

SOCIAL CHANGE IN UZBEKISTAN, 1991-2015

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Social Change in Uzbekistan, 1991-2015**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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CERTIFICATE

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

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New Delhi

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Shaista

TO
MY LITTLE BUNDLE OF JOY,
MOHAMMAD SHADAB (SHONA)

CONTENTS

Chapters	Page No.
CHAPTER 1: Theories of Social Change	1-27
Evolutionary Theory of Social Change	3-6
Functional Theory of Social Change	6-7
Cyclic Theory of Social Change	7-8
Economic Theory of Social Change	8-10
Conflict Theory of Social Change	10-12
Technological Theory of Social Change	12-15
Review of the Literature	17-23
Definition, Rationale and Scope of Study	24
Objectives of the Study	24-25
Research Questions	25
Hypotheses	26
Research Methodology	26
Research Plan	26-27
CHAPTER 2: Social History of Uzbekistan	28-50
Pre-Soviet Social System in Uzbekistan	28-37
▪Pre-Tsarist Uzbekistan	28-34
▪Uzbekistan under the Tsarist Rule	34-37
Uzbekistan under Soviet Rule	37-50
CHAPTER 3: Social Change in Uzbekistan in the Post-Soviet Period	51-76
Literature, Culture and Art	52-55
Family Structure and daily Life in Uzbekistan	55-56
Food habits of the People of Uzbekistan	57-58
Marriage System	58-59
Status of Women in Uzbek Society	59-60
Education System in Uzbekistan	61-63
Religion and Society in Present day Uzbekistan	63-65
Impact of Economic Reforms on Uzbek Society	65-68
Technological Development and Society	68-69
Change in Political Culture	69-72
Environment and Society in Uzbekistan	72-76

CHAPTER 4: Challenges to Social Change in Uzbekistan	77-95
Ethnicity and Social Change	78-80
Religion and Social Change	80-82
Women in Uzbekistan	82-89
Human Trafficking	89-91
Economic Problems	91-93
Environmental Problems	93-95
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion	96-106
REFERENCES	107-117

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BST	British School of Tashkent
CADAP	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
CARC	Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DAMOS	Drug Epidemiology Database Collection and Development
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organisation
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EWG	Expert Working Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ILO	International Labor Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IWPR	Institute of War and Peace Reporting
JDAI	Joint Development Associate International
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDIST	Management development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Countries
OSCE	Organisation of Security and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UBA	Uzbekistan Banking Association

UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WIUT	Westminster International University of Tashkent

CHAPTER-1

Theories of Social change

Change is inevitable. Social change indicates toward all modifications of human society. **Social change** is defined as a significant and deep rooted change in the society's behaviour. When a society undergoes changes, its norms and values change accordingly. In other words, when the living standards of the society change, social relations of the individuals also change, it brings overall change in the society. Any type of change that transforms the social structure with changes in the established social relationships is called social change.

No doubt, change identifies a wide contour for progress, development, transformation, growth, mobilization and so on. Social change refers to the modifications which take place in life pattern of people. Whenever human behaviour is in the process of modification, one can see that social change is taking place. Since human society is constituted of human beings, social change means human change. Different authors define social change in different ways. As Davis says, "social change means only such alterations that occur in social organisation, that is, structure and function of society. Thus, social change is a part of broader culture change." (Mann 1994:25-26)

According to Horton and Hunt (1968) "change in the social structure and social relationships of the society is called social change".¹

"Social change refers to a process responsive to many types of changes; to changes in man-made conditions of living, to changes in attitudes and beliefs of men, and to the changes that go beyond the human control to the biological and physical nature of things. Social change is a process which includes biophysical, cultural and technological aspects. The key to present social system lies in the past." (MacIver and Page., 1937, p-508)

¹ Top 5 theories of Social change, Your Article Library, [Online: web] Accessed 20 September 2016, URL: <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/top-5-theories-of-social-change-explained/35124/>

Lundberg says “Social change refers to any modification in established patterns of inert-human relationships and standards of conduct.” In a similar vein, Judson R. Landis writes, “Social change refers to change in the structure and functioning of the social relationships of society.” Koenig is of the view that “Social change refers to the modifications which occur in the life patterns of people”.²

It can be said that social change is an all inclusive concept that implies changes at different levels of human life from specific to general. Any change at any level of human life shows change in the social fabric. Thus, any alteration in the web of social associations that change the settled pattern of social systems and social organizations can be called as social change. For sociologists, “alterations in the properties of social structure overtime constitute the focus of the subject of social change or social dynamics”. (Dushi 2012)

In this research work, an attempt is made to study social change in Uzbekistan through various theories. It is a study related to Uzbekistan’s social practices and social structures. The study tries to find out the reasons for the changes which the society in Uzbekistan is witnessing.

Culture and economy play important roles in bringing changes to the social system. So, in order to understand the social structure and social phenomena in Uzbekistan, it is essential to know the history and culture of Uzbekistan.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to see social change in Uzbekistan through the lens of theories of social change. Social change is a multi directional and slow process. Theories of social change are helpful in order to make the social changes visible. The study of society of Uzbekistan evaluates the past and present social structure of Republic of Uzbekistan and also finds out the reason, why society has taken the present direction of social change. The study deals with various aspects of society like family, religion, culture, economy, education, government and civil society. On the basis of the evaluation of the existing social structure, the study would try to conclude about the process of social change in Uzbekistan.

² Social Change, Notes on the definition and Meaning of Social Change, [Online: web] Accessed 25 September 2016, URL: <http://www.sociologydiscussion.com/society/social-change-notes-on-the-definition-and-meaning-of-social-change/961>

Throughout the history, a wide number of reasons have been given to explain why changes take place in a social structure. The process and reason of these changes have been explained through various theories like Evolutionary theory, Cyclic theory, Conflict theory, Technological theory, Economic theory of social change etc. Different theories of social change explain the process and reasons for social change in different ways. In this research an attempt is made to analyse how social change in Uzbekistan can be understood through these theories of social change.

Evolutionary Theories of Social change

“In the second half of 19th century, the concept of evolution assumed a central place in explanations of all forms of human development in both social and biological sciences. For example, Morgan’s three epochs of humanity i.e., savagery, barbarism and civilization and August Comte’s ideas of human intellect.”³

Herbert Spencer is known as the forerunner of evolutionary thought in sociology. This theory is based on the assumption that “change is unavoidable and it is the basic characteristic feature of human society. The present condition of the society is presumed to be the result of changes that happened in the past. It was assumed that the change is basically the result of the operation of forces within the society or culture. In the theories of evolution, there exists a belief of infinite improvement in the next stage over the preceding one.”⁴

There are three types of evolutionary theories-

1. Uni-linear evolutionary theories
2. Universal Theory of Evolution
3. Multi-linear evolutionary theories

Uni-linear Evolutionary Theories

Uni-linear theory suggests for a straight line, progressive and organized character of social change. It states that the course of change is predestined and it is always uni-

³ “Evolutionary Theories”, Sociology Guide, [Online: web] Accessed 24 September 2016, URL: <http://www.sociologyguide.com/social-change/evolutionary-theories.php>

⁴ “Evolutionary Theories”, Sociology Guide, [Online: web] Accessed 24 September 2016, URL: <http://www.sociologyguide.com/social-change/evolutionary-theories.php>

linear in fashion without repetition of its stages. It argues that gradually the society proceeds to a higher stage of civilisation which moves ahead in a linear fashion toward improvement. In other words, “linear hypotheses states that all aspects of society change continually in a definite direction, never fluctuating, not repeating themselves. Theories of Saint Simon, Comte, Morgan, Marx and Engels and many other anthropologists and sociologists come under the category of uni-linear theories of social evolution. It is because they are based on the assumption that each society does, indeed must pass through a fixed and limited number of stages in a given sequence. Saint Simon, one of the earliest founders of sociology, along with, Auguste Comte, put an evolutionary idea of social development, as a sequential progression of organic societies representing increasing levels of advancement.”⁵

Comte in his evolutionary scheme elaborated the three stages of Saint Simon. Comte joined the developments in human knowledge, culture and society. He said that, “all societies essentially pass through three stages—the primitive, the intermediary and the scientific. Comte conceived these stages as progressing from the theological through the metaphysical to arrive ultimately at the perfection of positive reasoning. He argued that all mankind inevitably passed through these stages as it developed, suggesting both uni-linear direction and progress. Spencer also displayed a linear concept of evolutionary stages. He argued that the trend of human societies was from simple, undifferentiated wholes to complex and heterogeneous ones, where the parts of the whole become more specialized but remained integrated.”⁶

Universal Theory of Evolution

“According to the Universal theory of evolution it is not necessary that every society would pass the same stages of development. It argues that the evolution of whole culture of mankind has followed a specific track of evolution. Sharing the same perspective, Spencer said that, mankind had progressed from small groups to large and from simple to compound and in more general terms, from homogenous to heterogeneous. In his view there are three distinct facets of social regulation: political

⁵ “Top 5 theories of Social Change, *Your Article Library*, [Online: web] Accessed 20 September 2016, URL: <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/top-5-theories-of-social-change-explained/35124/>.

