

**POLITICAL PROCESSES AND
CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN
DAGESTAN, 1991-2010**

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requirements for the award of the Degree of*

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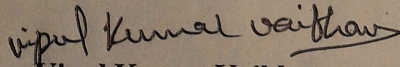
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
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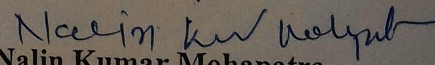
I declare that the dissertation entitled "POLITICAL PROCESSES AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN DAGESTAN, 1991-2010", submitted by me for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.


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CERTIFICATE

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


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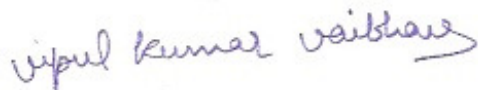
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CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Design	1-5
Chapter 2: Historical perspective on Dagestan (pre-soviet era till 1991)	6-28
2.1 Russian conquest of North Caucasus, including Dagestan, till 19th century	6
2.2 Formation of Soviet Union and Dagestan's position in the USSR	10
2.3 Socio-political changes in North Caucasus and Dagestan	13-21
2.3.1 Socio-political changes during Russian colonization	13
2.3.2 Socio-political changes under USSR	18
2.4 Soviet policy during and after Stalin regime and persecutions	22
2.5 Summary	27
Chapter 3: Russian Constitutional System and Federal Polity and their Implications on Dagestan (1991-2000)	29-44
3.1 USSR in Transition	29
3.2 Political crisis in Moscow during Soviet collapse	31
3.3 Moscow's policy towards North Caucasus	34
3.4 New Constitution 1993	36
3.5 Administrative system in Dagestan during the period 1992-99	40
3.6 Summary	43

Chapter 4: Ethnic Polarization and Nature of Political Process in Dagestan 1991-2010	45-68
4.1 Spillover effect of Soviet collapse	45
4.2 Administrative structures and ethnic polarization in Dagestan	50
4.3 Post-1993 Constitution and the questions of Federal relations	55
4.4 Second Chechen War	57
4.5 1999 Putin's political realignment of the political forces	61
4.6 Summary	66
Chapter 5: International actors and Dagestan politics	69-86
5.1 Regional actors in Caucasus	69
5.2 International actors in Caucasus	73
5.3 Impact of Chechnya conflict on Dagestan	77
5.4 Russia's response to reconciliation approach towards Dagestan conflict vis-à-vis external actors	79
5.5 Outcomes of the international negotiations and engagements in the North Caucasus region	80
5.6 Summary	84
Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion	87-92
References	93-107

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The Republic of Dagestan is one of the 85 federal subjects of the Russian Federation. The word “Dagestan” literally means “the land of mountains”. It is situated in the southernmost part of Russia, known as North Caucasus, and in the eastern most extremity of the Caucasus. It is connected through land, with Azerbaijan, Georgia, Stavropol Krai, the Republic of Chechnya and Kalmykia, and sea with the Caspian littoral states, viz. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (StratRisks 2012; Sagramoso 2007: 683-685). Dagestan is very important to Russia in many ways as its territory provides opportunities of access to energy transportation routes, energy and raw materials. The total land area of the republic is 50,300 square kilometers and the total length from north to south is about 400 kilometers (StratRisks 2012). Dagestan’s geographical location is very significant as it lies at the crossroads of many civilizations, viz. Slavic, European, Turkish, Islam and Persian (StratRisks 2012). From the military and strategic point of view, the republic is also very crucial for the Russian Federation both for ensuring socio-political and economic stability on its southern borders as well as for maintaining its influence over the large swathes of the Caucasus region, the West Asia and Central Asia (StratRisks 2012). The length of its coastline is about 530 kilometers. Dagestan’s portion of Caspian Sea coast is longest in the Russian coast of the Caspian Sea. The Dagestani shore at the Caspian Sea is rich in natural resources, viz. hydrocarbons, biological resources, including sturgeon etc. (StratRisks 2012; Sagramoso 2007: 683-685).

Dagestan formally came under Russian rule in 1813 through the Treaty of Gulistan with Iran. However, Russia had to pursue military campaign for the next 50 years, i.e. till 1859, to establish full control over the region (Hille 2010: 47; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 494). On 20 January 1921, the Dagestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was established. In the wake of the Soviet collapse, the Republic of Dagestan was acceded to Federation Treaty in March 1992. The treaty lessened the power of the federal

government, and provided significant economic, cultural, and legislative autonomy to the constituent units, including Dagestan, of the Russian Federation (Churchward 1968: 79-80; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 500; Wessenlink 1995).

Dagestan is Russia's most ethnically heterogeneous and diverse society as it is home to 14 ethnic groups, viz. Avars, Dargins, Kumyks, Lezgins, Laks, Azerbaijanis, Tabasarans, Russians, Chechens, Nogais, Aguls, Rutuls, Tsakhurs and Tats; with Avars as the largest group. Around 91% of the population are predominantly Sunni Muslims, around 4% are Shiite Muslims and upto 5% are Christian (mostly Orthodox) and less than 1% are Jews. There are 34 ethno-linguistic groups in Dagestan and the tensions among them make it intrinsically unstable, while Dagestan's relation with the rest of the Russian Federation makes it extrinsically unstable. All inter-ethnic conflicts in the republic are based on the issues like allotment of government jobs, possession of land, administrative powers, control of resources and housing. Avars, being the largest ethnic group in Dagestan, comprises around 28% of the population. The second largest group is the Dargin which comprises 16% of the population. Kumyks and Lezgins comprise 14.9% and 13.3% respectively of the population, and the latter mainly inhabits the southernmost tip of Dagestan. Russian nationals and Chechens comprise 7% and 4.5% of the population respectively (Ware et al. 2003b: 04-05). The top echelons of power are mainly held by top three or four largest nationalities (ethnic groups), viz. Avars, Dargins, Kumyks and Lezgins, in the republic in various proportions. The ethnic factor is also covertly relevant in business. By practice, all businesses related to oil sector are dominated by Avars, gas sector by Kumyks and within organizations favour is given to those belonging to the same ethnic group of the leader. Unemployment is a major problem in Dagestan and the corrupt job distribution system exacerbates the situation; as favoritism on the basis of ethnicity is the decisive factor (*Census of the Russian Federation 2010; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 36-37; Ware 1998: 346; Ware et al. 2003b: 04-05).

The Dagestan's political system based on Consociational democracy as there is a political arrangement in which various ethnic and ethno-linguistic groups within the country, whether largest or smallest, share power according to an agreed formula or mechanism

i.e. 1994 and 2003 Dagestan's Constitutions (Kisriev and Ware 2001). Dagestani political system is puts emphasis on "ethnic quotas" within the administrative edifice, which is inherited from the Soviet administration. The system advocates representation of different ethnicities at different levels of power depending on their proportion in the population. The distribution of federal subsidies among various regions is one of the dominant issues in Dagestani politics. Arend Lijphart (1969: 211) suggests three variables, viz. the political culture, the role structure and the behavior of the political elites, which are accountable for the stability of the political system and consociational democracy; and he believes that strong cohesion within the subcultures is one of the most conducive factors to consociational democracy. Consociational democracy, according to Lijphart, means government machinery designed to turn a system with diverse socio-political cultures into a stable democracy (Lijphart 1969: 216). The adoption of 1994 and 2003 Constitutions in Dagestan is such an attempt by the political elites towards Consociationalism (Ware and Kisriev 2001). Lijphart maintains that – "Consociational democracy disregards the principle of majority rule but it doesn't deviate very much from normative democratic theory" (Lijphart 1969: 214).

J. David Singer (1961) suggests "three levels or three images" of analysis which are prominent in the international system. The First-image is the Individual Level of analysis which lays emphasis on the specific psyche of human being. The Second-Image analysis is the National/State Level of analysis which refers to the internal structure of the states making distinction between good and bad states and ideally trying to change them for the better. Third-image analysis is the Systemic Level of analysis that takes account of the dominant forces in the system that cause war and their significance within the system as a whole (Singer 1961). Thus, according to Cornell (2001), three types of entities, viz. external great powers, regional powers and state actors, are functional in the Caucasus region, including Dagestan. The external great powers are the US, EU, Russia and China who associate their own interests with the local matters of the region in order to gain more and more influence over it. The regional powers in the region are Iran, Russia and Turkey. The state actors comprise Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan (Cornell 2001). Russia, thus, still has far greater role within the region.

It sees control over the Caucasus as one of the most important elements in its national security, any loss of the former's control over the latter is seen in Moscow as a severe setback in Russia's ambition to remain a great power (Cornell 2001: 383). The US has found the region important enough for its national interests and hence in the prolongation of its national security to step up its presence there dramatically. The US, due to its large geographical distance, is the only power which has the option of withdrawing from the "Caucasian game" at any point time (Cornell 2001: 384). All other states, viz. Turkey, Iran Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and even Russia, are compelled to take the Caucasus into account in the consideration of their national security (Cornell 2001: 384).

Although it is believed that the conflict in North Caucasus is an internal matter of the Russian Federation but it is attracting a large number of international actors viz. terrorists, NGOs, great powers and regional powers. Some of them tend to take advantage of the volatile situation while some seek conflict resolution in the region. Furthermore, the large hydrocarbon reserves in the Caspian region and Central Asia also attract these international actors who see the region both as a supplier and source of hydrocarbons as well as energy transit route to the West. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline is one such example having tremendous geopolitical importance (Starr and Cornell 2005).

This paper seeks to put light on some basic and important aspects of Dagestan like the nature of its political system and the role of federal policy in shaping the political and constitutional development in Dagestan since 1991 till 2010. Since ethnicity is the most important entity in Dagestan which dominates the socio-political life of the republic, so the paper will focus on the nature of political institutionalization process that seeks to bridge ethnic gaps in the ethnic relations in the republic. The paper will also focus on the impact of the ongoing ethnic conflicts in North Caucasus on Dagestan. Given the geopolitical location and energy reserves as well as the ongoing conflicts in the whole Caucasus region, a considerable number of international actors are attracted towards the region. Thus, the paper will examine whether these external actors are playing any role in causing conflict in the region.

Hence, this whole paper revolves around the hypothesis that whether the political system of Dagestan is influenced by the two main factors, viz. federal policy and internal social contradictions. This paper will test the given hypothesis on the basis of some parameters discussed in the forthcoming chapters.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DAGESTAN (PRE-SOVIET ERA TILL 1991)

Russian conquest of North Caucasus, including Dagestan, till 19th century

The North Caucasus has been subjected to many conquests beginning from Arab conquest in 664 AD. Many bloody wars were fought and some invaders succeeded, while many failed to conquer the region. It was only in the early 8th century that the Arabs led by the Caliphate of Hisham succeeded in establishing a base in Derbent (formerly Derbend). Dagestan was first occupied by the Ottomans in the second half of the 16th century; invaded by the Persians in the 18th century and finally annexed by the Russians in the early 19th century. This marked the beginning of Dagestan's transition from an alignment with the south, i.e. West Asia, to an alignment with the north, i.e. Russia. However, it was not an easy development as the sense of belonging to the Islamic world was so strong that it culminated into religiously inspired revolts which continued in the 20th century and even today (Akiner 1983: 123-24; Hille 2010: 47-48; Cornell 2001: 11-13).

The first wave of Russian expansion towards the North Caucasus came in 1556 with the annexation of Astrakhan and ended with a military disaster in 1604 when the Russian army was crushed by the people of Dagestan supported by the Ottomans (Matveeva 1999: 5). In the beginning of the 17th century, Persia met stiff resistance in Dagestan. Hadji-Daud, a local religious leader, declared war on the Persian invaders while propagating the belief that Allah had sent him to wage jihad against the Shia rulers of the south and free the local Sunni population. Kazi-Kumukh's sovereign, Surhai-Khan, and Akhmed-Khan of Kaitag also supported him in his campaign. Finally, Hadji-Daud's movement succeeded in driving the Persian invaders out of Dagestan and northern

Azerbaijan by 1721 (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 493-94). It was a historical event when an imperial power faced defeat in the hands of Dagestanis and was pushed back to the south, but soon a new imperial expansion loomed over Dagestan from north: it was Russia under Peter the Great I. In 1722, Russians launched their first intervention in Dagestan with Peter's army conquering the ancient Dagestani city of Derbent, Tarku and Kuba while marching down along the Caspian Sea coast till Baku. Peter's campaign ended unsuccessfully and he was compelled to withdraw his forces and just 10 years later, he had to cede its claim of Dagestan to Persia (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 494; Hille 2010: 47; Matveeva 1999: 5; Reynolds 2004: 4). However, the mountaineers of Dagestan refused to surrender to the Persians inducing a fierce confrontation. In three years of struggle, they defeated the Persians, under Nadir Shah, and forced them to withdraw from the North Caucasus. The Dagestani mountaineers strongly repelled all attempts by outsiders to conquer the region and emerged invincible (Reynolds 2004: 4; Hille 2010: 47).

Russian Czar Nicholas I's invasion of the North Caucasus, including Chechnya and Dagestan, continued in the early 19th century. In the beginning of the 19th century, the Russians were expanding their territory in the North Caucasus. Thus the three regional powers; viz. Russia, Turkey, and Persia; got engaged in the long diplomatic and military struggles against each other which occurred along the Caspian shoreline and the Caucasian mountain range. After decades of fighting, Russia finally acquired Dagestan through the 1813 treaty with Persia, called the Treaty of Gulistan. For the next 50 years, Russia kept pursuing military campaign at its disposal to establish influence over the region (Hille 2010: 47; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 494).

In 1803 Avaria, one of the most important khanates of Dagestan was conquered by the Russians (Baddeley 1908: 295-296; Hille 2010: 48). During the first half of the 19th century, most of the areas and cities in the North Caucasus were transferred from one state to another state through treaties (Malanczuk 1997: 148; Hille 2010: 48). In 1818, General Ermolov, a Russian chief commander in the Caucasus, ordered to build fortress in the North Caucasus with the purpose of subjugating the Chechens who were defiant and constantly fighting the Russian troops. This new fortress was called Groznaya,

meaning -- threatening fortress. In 1819 most of the important free communities of Dagestan had acknowledged Russian power. In summer of the same year, the Russians conquered Tabasaran (Baddeley 1908: 129). On August 1819 Sheki, an Azerbaijani territory ceded to Russia in the 1813 Treaty of Gulistan with Persians, was proclaimed a Russian Province (Baddeley 1908: 130). In June 1820, Kazi-Kumukh too was conquered by the Russians (Baddeley 1908: 136; Hille 2010: 48). The Russians were joined by the free people of the Kubachi inhabiting the mountains of Kaitagh. In 1820, the Khan of Kazi-Kumukh fomented an uprising amongst his neighbors but was defeated by the Russians at Khozrek and his capital was annexed and his khanate incorporated with Kiurin. In 1824, the community of Kusu-bu, including Ghimri, exchanged hostages as part of a peace deal where hostages were given a word of honor (Baddeley 1908: 236; Hille 2010: 48). On 30 August 1829 Shirvan, another Azerbaijani city, was declared a Russian Province after its annexation in the 1813 Treaty of Gulistan (Baddeley 1908: 139; Hille 2010: 48).

In 1829, the Murid war (1829-59) began in the North Caucasus in which Dagestani and Chechen clans together fought against the Russian invasion. Their leaders -- Kazi-Mullah¹, Hamzad Bek² and Imam Shamil³ -- were clergymen who favored Muridism which combined religion and politics. Their goal was to create a Muslim state in Dagestan, Chechnya and other Muslim North Caucasus territories. In 1832 Dargo was occupied and annihilated by the Russians (Hille 2010: 48-49; Baddeley 1908: 275; Gammer 1994). On 13 September 1834, Dagestan's Ghimri was conquered and in October, other Dagestani cities of Gherghebil and Gotsatl also fell to Russian occupation

¹Kazi-Mullah (or Ghazi Muhammad or Kazi-Magomed) was a Dagestani Islamic scholar and ascetic who was the first Imam (military and political leader of Muslims) of the Caucasian Imamate from 1828 to 1832. Caucasian Imamate (1828-1859) was the state established by the Imams of Dagestan and Chechnya in the North Caucasus to resist Russian conquest of the region during the Caucasian War.

²Hamzad Bek was the second Imam of the Caucasian Imamate, from 1832 to 1834, who succeeded Kazi-Mullah upon his death in 1832. After his death in 1834, Imam Shamil became the third Imam of Dagestan.

³Imam Shamil was the third Imam of the Caucasian Imamate, from 1834 to 1859, and the leader of the tribes of the Northern Caucasus who bravely led a bitter struggle against Russian colonization until his capture in 1859.

(Baddeley 1908: 286-287; Hille 2010: 49). In 1837 Circassia was ceded by the Ottoman Empire to Russia after it had been occupied by Russian troops (Burdett 1996: 41-66). In 1837 Shamil and the Russian Emperor signed a peace treaty which did not last long. On 21 March 1838, General Golovin was appointed the new Russian chief commander for the Caucasus who outlined a war strategy for the occupation of Northern Dagestan and Chechnya (Hille 2010: 49; Gammer 1994).

The Circassian emissaries frequently visited Shamil, from 1828 to Shamil's capture in 1859, in order to get his advice on planned uprisings against the Russians. This strengthened and legitimized Shamil's position in the whole Northern Caucasus (Hille 2010: 49; Burdett 1996: 413; Gammer 1994). In 1846 the Murids, mostly Chechens and Dagestani, invaded Kabarda which had officially accepted Russian domination. An understanding was reached that Kabardians would support their fellow North-Caucassians against the Russians (Burdett 1996: 425-426). In October 1846, Shamil was defeated by the Russians. His Darghi confederacy and its capital Akusha which he had occupied earlier were snatched. Shamil was now reduced to rear guard actions only (Hille 1964: 49; Gammer 1994).

In 1857, Russians formulated a new strategy for the surrender of the North Caucasus. The Russian troops successfully occupied entire lower Chechnya in the ongoing war. In 1858 Shamil still held a portion of Northern Dagestan and the adjoining district of Andi and Ichkeria (South East Chechnya). During 1858 the Russians occupied more and more territory while Shamil lost several clans which turned to Russia and were incorporated in the Russian Empire. Finally, on 25 August 1859, Shamil had to surrender. His surrender was a huge military and psychological victory for Russia towards its forty three year attempt to annex the Northern Caucasus. In 1864 Circassia was the last entity to be placed under Russian domination in the Caucasus. During the following decades, incidental conflicts occurred between Russian troops and Caucasians (Hille 2010: 49; Barrett 1994: 353; Gammer 1994). After Dagestan had been totally annexed by the Russians, the principalities, viz. the Utsmiyat of the Kaitaks, the Shamkhalat of the Kazi-Kumukhs (Laks) and the Maasumat of the Tabasarans, were gradually abolished in 1819,

1828 and 1865 respectively and their lands brought under direct Russian administration (Akiner 1983: 124-25).

The 1917 Russian Revolution caused anarchy and unrest which forced the people of the North Caucasus to install their own political organs in the region. The state building activities later led to a united North Caucasus. However, the area stabilized slowly only after inefficiency, internal division and attacks by both the Red and the White armies ceased (Hille 2010: 51).

The Russian participation in the World War I had also set the stage for a series of momentous changes in the Caucasus. The Provisional government set up in Russia during 1917 Russian Revolution issued decrees that abolished all restrictive legislation imposed on minorities by the Czarist regime and established full equality for all citizens. The new government also introduced the principles of national self rule by placing the administration of territories that formed Empire in the hands of local committees (Hille 2010: 52; Pipes 1964: 50).

The Russian colonization in the area in the 19th century was accompanied by the state building process in the North Caucasus which helps understand two things. Firstly, the territorial claims of North Caucasian peoples since 1991; and secondly, the relation between the federal authority based in Moscow and the authorities in the North Caucasus, especially Dagestan (Hille 2010: 47).

Formation of Soviet Union and Dagestan's position in the USSR

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or Soviet Union was founded on 30 December 1922 during the first All-Union Congress of Soviets. The Union Treaty was approved along with the Declaration of the creation of the USSR on 29 December 1922 by the four founding republics, viz. the Russian SFSR (Soviet Federative Socialist Republic), the Transcaucasian SFSR, the Ukrainian SSR (Soviet Socialist Republic) and the Byelorussian SSR. On 30 December 1922, the first All-Union Congress of Soviets

confirmed the Treaty and the Declaration of the creation of the USSR. The Constitution of the USSR was formally adopted in January 1924 by the 2nd All-Union Congress of Soviets (Churchward 1968: 79-80; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 500).

