

Islamic revivalism in Tajikistan, 1991- 2014

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “ISLAMIC REVIVALISM IN TAJIKISTAN, 1991-2014” 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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THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO

MY PARENTS AND MY SISTERS

Map of Central Asia

Commonwealth of Independent States - Central Asian States



CONTENTS

	Page No.
Map of Central Asian countries	iii
Acknowledgement	vii
Abbreviations	viii - x
List of Maps	xi
List of Tables	xi
List of Graphs	xi
Preface	xii - xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1 - 14
1.1 Islam	2
1.2 Islam during Soviet	3
1.3 Islam in Tajikistan	4
1.4 Literature Review	8
1.4.1 The ideological factor	8
1.4.2 External factors	10

1.4.3 Role of Islamic radical groups	11
1.5 Definition, Rationale and Scope	12
1.6 Research Questions	13
1.7 Hypothesis	13
1.8 Methodology	13
Chapter: 2 Socio - economic factor in Tajikistan	15 - 33
2.1 The Economy of Tajikistan	15
2.1.1 Agricultural sector	18
2.2 Social situation in Tajikistan	19
2.2.1 Population of Tajikistan	19
2.2.2 Gender inequality in Tajikistan	21
2.2.3 Education in Tajikistan	23
2.2.4 Health issues in Tajikistan	25
2.2.5 Migration	27
2.2.5.1 Labour migration in Tajikistan	27
2.2.5.2 Unemployment in Tajikistan	28
2.2.5.3 Tajik Migrants and their Remittances	29
2.2.5.4 Destinations	30
2.3 Conclusion	32
Chapter: 3 External Influences	34 - 47
3. 1 Afghanistan Factor	34
3.1.1 Taliban	36
3.1.2 War against terrorism	36
3.2. Pakistan	37
3.2.1 Af- Pak region	38

3.2.2 Emergence of the Taliban in Pakistan	39
3.2.3 Religious identity	40
3.3 The Role of Iran	42
3.4 The role of Saudi Arabia	45
3.5 Concluding Remarks	46
Chapter 4: The role of Islamist Radical groups	48 - 63
4.1 Hizb ut- Tahrir	48
4.1.1 Tajik government response	51
4.2 Al Qaeda	51
4.2.1 Main ideology	52
4.2.2 Event of 9/11 and Al Qaeda in Tajikistan	53
4.3 Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan	54
4.3.1 Civil War in Tajikistan	55
4.3.2 United Tajik opposition	58
4.4 Jamaat-i-Islami	58
4.5 Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	59
4.6 Taliban	62
4.7 Summary	63
Chapter: 5 Conclusion	64 - 68
Bibliography	69 - 83

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BOMBAF	Border Management Program Badakshan Afghanistan
BOMCA	Border Management Programme in Central Asia
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CA	Central Asia
CADP	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
CAS	Central Asian States
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DPTJ	Democratic Party of Tajikistan
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Area
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HT	Hizb- ut- Tahrir
ICG	International Crisis Group
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

IRPT	Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISI	Inter Services Intelligence
ME	Ministry of Education
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Conference
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
TASSR	Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
UAE	United Arab Emirates
USA	United States of America
UN	United Nations
UTO	United Tajik Organisation
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UZBEK SSR	Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic

LIST OF MAPS

Maps	Page no.
_Physical map of Tajikistan	1
Map of Tajikistan and its Neighbouring Countries	18
Map of the Feghana valley	41
Map of Tajikistan's provinces	57

LIST OF TABLES

Urban and Rural population in Tajikistan (in percentages) (2000-2014)	20
Percentage of Population ages 15 to 49 in Tajikistan (1990- 2014)	27
Migration of Population (2000- 2014)	28
Registered Unemployment in Tajikistan (Percentage) (1994 – 2010)	29

LIST OF GRAPH

Population Growth in Tajikistan (%) (1990-2014)	21
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Preface

In Tajikistan, Islam has been part of daily life of Tajiks over the centuries. Islam is not only considered as a religion but is also regarded as a significant and organic element of the history and culture of Tajik people. During the Soviet period, Islam survived in Tajikistan in diverse forms especially in the undeveloped rural Areas and particularly in Fergana valley. The resurgence of Islam in the Central Asian republics and especially in Tajikistan had different impact on different areas depending mainly on the local religious practices and traditions. The impact of cultural and educational aspects of Islam has been growing in Tajikistan. After the collapse of Soviet Union and emergence of Tajikistan as an independent state, Islam emerged as an unifying force due to the lack of political control and weak social infrastructure.

The revival of Islamic values and ideas became particularly evident in Tajikistan, where about 95 percent of the population follow Sunni Islam. Tajikistan's government worked really hard to restrain religious practices and propaganda. This not only affected illegal Islamist groups, but also institutionalised political forces like the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP). The Tajik government justifies its suppression of political Islam for maintaining stability and security of the region. The government focus on extreme forms of Islam is also associated with such alarmist trends emanating Afghanistan. Therefore it has taken all possible steps to contain radical Islam in Tajikistan which somehow transforms into Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism.

Adverse socio-political and economic situation arising after the Soviet disintegration paved the way for increased role and prospects of Islam in Tajikistan. Tajik Society faced severe economic difficulties after 1991, which resulted in unemployment and poverty, which in turn attracted the Tajik youth towards fundamentalist Islam. Moreover, fundamentalist Islam arising from Pakistan and Afghanistan influenced Tajikistan, and particularly rural areas adjoining the Afghan border. These areas also became the safe haven for terrorist groups such as Hizb- ut- tahrir and IMU. Islamic radicals found it suitable to influence people by giving them monetary assistance. Islamic radical groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Islamic revival party of Tajikistan, Taliban have taken the advantage of poor socio economic condition, which resulted in the spread of Islamic fundamentalist thoughts and many young people also joined the terrorist outfits.

Developments taking place in the Muslim world especially the Middle East also influenced Islamic revival in Tajikistan. In the late 1970s, Islamic resurgence in Tajikistan was specially mobilised by the Iranian revolution and the transnational propaganda of political Islam. Cross- border movements limited to social and trade contacts changed dramatically after the Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan. Common ethnic and religious background of this border region facilitated the cross border smuggling of religious and revolutionary literature, arms and ammunition by the Afghan Mujahideen into the Tajikistan. Afghan Mujahideen leaders also acknowledged that the 1979 Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan helped in re-establishing links between their Tajik and Muslim brethren in Afghanistan, who share common language, culture, religion and common ancestors. External factors particularly from Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan influenced the rise of political Islam in Tajikistan. Whereas Iranian Revolution was the main ideological force behind the revival of Islam in Tajikistan, rise of Mujahideen and Taliban in Afghanistan led to cross - border terrorism in Tajikistan affecting peace and stability in the region. Other regional players like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia financed the terrorist outfits in the region.

The secular government of Tajikistan in order to combat extremist threats, continues to have full control of religious affairs, religious education and worship in the country. In this regard, Islam and current secular state in Tajikistan now are in a complex relationship. Despite government's recent restrictions and mentioned policies on controlling religious affairs, the influence and support of political Islam in Tajikistan is rising. Tajik Government has banned the IRTP which was the main advocate of Islamic revival in Tajikistan. Therefore, after its independence from Soviet Union and opening of Tajikistan to the world, Islam is again beginning to play a major role in the society, politics and culture of the area.

This research work examines the issue of Islamic revivalism in Tajikistan. Both the primary and secondary sources have been consulted.

Chapter: 1

Introduction

Map: 1 Physical map of Tajikistan



Source:

http://www.vidiani.com/maps/maps_of_asia/maps_of_tajikistan/detailed_physical_map_of_tajikistan.jpg

Geographically speaking Tajikistan is smallest in size, of all Central Asian countries. It shares its borders with four countries- Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and China. Its geography is noticeable because of the rivers and mountains; more than 90 percent of

the area is covered by the mountains that include the towering ranges of Pamir and Tien Shan having peaks ranging between 300 m to 7,495 m in altitude. The Pamir Mountain is the source of many important rivers, gorges and canyons. Tajikistan is having 947 rivers stretching over 10 to 100 km, including Amu Darya, the Syr Darya, the Zeravshan, Vakhsh and Panj. There are several lakes, the biggest being Lake Karakul in eastern Pamir. Fresh water Lake Sarez is situated in the western Pamir, and is 490 meters deep. Tajikistan mountains are known for their glaciers, possibly largest in Asia with the Fedchenko Glacier being 77 km long and 1,700 m to 3,100 m broad.

1.1 Islam

Islam is one of the largest religions in the world having about 1 billion followers. It is a religion believing in single God, as revealed by the Prophet Mohammad in 7th century in Saudi Arabia. The word Islam is derived from Arabic and in English it means ‘submission’. It is a reflection of submission to the will of God. The followers of this religion are called Muslims.

The holy text of Islam, Quran was written in Arabic within thirty years of Prophet’s death. Muslims consider that it contains the literal word of God. It is also important because it has a content of Prophet’s sayings, his actions and his companions collected in the *Hadith*¹. Islam has a centre of five pillars to practice “faith, prayer five times, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca, charity. (Islam: religious facts 2015)

So historically speaking, Islam started with the prophet Mohammad. Nevertheless, Islam witnessed a definite historical and geographical situation. Before coming of Mohammad, Arabian Peninsula was inhabited by the nomadic people. They would migrate in every season due to the desert and harsh climate. In the fifth century B.C some groups started settling in Mecca, close to the west coast of Saudi Arabia as their home. It was not very much favourable due to the climatic and resources situation. Before Islam came into force, the Arab people were praying animals, plants and inanimate objects as spiritual essence and believed in worship of many Gods. People were worshiping so many Gods and Mecca was the epicentre with 360 shrines. The local people mainly depended on the pilgrims for their livelihood. Before Prophet Mohammad, polytheism was mainly followed by the people and there were bloody fights, violence, and corruption in the

¹ A collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad which, with accounts of his daily practice (sunna), constitute the major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Koran.

society. Before the advent of Islam, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity also existed in the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in the south.

After the Prophet Mohammad's death, the followers of Islam chose Khalifa 'successor' or 'deputy' as a leader of Islam. As a result three dynasties came into being -

1) Umayyad Dynasty, 2) Abbasid Dynasty, 3) Ottoman Empire

The Umayyad family recognized a system of hereditary chain for leader of the Muslim world. Under the Umayyads, the Islamic empire extended up to North Africa, Spain and Central Asia.

Abbasid was the dynastic name normally known to the Caliphs of Baghdad, the second of the two great Sunni dynasties of the Muslim empire that overthrew the Umayyad Caliphs.

The Ottoman Empire was founded by when Mehmed II² conquered Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453; the state grew into a mighty empire. (History of Islam 2015)

1.2 Islam during Soviet Period

Central Asian region had witnessed suppression of religions for so many years because it was intended to provide a sense of unity of the Soviet Union. This suppression underwent significant Islamic resurgence with the multiple numbers of Islamic schools, and mosques running across the region in spite of their ban from the government. During this time, when Islamic resurgence was prevalent, a number of measures were taken to revive religion and culture of the region which had been lost in the earlier period. The process instigated a whole new dimensions of religiosity in the Central Asian region it maintained its individualism. The fact that Islam had preached fanaticism and intolerance creating a set of fanatic believers on the one side against the non believers, created a rift between it and the people of other religions leading to ethnic tensions between different sects of people in the former Soviet Union. This situation was not helpful for the Soviet policy of equality among its entire people. The year 1979, drastically changed the scenario when Central Asian countries started to acknowledge their common ethnic cultural and religious affinities with South Asia, because South Asian countries such as Afghanistan

² Mehmed 2, byname Mehmed Fatih (Turkish: Mehmed the conqueror) Ottoman sultan from 1444 to 1446 and from 1451 to 1481.

along with Iran witnessed such Islamic resurgence that was impossible to be avoided by its Muslim neighbours. In the context of Islamic revivalism in Central Asian, in other Muslim countries like Iran, Middle East, Islamic revivalism was initiated and promoted by the government. But in Central Asian countries, government always tried to suppress this process because government have had fears about rise of Islamic fundamentalism. Islamic resurgence in Central Asia would lead to Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, which compelled the respective governments to control the situation.

1.3 Islam in Tajikistan

Tajikistan has majority of the Sunni Muslim population of Hannafi school, whereas 5 percent of Pamiris are Ismaili Muslims who follow Aga Khan. Religion occupies an important place in daily life and family rituals. In 1920's and 1930's suppression of Islam did take place. It was during the Second World War that religious freedom was provided, when a Spiritual Board of Muslims was set up in Tashkent, in Uzbekistan. Nevertheless the political expression of Islam was curtailed and state control over religion was strengthened. In the year 1987 there were only 30 official mosques. However a large number of unofficial mosques functioned underground. (Matveeva 2009)

Sharing its borders with neighbouring countries of China, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyztan, Tajikistan is separated from Pakistan by a narrow strip of Afghanistan's Wakhan corridor. Religion and culture have always played an important role in the traditional society of Tajikistan, where Sunnis of Hanafi Sect are in majority, along with some practitioners of Salafism, a fundamentalist sect of Islam. Whereas all these Sunni Muslims practice Islam in their daily life, there is a Shia sect called Ismailis who live in the Gorno Badakshan Autonomous Oblast. During the period 8th to 14th centuries, Tajikistan witnessed many changes. Firstly Arab forces invaded Central Asia and introduced Islam. And then Persian Samanid dynasty came to power, followed by Genghis Khan. In the nineteenth century, northern Tajikistan came under Tsarist Russian rule, whereas southern part Tajikistan was annexed by the Emirate of Bukhara. The territory of Tajikistan was united in the year of 1921, after it became part of Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic along with Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and northern Turkmenistan. After three years in 1924, it became the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Tajik Republic within Uzbek SSR. However, in 1929 Tajik ASSR was separated from Uzbek SSR and it became a separate Tajikistan Soviet Socialist Republic.

Tajikistan thus gained the status of the Union Republic within the former Soviet Union in 1929. During the Soviet period, Tajikistan witnessed modernisation and industrialization and Islamic practices went to the background. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the Islamic Revolution in Iran, both in late 1979, had its impact upon the social and political situation in Tajikistan. Now the Afghan mujahideen started influencing the young Tajiks with their anti - Soviet activities. During Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan was registered as a political party. This party mainly focused on the Islamization of Tajikistan society, and its politicization on the basis of Islam. The Islamist fundamentalists sought to create an Islamist State under the purview of Islamic Caliphate. Islamic fundamentalists in Tajikistan want to practice original form of Islam as it was in the medieval times. Political Islam gained popularity and received support from young Tajiks who are disillusioned with the Western thought, and are fed up with corruption and instability in Tajikistan. "The Islamic thought of Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Abd Al Wahab, Jamal Ud Din Afghani, Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini-leader of the Revolutionary Party of Iran, Hasan Al Banna- founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, and Maulana Sayed Abdul Ala Mawdudi of Pakistan the first Amir of the Jamaat e Islami, influenced the religious and political discourse in Tajikistan." (Warikoo 2011).

Modern concepts of democracy and secularism failed to influence the Islamist radicals. During this phase of Islamist revivalism, many mosques were constructed, religious education started spreading, and there was call for enforcing the Sharia in the political and social life. Anti - government activities were started against the communist regime. External factors particularly from Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan influenced the developments in Tajikistan. Whereas Iranian Revolution was the main ideological force, rise of Mujahideen and Taliban in Afghanistan led to cross - border terrorism in Tajikistan affecting peace and stability in the region. Other regional players like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia started financing terrorist outfits in the region. They played an important role in the spread of radical Islam by sending literature and funds. The radicalisation of Ferghana Valley also affected the territory of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Organisations such as Hizb- ut -Tehrir, which is both a religious and political organisation and strongly believes in the formation of single Muslim state based on Islamic Caliphate and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, actively influenced the socio- political situation in Tajikistan.