⁶ Goodfriend Wind, Comte’s three Stages of Society and Theory of Positivism, [Online: web] Accessed 21 September 2016, URL: <http://study.com/academy/lesson/comtes-3-stages-of-society-theory-of-positivism.html>

control, social control and socialization. They tend to keep the society stable.” (Perrin 1976:1339-1359)

Similarly, Ogburn laid emphasis on the role of invention in social change. “On the basis of invention he produced the famous concept of ‘cultural lag’ which means change in our non-material culture, i.e., in our ideas and social arrangements, always lag behind changes in material culture, i.e., in our technology and invention. He suggested that technology is the primary engine of progress, but tempered by social responses to it. Thus, his theory is often considered a case of ‘technological determinism’, but is really more than that”. (Ogburn, 1922:61-66)

Multi-linear Theory of Evolution

Multi-linear theory of evolution is considered to be more realistic than the other universal and linear theories of evolution. Supporters of this theory such as Steward (1960), seek to describe the social change by concentrating on limited sequences of progress of society, without mentioning the straight-line evolution and mankind as a whole. It attempts to account for diversity of the social systems.

“This theory says that change happens in many ways like in family structure, living styles, education, cultural influence and that it does not inevitably lead in the same direction. Theorists of this persuasion recognise that human culture has evolved along a number of lines. It does identify some social trends as merely universal; the progression from smaller to larger, simpler to complex, rural to urban and low technology to higher technology but it recognises that these can come about in various ways and with distinct consequences. Multi-linear theory has no priori laws or schemes. It recognises that the cultural traditions of different areas may be wholly or partly distinctive, and it simply poses the question of whether some genuine or meaningful similarities between certain cultures exist and whether these lend themselves to formulation. These similarities may involve culture as a whole or some special features like clans, social classes, men’s societies etc.” (Steward 1972:19)

This theory is related to **periodic or episodic approach**, which emphasize the importance of coincidences and unique circumstances in history, society and in the environment that shapes to a particular course of social change.

Evolutionary theories are more or less applicable to all types of societies and Uzbekistan is no exception to it. But there are some special features associated to every society like religion, traditions, language, food habits etc. Though the change turns from simple to complex social relations but there always have some constructional features of evolving societies or organizations and process of change, which always affect the transition from one stage to other.

Functional Theory of Social Change

“Functionalism, as a new approach of study of society, developed mainly as a reaction to evolutionism, in the early years of twentieth century. Critics of evolutionism advocated that there was no use to know the first appearance of any item of culture and social behaviour. These theorists believed that the society, like human body, is a balanced system of institutions, each of which serves a function in maintaining society. When events outside or inside the society’ disrupts the equilibrium, social institution makes adjustments to restore stability.”⁷

Talcott Parsons gave an equilibrium model to explain social change. He said that “society always remains in a natural state of equilibrium, defined as a state of equal balance among opposing forces. Gradual change is both necessary and desirable and typically stems from such things as population growth, technological advances, and interaction with other societies that brings new ways of thinking and acting. However, any sudden social change disrupts this equilibrium. To prevent this from happening, other parts of society must make appropriate adjustments if one part of society sees too sudden a change. He says that every element of society has a role to play to keep the social system stable. So overtime societies adapt this adaptive capacity of social elements and social structure as a whole determines the stability of the society.” (Parsons 1966: 21-22)

Berghe states that, “according to functional theory change may come from three main sources:

1. Adjustment to external disturbances such as a recession in world trade.
2. Structural differentiation in response to problems within the system, e.g., electoral reforms in response to political unrest.

⁷ Top 5 Theories of Social change, Your Article Library [Online: web] Accessed 20 September 2016, URL: <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/top-5-theories-of-social-change-explained/35124>

3. Creative innovations within the system. e.g., scientific discoveries or technological advances.” (Berghe 1963:696)

In Uzbekistan, this theory seems to be visible when Sovietisation of Central Asia was taking place. The Soviet Government tried to change the social and cultural systems of Uzbekistan in the name of modernisation. In reality it was Russification of Central Asia. There was systemic liquidation of traditional institutions and culture, building of new Soviet society to replace the older one. A radical change was pushed in all spheres of society.

All the changes which a society undergoes are to varying degrees reflected in the family, where the foundations of the nation’s future are laid. Thus, a crisis in society is manifested as crisis in the institution of family, a fact illustrated by the problems faced by the family in Central Asia during Soviet and now post- Soviet periods.

The people of Central Asia were reluctant towards these changes and it is reflected in the findings of underground mosques, as public prayers were not allowed in Soviet Central Asia. But after disintegration of the Soviet Union, there is a visible trend of revival of Islam in Uzbekistan.

Cyclic Theory of Social Change

Cyclic theory is formed on the belief that all societies have pre-destined life-cycle of birth, growth, maturity and decline. Like waves in the ocean, the great culture emerge, rise to heights, only to subside while others rise in their turn. There are repeating set of activities that form a cyclic pattern like rhythms of nature, like cycles of day and night, seasons etc.

After completion of all the stages, the society comes back to the original stage from where it had started and the process begins again. Thus, if a society is able to respond constructively to the internal and external challenges, it can grow and survive. Cyclical theory of social change is also known as rise and fall theory.

Theory of ‘Circulation of Elites’ is a type of Cyclic theory of change. Theory of ‘Circulation of elites’ says that all the significant changes in a society take place when one elite class replaces the other. Pareto termed the process as ‘circulation of elites’. Vilfredo Pareto is of the view that social change is due to political circumstances. He

feels that vigorous politicians try to capture power by disturbing the existing social order but with the passage of time it becomes impossible to vigorously pursue the change and they try to use their energies for maintaining status quo. This status quo is tolerated till such time when new aristocracy does not come to the forefront to disturb the existing order. Therefore, he believes that disturbing social order and maintaining status quo is in a cyclical order and thus inevitable.

P.A. Sorokin (1941) gave a variant of cyclic theory, known as 'pendular theory of social change'. Sorokin opined that, "history is a continuous course, though irregular, moving between two kinds of cultures- the 'sensate' and the 'ideational' through the 'idealistic' path. Culture oscillates like the pendulum of a clock between two points. The pendulum of a clock swings with the passage of time, but ultimately it comes to its original position and re-proceeds to its previous journey. Thus, it is just like a cyclical process but oscillating in character. A sensate culture is one that appeals to the senses and sensual desires. It is hedonistic in its ethics and stresses science and empiricism. On the other hand, the ideational culture is one in which expressions of art, literature, religion and ethics do not appeal to the senses but to the mind or the spirit. It is more abstract and symbolic than the sensate culture. The pendulum of culture swings from sensate pole and leads towards the ideational pole through the middle pole called 'idealistic' culture, which is a mixed form of sensate and ideational cultures—a somewhat stable mixture of faith, reason, and senses the source of truth." (Sorokin 2010:20-25)

Sorokin's analysis of culture is a combination of both the theories - linear and cyclic. His theory implies that a culture's progress may appear to be linear when it proceeds in a fix direction for a time. But, eventually, some inherent forces of the culture show their effect. These forces tend to bring change in the direction of social process and a new period of development starts. This new trend may be linear, oscillating or it may follow some specific type of curve.

Economic Theory of Social Change

Economic theory of social change is also known as Marxist theory of social change, as it is largely influenced by Marx. Economic interpretation of social change is generally associated with Marxism.