About two years back from the creation of the USSR, i.e. on 13 November 1920, amid a battle between the Bolsheviks and the recalcitrant highlanders, the Dagestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was proclaimed in Temir-Khan Shura (now the town of Buynaksk) through an “Emergency Convention of the Peoples of Dagestan”. And, on 20 January 1921, the Dagestan ASSR was declared. The Constitution of Dagestan ASSR was adopted by the “Extraordinary Eleventh All-Dagestan Congress of Soviets” on 12 June 1937. The supreme bodies of state power were the unicameral Supreme Soviet of the Dagestan ASSR and its Presidium. There were 11 deputies per 7,000 inhabitants elected for four-year terms in the Supreme Soviet of the Dagestan ASSR. The Supreme Soviet formed the republic’s government, the Council of Ministers of Dagestan. The Dagestan ASSR was represented by 11 deputies in the Soviet of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Local bodies of state power were municipal, districts, settlement, and village Soviets of deputies of the working people elected by the population for a two-year term. The Supreme Soviet of the Dagestan ASSR elected the republic’s Supreme Court for a five-year term. The Supreme Court was composed of two judicial colleges, for criminal and civil cases, as well as the Presidium of the Supreme Court. The Procurator of the Dagestan ASSR was appointed by the Procurator General of the USSR for a five-year term (*Dagestanskaia ASSR 1958; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 500).

Initially, the Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus (MRNC), or the Mountain Republic or the Republic of the Mountaineers, was formed in the Northern Caucasus in the year 1918 and was dissolved in 1921 (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 24; Reynolds 2004). The MRNC comprised the territories of former Terek oblast and Dagestan oblast which today constitute the republics of Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania and part of Stavropol Krai of the Russian Federation. In the wake of the overthrow of Czar, a large number of prominent mountaineers came together from

across the North Caucasus and created an organization called the “Union of Allied Mountaineers of the North Caucasus” (UAM) and its Executive Committee was elected in March 1917 whose Chairman, Tapa Tchermoeff, had been a leader in the National-Liberation Movement of the people of the North Caucasus. In August 1917, the Central Committee of the Northern Caucasus adopted the 1847 Constitution of Shamil. The UAM found a secure future in Russia and saw it not only as an oppressor but also as a key for development and access to the western society and the world, and thus it always wanted to remain a part of democratic Russia. However, UAM was opposed to the Bolsheviks and the November 1917 overthrow of the Provisional Government and subsequent seizure of power by the former turned the UAM against Russia. Being unable to fight the strong Red Army, UAM started seeking external help, first from Tiflis (Transcaucasian Federation’s capital) and then Ottomans, to drive Bolsheviks out of North Caucasus. Nevertheless, the Ottomans failed in its campaign to rout Bolsheviks in the region and the latter continued to rule the North Caucasus (Reynolds 2004: 13-14). Finally, the Mountain Republic with Temir-Khan-Shura as capital was established, succeeding UAM, in May 1918 after the 1917 Russian revolution (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 24; Reynolds 2004). Said Shamil, grandson of Imam Shamil, Prime Minister Tapa Tchermoeff, Sheikh Ali-Khaji Akusha and Haidar Bamat were the republic’s main founders (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 24-25).

The Mountaineers fought the invading White Army, under General Anton Denikin, during the Russian Civil War that took place between Bolshevik’s Red Army and the pro-Czar White Army immediately after the 1917 Russian revolution. With the defeat of Denikin’s army in the hands of the Red Army, the fighting in the region came to an end in January 1920 and by June 1920, the Red Army had conquered the MRNC forcing the republic’s government to flee the region. In January 1921, the “Soviet Mountain Republic” of the Russian SFSR was founded. However, the Bolshevik’s promises to the republic of autonomous rule remained unfulfilled, and once Joseph Stalin came to power the republic was again abolished and new territorial divisions were made (Hille 2010: 57).

After the formation of Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), the federal government possessed authority over the formation of new subordinate units, internal boundaries, local administration, laws, social and economic policy, education, the union budget, war and peace, security, international relations, foreign trade and other union-wide matters (*Article 1 Constitution 1924).

Socio-political changes in North Caucasus and Dagestan

Socio-political changes during Russian colonization

The population living in the mountains has inhabited the area for centuries, sometimes millennia, due to which their knowledge of the region is unique. The fact that the areas were not easily accessible also resulted in the preservation of old religions and old cultures. The whole North Caucasus was, indeed, under the rule of the ancient state of Albania during the 4th and 5th centuries, and thus Christianity had spread all over the region including the plains and mountains of Dagestan. Some peoples, like the Circassians⁴, converted to Christianity in the 12th century, and converted to Islam by the Arabs in the 18th century (Jaimoukha 2001: 46-137; Akiner 1983: 123). When the Arabs introduced Islam, it spread rapidly ousting Christianity and the all time strong pagan cults from the region. Although several of the mountain peoples, viz. Kaitaks, Laks and Tabasarans, began to accept Islam almost immediately, their full conversion took place only by the 16th century or later. The majority of the population however kept their animist⁵ religion. It was only by the end of the 18th century that the last groups in Chechnya became Islamic. Dagestan was firmly established as part of the Islamic world and as the northern limit of the cultural world of the West Asia (Jaimoukha 2005: 106-117; Akiner 1983: 123; Hille 2010: 47).

⁴Circassians are the ethnic group belonging to the North Caucasus and are native to Circassia who were displaced during the Russian conquest of the Caucasus in the 19th century, especially after 1864 Russia-Circassia War. The term "Circassian" includes the Adyghe and Kabardian people.

⁵Animism refers to belief in the existence of individual spirits that inhabit natural objects and phenomena.

The colonization of Dagestan by Russia resulted in the birth of a new ideology based on Sufism, which was first started by Mullah Mohammed Yaraghi after he became the highest Sheikh-Murshid of the Naqshbandi⁶ brotherhood. His teaching spread a discourse of freedom of the Muslims from oppression and subordination. His main teaching was: *“A Moslem cannot be a slave, or anybody's subject; he should not pay taxes; and there should be equality among Muslims”* (Neverovsky 1847; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 495). His preaching argued that the true Muslims were those who were free from all forms of oppression and called both the oppressors and the oppressed as unbelievers or unfaithful. He further preached that a Christian who led a free life and never oppressed others was not an enemy of the Muslims (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 495). This approach raised question on one of the doctrines of Islam, called Zakat or Zakah or mandatory charity, which means purification. It was a common belief that – “a tithe given to the needy people purifies and legitimizes material prosperity”. Zakat contributions are derived from income from different sources of profit and property (Quran, 2:43; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 495). He believed that Zakat was wrongly practiced as it was made a mandatory tax which was rarely used for the intended purpose and was indeed misappropriated more by the Mullahs, Kadis and other clerics who used to manage its collection and distribution (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 495).

Mohammed Yaraghi thus rejected the customary practice of donating Zakat on the ground that a Muslim is a free man and is not liable to pay taxes to others (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 495). He referred to this passage from the Quran: *“If you give charity openly, this is good, but if you secretly help the poor it is better for you, and it covers all of your bad deeds”* (Quran, 2:271). On the basis of this passage, he argued that Zakat must not be imposed as a mandatory tax that one man pays to other but, indeed, Zakat is a free man’s duty towards his god and is meant exclusively to help the poor as well as others in need. Henceforth, he decided to refuse accepting a part of the Zakat which his djamaat had

⁶Naqshbandi refers to the Sunni spiritual order of Sufism with its spiritual roots in the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, through Abu Bakr who was the first Caliph and Prophet Muhammad's companion.

customarily allotted as his personal allowance. This had a good influence over the people of his village who acknowledged and accepted his new ideology (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 495-96; Agaev 1996: 85-86).

Russian hegemony, during and after the occupation of the North Caucasus, turned into a military administration featuring both autocracy as well as traditional local influences of Islam and adat (local customary law) (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 493). It created the government with bureaucratic fabric and form, and arbitrary in its policy. The bureaucrats often dispatched from the Christian dominated areas of the Caucasus, like Georgia and Armenia, to the region had developed connivance and patronage relations with the local aristocrats (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 493).

After Shamil's surrender in 1859, the Czar-administration created the Dagestani Oblast (province) of the Czarist Russia and founded new province based on the traditions of djamaats and adat. The administration strictly limited the practice of Sharia and persecuted the tariqat brotherhoods. This system of government assumed the shape of "Military-People administration" because the nature of administration in Dagestan was entirely military and no Russian civil laws were applicable there (Reynolds 2004: 8-9; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 497). Under the Russian rule, there occurred no change in the regime of the djamaats as it remained as it used to be before Shamil. The military administration now took over the authority of appointing the councils of "village elders" and "village judges". Clerics were stripped of power but Kadis remained the members of the courts for the time being. Village assemblies also lost any power and significance (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 497-98).

With the intention of keeping the region at par with Russian traditions, the Czar administration turned to local aristocracy irrespective of the substantial difference in the social statuses of the local group and its Russian counterpart. The administration resorted to brutal confiscation of lands from the local villagers for the imperial treasury, and then handed over the same to local elites who were loyal to the Russians. This model of socio-political institution imposed by Russia resulted in the emergence of "pseudo-aristocracy" of loyal local elites and the suppression of the formerly free djamaat populations who

were reduced to mere slaves (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 494; Reynolds 2004: 11-13; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 9-19). This practice weakened traditional systems of socio-political relations in the society in Dagestan resulting in the demoralization of old social system rather than the emergence of a new social system, which had been expected, and deterioration of the once democratic mountainous societies into little tyrannies with Russian military exercising and supporting arbitrary power. The common masses were left with no options but to choose between compliance and defiance to these paltry tyrannies. This resulted in the emergence of a new Sufi ideology of political resistance, liberation and self-determination, known as Muridism, in Dagestan and Chechnya (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 494; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 9-19).

Muridism refers to the spiritual movement of Dagestan's formerly free djamaat populations against the severe and drastic changes brought into their socio-cultural life by Czar's divisive and harsh politics. It aimed to protect Muslims and bring about their spiritual purification from the evils of perceived impurities of the new society and the aristocratic injustice imposed upon them by a foreign religion (Rodionov 2001: 35; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 494). Such political goals of the movement were mentioned in "Gazavat" (meaning: war of liberation) propounded by Mullah Mohammed Yaraghi (or Magomed Yaragsky). According to him, Gazavat was a revolt against all forms of oppression by the local aristocracy, local customs, soldiers and Czar's bureaucrats. This murid movement relied on the traditional organization of Sufi brotherhoods called "tariqats" which comprised an Islamic teacher (or sheikh) and his disciples (or murids). Thus, it soon strived for the transformation of the entire internal structure of Dagestan's society. It was done by murids to put against the Russians an effective resistance, which could only be ensured by uniting the Dagestani and Chechen Muslims and departing from adherence to particularism inherent in the traditional djamaats of Dagestan. Thus, waging war against Russia, the murids attacked local djamaats with the aim to establish Islamic sharia law replacing the customary law or adat (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 493-95; Reynolds 2004; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 9-19).

In 1913-14, Dagestan underwent a strong protest movement called the “opposition to the introduction of cyrillic (Russian) characters into the written language”. By practice, Kadis used to keep all village records in Arabic which proved unacceptable to the Czarist administration. Attempts were made by the Czarist administration to promote Russian language by replacing the Arabic language with the former. At last, a formal decree was issued by the Czarist administration leading to the seizure of the record books written in Arabic from the Kadis and the removal of Kadis from their jobs. New Russian-speaking clerks were appointed whose salaries were paid by the djamaats (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 498).

At the time of its inception in 1861, the military-people administration in Dagestan was designated as a temporary and transitional step. Whenever, the issue of setting up a civil government was put before the corrupt Caucasian administration, it raised various pretexts for maintaining the status quo. This colonial regime ended with the fall of Czarism in Russia (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 498).

Islamic societies were set up at three places, viz. Temir-Khan Shura (now Buynaksk), Port Petrovsk, and Derbent, in Dagestan in April 1917. All-Caucasian convention of Muslims, which was convened in Baku on 15 April 1917, led to the emergence of two Islamic political organizations -- one was meant for North Caucasus and, the other for South Caucasus. In the year 1917, the United Mountaineers was founded in Vladikavkaz under the leadership of an Avar, Nazhmudin Gozinsky, who took over the title of “Mufti of Dagestan and the North Caucasus”. Its objective was to include sharia in the judicial system. During the First Convention of Muslims of Russia held in May 1917, Dagestanis registered good presence and good-representation. The 1917 Russian revolution liberated the people of Dagestan from exploitative clutches of feudalism and bureaucracy, and the djamaats too started returning gradually to traditional forms of self-governance (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 499).

Socio-political changes under USSR

During the Russian civil war, the local Bolsheviks along with the Red Army officers had teamed up with local guerrilla leaders to set up a new political order in Dagestan replacing the old one under the Czarist rule. The revolutionary committees formed by the Bolshevik leaders in Moscow had the task of assigning power to the armed forces (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 25; Kisriev and Ware 2006: 500).

Nevertheless, the new order established by the Bolsheviks was almost similar to the old one under Czarist rule and this led to widespread disappointment culminating into mass revolts. A big uprising broke out in September 1920 under the banner of Islam with Imam Nazhmudin Gozinskii as its leader. The Bolsheviks came under immense pressure by Gozinskii to reassess their approach in the governance of Dagestan, due to which they responded by offering compromise with traditional village structures as well as with Islam. As a part of compromise, they set up local organs of power to be elected by people and replaced revolutionary committees with Village Soviets or Councils. The popular Bolshevik slogan of “Power to the Soviets”, which was raised during the 1917 Russian Revolution and Civil war, also resembled the goals of the Dagestani highlanders. A campaign started by the Bolsheviks in the mid-1920s to disarm Chechnya and Dagestan led to another round of rebellion against the regime (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 500; Reynolds 2004: 16).

Moscow later felt the need of giving political sovereignty to Dagestan, thus came the Dagestan ASSR into existence in 1920-21 (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 500). Thus the most significant compromise done by the Bolsheviks was granting the “right to govern based upon their laws and customs” to Dagestan. Since, by that time, adat had become a mere tool in the hands of Czar for carrying out his colonial rule in the region and sharia and the power of the Islamic Ullema; including kadis, mullahs and sheikhs; had been deliberately weakened, thus the slogan of “Islam and Sharia” was widely raised soon after Czarism fell in Dagestan. The Bolsheviks then began recognizing sharia openly as a legitimate right of the Dagestanis. Even Joseph Stalin had assured of the compromise during an

“Emergency Convention of the Peoples of Dagestan” held in 1920 (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 25). He said:

“We have been informed that sharia has a very serious meaning among the peoples of Dagestan. We have also learned that the enemies of Soviet power are spreading the rumour that the Soviets will ban sharia. I am here to assure you, on the authority of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, that these rumors are false. The government of Russia allows every nation to govern based upon the local laws and tradition. The Soviet government recognizes sharia as a legitimate customary law, practiced among other nations of Russia. If the Dagestani peoples wish to preserve their law and tradition, then they should be sustained⁷.”

As the symbol of independence, the Dagestanis had already perceived the establishment of their republic based on sharia law. Under the Bolshevik rule, the Dagestani mountaineers seemed to have achieved what they had earlier demanded for themselves – i.e. sharia and the restoration of the traditional power of djamaat councils (now called Soviets) (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 25-26).

In 1921, a District Sharia Legislative Department was founded and became the Sharia Department of the Narkomat (National Committee or Ministry) of Justice of the Dagestan ASSR in 1922 (Kisriev and Ware 2010). In 1923, eleven District Sharia Courts, with the authoritative and popular religious leaders as heads, were also set up as mediator between the judicial structures of the djamaat and the republic. In 1924, it was decided by the republic Communist Party Committee to officially recognize Islamic holidays (Kakagasanov 2001: 132).

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet government, first under Lenin and then under Stalin, had launched some new programs for developing ethnic identities in the whole of Caucasus including Dagestan and in this regard, newspapers, theatres, national language schools etc. were considered the good mediums (Ware 1998: 339-340). Thus, by mid-

⁷Joseph Stalin, Works, vol. 4 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1947), 395-396.

1920s, languages were standardized and alphabets were made available in Latin script. Since the mountaineers were earlier indifferent towards setting up own national cultures during Czarist rule, thus their ethnic identities also remained insignificant and ignored even during Soviet period. Initially during Czarist rule, the people of North Caucasus had a common cultural heritage which defied their segregation on the basis of ethnic, linguistic, administrative, tribal and clan divisions. The members of this society were ignorant about themselves as being the members of the officially recognized national groups (Ormrod 1993).

The Stalin administration reinforced the ethnic identity through a number of measures, like ethno-territorial organizations, cultural development programmes, and a system of internal passports, introduced in 1932, which kept record of the ethnic lineage of the citizens (Ware 1998: 340). Ethnicity was institutionalized which created the conditions necessary for the pursuance of an ethnic policy, which comprised both integrative as well as divisive measures (Zaslavsky 1993). These policies were adopted in the 1936 Constitution of the Soviet Union (Ware 1998: 340).

The World War II, to some extent, also transformed relations between Russians and Muslims living within the Soviet Union (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 86). Seeking to create a rift between them, Adolf Hitler promised independence to those Muslims who collaborated with the German invaders. In response, Stalin promoted a supranational patriotism by relaxing antireligious policies and co-opting Christian and Islamic leaders. Three new Muftiats⁸ were established, one in Baku to administer the Shia Muslims of the South Caucasus; and second in Tashkent to oversee the Sunni Muslims of Central Asia (Pilkington and Yemelianova 2003: 47). The third new Muftiat established in 1944 was the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of the North Caucasus (DUMSK) meant for administering the Sunni Muslims of the North Caucasus. Originally headquartered in Buynaksk, Dagestan, it was soon moved to Makhachkala (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 86).

⁸Muftiat (or Muftiyat) is a place where Muslim scholars interpret Koran, sharia and other Islamic treatises.

Nevertheless, some Muslims and nationalists in the North Caucasus responded to German offers of collaboration. Stalin regime responded to these limited cases of disloyalty with collective punishments that sometimes approached genocidal proportions (Pilkington and Yemelianova 2003: 47-48). In 1944, all ethnic Chechens, Balkars, Ingush, Khamshils, Kurds, Karachais, Meskhetian Turks, Germans, Bulgarians, Greeks and Crimean Tatars were hastily transported under brutal conditions to Siberia and remote areas of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan. This combination of patriotic propaganda and pro-Islamic concessions effectively prevented large-scale collaboration between Soviet Muslims and German invaders (Pilkington and Yemelianova 2003: 47-48). The Muftiats called for jihad against German aggression and thus, millions of Muslims participated in military service and gave monetary contributions to the Red Army (Pilkington and Yemelianova 2003: 47).

Like other parts of Soviet Union, Dagestan also witnessed severe repression and crackdown against Islam throughout the Soviet period. In the 1930s, Islamic leaders were oppressed and the tariqat orders were forced to leave the society (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 502). The active Muslim leaders were arrested, and some of them were executed while others exiled into the remotest northern regions within the territory of USSR. In the early 1930s, the Soviet administration had shut down mosques. By 1940, no active religious organizations were left in Dagestan (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 26-27). Nevertheless, underground Sufi orders survived in Dagestan's rural communities and particularly in its highland villages. Still without opportunities for formal study and communication with broader communities of Muslims, the Islamic education and practices of these groups suffered a gradual deterioration.

Soviet policy during and after Stalin regime and persecutions

As discussed earlier, the Bolsheviks yielded to all the Dagestanis' demands relating to sharia, Islam, adat, djamaats etc., however, having consolidated their rule over entire Caucasus, including Dagestan, they started ignoring their promises of autonomy, and instead exercised strict control over the region and even carried out harsh crackdown on Islam (Reynolds 2004: 16).