Immediately after the independence of Tajikistan, the Islamist forces started fighting against the ruling Communist regime. During this civil war period, the Tajik opposition forces joined to form the United Tajik Opposition and set up their base in Afghanistan from where they started attacking the government forces in Tajikistan and created instability in the region. (Karagiannis 2006). The bloody Civil war, which resulted in death of tens of thousands of people, over a million refugees and huge economic loss running into billions of dollars, lasted upto 1997. Following a series of negotiations, a peace and reconciliation agreement was signed between the Tajik government led by Emomali Rakhmanov and the opposition led by Syed Abdullo Nuri in 1997.

President Rakhman sought to control Islamist activities by restricting the spread of radical Islam and banning the use of hizab by girls in schools. BBC Monitoring reported on 29 September 2015 that Tajikistan's Islamic Revival Party is also banned by the Supreme Court. Government is trying to safeguard the people from the radical Islamist thought in Tajikistan. Tajikistan being one of the poor countries in Central Asia where most of the youth are unemployed, the radical Islamic groups take advantage of the situation to increase their foothold in the country. The situation is ripe for religious extremists and active terror groups particularly from Afghanistan to destabilise Tajikistan.

Tajik diaspora is spread in different countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and China. The demarcation of state borders was done by the Bolsheviks in 1924, which created the Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan. In this demarcation, Tajikistan got the territory of eastern Bukhara in which 85 percent of land is not suitable for agriculture. Historically Tajiks have very rich millennium old Tajik culture. Yet Bukhara and Samarkand, Tajikistan's linguistic and spiritual centres were transferred to Uzbekistan, which has been a source of discontent among the Tajiks. The growth of industrialisation picked up in 1960's to 1980's, and it gave rise to multinational cities, the urban population being usually Russians.

According to Russian political scientist "the main dividing base is between Tajik north and south. The Khujand large community is also known as Leninabad group and is described as an elite North. It creates division on the basis of geographical, socio economic and even socio – cultural factors. There is 68 percent of the industrial and agricultural production in Khujand and 40 percent of the people are living in this

province. Importantly, Khujandis are prominent in the political parties and hold state posts of the region”, (Vassiliev 2001).

During the civil war, Leninabad region was not affected by the armed clashes, and the self - defence regiment was formed in Khujand. After the establishment of Parliament and the formation of the new government in 1992, led by Kulyabi³ Emommali Rahmonov, the clashes between Khujandis and Kulyabis for main political posts did not stop but became stronger. Apart from this, Kulyab is the poorest and backward region of the region. Its population is the main supporter of popular Islam. They supported the establishment of the Islamic state as early as in the late 1980’s. The other population of the country involved in the conflict in different degrees were the Uzbeks. They were about 1.2 million in 1992 and 1.5 million in 1997 and are living in the south and west of the region. (Vassiliev 2001)

The Muslim community and religious institutions faced the regime of anti - religious policies and restrictions during the Soviet period. After the October revolution in 1917 the Bolsheviks implemented a programme separating religion from government and started campaign against the religious institution. The reason was basically the Marxist belief that “religion is an obstacle to modernization and social development.” The governments closed mosques, Sharia courts and religious schools, religious donation (waqf) etc. This is one of the main reasons for the 1918 Basmachi revolt, against the Soviet rule. In the year 1924 the revolt in Tajikistan weakened but it continued in the Pamir region till 1928. Later, Lenin revised his religious policies when some Muslims turned communists were involved in the government. Now an attempt was made to re-establish trust among Muslims, with the return of waqf property, reopening of mosques and Islamic schools and the practice of Sharia Law. However, soon after, the Soviets started anti - Islamic policies during the years 1925 to 1927, when a number of attempts were made to replace the Sharia courts with the establishment of new courts and cutting off financial aid to the local government. In 1925 nationalization of the waqf property was started, material support to religious and educational institution was stopped. Many religious administration officials were dispersed through transfer, exile, custody and assassination. Arabic script was replaced by Latin and all religious schools were banned. In 1930’s, strict punishment was given to those who continued to operate mosques and clerics who

³ The term Kulobi comes from the [Kulob Oblast](#) that existed during the [Soviet period](#) and was merged with [Qurghonteppa Oblast](#) in 1992 to create [Khatlon Province](#).

preached. Under the regime of Stalin, three important pillars of Islam- the payment of Zakat (charity), the hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca and the performance of the fast of Ramadan were prohibited. (Tazmini 2001)

It was during Gorbachev's policy of Glasnost and Perestroika, that Islam started reviving its identity, thus posing challenge to Soviet secularism and taking the form of political activities. Olivier Roy states that, "there is a difference between official Islam represented by Qazi Qolon Ali Akbar Turanjonzoda, the official leader of Tajikistan Muslims and supreme Islamic Judge and Parallel Islam which was made with the informal groups, and Sufism also taking part in the region", (Matveeva 2009).

The events before and after the independence of Tajikistan distinctly point out the reality of the strong presence of Islamic revival. The ethno - cultural basis of Tajikistan is regularly under the serious threat of pan - Islamic ideology. The emergence of Islam in Tajikistan is more critical than the other Central Asian republics.

1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 The ideological factor

According to Tajikistan's State Committee on Religious Affairs, 97% of the Tajik population is Muslim and is served by 3224 mosques, 19 madrassas and an Islamic University. An estimated 30% to 40% of the rural population and 5% to 10% of the urban population regularly follow Islamic practices and attend mosques. Madrassas play an important role for spreading Islamic thought, which influenced young people's minds.

Muslim ideologues - Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Abd Al Wahab, Jamal Ud Din Afghani, Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini- leader of the Revolutionary Party of Iran, Hasan Al Banna- founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, and Maulana Sayed Abdul Ala Mawdudi of Pakistan - the first Amir of the Jamaat e Islami, propounded Islamic fundamentalist thought. Tajikistan's Islamic Revival Party got influenced by the thoughts of Ayatollah Khomeini and other Islamic revolutionary leaders. It also highly affected Tajik people as they actively started taking part in religious practices. Their thoughts also gave impetus to building of mosques, acquiring land for congregational prayers and graveyards, teaching of Islamic religion, enforcement of their injunctions at gun point, censoring the respect of ziarats and sufis, closing spaces of entertainment, prohibition of music and fine arts, strict execution

of hadith and propaganda, removing any distinction between religion and politics and opposing the achievements of democracy, secularism and modernisation.(Warikoo 2011)

As Wahhabist Islamist radical thought increasingly influenced the youth and children in Tajikistan, the Tajik parliament adopted in July 2011 “The Law of the Federation of Tajikistan on the responsibility of parents for the education and upbringing of children is prohibiting children from participating in religious organisations.” (FIDH report 2011). Wahhabism gained roots in the rural areas of Tajikistan predominantly along the Tajik - Afghan border. The Wahabi literature that was smuggled via Afghanistan lays stress on religious dictatorship and is critical of Sufism and holy shrines. Tajikistan’s Wahabi leader, Abdullo Saidov advocated the formation of an Islamic State and called for jihad. (Warikoo et al 2004) According to Cummings, “by the mid - 1980’s the primary threat was perceived as Wahabism rather than Sufism” (Cummings 2007). For the Wahabbis their main aim is to “establish the purist orthodox Islam” (Akiner 2010).

Iranian revolution of 1979 that spread the idea of export of Islamic revolution to other countries had its impact in Tajikistan. “ The Iranian Government continued to support the teaching of Persian in elementary schools, and Iran has provided the core of the educational support and facilities, including 250,000 Persian books for elementary and high school students in 1993, and 400,000 in 1996”(Mesbahi 1997). Jamaat- I Islami of Pakistan also played an important role in the Islamic movement. “Maududi proposed Jihad and an Islamic State as the only remedy to these ills of modern times (Warikoo 2011).

Therefore, Tajikistan was much affected by the ‘radical Islamist thought, which became the most important factor in growing instability in the region. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, Tajikistan was engulfed in the Civil War during the years 1992 – 1997, which period witnessed growing Islamic fundamentalism in the country. Afghan Mujahiddeen also played an important role in spreading violent fundamentalism across the border in Tajikistan. Taking note of the problem of cross border terrorism and infiltration, The European Commission and UNDP executed “two main projects the Border Management Program in Badakshan, Afghanistan (BOMBAF) and the Border Management Program in Central Asia (BOMCA-CADAP). All these efforts were aligned

with the Integrated Border Management Action Plan, to combat the illegal activities.” (UNDP Report, 2010- 2015).

Most of the young people from Tajikistan have been taking religious education in the Middle East. Therefore the number of Mullahs also increased and it became another important factor for spreading the radical Islamist thought in Tajikistan. The whole Central Asian region is now affected by the extremist and terrorist organisations like Taliban, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Al Qaeda and recently ISIS which act in the name of Islam. In Tajikistan, Islamic education provided in mosques heavily influences the people and fills their mind with radical Islamist thoughts.

1.4.2 External factors

According to Warikoo, “Modern democracy and secularism failed to influence the Islamist. For a Jihadi, “Islam is his religion and his nation”(Warikoo 2011). First external factor was the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, which alienated the Tajik Muslims. According to Soviet press, young people and children were getting increasingly affected with propaganda from across the border.

Radical Islamist thought also came in from Jamaat- i- Islami of Pakistan, which led to the rise of radical Islamist movement in Pakistan under general Mohammad Zia - ul – Haq in the late 1970’s and it facilitated the growth of political Islam in Tajikistan. (Roy 1996). Pakistan and Saudi Arabia financed Islamist outfits in Central Asia. They played an important role in the spread of radical ideas and literature. Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan had a strong base of Islamist radicals which influenced the whole territory of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Afghanistan being the neighbouring country of Tajikistan and one of the most important external actors has been a crucial player. Drug production and trafficking from Afghanistan is the main source of funds for the extremist groups. The crisis in Afghanistan has had a direct impact on the situation in Tajikistan due to supply of arms and ammunition and training imparted by the Mujahideen to Tajik Islamist extremists”, (Warikoo 2015). During the Afghan Mujahideen resistance against the Soviets, “the Soviet soldiers conscripted from Tajikistan were not only reluctant to fire on the Afghans

but they even sold their rifles to purchase the Koran”, (Warikoo 1995). The rise of Taliban in 1996, turned Afghanistan into a centre of religious extremism, global terrorism, drug trafficking, cross border terrorism and Islamist militancy, which directly affected its neighbouring states especially Tajikistan. (Warikoo 2011).

ICG report states that, because of the extreme poverty and unemployment in Tajikistan, most of the youth started joining the terrorist outfits. “Much of the population remains partially dependent on international food aid. The economy still reflects its Soviet past, with too much state intervention and very little in the way of the rule of law; Corruption is almost universal, foreign investors rare” (ICG report 2004).

International organisations such as Hizb ut Tahrir and IMU strongly believe in single Islamic Caliphate. “Hizb ut-Tahrir first emerged among Palestinians in Jordan in the early 1950s. Its views are highly radical, advocating the overthrow of governments throughout the Muslim world”. (ICG report 2003). The Tajikistan government banned “the Hizb ut Tahrir as an illegal political party in 1999” (Karagiannis 2006). The civil war and instability in Tajikistan adversely affected the economic growth of the country. Because of all these consequences and instability, Chaudet states that, “people of the region started thinking Sharia will give the society a healthy and corruption free environment” (Chaudet 2006). According to Roche, Sophie (2010), youth discontent has been acute for a long time, from the time of civil war where maximum youths participated in the capital city Dushanbe. She points out how conversion of youth takes place from a majority motivating force which can change into a violent conflict afterwards. She mentioned the term ‘youth bulge’ which can spoil into source of serious violent conflict with the shortage of resources such as jobs, study opportunities and so on. The civil war after the Soviet breakup created a space for Islamic revivalism which the author describes as the ‘youth bulge’ inclined towards radicalization and leading to the formation of Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP).The youth depict fighting as ‘naturally masculine’. After the Soviet dissolution, the government decided to bring a secular state of Tajikistan, but there has been strong inclination towards Islamic values.

1.4.3 Role of Islamic radical groups

Islamic radical groups, in which one important group is Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) came into prominence during the civil war. During Gorbachevs

'glasnost', the Islamic Revival Party was registered as a political party. Islam continued to operate in Tajikistan underground. When the IRP started, main focus of the Islamist fundamentalists was to control education and culture, but after the disintegration of USSR they got the opportunity to expand their role in politics in the name of Islam. (CAS 2007) The Central Asian Muhajirs from Tajikistan who had migrated to Afghanistan during the period of the Bolshevik revolution were in the fore front of what was described as jihad (holy war). Mohammed Sharif Himatzade, chief of Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) set up his base in Afghanistan. (Warikoo and Mahavir 2004)

Another important Islamic radical group having affected the entire Central Asian region and Tajikistan is Hizb ut Tehrir, which aims to create an Islamic State. It was founded in 1953 by Taqiuddin- an- Nabhani, an Islamic scholar and judge in the Shariah appeal court in East Jerusalem. Attracting the youth particularly due to the situation of immense poverty and unemployment in Tajikistan, Hizb ut Tehrir turned into a political organisation. Though the Tajik government took strong measures against HT members, but it was unable to control the activities of this group in the country. (Karagiannis 2006). According to Nationalities Paper (March 2006) Hizb ut Tehrir also established its hold over the former members of the IRPT, who had quit their involvement in politics. Safovudinov (2013) points out that, about 70 percentage of the total population of Tajikistan are under 30 years of age and 35 percent of the population is between 14 and 30 years old. Economic decline and Tajikistan's steady growth is not creating sufficient jobs for its young population. Therefore, spill over from Afghanistan in the form of religious radicalization destabilizes the country. He points out at the recent emergence of radical group of 'Jamoati Anzorulloh' which calls for jihad against the current government.

1.5 Definition, Rationale and Scope

Republic of Tajikistan which has a Muslim population with majority belonging to the Hanafi sect, is having common cultural affinity with their neighbouring countries. Even in Soviet period, Islamic revivalism started in Central Asia which also affected Tajikistan. People were not very much free to practice their religion openly and they started thinking Islam will be the best option to counter the Communist regime. Because Tajikistan was facing corruption and extreme poverty, the people thought Sharia will be the best thing to improve their socio - political situation. After the Soviet disintegration, people now

openly practiced Islam and thousands of mosques were constructed. Islamic revivalism became a threat for newly independent country, and it witnessed the long civil war, which caused instability and huge economic losses. Population of the country suffered extremely because of this instability and now Tajik government is trying to control the Islamic radical activities and prohibiting wearing hijab in schools and imposing restriction in the religious field.

The study also seeks to study the impact of Islamic revivalism on the people of Tajikistan. The study would help to understand how external actors played an important role in the revival of Islam. The time period of the study is from 1991 when Tajikistan became independent till the year 2014. This time period also witnessed the civil war in Tajikistan and problems of unemployment and poverty. It will also analyze the role of Islamist radical groups which is causing instability in the country

1.6 Research Questions

What are the causes and consequences of Islamic revivalism in Tajikistan?

Which external extremist groups have been active in Tajikistan?

How does Tajikistan government deal with Islamic radicalism in Tajikistan?

What role did external actors play in spreading Islamic revivalism in Tajikistan?

How is Islamic revivalism affecting Tajikistan?

1.7 Hypotheses

Extreme poverty and unemployment has encouraged people to join radical and terrorist organizations in Tajikistan.

External influences of Afghanistan and Pakistan not only fuelled the violent civil war in Tajikistan, but also encouraged Islamist extremism there.

1.8 Methodology

Historical-analytical and descriptive methodology is followed while examining various aspects of Islamic revivalism in Tajikistan. The research is based on available primary sources such as United Nation Development programme report (UNDP), FIDH report

for collecting information about the Islamic Revivalism in Tajikistan. The secondary sources like International Crisis group (ICG), journals, newspaper, reports, articles and books are also used.