“Marxist theory rests on the fundamental premise that changes in the economic infrastructure are the prime agents of change in social order. According to him, society consists of two structures—‘infrastructure’ (base) and ‘superstructure’. The infrastructure consists of forces of production as well as relations of production. Features of social system like legal, ideological, political and religious institutions are present in the super structure, which serve to maintain the infra-structure and get influenced by it.” (Cohen 1968: 180)

According to Marx, “productive forces constitute ‘means of production’ (natural resources, land, labour, raw material, machines, tools and other instruments of production) and ‘mode of production’ (techniques of production, mental and moral habits of human beings) both and their level of development determines the social relation of production, i.e., production relations. These production relations (class relations) constitute the economic structure of society—the totality of production relations. Thus, the socio-economic structure of society is basically determined by the state of productive forces. For Marx, the contradiction between the constantly changing and developing ‘productive forces’ and the stable ‘production relations’ is the demiurge of all social development or social change.”⁸

Marx was of the view that all the changes occur due to the contradiction of forces and these forces are present in the whole course of history in one form or the other. In the ‘Preface’ of his book, ‘Capital: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy’, Marx has summed up the idea of social change as, “At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution with the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.” (Marx 1867: 7)

Hence, Marx emphasises that change in the mode of production leads to development of new ideologies. These new ideologies sensitise people to fight through the social struggles. For Marx “the course of history or social change is nothing but the

⁸ Top 5 theories of social Change, [Online: web] Accessed 20 September 2016, URL: <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/top-5-theories-of-social-change-explained/35124>

philosophy of ‘*dialectics*’⁹. Accordingly, the change, development, and progress take place by way of contradiction and conflict and that the resulting change leads to a higher unity.”

For Marx, "the class struggle and the transition from one social system to another is also a dialectical process. The class struggle is the driving force of social change or ‘motor of history’. The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” (Communist Manifesto 1848:01).

All Societies evolve gradually by means of struggle between two classes—one representing the waning system of production and the other new order. The rising class is always victorious in the struggle and it establishes a new order of production. In this new order, there are also the seeds of its own destruction that again give way to the next dialectical process. Change will come only with the triumph of the suppressed class over the suppressors.

“Marx believed that the basic contradictions contained in a capitalist economic system would lead to class consciousness. Class consciousness involves a full awareness by members of the working class of the reality of exploitation, recognition of common interests, common identification of an opposing group with which their interests are in conflict. This realisation will unite them for proletarian revolution. The proletariat would overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize the forces of production—the source of power. Property would be communally owned. Now, all members of society would share the same relationship to the forces of production. A classless society would result. Since the history is the history of the class struggle, history would now end.”¹⁰

Conflict Theory of Social Change

According to Conflict theory, every pattern of action, belief and interaction tends to generate an opposite reaction. Thus, this theory highlights the forces which produce instability by using social disorganizations. It sees unequal distribution of power and authority as the fundamental source of conflict in a society. The groups with power

⁹ A discourse between people with two or more view points about a subject not to win the individual argument but to establish the truth with reasoned arguments.

¹⁰Top 5 Theories of social Change, *Your Article Library*, [Online: web] Accessed 20 Spetember 2016, URL: <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/top-5-theories-of-social-change-explained/35124>

wants to maintain the status quo while the desire to change it. This conflict between the two groups leads to various changes in the structure of the society although the nature and depth of the conflict and the resultant change also depends on various other factors.

Every social structure begins as a “thesis” of its current state of existence but its own internal contradictions prompt a challenge to its structure. This challenge is called the “anti-thesis”. The conflict resolves into the “synthesis” of a whole new structure carrying elements of both thesis and anti-thesis. However, this theory fails to explain the concept of social stability.

“Conflict theorists do not believe that societies smoothly evolve to higher level. Instead, they believe that conflicting groups struggle to ensure progress. In addition, conflict within a group frequently helps to revitalize existent norms; or it contributes to the emergence of new norms. In this sense, social conflict is a mechanism for adjustment of norms adequate to new conditions. A flexible society benefits from conflict because such behaviour, by helping to create and modify norms, assures its continuance under changed conditions. Such mechanism for readjustment of norms is hardly available to rigid systems: by suppressing conflict, the latter smother a useful warning signal, thereby maximizing the danger of catastrophic breakdown.” (Coser 1956: 151-157).

The supporters of Conflict theorists believe that every type of change happens due to a conflict. There is no society which can exist without conflict as it a necessary condition for social change, and change is inevitable. The modern conflict theory is highly influenced by the Marxist ideas. It is considered as a branch of economic theory of social change. While Marx talks about economic conflict, Max Weber based his arguments on conflict for power.

“Marx viewed social change as a resolution of conflict over scarce economic resources, whereas Dahrendorf viewed social change as a resolution of conflict over power. Dahrendorf believed that there is constant simultaneous conflict among many segments of society. Wherever men live together and lay foundations of forms of social organisations, there are positions whose occupants have powers of command in certain contexts and in certain positions, and there are other positions whose

occupants are subjected to such commands. The distinction between ‘up’ and ‘down’ or as the English say, ‘them’ and ‘us’ is one of the fundamental experiences of most men in society. This distinction is intimately connected with unequal distribution of power.” (Dahrendorf 1958:170-183)

He says that conflict has two important consequences—it has an integrative function as well as change producing function. (Purohit and Mohan 1976:372-373)

Commenting on conflict theory, Percy S. Cohen writes: “This theory is plausible, but it is not necessarily true. The contention that group conflict is a sufficient condition for social change is obviously false. It is arguable that structured conflict, when it involves a fairly equal balance of forces, actually obstructs change which might otherwise occur. For example, in societies where there are deep divisions between regional, ethnic or racial groups, there may be little possibility of promoting economic development or welfare policies; such ‘ameliorative’ changes require some degree of consensus. The simple point is that conflict may lead to impasse not to change. It should be emphasized that social conflict is often as much the product of social change as the cause. And it is commonly a great obstacle to certain types of change.” (Cohen 1968:183-184)

Technological Theory of Social Change

When a layman talks about the social changes brought about by science, he is usually thinking about the ‘*technology*’¹¹ and its several achievements. Technology is all about creating the material instruments such as machines and their interaction with human world to explore nature.

Many factors are responsible for bringing changes to the society. Among other factors of social change, technology is of prime importance. The saying that, “almost whole of human civilization is the product of technological development” it indicates that every development in the field of technology would subsequently lead to a corresponding change in the social structure.

¹¹ Technology is defined as the application scientific of knowledge for making of instruments and the utilization of natural resources.

Marx has given huge importance to technology in his design of “mode of production” that becomes the prime basis for bringing change in the society. For Marx, ‘mode of production’ and the constituent institutions and relationships of the economic system determined the stage of technological development. This set of relationships is the chief determinant of the social order.

Technological development leads to the creation of new conditions of life which then propels new conditions for adaptation. According to W.F. Ogburn “Technology changes by changing our environment to which we, in turn, adapt. This change is usually in the material environment, and the adjustment we make to the changes often modifies customs and social institutions.” (Ogburn 1947:81)

Our social relations are influenced by the technological advancements. For example, with the rising trend of social networking sites, people are connected through internet. They have time for social networking but not for family. The impact can be seen in positive way as well like more awareness and knowledge hub. In the words of Leslie White, “The technology is the independent variable and the social system the dependent variable. Social systems are therefore determined by systems of technology; as the latter change, so do the former.” It implies that technology affects all areas of life either directly or indirectly.

There are certain social consequences which are the direct result of mechanisation, For example, whole new kind of labour arrangements, replacement of domestic production with industrial production, widening of social contacts and the specialisations in functions etc. The indirect impacts of mechanisation include rise in unemployment and more competition.

In the first form the technological theory is obviously true in one respect and false in others. A bigger technological change will result in some other social change. For example, new manufacturing techniques always affect social relations in the corresponding industry and new techniques of warfare impacts the military organizations. It is very difficult to find out a significant technological change which did not bring any change in society. This, however, does not mean that all types of social changes are direct results of technological change alone. In fact, a widely accepted idea in sociology has been the 'culture-lag' hypothesis, which tries to explain

many features of modern industrial societies-its tensions, conflicts, forms of mental illness, and what you will-in terms of the failure of social organization to keep pace with technological change. There is a good deal wrong with this hypothesis. It assumes that one knows that sort of social relations would be best suited to a particular level of technology; and it probably seeks to explain far too much. But its fundamental germ of truth can scarcely be disputed: very rapid technological changes can occur without a similar degree of change in social structure and other features of culture. (Cohen 1968:179)

In this opinion of Ogburn and Nimkoff, “An important invention need not be limited to only a single social effect. Sometimes it exerts many influences which spread out in different directions like the spokes of a wheel.” (Ogburn and Nimkoff 1964:517)

Technological developments shape the attitudes and beliefs of the people. Moreover, traditions in a social system are also change with the introduction of new technological advancements. The impact of technological development can be seen in social customs as well.

Technology makes the individual rational and objective in his approach toward things and events. It develops pragmatic outlook. It is a result of technological advancement that today man has become more disciplined in his work. The development of communication and transportation has brought characteristic changes in social structure. It has only become possible due to science and technology.