The sharia structures were gradually dismantled by the Soviets for the sake of establishing state structures of administration. The process of limiting the privileges of sharia had already begun much before their complete abolition. In 1922, district investigative committees came up for controlling djamaat and district sharia courts. Sharia was stripped of the jurisdiction over cases involving land ownership, and this jurisdiction was brought under separate, specialized courts called district land committees. Nevertheless, the district land committees referred to the same norms of traditional law that was based on adat and sharia (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 501). In 1923, sharia was stripped of the jurisdiction over cases involving homicide and blood feud. In 1924, the sharia courts lost the authority of the maintenance of public finances, including salaries (Bobrovnikov 2002: 230). In 1925, the village oral courts similar as the sharia courts were created. An official called the village bailiff was appointed for these village oral courts and was assigned duties which were almost the same as those of the traditional Chaush. The village bailiff was also seen as the prototype of the village policeman (Bobrovnikov 2002: 230).

On 18 April 1927, a decree abolishing djamaat and district sharia courts, and criminalizing the practice of sharia was issued by the Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People's Commissars of Dagestan. In the early 1928, madrasa and mosque schools were shut down, and clergy were subdued (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 501). Around eight hundred Dagestani old men and women were exiled to Archangelsk near the Arctic Circle. This development occurred just during the legislation of the Tenth Article of the Criminal Law titling "On Crimes Related to the Relic Tribal Way of Life" (Kakagasanov 2001).

In all, Stalin persecuted Islam all over the country and his ethnic policies just paid lip service to various nationalities residing in the titular republics, including Dagestan. However, Dagestan saw major socio-political changes in the post-Stalin period as the Soviet government under Nikita Khrushchev eased the strict socio-political policies that were followed during Stalin era. Khrushchev provided tangible benefits both in security as well as economic development to the North Caucasus, including Dagestan. Nonetheless, despite all those compromises, Islam remained a suppressed lot during Khrushchev era too and throughout the Soviet regime (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 6-7).

Thus, in response to an early period of resistance, the Soviets offered compromises with local and Islamic structures. Dagestanis initially embraced these compromises within emergent and encompassing structures that fit more neatly within Russian traditions of hierarchical social organisation. Yet within ten years after the proposal of these compromises, local and Islamic structures were abolished and their practitioners were persecuted (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 27). However, the Soviet Union offered other forms of compromises to the people of North Caucasus. Although, the Soviet administration had enforced a strict system of hierarchy and domination in the region for maintaining pace with Russian traditions, the Soviet collectivism was almost consistent with the traditional highland village life. Showing lax regards for local traditions of kinship and parochialism, Stalin divided the region into titular republics; whereas cultural and linguistic attributes were subsequently considered (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 27).

The Soviet oppression of the religion in the North Caucasus reached its peak when Stalin ordered, in February 1944, the mass deportation of the Chechen and Ingush Muslims to Siberia and remote areas of Central Asia (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 86; Lieven 1998: 319; Tishkov 1997: 193-194). Between 1937 and 1951, Stalin administration had systematically deported around 13 nationalities to remote areas of the USSR. The Stalin regime brutally wiped out these nationalities from all the strategic areas of the country without bothering their national as well as individual rights. The Stalin regime ordered sequentially the deportation of the “Soviet Koreans, Finns, Germans, Karachays, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, Georgian

Kurds, Khemshils (Muslim Armenians) and Pontic Greeks” from their native areas. More than 2 million people belonging to these groups were internally exiled by the NKVD-MVD (Peoples Commissariat of Internal Affairs–Ministry of Internal Affairs). These people were condemned and sentenced to permanent exile in Siberia, Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, and the Urals (Pohl 2000: 267; Kisriev and Ware 2010; Tishkov 1997: 193-194). The Buddhist Kalmyks were also deported from northern Dagestan to the Volga region around 1943-44 (Kisriev and Ware 2010).

The deportations were extremely and extraordinarily brutal. The sentenced people were forcibly loaded onto ships or cattle trains at bayonet point by the NKVD. They were given only a few hours to pack the belongings before going into exile. The deportees had to undergo extremely inhuman and tough situation during the journey as they were transported in unhygienic and overcrowded rail cars. Thus many of them died from diseases before reaching their respective places of exile. The extreme climates and poor living conditions of these places of exile also claimed millions of lives within the USSR (Pohl 2000: 267; Martin 1998). These brutal ethnic-deportations of population under Stalin in 1944 had a devastating impact on other populations of the Soviet Union however, they had a marginal effect on Dagestan which endured little heat of deportations (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 86).

There were two main motives behind Stalin’s policy of forced deportation: firstly, the demand for cheap labor for exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of Siberia, and secondly, in order to speed up Soviet industrialization program a large number of people were required at the industry sites (Pereltsvaig 2014). Later during the World War II, Nazi invasion of the USSR give yet another excuse to Stalin to carry on the process of ethnic deportation/cleansing. The Stalin regime always sought to justify these ethnic deportations as the means of punishment for the deportees’ involvement in opposition to Soviet rule, separatism, and collaboration with the German occupation forces (Martin 1998; Pereltsvaig 2014). In many occasions, the Soviet government didn’t hesitate in depicting the mass deportations as “resettlement program”, but it was indeed a true case of government-run ethnic cleansing (Martin 1998: 813; Pereltsvaig 2014). In

addition to the large number of deaths, the deported nationalities also had to suffer severe assault on their ethnic identities. The deportees were deprived of their ancestral homelands as well as the right to publish and receive education in their native languages. The main objective behind these policies was to suppress the national identities of the deported ethnic groups. Stalin left no stone unturned in destroying these ethnic groups through the means of mass exile and forced assimilation (Pohl 2000: 268).

Shortly after Stalin's death in 1953, the deportees -- including Chechens, Ingush, Kalmyks -- began returning to their ancestral homelands. Finally, in 1957, Khrushchev officially permitted the Chechens and Ingush to return to their native areas (Reynolds 2004: 16; Tishkov 1997: 193-194). However, the Soviet authorities maintained tight control over North Caucasus and kept repressing the practice and study of Islam (Reynolds 2004: 16).

During the 1980s, the Soviet war in Afghanistan provoked Soviet Muslims toward greater political engagement. The Soviet government under Leonid Brezhnev responded by tightening its control of traditional Muslim regions with policies that were surprisingly intensified during the perestroika period (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 86; Pilkington and Yemelianova 2003). During Soviet repressions of Islam, underground Sufi orders kept Islam alive in Dagestani villages and where Islamic tradition had been exceptionally preserved. The perestroika and glasnost proved to be a watershed in the Soviet government and Islamic leaders of North Caucasus. The Soviet law "On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organizations" adopted on 9 October 1990 gave full freedom to the individuals for religious practice and indoctrination without any fear. Persecution of individuals on religious grounds was banned and religious organizations were allowed to flourish and were protected by law. Islamic leaders were allowed to publish Islamic works and spread Islamic doctrines (Sagramoso and Yarlykapov 2013: 54-55). The Russian SFSR law "On Freedom of Religion" proclaimed on 25 October 1990 guaranteed protection of everyone's religious rights and further declared that freedom of religion an inalienable individual right. Furthermore, the total number of registered mosques and Muslim communities shot up significantly from 27 in 1989 to

around 600 alone in Dagestan by the end of 1991 (Sagramoso and Yarlykapov 2013: 54-55; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 86). As a result of perestroika and glasnost, the Dagestani ruling elites, who were loyal to Kremlin, had to face strong social movements of the masses by the end of 1989 leading to weakening of Moscow's control over the region. The situation forced Moscow to come up with vague and ad hoc solutions which brought major drastic political changes in the region. At this juncture, an autonomous political system was born in Dagestan which culminated into the formulation of its 1994 Constitution (Kisriev 2003: 2-3). Around this period, the so-called young Imams, or graduates of Central Asian madrassas, emerged. They criticized the old Imams for their submissiveness, low moral standards and compliance with the oppressive Soviet government. They started a campaign aiming to restore the Islamic infrastructure on a pre-revolutionary scale and encourage the Soviet Muslims for greater involvement in social and political life. Soviet authorities responded with a series of concessions that included the establishment of dozens of new mosques in Muslim areas in Dagestan (Pilkington and Yemelianova 2003: 52-53; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 86-88).

Summary

The colonization of the region, i.e. North Caucasus in general and Dagestan in particular, by external powers; viz. the Arabs, Ottomans, Persians and Russians; had a tremendous impact on the socio-political edifice of the region. Beginning from 7th and 8th century when Arabs colonized the region, they introduced Islam replacing Christianity, which was prevalent since 4th century, and by 18th century all the inhabitants were converted to Islam.

After failed attempt to conquer North Caucasus and Dagestan in 1556-1604 war, Russia, under Czar Nicholas I, finally managed to conquer the region in 19th century after fighting many bloody wars. Russia acquired Dagestan through the 1813 Treaty of Gulistan with the Persians. Small armed conflicts between the Russian troops and local population of Dagestan were still on for next 50 years. During this period, three prominent clergymen; Kazi-Mullah, Hamzad Bek and Imam Shamil; emerged in Dagestan who bravely led Dagestan's battle against Russian conquest. However, after Shamil capture in 1859, the armed resistance against Russians subsequently ended in Dagestan. The Russian colonization of the North Caucasus in the 19th century was accompanied by the state building process which continued till the 1917 Russian Revolution. The Russian administration in the region assumed the form of military-people's administration combined with corrupt bureaucracy which badly oppressed the poor Dagestanis by forcefully grabbing their lands and handing them over to the tyrannous local elites and by imposing of forced labor them. The practice of Sharia restricted and traditional djamaats of Dagestan were suppressed. Islam was badly oppressed and all religious leaders, viz. Kadis, Clerics etc., were repressed.

The Bolsheviks initially showed solidarity with the Dagestanis and agreed to their demands relating to sharia, Islam, adat based system as well as recognizing the traditional power of djamaat councils, but later after consolidating power the Soviet regime started brutally suppressing Islam which continued throughout the Soviet rule. Islamic leaders were brutally persecuted throughout North Caucasus, including Dagestan. The sharia structures were totally dismantled for the establishment of state structures of

administration. Meanwhile, measures to reinforce the ethnic identity were also launched which found mention in 1936 Soviet Constitution. The Soviet oppression of the religion in the North Caucasus reached its peak under Stalin who resorted to the extremely brutal methods, i.e. mass deportation and forced assimilation, against the Muslims of the North Caucasus with the objective of ruining their ethnic identities in the region. They were forcefully exiled under extremely harsh and inhuman conditions to the remotest areas of Central Asia and Siberia. Moreover, Stalin also wanted cheap labour force for industrialization process, so this practice was done to produce such labour force. Nonetheless, Dagestan endured little heat of deportations. The deportees, mainly Chechens and Ingush, were officially allowed to return to their ancestral homelands in 1957, four years after Stalin's death.

CHAPTER 3

RUSSIAN CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM AND FEDERAL POLITY AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON DAGESTAN (1991-2000)

USSR in Transition

The 1991 Soviet collapse and the subsequent transition of Russia from socialist economy to the market or capitalist economy was one of the most astonishing geopolitical events of the century. This event is also comparable to the collapse of the Ottoman and Habsburg empires during the First World War. The Soviet disintegration started on the peripheries and in the non-Russian areas. The Baltic States were the first to declare independence from Soviet Union. In 1987, Estonia, a Baltic Republic, demanded autonomy which was immediately followed by the remaining two Baltic Republics, viz. Lithuania and Latvia. All other republics then followed suit and parted ways one after another. The USSR existed for almost 75 years and suddenly in December 1991, it died a peaceful death leading to the emergence of 15 independent sovereign countries on the world stage out of the former, among them were some new states with unfamiliar names, and the event was mournfully called by Soviets the “parade of sovereignties”. Massive chunks of territory were torn away from the largest political landmass in the world leaving geopolitical confusion in their wake. Among all those 15 republics that emerged independent from the Soviet Union, Russian Federation was the most powerful (Clemens 1997: 137-138; Fuller 1994; Lovell 1996; Saunders and Strukov 2010).

During Mikhail Gorbachev’s rise to power in 1985 who was the last Soviet leader, the USSR was in the grip of severe economic and political crises. Seeing the severity of the situation, Gorbachev introduced a two-tiered policy of reform: “Glasnost (freedom of speech)” and “Perestroika (rebuilding) a program of economic reform”. Under

perestroika, he intended, indeed, to reconstruct both the CPSU party as well as the Soviet political system. Through glasnost, Gorbachev unknowingly unleashed people's sentiments and ignited their political feelings which had been built up for many years, and which ultimately became instrumental in the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, perestroika too failed to yield the desired results which he had earlier predicted. Armed with this newly allotted freedom of speech, called glasnost, the people of the Soviet Union began criticizing Gorbachev regime for its failure to protect the country's economy. Thus, glasnost and perestroika were also one of the main reasons behind Soviet collapse (Fuller 1994; Lovell 1996; Stoner-Weiss 2009: 4; Saunders and Strukov 2010).

On 25 December 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev resigned as the last leader of the Soviet Union and Boris Yeltsin, who was the President of Russian Republic's Parliament, became the first President of newly independent Russia. On the same day, for the last time the Soviet flag of hammer and sickle was hoisted in Kremlin, and then it was replaced by the Russian tricolor. The Soviet collapse was a peaceful transition resulting in the emergence of multiple independent republics from a single Communist state. In January 1992, the Soviet Union ceased to exist. After Soviet Union met its demise, a new entity came up in its place which was called the "Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)" comprising 12 independent countries, except the Baltic States, of the erstwhile Soviet Union. The CIS member countries had full political independence and were associated with each other in economic and, to some extent, military spheres. Immediately after Soviet collapse, the newly independent Russia aggressively started pursuing economic reform programs of mass privatization under Yeltsin in order to revive the stagnant economy of the country (Fuller 1994: 19; Lovell 1996).

Political crisis in Moscow during Soviet collapse

Soon after the introduction of reform programs, glasnost and perestroika, by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986-87, the floodgates of protest and resentment opened within the Soviet Union. This led to a severe political crisis in Moscow. Gorbachev also introduced the New Union Treaty which was a draft treaty meant to replace the 1922 Treaty on the Creation of the USSR, and also to replace the Soviet Union by a new entity known as the “Union of Sovereign States”. It was an attempt by him to reform and protect the Soviet Union from impending collapse. The treaty was scheduled to be signed between the Russian SFSR, the Ukrainian SSR and the Byelorussian SSR on 20 August 1991, but the Soviet coup d'état attempt that happened on 19 August, just a day earlier, had prevented this event from taking place (Clemens 1997: 144-145; Grachev 1996; Sturua 1992; Kotkin 2001; Hollander 2000; Winters 1999).

On 12 June 1990, Russia declared its sovereignty and restricted the application of Soviet laws, i.e. laws pertaining to finance and the economy, within Russian territory. The Supreme Soviet of the Russian SFSR adopted laws contradicting Soviet laws. In July 1990, Boris Yeltsin, then President of the Russian Republic's Parliament, convened the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Republic and insisted on economic sovereignty for the republic. This enabled him to tighten his grip over the republic and grab control of its economy from Gorbachev. All other republics too followed Yeltsin's move. Ukraine began recalling its soldiers from the Soviet military and called for the setting up of its own military. The Communist Party split into two factions, viz. the reformers and conservatives, which were critical about Gorbachev who was searching a middle path between socialist economy and market economy. He defended himself by showing support and allegiance for Communism and Socialism and referred to Lenin's New Economic Policy of 1921 as his method for tackling crisis. However, he appeared for many Russians as weak and unable to take a clear stand. People were getting skeptical about his stand, and thus held him responsible for economy's failure. Many people in the Soviet Union were also angry with Gorbachev for letting Germany reunify. Conservative and patriotic Communists believed that Gorbachev not only insulted but also disarmed

the Soviet Union. They condemned Gorbachev arguing that he nullified the hard earned victory in World War II which had claimed around twenty million Soviet lives (Grachev 1996; Sturua 1992; Kotkin 2001; Hollander 2000; Winters 1999).

In 1991, more Soviet factories were at the verge of closure. The Parliament in the Russian SFSR passed a few reforms towards promoting market economy and henceforth, funding to the Soviet agencies based in the Russian SFSR was stopped. Gorbachev found that the Soviet government was losing power and thus gave more priority to restoration and preservation of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's ally, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, resigned accusing him of acting as a dictator. Meanwhile, Gorbachev had no option but to give free hand to the conservatives of his party and some prominent people of the Soviet military to take necessary and extraordinary actions for preserving the USSR (Grachev 1996; Sturua 1992; Kotkin 2001; Hollander 2000; Winters 1999).

These political crises prevalent in Moscow over a few years culminated into the 1991 Soviet coup d'état attempt, also called August Putsch or August Coup, and further angered the Russians against Soviet government, although it was a failure and collapsed in just two days. The coup attempt ended Gorbachev's reign and further consolidated Yeltsin's political power. It also contributed in the demise of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and accelerated Soviet disintegration resulting in the birth of some new nation states. The coup attempt was staged by some members of the Soviet government with the intention of taking away power from President Mikhail Gorbachev and restoring Soviet Union. The coup leaders were hardline CPSU members opposed to the latest reform program introduced by Gorbachev and the new union treaty which decentralized considerable portion of Kremlin's powers to the republics (Grachev 1996; Gibson 1997: 671; Sturua 1992; Winters 1999).

On 19 August 1991, a small group of Soviet leaders tried to stage a military coup against Gorbachev regime taking Gorbachev's illness and his subsequent inability to carry out governance as excuse. The eight-man State Committee for the State of Emergency in the USSR (GKChP) imposed an emergency for a period of six-months that resulted in a ban on rallies, demonstrations and strikes, and strict restrictions on mass movements as well

as activities of the political parties, and press censorship. Soviet tanks rolled on the roads and streets of Moscow but the people of Moscow, led by Yeltsin, strongly protested the involvement of the troops and, sometimes, even formed human chains to block the movement of the military vehicles. Yeltsin declared the coup illegal and spoke from atop a tank in front of the Russian White House, the seat of the Parliament of the Russian SFSR, appealing to the Russian people to resist any attempt for overthrowing democracy through protests and indefinite general strikes. Supporting Yeltsin's stand, people took to the streets in protest against the coup. The mayor of Leningrad also organized resistance against the coup. Yeltsin drew huge support across the Russian SFSR resulting in mass demonstrations against the coup throughout Russia (Grachev 1996; Gibson 1997: 671; Sturua 1992; Kotkin 2001; Winters 1999).

On 20 August 1991, there was a mass demonstration of around 200,000 people in front of the Moscow City Soviet; 50,000 people staged mass demonstration at the Russian White House; 200,000 people participated in anti-coup rally in Leningrad's Palace Square; and 50,000 people demonstrated against the coup in Kishinev, Moldavia. A day later came a dramatic situation in the coup when even the CPSU turned against the coup meant for the seizure of Soviet power and all the leaders involved in the coup were later arrested. The next day after the failure of coup attempt, a large number of people assembled in front of the Russian White House and celebrated "a Rally of Victors". Within one week, a democratic government was revived in the Soviet Union (Grachev 1996; Gibson 1997: 671; Sturua 1992; Kotkin 2001; Winters 1999).

Finally, by January 1992, Soviet Union ceased to exist and Russian Federation, along with 14 other republics, emerged as an independent sovereign state with its capital in Moscow. Boris Yeltsin became the first President of new Russia the same year thus putting an end to many years of political crisis in Moscow (Grachev 1996; Gibson 1997; Lovell 1996; Sturua 1992; Kotkin 2001; Hollander 2000; Winters 1999).

Moscow's policy towards North Caucasus

North Caucasus lies in the southernmost territory of Russia consisting of Stavropol Krai, Krasnodar Krai, and the constituent republics, viz. Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria, Chechnya, and Republic of Dagestan. The region lies to the north of Caucasus mountain range extending over the area between Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. It connects South Caucasus bordering Georgia and Azerbaijan and is the juncture of three civilizations, viz. Persian, Turkish and European. The geographical location and ethnic composition of the region are strategically quite significant to Russia, EU as well as the US. It not only provides a vital link between the two water bodies, viz. the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, but also holds important transportation routes linking Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia on land. Dagestan is ethnically the most diverse region of Russia, where around 40 ethnic groups with Caucasian, Iranian and Turkic descent are currently residing, and each one of them has its own language, culture, history and national identity (Sagramoso 2007: 683-685).