Chapter – 2

Socio - economic situation in Tajikistan

After the Soviet disintegration Tajikistan emerged as an independent republic in 1991. Soon after its independence, the country was gripped into a devastating civil war which created a huge vacuum in the socio - economic development of the country. During the Soviet era, Tajikistan was a backward country with weakly developed industry. Majority of the population, approximately 70 per cent live in rural areas of the country. One of the reasons for weak Tajik economy is its “limited production in agricultural sector, and industrial exports to foreign countries.” Tajikistan imported majority of the daily necessities like foods, consumer goods, machines, equipment etc from other republics. This dependence on other republics led to its economic problem during the first years of independence.

During the Soviet period, Tajik economy was mainly dependent on cotton production, 15 percent of which was used in the country and the remaining 85 percent was exported. Another economic sector was silk industry and aluminium industry, which were export oriented sectors of the country’s economy. Tajikistan has huge potential for hydroelectric power production as it is a major upstream country among the other Central Asian Republics. Soviets constructed a number of power plants on the Vahsh River and Syr Darya, which were fully used in the production of primary aluminium, which takes huge power consumption. Tajikistan was very much self sufficient in the area of animal husbandry products. Fish products were only imported. Population growth in the country is high which creates the unemployment problem. Tajikistan had a socialist regime where social and political freedom was absent. Private sector was limited rather it was nonexistent. However, good education, health care and transport facilities were provided by the socialist government. Literacy rate was close to 100 percent.

2.1 The Economy of Tajikistan

The economy of the country declined to a great extent after independence, as it experienced the lowest per capital GDP among all the post - Soviet Republics. Previously during the Soviet times, Tajikistan received the highest transfers from the union budget amounting to 47 % of total government revenue of the country. As large part of the country is mountainous, Tajikistan suffers from economic development. However, before 1990, the majority (41%) of the workforce in Tajikistan were employed in the agricultural sector, but still the country experienced lowest economic output in USSR, for instance one-fourth that of Kyrgyzstan and one-15th that of Kazakhstan. In spite of some improvements at the macro-level after independence, Tajikistan's poor economic performance, particularly on the household level, escalated in the post-Soviet period. Still after 10 years of the country's independence, the GDP for 2001 was approximately half of 1990 and the per capita income was \$175 per year which is far below the Soviet times. (Foroughi 2002).

According to the World Bank data for 2014, Tajikistan's GDP is \$9.242 billion. After the economic recession in Russia, which reduced the labour migration from Tajikistan, the economic growth in Tajikistan slowed from an average of 7.5 percent a year over the past decade to 6.4 percent in the first six months of 2015. The economy of Tajikistan is partially dependent upon the remittances received from Russia which fell to nearly 32 percent in January-June 2015, as compared to 2014, due to economic recession and currency devaluation of the ruble. Due to the economic recession, Tajikistan's poverty reduction programme also suffered. The present situation provides a chance to improve the economy and to adopt new models of growth such as investment and exports to produce additional and better-paying jobs in the country. (World Bank)⁴

Tajikistan's economic overview 2014, states that Tajikistan has one of the lowest per capita GDP among the 15 former Soviet republics. The 1992-1997 civil wars damaged the already weak economic infrastructure and caused a major setback to industrial and agricultural sectors. On the other hand lack of employment opportunities in Tajikistan forced people to migrate to neighbouring countries in search of employment. Approximately 90% of the total migrated population went to Russia providing families in

⁴The World Bank, "world development indicator," [Online: web] Accessed 5 Feb 2016 URL: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan>

Tajikistan in the form of remittances sent from the host countries. (Economic overview 2014).

The Tajik government is mainly dependent on foreign state-led investments and finances from China, Russia, and Iran, and other financial institutions for major infrastructure projects. The total loans and FDI from foreign investment from Tajikistan's economic partners equalled to about \$486 million in 2013. President Rahmon has encouraged public and private investments from abroad chiefly in energy and transport infrastructure, "with sustained improvements in the asset climate, opportunities in energy, telecommunications, building, food processing, textiles, consumer goods, healthcare, natural resource extraction (mining, oil, gas), and tourism". (US Dept of State diplomacy in action)⁵.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been recognised as a major and significant player in building Tajikistan's economy after the country's independence. ADB has encouraged its financial capital and technical capability for social improvement, restoration and construction of new infrastructure, and agricultural manufacturing. ADB has helped Tajikistan to build roads by connecting Tajikistan with its neighbouring countries and many infrastructural projects. ADB has helped Tajikistan increase regional cooperation and trade, besides well-organized and see-through customs services. In the energy sector, projects supported by ADB have helped to get three hydropower plants. Through the ADB assistance, clean water is now accessible to additional 90,000 households, with over 160,000 hectares of land benefiting from better irrigation, drainage, and flood management. (Asian Development Bank: Tajik Economy)⁶

⁵ US department of State, "diplomacy in action," [Online: web] Accessed 7 Feb 2016 URL: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/228816.pdf>

⁶ Asian development bank, "Tajikistan economy," [Online: web] Accessed 7 Feb 2016 URL: <http://www.adb.org/countries/tajikistan/economy>

Map: 2 Tajikistan and its Neighbouring Countries



Source: <http://www.factmonster.com/atlas/country/tajikistan.html>

2.1.1 Agricultural sector

According to Government of Tajikistan 2007, agriculture is the second most important sector in its contribution to the country's economy. Cotton cultivation forms the main agricultural export crop. Other agricultural exports are fresh and processed fruits, vegetables and silk products. As more than 70 per cent of the population in Tajikistan is concentrated in rural areas of the country, therefore involvement in agriculture is huge where 60 percent are mostly occupied in the cotton sector. There has been imperfect

growth of the non-farm rural economy. Tajikistan has good climatic conditions for increasing the variety of crops. After independence of the country following the Soviet disintegration and the due to the civil war in Tajikistan, agricultural sector of the country was adversely affected and it declined to a great extent. With the end of the civil war, some improvements were observed in 1996 and after 2000 it has grown-up at 2 digit levels. Agriculture sector growth constitutes a major element of the post-war economic revival, accounting for about one third of general economic growth from 1998 to 2004 (Tajikistan government report 2007).

Other than cotton, tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, lettuce, bell peppers, and eggplants are cultured in green houses, utilizing well-organized drip irrigation systems. Fruits and vegetables full-grown in greenhouses can have numerous production cycles per year.

Tajikistan is known for its horticulture produce such as apricots, plums, peaches, cherries, apples, lemons, and almonds which are mainly exported. Tajikistan's climatic condition gives it a competitive benefit in cultivation of apricots and plums, though the industries are not well developed in the country. The major exporting markets for Tajik fruits and orchard crop are Russia. Potatoes and onions are cultivated whole year round, while melons are stored for sale throughout the off-season. (Puette 2013).

One of the major agricultural problem arises today is the problem of erosion. According to Tajikistan's National Action Plan to fight Desertification, Tajikistan is suffering from major problems of erosion which affects the agricultural lands in the country. Besides, during the civil war there was heavy deforestation, with adverse effects. (FAO 2006).

2.2 Social situation in Tajikistan

2.2.1 Population of Tajikistan

According to the UNDP report, Tajikistan is the least urban in nature of all the former Soviet republics. In the 1980's during the Soviet period there were 19 cities and 49 classified urban- places in the country. At the period of the first Soviet census in 1926, only 10 percent of its population lived in cities, whereas according to the 1959 census, the number rose to 33 per cent. People migrated to cities like Dushanbe and Leninobod (now Istaravshan) to get jobs in military, government and to hold party positions. Even after independence the urban population concentration in Tajikistan is low as compared to

other Central Asian republics. The following table shows the concentration of rural and urban population in Tajikistan after independence.

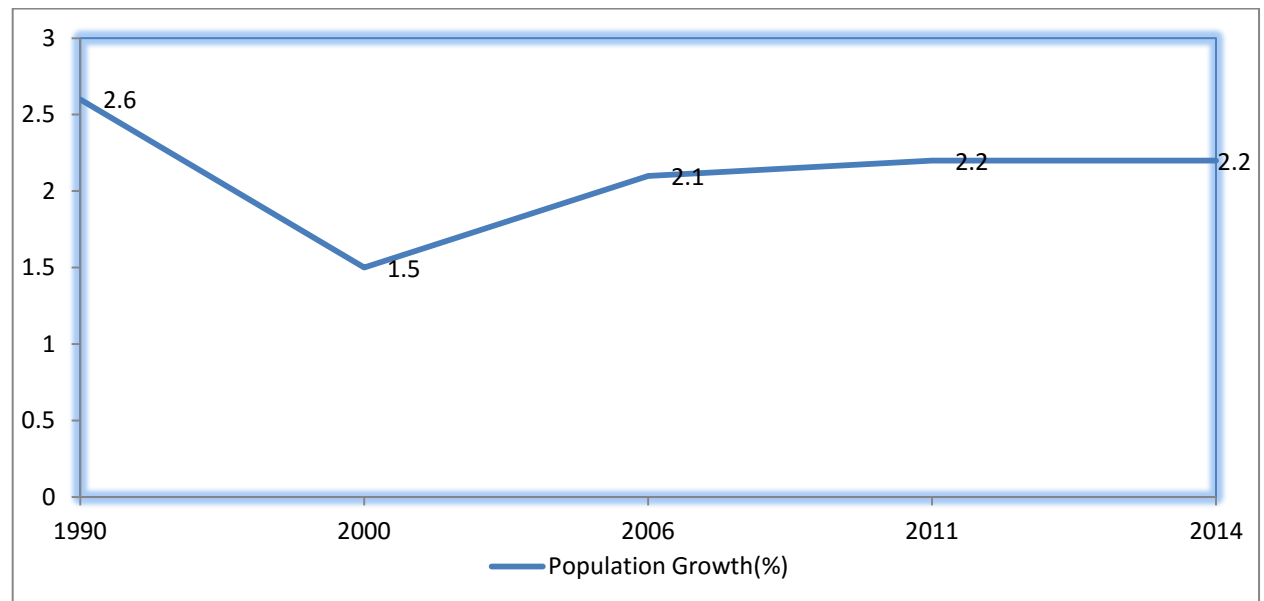
Table 1: Urban and Rural population in Tajikistan (in percentages) (2000-2014)

Urban and Rural population in Tajikistan (in percentages)		
Year	Rural	Urban
2000	73.3 %	26.7%
2005	73.6%	26.4%
2010	73.5%	26.5%
2014	73.5%	26.5%

Source: State Statistical Committee of Tajikistan

The above table clearly shows that the majority of population is concentrated in the rural areas, whereas the urban population shows uniformity over the years. According to Tajikistan’s demographic and health survey report 2012, Tajikistan is the seventh most populous country of former Soviet Union, next in order to Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Azerbaijan. Approximately 73 percent of the population resides in rural areas as shown in the above table. According to the World Bank indicator, the total population of Tajikistan was 8.296 million in 2014. As per the Tajikistan demographic profile (2014), the age structure of the population from 0- 14 years is 33 percent (male 1,352,150/ female 1,304,615), 15- 24 years is 20.1 percent (male 819,936/ female 1,304,615), 25- 54 years is 38.9 percent (male 1,547,863/ female 1,586,218), 55- 64 years is 4.8 percent (male 178,161/ female 148,605), 65 years and over is 3.2 percent male 107,137/ female 148,605). The data shows that the working age population or the dominant age group of 25-54 years of the country is currently very active in the country. Population growth of Tajikistan is the highest among the Central Asian countries. During the civil war period the population growth drastically declined. With the increasing population growth and lack of economic opportunities in Tajikistan, people began to migrate to neighbouring countries for subsistence. The population growth according to the World Bank data below shows a growth rate of about 2 per cent each year after the civil war. (Tajikistan Demographic profile 2014)

Graph 1: Population Growth in Tajikistan (%) (1990-2014)



Source: World Bank

Current population growth rate is 1.75 percent whereas birth rate is 24.99 births/ 1,000 populations; death rate is 6.28 deaths/ 1,000 populations. As per 2014 data, urban population is 26.5 percent of total population as rate of urbanisation is 1.66 percent. As such rural population is much more than the urban population.

2.2.2 Gender inequality in Tajikistan

According to the World Development Report (2012), gender inequality is a major problem in developing countries. Tajikistan is no exception having huge gender inequality in the society where the gap between male and female is high in education, earnings, occupation, formal employment, right of entry to managerial positions, right of entry to productive inputs, political demonstration, or bargaining control inside the household (Cuberes 2011).

Tajikistan is a male dominated country where women are considered as secondary in the family households. Generally inequalities are higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas of the country and the decision making of the family households is generally done by the male head of the family. In the city there are additional opportunities for women to

get secondary and specialized education, to obtain a waged job, to contribute in the decision-making process and to avail health services etc. (Kuvatova 2010)

In 1991, the Committee on Women and Family Affairs was established under the Government of Tajikistan to encourage better status of women in all spheres of public life. The government of Tajikistan has taken some steps towards encouraging gender equality since its independence in 1991, but still there are several hurdles to attain the equality between men and women in political, economic, cultural spheres of life.

In Tajikistan it is widely observed that the major drop outs among Tajik school children are the Tajik girls after attaining 15 years of age. In the arena of higher education there is a significant drop in the number of girl students which is a clear example of existing gender inequality in the country. In contrast with men, a mere proportion of women have attended higher education, and this percentage is lower in rural than urban areas. The country has not been able to get rid of gender difference in primary and secondary education. In Tajikistan the contribution of women in the labour market is 31.1% which is less. Between 2006 and 2009, 190 projects by different firms were initiated and implemented to reduce the gender inequality in the country, which resulted in jobs for 15,000 women. But in reality profits gained by women are less than men. There is a very small representation of women in the government legislature and in higher government positions. (UNDP sustainable development goals).

Traditionally, the position of women in Tajik society has been to look after the home and raise children. Although official legislation gives women equal status, in reality they have little property and legacy rights where they are not given share of the ancestral home if their husbands die or get divorced. According to UNIFEM study of 2006 on the land tenure rights of women in Tajikistan, it is established that although men work outside the country, the women who have to work hard on agricultural lands are not given equal right to use these resources. The inequality is also observed in other jobs where there are more women than men working in the land. Women are half waged than their male counterparts for the same job assigned to them and they also have lesser possibility to obtain their own land. As regards land privatisation, plots are mainly owned by men. Just six per cent of private farms are registered in the name of women. (Aslibegim Manzarshoeva institute for war and peace). In recent years divorce rate in the country has been on rise, where women are abandoned simply by divorce over telephone.

Under the Soviet system, women enjoyed equal civic rights to that of men. Pre - independence era in Tajikistan shows significant participation of women in the labour force. The situation changed with the economic decline and civil war in the country after independence. This adversely situation affected the industries where majority of the women worked in textiles, manufacturing, and agriculture etc. which made them to be the first to lose their jobs. Former sectors where women worked, such as health and education, declined and wages fell subsequently to a great extent losing job opportunities for the women. Furthermore, women and girls are facing discrimination in right of entry to education and health care services. (Falkingham 2000)

Crime against women is an other issue in Tajikistan. During the civil war, women became easy victim of violence, due to instability in the region. Several problems erupted during the civil war such as drug trafficking, prostitution, illegal trafficking leading to extreme poverty and unemployment in the country. (Tajikistan Human Development Report 1998). Murder, rape, aggression against women also increased to a great extent during the civil war. “Also the number of officially registered marriages decreased to a great extent between the periods of 1991-1998 with a decrease of around 2.7 times, earlier data which subsequently created an increase in extra - marital affairs in the country. With the consent of the family, many marriages are authorized through a religious ritual called “nikoh”. Where the bride is second or third wife, they have no legal right to property or any part of husband’s legacy in case of divorce or death of husband. The complete financial reliance and non - appearance of legal rights leave them without the opportunity to make choices relating to their social and economic performance”, (Kuvatova 2010).