The development of rapid means of transport has resulted in greater mobility of population in comparison to 19th or 20th century. The communication and transport facilities save time. “Shrinking space and time through the speed and low cost of electronic communication and air travel has developed a new phenomenon called ‘globalisation’.”¹²

The gist of this theory can be understood in the words of Cohen, “Any technological change which is great enough will produce some other social change as a consequence”. (Cohen 1968:179).

¹² The worldwide movement toward economic, financial, trade and communication integration. It is the opening of local and nationalistic perspectives to a broader outlook of an interdependent world.

For example, the invention of geared wheel has resulted in numerous new inventions which enormously affected social relations. Computers are now become the essential part of our lives. Without cell phones and internet life seems to be incomplete. From booking of railway tickets to the launch of a rocket everything is technologically controlled. Technology improves efficiency as well as quality of work.

The idea of '*global village*'¹³ reflects that the world is moving toward more intrinsic culture. Although, technology is a significant driver of change but it does not imply that only technology is responsible for all sorts of social developments. Apart from technology, there are several other factors simultaneously working for setting the stage of social change. For example, a democratic society can be established without significant use of technology. Moreover, it is culture who directs the use of technology. "Man may be master as well as the slave of the machine. Man is a critic as well as a creature of circumstances".

"The causes of social change are diverse, and the processes of change can be identified as either short-term trends or long-term developments. Change can be either cyclic or one-directional. The mechanisms of social change can be varied and interconnected. Several mechanisms may be combined in one explanatory model of social change. For example, innovation by business might be stimulated by competition and by government regulation. To the degree that change processes are regular and interconnected, social change itself is structured."¹⁴

All the theories of Social change explain the process and reasons for social change in their own different ways. But my analysis is that we cannot consider just one theory as most suited to explain the change in society of Uzbekistan. Different factors are responsible to bring changes in a society. As far as Uzbekistan is concerned, there have been religious, technological, economic and educational factors which played prominent roles in transforming the society. There always have been unique circumstances that help in explaining a specific course of social change.

"For Uzbekistan, the coming of Persians was beginning of human life as they were the first who inhabited the region near Amu Darya. In the 7th century Arabs came to

¹³ The world considered as a single community linked by telecommunications.

¹⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Social Change" [Online: web] Accessed 29 September 2016, URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-change/Conclusion>

region and brought Islam. Islam is still the dominant religion and culture in Central Asian states. The social structure of the country revolves around Islamic way of life. The major change that came to the country was under Russian rule and then under the Soviet government. Soviet government for the first time forcefully ban the Islamic practices or other religious practices in public. The society in Uzbekistan then developed a different style of living.” (Library of Congress, Country Profile, Uzbekistan 2007: 1-2)

The Soviet government introduced industries and started using human beings as machines for more and more production. But this industrialisation did not improve the people’s living standards. They had no moral and spiritual strength. The only source of moral strength i.e. religion was taken away from them. Under this situation they were looking for some sort of spiritual peace which came from Islam again when Uzbek soldiers were sent to Afghanistan in 1979. This provided an opportunity for the revival of Islam in Uzbekistan.

Moreover, people of Central Asia were not satisfied with the way of life that the Soviets introduced. The media was biased towards Soviet regime. The report of media exaggerated the socio economic development made by the Soviet government. People of Central Asia could not co-relate themselves with this situation. The society in Uzbekistan was under developed. Their economic condition deteriorated and they did not even have any spiritual outlet to drain their pressure. Under such circumstances people went for revival of their old culture and tradition after disintegration. To explain the unparalleled trajectory of social change in Uzbekistan, the next chapters will deal with the circumstances in the past that prompted the society to change in a certain way. The research will also deal with the present social structure in Uzbekistan with focus on women, environment, economy, human rights etc. To understand the future course of social progress, it is necessary to understand what types of social challenges are present in a state. In this research an attempt is made to understand the challenges which the society is facing in Uzbekistan and how they can reduce the pace of social development.

Review of the Literature

Review of literature is the literature studied or reviewed in the research. It helps in finding out answers to many questions regarding the research work. It also helps in both analytical and descriptive review of the study. The review of literature is divided in four themes. First: Conceptualising Social change, Second: Social changes in Uzbekistan during Soviet period, Third: Social changes in Uzbekistan after 1991, Fourth: Present challenges to society in Uzbekistan.

Theories of Social Change

Different authors define social change in a narrower or a broader manner. According to R. H. Lauer “Social change is an inclusive concept that refers to alterations in social phenomena at various levels of human life from the individual to the global.” He considers any alterations at any level of social life to be properly regarded as social change. Culture, religion and economy play important roles in bringing changes to the social system. Social change in the broadest sense is any change in social relations. But the question here is what is that brings the Social change. A variety of reasons have been offered throughout history to explain why social change occurs. There are various theories which deal with the concept of social change like Evolutionary theory, cyclical theory, Conflict theory, Technological theory, Economic theory of social change etc.

Herbert Spencer (1890) is known as forerunner of evolutionary thought in sociology. The basic assumption of this theory is that change is inevitable and is the characteristic feature of human society. The present observed condition of the society is presumed to be the result of change in the past. It was assumed that the change is basically the result of the operation of forces within the society or culture. In the theories of evolution there exists a belief of infinite improvement in the next stage over the preceding one. There are two types of evolutionary theories- uni-linear and multi-linear.

Uni-linear theory postulates the straight line, ordered or progressive nature of social change. It states that change always proceeds toward a predestined goal in a uni-linear fashion without repetition in stages. It argues that society gradually moves to an even higher state of civilisation which advances in linear fashion and in the direction of

improvement. Briefly, linear hypothesis states that all aspects of society change continually in a certain direction, never faltering, never repeating themselves. Theories of Saint-Simon, Comte, Morgan, Marx and Engels, and many other anthropologists and sociologists come under the category of uni-linear theories of social evolution because they are based on the assumption that each society does, indeed must, pass through a fixed and limited numbers of stages in a given sequence.

Universal theory of evolution states that every society does not necessarily go through the same fixed stages of development. It argues, rather, that the culture of mankind, taken as a whole, has followed a definite line of evolution. Spencer's views can be categorised under this perspective who said that mankind had progressed from small groups to large and from simple to compound and in more general terms, from homogenous to the heterogeneous. The anthropologist Leslie White has been a leading exponent of this conception.

Multi-linear theory of evolution is considered to be more realistic than the other universal and uni-linear theories of evolution. Those who share this perspective, such as Julian Steward (1960), attempt to explain neither the straight-line evolution of each society, nor the progress of mankind as a whole, but rather concentrate on much more limited sequences of development. It attempts to account for diversity. This theory holds that change can occur in several ways and that it does not inevitably lead in the same direction. Theorists of this persuasion recognise that human culture has evolved along a number of lines. It does identify some social trends as merely universal: the progression from smaller to larger, simpler to more complex, rural to urban, and low technology to higher technology but it recognises that these can come about in various ways and with distinct consequences. This theory is related to what is known as **episodic approach**, which stresses the importance of accidents and unique historical, social and environmental circumstances that help to explain a particular course of social change.

Oswald Spengler (*Decline of the West*, 1918) and Arnold J. Toynbee (*A Study of History*, 1956) argued that societies and civilisations change according to cycles of rise, decline and fall just as individual persons born, mature, grow old and die,

According to German thinker Spengler, every society has a predetermined life cycle—birth, growth, maturity and decline. Society, after passing through all these stages of life cycle, returns to the original stage and thus the cycle begins again. Thus, a society can grow and survive if it can constructively respond to the challenges. Cyclical theory of change or sometimes called ‘rise and fall’ theory presumes that social phenomena of whatever sort recur again and again, exactly as they were before in a cyclical fashion.

Vilfredo Pareto’s (1963) theory of ‘Circulation of Elites’ is also essentially of this variety. According to this theory, major social change in society occurs when one elite replaces another, a process Pareto calls it ‘circulation of elites’. All elites tend to become decadent in the course of time. They ‘decay in quality’ and lose their ‘vigour’.

Marx says that the economic infrastructures of society are prime movers of social change. It is called economic theory of social change. For Marx, society consists of two structures—‘infra-structure’ and ‘super-structure’. The ‘infra-structure’ consists of the ‘forces of production’ and ‘relations of production’. According to Marx, productive forces constitute ‘means of production’ (natural resources, land, labour, raw material, machines, tools and other instruments of production) and ‘mode of production’ (techniques of production, mental and moral habits of human beings) both and their level of development determines the social relation of production, i.e., production relations. These production relations (class relations) constitute the economic structure of society—the totality of production relations. Thus, the socio-economic structure of society is basically determined by the state of productive forces. For Marx, the contradiction between the constantly changing and developing ‘productive forces’ and the stable ‘production relations’ is responsible for all social changes.