North Caucasus has been the priority area of concern for the Russian Federation since 1991 as it is Russia's most unstable and volatile region, because of Islamic extremism, insurgency, separatism and ethnic violence, threatening to destabilize other regions of the Federation. The region also suffers from miserable socio-economic conditions forcing people to take to insurgency against Federation. It appears quite different from the rest of the country and showing symptoms of an unstable frontier zone. Chechnya, which has seen the rise of Wahhabism, terrorism and Islamic extremism in the early 1990s, is the main epicenter of disturbances in the North Caucasus; and the two Chechen Wars (1st war in 1994-1996 and 2nd war in 1999-present) between Russia and Chechen insurgents underline this argument that Chechnya is in the grip of brutal Islamic insurgency and extremism. Chechnya is a landlocked republic in the southern part of Russia, known as North Caucasus. It is bordered by Ingushetia in the west, Stavropol Krai and North Ossetia in the northwest, the Republic of Dagestan in the east and north, and Georgia in the south. Grozny is the capital city of Chechnya. In the 1990s and first half of 2000s, violence in the North Caucasian region was mainly confined to Chechnya, but after the

first half of 2000s the level of violence and terrorist activities rose considerably in other republics of the region and also spread further beyond the region. The federal effort to stabilise the region is proving expensive. The establishment of a new “North Caucasus Federal District” in January 2010 under the former governor of Krasnoyarsk, Alexander Kholponin, failed to yield desired results and the situation continued to deteriorate (Kramer 2004; Lieven 1998; Tishkov 1997; Kuchins et al. 2011: 1-2).

The 1993 Constitutional crisis in Russia created problems for its peripheries. Many federal subjects, mostly in the North Caucasus, began either defying or ignoring Russia’s authority. The open defiance by the subjects stood entirely against the integrity, cohesion and legitimacy of the Russian Federation and increasingly became a matter of great concern for Moscow (Shariet 1995). With this development emerged the fierce separatist insurgencies in many parts of North Caucasus, viz. Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia-Alania, and the fiercest of all broke out in Chechnya in 1994. Chechnya had the status of “Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic” within Soviet Union. After Soviet disintegration and more importantly following 1993 Constitutional crisis in Russia, Chechens intensified their struggle for independence from the Russian Federation and declared full independence from Moscow declaring itself as “Chechen Republic of Ichkeria” (Shariet 1995; Kisriev 2003). The Russian Federation responded with a military campaign against the Chechen rebels in December 1994. However, the Federation suffered heavily in the hands of the Chechens and finally withdrew from Chechnya in August 1996. The de-facto independence of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria ended in August 1999 when Russia launched military campaign against it in response to the invasion of Dagestan by Chechnya-based Islamist insurgents restoring the Russian federal control over the territory. However, the 2nd Chechen war induced a never ending conflict in the region and has become a big worry for Russia. The 2004 Beslan school siege or Beslan massacre in North Ossetia was the culmination of the conflict into the ugly school massacre by the Chechen and Ingush militants which claimed 385 lives, including 186 children. The separatist insurgencies in Chechnya and Dagestan escalated to Ingushetia by 2007 and

engulfed the whole North Caucasus by 2009, and are still going on (International Crisis Group 2008; Kisriev 2003; Gidadhubli 2004; Lieven 1998; Tishkov 1997).

Cornell (2001) calls the conflicts in the Republic of Chechnya as the most devastating and fatal event in the former Soviet space. He believes that post-Soviet Chechnya had lost the peace and thus failed to establish a peaceful society and a credible as well as functional system. He assumes a more benevolent attitude towards Chechnya and portrays Chechen war mainly in terms of the “Russian invasion and the Chechen struggle for the ideals of independence”, rather than calling it a separatist and secessionist conflict which Russia and most other authors believe (p.g. 250).

New Constitution 1993

The 1993 Constitution of post-Soviet Russia was adopted following a political confrontation between the Russian President and the Parliament resulting into the constitutional crisis of 1993 which was resolved by using military force. The 1993 constitutional crisis was accompanied by bloody violence lasting for ten days and emerged as the single deadliest event in the history of Russia since the revolutions of 1917. It claimed 187 lives and wounded 437 people.

The new Constitution of Russia was approved on 12 December 1993 by the people who voted for it at the referendum. It came into force on 25 December 1993 abolishing the Soviet system of government. This Constitution replaced that of Russian SFSR adopted in 1978 when Russia was a Republic within the USSR. In 1991, a new state, viz. the Russian Federation, emerged. The transformation of the state started a process of transformation of the Constitution. The 1978 Constitution was amended more than three hundred times. It was full of contradictions. It was quite obvious that the new country needed a new Constitution (Krylova 1994; Saunders and Strukov 2010).

The new Constitution entails two different dichotomies, viz. transition and consolidation, in the democratization process of Russia. In Russia’s context, transition represents the

time period, from 1993 to 1996, which begins with the collapse of the old authoritarian Soviet system and ends with the establishment of a relatively stable political system in the newly independent Russian state. The new Constitution ensured a transition from highly centralized unitary state to a highly decentralized federal state (Hatipoğlu 1998: 1). Consolidation is somewhat different from transition as it refers to the realization of a change in attitudes and substantial support for the newly established system which requires a relatively longer period of time. The consolidation of democracy occurred after 1996 in Russia. Transition aimed at the creation of a new regime seeking to yield more powers to the President than the Parliament, while the consolidation aimed at stability and the perpetuation of the established regime in Russia (Hatipoğlu 1998: 1-2; Zhuravskaya 2010: 59).

After the 1993 Constitutional crisis, the “constituent units” were renamed as “federal subjects” in the new Constitution to reflect a more centralized form of federation. The new Constitution (1993) consisted of one hundred thirty seven articles. There were some provisions left which were crucial for the future i.e. 2008 constitutional development of the country. President Yeltsin believed that this new Constitution should be the Bridge to Democracy and a touchstone in Russia’s transition from totalitarian dictatorship to democracy. The first words of the Constitution show how great the desire of the people to depart from the long period of isolation and become part of the world community (Krylova 1994; Saunders and Strukov 2010). The Constitution opens with the preamble which contains the following statement:

"We, the multinational people of the Russian Federation, united by a common fate on our land, establishing human rights and freedoms, civic peace and accord, preserving the historically established state unity, proceeding from the universally recognized principles of equality and self-determination of peoples, revering the memory of ancestors who have conveyed to us the love for the Fatherland, belief in the good and justice, reviving the sovereign statehood of Russia and asserting the firmness of its democratic basic, striving to ensure the well-being and prosperity of Russia, proceeding from the responsibility for our Fatherland before the present and future generations, recognizing ourselves as part

of the world community, adopt the CONSTITUTION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION”
(*The Preamble of the Constitution of the Russian Federation).

Proclaiming Russia as the part of the world community, the Constitution declares that “*Russia shall be a democratic.....rule-of-law state*” (*Article 1 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation). Rule of Law is one of the fundamentals of the new constitutional system. The Chapter 2 of the Constitution is about “Rights and Freedoms of Man and Citizen” and contains forty seven articles. There are some provisions in the new Constitution which very succinctly show Russia’s big departure from the Communist and Soviet past (Krylova 1994).

It is well known that many rights and freedoms common for the most democratic societies were denied to the people of the Soviet Union. For example, the individual could be stripped of his citizenship; there was no freedom of movement; there was no ban for the state to use forced labor and unlawful methods were applied to the convicted in the process of the interrogation. At present, the provisions of the new Constitution on human rights are consistent with those which exist in any democratic society. The Constitution lays down: “*Human beings and their rights and liberties are the supreme values*” (*Article 2). This provision is one of the fundamentals of the new constitutional system. It is a very important declaration for a country where a human being is given the supreme value. Now, it was stipulated in the new Constitution that a citizen of the Russian Federation shall not be stripped of the citizenship or of the right to change citizenship (*Article 6). It is laid down also that everyone shall have the right to free travel, choice of place of stay or residence and he/she is free to leave the boundaries of the state as well as to have the right to freely return to the country (*Article 27).

The 1993 Constitution, during adoption, defined a total of 89 “federal subjects”, in which there were 21 republics, 55 oblasts and krais, 2 cities of federal importance, Moscow and St Petersburg, and 11 autonomous okrugs, including the Jewish autonomous oblast (Krylova 1994: 402; Vazquez 2002: 2). However, after several mergers of some subjects by 2008 the total federal subjects got reduced from 89 to 83 with 21 republics, 46 oblasts,

9 kraia, 2 federal cities, 1 autonomous oblast and 4 autonomous okrugs (Derrick 2009: 317-321; *Article 65).

The new Russian Constitution embodied some of the constitutional principles which were well-known to the constitutional practice of many democratic countries but have never been recognized in the USSR. The constitutional principle -- "Habeas Corpus" was first time incorporated in the new constitution of Russia. According to the Article 22 -- "Arresting persons, taking them into custody and keeping them in custody are permitted only on the basis of a court decision. A person may not be subjected to detention for more than 48 hours before a court decision is rendered". The other generally accepted principle of any democratic constitutional system is the so called presumption of innocence. However, this principle was never recognized by the 1978 Constitution of Russian SFSR. At present, this principle is incorporated in the text of the Constitution. According to Article 49 -- "everyone charged with a crime shall be considered not guilty until his or her guilt has been proven in conformity with the procedures stipulated by the law and established by the verdict of a court of law".

Krylova (1994) believes that the system of government envisaged by the new Constitution is an example of mixed Presidential and Parliamentary regime. It has been based on the principle of separation of powers and provides a certain system of checks and balances (*Chapter 4-7 of Russian Constitution). The most important powers of the Russian President, as envisaged by the 1993 Constitution, are: -- the appointment of the Chairman of the Government [*Article 83(a)]; the appointment of the members of Government [*Article 83(a)]; the dismissal of the Government [*Article 83(c)]; the dissolution of the State Duma [*Article 84(b)]. According to the Article 83(a), "*The President of the Russian Federation shall appoint by agreement with the State Duma the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation*". The President also has the power to appoint and dismiss deputy chairmen of the Government and federal ministers if such a proposal is made by the Chairman of Government [*Article 83(e)]. The new Constitution envisages the President as the guarantor of the Constitution and empowers him to ensure proper coordination between all entities of state power [*Article 80(2)].

Administrative system in Dagestan during the period 1992-99

The Soviet disintegration and the ongoing political crisis had tragic consequences for the Caucasus. Dagestan, with its distinctly segmented ethnic and social structure and internal contradictions, was at the verge of acute inter-ethnic conflict. Under this volatile situation, a distinct and independent political system began to emerge and the deep rooted socio-cultural and ethnic features started gaining prominence anew in Dagestan's politics. As a result, various political institutions emerged from this complex and sometimes conflictual process which still exist today in Dagestan (Kisriev 2003: 2; Kisriev 2004: 329).

The Republic of Dagestan was acceded to the Federation Treaty in March 1992. The 1992 Federation Treaty provided for priority of local legislation over the Russian legislation when the two were in conflict. Thus, it weakened the power of the federal government and provided significant economic, cultural, and legislative autonomy to the constituent units (now federal subjects) of the Russian Federation. Moscow retained control of currency, finance and banking, communications, justice, and space exploration, while sharing responsibility for the environment, historic preservation, education, and key areas of the national economy. The ethnic republics, in particular, gained substantive control of their own affairs while the oblasts received less independence, thus creating a system of asymmetrical federalism⁹ (*Federation Treaty 1992; Saunders and Strukov 2010; Gidadhubli and Kumar 1993).

Dagestan is the most ethnically, culturally, territorially and linguistically diverse and extremely heterogeneous republic in the Russian Federation as it is home to 14 ethnic and 34 ethno-linguistic groups (Ware et al. 2003: 04-05; Kisriev and Ware 2001: 107). Its multi-national political system, although a complex system, is a clear example of ethnic speciality which took several centuries to evolve and has sustained the republic's socio-

⁹Asymmetrical Federalism refers to a federal system of government in which power and autonomy are unevenly divided between constituent states.

political system. Dagestan adopted its own constitution on 26 July 1994, and during the adoption of the latter, a need was felt to accommodate all the ethnic groups in the political and administrative system of the republic based on consociational model of democracy (Kisriev and Ware 2001: 106-107; Kisriev 2003: 2-3; Kisriev 2004: 334-335).

The People's Assembly of Dagestan is the legislature or Parliament of the Republic of Dagestan. It was created replacing the Supreme Soviet in 1995. It comprises 90 deputies elected by proportional representation for a period of 5 years through secret ballot and universal suffrage. In the administrative system, it is necessary that senior officials in various government branches must belong to the different ethnic groups, and the same is applied to their deputies too. Elections take place according to a majority system in single mandate constituencies with the goal of ensuring proportional representation and avoid ethnic confrontations within constituencies. Thus, Dagestan's political stability till 1999 owed much to its quasi-consociational political system (*Parliament of the Republic of Dagestan; Kisriev and Ware 2001: 106-107; Kisriev 2003: 2-3; Kisriev 2004: 334-335).

The 1994 Constitution of Dagestan and the electoral laws along with several rules of political behaviour established a consociational political system with the objective of giving comprehensive stability to the republic. The 1994 Constitution disapproved the absolute role of a single President of Dagestan, recognizing that the concentration of power in an individual would be detrimental to the whole political balance. The President of Dagestan is appointed by the Russian President and serves a four year term. His task is to function under the ambit of, and in compliance with both the Constitution and federal laws as well as the Constitution and laws of Dagestan; and the preservation of the unity and territorial integrity of the republic (*President of the Republic of Dagestan). The State Council is the highest executive body elected by the members of the Constitutional Assembly. It is composed of 14 members comprising one representative from each of the 11 titular ethnic groups of the republic and remaining three representatives coming from ethnic Russian, Azerbaijani and Chechen communities. In order to check the concentration of power within a single ethnic group, a norm was set up under which, the post of chairman of the State Council would rotate on ethnic principle, i.e. the post must

not be held for two consecutive terms by the persons of same ethnic group. The Chairman of the State Council would propose a Prime Minister who is not allowed to have the same ethnicity as of the former. The Prime Minister is the member and first deputy chairman of the State Council. The other members of the Council are elected according to the ethnic group. The Constitutional Assembly consisting of 242 persons is the organ that adopts a constitution and elects the Chairman of the State Council. The members are elected in order to reflect proportional representation of the main nationalities in Dagestan (Kisriev 2003: 2-3; Kisriev 2004: 337-338; Hille 2010: 307-308; Abdullaev 1997).

With Putin's coming to power in 2000, the process of recentralization and reconsolidation of power slowly and steadily began in Russia, and Dagestan also underwent this development which changed its internal political system. The federal officials first sought to find out all those articles of the 1994 Dagestani Constitution that were not consistent with the Russian Constitution. It was found that the Russian Constitution was contradicted at 45 points by 25 articles of the Dagestani Constitution. Meanwhile in May 2000, the then Dagestani Attorney General, Imam Yaraliev, had appealed to Constitutional Court of Russia requesting it not to permit changes in the Dagestani Constitution and keep the latter intact. However, the People's Assembly of Dagestan, hurriedly and without waiting for the court's verdict, began the process of amending the Dagestani Constitution in order to make it consistent with that of the Russian Federation. As such on 22 June 2000, amendments to the Dagestani Constitution in the articles; viz. Articles 65(6), 65(8), 66, 70, 75, 81(1)(5), 81(4), 81(7), 91(13), 112(3), 113 and 113(5)(2); were passed by the People's Assembly of Dagestan. Since, these articles were easily changeable so the People's Assembly agreed to modify them however; it managed to evade a few more modifications sought by the centre on the ground that further changes involved complex legislative procedures. Finally in 2003, the day came when the 1994 Dagestani Constitution was amended and brought fully within the compliance of the federal constitution. The amendment also changed the election of Dagestani President on the basis of rotation principle (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 154-162; Hille 2010: 308).

Summary

The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 giving independence to 15 republics. The CIS comprising 12 independent countries was conceived in 1992. Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost, perestroika and New Union Treaty were instrumental in unleashing the wave of Soviet collapse. A military coup was staged in August 1991 by the CPSU to restore Soviet Union. However, it failed in just two days and further angered Russians against Soviet regime. In December 1991, Gorbachev resigned as the last leader of the Soviet Union and Boris Yeltsin succeeded him as the first President of the new Russia. The Soviet collapse and the subsequent demise of Communism put Russia into a transition from socialism to liberal market economy.

The new Constitution was adopted by the Russian Federation on 12 December 1993 after a 3-day bloody Constitutional crisis in Russia. It came into force on 25 December 1993 replacing that of Russian SFSR adopted in 1978. Many new provisions were added and possible changes undertaken during the making of 1993 Constitution which made it look better and more liberal as compared to 1978 Constitution of the Russian SFSR. However, it favored the Russian President more than the Parliament and gave him the absolute political power.

The Soviet collapse and 1993 Constitutional crisis in Russia tarnished Russia's image in its peripheries inducing fierce separatist struggles in the North Caucasus. Since Soviet collapse, Chechnya has been the main epicenter of all conflicts and disturbances like terrorism, Islamic extremism and separatism in the North Caucasus and thus, it has been a grave area of concern for the Federation. The Federation has realized that in order to maintain peace and stability in the whole of North Caucasus region which is a vital area of Russian interests, the restoration of order and peace; and elimination of terrorists and separatists in Chechnya must be given utmost priority.

During Soviet collapse, Dagestan became vulnerable to violence and inter-ethnic conflicts but slowly and steadily it shaped its political structure along the lines of social and ethnic edifice. On 26 July 1994, it adopted its constitution and embraced

consociational model of democracy to accommodate more than 30 nationalities on the basis of their proportional representation in Dagestan. Under the 1994 Constitution, an administrative setup was established which assigned different roles to the Parliament, National Assembly, and the State Council to maintain consociationalism. Despite ethnic conflicts and internal contradictions, Dagestan managed to ensure some degree of political stability.

CHAPTER 4

ETHNIC POLARIZATION AND NATURE OF POLITICAL PROCESS IN DAGESTAN, 1991-2010

Spillover effect of Soviet collapse

The weakening of system and order in Soviet Union during Mikhail Gorbachev's regime had a very severe impact on the North Caucasus. During perestroika, the weakness of Soviet political authority accompanied by the institutional decay weakened the Soviet control over the North Caucasus and led to the emergence of socio-political movements against the Soviet regime in the region. The Soviet collapse tarnished Kremlin's image which resulted in the nationalist movements seeking to establish political sovereignty and put forward ethnic and cultural demands in North Caucasus. Salafism emerged first, in the 1980s, in the western Dagestan and began to spread all over the region, and later it got foothold in Chechnya from where it spread to other republics of the region. The collapse of the Soviet order was followed by the political mobilization which was channeled along the ethnic and nationalist fault lines in the North Caucasus (Melvain 2007: 14-16; Goldenberg 1994; Henze 1996; Hille 2010: 275; Kisriev 2003; Kisriev and Ware 2010).

During the Soviet collapse, tensions and conflicts driven primarily by ethno-national issues, spread across the North Caucasus and led to many changes in the region. All entities in the region were haphazardly given republic status within the Russian Federation. There occurred a leadership crisis both at the regional level as well as in the relationship between the federal authorities and the North Caucasus republics. The political and ideological void which the fall of communism created was soon filled by nationalism and Islamism in the region. This resulted in the creation of nationalist groups and the re-invention or re-discovery of national language, culture, religion and clan who openly started opposing the local ruling elites and Federation putting them into direct

confrontation with the Federation. There were also tensions between these groups within republics, like in Karachayevo-Cherkesskaya and Kabardino-Balkaria. In order to counter this ethnic conflict and fragmentation, the Confederation of North Caucasian Mountain Peoples, a militarized political organization composed of militants from the republics of the North Caucasus, was formed. It was later renamed as the Confederation of the Peoples of the Caucasus (CPC) in 1990 when the Soviet Union was on the verge of collapse (Hille 2010: 275; Melvain 2007: 14-16; Goldenberg 1994; Henze 1996; Halbach 2001: 96; Kisriev 2003; Kisriev and Ware 2010).

Boris Yeltsin's statement -- "take as much sovereignty as you can swallow", in the early 1990s, as a warning to Russia's regional leaders further sped up the nationalist mobilization in the region. The autonomous republics, oblasts and districts subsequently began declaring their sovereignty inducing a wave -- popularly known as the "parade of sovereignties" -- which soon engulfed entire North Caucasus. It also resulted in Chechnya's proclamation of independence in November 1991. Moreover, the Federal Assembly of Russia passed the "Law on the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples" in 1991 which prioritized the issue of the return of land to all the former deportees making it one of the top political agendas in relation to the North Caucasian republics. However, many viewed this law as a pretext for manipulating the borders and status of the administrative units of the North Caucasus yet again (Melvain 2007: 14-16).