2.2.3 Education in Tajikistan

Before Soviet rule in the 1920s, few Tajiks had official education. According to the primary Soviet survey of 1926, the literacy rate was 4 per cent for Tajik men and 0.1 per cent for Tajik women in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The Soviet system of centralised education passed laws on education and started a system of state run schools at a fast speed after 1930’s. In the immediate 10 years, more than 2,000 schools were built. Literacy rate increased to an approximate 71 to 82 per cent in 1939. The system of education was divided into primary, lower-secondary, upper-secondary schools and higher education. The languages of teaching were Tajik, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Russian.

Russian language began to dominate as the main working language all over the country including as a medium of teaching. Tajik language was also taught side by side with Russian. (UNICEF 2013)

After independence the education sector declined, during the civil war and privatization was welcomed in the higher education programmes. After independence, the country was devastated with falling standards and declining economy. Education during the Soviet period was compulsory and free under the Soviet centralized system of education. Almost 80% of the students finishing grade 9 went on to secondary school (through grade 11) in academic year 1990/91, while hardly 52% did so in 2011/12. The reason behind the decreased level in education is the advent of privatization which barred common people to enrol in institutions due to their conditions. Due to this situation, the quality of education declined and without higher education people are barred from various jobs in the country which require higher education. The education sector in Tajikistan has been adversely affected by the economic crises, civil war and problems of a reform era. All this disorder, indecision, and drop in income levels have caused major “brain drain” due to migration of capable teachers, faculty members and other staff from educational institutions to other spheres of action. Low salaries, deprived working conditions, low status of teacher’s profession in the social order and insignificant inflow of young graduates into the education division are another problems. The intensity of labour migration increased to a great extent after the year 2000 when people mainly migrated to gain a low skilled job for subsistence. Due to lack of higher education the migrated people also face difficulty in securing jobs. According to information of Ministry of Education, there is a deficit of 10,700 teachers. The government funding in the education sector decreased to a great extent after independence. (Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan 2005).

With the decline in education sector, many steps have been taken by the government such as funding in the education sector has been increased from 3.5% to 4.5% of GDP in 2011, increased wages of the teachers, establishment of new schools and proving scholarships to increase students in the sector of higher education. With the increased economic growth in the subsequent years, the funding of government is being made available to education sector. This funding is expected to increase up to 7 per cent by 2020. (ADB report 2015).

UNICEF, with the help of Tajik government has prioritized areas in the education sector to meet a number of concerned challenges in education in Tajikistan. (Country profile UNICEF). These are:

- Enlargement of girls entry and attaining education in primary and secondary school,
- Reduce the failure and non-attendance in primary and secondary education,
- Provide childhood care and education, particularly for rural children and children with particular needs,
- To enlarge budgetary allocations to education and improved budget planning,
- To decrease child labour and its pressure on education dropouts,
- To get better organization of the education scheme and its competence,
- To start SWAP and improved coordination of external/internal resources; and
- To respond to urgent situation in the education sector, counting pre-primary and early childhood.

2.2.4 Health issues in Tajikistan

Tajikistan suffers from serious lack of health care facilities today than it enjoyed in the centralized Soviet healthcare system. Over 4,000 healthcare workers have been provided training to improve their skills in the provision of primary health care services, and around 20 percent of country's Primary Health Care network has been completely renovated. The World Bank is committed to further support Tajikistan in improving the lives of people. (World Bank 2013)

Tajikistan, with a population of 7.5 million people, faces extraordinary environmental challenges with uranium and nuclear matter dump centres and refuse locations in the country. The dump centres causes severe health hazards, as in Tajikistan these areas are poorly managed which created a lot of health issues in the country. (Dustov et al 2013: quoted in "Uranium tailing pits in Central Asia," 2009 :1261). Radioactive waste, a great quantity of which is located in northern Tajikistan, spill over by mud streams and winds to inhabited areas as well as the town of Taboshar, cause severe health problems. (Dustov et al 2013).

The second important healthcare challenge faced by Tajikistan is the spread of malaria. In the 1960s, malaria was extensively eliminated from the country (Lisenko and Kalmikov 1965). But after political disability in the country during 1991–1993, health services became irregular and anti-malarial work remained unfinished. As of 1993, malaria once more became a main problem in the republic (WHO 2001, Matthys et al. 2008). 29,794 malaria cases were recorded in 1997 (514 per 100,000 inhabitants), and falciparum malaria emerged. In 2001, 11,387 cases were recorded, counting 826 cases of *P. falciparum* (Aliev 2005 Karimov 2009). Polio is another serious concern in Tajik healthcare services. Tajikistan held four short-interval rounds of polio vaccination to ensure children's immunity in response to an outbreak. Total health expenditure percentage is 6.8 per cent of GDP, which is used for healthcare in Tajikistan (WHO 2016). (Global polio eradication initiative 2010).

Drug addiction is another area which is a very problematic issue. In tandem with Central Asia's emergence as a preferred transit route for drug smuggling, a disturbing increase in the statistics of drug users has been recognized. During the period 1995 to 2001, the figure of registered heroin addicts in Tajikistan increased seven-fold, from 823 in 1995 to 6,243 in 2001. During the civil war cases of drug addiction increased which affected the health sector in the country. (ENGVAL 2006: quoted in Madi 2003, p. 42: 841). "UNODC has approximated that the real number of drug addicts in the country is at least 12 times more than the official data. According to statistics from 2000, opiates (opium and particularly heroin) were the main drug of abuse in 91 % of the formally registered drug action cases", (UNODC 2003).

Another important issue in Tajikistan is the increase of HIV among the population. Around 14,000 persons are currently living with HIV in Tajikistan (UNAIDS 2013). In 2013 women accounted for 39.5% of individuals living with HIV (UNAIDS 2014). This disease is transmitted mainly among the drug addicts, convicts, sex workers. (UNAIDS Tajikistan 2012).

Table: 2 Percentage of Population ages 15 to 49 in Tajikistan (1990- 2014)

Percentage of Population ages 15 to 49 in Tajikistan	
1990	0.1
2000	0.2
2006	0.3
2010	0.3
2014	0.4

Source: World Bank

The above table shows how young people get affected with HIV. The major HIV risk factors for women in Central Asia include people having sexual affair with the drug addicts or migrant male partners (Thorne et al. 2010). Male migrant labourers from the country are at higher risk of catching HIV because of their inhuman living conditions, unarranged sexual relations and several addictions (Weine et al. 2013).

2.2.5 Migration

2.2.5.1 Labour migration in Tajikistan

After its independence, Tajikistan was gripped into a serious civil war between the government and the Islamist forces. The process of labour migration started soon after the civil war which destroyed the economy and agricultural production in the country. Growing poverty and unemployment caused severe outflow of population to the neighbouring countries in search of jobs. After independence, the introduction of privatisation led to huge inflation which forced the people to migrate for their livelihood. Even after the civil war, the government of Tajikistan failed to improve the country's economy which resulted in a huge migration after 2000. On the other hand, the oil boom in Russia created a huge labour market which provided good opportunity of earning for the Tajik people. Labour migration from Tajikistan has followed certain pattern which can be broadly classified into the following categories: a) 'brain drain' relating to migration of unskilled or unskilled labourers for subsistence for a period of time, b) mass departure of highly skilled population from the country for better opportunities, c) commercial traders who mainly migrated to work as shuttle traders for income d) and

finally the migrants who went back to other countries after independence and at the time of civil war.(Olimova 2003).

Table: 3 Migration of Population (2000- 2014)

Number of Persons leaving Tajikistan	
Year	No. of Persons
2000	28,188
2002	30,219
2004	24,663
2006	30,554
2008	37,651
2010	36,134
2012	38,917
2014	45,344

Source: State Statistical Committee of Tajikistan

Up to 60,000 Tajiks migrated to Afghanistan and 13,000- 20,000 to Kyrgyzstan during the civil war. Even greater number of people migrated to Uzbekistan and Russia. The above table shows increase in labour migration year by year, and most importantly in 2008 the global financial crises caused it drastically. The IOM, along with the EU, Norwegian government, OSCE and UNDP, have been working with the Tajik government to get migrants better defence abroad. (Marat 2009).

2.2.5.2 Unemployment in Tajikistan

The major push factors for labour migration in Tajikistan are unemployment and poverty. The following table shows yearly increase in unemployment percentage.

Table: 4 Registered Unemployment in Tajikistan (Percentage) (1994 – 2010)

Registered Unemployment in Tajikistan (Percentage)	
1994	22.7
1997	45.6
2000	49.8
2004	42.8
2007	46.4
2008	49.3
2010	44.8

Source: World Bank

As we can see from the above table, the unemployment rate in 1994 according to the World Bank was 22.7%, which is significantly lower as compared to 45.6% in 1997. In 1997 being the peak of the civil war the economic growth of the country was nearly destroyed leading to severe unemployment. In 2000, the number of registered unemployed was nearly 49.8%, which signified the failure of government initiatives in job creation. After the introduction of labour migration in Tajikistan, there has been a significant decrease in unemployment which was 42.8% in 2004. In 2008 due to the global financial crisis, unemployment increased drastically. “Nearly 52.5% of the total figure of unemployed is aged between 18 and 29. Minor school graduates constituted the main percentage (68.9%) of the unemployed. Most are supported by their families. Unemployment deprives young people of self-assurance and the capability to plan their future. They have no alternative but to live as dependants of their parents or other relations for a long period of time. These circumstances are unfavourable to the expansion of adulthood, social skills and self-sufficiency. For a lot of young people, migration is the only choice”, (Olimova & Bose 2003, 14-15).

2.2.5.3 Tajik Migrants and their Remittances

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), remittances from Tajik migrant workers increased since 2005. Russia emerged as a powerful economy after 2000 when oil prices gained momentum. Russian market proved to be an important space for the

Tajik labour migrants for employment. Following this, labour migration from Tajikistan to Russia increased, and remittances to Tajik economy also rose to a new level. The remittances proved to be an important part of Tajikistan's GDP. In 2007 it comprised about 40 per cent and in 2008 it reached about 50 per cent of the total Tajikistan GDP. According to official data, the inflow of remittances to Tajikistan amounted to 3.06 billion US\$ in 2011, or about 47 percent of the country's GDP. With this Tajikistan occupied the peak spot among remittance receivers in the world. (World Bank 2013). On average, the poorest rural and urban households finance almost 80 and 50 percent of their annual expenditure from remittances, in that order. The wellbeing of families receiving remittances is normally better than that of common families in the country. For example, children in households that get remittances receive improved education (Nakamuro 2010). "Tajikistan is the poorest country among the successor states of the Soviet Union and the most important remittances receiving economy worldwide. In recent years more than one fourth of the households in Tajikistan included at least one international migrant. A very high percentage of labour migrants are males and most of them move to Russia to perform low-skilled jobs in construction, trade and services. Meanwhile, many households in Tajikistan—particularly the poorest ones—depend on the money sent home by their migrant family members. This makes migration households vulnerable to the economic development of the principle destination country - Russia", (Alexander et al 2013, 17).

2.2.5.4 Destinations

The favourite destinations for Tajik labour migrants are Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The remarkable factors for the destination countries include common history, visa free structure, common Russian language and influence of Tajik diaspora community, relatives and friends. Major factors which influence Tajik migrants for selecting a destination includes: job availabilities, traditional link which helps the Tajik migrants in the host countries. Also historical connections influence the migrants to find job which dates back to the Soviet times to find employment in enterprises in Russia. Tajik migration also extends to Belarus, China, Malaysia, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey other than the Russian Federation and former Soviet Republics. Recently it also saw upsurge in European countries like Germany, Poland and West Asian countries like UAE. Also some

migrants went to work in USA, Canada or Australia for making money (Olimov & Bosc: 2003 22-23).

Russia is the most favoured destination of Tajik migrants, who work on building sites or in factories, and mainly are “unskilled manual labour.” The major reason of going to the Russian Federation is to make money, which explains why merely four respondents pursued occupational training courses or university studies in the country. A disturbing judgment of the survey is that more than 80 per cent of the migrant labour had only informal contracts, that is, oral agreements with their employer, with no official in print contract. The migrant labour work in various forms and abuse of their rights is a major problem faced by foreign workers in the Russian Federation (IOM 2014: 16 as quoted in Human Rights Watch, 2009)

A reason for homecoming of the migrants was not disqualification from the Russian Federation. When asked about the reasons of their return to Tajikistan, almost all of them stated that their return was provisional, with 85 per cent of the respondents saying that their early plan was to go back to the Russian Federation after staying for a brief period in Tajikistan. Labour migration to the Russian Federation is mainly migratory, though the figure of Tajik migrant workers who wait for long periods of time has been rising (IOM (2014): 5 as quoted in ILO, 2010). Most migrants return to Tajikistan during the low season in winter, when there is a little need for manual labourers, particularly on construction sites in Russia. As a result, the re-entry ban came as a surprise for many of them as they were not at all ready nor did they mean to wait in Tajikistan for more than a few months. Homecoming as part of seasonal labour migration is not the only cause for their coming back to Tajikistan. Numerous migrant workers have special situations like weddings and funerals, or, in a number of cases, the illness of family members, as reasons of their provisional homecomings. Such migrant labour planned to stay home only for essential period and intended to return to the Russian Federation later. Others had to come home since their documents had expired. So departure for them was necessary to obtain new travel permit for their return to the Federation. Some respondents stated that they came back to Tajikistan for medical action.

Lots of migrant workers, who were preparing to go back to the Russian Federation, were not familiar with their re-entry ban and, the announcement about the ban came as disbelief. “Having left the country without knowing about their ban, their future plans

made a 180-degree turn when they eventually found out that they could not go back to the Russian Federation for work”. The migrant workers in our sample described the different ways they found out about their re-entry ban. These migrants, who had an initial suspicion, contacted the IOM hotline to find out about his or her status. This way, the migrant avoided losing money paying for the expensive plane ticket to the Russian Federation and instead start planning on how to cope with the new situation. These cases, however, are rare, as most of the migrant workers sampled in the survey found out about their re-entry bans only after leaving Tajikistan, that is, at Russian border checkpoints or upon arrival at Russian airports. On the assumption that everything was in order, they bought plane tickets to the Russian Federation, only to be denied entry into the country. Consequently, these migrants could not leave the airport transit zone and had to buy tickets for the next flight back to Tajikistan”, (IOM 2014, 21)

For almost 2 years, Tajik labour migrants faced rising restrictions, strict policy and actions in Russia. According to diverse researches, from 50 to 70% of Tajik labour migrants stay unlawfully in Russia. Along with trade unions, they try to improve labour circumstances to stop the use of migrants by the law enforcement establishment and criminal structures, and to make migrant’s status legal and get better national legislation in the middle of previous effects. (Warikoo & Umarov 2014)

2.3 Conclusion

The adverse socio – economic situation is a prominent factor for the Tajiks to think about other option. Many of them are highly influenced with Islamic radicalism and join terrorist outfits. The socio - economic situation in Tajikistan is to an extent responsible for influencing Tajik minds with radicalism and extremism. Tajikistan’s GDP is the lowest among Central Asian countries and totally relies on foreign investment, loans from the outside country, and remittances. After disintegration of the Soviet Union, agriculture in Tajikistan is not doing very well.

High population of the country, as population growth is highest in Tajikistan a in other Central Asian countries, is another factor. Most of the people are living in rural areas. The population consists of young people and it is mainly male dominated country which is giving women a secondary position in the household. During the civil war, women were the victim of violence. Most importantly, people are not going for higher education.

During the Soviet regime, literacy rate was good but now teachers and educationists are going abroad to earn more money instead of teaching in their own region. Due to inflow of drugs from Afghanistan, people are getting addicted to drugs and HIV cases are increasing day by day. Due to unemployment and extreme poverty at home, people are migrating to Russia for their livelihood, as they are getting more wages and, job opportunities as compared in their own country. All these factors contribute to instability and rise of fundamentalism and extremism in Tajikistan.