Marx believed that the class struggle was the driving force of social change. For him it was the ‘motor of history’. He states that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (Communist Manifesto, 1848). Marx states that change is inherent in the matter through the contradiction of forces. Production system is the lever of all social changes and it is dynamic. Man’s material necessities are the root of his productive effort which in its turn is the basis of all other forms of

his life. Marx believed that change occurs through contradiction of forces and this is present throughout the history in some or the other form.

Marx is also considered as father of social conflict theory. Conflict theorists contend that institutions and practices continue because powerful groups have the ability to maintain the status quo. Change has a crucial significance, since it is needed to correct social injustices and inequalities. Conflict theorists do not believe that societies smoothly evolve to higher level. Instead, they believe that conflicting groups struggle to ensure progress (Coser, 1956). Conflict theorists assert that conflict is a necessary condition for change. It must be the cause of change. There is no society, changing or unchanging, which does not have conflict of some kind or another. Thus, conflict is associated with all types of social change in some way or other. The modern Conflict theory is heavily influenced by the ideas of Karl Marx. Conflict would ultimately transform society. While Marx emphasised economic conflict, Max Weber based his arguments on conflict about power. Ralf Dahrendorf (1959), although critical of Marxist notions of class, tried to reconcile the contrast between the functionalist and conflict approaches of society.

W.F. Ogburn, in his article, 'How Technology Changes Society' (1947), writes: "Technology changes by changing our environment to which we, in turn, adapt. This change is usually in the material environment, and the adjustment we make to the changes often modifies customs and social institutions." Anthropologist Leslie White (Science and Culture, 1949) held that "technology, particularly the amount of energy harnessed and the way in which it is used, determines the forms and content of culture and society". Technology affects directly and indirectly both.

The 'technology' refers to the application of knowledge to the making of tools and the utilisation of natural resources (Schaefer and Lamm, 1992). Social change takes place due to the working of many factors. Technology is not only one of them but an important factor of social change. When it is said that almost whole of human civilisation is the product of technological development, it only means that any change in technology would initiate a corresponding change in the arrangement of social relationships. It is believed that Marx has attached great importance to technology in his scheme of mode of production, which forms the main basis for the

change in society. For Marx, the stage of technological development determines the mode of production and the relationships and the institutions that constitute the economic system. This set of relationships is in turn the chief determinant of the whole social order. Technological development creates new conditions of life which forces new conditions in adaptation.

All the theories of Social change explain the process and reasons for social change in their own different ways. But my analysis is that the theory most suited for the social change in Uzbekistan is Multi-linear theory of evolution, which says that change can occur in several ways and it does not always lead to the same direction. It uses episodic approach, and believes in unique circumstances that help in explaining a particular course of social change.

Social History of Uzbekistan

Prior to Russian conquest, the culture and political life of people of Central Asia did not differ greatly from the settled and nomadic peoples in other parts of Muslim world. With change in the imperial policy of Tsarist Russia at the end of 19th century some changes were started in social system as well as in education system. Soviet govt. tried to change the culture of people in Central Asia in the name of modernisation. There began the Russification of Central Asia. Thus, Soviet brought radical changes in all spheres of socio-cultural life of people in the region. The Soviets claimed to have improved material conditions of the people through these coercive changes. The Russian Bolsheviks completely dominated the political and military power and made the people of Central Asia highly dependent on Russia both economically and technologically. There was systemic liquidation of traditional institutions and culture and building of new Soviet society to replace the old one. They tried to completely change the native identity of the people in Central Asia. The Soviet govt. also tried to culturally isolate people of Central Asia from their historic past as well as from neighbouring countries. Destruction of religious belief, values, and Islamic institutions were basic part of Soviet strategy of modernisation. Family system was changed from two sections of men and women to one single house. There was introduction of Russian type Houses, interiors decoration, more rooms with glazed windows, electricity and better cooking facilities. The difference between

nomads and sedentary was reduced. Soviet introduced women education, right to property to women in Central Asia and also women started working in kolkhozes, entered in arts and other professions. Nuclear family replaced the traditional joint family system. Although father remained the traditional head of the family but he considered opinion of children in family matters. Women got more freedom in Soviet era and Boys and girls were treated as equals. Marriages now became personal affair of young people. But still only man from central Asia can marry a Russian girl and opposite to it was rare. During Soviet time a girl needed not to change her religion after marriage as happened before. The Kalym system was ended by Soviet govt. but in remain there in disguise in the form of expensive gifts. The relation between husband and wife too became less formal.

Social Change in Uzbekistan in the Post-Soviet Period

Even after decades of Soviet rule, Uzbekistan after getting independence remained a patriarchal or male dominated society, though mother runs the household. Although women make up nearly half of the workforce but they hold only 10 % seats in the parliament, and 18% of administrative and management positions according to UN figures. Women run the households and traditionally control the family budgets. When guests are present they are expected to cloister themselves from view. Though Uzbekistan is a secular state but revival of Islam has brought some social problems regarding status of women in society. The women in the region who enjoyed equal status and rights during Soviet rule are now being forced to conform the fundamentalist social mores. The fundamentalist are even demanding the withdrawal of girls from the school.

In public, women are expected to cover their bodies completely. Full veiling is uncommon, though it is occasionally practiced in the Ferghana Valley. Women often view this as an expression of their faith and culture rather than as an oppressive measure. As marriage is the basic unit of society, it is imperative for everyone to marry. Marriages are still arranged between families but in big cities it is the bride and groom's choice. Polygamy is illegal and rare but not unknown. The territory of Uzbekistan has been a centre of Islam in the region for a thousand years, but under the Soviet Union the religion was heavily controlled: mosques were closed and Muslim education was banned. Beginning in 1988, Uzbeks have revived Islam, particularly in

the Ferghana Valley, where mosques have been renovated. During Soviet period religion was suppressed, but with the disintegration of USSR people again started their religious practices. The revival of Islamic culture in the region is due to jihadist Afghan and religious broadcasts from Iran, which gained prominence with the Gorbachev's Economic and political reform policies.

Challenges to Social Change in Uzbekistan

Centuries-old customs and traditions of the Uzbek people are carefully maintained and passed on from generation to generation. Uzbek traditions are based on hospitality, respect for elders and collectivism. But there are some challenges which the society in Uzbekistan is facing today. There are a number of challenges which Uzbekistan faces and among them are religious extremism, ethnic conflicts, Human rights violations, discrimination against women, child marriage, polygamy etc. which were prevalent in pre Soviet Central Asian society. Although Islam has played an important role in controlling corruption but the revival of Islam in the region can also become the reason of Islamic fundamentalism in future in some regions like Ferghana valley.

Thus, social challenges are becoming hindrances in the path of social development of Uzbekistan. The Govt is now promoting NGOs for development of women and to protect their rights. In the field of education some modern schools and Universities are opened based on Western system. In 2002, Westminster International University has been established in Tashkent to promote higher education and to train youth for international diplomacy. On one side Uzbekistan is progressing in terms of economy and education standard and on the other side moving backward when it comes to Islamic fundamentalism and standard of women in society. Despite majority of Muslims in the country constitution of Uzbekistan provides for a secular state. The scholars have tried to find the social issues in the society of Uzbekistan. But the literature lacks how society and culture have changed in Uzbekistan. The research will provide some suggestions as how and what should be the steps required by govt. and society for the progress of Uzbekistan's society. Therefore, it is necessary to reevaluate the historical background to find proper causes and challenges in Uzbekistan hindering the progress of society, and also find out the best solutions to current social problems.

Definition, Rationale and Scope of Study

Social change in Uzbekistan is the study related to its social practices and social structures and to find out the changes and reasons for those changes in the society of the country. In order to understand the social structure and social phenomena in Uzbekistan, it is essential to know the history and culture in Uzbekistan. This could be facilitated when research addresses questions like what kind of culture was prevalent in Uzbekistan, who were the holders of power during pre Soviet and Soviet times, what was the impact of culture, economy, religion on the present culture and society etc. The time period 1991-2015 is taken for research has significance as in 1991 Uzbekistan became an independent nation state.

The rationale of the proposed study is to look out how in Uzbekistan, society fought with the challenges which came after Sovietisation and after disintegration of USSR, to find out whether the changes were progressive or conservative. Further study the highlights the role of religion and education process in bringing change to the society.