In the backdrop of Soviet collapse, the Chechens intensified their struggle for independence from the Russia Federation thus aggravating problems for Russia as well as the North Caucasus. In the late 1991, Chechnya declared full independence from Moscow and Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, under Dzhokhar Dudayev was thus proclaimed which was neither recognized by Russia nor the world. The Constitution of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria was created in March 1992 by Dudayev's government. In April 1993, Dudayev dissolved the Chechen Parliament leading to lawlessness and chaos in Chechnya. Bitter conflict broke out between pro- and anti-Dudayev factions. Dudayev organized large scale violence against the non-Chechens, in general, and ethnic Russians, in particular, forcing a large number of people, mostly ethnic Russians, to flee the

republic between 1991 and 1994. Finally, in December 1994 Russia had to respond by sending troops to restore the federal government's authority and maintain order in the republic triggering the First Chechen war. A fierce battle between Russian troops and Chechen rebels ensued which exacerbated the conditions as both sides indulged in a number of brutal violence and war crimes that resulted in heavy human toll. The war ended in August 1996 with heavy Russian casualties in the hands of the Chechen rebels and subsequent Russian withdrawal from Chechnya. Dudayev was killed in an aerial bombardment by Russia in April 1996. However, this de facto independence of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria didn't last long and ended in August 1999 with Russian military campaign against the republic in response to the invasion of Dagestan by Chechnya-based Wahhabi militants. The Wahhabi militants invaded Dagestan with the intention of merging it with Chechnya to form an Islamic state. Although, Russia succeeded in restoring the federal control over the republic but the bloody conflict between Russia and Chechen separatist militants is still on. Chechnya's de facto independence from the year 1994 to 1999 only served to create a major power vacuum of authority in Chechnya resulting in further deterioration of the republic into a failed state that also brought severe repercussions for its neighbors, especially Dagestan (Kuchins 2011: 5; Melvain 2007: 21-22; Halbach 2001: 99-104).

The Soviet collapse also triggered border disputes between republics of the North Caucasus. The separation of Ingushetia and Chechnya from Chechen-Ingush ASSR¹⁰ in 1992 and the Federation's failure to delimit the borders of the new republic of Ingushetia took the form of Chechnya-Ingushetia dispute over Sunzhensky district. There were also violent disputes between the North Ossetians and the Ingush over Prigorodny in the autumn of 1992 claiming around 600 lives and rendering scores homeless; tensions continued throughout the 1990s. Russia failed to come up with an effective and coherent policy in order to resolve the cycle of conflicts over territory in the North Caucasus. The

¹⁰Chechen-Ingush ASSR was an autonomous republic, constituted in 1936, within the Russian SFSR during Soviet era. It was formerly called Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Oblast formed by administratively joining Chechen and Ingush Autonomous Oblasts in 1934.

relations between Moscow and the republics of the North Caucasian region got further complicated due to contradicting legislations on the distribution of authority among the former and latter. The 1992 Federation Treaty, 1993 Constitution of new Russian, and a set of bilateral treaties between Moscow and the individual subjects contributed in raising doubt and confusion among the subjects and the centre. There was also a serious institutional uncertainty in Russia with the Parliament, ministries, presidential apparatus and security agencies being unaware of their responsibilities towards the region at policy level. Owing to the absence of strong legal base for federal relations and a well organized institutional arrangement, Russia had to vaguely devise a solution to resolve the conflicts in the region (Melvain 2007: 16-17; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 31-34).

The North Caucasus also experienced a religious, i.e. Islamic revival, in the early 1990s following the Soviet disintegration. Perestroika and open borders not only made it possible to practice Sufi traditions freely but also enabled reformers to demand a purer approach to religion. The Soviet collapse weakened Russia's legitimacy and control over the Muslim regions of North Caucasus. The rise of nationalist sentiments thus provided a good platform for Islamic resurgence based on ethnic lines. Thus, regional Muftiats¹¹ which came into being during the World War II, split up taking the form of various national organizations. In 1989-92, the "Spiritual Board of Muslims of the North Caucasus" was replaced by independent bodies belonging to different republics, and Islam, which had been driven underground during Soviet regime, began gaining foothold in the region. A number of groups as well as different versions of Islam emerged and vied for dominance in the region. As a consequence, a violent power-struggle broke out between the followers of traditional forms of Islam, the Sufis, and those of more radical forms of Islam, the Salafis, in the region. Dagestan and Chechnya became the main battlegrounds of rivalry between the followers of different forms of Islam in the region (Melvain 2007: 18; Kisriev and Ware 2010; International Crisis Group 2008: 7).

¹¹In 1944, three Muftiats were established: one in Baku, one in Tashkent and one in Makhachkala.

Historically, Dagestan has been the main centre for Islam in North Caucasus and both Sufism and Salafism flourished in the republic in the 1990s. Salafi Islam found its first foothold in the Caucasus in Dagestan, from where it spread to Chechnya and influenced insurgency there from the mid-1990s. The Islamic Jamaat of Dagestan was founded by Bagauddin Kebedov, a radical Salafi, in 1989 as a forum for spreading his jihadi teachings. He started provoking the residents of the villages of Chabanmakhi and Karamakhi of the ethnic Dargin in Buynaksk district against the federal laws and encouraged them to declare their villages as Sharia mini-states. During this period, the republic became the frontline of conflicts between the federal and local authorities, Sufism and Salafism. Soviet collapse and the subsequent weakening of the federal and local authorities gave Salafist groups an opportunity to bring the region under their clout. Thus in various localities within Dagestan, they managed to grab political power and created enclaves that were governed according to the sharia law. Unlike the traditional Islamists, who tended to stay in power by keeping the official Islamic institutions under their control, the radical Islamists i.e. Salafists preferred to stay away from the power as well as the authorities and ethnic competitions. The Salafist movement spread its radical ideology and gathered considerable support by outstripping ethnic and clan politics. Most of the socially active young Dagestanis saw hope in such movement and got attracted towards Salafism as the inability of both the local authorities and traditional clerics to check corruption, crime and perceived moral defects had already spread despair in the society. The Salafists and the radicals have still been looking for internal support for the Islamization of the North Caucasus (Melvain 2007: 18-19; International Crisis Group 2008: 7). The Soviet collapse led to the re-emergence of traditional structures of social solidarity in Dagestan. In this era of transition and transformation, the djamaats began to re-emerge and tended to keep the political system of Dagestan within traditional patterns. The resultant political organizations could be identified as ethnoparties as they had some of the features of Western-style political parties. These ethnoparties had the support base consisting of a single village or a djamaat. Most of the key positions within an ethnoparty were occupied by the members belonging to same djamaat though it had members from other ethnic groups too. The Wahhabism posed a grave threat to such traditional political

system of the republic as it tended to create serious differences among djamaats. Hence, it was rejected by the Dagestanis who stood against the spread of Wahhabi thought which was also considered an alien import and cause of Chechen separatist movement (Kisriev and Ware 2000: 484-485).

Administrative structures and ethnic polarization in Dagestan

The 1994 Constitution of Dagestan reflects the multiethnic fabric of the republic. It established a political system based on consociational model of democracy for supporting the republic's traditional social structure where the people are culturally, territorially, and linguistically divided into more than 30 ethnic groups. The Constitution is the manifestation of Dagestani political elite's will to ensure a quite stable and balanced equilibrium in the socio-political spheres of the republic. It thus established political institutions meant for preserving a political balance between different ethnic groups. The Constitution requires the Parliament, the People's Assembly, to represent all ethnic groups on the basis of proportional representation and an electoral law setting up a system of electoral districts based on ethnicity to ensure this. The Constitution envisages the government's objective of upholding the cohesive identity of Dagestan by recognizing and supporting the individual rights and ethnic identities, vis-à-vis the rights of ethnic groups. The government extends support to cultural development, ethnic television programmes, multilingual national newspapers etc. and at the same time, steps are being taken to ascertain that no ethnic or national group feels alienated and marginalized from the system; and there has been continuous effort to maintain proper ethnic balance within the administration. All ethnicities are ensured proportional representation according to the law on the elections to the People's Assembly (*The 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan; Kisriev and Ware 2001; Hille 2010: 308; Abdullaev 1997; Ware 1998: 348).

Dagestan's administrative structure exhibits a clear model of consociationalism. Arend Lijphart (1969 & 1977) defines consociational democracy as the government or political

system designed to turn the system with diverse socio-political cultures into a stable democracy. He maintains that “in a consociational democracy the centrifugal tendencies inherent in a plural society are counteracted by the cooperative attitudes and behaviour of the leaders of the different segments of the population”. He also stresses that cooperation among ruling elites is based on pragmatic accommodation which is the principal feature defining the consociational model. Dagestan more or less exhibits the same feature and seeks to assimilate the diversity in ethnicity despite internal conflicts and contradictions.

Dagestan is a fragmented society because it is ethnically heterogeneous and diverse. As per 2010 Census of the Russian Federation, Dagestan has the population of 2,910,249 people who are culturally, territorially and linguistically divided among 14 ethnic, viz. Avars, Dargins, Kumyks, Lezgins, Tabasarans, Azerbaijanis, Laks, Nogais, Aguls, Tats, Russians, Rutuls, Chechens and Tsakhurs; and 34 ethno-linguistic groups. Around 95% of the population are Sunni Muslims; up to 4% are Shiite Azeris; around 5% are Christians (mostly Orthodox); and less than 1% are Jews. Avars are the largest group totaling around 850,011 or 29.4 percent of Dagestan’s population. They are the amalgamation of 15 ethnolinguistically distinct nationalities comprising Andis, Bagulals, Akhvakhs, Karatints, Botliks, Tsez or Didoyts, Chamalints, Godoberints, Tindints, Khvarshints, Gunzibts, Beshtints or Kaputchins, Ghinukhts, and Archins. Dargins are the second largest ethnic groups which comprise 17.0 percent of the population with around 490,384 people. They include Kubachins and Kaitags; and three ethno-linguistic groups living mostly in the central Dagestan. Kumyks are the third largest group comprising 14.9 percent of the population with around 431,736 inhabitants; and Lezgins the fourth comprising 13.3 percent of the population with around 385,240 inhabitants. Kumyks are the Altaic people inhabiting the area extending from the low lying area along the Caspian Sea to the north of Derbent and on the foothills and Tersko-Sulack plain. They are mainly Turkic speaking people. Lezgins mainly inhabit the southernmost tip of Dagestan in the area extending from the Caucasian highlands to the shores of the Caspian Sea and into the northern part of the neighboring Azerbaijan. Laks constitute 5.6 percent of the population with around 161,276 inhabitants occupying the central parts of Dagestan’s highlands. The Chechen-Akkins (or Aukov Chechens) occupy the Khasavyurt district

with around 93,658 inhabitants constituting 3.2 percent of the population. Ethnic Russians, comprising 3.6 percent of Dagestan's population with around 104,020 people, inhabit the Kizliar and Trumovsky districts, including the town of Kizliar, along the Terek River. Nogais comprise only 1.4 percent of Dagestan's population with around 40,407 inhabitants living in the area near Chechnya and the Stavropol region of Russia. Tabasarans comprise 4.1 percent of the population with around 118,848 inhabitants; Rutuls comprise 1.0 percent of the population with around 27,849 inhabitants; Aguls comprise 1.0 percent of the population with 28,054 inhabitants; and Tsakhurs comprise 0.3 percent of the population with 9,771 inhabitants. Dagestan contains 130,919 Shiite Azeris who constitute around 4.5 percent of the population along with the considerable Christian and Jew populations. Mountain Jews, constituting 0.03 percent of the population with around 825 inhabitants, occupy the southern-most part of the Caspian lowland in Derbent and in the nearby foothills. They are also known as Tats whose language belongs to the Iranian group (*Census of the Russian Federation 2010; Ware et al. 2003; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 36-37; Ware 1998: 346).

On 5 March 1999, the State Duma adopted the law under the title "Guarantees of Rights of Indigenous Small Ethnicities of the Russian Federation". The law was Moscow's attempt to bring Dagestani local legislation in line with the federal law which was seen by Dagestani officials as an attempt to disrupt republic's ethnic structure. It defined "small ethnic groups" as those whose total population was 50,000 or below. It intended to provide special privilege and assistance to such groups all over the Russian Federation. However, regarding Dagestan's unique ethnically diverse society, the law threatened the consociational model and the viable institutions upon which the republic's ethnic edifice was based. In the republic, only four ethnic groups; viz. Aguls, Rutuls, Tsakhurs and Tats; officially met this criterion while the rest didn't. Nevertheless, other groups too had the bases for claiming on ethnocultural and linguistic grounds as well that they qualified for consideration as "small ethnic groups", for example, Avars and Dargins comprised 15 and 3 ethnolinguistic groups respectively. The State Council kept asserting that all 14 native ethnic groups were "small ethnic groups", so all should be given equal opportunities. Dagestan's ethnic electoral practices were truly intended to protect the

interests of the smaller ethnic groups; viz. Nogais, Tats, Rutuls and Tsakhurs; and a few of them were given their own electoral district. Thus, any federal intervention would jeopardize the very ethnic arrangements of the republic. After repeated assertions and objections by Dagestani legislators and numerous protests in the republic against the federal legislation, Moscow had to succumb to the republic's demands. Finally, in 2001, Moscow accepted the republic's principal of 14 ethnic groups and included these 14 ethnic groups in the official list of small indigenous ethnicities (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 157-166).

There have been separatist movements within the republic by various ethnic groups intending to setup own independent region by breaking away from the republic and the Russian Federation. Many a times, some of the members of larger ethnic groups, viz. Kumyks, Lezgins and Nogais, have asserted their own ethnic identities and announced their will to form independent republics. Lezgins started a national unity movement known as Sadval demanding an independent Lezgianstan based on the pattern of their predecessors. In 1992, some Nogais started the "Birlik national movement" with the goal of setting up an autonomous Nogai area by including two districts of neighbouring Stavropol Krai, two districts of Dagestan and one district of the Chechen Republic bearing considerable Nogai populations (Ware 1998: 347).

All the ethnic conflicts in Dagestan are centered over land, resources (oil and gas), political access, government jobs, schools and cultural subsidies. After the end of collectivization, land has become a particularly complicated issue and there is a considerable rise in land disputes, where land is usually regarded more in terms of ethnic rather than individual rights. Most of the ethnic clashes and conflicts that occurred in Dagestan in the wake of the Soviet collapse involved either the issue of distribution of land or the accommodation of the rights of other ethnic groups. In such a situation of disagreement, both the conflicting sides ended up damaging each other. The government generally made efforts to arrive at pragmatic and consensual solution acceptable to both the opposing parties, which sometimes succeeded and sometimes failed. In 1993, Dargins and Kumyks, who inhabited the neighbouring towns of Novyi Kostek and Kostek

respectively, got into an armed conflict over land dispute. Since, some members of the Dargin community had migrated from mountain villages and needed land for new housing which they had decided to build near Kostek. A bloody confrontation between the two ensued when a group of Kumyks tried to prevent them from building houses, leading to a casualty among Kumyks (Ware 1998: 347-350).

Robert Ware (1998) attributes one of the most significant reasons behind the ethnic discontent in Dagestan to the historical factor which implies that long and complicated history of group interactions might have led to continuing indignation and incomparable perceptions of grudge against each other. Another main reason of ethnic conflicts, according to Ware, is an intrinsic perception of disagreement regarding the rules for the resolution of disputes. He believes that the promotion of pragmatic multiculturalism and equality among multiple ethnic groups may ensure peace in the region (pg. 350 & 351).

Despite government's efforts, the ethnicity continues to be the most decisive factor in all spheres of life in the republic; be it politics, business, job, assets etc. The highest echelons of power in the republic have mainly been held by top three or four largest ethnic groups, viz. Avars, Dargins, Kumyks and Lezgins, in the republic in various proportions. Magomedali Magomedov, a Dargin, headed Dagestan government as the chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Dagestan from 1987 to 2006. He was the 1st President of Dagestan heading the presidential office of the Republic of Dagestan from 1994 to 2006. Then came Mukhu Aliyev, who is an Avar, as the President of Dagestan heading the office from 2006 to 2010. From 2010 to 2013, the presidential office of Dagestan was occupied by Magomedsalam Magomedov who is a Dargin. At present, Ramazan Abdulatipov who is an Avar is Dagestan's President since 2013 (*President of the Republic of Dagestan; Hille 2010: 307; Ware et al. 2003: 04-05).

The ethnic factor is also relevant vis-à-vis controlling of the resources in Dagestan. By convention, Avars control the oil resource with both upstream and downstream facilities, Kumyks control gas. The system is crippled by favoritism on the basis of ethnicity as within organizations favour is given to the nationality of the leader, thus resulting into the

corrupt job distribution system that exacerbates the problem of unemployment which is one of the major problems in the republic (Ware et al. 2003: 04-05).

Post-1993 Constitution and the questions of Federal relations

The Russian Federation, with a total population of 142,856,536, is one of the world's largest and most ethnically diverse multi-national countries having 182 different officially recognized nationalities (*Census of the Russian Federation 2010). Federal or inter-governmental relations within the Russian Federation are highly complex and are generally conducted keeping in mind the status of the subjects of federal lists (Ross 2010: 167; de Silva 2009: 20). Article 65 of the 1993 Constitution (after amendments in 2008) of the Russian Federation identifies 83 federal subjects. These federal subjects have constitutions as well as charters depending upon type of the subject. All 21 republics have their own constitutions, while the rest of the subjects, viz. krais, oblasts, federal cities, autonomous okrugs and autonomous oblast, have their charters (Salikov 2003: 5). These 21 republics are granted more powers than rest of the territorially defined regions making the Russian Federation constitutionally asymmetrical, while Article 5(4) declares that all federal subjects are equal. Articles 65-79 of the 1993 Constitution outline the federal structure of Russia.

According to Article 65(1), the Russian Federation includes the following subjects of the Russian Federation: 21 Republics, 46 Oblasts, 9 Krai, 2 Federal cities or cities of federal importance, 1 Autonomous oblast and 4 Autonomous okrugs.

According to Article 65(2), the federal constitutional law has full power to admit new territories as well as create a new federal subject in the Russian Federation.

Article 1 of the 1993 Constitution declares the Russian Federation as “a democratic federal law-bound State with a republican form of government”. The 1993 Constitution granted the federal government absolute powers over all the major areas regarding economy and polity. Articles 71-73 talk of the distribution of powers. Article 71 grants

the federal government 18 exclusive powers over major areas, viz. the federal budget, national economy, federal taxes and duties, foreign and defence affairs. According to the Article 71(c), the regulation and protection of human rights and freedoms of the citizens as well as national minorities are kept under the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government. Article 72 talks of the joint jurisdiction of the federal government and the federal subjects over 14 areas which are shared between the federal authority and the federal subjects. However, over the question of who shall govern, these concurrent powers have been a matter of tension and conflict between the federal and sub-national governments. Article 73 grants the federal subjects only the residual powers, i.e. powers not mentioned in Articles 71 and 72, and no exclusive powers (*1993 Russian Constitution; Ross 2010: 168).

The 1993 Constitution has established the supremacy of the federal constitution over that of the federal subjects. Article 4(2) justifies this statement declaring that - “the Constitution of the Russian Federation and federal laws shall have supremacy in the whole territory of the Russian Federation”. Article 4(1) declares that “the sovereignty of the Russian Federation shall cover the whole of its territory”. Article 4(3) declares that “the Russian Federation shall ensure the integrity and inviolability of its territory”. Article 15(1) declares that the supreme juridical force of the Russian Federation can be deployed anywhere within the territory of the Russian Federation and the constitutions and laws of the federal subjects must not contradict with the federal constitution. Article 77 grants authority to the federal subjects to establish own governmental institutions, with condition that they must be in accordance with the federal constitution and the general principles governing the organisation of legislative and executive bodies of federal law (*1993 Russian Constitution; Ross 2010: 168-169; Salikov 2003: 8).