Chapter: 3

External Influences

Tajikistan witnessed the revival of Islam, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, at a time when Central Asia was prone to external influences. This chapter delves into the factor of common Islamic aspirations and the role of small actors in the revival of Islam in Tajikistan. Most of the funds and support came from foreign countries for building Madrassas, Islamic University, mosques, and re-establishment of Islamic monuments etc. For these things, Tajikistan received funds both from private as well as government sources. Tajik students started going to Egypt, Pakistan and Turkey for seeking religious education. After independence, Saudi Arabia gave concessions in travel expenses to Tajik pilgrims travelling for Hajj to Mecca. Tajikistan along with other Central Asian countries joined the Organisation for Islamic Conference (OIC). Although Tajikistan has a majority of Sunni population adhering to Hanafi sect, the Iranian revolution did influence the population. Turkey too has a strong foothold in Central Asia with its moderate and modernised form of Islam, while youth of Tajikistan have been going abroad to the Islamic countries for getting higher education. They became highly influenced by Islamic fundamentalism and radical ideas, which poses threat to the stability of Tajikistan.

3. 1 Afghanistan Factor

Afghanistan is a mountainous and landlocked country sharing long border and common ethnic religious ties with Tajikistan. There are about 4.3 million Tajiks in Afghanistan. And Afghan Mujahideen played very important role in the Tajik civil war. Afghanistan also has a long history of trade and direct contacts through overland routes with Tajikistan.

During and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the Afghans opposed the communist regime. And most importantly Afghan Mujahideen started their armed resistance against the Soviets, after getting arms and funding from US and Saudi Arabia.

Finally the Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan, paving way for the rise of the Mujahideen and Taliban to power. (US dept of State)⁷.

The situation of Afghanistan – Tajikistan relations, both countries having trade and social contacts, drastically changed, after the armed Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. Both Tajiks and Afghans now thought that it was a direct communist attack on Islam and according to them whoever supporting or representing the Soviet regime was anti – Islamic. During the anti - Soviet Basmachi movement in 1917 – 1921 and also the collectivization campaigns in early 1930’s in Central Asia, many people left Central Asia including Tajikistan and settled in northern Afghanistan. These Central Asian muhajirs played important role in fomenting dissent against the Soviets in Tajikistan. “For example Azad Beg, leader of the Islamic Union of the Northern province of Afghanistan, was responsible for a number of missions against the Soviet forces. Ibrahim Beg, one of the leaders of the Basmachi movement was closely related to Azad Beg, The last Amir of Kokand, Naseeruddin was maternal great grandfather of Azad Beg. Pakistan set up the Islamic Union in Peshawar in 1981. Most importantly, former chief of Pakistan’s army Mirza Aslam Beg who was a descendent of a Central Asian immigrant (muhajir) and also related to Azad Beg, initiated Pakistan’s forward policy in Afghanistan, and trans – Oxiana.” (Warikoo 1995, 195-196)

Central Asian muhajirs⁸ who settled in Afghanistan during and after the Bolshevik revolution, started jihad (holy war) along with Mohammed Sharif Himatzade, chief of Islamic Renaissance Party, who lived in exile in Afghanistan. Soon after the Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan and Iranian revolution in 1979, Afghan Mujahideen indoctrinated with radical Islamist thought started crossing the Afghan - Tajik border and Tajikistan’s radical Islamist activists welcomed them. Mujahideen leader Masood Khalili disclosed that Soviet soldiers conscripted from Tajikistan, sold their rifles to purchase the Koran. Jamaat - i – Islami led by Burhanuddin Rabbani and Hizb - i – Islami led by Gulbadin Hikmtyar were very active in enrolling members and they distributed letters at night among people in Tajikistan. They got immense response from the educated young Tajiks. Thus radical Islam was spread by the Afghan mujahideen by distributing revolutionary literature in thousands and audio cassettes, video films. They crossed

⁷ US department of State, “diplomacy in action”, [Online: web] Accessed 1 April 2016 URL: <http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/afghanistan/10958.htm>

⁸ Muhajir or Mohajir is an Arabic word meaning immigrant

border with arms and attacked Kulyab and Kurgan Tyube regions of southern Tajikistan. Smuggling of arms and ammunition, religious and military training and border movement became frequent. They established training centres to impart arms training to young Tajik people. (Warikoo and Mahavir 2004, 144- 145)

3.1.1 Taliban

As we know after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, madrassas played an important role in recruiting the mujahideen and the guerrillas fighting Soviet forces in Afghanistan. The members of Taliban were produced by the private rural based madrassas in NWFP and Afghanistan. Taliban leaders have been mullahs from Qandahar province closely linked to the Deobandi movement both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The main leader of the Taliban was Mullah Muhammad Omar, who got the title of Amir – ul- Momineen which means commander of the faithful. He changed the name of Afghanistan, which was previously Islamic State of Afghanistan to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in 1997. He established the Ministry of Enforcement of Virtue and Suppression of Vice for the enforcement of all Taliban decrees concerning moral behaviour. The Taliban received support and diplomatic recognition from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. They also gave financial assistance to Taliban to maintain an effective military force. Taliban fighting force consisted of non - Afghans including nationals from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States as well. It received support and funding from former mujahideen groups particularly those connected with Hizb- i – Islami. In October 1998 a breakaway faction of Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan), led by Hujjat-al-Islam Sayyid Muhammad Akbari, joined the Taliban. Akbari was a non-Hazara Shi'a from the Qizilbash ethnic group, having received his religious guidance in Iran. (Human rights watch 2001)

3.1.2 War against terrorism

Al- Qaida leader Osama Bin Laden was responsible for 9/11 attack in USA, causing thousands of civilian deaths. Therefore, USA initiated 'War on Terrorism' in 2001 in Afghanistan. And the US led coalition started military operations against the Al- Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan. By the end of November 2001 the fighting was largely over and on 5 December 2001 the leaders of different Afghan factions met in Bonn to sign an agreement whereby an interim administration was formed. It was later succeeded by a

supplementary representative government, which with UN help, initiated the enormous task of reconstruction of Afghanistan. (Akiner 2010)

Central Asian countries also joined hands with United States and the international community to counter the problem of extremism and terrorism. For the Central Asian countries which are sharing their border with Afghanistan, it is very important to stabilise the situation in Afghanistan. So Tajikistan cooperated with the international community including the US government to protect their territory from Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism and drug trafficking. Islamist Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which also has its offices in Afghanistan, has been operating along with Taliban. Many young people from Tajikistan joined these organisations due to poverty and unemployment and got arms trained in Afghanistan. They also got weapons and ammunition from the Taliban. (Sreedhar 2003)

According to the Eurasia net report, Tajikistan government opened “special reconnaissance units” to safeguard the border with Afghanistan. These units are part division of Tajikistan's State Committee for National Security (known by its Russian acronym, GKNB), which oversees the border. “According to the commander of the border forces, Radzhabali Rakhmonali, the situation on the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border is difficult, as Kunduz, Takhar, and Badakhshan provinces are the hub of Taliban activity. Therefore, Tajikistan has restructured its border forces and formed special reconnaissance units.” (Kucera 2016)

Osama bin Laden's Al- Qaida, formed in 1988 also got integrated with the Taliban. Most importantly Osama bin Laden and his forces settled in Afghanistan and established its headquarter there. As we know Osama had fought against the Soviet Red army during 1979 to 1989. Osama also married Mullah Omar's daughter thereby cementing the relationship. (Sreedhar 2003)

3.2. Pakistan

The Islamic republic of Pakistan, which is sharing its borders with India in the east, Afghanistan in the west, Iran in the southwest, China in the northeast, is separated from Tajikistan by the Afghanistan's Wakhan corridor in the west. Therefore, its location from the strategic point of view is very important. Pakistan has played an active role for spreading Islamic movement in Central Asia, adversely affecting Tajikistan's security and stability.

Pakistan played a role in accentuating Islamic revival in the former Soviet Central Asian republics. Pakistan warmly welcomed the independence of these republics from the communist hold and made efforts to drive them into the Islamic fold. Pakistan sought to extend its influence into Central Asia by actively revive culture, faith and historic links. It believes that Afghanistan and Pakistan are the cultural extensions of the Central Asian region, in order to bring these countries under the influence of Pakistan.

Pakistan was very much active in spreading the anti – communist movement among the people of Tajikistan. After the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 the neighbouring Islamic countries started influencing the Central Asian republics exposing their Islamic brotherhood. Pakistan circulated Islamic fundamentalist literature with Syed Abu Al- Ala Maududi's book 'Jihad', conducted religious propaganda, and most importantly sent weapons to the region through the Afghan mujahideen.

Former President of Pakistan Zia Ul Haq emphasized Pakistan's historical and cultural links with Central Asia and strived to revive these links. His intelligence Chief Lt. Gen Akhtar Abdur Rehman told the visiting US dignitaries- "the holy war in opposition to communist will not stick to Afghanistan only; it will spread to the whole of Central Asia". As such the destabilisation of Tajikistan was caused through the involvement of Islamic fundamentalists and Pakistan's secret agencies. (Warikoo 1995)

3.2.1 Af- Pak region

Geostrategic position of Afghanistan- Pakistan region is very important because these two countries played huge role in destabilising the region through the radical Islamist movement in Tajikistan. Pakistan actively supported the Afghan Mujhadeen against the Soviet regime in Afghanistan, giving arms training to Afghan guerrilla forces. At the international level, Moscow was facing universal condemnation from western powers and third world countries, which gave diplomatic strength to "Pakistan's Afghan policy". And most importantly Pakistan was getting economic and military aid from United States, and other countries in pursuit of anti – Soviet resistance. Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) helped executing in insurgent operations against the communist regime in Afghanistan. The most important Afghan Commanders Ahmad Shah Masood and Ismael Khan were operating with the support of Pakistan, and its arms and ammunition. ISI also supported the fundamentalist group Hizb- i – Islami (Islamic party) of Gulbadin

Hikmatyar, who later became the Prime Minister during Afghan Mujahideen government. (Rais 1993)

3.2.2 Emergence of the Taliban in Pakistan

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan has been the hub of Taliban movement. This was a result of Pakistan's involvement in Afghan affairs. In 2001, when the coalition forces attacked the Taliban, Miran Shah and Mirali routes were left open in Waziristan. These two routes were very much used during the anti - Soviet jihad of the Mujahideen.

The war on Afghanistan led to the emergence of a new kind of leadership, which was fully moulded in Islamist movement. The emergence of Pakistani Taliban basically took place in Waziristan. The Pakistan government's decisions had a remarkable impact on the political landscape of the FATA. Though holding universal adult franchise was introduced in 1996, but political parties were banned from their activities in the area. The extremists operated from mosques and madrassas. Religious organizations such as the Jamiat Ulema-e- Islam continued to proselytize, and support the Afghan Taliban, thus preparing the ground for the emergence of Pakistani Taliban", (Warikoo 2011)

Tehrik- e – Taliban Pakistan is responsible for the operation of the whole Taliban movement in Pakistan. The leader of this organisation Baitullah Mehsud was responsible for the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. In December 2007, the organisation declared its main aim to 'enforce *Sharia*⁹' and to fight against the NATO forces in Afghanistan. (Warikoo 2011)

Islamic student's organisations played an immense role in Islamic revivalism and Islamic radical movement. Now Islamic student organisations are spreading their religious ideas in the political sphere. The student movement is fuelled by the religious ideologues and revivalist leaders such as Islami Jamiat – i Tulaba (Islamic Society of students), a unit of the Jamaat-i- Islami (Islamic Party) of Pakistan. Jama'at-e-Tulba which is an oldest wing of the student movement has been playing important role in influencing the young minds with their ideology. Jamaat- i- Islami's political agenda has been the Islamization of

⁹ Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet (Hadith and Sunna), prescribing both religious and secular duties and sometimes retributive penalties for lawbreaking.

Pakistan from the day it got independence. This movement for the Islamisation of the region also affected Tajikistan. (Nasr 1992)

3.2.3 Religious identity

Islam was introduced in Central Asia first in tenth century AD, during the Karakhanid dynasty led by Karim Satuk Khan. In thirteen century when Mongols invaded the region, it became the official religion. Some scholars state that Islam was established in Uzbekistan between eighth and tenth century. So one can say Uzbeks and Tajiks were influenced by Islam in general and ‘shariat’ in particular in the 10th century. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the people of Central Asia started strengthening their religious identity, leading to revival of Islam in the region and particularly in Tajikistan. New mosques and madrassas were built, giving religious education to the people. This was accompanied with the politicisation of Islam and formation of parties with Islam as ideological base, such as Adolat, Islamic Renaissance Party. (Yerekesheva 2008)

It was in 1980’s, under Gorbachev’s glasnost policy that the revival of Islam started. Non - state actors started operating openly, which got the attention of other Islamic countries. The exploration of religious, cultural and ethnic linkages became part of nationalist discourse of the Islamic movement. With their rediscovery of Islam and Muslim culture, the people of Central Asia sought to forge contacts with other Islamic countries on the basis of common Islamic ideology. This religious revival helped in reclaiming national and religious identity in Central Asia. (Khalid 2003)

Map: 3 The Feghana valley



Source: Google Map

The radical Islamist thought established deep ground in Ferghana Valley, from where the Islamic movement started. As we can see in the above map the Valley is stretched across Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Therefore the movement of Islamists and their radical thoughts spread easily across the region. The Ferghana Valley is home to 31.4 percent of the population, and in the last 40 years it has been playing an important role for the growth of national economy of Tajikistan. This region is not only known for its Islamist movement but also for the opposition national Birlik Party, which was banned by Islam Karimov's government in Uzbekistan. Most importantly, there is unemployment and people lost their jobs in manufacturing industries. "In the last decade of the Soviet rule, people started working in neighbouring towns and metropolitan settlements. These people were highly skilled in the rural labour force". (Ilkhamov 2001).

Islamic Revival party emerged in 1990. It started functioning in Uzbekistan, and Uzbek government banned the party, after which the members of this party continued their work covertly in Uzbekistan. In 1991 the same party members established the Adolat (Justice) party. A number of demonstrations were held in the Namangan province in support of establishment of an Islamic State. They also protested against Islam Karimov. After the Soviet disintegration, Ferghana valley became the hub of religious extremism. In 1995, this group filled the region with Wahhabist ideology and its leader Tohir Yuldashav became a strong leader in this region, seeking to overthrow the Islam Karimov's secular government. (Gupta 2014)

In 1992 the Tajikistan civil war supported by the Islamist Movement of Uzbekistan which fought against the Tajik government forces. By the end of the 1992 Islam Karimov's secular government banned all non-governmental religious groups and assumed control of the official Islamic clergy. The civil war in Tajikistan was a major concern to the Uzbek government, because Islamism in the neighbouring country would boost Islamist radicalism in Uzbekistan. The peace Accord of Tajikistan of 1997 also legitimised the Islamic party as a force in Tajikistan's politics. (ICG 2001)

Tavildara region in Tajikistan was the base for training for the IMU fighters. Likewise the IMU, Islamic opposition group Hizb ut- Tahrir (Islamic Party of Liberation) which was formed in 1953 in east Jerusalem, with an objective to establish an Islamic Caliphate all over the world, became active in Central Asia. It distributed pamphlets advocating Islamist ideology. (Akbarzadeh 2004). HT came into force in Uzbekistan in 1990s claiming the non - violent way to establish an Islamic Caliphate based on 'shariat law'. And it has the similar goal of IMU, to overthrow the established government of Uzbekistan. Most of the people joined this movement because HT rejects military measures. The government banned this movement, and they went underground to operate. (ICG 2001)

3.3 The Role of Iran

The Islamic republic of Iran historically has been the major cultural, political and economic force in Central Asia. It shares borders with Armenia and Azerbaijan in northwest, in the north with Kazakhstan and Russia, across the Caspian Sea, in the

northeast with Turkmenistan and in the east with Afghanistan and Pakistan, in the South with the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and in the west with Turkey and Iraq. It is the only country which has access to the coastline of both Indian Ocean and Caspian Sea. Iran is geostrategically important due to its location in Eurasia and west Asia, besides having high energy resources such as oil and gas. Several Middle Eastern countries competed for extending religious influence and political power that can come along with this Islamic connection. Iran has been the most open advocate of exporting political Islam and its main area of influence has been Tajikistan, which has largely Sunni population in contrast to the Iran's Shia population. Iran maintains close cultural links with Tajikistan. It was during 1991 to 1993, when Iran supported the Islamic movement of Tajikistan in order to politically influence Tajikistan and also to spread its notion of pan – Islamic world in Tajikistan.