The scope of the study is to evaluate the past and present social structure of Uzbekistan and also to find out the reason why society has taken the present direction of social change. The study deals with various aspects of society like family, religion, culture, economy, education, government and civil society. On the basis of evaluation of the existing social structure the study tries to conclude about the process of social change in Uzbekistan. The study also makes an attempt to investigate the hurdles and challenges which Uzbekistan is facing in the process of social development.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the research is to study the society and culture of Uzbekistan during different periods, which the country had during different regimes and their impact on the present social structure. This can be stated in the form of following specific objectives:

- To study the social structure of Uzbekistan.

- To analyse the historical social systems and structures of the society in Uzbekistan.

- To examine the role of religion, family structure, place of women in society, education system, government etc in bringing social changes in Uzbekistan.
- To examine the challenges which Uzbekistan is facing and are becoming hindrances to its social development.
- To analyse the Impact of external influences on Uzbekistan's society.
- To examine the role of govt. in bringing changes to the society.

Research Questions

Following are the research questions which the research scholar has tried to answer in this study

- What is social change?
- What kind of social changes are taking place in Uzbekistan?
- What is the role of history in the social development of the country?
- What kind of social institutions does Uzbekistan possess and how they have changed overtime?
- What are the challenges to the social change in Uzbekistan?
- How status of women in society led to change in the whole social system in Uzbekistan?
- What role did education system play in bringing changes to the social order?
- How religious beliefs impacted the social system?
- How neighbouring countries became the drivers of change in Society of Uzbekistan?
- What are the policies of govt. regarding social institutions?

Hypotheses

Following are the hypotheses of study:

- Traditional society, limited role of women in social process and negativity towards Soviet reforms made the people of Uzbekistan reluctant to bring changes in their social structure.

- Patriarchal society, traditional economy, large family structure, religion are the challenges which hinder the process of social change in Uzbekistan.

Research Methodology

The study is based on historical, analytical and descriptive methods of research. The research focuses on critical analysis of social structure in Uzbekistan. The research analyses and describes the history of social structures in soviet period and how they emerged after breakup of Soviet Union. The research is analytical while examining the social structure and culture it passed through different time periods. The study has both dependent and independent variables. The independent variables are the dominance of rural economy, large family system, religion and education system on which variables like social development of Uzbekistan depend. Both inductive and deductive methods are taken into consideration. The study of historical findings, root causes of social changes and the role of social institutions to make the society stable are examined deductively. The inductive method is used for generalising some findings of the research such as a relatively open society as a solution to Uzbekistan's social problems.

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include Constitution of Uzbekistan, govt. reports, legal documents, speeches, declarations etc. The secondary source materials, which have been used for the study, include books, journals, articles, magazines and internet material available at websites. The relevant information of lectures, seminars have also been included to carry out the research.

Research Plan

Following are the schemes of chapterization of the study:

1. Introduction: Theoretical framework and Review of Literature: The first chapter deals with the outline of the subject. Besides, it also throws light on the

theoretical explanation of the theme, including its significance, aims and objectives of the study, methodology and sources, hypotheses and the scheme of chapters. A brief survey of the relevant literature is also given in this chapter.

2. History of Social structure of Uzbekistan: The second chapter focuses on the social structure of Uzbekistan in a historical perspective. It discusses how social structure was changed by different regimes during different periods of time and how they influenced Uzbekistan's society and social institutions. The pre-Soviet and Soviet social structure and institutions are analysed to know their impact on the Uzbekistan's social system.

3. Social Changes in Uzbekistan in the Post Soviet Period: The third chapter throws light on the social culture and social development in the post-Soviet Uzbekistan. This chapter deals with the changes that came in the society after the disintegration of the former USSR. It discusses the government policies and external influences which have brought changes in the Uzbek society.

4. Challenges to Social Change in Uzbekistan: The fourth chapter analyses the challenges such as religious extremism, political system, traditional values, education system, status of women in society, environmental issues etc. which are major hindrances to the social development in Uzbekistan. The chapter discusses how these socio-cultural and gender related challenges are creating trouble for the process of social development in Uzbekistan.

5. Conclusion: In the end, the researcher tries to sum up the findings of entire research work. It also includes the observation and a conclusion derived from the study.

CHAPTER -2

Social History of Uzbekistan

Social history looks at the lived experiences of the past. It is a view of historical events seen in terms of social trends. It is also called history of the people or history from below. Social history looks for economic, political and cultural trends in a society that determine the course of social change. In this chapter, the focus is on society of Uzbekistan during the Communist regime. Throughout the history, the Central Asian society has experienced changes which challenged the basis of their traditional societies and lifestyles. The most significant ones were brought about by the Bolshevik regime established after the Russian Revolution of 1917, which had a significant impact on Central Asian society. The chapter deals with the impact of Russian regime over people of Uzbekistan under Tsar and under Communist Government, how the arrival of Russians and communism impacted the life style of people, role of religion and education in determining the social order as well as in bringing change in the Central Asian society in general and Uzbekistan in particular. The social history of the region can be divided into two parts. These are- (a) Pre-Soviet Period and (b) Soviet period.

I. Pre-Soviet Social system in Uzbekistan

In order to understand the social development of Uzbekistan, it is essential to understand the roots of the social structure of the country. Uzbekistan's social history before Sovietisation can be studied in two phases, one is pre-Tsarist and other is Tsarist Uzbekistan. Before the arrival of Russians the social and cultural life of the people of Uzbekistan moved around Islamic culture influenced by Turkic and Iranians cultures. Pre-Soviet period can further be divided into pre-Tsarist and Tsarist period.

(i). Pre-Tsarist Uzbekistan

“The very first people that inhabited Central Asia were Iranian Nomads during 1st Century BC. With their settlement in the region, two important cities that developed were Samarkand and Bokhara. The two cities began to develop as centres of government and culture. With the development of trade and commerce which later known as Silk Route trade, Bokhara and Samarqand became very wealthy cities and

at times *Transoxiana*¹ or *mawarannhar*² was one of the most influential and powerful provinces of that times.”³

“The wealth of *Transoxiana* was a constant attraction for invaders from the northern steppes and from China. Numerous intraregional wars were fought between Iranian’s states in the region and the other states in *Transoxiana*, and the Persians and the Chinese were in perpetual conflict over the region. In the same centuries, however, the region also was an important centre of intellectual life and religion. Until the first century after Christ, Zoroastrianism was the dominant religion, but Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Christianity also attracted large number of followers.” (Curtis, Glenn E. 1997: 386)

“In the middle of the 7th century, Arabs first invaded *Transoxiana* through sporadic raids during their conquest of Persia. Arabs brought the new religion Islam which gradually spread in the region. Nevertheless, the destiny of Central Asia as an Islamic region was firmly established by the Arab victory over the Chinese armies in 750 in a battle at the Talas River.”⁴ (Curtis, Glenn E. 1997: 387)

Even after brief Arab rule, Central Asia continued to maintain its Iranian characteristics. It continued to remain the prime centre of culture and trade for centuries, even after adopting the new religion. It had later ruled by various Persian dynasties. Thus, the ethnic composition of Central Asia includes ancient tribes which possessed their own different languages, culture and modes of living.

The 8th and the 9th centuries were the golden age for Central Asia or *Transoxiana* in a true sense. Bokhara, the ancient city of Central Asia, became one of the leading centres of learning art and culture while Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordoba stood its rivals in the development of marvellous culture, architecture, and trade. Some of the greatest historians, geographers and scientists in the history of Islamic culture were natives of this region.

¹ An ancient name used for the portion of Central Asia corresponding approximately with modern day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, southern Kyrgyzstan and South West Kazakhstan. Transoxiana means the land beyond the Oxus River.

² The Central Asian region was named as Mawarannhar after the Arab conquest.

³ Country Profile: Uzbekistan(2007) [Online: web], Accessed on 5 April 2017 URL: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/Uzbekistan-new.pdf>

⁴ Talas River rises from Kyrgyzstan and ends in Kazakhstan before reaching Syr Darya of Uzbekistan. During Battle of Talas River Abbasid dynasty defeated Chinese forces.