Second Chechen War

After the August 1996 military defeat of Russia, Moscow and Grozny signed peace agreements, viz. 1996 Khasavyurt accord and 1997 Moscow treaty. The Khasavyurt accord, a formal ceasefire agreement signed in August 1996, led to the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechen territory by December 1996 and allowed Chechnya for self-determination (Kramer 2004: 5; Fuller 2007). The Chechen Republic of Ichkeria survived the war and the people of Chechnya elected Aslan Maskhadov, a champion of the First Chechen War, as its President in February 1997. However, none of the sides delivered on their promises made during the accord. Since, huge areas of Chechnya were ruined during the 1994-96 war and Moscow's promise of large-scale reconstruction aid was never fulfilled. Although Moscow did provide some sort of assistance, i.e. mostly energy supplies and grain, but it made no attempts of economic recovery as well as the reconstruction of destroyed facilities in Chechnya (Kramer 2004: 6).

Soon after the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya in 1996, the ethno-political and humanitarian situation in Chechnya deteriorated and the republic plunged into complete anarchy resembling failed state. The Chechen leadership failed to cope with this post-war anarchy and couldn't fulfill its commitments of combating crime, terrorism and manifestations of national and religious enmity. The republic became a good haven for numerous terrorists, armed gangs who were indulged in kidnapping people both in Chechnya and in the adjacent territories of Russia. Terrorist training bases of fundamentalist Islamic groups started cropping up in Chechnya which recruited aspiring jihadists from across the Northern Caucasus and Central Asia giving them military-style training along with political and religious teachings (Pashin 2002; Kuchins et al. 2011: 3-5; Kramer 2004: 7).

The Second Chechen War was fueled by the invasion of Dagestan, first in August and again in September 1999, by the Chechen Islamist insurgents led by Shamil Basayev, a famous rebel leader from the First Chechen War, and Ibn ul-Khattab, an Arabic militant leader of the fundamentalist Wahhabi Islamic movement. They invaded Dagestan with the goal of separating the republic from Russia and uniting it with Chechnya to form an

independent Islamic State (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 119-120; Lyall 2010: 2; Pashin 2002). Having suffered defeat on all fronts in Dagestan as a result of stiff resistance from Dagestani villagers and military assault by Russia, the insurgents had to finally withdraw from the republic and retreat to Chechnya by 16 September 1999 (Lyall 2010: 2; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 120-121).

The newly appointed Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, had ordered Russian troops in late September 1999 to restore federal control and order in Chechnya by employing “all available means”. Thus, after routing the armed intruders and forcing them to retreat from Dagestan, the Russian troops entered the Chechen Republic on 1 October 1999 with the aim to flush out Chechen insurgents and restore order in the republic triggering the Second Chechen War. The conflict escalated in October-November 1999 when federal troops occupied northern Chechnya and then moved further towards Grozny surrounding it from all directions. The federal troops adopted a war strategy to crush hostile resistance and re-establish control of all the important places, including cities and villages, and transportation routes. The fighting caused heavy casualties on both sides and inflicted immense destruction on Chechen cities, especially Grozny which was totally annihilated as a result of Russian bombings. Despite suffering heavy casualties, the Russian army took control of Grozny and gained a firm presence across Chechnya by February 2000. And by the end of the same month, most of the Chechen guerrillas had fled Grozny and hid somewhere farther south (Kramer 2004: 7-8). As a result of successful Russian military campaign, the de facto independence of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria came to an end and Russian federal control over Chechnya was restored by May 2000. Akhmad Kadyrov, a pro-Moscow leader, was appointed the acting head of administration in July 2000 by Russia and in October 2003, he was elected President of Chechnya in 2003 by Russian effort. This post-war approach of Kremlin was widely referred to as Russia’s policy of Chechenization which implies – keeping Chechnya fully under federal control (Eichler 2011; Lyall 2010: 3).

Throughout the conflict, both sides committed atrocities putting civilians at the receiving end. Russian troops indulged in torture, forced disappearances, kidnapping, mass arrest

operations, rape, and summary executions. Instead of trying to check such abuses, the concerned commanding officers frequently resorted to cover ups or turned a blind eye. The Chechen guerrillas too frequently used civilians as human shields and committed gruesome acts against suspected defectors. They were also indulged in abductions for ransom (Kramer 2004: 9-10).

Although, the Second Chechen War ended in May 2000 with Russia's victory but the Russo-Chechen conflict still continues to haunt Russia from time to time in the form of terrorist bombings, ambushes and assassinations by the Chechen rebels within the country. Despite pro-Russia government and full control over the republic, Russia is still struggling to maintain law and order in Chechnya as the republic remains on the verge of chaos; and civilians have to live in misery. Islamic extremists and criminal gangs still flourish and operate freely. There have been frequent ambushes and assassinations against the Russian troops by Chechen militants in the republic. The major terrorist attacks in Russia, like 2002 Moscow theater hostage crisis and 2004 Beslan School massacre, by Chechen militants which separately claimed hundreds of lives, are the bloodiest signatures of the Russo-Chechen conflict. The then Russian PM Vladimir Putin had declared in April 2009 that the conflict was officially over, which was proved void by the unabated insurgent attacks and suicide bombings within the federal territory (Lyll 2010: 2; Kramer 2004: 8-11).

At the end of the day, it became clear that the war was almost as beneficial for Dagestan as it was disastrous for Chechnya. Since the war led to further devastations in Chechnya, it further improved relations between Makhachkala and Moscow. The war also resolved the complex and serious problem of a well-armed and well-fortified militant Wahhabi djamaat situated at the strategic centre of Dagestan near the main federal military base in Buinaksk. The Dagestan war temporarily strengthened relations between the ruling elites and the general population, and outlawed the Wahhabis in the republic. The Wahhabi leaders were either arrested or driven underground resulting into the suppression of Islamic extremism in the republic, not forever but temporarily (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 125).

The Chechen invasion of Dagestan also had the ethnic implications on the republic. It gave rise to an Avar backlash against the newly consolidated power of the Dargins in Makhachkala under Magomedov and Makhachkala Mayor, Said Amirov. The backlash mainly targeted two new centers of power, viz. official recognition of the Avar dominated DUMD (Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Dagestan) and the rise of Dagestan's Northern Alliance under the leadership of Avars, namely Gadji Makhachev and Saigidpasha Umakhanov. The law passed by the People's Assembly of Dagestan unanimously on 16 September 1999 designated DUMD as the main Islamic spiritual organisation in Dagestan. That means, apart from the prohibition of the Wahhabis and other extremist activities in the republic, the law transformed an Avar-dominated religious non-governmental organisation i.e. DUMD into a state apparatus for the purpose of regulating all religious matters and events, viz. Islamic education, marriage, administration etc., for the republic's Sunni Muslims. It was a big achievement for the Avars of the republic (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 148-150). Dagestan's Northern Alliance refers to the alliance of the Avar dominated Northern Region of the republic comprising Nogaiskii, Kizliarskii, Babaiurtovskii, Khasaviurtovskii and Kazbekovskii raions, including cities – Kizliar, Kiziliurt, Khasaviurt and Yuzhnosukhokumsk. In this industrially developed region of Dagestan, Avar ethno-parties played a significant role and, after the 1999 invasion, consolidated their political power vis-à-vis the Dargin-led government in Makhachkala. During the August 1999 Chechen incursions, the Avars of this region formed volunteer militias which played an important role in repelling the intruders from Tsumadinskii and Botlikhiskii raions. During the September 1999 invasion of the northern territories of the republic, viz. Novolakskii and Kazbekovskii raions, the Avar militia led by Umakhanov successfully repelled the Chechen intruders and established order in the region. The Avar leaders, Makhachev and Umakhanov, grew so powerful in the raions of the northern region that they could easily defied the administrations of both Dagestan as well as Russia (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 150-152).

Putin gained huge public praise in the country for his handling of the war and became the most popular figure in the government of Russia. When Russian President Boris Yeltsin suddenly resigned at the end of 1999, he designated Putin as the acting President of

Russia who was later elected the President in the March 2000 elections (Kramer 2004: 8).

1999 Putin's political realignment of the political forces

Vladimir Putin was an unknown person for the Russian masses when he arrived on the political stage as Prime Minister of the government of the Russian Federation in August 1999. As the Russian Prime Minister, he handled the Russian military operations (1999-2000) against the Chechen rebels very efficiently and successfully forcing the rebels to withdraw from Dagestan. On 31 December 1999, Boris Yeltsin resigned as President of Russia and appointed Putin as acting President for 3 months till official elections scheduled in March 2000. Putin's popularity rose further in February 2000 when most of the Chechen insurgents, because of Russian troops' operation, fled the key parts of Chechnya including Grozny and hid in positions farther south. Because of his handling of the war and Russian victory, Putin earned huge public praise and in a very short span of time, he became the most popular figure in the Russian government (Kramer 2004: 8). In the Presidential elections held in March 2000, Putin won with 53% of the vote. He was inaugurated President of the Russian Federation on 7 May 2000.

Following the war in Dagestan in August and September 1999, the federal interventions in the republic increased manifold, even much more than the transitional period during Soviet collapse when there was minimal central influence in the affairs of the republic (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 154). Soon after taking oath as the Russian President in May 2000, Putin started emphasizing increasingly on measures towards recentralization of the Russian political system. And Dagestani institutions were also the focus of federal's judicial and executive pressures in this regard. Kremlin demanded major changes in Dagestan's constitution aiming at the modification of the republic's entire political structure. And after many debates, discussions and legal proceedings, Dagestan's 1994 Constitution was amended on 10 July 2003 (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 154). The way the new constitution was imposed, showed Putin's tightening of noose on the republic.

Dagestan's new constitution changed its political focus from internal force field and shifted its center of gravity away from the republic at the federal center. The political power in the republic was no longer based on domestic political fabric but on the bureaucratic structures and top brass administrative functionaries directly connected to Putin's Kremlin. With the new constitution, Putin brought the republic effectively under Kremlin's clout which became the guarantor of Dagestan's stability (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 181).

Putin's measure of "federal reforms", under the slogan - dictatorship of law, was the crucial step toward strengthening the Russian state. The reform measure, based on the recentralization of federal power vis-à-vis regional authorities, had the very pragmatic aim of strengthening the president's influence by weakening the position of regional elites (Gel'man 2002: 1; Hyde 2001: 719). On 13 May 2000, President Putin issued a decree pertaining to introducing reforms in the institution of Presidential Representative in some federal subjects and dividing Russia into seven federal districts with special presidential envoys as their heads. These envoys would have broad powers of control over federal agencies in their respective region and would monitor the performance and consistency with federal law of the actions of regional and local authorities (Gel'man 2002: 1). Under the new federal system, Dagestan fell into the Southern Federal District with Rostov as administrative capital headed by General Viktor Kazantsev, a 1999 Dagestan War veteran (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 154). On 19 May 2000, the presidential decree was immediately followed by a number of reform bills which changed the method of the selection of the members of the Federation Council. It also gave the President the right to dismiss regional leaders and allowed regional leaders to dismiss heads of local government. The branches of the federal agencies, viz. the Prosecutor's Office, Federal Security Service, Ministry of Interior, Tax Inspection, Tax Police etc., were then reorganized around federal districts in order to minimize their dependence on regional governments. Through his reforms, Putin aimed to strengthen what he called the "vertical chain of command" through which presidential policies were implemented (Gel'man 2002: 1; Hyde 2001: 719).

Putin subjugated the Federation Council when he removed elected heads of regional legislatures and governors from their seats and replaced them with appointed representatives. The Federation Council now consisted of full-time legislators appointed by regional chief executives and regional legislatures, which also implied that the regional governors were stripped of parliamentary immunity (Gel'man 2002: 1; McFaul and Weiss 2008: 71). Regional elections were rigged to punish leaders opposed to Putin. In the wake of September 2004 Beslan School massacre, President Putin reiterated the need of even stronger central authority in Russia. Thus, manipulating Russian federalism, he announced major electoral changes in Russia's 89 federal subjects. The move was meant to strengthen federal control over regions by giving the Russian President power to appoint regional governors with the concerned regional legislatures' endorsement. For this, Putin maintained that this would strengthen the executive chain of command. Thus since February 2005, there have been no regional elections for executive office (McFaul and Weiss 2008: 71; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 187). In Dagestan, Magomedali Magomedov was forced to resign as the chairman of State Council and, in his place; Mukhu Aliev was nominated by Putin's regional envoy, Dmitri Kozak, as the republic's president whom the Dagestani Parliament also confirmed. Aliev was pro-Kremlin whose political approach was more compatible with Putin's centralized bureaucratic administration. However, this electoral reform was a matter of concern for Dagestan which has ethnically diverse and traditionally pluralistic political system. This is because Moscow's appointment of any head of state could immediately alienate many local political elites and as a consequence, though appearing to acquiesce, they could stealthily work to de-stabilize and sabotage the system (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 188-194).

President Putin, however, showed favors and compromises for Dagestan till 2003. First Yeltsin and then Putin from 1994 to 2003 sought to accommodate Dagestan's political system with ease. Putin showed compromise and cooperation with the republic's Sufi Islamists in order to help them in their struggle against Wahhabism. He thus gave approval to the organization of the Islamic Party of Russia (IPR) which fought the 2003 Duma election in Russia. He also granted political authorization to the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Dagestan (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 7-8; Ware et al. 2003: 287-290).

Putin successfully weakened the autonomy of the Federal Assembly, the Russian Parliament, to some extent. During the December 2003 parliamentary elections, he took advantage of his monopoly over some political tools; viz. NTV and the regional governorships; to ensure a strong majority for his political party, the United Russia, in the lower house of the Russian Parliament - the State Duma. United Russia and its allies are now the strongest entities possessing two-third seats in the Russian parliament. Putin's own popularity has been the greatest electoral asset of United Russia. Electronic media, print media as well as radio played greater roles in increasing Putin's popularity and his consolidation of power through constant positive coverage of the leaders of United Russia and negative of all other party leaders on national television stations, which attracted people's support in favor of Putin. Furthermore, overwhelming financial assistance from Russian oligarchies and unanimous approval by Russian regional leaders in favor of Putin helped him a lot (McFaul and Weiss 2008: 72).

Initially, half of the seats in State Duma were filled by proportional representation with a mandatory 5% of the vote to qualify for these seats, and the remaining half of the seats by single member districts. However, in 2004, President Putin passed a decree making it mandatory, since November 2007 parliamentary elections, to fill all seats by the method of proportional representation with at least 7% of the total votes polled to qualify for the seats. By introducing this 7% threshold, Putin sought to eliminate independent candidates and made it extremely difficult for small and minor parties to make it to the Duma. He also approved the Central Election Commission proposal that recommended the elimination of single mandate constituencies which, at that time, accounted for almost half of the seats in State Duma. The proposal further recommended that all Duma representatives be allotted seats as per the lists compiled by the national parties concerned. This move was aimed at eliminating independent deputies in the Duma, strengthening party control of the body as well as reducing the number of other political parties. During the announcement of the proposal, the Putin's United Russia Party and its allies already had a two-thirds majority in the State Duma (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 187).

Putin won two consecutive presidential elections of 2002 and 2004 and, as per the constitution, stepped down during 2008 elections. He was instrumental in initiation of the amendments of 1993 Constitution in November 2008 which increased President's term from 4 years to 6 years, applicable from 2012 presidential elections. The way President Putin handled political system in Russia is called by many - the managed democracy. His eight year long term as Russian President is characterized as the decade of autocracy and economic growth (McFaul and Weiss 2008: 78).

Summary

The Soviet collapse not only tarnished Kremlin image but also weakened its control over the North Caucasus plunging the region into social and political turmoil. This resulted in the rise of Islamic extremism, separatism and border disputes in the region. Taking advantage of the weak center, Chechnya declared full independence from Russia proclaiming Chechen Republic of Ichkeria under Dudayev in 1991 and adopted new constitution in 1992; and successfully repelled Russian attempt to restore federal rule in the war in 1994-96. In the absence of a strong center, border disputes among the republics of the region also took place, for example the Chechen-Ingush dispute over Sunzhensky and the Ingush-North Ossetians dispute over Prigorodny in 1992, which were violent and claimed many lives. Dagestan also found itself orphaned and in the grip of chaos with the fear of major ethnic clashes. During this time, Salafism and Sufism gained foothold in Dagestan and later spread to other parts of the North Caucasus and encouraged insurgency.

Dagestan somehow managed to maintain order within the republic in this difficult time and in 1994 adopted its constitution which reflected the multiethnic fabric of the republic. Since, Dagestan is a unique and world's most ethnically diverse society which is home to 14 nationalities and 34 ethnolinguistic groups, so it established a political system based on consociational model of democracy to support this traditional social structure. The 1994 Constitution represents a balanced administrative system. The People's Assembly represents all ethnic groups on the basis of proportional representation and an electoral law instituting a system of ethnically based electoral districts to ensure this. Avars, Dargins, Kumyks and Lezgins are the four largest ethnic groups out of a total of 14 in the republic who also dominate all the major top jobs; viz. administrative and political; businesses and major natural resources in the republic. These 14 ethnic groups were recognized by Russia much later in 2001 and were included in the federation's official list of small indigenous ethnicities. Despite government's effort, there exists favoritism based on ethnicity, as within organizations favour is given to the nationality of the leader. This leads to large scale corruption in job distribution systems. There are also many

instances of ethnic conflicts in the republic which are mainly based on land, resources, government jobs, political access, cultural subsidies and schools.

After independence in 1991, Russian Federation adopted its constitution in 1993. The federal structure (Article 65-79) laid out in this constitution gives immense and exclusive powers to the center over 18 areas; viz. the federal budget, national economy, federal taxes and duties, foreign and defence affairs. This 1993 Constitution also established full supremacy of the federal constitution over that of the federal subjects. Initially there were 89 federal subjects but after several mergers, the total federal subjects became 83 with: 21 republics, 46 oblasts, 9 kraia, 4 autonomous okrugs, 2 federal cities and 1 autonomous oblast; in the federation. All 21 republics have their own constitutions, while the rest of the subjects have the charters. The Russian Federation is constitutionally asymmetrical as the republics are granted more powers than the territorially defined regions.

Vladimir Putin came into prominence in Russia due to his successful handling of the second Chechen War (1999-2000) during his terms as Prime Minister and then as acting President of Russia. The invasion of Dagestan from 2 August to 16 September 1999 by some armed factions of Chechen Wahhabis fueled the Second Chechen War which began with federal forces attacking the retreating insurgents in Chechnya in October 1999 and ended with disastrous defeat of the Chechen insurgents in February 2000. Thus, the Chechen independence ended and the federal rule, with pro-Kremlin ruler, was restored in the republic. The whole conflict proved as beneficial for Dagestan as it was disastrous for Chechnya. The conflict temporarily strengthened relations between Makhachkala and Moscow; and between the Dagestan's ruler and the ruled. Chechnya was further devastated as a result of heavy Russian aerial and artillery bombings in the republic. Putin too became popular because of this conflict and later he was elected the Russian President in March 2000. Soon after assuming office, he focused on consolidation of political powers and strengthened Kremlin's control within the federation. In this process, democracy was undermined. His "federal reforms" program was based on the recentralization of federal power vis-à-vis the regional authorities, which aimed at strengthening the president's influence by weakening the governments of the federal

subjects. He forced long term Dagestani President, Magomedov, to resign and replaced him with pro-Kremlin Aliev; and he also brought about 2003 constitutional amendments in the republic; all these showed his intention of bringing the republic fully under Kremlin's control. He issued May 2000 decree on reforming the institution of Presidential Representative; weakened the Federation Council and the autonomy of the Federal Assembly; eliminated small parties and independent candidates by raising the vote threshold from 5 to 7 percent for State Duma. All these steps taken by President Putin during his two consecutive terms as President and then as Prime Minister indicate that he wanted a highly centralized political system with Kremlin as the power house.

CHAPTER 5

INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND DAGESTAN POLITICS

Regional actors in Caucasus

Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003) argue that security in a region is clustered together forming various layers; and problem in any layer has a spillover effect on others. The Caucasus is a region but more than being a region, it is a security complex as the national security anywhere in the Caucasian region cannot realistically be considered apart from that of the rest. Thus national security of one of the Caucasian states cannot realistically be considered apart from that of the other two. In case of the regional powers; viz. Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan; the security of the Caucasus has a direct bearing upon their national securities (Cornell 2001: 383).