During the 16th century, Central Asia witnessed Persian influence in the region. Throughout the Safavid period, Shah Ismail was in power. He installed the governor of Khwarezm and in the 18th century Nadir Shah occupied the Khanates of Khiva and Bukhara. In the early Islamic period, both Turkic and Persian languages had their influence in bilingual tradition. Both languages in vernacular dialects were in common use. Central Asian painting, music, architecture had Persian impression. In the 19th the Tsarist Russian empire extended its power to Central Asia and Iran. And importantly it acquired political and economic linkages, with effective foreign trade in Khorasan. Central Asia developed strong political and cultural ties with Iran, also due to 'Silk Route' connection. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, relations between Iran and Central Asian countries became strong. Earlier, the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 also influenced Central Asia with its Islamic ideology, posing a threat to region's stability and security. (Warikoo 1995)

The rise of Islamic revivalism in Iran was a result of breaking up of the modern secular structure. Some scholars suggest that formation of an autocratic state in post-1953 Iran effectively destroyed democratic secular political institutions (parties, unions, and parliament). Secondly, the social and psychological alienation of the Iranian people resulted from the "modernization" program of the 1960s and 1970s. This alienation led to the formation of a new type of ideology that employed Islamic symbols and ideals to provide a new but familiar meaning to the subjectivity of Iranians. The Islamic ideology had a very powerful populist appeal because of its attention to such ideas as community,

authenticity, social justice, and socio political participation. Thirdly “the Shia hierarchy, evolved as a viable alternative to secular politics, and was able to attract broad segments of Iranian society”, (Ashtiani 1994)

The main ideologue from Iran was Ali Shariati (1934- 1977) who started the present Islamic radicalism. He was a French educated sociologist and was imprisoned during Shah’s regime. His ideas of Islam were followed by many Muslim intellectuals, students and urban working people. Like all Islamic ideologues who got their education in western world, Shariati also worked towards the reinterpretation of Islam. But he connected it with the ideology of radical social and political change along with fundamental Islam. Various radical ideologues of the Muslim world here tried to mix nationalism and radical social transformation, for example Bath in Syria and Iraq and Nasser in Arab socialism. They tried to mix the nationalistic sentiments with radical social changes. It was Shariati who first thought about reinterpreting Islam to make it an important part of radical ideology. Shariati was different from the traditional Shia *Ulemas*¹⁰, because he stressed more upon the radical Islam than the traditional one. He followed sharia in the same way as the traditional Ulemas did. Both of them negated the western influence in Islam. Shariati suggested that the Ulemas restricted Islam within the boundaries of Islamic law but it should be used more in the social transformation. Therefore, he was against the traditional and inactive Ulemas and was also against the Shah regime (Griffith 1979).

Iranian revolution was an Islamic political movement against the ruling Shah regime and it established an Islamic State. Ayatollah Khomeini was a prominent Shia leader spreading political Islam with his excellent leadership. He was a fundamentalist with strong connection with the clerics, who supported him in his ideas of Islamic government. The Shia clerics started utilizing their political position to bring a movement in society, which witnessed absence of active political opposition in Iran. Khomeini’s followers operated from the mosques of Tehran and other cities. Khomeini collected funds, which were not only used for supporting mosques, clerics, Islamic cultural activities but also influence people for participating in the political movement. He also gave the shape of political doctrine to the Islamic movement. He established a political movement against

¹⁰ A body of Muslim scholars who are recognized as having specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology.

the Shah regime to establish Islamic State. Khomeini and his clerical followers used Shia ideology to change the political scenario of present Iran by attracting the youth and middle class. Islamic intellectuals would publish lot of Islamic literature, open Islamic centres, which led to the Islamic revolution. Religious periodicals gained wider circulation and religious books became more and more popular. A survey in 1976 found 48 publishers of religious books in Tehran alone, who had begun their activities during the 1965-1975 decade. The Islamic movement did not limit itself to traditional forms of religious activity and modes of propaganda. “By the mid- 1970s, a survey reported some thirteen centres for the recording and distribution of tapes. In fact, the demand for religious tapes and cassettes in these years was so great that they became like a religious institution in themselves”, (Ashtiani 1994).

There were 12,300 religious associations in Tehran after 1965, over 80,000 mosques and holy shrines, approximately 180,000 mullahs. Khomeini effectively influenced the population especially young minds, who viewed Islam as an active solution for social and political problems (Ashtiani 1994). After the independence of Tajikistan, Iran exported its ideology of Islamic revolution, literature, cassettes etc to Tajikistan, which shares its language and culture with Iran.

3.4 The Role of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia with its vast oil resources is one of the wealthiest states. This is the birth place of Prophet Mohammed, where Islam originated. Since 18th century, Al Saud family, which supported strict implementation of Islam, in the form of Wahhabism, has been ruling Saudi Arabia. In the 20th century, Al Sauds developed Saudi Arabia on the path of economic modernisation and as a regional power.

Wahhabism was first preached by Mohammad Ibn Abd al- Wahhab of Saudi Arabia in 1740's. He was a native Muslim scholar, and the Wahhabi school he founded was named after him. Wahhabism calls for the restoration of religious, social, political traditions prevalent at the time of Prophet. It also emphasizes on Quran and the sunna as the only source of the religious behaviour. And all other traditions and Islamic practices are not acceptable. Claiming the principle of ‘oneness of God’, it has its impact on the people in their daily lives, particularly in Middle Eastern and Wahhabi ideology inspired Muslim countries. (Nevo 1998)

Late king Faisal of Saudi Arabia during 1960's and 1970's invested a lot of money to spread the pan – Islamist idea of Muslim unity. In 1980's pan Islamist movement became strong. Saudi Arabia which supported pan - Islamist militancy from the 1980's, also affected the domestic and political scenario of the nation. Saudis supported the Afghan jihad which directly led to Tajikistan's instability. It supported Bosnian jihad, and in the 1990's private support for jihad was growing immensely. It gave full support to jihad and Islamic militancy by means of funding. Many Saudi nationals took this as a positive charitable funding. People having pan -Islamist sentiments admitted their initiation for jihad abroad. (Hegghammer 2009)

Saudi Arabia has heavily invested in building mosques, madrassas, religious schools, Sunni cultural centres, and Islamic university in various countries including Central Asia. It has also been sending Saudi clerics for preaching puritan Islam. They are giving religious education and organizing religious seminars. Saudi Arabia thus inspired many Muslim countries with this kind of soft power. And Tajikistan has been witnessing the problems of such Islamist radicalism spread by Saudi Arabia. Tajikistan having a majority of Sunnis, fundamentalist thought of Wahhabism is taking roots there. Saudi Princes funded the growth of madrasas in Pakistan and Afghanistan during the anti – Soviet resistance, which preached militant radical form of Islam, and jihad. These students formed the Taliban as well as Al Qaeda. (The week)¹¹

3.5 Concluding Remarks

Because of the external actors as discussed above, people of the Tajikistan are highly influenced with the radical Islamist thought. The Afghan mujahideen during their anti - Soviet resistance spread Islamic radicalism across the Afghan border in Tajikistan. Another major actor has been Pakistan which provided logistics, arms and funding to Afghan mujahideen and later the Taliban, creating instability in the region. The Af - Pak region with the predominance of Tajikistan and Al Qaeda poses direct challenge to

¹¹ The Week, “How Saudi Arabia exports radical Islam”, [Online: web], Accessed on 24 April 2016 URL: <http://theweek.com/articles/570297/how-saudi-arabia-exports-radical-islam>

security and stability in Tajikistan. Iran too has inspired Islamic revivalism in Tajikistan, And Saudi Arabia with its financial assistance, pilgrimage destination, Wahhabism, pan – Islamism funding of mosques and madrassas, religious fundamentalist thoughts, has been yet another factor in unsettling peace and stability in Tajikistan. All there external actors have played significant role in pushing the young, educated and unemployed youth in Tajikistan towards embracing radical Islam.

Chapter 4:

The role of Islamist Radical groups

Tajikistan just after its independence witnessed instability in the region, and its economy and social condition got adversely affected by the civil war from 1992 to 1997. During this period, most of the radical Islamist groups played active role for revival of Islam in this region. This chapter deals with these Islamic radical groups, which played a role in the revival of Islam in the country. With the rise of Taliban to power in Afghanistan with the direct support of Pakistan, many young people of the region joined the frenzy of *Jihad*¹². Pakistan with its religious party Jamaat-i-Islami actively engaged in this revivalist movement. In Central Asia, IMU operated in the fertile Ferghana Valley in the name of establishing Islamic state. Al Qaeda with its followers established its base in Afghanistan, attracted young and new militants and developed active links with other militant organisations, providing financial support and expertise. Internally in Tajikistan, Islamic Revivalist Party spread the idea of Sharia and it joined hands with the United Tajik Opposition group against the established government. From West Asia, Hizb-ut-Tahrir which originated from East Jerusalem became active in forty countries including Tajikistan. It attracted young Tajik people with the agenda of establishing Islamic Caliphate.

4.1 Hizb ut- Tahrir

This group was founded in 1953 by Sheikh Taqiuddin al- Nabhani in East Jerusalem. He died in 1977 and the group was taken over by Abu Yusuf Abdul Qadim Zallum, another Palestinian cleric. In 2003 after Zallum left the leadership, Ata Ibnu Khaleel Abu Rashta became the leader. Previously he was the party's official spokesperson in Jordan. Abu Rashta joined hands with a Palestinian Abu Yasin, who was living in West Bank, and during his leadership the party became more aggressive. At present this radical group is active in 40 countries, its ideological footprint is in London, and headquarters is in Jordan. It emphasises on the unity of the Umma and advocateds the path followed by

¹² A war or struggle against unbelievers.

Prophet Muhammed to establish the Islamic Caliphate. The first and foremost leader of the party al Nabhani says that “the work of the Prophet was clearly defined in a way which is showing precisely clear behaviour of the creation of Sharia based Islamic government” (Baran). Hizb ut Tahrir advocates utopian political agendas, and It is opposed to democracy and secular society.

Hizb- ut- Tahrir firstly held its position against the infidels and advocated jihad by circulating leaflets, books, brochures, internet sources, websites maintained by the organisation. It aims at converting Dar al- Kufr (the country of unbelievers) into Dar al-Islam (the country of Islam). It even started armed struggle against the unbelievers who refuse to follow Islam. To attract the Muslims, they use Koranic verses to galvanise the Muslims across the world. They emphasise on following the ‘sharia’ in all activities of human life, whether it is politics, social systems, economy. And finally it calls for the establishment of the ‘Islamic state’. HT with its Sunni Islamist agenda seeks to unite all the Muslim countries. Therefore, it wants to create a theocratic Islamic Caliphate in Central Asian region, following Prophet Mohammad’s model of 7th century, which would be ruled by a Caliph with both the religious and political powers. The founder of the group Nabhani even prepared a constitution in which the draft of the Caliphate is provided detailing various Islamist concepts.

Hizb ut- tahrir is mainly constructing a hierarchical pyramid structure including a number of cells. All the cells are having five members. During the first six months, they study the book Islom Nizomi (the structure of Islam), after that every member of this group takes oath in the name of Allah, I swear to carry out any orders of HT leaders even if these orders do not correspond to my belief . With the completion of the primary training, the group members form a halka, which consist of five or six members. Every member has allies, but only the main member of this organisation has access to the senior member of the organisation. And Mushrif (supervisor of the halka) keeps knowledge about the subsequent level of leadership, not even the full hierarchy. Mushrif also supervises the group member’s familiarity with HT ideology. Naqib heads the local committee at the district level, which is accountable for the administration of the group relationships in urban level and villages. In this hierarchy, Mutamad, is a provincial delegate of the committee who supervises HT activities, and is selected by the Amir of HT.

In this group members have to study the organisation's agenda, literature, geography, politics, religion, and history being compulsory. Women members of the group have separate unit for themselves. So the members of this group start at the primary level going on to the regional level, all the members following the instructions of Kiedat (HT legislative assembly) and Amir.

HT is spread in many countries of the world, and most importantly is very active in Central Asia. Many analysts believe that among "all the banned organisation of former Soviet Union, HT is the only mass organisation". (American foreign policy council)¹³ Its organisational centre is in London, and literature is published there with people getting training for the group. It had a national conference in the US and Canada in July 2009, which indicated its global reach and activism. Some people say the alleged global leader Ata Abu Rashta is based in Lebanon. It is active in Russia, Ukraine, and Southeast Asia. In Indonesia they claimed that "it recruited tens of thousands of members and 2007 conference witnessed the 80,000 and 100,000 members from all over the world. It also held public protests and demonstrations in Bangladesh and Pakistan. It is also present in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, UK, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, and Tunisia. This group has vast members all over the world, but the exact number is unknown, and the members of Central Asia are stated to be about 20,000 to 100,000." (American foreign policy council)

After the disintegration of Soviet Union, Hizb ut Tahrir became active in late 1990's in Tajikistan. This organisation has been getting funds from the mahalla mosques and followers. Due to Tajikistan sharing its border with Uzbekistan and Ferghana Valley being the hub of radical groups, Islamic radicalism has been influencing the people of Tajikistan. HT has also grown because of the dissatisfaction of Tajik people with the Islamic Renaissance Party. (ICG 2001)

¹³ World Almanac of Islamism, "American foreign policy Council: Hizb ut- Tahrir", [Online: web], Accessed 15 May 2016 URL: <http://almanac.afpc.org/sites/almanac.afpc.org/files/Hizb-ut%20Tahrir.pdf>

4.1.1 Tajik Government's response

Tajikistan government responded towards the activities of HT by declaring the group illegal in 1999. The government stated that this group is trying to establish an Islamic state, thus challenging the Tajik constitution, which states in article 1 that "Tajikistan is a secular republic. (Karagiannis 2006) In 1999 the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan also spread to Tajikistan. The government of Tajikistan has increased its surveillance over these radical groups, to ensure peace and stability of the region. (Karagiannis 2006) The government arrested some 150 to 200 people in the Sughd province for distributing leaflets and other materials, calling for overthrow of the Uzbek government. Most of the young people of the region have become members of this group. They were given five year imprisonment. However, after coming out of the jail, they again started looking for sponsors for their radical activities. (ICG 2001)

According to the Karragianis, who interviewed "security officials, diplomats and group members, as well as the arrested members in Tajikistan, "there are around 2,500–3,000 members and many more sympathizers. Many Hizb ut-Tahrir's arrested members have been ethnic Uzbeks, but the number of Tajiks is growing fast. Some of the arrested members in the northern city of Khojand were students and teachers. In recent years, the group has spread its activities in Dushanbe and southern Tajikistan". According to a well-informed source from the Tajik security services, the group first appeared in Dushanbe in 2001– 2002. Hizb ut-Tahrir's members even managed to penetrate the Russian forces based in Tajikistan. In March 2004, Tajik police arrested a Hizb ut-Tahrir's activist who was a civilian staff member of Motor Rifle Regiment 149 of Russian Motor Rifle Division 201 stationed in Kulyab. Members of Hizb ut-Tahrir disseminate leaflets and books that have been printed in Tajik, Uzbek and Russian, thus trying to recruit members from all ethnic groups. Due to Tajikistan's high literacy rate, the dissemination of Hizb ut-Tahrir's literature has been a successful way of spreading its message", (Karagiannis 2006).

