoing projects of ESPO pipeline, SAKHALIN1 and SAKHALIN are degrading the Natural Environment. The immigrating population from China is snatching the job opportunities of the local populace. To achieve long-term benefits and stability Russia should target on resolving the above issues.

This study opens the door for further research in East Asian integration, Pacific expansion of Russian policy and exploring the East Siberian natural resources. This study can be useful for policy makers, academicians and researchers in the field of geopolitics, diplomacy, environment and policy making.

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