Dagestan's relation with neighboring Azerbaijan is complex. The differences lie in both ethnicity as well as religion. Azerbaijan is a majority Turkic-speaking country with Dagestani ethnic groups, viz. Lezgins and Avars, among the minorities, while Dagestan is a majority Caucasian-speaking republic along with significant Turkic-speaking ethnic groups. It has predominantly Sunni Muslims, while Azerbaijan has predominantly Shia Muslims. Around 130,919 ethnic Azeris inhabit Dagestan mainly in Derbent area in the southern part of the republic bordering Azerbaijan (*Census of the Russian Federation 2010). Mainly Lezgins and Avars of Dagestani ethnic lineage dwell in Azerbaijan and are counted among the minorities there (Dzutsev 2014: 1). The issue between Azerbaijan and Dagestan is about ethnicity, as Lezgins mainly inhabit the southern-most part of Dagestan and the northern part of Azerbaijan. They have been striving for unification for decades. Since 1991, they remain divided between two sovereign states, viz. Azerbaijan and Russia. Such problem has arisen due to the Soviet collapse. Prior to the Soviet collapse, Azerbaijan was a part of Soviet Union and the border between the RSFSR and the Azeri SSR had never been a hindrance to the Lezgins (Cornell 2001: 258). The first territorial

claim by the Lezgins was raised in 1965 when a national organization under Iskander Kaziev, a Dagestani writer, raised voice against the Soviet policy of assimilation in relation to the Lezgins and demanded a separate unified territory comprising both the territories of Dagestan as well as Azerbaijan (Cornell 2001: 258-259; Birch 1987). In the wake of Soviet collapse, an “All-Nation Congress of the Lezgin People” proclaimed in 1991 an independent state of Lezgistan comprising territories of both Azerbaijan as well as Dagestan which was viewed by many as an act committed out of sheer panic by Lezgins who feared of being separated along the Samur river as international frontier. However, it never materialized and Lezgistan never came into existence. In the 1990s, a Lezgin terrorist organization known as Sadval, with Kremlin’s support, threatened to launch an insurgency in northern Azerbaijan with the objective of carving out parts of Azerbaijan’s territory bearing significant Lezgin population. However, Kremlin’s patronage to the movement later faded away and so the movement (Cornell 2001: 259; Dzutsev 2014: 1). When Russia-Azerbaijan relations deteriorated by the summer of 1992, Russia proposed setting up strict border controls on the Azeri border. Thus, it would become mandatory for Lezgins crossing the border, to have visas for travelling either way. This decision put considerable hurdles in the way of person to person contacts among Lezgins across the border exacerbating the already tense situation. After massive demonstrations by Lezgins on both sides, the governments of Russia, Dagestan and Azerbaijan finally came to negotiating table (Cornell 2001: 259-260).

Lezgins are better integrated into Azerbaijani society and mixed-marriages also happen to be a common phenomenon. In all, Lezgins living in Azerbaijan enjoy a better standard of education than the Lezgins living in Dagestan (Cornell 2001: 259; Akiner 1983). Given the availability of natural resources along the coastline of Dagestan, Azerbaijan’s interest for investment in the republic’s Derbent city is considered as a security threat to both Dagestan and Russia. This type of investment shows the local population, which comprises one-third ethnic Azeris, that Baku is more liberal and supportive towards them than Moscow. It is feared by Makhachkala and Moscow that it might affect the people’s allegiance for them in the area (Dzutsev 2014: 1).

Nonetheless, Azerbaijan nowadays has been pursuing an aggressive assimilationist policies vis-à-vis its ethnic Avars and Lezgins who traditionally inhabit northern part of the country. These ethnic minorities in the country are being harassed and treated as migrants on their own ancestors' land. Furthermore, pressure on Dagestani ethnic groups in Azerbaijan has become routine. Ethnic Lezgins on both sides are unhappy and critical of the actions of both the Azeri as well as Dagestani authorities over the issue of nationality policies (Dzutsev 2014: 2).

Turkey's involvement in the Caucasus is not only crucial for the region and the country itself but also for the US and EU, as it also acts to promote the interests of the West (Khokhar and Wiberg-Jørgensen 2001: 77). Turkey gained prominence in the Caucasus after the Soviet collapse when strategic vacuum was left by Moscow in the former Soviet states of the region (Oskanian 2011: 23). Turkey's engagement in the Caucasus is increasing and thus its ascending power is described as "pivotal power", that implies it has the capability to influence both regional as well as international stability. Turkey today has become so significant regionally that its decline would trigger transboundary chaos, viz. communal riots, ethnic clashes, migration etc. A pivotal state's steady economic progress and stability would reinforce entire region's economic and political significance benefiting US trade and investment too (İşeri 2011: 45; Kennedy 1996: 37). Turkey's ascending power in the region is also described as "the strategic partner", which implies that Turkey has become a country of both political and economic importance as well as a strategic buffer zone for the US interests (İşeri 2011: 45). Turkish role in the region is very much important for the US for carrying out upstream and downstream tasks for oil in the Caspian Sea region. Turkish harbors in the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea also serve as hubs for Caspian oil transportation distribution (Kim and Eom 2008: 95). Turkey's strategic goal in the region is to establish itself as the primary regional energy hub for the transportation of hydrocarbons from the Caucasus, including Dagestan and Azerbaijan, via the Balkans to the Western Europe. There are many advantages associated with this energy-based foreign policy. Firstly, Turkey aims to cope with the ever-increasing demands of the growing domestic economy for the hydrocarbons, viz. natural gas and oil, and thus curbing its increasing energy dependence

on non-reliable sources. Secondly, it intends to draw advantage from ongoing energy politics in the Eurasian space so that it can improve its image among the Western peers. If Turkey succeeds in obtaining a significant strategic role for the West, the other regional powers, viz. Iran and Russia, will recognize and respect Turkey's claim over the ongoing Eurasian energy deals. Turkey also wants to see the region as a zone of political stability and economic prosperity which it believes can be achieved only with the backing of regional powers, especially Russia and Iran (İşeri 2011: 45). Its main goal vis-à-vis Caucasus and Central Asia is to establish itself as a hub of Caspian Sea oil transportation network (Kim and Eom 2008: 95).

Turkey's foreign policy has been directed to set up a plural regional order based on gaining access to the Turkic-speaking Caspian Sea region's rich resources, mainly oil and gas. The pipeline projects, which are meant for delivering Caspian energy resources to European markets through its soil, give shape to Turkey's economic interests in the region. The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which supplies Azerbaijani oil from Baku oil-field to Turkey through Georgia, is a strong message to Russia that the countries of the South Caucasus are independent and sovereign actors, where Russia can influence but can't dominate or dictate policy (İşeri 2011: 46-47; Starr and Cornell 2005: 17).

Turkey has been the third largest importer of the Russian gas with an annual volume of more than 23.15 billion cubic meters (İşeri 2011: 47). Turkey is also keen to improve trade relations with the Russian Republic of Dagestan by increasing trade volume from \$28 million to \$1 billion (World Bulletin 2014).

Iran has always been a significant entity in Russia's foreign affairs. It is Russia's one of the major trading and economic partners and the trade volumes between the two still continue to rise. The Dagestan-Iran relation is maintained within the framework of existing Russian-Iranian agreements. The trade and economic relations between Dagestan and Iran are carried out at the entrepreneurial level between the small and medium business entities and have a good significance in the overseas economic activities of the republic. Iran has been traditionally Dagestan's main trading partner and these relations are characterized by stable and positive elements with rise in commodity turnover.

Dagestan and Iran are working together for further enhancing their strategic partnership. Dagestan exports timber, grain crops, ferrous metal goods, joinery and carpentry goods and centrifuges to Iran, and imports sugar, fruit, tea, vegetables, heating stoves, furniture, plastic goods, clothes items, carpets and other textile goods, dishes, etc. from Iran. Makhachkala seaport has transport links with seaports of Iran Amirabad, Enzeli, Neka and Nowshahr (*Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment of the Republic of Dagestan).

The three littoral states of the Caspian Sea, viz. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia, have bilaterally and peacefully settled their maritime boundaries making the northern part of the water body peaceful. However, the major maritime disputes in the Caspian Sea still exist between Azerbaijan & Iran and Turkmenistan & Azerbaijan, where Azerbaijan-Iran dispute over Araz-Sharg-Alov field in the Southwestern Caspian is the most significant (Starr and Cornell 2005: 20).

International actors in Caucasus

Brzezinski (1998) believes that Eurasia is the world's largest continent and geopolitically axial, thus it is the chessboard upon which the competition for global primacy is being played. He finds Eurasia as the best geopolitical prize for the US and further says that global primacy of the US depends directly upon the sustainability of duration and effectiveness of its influence over the Eurasian mass (pg. 30-31).

The United States sees the Caucasian region significant for its national interest and it is stepping up its presence in the region over the question of national security after 9/11 events. Unlike the regional powers; viz. Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran and Russia; the US, owing to its geographical distance, is not necessarily a part of the region's security complex, thus it has the option of pulling out of the Caucasian politics at any point of time (Cornell 2001: 384).

Initially, in the backdrop of Soviet collapse, i.e. from 1991 to 1994, the US had least interests and with no defined policies for the Caucasus region, which comprised the newly independent successor states of the Soviet Union and southern part of Russia (Cornell 2001: 358). It started taking interests in the Caucasus in a number of fields only after 1994, with the objective of ensuring certain regional gains in the region.

The US has more advantages than Russia in the South Caucasus, as the region has been relatively the most anti-Russian in the whole of Eurasia. The US gives impetus to the region for a number of reasons: for using Caspian and Caucasian energy for international market, as energy corridor for transporting Central Asian energy through pipeline connecting Europe, and military power projection by setting up NATO bases to counterbalance Iran and Russia in the region (Kim and Eom 2008: 91).

Each of the three countries of the South Caucasus; viz. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan; has been undergoing a difficult phase of economic and political reform, systemic transition and nation building since the Soviet collapse (Giragosian 2004: 43). They are characterized by the inability to set up a stable domestic political system, economic weakness and a weak national sovereignty with foreign dependence (Kim and Eom 2008: 91). The 2008 Georgia war has further made Georgia turn pro-West as well as anti-Russia and gave the impoverished country the reason to join NATO and allow US military bases (Yalowitz and Cornell 2004: 108; Kim and Eom 2008: 92). It is clear that the weak political and economic systems of the countries in the Caucasus have turned the region into an arena of competition for influence, where Russia is striving to continue its existing influence and the US vying to gain new influence (Kim and Eom 2008: 93).

The US is planning to establish the “East-West Superhighway” or “new Silk Road” to transport Caspian and Central Asian hydrocarbons to the western markets. The larger part of the goal is to lay a transportation network starting from western China, Central Asia and passing through Caucasus and Caspian region, traversing Black Sea, and finally ending in Europe. The BTC is an important pillar of this network (Starr and Cornell 2005: 20). It is important not only for trade but it has strategic and military implications. The recent US military operations in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, like Global War on

Terror and Afghan War, have further established the strategic importance of Caucasus and Caspian Sea region, apart from hydrocarbons, for the Western interests (Starr and Cornell 2005: 21). Nabucco pipeline project is also a part of this transportation network being planned by the US and EU to diversify gas supplier and source and mitigate European dependence on Russia for natural gas. It is a trans-Caspian pipeline project meant to carry Caspian gas from Azerbaijan or Turkmenistan to the European market. However, this project is currently put on hold due to the lack of commitment both from the US and the EU (Petersen 2010: 30-31).

The NATO's "Partnership for Peace" program launched in January 1994 has been started to create an atmosphere of trust between NATO and states of the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. Through this program, the US has been encouraging the involvement of the Caucasian and Central Asian states for more cooperation and trust in the long run (Cornell 2001: 376; Borawski 1995: 233).

The eastward enlargements of the EU and Europe's energy-diversification needs to mitigate its dependency on Russian energy have confirmed the importance of Caucasus, including Caspian Sea Region, for EU's energy security. The discovery of huge hydrocarbon reserves in the Azerbaijani section of the Caspian Sea has projected not only Azerbaijan but Georgia, and Turkey also as a new alternative transit system meant for energy supply to the European markets (Tsereteli 2013). After the Soviet collapse, the importance of the Caspian Sea Region has increased manifold with the Europe's growing demand for energy. The EU is urgently seeking an alternative energy supplier and source to mitigate its energy dependence on the West Asia and Russia which has been deemed an unreliable partner. For Europe, the Caucasus region is conducive both as alternative energy supplier and source as well as transportation routes, bypassing Russia, to connect Caspian energy with the European market (Alieva 2009: 44). The BTC oil pipeline has come up in 2006 as a result of the joint efforts of the EU, US, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia which is believed to be an oil window to the Europe and is expected to address EU's oil needs in the long run (Starr Cornell 2005).

The countries of South Caucasus, owing to both pre-Soviet Europeanization and Soviet style modernization, have been associating themselves with European identity and aspirations. They tend to incline more towards Europe and have thus opened up their economies for European investments (Alieva 2009: 43).

Apart from energy, EU seeks to promote a regional multilateralism in the Caucasus and Caspian region. Thus, it has successfully acceded four Caspian Sea littoral countries, viz. Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, into the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) (Alieva 2009: 47). The OSCE had been involved in the North Caucasus since 1995 till 1999, with the purpose of ending the Chechen war and post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation of the region. Since instability and conflict in the North Caucasus threaten EU's interests too. There is a fear of the spillover of the conflicts of North Caucasus into South Caucasus threatening to create a new area of instability. This is detrimental to the EU's interests at a time when it is planning to set up a transit route in South Caucasus for the transportation of Caspian and Central Asian energy. Thus, a stable and peaceful North Caucasus is equally beneficial for both Russia as well as EU (Melvin 2007: 47).

Due to the ongoing economic crisis, EU is lacking the capacity to take significant initiative in the region. The EU is getting slow in decision-making alone and has taken the back seat only to follow the US moves in the region. Thus because of EU's slow going and lack of commitment, its highly prioritized projects, like Nabucco pipeline project, for bringing Caspian natural gas to European market and lessening its over energy dependency on Russia are gathering dust (Tsereteli 2013).

Impact of Chechnya conflict on Dagestan

The Chechen conflict (1994-96) had the seeds of further conflicts in the region which later spilled into Dagestan in the form of invasion of the republic by a group of Chechen Islamist insurgents in August 1999 (Melvin 2007: 21-23). The invasion of Dagestan took place in two waves: first wave 2-22 August 1999, second wave 5-16 September 1999; in which fierce battle raged between Chechen insurgents on one side and Russian troops and local Dagestani villagers on the other side. In both the two occasions, the Chechen insurgents faced defeat at all the fronts in Dagestan and had to withdraw from the republic (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 119-121; Pashin 2002).

The platform for the conflict in Dagestan began to be prepared after the end of the First Chechen War (1994-96). During the interwar period (1996-99), tension within Islamic community was rising between fundamentalist Wahhabis and Muslim traditionalists in Dagestan. The tension was further worsened by the republic's severe economic decline bringing unemployment at 80 percent in many rural areas. A considerable number of Dagestani youth were attracted to terrorist training camps operated in Chechnya by Shamil Basayev, a famous rebel leader from the First Chechen War, and Ibn ul-Khattab, an Arabic militant leader of the fundamentalist Wahhabi Islamic movement, with funding from abroad (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 119).

In 1998 Movladi Udugov, a radical Chechen Wahhabi, had created the Islamic Nation movement, and set up the "Congress of Peoples of Ichkeria and Dagestan" under the leadership of Shamil Basayev with the goal of unifying Chechnya and Dagestan as a single Islamic state (Sagramoso 2007: 697). During the second session of the Congress of Peoples of Ichkeria and Dagestan held on 17 April 1999 in Grozny, Basayev called for the formation of a "military-political council" and a "security council" as well as an "Islamic legion" and a "peacekeepers brigade" comprising a few thousand well-trained militants, as he believed that these troops would be needed for the realization of the ultimate goal of the creation of an independent Islamic state. The event was described as the "Congress of the Moslems of the North Caucasus" which was attended by 297 delegates from 25 Dagestani djamaats located in raions such as Buinakskii, Gunibskii,

Tarumovskii and Khasaviurtovskii. There were also 195 official representatives from Chechnya and additional 200 invited guests in the Congress (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 119).

On the fateful day of 2 August 1999, armed factions of Chechen and some Dagestani Wahhabis led by Basayev and Khattab invaded the Botlikhskii and Tsumadinskii raions of Dagestan with the objective of separating the republic from the Russian Federation and forming a united Islamic state comprising Chechnya and Dagestan (Lyll 2010: 2; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 119-120; Pashin 2002). On 10 August 1999, they declared the Independent Islamic Republic of Dagestan under the leadership of Siradjin Ramazanov. By that time, they had conquered three Dagestani villages, namely Ansalta, Rakhata and Shadroda, and gained access to Tando village near the district town of Botlikh. However, the invasion by Chechen insurgents was effectively resisted by a good majority of population, including local villagers, of Dagestan who immediately formed citizen militias. This came as a bolt from the blue for the Chechen insurgents who had never anticipated such resistance from Dagestan's local masses. Thus fierce battle raged in these villages which threatened the entire population of Andis and other small groups of Avars. Dagestani officials urgently requested federal military forces to repel such an insurgent attack on the republic's soil. Russia finally responded by dispatching federal troops under the leadership of Colonel-General Viktor Kazantsev, commander of the North Caucasus Military District (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 120). A military operation was launched against the Chechen intruders in Dagestan, and thus a fierce battle further raged in which Dagestani OMON (Special Task Force) actively fought along with the federal forces. As a result, the insurgents under Basayev and Khattab had to withdraw on 22 August and by 26 August 1999, all fighting in the region ceased. However, on 5 September 1999, Khattab and Basayev again invaded Dagestan by attacking its Novolakskii raion which lies further north in the republic. This time, their objectives were -- the recovery of Chechen territory in Aukovskii district which had become the Novolakskii raion of Dagestan during 1944 deportation of the Chechens; a corridor to the Caspian Sea; and the strategic division of Dagestan into northern and southern parts. Nevertheless, they faced defeat on all fronts in Dagestan and were forced to retreat by 16

September 1999 (Kisriev and Ware 2010: 120-121). This event manifested the republic's vulnerability to terrorism, Wahhabism, Islamic fundamentalism and extremism which still continue to pose potential threat to Makhachkala and Moscow.

Russia's response to reconciliation approach towards Dagestan conflict vis-à-vis external actors

During the Yeltsin's presidency, Russia's bilateral relations with EU and US provided forum for discussions over the conflicts in North Caucasus, in general, and Dagestan and Chechnya, in particular, which evolved various approaches to handle the conflicts. However Russia, under Putin's presidency, underwent a dramatic and unfriendly shift in attitude towards international reconciliation and engagement in North Caucasus. Russia now calls such international engagement as external interference and thus rejects all international reconciliation efforts in the ongoing conflicts in Dagestan and Chechnya. Russian government in December 2002 refused to extend the mandate of OSCE, an intergovernmental organization (IGO), for an assistance mission to Chechnya which had been battered by the Second Chechen War. All other OSCE's efforts towards mediation in the ongoing conflicts in the region have also been rejected by Russia (Melvin 2007: 35). Russia even threatened to stop its part of payments to the Council of Europe for criticizing its approach in the region and even took advantage of the post of Chairman of the Council's Committee of Ministers to block discussion over the issue in 2006. It also threatened to use its veto power in the OSCE to stifle any meeting about conflicts in the region (Melvin 2007: 36).

Russia has assumed the stubborn and highhanded attitude towards any effort by its critics, be it international NGOs, IGOs or IOs. It has been resorting to violence to silence its critics. Even the media reporting anything against the government and its policies in relation to North Caucasus has come under brutal administrative crackdown. NGOs criticizing the government were also ruined either by violence or administrative crackdown (Melvin 2007: 35-36). The Russian-Chechen Friendship Society, a Finland

based international NGO monitoring the human rights situation in Chechnya and Dagestan, was indicted of inciting ethnic and racial hatred by the Russian administration and forcibly closed down in October 2006. The NGO was also declared an extremist organization within the federal territory (Melvin 2007: 36).

In all, rejecting the international efforts for promoting peace and stability in Chechnya and Dagestan, President Putin has been pursuing his own stubborn doctrines of “no dialogue” with the separatists, and “use of force” for promoting peace in the region (Melvin 2007: 45; Aliyev 2010: 339). By doing so, he is strengthening the central control over the region and eliminating his opposition and criticism. Putin’s brutal effort to bring peace, stability and order in the region seems a distant dream but what seems obvious is further conflict, instability and aggravated problem for the country, which also threatens his effort of consolidating federal power. His approach towards bringing order to the region undermines democracy and weakens rule of law (Melvin 2007: 45-46).