4.2 Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda is an Arabic word which means 'base of operation'. Abdullah Azzam the main ideologue of modern Sunni Muslim radicals was given the title term of Al- Qaeda al-

sulbah in 1987, which means an ‘advance guard of the strong’, while Osama Bin Laden and his followers created their base in Afghanistan attracting new militants and strengthening links between the existing militant organisations. It provided these militant groups with funds, expertise, and contacts with other Islamic groups. At present the Al Qaeda base in Afghanistan has been destroyed after bin Laden was killed by the US forces in Pakistan. But the organisation continues to be a strong terrorist Islamist organisation. (Burke 2004)

4.2.1 Main ideology

This organisation and its members are very much involved in jihad against the anti - Islamic regimes and the west. This group has mainly two key beliefs, “first is Wahabbism, which is Saudi Arabia’s official version of Islam and the idea of Egypt’s Sayyid Qutb. Wahhabism came from the Sunni ideologue Mohammad ibn Abd al-Wahab with origins in Saudi Arabia. The second most important personality, which influenced the group is Sayyid Qutb (1906- 1966), a main Islamist member of Muslim brotherhood in Egypt. He advocated the Islamic state in Egypt, and he believed the western civilization to be the main enemy of Islam. He exhorted Sunni Muslims to take up jihad to protect and clean Islam.” The organisation’s main aim is to:

- a) Go back into the form of ‘pure and authentic’ Islam, which was followed in the era of Prophet Mohammed and his followers in seventh century.
- b) Al Qaeda wants to overthrow the non - Islamic regimes.
- c) Push out the non - Muslims and western people from the Muslim countries, since westerners have been dominating the lands of Islam, and western ideology would corrupt the original form of Islam.
- d) Set up a ‘pan Islamic Caliphate’ with the support of all militant groups throughout the world. (Haynes 2005)

The leaders of Al Qaeda never visualized the sudden collapse of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001, which was the main fertile ground for the group. Most importantly Al Qaeda had trained around 60,000 fighters here. Al Qaeda leaders thought that they will catch up with US and coalition forces in Afghanistan in war, as they did with Soviets earlier. “Al Qaeda and Taliban made a plan to remove the Afghan opposition and trouble its ability to fight with the assassination of the Northern Alliance commander Ahmed

Shah Masoud, two days before 9/11. After that in 2002, Mullah Muhammad Omar, the Taliban leader, to whom Laden had sworn commitment, lost Kandahar, the capital of the Taliban's operation. According to Ahmed Rashid, before 9/11, top experts of the Taliban were Pakistani volunteers who served in its armed forces, beside, dozens of energetic on duty Pakistani army advisers and also some Pakistani army commando units. After they left the Taliban, the group lost its strength and conventional military capability and political support. And most importantly Al Qaeda lost its safe operating place, where it was giving arms training and propagating its agenda, and they shifted towards Pakistan", (Riedel 2007).

Ayman al-Zawahiri has taken the position of Emir after the death of its first leader Osama bin Laden, and Abu Yahya al-Libi the head of group's religious committee became his deputy. And these people are guarded by younger operatives like Hassan Gul, Hamza al-Ghamdi, Abu Zayd al- Kuwaiti al Husaynan, Abd al-Rahman al-Maghrebi. They all are involved in planning and plotting the operations of the group, and to conduct its media campaign and develop its religious doctrine as well. (Jones 2012)

4.2.2 Event of 9/11 and Al Qaeda in Tajikistan

After 9/11 terrorist attacks, US launched 'war on terror' against Al- Qaeda, Taliban and other terrorist outfits, in Afghanistan in 2001. It threw out the Taliban regime and struck at the root of the Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda had spread from Afghanistan to Pakistan and Central Asian region. Tajik troops had battled with this terrorist group in the remote areas. Abdullo Rakhimov is one of the followers of bin Laden, as he was trained in the camp of Rasht valley, which is 30 miles north in Tajikistan along its border with Afghanistan. The Rasht valley training camps were actually set up by Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan's militants. (Swami 2010). The Tajik militants had joined hands with IMU and Al Qaeda against the Tajik government. The Tajik security committee said that "the rebel leader Mahmud Khudoyberdiyev has taken the initiative to join the terrorist outfits. He was a colonel in the defence Ministry and led the group of troops". (Roggio 2009) Tajikistan has become a central point for the terrorist organisations like Taliban and IMU to disturb the NATO's new supply line from the northern part of Afghanistan. As we know Al Qaeda was well connected with IMU and Taliban, therefore it was operating actively in this region. (Roggio 2009)

Its fighters are searching a new route to escape from the US troops, so they thought about Tajik mountainous region being their best option. This border region is well known route for arms and drug trafficking. After the collapse of the Taliban, Al Qaeda is operating from Pakistan territory. (BBC news 2002)

4.3 Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan

Islamic Renaissance Party or Islamic Revival Party basically consists of Tajik Islamists. It consists of Tartar intellectuals, who wanted to organise Muslims in former Soviet Union to propagate ‘Sharia’. The Tajik unit of Islamic Renaissance Party was called Hizb-i-Nehzat-i-Islami and its leaders were Himmatzade, Nuri, and Dawlat Osman. This party set up its military base in Garm Valley and changed its name to Islamic Movement of Tajikistan in 1995. IRP was in the forefront of armed conflict with Tajik government forces during the civil war of 1992 – 1997. Peace negotiations started between the Tajik opposition and government and IRP joined hands with the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) group. (Rashid 2001)

Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) is the leading force of the so called ‘Islamic Democratic Bloc’, and actually held reins of power in Dushanbe between May and October 1992. Before 1991 it operated illegally. The first congress of the IRPT was held in the autumn of 1991, and in the following November it was registered as a political party advocating economic reform, development of all forms of ownership, and marketisation of the economy. IRPT advocated ‘the creation of an Iranian type state, and reorientation of economy and foreign policy on Islamic lines. In 1992, the party membership was 20,000” (Vassiliev 2001)

In the presidential election held after the independence of Tajikistan, IRPT supported the candidature of Davlat Khudonazarov. After the election, this party became more active in implementing its radical programme. One of its leaders, Davlot Usmon, headed a group of Islamic fighters, who included Wahhabis from Karategin, Dushabe and armed squads of Pamirians. This party was basically formed by peasants, students, and rural intellectuals. It influenced most provinces of the country mainly in Garm, Pyanj and Kurgan Tyube. After losing election in 1992, the Islamist leaders and armed fighters fled to the mountains and further went to Afghanistan and Gorno Badakhshan to carry out their armed movement against Tajik government (Vassiliev 2001).

In 1999, Said Abdullo Nuri was re-elected as its leader. After Nuri's death in 2006, leadership shifted to and Muhiddin Kabiri who took the responsibility to fight the conservatives inside IRPT. Kabiri was not involved in the civil war and he believed in separation of religion and politics and emphasised on secular education. He has been modernising the programme of IRPT. Today the Islamic character of this party remains invisible. It acts like a protest movement, which criticises the economic and social programme of the government, as it seeks development of Tajik society on the basis of Islamic principles. The call for Islam played an important role in the recruitment of the members of this party. For this party religious education is must. The party worked along with existing institutions and compromised with the government, which resulted in the official recognition of the party. This party is different from Hizb ut Tahrir, Salafiya, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Jamaati Ansorullah, which are radicals involved in violence. IRPT has initiated the culture of protest using modern media in its social networks, and people to people contacts for its propaganda. It has got support of Ismaili minority in the Pamir region of Gorno Badakhshan. It increased its members from 20,000 in 2000 to 41,000 in 2014, with women being around 53 percent. This makes this party the largest opposition party. From the year 2000 onward, it has been participating in parliamentary elections. However, it failed in 2015 elections receiving only 5 percent votes. IRPT always got support from the clergy, mosques and madressas propagating its radical ideas. (Schmitz 2015)

4.3.1 Civil War in Tajikistan

After the independence of the country in 1991, Rahmon Nabiev a former communist leader was elected as president after getting 56.9 percent votes. The opposition which got 34 percent of votes demanded re-election. "President Rahmon Nabiev agreed to accommodate the opposition's coalition of democratic, nationalist, and Islamic groups by offering them one-third of ministerial posts in his government. But Nabiev's supporters in southern Tajikistan rejected outright the proposed compromise with the opposition. Thus within two years of independence, civil war started in Tajikistan. Realizing the sensitivity of the situation due to the opposition gaining an upper hand, Russian officers commanding the CIS military units in Dushanbe, advised dialogue between the opposition and Nabiev's government. After several rounds of negotiations peace agreement was signed by Mohammad Sharif Himatzade, Chairman of IRP, Shodmon Yousuf, Chairman of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPTJ), and Amirbek, Chairman

of La'le Badakhshan organization (a political group made up of Ismailis from the Pamirs)", (Ahmed 1994).

Emomali Rahmon became the president, and the opposition would have 24 ministries but communists did not want to share power with the opposition. On the other hand, opposition IRP wanted power without delay. Therefore, the peace settlement was not successful and the crisis continued in Tajikistan (Ahmed 1994). Finally peace accord was signed in 1997, which brought on end to civil war in 1997, which had resulted in the economic devastation of the country. "Various estimates indicate that almost 23,500 to 100,000 people were killed. This conflict was not only political but it was also due to the differences between different regions, clans, and elitist groups. More importantly it was the conflict between those who wanted to establish an Islamic State and those who wanted to establish a secular state", (Malashenko 2012). After the civil war, the government of Tajikistan legalised IRPT in Peace Accord of 1997, and its leaders got some posts in the government. The peace accord of 1997 ended the first five years of battle between UTO and government. However, the party faced a number of challenges in some regions, regarding the registration of the party. Kulyab and its neighbouring region were denied registration of the party for many years but in 2003 it was allowed to register. Later, deputy chairperson of the party Shamsiddin Shamsiddinov was arrested from Khujand and charged with serious crimes. (ICG 2004)

Map: 4 Tajikistan's provinces



Source: Google map

After independence Kulyab which used to contribute many police and security officials to Tajik government became one of the main regions of civil war and the centre of battle between the government and opposition forces. In mid- 1992, this region established its own armed forces, under the leadership of Sangak Safarov. According to the media reports, originally this force was receiving support from Russia and Uzbekistan Safarov's warriors, heavily armed and poorly disciplined military force were known as Popular Front. They were the major opponent of United Tajik Opposition, which was getting support from Afghanistan. Emmomali Rakhmon emerged as the leader of Kulyabis and later was elected as the President of Tajikistan. (ICG 2009).

President Rahmon has banned the IRPT considering it as a terrorist organisation. In 2015 many members of party IRPT were arrested by the government. In 2000 the party got several parliamentary seats, and an ex- UTO member gave 30 percent posts to security services. This included a controversial commander, Gen. Mirzo Zivoyev as well. After the death of the leader of IRPT, Said Abdullah Nuri in 2006, the moderate leader of this

party Mukhiddin Kabiri has given the party a different shape on the lines of liberal democracy, and secularism, which poses a challenge to President Rakhmov. Therefore in “1 March 2015 parliamentary elections, the government ordered Imams at state-registered mosques to preach against voting for the IRPT, which was labelled “the party of war”. The IRPT was reported to have received just 1.5 per cent of votes and it lost its two parliament seats (ICG 2016).

4.3.2 United Tajik opposition

It was formed in 1993 in Afghanistan and it’s a combined party of opposition and Islamic leaders of Tajikistan. UTO has its military base situated in north-eastern Afghanistan. So the violent clashes between drug smugglers, Tajik and Russian border guards continue. This group was very active in Gorno Badakhshan and Kurgan Tyube (Human rights Watch 2001).

4.4 Jamaat-i-Islami

The Jamaat-i-Islami means the community of Islam, and is a religious party of Pakistan. It is basically a kind of similar religious party of Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. Its leader believes that development and progress can be possible under Islamic Law. There is nothing new in this organisation. Most of the conservative Muslim leaders are supporters of this group and they give support to this organisation. “It is an appealing example of Pakistan’s Jamaat, that go with Muslim thought and leadership to attract non Muslim world and as an active organisation to Muslim State”, (Abbott 1957)

Jamaat-i-Islami is an oldest and most significant Islamic revivalist movement of Pakistan. Its ideology and activities amount to an Islamic revolution. It calls for an Islamic revolution to create an Islamic state. (Nasr 1995)

Jamaat-i- Islami was formed in 1941 by its founder Maulana Sayyid Abu ala Mawdudi who was the chief ideologue of this party till 1972. After its formation this party worked as a revivalist party. It seeks to establish a state based on the principles of Islamic law. After the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, Maududi along with his other Jamaat leaders and members moved to Pakistan, though some other Jamaat-i-Islami members remained in India, Kashmir, and Bangladesh (Nasr 1995).

Jamaat has established its impact on the national politics and the society in Pakistan state. Jamaat's literature is being circulated in twenty six languages including Arabic, Persian, Spanish, Malay, Malayalam, Swahili, and Japanese. Maududi's ideas had impressed Sayyid Kutb, the leader of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Iranian revolutionary leaders, Afghanistan's revivalist activists, Hasan Turabi and Muslim Brotherhood of Sudan, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Malaysia, Tunisia and Turkey. More importantly, Tajikistan's Islamic Movement Nihzat-i Islami got influenced with the Jamaat and its ideology. The Jamaat's ideology influenced Pakistan's constitutional debate from 1948 to 1956 and once again in 1972 - 1973, which shaped the Islamic polity in Pakistan. It also took part in the anti - Ahmediya agitation in Punjab (Nasr 1995).

Jamaat-i-Islami's ideas found a proper place during the Zia ul-Haq regime in 1977 to 1988. In his time Islamization of laws, public policy and popular culture took place. His regime accepted the Islamist idea of nation and society. The alliance of Jamaat-i- Islami and military rulers shaped the new fundamentalist Islamist policies in Pakistan (Nasr 2004). In the 1980's during the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Zia-ul-Haq with US and western and Saudi Arabia support created militant Afghan Mujahideen to oust the Soviet forces and also across in Tajikistan. Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami party used this opportunity to spread Islamic revolution in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Hizb-i-Islami of Afghanistan (Afghanistan Islamic Party) led by Gulbadin Hikmatyar benefited from Zia's efforts (Synnott 2009).

4.5 Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is run by Islamist militants from Uzbekistan and wants to overthrow the existing government of Uzbekistan with force and want to set up an Islamic state. Being involved in bombing incidents in Uzbekistan, the organisation has been declared as a terrorist organisation. It is not only involved in 1999 bombing which basically targeted the president of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, but was also involved in Kyrgyzstan's southern Batken region's armed raids USA in the year 2000 declared IMU as terrorist organisation. On September 20, 2001, the US president George W. Bush stated that IMU will be a target of US counter terrorism operations after the 9/11 attack, as IMU was considered to be linked with Al- Qaeda and Taliban. The organisation

fought along with the Taliban against US forces in Afghanistan. The only well known leader of IMU Juma Namangani died while fighting together with Taliban during the US bombing in Mazar-i-Sharif region of Afghanistan. The organisation collects funds from Uzbek diaspora, donations from Al Qaeda and from narcotics trade. (Mann 2002)

The organisation's founding leader is Tahir Yuldashev, a mullah from the town of Namangan in Uzbekistan. He split his way out of the Islamic Renaissance Party in 1990s. After that he established the Adolat (Justice) party, which preached puritan Islam. Subsequently, the party was banned by Uzbek government. Yuldashev and his followers moved to Tajikistan in March 1992, where they supported and fought along with the Islamic opposition in the civil war from 1992 to 1997. Jumaboi Ahmadzhanovitch Khojaev who had served in the Soviet army in Afghanistan, became group's main military leader in the adopted name of Juma Namangani. After Tajik opposition accepted the peace accord of 1997, Yuldashev and his followers were disappointed and they joined the forces of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and set up their military camp in the Tavildara valley until 1999. The members of the group increased from hundreds to nine thousand and started operating very actively in Central Asian region directly affecting peace and security in Tajikistan (Weitz 2004).

The main ideology of IMU is to promote pan- Islamism, and establish an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. In 2000, Tahir Yildashev said in an interview that "the IMU has declared a *Jihad* in order to create an Islamic religious system based on pure *Sharia* laws stemming directly from the Prophet a system he did not think had existed either in Afghanistan or any present-day country", (Mann 2002).