By the 10th century the region turned into an important centre of culture in the Muslim world. The independent khanates of Kokand and Khiva and emirates of Bokhara used to dominate the region, which was known as Turkestan (historical name for Uzbekistan) between the 16th and the 19th century. They use Islam as the main source of political legitimisation. The administrative system, land tenure, the taxation system was Perso-Arabic. The judicial system was based on Islamic laws i.e. *Shariyah* and the customary laws i.e. *adat*. This judicial system was headed by a member of religious elite known as Kazi. Kazi enjoyed high social status and economical privileges. Mufti was other religious elite who used to be the exponent of Shariyah law. The rule of native Khans and Emirs was very cruel and exploitative. They exploit poor people of the region due to which there were problems of poverty, diseases and illiteracy. (Badan 2001:22)

The impact of Islamic culture was more profound on settled tribes than the nomadic tribes because of which Uzbeks were more religious, as they were settled tribes. The principle of kinship and consanguinity permeated whole of Central Asian society. Joint family was basic unit of society, which usually consisted of two generations. The authority of head of the family was paramount, which used to regulate matters like marriage, allotment of property and other family duties. Widows had no right in her husband's land and property. (Badan 2001:22-23)

Uzbekistan had feudal political power structure. Hereditary rulers had nominal control and real power lied with provincial government known as beks. They were politically independent and fought continuous wars with their neighbours. The government was cruel and oppressive. People of Central Asia had no right to participate in political processes. The Khans received taxes from general public while the beks were exempted from paying taxes. But beks too offer gifts and other services to Khans. (Badan 2001:31)

Before the coming of the Russians the culture of the people of Central Asia did not differ greatly from that of settled and nomadic people in other parts of Muslim world. (Wheeler 1966:93) Their way of living, festivities, marriage system were more or less similar to the Muslims of other regions. It is because of their common religion.

Economy

Economy of Uzbekistan like other Central Asian countries was dependent of agriculture, craft and trade. They have developed a splendid culture and also influenced the culture of their neighbouring countries. Europe and Asia learnt the art of Cavalry in warfare from Central Asia. The art of silk making was developed in the region. Also the art of making paper was brought from China to Europe through Central Asia (through Fergana of Uzbekistan) which gave rise to the Great Silk Route. The Chinese learnt grape cultivation, growing of alfalfa, the breeding of war horses and glass making from Central Asia. (Kaushik 1970:23-24)

From 16th to mid 19th century the people of Central Asia were ruled by Khans of Uzbek dynasties. The prevailing conditions under Khans were not conducive for further national consolidation as they kept on fighting with each other. It led to low level of economic development. By the end of the 19th century, the sedentary people of the region started to hold property in common. But later started division of family property after death of patriarchal head of the family i.e. father. The low level of development of productive forces, and stagnation in agriculture and crafts also adversely affected the formation of national consolidation. (Kaushik 1970:25)

Thus, the economy was undermined by incessant internecine wars between the Khanates. This led to weakening of the Uzbek rule and gave opportunity to the Tsarist Russian Empire to incorporate Central Asia in the second half of the 19th Century.

Family Structure and Social Life

The family system in Uzbekistan was patriarchal and joint family system was prevalent. Joint family played an important role in socialisation of family members and established close relations. Mothers played an important role in children's socialisation and elders in the family taught social norms and values to their children. (Badan 2001:25)

The continuing influence of tradition and culture was also felt in the upbringing of children. The preference for male children is found everywhere: with a son was linked

the future of the family, its success and prosperity. On the other hand, parents consider marriage the main event in daughter's life and there is considerable pressure for daughters to marry early. Unable to break the vicious circle of discrimination within the family, in the social consciousness of the majority of Central Asian people, women were considered to differ from men in their roles, their potential and abilities. "Women have long hair, but are short on wisdom" an old proverb was reflected in the characteristic of all layers of Central Asia society; according negative qualities to women was the result of not only the general psychology, but also family upbringing. (Tokhtakhodjaeva 1997:164)

As far as marriage system is concerned, both exogamy and endogamy were practised in Central Asia. Most nomadic tribes practised exogamy while sedentary tribes practised endogamy. People of Uzbekistan were sedentary and hence there was endogamy. The marriage ceremony took place outside their village. The marriages were settled between families of same social and economic status. Although there were both monogamy and polygamy but mostly rich people practised polygamy. The reason for this was the *Kalym* system.⁵ Everywhere the amount of *kalym* depended on the wealth and the socio-financial status of the groom. So, the one who could pay higher *kalym* was also able to get more than one wife. (Zanca, Russel, Sahadeo, Jeff 2007:118)

In pre-Tsarist Central Asia, there was dominance of Islam and Bokhara was one of the greatest Islamic centres. Namaz was obligatory and people used to offer Friday weekly services to the mosque. People used to observe Islamic practices according to Quran. *Shariyah* was the basic law. There were some social restrictions on women and they were obliged to put on veils. Women were not allowed to attend school and work outside home. There was also tradition of child marriage in Uzbekistan. (Badan 2001:26)

Like other Muslim countries the main festivals celebrated in Uzbekistan were Id-UI-Fitr and Id-UI-Adha. It is the influence of Iranian culture that Navruz, the Iranian New Year festival was also celebrated in Uzbekistan. The system of education was based on religion. Uzbekistan has always been the centre for religious teachings. Education in pre-Tsarist era was based upon the scholastic pattern. Religious preachers, judges

⁵ Kalym or bride price is the price which the groom pays to the bride to marry her.

and the traditional elite of the older order functioned as teachers in schools. There were *Maqtab*s (primary schools) and *Madrassah*s (seminaries) for training of clergy and religious teachers. (Badan 2001:26-41)

Language and Art

The languages spoken in Pre-Tsarist Russia were mainly of Turkic and Iranian origin. The language of rich Turkic literature was Chaghatian.⁶ This literature flourished during 15th to 17th century. There was not much literature in the region because of low literacy standard. Some literature available in local languages was in poetic form. "People composed and passed from mouth to mouth heroic epics, the characters of which were heroes who fought against oppressors and enslavers, depicted in the image of evil forces." (Skvirsky 1968:316)

"Some epic works of Uzbek folk-lore were 'Kor-oglu' and 'Alpamysh'. The poem 'Alpamysh' which tells of the courage and bravery of the Uzbek warriors survived centuries and became a true monument of the Eastern literature. The flourishing of the fiction reached in the historical epoch under Amir Temur and Temurids. Its popularity is justified by the fact that the works acquire a more secular character, freed from excessive religiousness. During this period a great oriental poet, thinker and politician Alisher Novoi who is considered a classic of Uzbek literature laid foundation of Uzbek language and created imperishable works like Chordewon and Hamsa. These works have been translated in several languages."⁷

There were no fine arts as Islam did not allow representation of human form. Hence, paintings were negligible and sculpture was non-existent. Although music enjoyed some popularity but its development was hampered due to absence of notion. Notwithstanding this, music was more developed in central Asia than Russia. Hence, Bokhara exported Central Asian music to Russia in 1775. Samarkand and Bokhara were main centres for learning where religious literature and Islamic theology were taught to the children. (Badan 2001:47)

The fine arts in Uzbekistan were limited to ornamentation and wood carving. Their artistic creativity can be seen in architecture, ceramics, embroidery and carpet-

⁶ A body of works written in the Turkic literary language of Chaghatai.

⁷ Advantour, "Uzbek Literature" [Online: web] Accessed 12 April 2017, URL: <http://www.advantour.com/uzbekistan/culture/literature.htm>

weaving. Central Asian architecture was very developed and it influenced architecture of neighbouring countries also. For entertainment people there were strolling players.

In Uzbekistan, the *Maskharebaaz* (jester) imitated animals and men. They also play satires on unjust judges, dishonest merchants, mullahs and others. There were puppet shows also. Schuyler writes, "In Central Asia, Mohammedan prudery prohibits the public dancing of women; but as the desire of being amused and of witnessing a graceful spectacle is the same all the world over, here the boys and youths specially trained take the place of the dancing-girls of other countries. These were called *batchas* or dancing boys. People kept them for their amusement." (Schuyler 1966:70)

In 1865, Russian forces conquered the khanates, which were either annexed or made into protectorates. A colonial relationship was established between Uzbekistan and Russia and Tashkent became the administrative centre of Turkestan.