The security policy pursued by the President Putin administration is based on coercion, i.e. fighting, capturing and killing the insurgents to defeat insurgency, which has witnessed the death of over thousands of civilians and, nevertheless, the insurgency is still on rise in the region. The federal administration has least bothered to address the socio-economic issues affecting the region and its main focus is indeed on greater political control, including through enhanced role of the security and intelligence agencies (Melvin 2007: 46).

Outcomes of the international negotiations and engagements in the North Caucasus region

The outbreak of the conflicts in Chechnya (1994-96) and Dagestan (1999-2000) has got the international community engaged in a number of ways, like conflict resolution, assistance missions, human rights watch etc, in the North Caucasus region. The major external actors; viz. US, EU, Turkey etc.; have been involved in the North Caucasus, especially in conflict hit Chechnya and Dagestan, through multilateral forums like NGOs,

IGOs, IOs etc., to promote long-standing peace and stability in the region which is potentially beneficial for their interests too. Some domestic and international NGOs dealing with human rights issues, reconstruction, rehabilitation, humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution etc. have been active in the region since Russian independence. In April 1995, the OSCE, an intergovernmental organisation, had established a long-term assistance mission to Chechnya amid the first Chechen War in the region. And this step by OSCE was considered the most significant political engagement by an external actor. The OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya successfully poured good efforts in the negotiations for ending the ongoing war. It also kept working in the war-torn region for several years in the field of reconstruction of the economy and infrastructure, and post-conflict rehabilitation. However, the operation of OSCE in the region came to an end when Russia refused to extend the permit of its Assistance Group in 2002 (Melvin 2007: 35).

Nonviolence International (NI), an international NGO headquartered in Washington DC, launched its multi-sector peace-building program in the North Caucasus, especially in the war-battered Dagestan and Chechnya, in 2001; with the objective of conflict resolution, conflict de-escalation, reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation in post-conflict societies. Under the 2001-02 peace-building programs, NI provided peace trainings to youth in the remote areas of Dagestan and Ingushetia. It also launched a number of programs meant for promoting inter-ethnic peace, and peace-building as well as tension reduction between villagers living on both sides of Dagestani and Chechen borders after the 1999 Dagestan invasion by Chechen insurgents. In addition, sports events, cultural and social awareness events, peace-education programs, training workshop and discussion clubs were also the part of peace-building activities in the region. Most of the NI's peace-building activities were organized in the rural areas (Aliyev 2010: 337).

Under the North Caucasus Regional Peace-building program launched in 2005, NI defined some primary objectives; viz. peace-building, regional development, and inter-ethnic tolerance; for the North Caucasus region. Given the multi-ethnic fabric of Dagestani society, NI focused in promoting inter-ethnic cooperation and tolerance for

Chechen migrants in the republic. It also worked towards promoting peace and harmony between Sufi and Salafi adherents of Islam (Aliyev 2010: 337).

However, NI's endeavor of peace-building activities for promoting long-standing peace and stability in the region seems insufficient because of three reasons. Firstly, most of its programs are focused on inter-ethnic cooperation and tolerance; but the recent Dagestan and Chechen conflicts were based on Islamic extremism and not on ethnicity, and ethnicity is also not a factor in the ongoing conflicts in the region. Secondly, NI failed to reach out to the insurgents, which also limits its effort of ensuring peace. Thirdly, NI does not offer programs which may prompt the state authority to stop carrying out some heinous acts; like abductions, custodial torture and extra-judicial executions; against the innocent civilians in the name of anti-terrorism operations (Aliyev 2010: 337-38).

Peacebuilding UK (full name: Centre for Peacebuilding and Community Development) is another international NGO operating in the North Caucasus since 2006. Its main objectives are – promotion of sustainable peace, protection of human rights and people's well-being, with a special emphasis on women, children and youth in the fields of psycho-social rehabilitation, legal aid, peacebuilding, cultural & social programs and community development. It is currently operating in six republics in the region, including Dagestan and Chechnya. It also organizes trainings in the region for conflict resolution and transformation. In addition, it is also working for the reconstruction of basic infrastructure, especially educational and cultural ones, in Chechnya (*Peacebuilding UK official Website; Aliyev 2010: 338).

The Humanitarian Dialogue in the North Caucasus (HDNC) is another international peace-building project undertaken by swisspeace in partnership some local organizations, namely "Peace Mission of General Lebed (PMGL)" based in Pyatigorsk, and the "Forum for Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER-Eurasia)" based in Moscow. The project began in April 2005 from Atschchoj-Martan area of Chechnya (*swisspeace official website; Aliyev 2010: 338). The project's objective is to promote peace by bringing the warring factions on to the negotiating table for talks on non-political issues; viz. issues of reconciliation, enhancement of human security, release of illegally detained persons and

psychological rehabilitation; aimed at giving pace and effectiveness to the humanitarian operations (Aliyev 2010: 338). In February 2006, its objective was later expanded to include some other important issues like search for missing persons and gender aspects in Chechnya. This peace-building project gets funding from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) (*swisspeace official website).

However, the project's effort towards promoting peace has proved insufficient in the region as it focused only on reconciliation between federal authority and representatives of Chechen civil society, and has not yet made access to the unsatisfied separatists. It also sought to strengthen the state institutions without emphasizing on the promotion of democracy in Chechnya and Dagestan, which implies - giving more powers to the corrupt and autocratic local authority in the region (Aliyev 2010: 338).

Danish Refugee Council North Caucasus (DRC NC) is a Danish NGO which started humanitarian operations in the North Caucasus in 1997. Its main goal in the region is the "protection and promotion of durable solutions to refugee and displacement problems on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights". DRC NC is carrying out the humanitarian assistance activities mainly in the conflict hit Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia; in collaboration with the UNHCR, the European Commission (EC) and EC's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) and the governments of Norway, Sweden as well as the US (*DRC North Caucasus).

Summary

The Caucasus region, including Caspian region, has huge hydrocarbon reserves. Following the Soviet collapse, it emerged lucrative for the regional and external actors. At present regional actors, viz. Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan, and international actors, viz. US and EU, are operating in the region and pursuing their vested interests in relation to energy deals, pipelines, security, power projection etc. The national security of these regional actors is intertwined with the security of the Caucasus so much so that they together form a security complex.

The ethnic groups, Lezgins and Avars, reside both in Dagestan and Azerbaijan. Ethnicity is the main issue between Azerbaijan and Dagestan as Lezgins inhabiting Dagestan's southern-most and Azerbaijan's northern parts have been complaining of persecution by their respective governments and demanding unification of these areas for decades.

Turkey's role in the region is crucial for the West as it is inclined towards promoting interests of the US and EU in all the areas, be it energy or security. Its role in the region is described as pivotal power and strategic partner. Turkey intends to draw Caspian Sea energy and transport it to domestic as well as western markets. BTC oil pipeline fulfills all its aspirations and proves to be a potential oil supplier to the Europe.

Iran is a Caspian state which intends to gain more influence and lessen Russian influence in Caucasus without having any confrontation with Moscow. It is involved in a maritime dispute with Azerbaijan over Araz-Sharg-Alov field in the Caspian Sea. It maintains good relations with the Russian Republic of Dagestan and has been traditionally Dagestan's main trading partner.

The US also sees great opportunities in the region due to huge energy reserves in the Caspian region. Although it is not a part of Caucasian security complex, it associates its national security with the region since 9/11 events. The US' goal in the region is to set up the East-West Superhighway or New Silk Road to transport Caspian and Central Asian hydrocarbons to the western markets and thus mitigate Russian and Iranian influence in the region. Since the states of South Caucasus are politically & economically weak and

anti-Russian too, US enjoys greater advantage over Russia towards engaging them in military alliance for new influence over the region. It has been engaging the South Caucasian states through NATO's Partnership for Peace program launched in 1994.

EU intends to engage in the region because it finds Caspian Sea region as a potential supplier of hydrocarbons towards diversifying energy supplier in order to mitigate its dependence on Russian energy. EU is also engaging the region in regional multilateral organisation like OSCE and EBRD. The OSCE was also involved in humanitarian assistance operations during Dagestan and Chechnya conflicts from 1994 to 1999. EU's lack of commitment and capacity in the region has rendered it a weak contender in Caucasian game. The indefinite stay on its Nabucco pipeline project also exposes EU's policy deficit in the region.

The First Chechen War (1994-96) ignited further conflicts in the region as Islamic extremists and terrorists started gaining more prominence and strength in the villages of Chechnya and Dagestan. Shamil Basayev and Ibn ul-Kattab along with other Chechen Wahhabists had started an Islamic nation movement and declared the unification of Chechnya and Dagestan into a single Islamic state. They organized a big faction of Islamic insurgents and invaded Dagestan in two waves, on 2 August and 5 September 1999, during which the villages of Ansalta, Rakhata, Shadroda, and Tando and Botlikhskii, Tsumadinskii, and Novolakskii raions came under insurgents' attack, but the Chechen invaders were badly defeated on all the fronts in Dagestan by the federal troops and local Dagestani villagers. They were forced to withdraw and flee to Chechnya by 16 September 1999.

Putin shows unfriendly attitude towards any kind of international humanitarian aid in the conflict hit areas of Chechnya and Dagestan. He calls such efforts as interference into Russia's domestic matters and rejects them. The Putin administration's security policy employs coercive nature to combat insurgency and promote peace and stability in the region. Consolidating federal power is Putin's priority area of concern, rather than socio-economic conditions affecting people of the region.

Some international NGOs and projects/missions, like Nonviolence International, Peacebuilding UK, DRC NC, HDNC etc., are operating in the conflict hit areas of North Caucasus. Their goals are almost common, i.e. humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution, rehabilitation, reconstruction, ethnic harmony, release of prisoners etc. The OSCE, an IGO, was active in Dagestan and Chechnya from 1994 to 1999 and helped in conflict reduction and negotiation between federal authority and Chechens during the First Chechen War. Nevertheless, all these international efforts have so far proved insufficient for promoting peace in the North Caucasus, including Dagestan.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Dagestan, the land of mountains, has been a region of great importance for the Russians. It is ethnically the most diverse republic within the Russian Federation and is home to 14 different nationalities and 34 ethno-linguistic groups. Its geographical proximity to the European, Arabic and Asian civilizations; and huge hydrocarbon reserves in its Caspian coast are yet another factors that underline its importance. Therefore, it is regarded by Russia as an important region within its territory both in terms of natural resources and ethnicity as well as geopolitical location. Historically, the North Caucasus, including Dagestan, had also been geopolitically important region for Czarist Russia, who managed to annex the region only in the latter half of 19th century after a long and fierce armed battle with the local mountain people (Sagramoso 2007: 683-685; StratRisks 2012).

During the Czarist rule in the region, the socio-political life of the Dagestanis was badly ruined by the harsh and repressive measures of the Czar administration which had assumed the form of military administration. Islam was oppressed and practice of sharia was restricted, Islamic priests were often humiliated and persecuted under Czarist regime. Sufism and Muridism were born during this period to fight the growing Russian totalitarian rule in Dagestan. One of the aims of the Czar administration behind such draconian and suppressive policies is to dissolve the local social structures of the region and bring it culturally and socially at par with Russian traditions. During the Soviet administration too, until Stalin regime, the social structure of the region bore the brunt of cruel and harsh policies of Stalin as he wanted to dissolve the ethnic and cultural identities of the Muslim inhabitants of the North Caucasus, including Dagestan, in order to bring about a Soviet order. Thus Stalin resorted to mass deportation of ethnic groups from the region to the uninhabitable areas of Siberia and Central Asia. He left no stone unturned in destroying these ethnic groups through the means of mass exile and forced

assimilation. Hence, both during Czarist and Soviet rule, the socio-political life, i.e. ethnic identity, culture, language and religion, of the North Caucasian people, including Dagestanis, underwent brutal assault. Although, the post-Stalin era saw some relief to the ethnic groups of the region, the persecution of Islam and ethnic groups continued throughout the Soviet rule, though with lesser brutality. The Soviet collapse brought major relief to the Islamic leaders, clerics and followers in the region who had been forced to go underground for the fear of persecution during Soviet days (Kisriev and Ware 2006: 493-500; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 9-25; Reynolds 2004: 1-18).

The post-Soviet Dagestan saw both Islamic resurgence as well as a balanced policy of ethnic accommodation. The 1994 Constitution of Dagestan is a clear and perfect testimony of the argument that the political elites of independent Dagestan wanted to promote a consociational democracy within the republic by accommodating all the 14 ethnic groups in the social and political spheres of the republic. The Constitution sought to ensure an ethnic equilibrium in the republic. Nevertheless, despite all these measures, the top echelons of power are still dominated by the top four groups, or more succinctly say top two groups, viz. Avars, Dargins, Kumyks and Lezgins, of the republic. Although, the ethnic conflict has lessened in the 2000s, the ethnic inequality has increased considerably. It is an irony that there still exists major “ethnic disparity” in the land where the diversity in ethnicity is most celebrated and taken as a pride by the people and administration alike (Ware et al. 2003: 04-05; Kisriev and Ware 2001: 107; Hille 2010; Kisriev and Ware 2010).

Huntington (1996) argues that the post-Cold War world will be organized increasingly along “ethnic, cultural and civilizational lines and the greatest conflicts will be those among different civilizations. The allies and enemies will be determined on ethnic and cultural basis”. The thesis given by Huntington is also applicable to Dagestan. Dagestan is a Republic within Russian Federation. It is internally divided along ethnic fault line which is the ground for conflicts within the republic. Thus the major threat and challenges for the post-Soviet Dagestan emanate out of ethnic and ethno-linguistic cleavages tending to make the entire region unstable. Huntington (1991) highlighted that

between 1974 and 1990, at least 30 countries made transitions to democracy. He believes that the adoption of democracy in most of the Soviet republics after their transition from highly centralized unitary state to sovereign states is highly complicated because of their ethnic heterogeneity and reluctance of the dominant nationalities to grant equal rights to ethnic minorities. Similarly, Dagestan having undergone third wave of democracy also exhibits the same symptoms. Huntington finds “culture” as one of the main obstacles to democratization (third wave) as he writes – “a profoundly antidemocratic culture would impede the spread of democratic norms in the society, deny legitimacy to democratic institutions, and thus greatly complicate if not prevent the emergence and effective functioning of those institutions” (Huntington 1991: 22). Thus in both the works, Huntington blames culture, ethnicity, civilization etc. as the main factors of conflicts and as opposed to democracy and democratization in the post-Cold War world. The North Caucasus region today is seriously threatened by some of the points raised by Huntington like ethnic conflicts, separatism, terrorism and Islamic extremism.

The major ethnic conflicts in the republic are still centered on the issues like land, government jobs, power, property and control of resources. Although, the sand had settled and the hatchets buried between the ruler and the ruled as well as between centre and Makhachkala following the end of 1999-2000 Second Chechen War, the Islamic resurgence coupled with ethnic conflicts aggravates separatist tendency within the republic threatening to destabilize the entire region. The Russian Federation respected and supported Makhachkala’s policy of ethnic accommodation but this support ended in 2003 when President Putin with the determination of reconsolidation of power forced latter for constitutional amendment and got the 1994 Dagestani Constitution amended in 2003. This development brought the republic completely under Kremlin’s ambit subjugating the local administrations there. Now the local legislators, having lost significant power to the centre, have to depend upon the local bureaucratic functionaries loyal to Kremlin for any legislation in the republic. The legislation no longer depends on the domestic factors of the republic rather, on the mood of the centre. This type of tight and stubborn attitude of Moscow under Putin only widens the ethnic rift preparing

ground for more ethnic conflicts in the republic which also aggravates the separatist tendency there (Lyal 2010; Kisriev and Ware 2010: 120-194; Ware et al. 2003).

There is a connection between ethnicity and security as former has a good influence over the latter. The issues of ethnic assimilation and ethnic heterogeneity have a bearing on national, regional as well as global security. Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003) argue that security in a region is clustered together forming various layers; and problem in any layer has a spillover effect on others. Thus threats emanating in a region do not travel over long distances, they, indeed, have greater implications locally on the nearby regions (Buzan and Waever 2003). The Caucasus is a region but more than being a region, it is a security complex as the national security anywhere in the Caucasian region cannot realistically be considered apart from that of the rest (Cornell 2001: 383). Hence, ethnic conflicts or extremism anywhere in Caucasus region, be it Chechnya or Azerbaijan or Georgia etc, produce tremors impacting the entire region; and Dagestan is not insulated from them. The events like 1999 invasion of Dagestan by Chechen insurgents, 2004 Beslan crisis and the spread of terrorist networks in the Republic best illustrate the argument. Therefore, the menace of terrorists and other extremist outfits within Dagestan can't be routed unless all sorts of conflicts and extremism within the region are resolved (Cornell 2001).

The international community, including the external powers, non-state actors, NGOs, IGOs etc, is also taking the whole Caucasus region very seriously because of two significant reasons. First, the Caspian region has rich hydrocarbon reserves and it has the potential to serve as a good energy supplier and source. Thus, the West shows interest in the region to harness its energy resources and use the latter as a transit route for the transportation of Central Asian energy to the outside world. Second, the ongoing violence; viz. Islamic extremism, ethnic conflicts, terrorism; in the North Caucasus threatens to spill into the adjacent regions, viz. Europe, West Asia, posing threat to their stability. Hence, the international community seeks to resolve conflict through various peaceful means, viz. peacebuilding, reconciliation, rehabilitation, reconstruction etc, and in this regard a number of NGOs are working in the North Caucasus and Dagestan

towards conflict resolution. The US and EU are also keen to stabilize the region for their own interests (İşeri 2011: 45; Kennedy 1996: 37; Khokhar and Wiberg-Jørgensen 2001: 77; Starr and Cornell 2005: 17).

Russia under Putin has adopted inimical and stubborn attitude towards any kind of humanitarian aid or reconciliation efforts in the conflict hit areas of Chechnya and Dagestan by external actors, viz. NGOs, IGOs and IOs. It has called such efforts as interference and thus turns them away. The Russian administration even resorts to violence and abductions to silence its critic and opposition regarding this issue. Its security policy too manifests coercive and rigid nature to combat insurgency and promote peace and stability in the region. It has been focusing more on consolidating federal power, rather than addressing socio-economic conditions affecting the people (Melvin 2007: 35-46; Aliyev 2010: 339).

A lot of international NGOs and projects/missions are operating in the conflict hit areas of North Caucasus. Their goals are almost common, i.e. humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution, rehabilitation, reconstruction, ethnic harmony, release of prisoners etc. However, all these international efforts are insufficient for promoting peace and stability in the region because they have failed so far to penetrate deep into the society and reach out even to the separatists. Their approach has also failed to redress and stop abductions, illegal arrests, persecutions and executions committed by the state. Their peace efforts are mainly limited to urban areas and they have never been to the rural areas which have been the haven of Islamic extremists and main grounds of ethnic and religious violence. Their peace efforts involve activities like social events, sports, educational workshops etc. which are not enough to check ethnic conflicts and Islamic extremism in the region (Aliyev 2010: 337-38).

It is the multi-ethnic character of Dagestan according to which its political system has been shaped. Thus, the political system that was developed in the republic was a clear example of consociational democracy in which equilibrium among all the ethnic groups in socio-political areas of the republic was sought. This type of political system, despite some limitations and shortcomings, has ensured good level of stability till date in

Dagestani society. However, the latter is vulnerable to the resurgence of Islamic extremists who get support and resources from Chechnya based Wahhabis are. The federal policy is also influencing the republic's political system since 2003, i.e. the year when Dagestan's constitution was amended under the immense pressure of the centre. A number of articles of the republic's constitution were found inconsistent with the federal constitution, so this measure was taken to make the former fall in line with the latter (Kisriev and Ware 2010). In fact, Putin's fascination for reconsolidation and recentralization of federal power has undermined the local authority's power and legitimacy in the republic. This federal policy has serious implications for the Dagestan's political system as the local laws and legislations are formulated according to the moods of the centre and the local authority is converted into a group of pro-Kremlin bureaucrats exercising full executive powers within the republic.

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