Now the group has changed its name to Islamic Party of Turkestan (IPT), it is expanding its area of operation from China's western Xinjiang province to the Caspian Sea. According to Ahmed Rashid, "Juma Namangani recruited people from all over the Central Asian region as well as Uyghur Muslims from Xinjiang and most importantly in this group we can find now Kazakhs, Tajiks, Uyghurs, Kyrgyz, Chechans and Uzbeks. And here some are trying to create an Islamic state in the region but the primary step for the group is to overthrow the Uzbek government and establishing an Islamic state". (Mann 2002)

Tahir Yuldashev operated from the Otavaliyon mosque of Namangan region of Uzbekistan. His ideas shaped during his extensive travels in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, being influenced with Wahhabism and Deobandism. In Ferghana valley, his ideas of radical Islam spread their network through madrassas and mosques. IMU got active support of Al Qaeda, Taliban, Al Jihad and Harakat ul Ansar. Yuldashev, the military commander Namangani and Saudi trained militant Abdul Ahad started recruiting from other countries as well. Hundreds of Uzbek militants were reportedly operating in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. On orders from Bin Laden, IMU militants took control of South Waziristan, with Yuldashev in command of military activities. After the conclusion of Operation Enduring Freedom, the IMU's infrastructure and man power has been significantly weakened. However, there are still approximately 150 IMU militants who still have the capacity to fight. Yuldashev, his son-in-law and chief lieutenant Dilshod Hodzhiev (who is believed to be in charge of IMU finances), and Ulugbek Kholikov, alias Muhammad Ajub (who is believed to head the IMU's military section) are reportedly hiding in Waziristan, Pakistan. Yuldashev is thought to be in negotiations with other international terrorist organizations and illegal arms traffickers to purchase Russian-manufactured "Igla" portable anti-aircraft missile launchers to use against American targets in Afghanistan" (Baran).

The group reportedly gets its finances from narcotics trade, Al Qaeda and ethnic Uzbeks living in Saudi Arabia, and illegal activities like kidnapping of foreign nationals. The group has recruited the unemployed young people or extremely poor persons by paying approximately \$ 200 every month. According to reports, IMU is very much involved in Central Asian narcotics trafficking to Russia and Europe being the final destination. And they are controlling some 70 percent of heroin and opium trafficking to the whole region and mainly to Tajikistan". (Weitz 2004).

The organisation became weak after the death of its leader Yuldashev in 2009, but the group is an umbrella unit for a number of other organisations such as Jamaat Ansarullah which was formed in 2010 by one of the IMU member Amriddin Tabarov. Besides IMU leader Usman Ghazi pledged its support to Islamic State in September 2014, and the group members started recruiting people from Ferghana valley for the Islamic State. The Jamaat Ansarullah militants have been arrested from Tajikistan for recruiting Tajik

people to fight in Syria. Recruiting members from Central Asia is easier for ISIS a compared in Pakistan and Afghanistan” (ICG 2015).

IMU is very much involved in drug trafficking, in the Central Asian region, particularly after the Iranian government curtailed trafficking through Iran which was the main route for smuggling. Therefore, the Central Asian route with its porous border became a new option. In 2002, 5.5 tons of heroine was recovered from Central Asian, mainly from Tajikistan. The main trafficking route is the highway between Khorog on the Afghan - Tajik border and Osh, the largest city of Kyrgyzstan. But in 1990's Khorog- Osh highway got the attention of Kyrgyz government and the United Nation Drug control programme, which considered the place as a major transit point and it took steps to limit the smuggling through enhanced security of this place. In 1997 one project named “Osh Knot” was started. The production of opium rose sharply after Taliban came into power in 1996 and the opium production grew to 2,700 tons in 1997 and in 1998 – 1999 it broke the record of 4,600 tons. Afghanistan thus accounted for 79 percent of world opium production. The Batken route from which drugs crossed the Tajik - Kyrgyz border with Jirgatal and Garm in Tajikistan which were strong points of the presence of IMU at the time of civil war in Tajikistan. (Cornell 2005)

4.6 Taliban

Post 9/11 the US led ‘war on terror’ in Afghanistan defeated the Taliban. However even after their defeat the Taliban continue to be actively posing challenge to the reconstruction process in Afghanistan. According to Ashley Tellis, “since the successful presidential election in October 2004, the Taliban insurgency has metastasized in scale, intensity and fury”. The Taliban tactics remains limited to “hit and run attacks”. Yet their influence is increasingly being felt in areas from where it was previously absent. A new phenomenon is the emergence and rise of Taliban movement within Pakistan itself. The Taliban is even targeting Pakistani forces themselves, historically their main source of support. The two phenomena are linked and share some characteristics both follow different logic in each of the two countries. The organisation’s ideology about Islamic integration in Afghanistan under the rule of Taliban was rigid. Taliban also targeted non-Pashtun ethnic and linguistic minorities in Afghanistan. Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaraas and others. Taliban is also involved in illicit trafficking of drugs. According to the UNODC

(United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes) report “opium is playing an important role of Afghanistan’s economy and more than half GDP is coming from this, almost 53 percent. Afghanistan in the year 2007 trafficked and produced opiates worth about \$4 billion. The militants are handling the production, distribution and control over this business, the rest is handled by drug traffickers. Most importantly its value increases after each border crossing and the main transit for this is Tajikistan” (UNODC report 2007).

It was in 1994 that Pushtun Taliban emerged as a force from Islamic madrassass and seminaries in Pakistan. After capturing Kabul in 1996, and encouraged by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and with the involvement of Bin Laden, the Taliban conquered the whole of Afghanistan. As a result in 1998, Taliban’s occupation of northern Afghanistan pushed the non- Pashtun minorities into the northeast. The Taliban version of Islam basically emerged from Deobandism followed by Pakistani mullahs in Afghan refugee camps. Deobandis set up a political party Jamiat ul-ulema-e-Islam (JUI), set up many madrassass in Pakistan’s Pashtun belt giving Afghan refugees and young Pakistanis free education, food, military training and shelter. And with the Saudi funds it has been propagating Wahhabism. Deobandis have literate clerics to teach the puritan Islamic tenets. In 1996, after victory over Afghanistan, JUI became the main recruiter of Pakistani and foreign militant cadres for Taliban. Around 80,000 to 100,000 Pakistani trained militants fought in Afghanistan during the period, 1994 to 1999. Pakistan’s ISI played active role in this operation both in Afghanistan and Central Asia creating new type of radical movement in Afghanistan and in its neighbouring Central Asian countries. (Rashid 1999)

4.7 Summary

This chapter discusses the role of Islamist radical groups and their activities in the name of Jihad, formation of Islamic State, agenda of Islamic Caliphate, Islamic law, revivalist movements etc to destabilise the situation in Tajikistan. Tajik people were affected due to their poverty and by their Islamic faith. Now ISIS is also recruiting people from this region. Tajik government has reported that 190 Tajiks are fighting in the Syrian conflict for ISIS, which is cause of serious concern.

Chapter: 5

Conclusion

After its independence, Tajikistan faced an immense challenge due to rise of Islamic extremism and conflict. Thus Islamic revivalism was due to external influences of Islamic countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. These countries with their Islamic card sharing their religion and culture with Tajikistan did impact upon Tajikistan. During Gorbachev's policy of Glasnost the Tajik Islamic leaders got opportunity to openly come out with their Islamic taking the agenda of republic of Tajikistan along the Islamic lines. Political Islam became popular and the young population were encouraged to join the radical groups. These radical Islamist thoughts which were propounded earlier by the revolutionary leaders such as Hasan Al Banna (founder of the Muslim Brotherhood), Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini (leader of the Revolutionary Party of Iran), Sheikh Muhammad Abd Al Wahab, Jamal Ud Din Afghani, Ali Shariati, Sayed Abdulb Ala Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt were played up new Islamic leaders in Tajikistan.

Immediately after its independence, Tajikistan faced civil war, which totally disturbed the state's peace and stability and dealt heavy blow to the Tajik economy. It resulted into the conflict between the United Tajik Opposition group and government forces. It caused huge economic loss running into billions of dollars and also resulted in the millions of refugees. The country's faith on modern concept of democracy and secularism was disputed by the Islamic radicals who wanted to enforce pan-Islamic brotherhood agenda in Tajikistan. The dissemination of radical ideas was done through building of mosques, propagating the hadith and by their propaganda against the Government. They also tried to close the medium of entertainment such as music and fine arts, emphasising on the implementation of sharia Law. They spread Wahhabism all over the country attracting the youth.

Revolutionary movements outside the country, particularly Iranian revolution of 1979 and Afghanistan's anticommunist battle with the Soviet forces affected the Tajik population's mind. These two events have taken place in the same year of 1979. Iran with its soft power approach influenced the Tajik population by providing them religious literature,

the Persian teaching, educational and subsequently, Persian books propagating its influence in the region. Afghanistan played a major role in the revival of Islam in Tajikistan through the Afghan Mujahideen, who played an active role during the civil war of Tajikistan by supporting the Tajik opposition forces. Moreover, they engaged in cross-border terrorism and drug trafficking besides propagating jihadi thought in the region. Being a neighbouring country Tajikistan faced major problems because of the Afghan Mujahideen activities. Besides the Tajiks have been going to Middle Eastern countries to get trained in Islami theology and this has resulted in the presence of large number of Mullahs, trained in radical Islamist thoughts. All these factors have led to the rise of the strong radical Islamist fundamentalist thoughts in Central Asia, causing the problems of extremism and terrorism.

One of the main causes of Islamic revivalism in Tajikistan has been the involvement of external actors. Soon after the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan 1979, there emerged an atmosphere of anti-communism due to the activities of Pak trained Afghan mujahideen. They propagated the notion that whoever is supporting communist regime is anti-Islam. Tajikistan being the direct neighbour of Afghanistan was thus influenced. The external players of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia gave arms and funds to these extremist groups who also engaged in the trafficking of arms, ammunition and drugs. Most importantly the Tajiks who were in the Soviet forces were not willing to fire on Afghan Mujahideen and they sold their rifles to purchase the Koran. They were clearly supporting the Islamic forces. And after the Taliban came into power, Afghanistan played an important role in spreading terrorism into the neighbouring countries. Tajikistan became a major victim of Afghan Mujahideen's radical Islamist activism and cross-border terrorism.

Pakistan its Jamiat-i-Islami under the leadership of Zia ul Haq, initiated political Islam in Tajikistan. Pakistan supported it with financial assistance as well. They distributed Islamic literature to brain wash the young minds. And with both Pakistan and Afghanistan having Taliban network in their countries, Tajikistan was directly affected. Af-Pak region very much prone to these extremist activities. While Pakistan fully supported Afghan mujahideen has been in their anti-Soviet activities armed resistance. Tajikistan became direct victim of the spill over of such radical activities. Uzbekistan's Ferghana valley region has served as the ground for these Islamist movements and religious opposition groups which started creating problems against the established government in Uzbekistan.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan fully supported the Tajik civil war against the Tajik government forces. Iran with its ideologue Ali Shariati initiated Islamic radicalism in the region. Apart from this, Iranian revolution in 1979 spread the fundamentalist thought across the boundaries through its official policy of export of Islamic revolution. Saudi Arabia and its Wahhabist ideology have been behind the Islamic revivalism. The Saudi government initially provided free pilgrimage to Mecca for the Tajiks, besides financing the activities of Islamic radical group's construction of mosques and madrassas etc. Tajikistan and Saudi Arabia have majority of the Sunni population which provides a fertile ground for investing a lot of money to spread Muslim brotherhood. Turkey with its moderate and Sufi order also influenced the people of Tajikistan. Egypt's Muslim brotherhood has also affected the Tajik people's minds.

Tajikistan also got influenced by activities of many radical Islamist groups, such as Hizb ut- Tahrir (HT). Hizb ut- Tahrir (HT) with its ideology of 'unity of the ummah' has been operating in Tajikistan. Its main aim is to establish unique Islamic Caliphate. It propagates jihad, and circulates Islamic literature, leaflets, internet sources, and websites, and books, brochures. This organisation has its broader connection in the world and is active in Central Asian region to radicalise the people. Immediately after the independence of Tajikistan, HT came into the region. This group is getting money from the Mohalla mosques and some other sources in order to operate smoothly. Its activity to transform the country into an Islamic State has been its prime concern. Tajik government banned this group in 1999 and declared it as an illegal organisation. Another important international group Al Qaeda had shaken the stability of Tajikistan. Its focuses on 'jihad' against the west and anti- Islamic rulers. This group with the support of other militants group has been trying to set up pan- Islamist Caliphate. Having close links with the Taliban, these two groups are rooted in Afghanistan, which has a long porous border with Tajikistan. They are easily recruiting Tajik people.

At the domestic level, Tajikistan has Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), which started its operations soon after the Independence of Tajikistan in 1991. It is an Islamic opposition party in Tajikistan. IRPT's disagreement with the ruling government resulted into the long civil war. And after the end of civil War in 1997 following the peace Accord, the government legalised the party. At present Tajik government has banned this party and arrested many members of this party because of their radical Islamist

activities. Regional groups like Jamaat-i- Islami, Islamic movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Taliban have also influenced Tajikistan's people. Jamaat-i-Islami of Pakistan has been following the policy of replacing the secular government of Tajikistan with Pakistan's former President Zia ul Haq supported this group, and along with the US and Saudi Arabia distributed arms and ammunition to Afghan Mujahideen, to fought against the Soviet forces. Jamaat-i- Islami in the name of jihad spread revolution in Afghanistan and adjoining Central Asian region. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan opposes the current secular regime with its militant activities, as they want to establish a pan- Islamic empire. This group has received financial support from Al Qaeda, Saudi Arabia, and narcotics trade it has been engaged in exporting drugs from Afghanistan to the Eastern Europe. Because of the drug trafficking, Tajik population has been affected Taliban with the support of Pakistan also created instability in Tajikistan. With their fundamentalist radical ideas, they brain wash the people in the name of Islam and recruit young people from Central Asia. Now a days, ISIS is also recruiting people from this region. Tajikistan due to its poverty and unemployment, is adversely getting affected by the radical Islamist groups, which recruit people from this state easily.

The poor socio- economic condition in Tajikistan has been encouraging the people to join radical outfits, as the people become inclined towards Islamic revivalism. The newly independent country of Tajikistan witnessed long civil war from 1992-1997, which wreaked its economic infrastructure and industrial and agricultural sector, causing economic losses of billions of dollars. Therefore it has lowest per capita GDP.

As regards the social factors, the population growth is very high in Tajikistan in comparison to the other Central Asian countries. Noticeable point is that it is having a young population with the 25 to 54 age group and large number being of rural population. Therefore, these circumstances of economic backwardness provide the radical Islamist forces easy opportunity to use youth into their fold.

In the name of Islam sharia. It has resulted in the poor condition of women in Tajik society. Tajik society is male dominated. And rural areas are dominated by men. Tajik girls are drop out from schools after the certain age. Womens in rural areas are basically raising children and looking after the home. Migrant men are taking divorce from their host countries over the telephone, creating unstable social situation. During the conflict, women faced violence against them and most importantly the second and third wife are

not having any legal property rights. After its independence, country witnessed downfall in education sector. In health sector, country is also facing HIV problem, and many young people are affected with it. Another important problem is drug addiction, which has led to declining health standards in the country. Country is witnessing the problem of unemployment, because of which most of the people are going abroad to earn money. They prefer to go Russia for jobs. Since the country does not have much job opportunities and people are taking one of the easiest ways to earn money by joining the extremist groups.

The government of Tajikistan has taken a number of steps to control people's involvement in radical Islamist activities. The government has banned traditional Islamic dress has banned the Islamist Revival Party, banning children from attending mosques has imposed fine for import and export of Islamic literature. There is punishment for unapproved gatherings, protests, unregistered religious meetings. However, the situation is became unstable due to increased activities of Islamic State (IS) and rise of Taliban in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US forces in 2014.

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