(ii). Uzbekistan under the Tsarist Rule

"In 1865, Russia occupied Tashkent and by 1876, all of Central Asia. In 1876, Russian liquidated the Khanate of Kokand and allowed the Khanate of Khiva and the Emirates of Bokhara to remain as the direct protectorates. The rest of Central Asia was placed under colonial administration. Russia invested in the development of Central Asia's infrastructure, promoted cotton production and encouraged the settlement by Russian colonists in the Central Asian region."(Curtis, Glenn E. 1997: 393)

In the initial phase of Tsarist regime, there was no significant change in the daily life of the people of Central Asia. Russians increased cotton production in the region, but their interference in the indigenous peoples' social and cultural life was negligible. Some new Russian settlements were made next to the established cities of Tashkent and Bokhara. Still the Russians could not mix up with the indigenous people of the region. After coming of Russians some significant social and economic changes took place and a new middle class came up. But the peasants were highly affected due to over emphasis on cotton cultivation. Edible crops were neglected, that resulted in bad health of the people of the region, especially Uzbekistan. Due to greater emphasis on cotton production by Russian authorities, Uzbekistan was converted into cotton factory of Russia. The main goal of Russian empire's policy was to convert the

Central Asian region into a base for raw material which could be supplied to the Russian industry. (Lubin, Curtis 1997:394)

For Russian Empire cotton production was of strategic importance and the regime made no stone unturned to promote the production of cotton. As a result, “from 1889 to 1911 the cotton sown areas in *Turkistan*⁸ increased by seven times. Turkistan played a major role in releasing Russia from dependence on cotton import, and by 1915 the proportion of Uzbek cotton on the Russian market was boosted to almost 70%. On the other hand, areas under cereals and fodder crops shrank dramatically, resulting in the shortage of food in the region. The local industrial structure was dominated by pre-transport treatment of cotton wool. In 1873 there was a single cotton plant and by the beginning of 20th century there were around 350 such cotton plants. Colonial goals totally determined the initiatives to build railways, which were laid with a view to strengthening defence, continuing territorial expansion and deploying troops in revolting areas.”⁹

The Tsarist regime is thus supported by its migration policy that acted as an instrument to expand the presence of Russians in the region and set up a strong social structure. The inflow of Russian peasants was due to the huge potential of the region to produce cotton. The Tsarist administration of Uzbekistan also brought to some fundamental reforms in local education system. The regime opened a number of Russian-Uzbek schools to develop an educated local workforce.

Russian Government started taking interest in education system of the region and introduced Russo-native schools to provide education through Russian language. A group of Traditional intellectuals stood against such changes. They were called khadimists. Another intellectual group of Central Asian people viz. Jadidists, started the reformation of education system and proposed radical reorganisation of old education system. They established ‘new methodology schools’ in early 20th century. These schools provided for the education that combined the achievements of eastern and European teachings with religious and secular training. Along with this traditional

⁸ Uzbekistan is historically a part of Turkistan, lying at heart of Central Asia.

⁹ Samarkand Tour (2010) , [Online: web] Accessed 12 April 2017, URL: http://www.samarkandtour.com/en/the_history_of_uzbekistan/

and classical music of Uzbekistan, applied art and craft also progressed. (Vaidyanath 1969: 52-53)

“The policy of Tsarist regime was inconsistent and confused towards Islam. So, initially the Colonial Government did not interfere in the native’s religious affairs. But in the beginning of the 20th Century, Russian type schools were opened in some areas of Central Asia. These schools were in fact the main force behind the jadidist movement. With the introduction of Russian people in Central Asia the spiritual life was also enriched with the introduction of previously unknown cultural phenomena such as public libraries, museums, newspapers, telegraph, photography, cinema, printing, etc., and the beginning of professional Uzbek theatre and circus.”¹⁰

The Russians increasingly intruded in the internal affairs of the khanates. “By 1900 Jadidism had developed as a political resistance to the Tsar rule, which was the region's first major movement. Until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the modern, secular ideas of Jadidism faced resistance from both the Russians and the Uzbek Khans, who had differing reasons to fear the movement.” (Badan 2001:28)

“After 1900 the khanates continued to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in their internal affairs. However, they ultimately were subservient to the Russian Governor General in Tashkent, who ruled the region in the name of Tsar. The entire colonial administration was under the Ministry of War. The Russian Empire exercised direct control over large tracts of territory in Central Asia, allowing the khanates to rule a large portion of their ancient lands for themselves. In this period, large numbers of Russians, attracted by the climate and the available land, immigrated into Central Asia. After 1900, increased contact with Russian civilization began to have an impact on the lives of Central Asians in the larger population centres where the Russians settled.” (Curtis 1997:395)

In the last decade of the 19th century, the migration of Russians to Central Asia increased manifold. It happened because of the development of railways by the Tsarist regime. “The territory of Uzbekistan was divided into three political groupings: the khanates of Bokhara and Khiva and the Guberniya (Governorate General) of

¹⁰ Samarkand Tour [Online: web] Accessed 12 April 2017, URL: http://www.samarkandtour.com/en/the_history_of_uzbekistan/

Turkestan, the last of which was under direct control of the Ministry of War of Russia. The final decade of the twentieth century found the three regions united under the independent and sovereign Republic of Uzbekistan. The intervening decades were a period of revolution, oppression, massive disruptions, and colonial rule.” (Curtis 1997:395)

II. Uzbekistan under Soviet Rule

During the first revolution of February 1917, the Russian Empire collapsed as the Tsar renounced the throne and a Provisional Government was established in Russia. The Soviets or workers' councils, led by radical socialist factions, initially permitted the Provisional Government to rule, but insisted on a prerogative to influence the government and control various militias. In the October revolution, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, and the workers' Soviets overthrew the Provisional Government in Petrograd and established the Soviet regime in Russia.

Initially the Bolsheviks criticised the Tsarist regime for the policy of Russification of its territories in Central Asia. But over a period of time Soviet regime itself started the same policy in the name of modernization. It is because the native culture of Central Asia did not follow the Soviet ideology. In order to create the so called “National Culture”, they continued their policy of Russification in Central Asia.

Russian Bolsheviks completely dominated the political and military power and made the people of Central Asia highly dependent on Russia both economically and technologically. Destruction of religious belief, values, and Islamic institutions were basic part of Soviet strategy of modernisation. There was systemic liquidation of traditional institutions and culture building of new Soviet society replaced the old one. They tried to completely change the native identity of the people in Central Asia. The Soviet government also tried to culturally isolate people of Central Asia from their historic past as well as from neighbouring countries. (Shahrani 2007:123-1135)

Change in Family Structure

Since the revolution of 1917, the material culture, way of life and family relations in Central Asia had acquired absolutely new features conforming to the improved material and cultural standards of the population. (Skvirsky 1968:385)

Under the Soviet rule, native joint family system was completely destroyed and nuclear family system was introduced. Father remained the traditional head of the family but he also considered his children's opinion in decision making. Earlier the birth of girl child was considered as curse, but under Soviet rule both girls and boys were treated as equals. Thus, Soviet Rule brought gender equality in the region. Earlier marriages were arranged by the patriarchal heads of the families but under Soviet rule marriage became the personal affair of the young people who usually contracted by the mutual agreement. Mixed marriages were also come into practice but in case of inter-marriage with Russians usually husband should be Central Asian. The practice of converting into Islam by a Russian woman after marrying a Muslim was ended under soviet rule. (Badan 2001:33-36)

Russian settlers, who came to Central Asia long back during the period of industrialisation, played an important role in transforming the way of life in the region. The influence of Russian culture in the region with old Russian and Ukrainian population considerably increased following the establishment of Soviet rule. The families of Central Asia acquired cultural habits from Russian and Ukrainian women like cooking and dressing. (Skvirsky 1968:386)

The status of women had improved under Soviet rule as they were made equal contributors in the production sector. Women were allowed to get higher education and they started participating in social productive labour. It created a stable material basis for their independent and equal position in the family. Moreover, in many families, women hold responsible positions in collective farm production. It all happened due to Soviet policies on economic production.

Education System

School education has always been a major agent for the formation and transformation of human behaviour. "The Soviet system of public education together with other social and economic factors has played an important role in bringing the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan to Socialism without entailing the capitalist stage of development." (Skvirsky 1968:280)

Lenin was highly concerned about the education of the people in Central Asia, as he believed that "Soviet society cannot be built in an illiterate country." (Lenin 1920:296)

To bring literacy is one of the prime importance's of soviet regime. Lenin gave a call to youth, both men and women to work for the abolition of illiteracy. So, the Soviet government brought modern education to Central Asia and *Madrassah* and *Maqtab*s were abolished. Boarding schools were established in Central Asia. As religious teachings were prohibited, the impact of modern educational system was huge as the new generation became less religious and their lifestyle was also changed.

In 1929, Cultural Revolution took place in Central Asia when a mass campaign was launched to wipe out illiteracy. In 1930, the Soviet Government decided to introduce compulsory primary education for children. The right to education was ensured by free education in all the schools. The statistical indications suggest that once a technically undeveloped society, Uzbekistan had accepted scientific and technological progress as a major aim of culture and that organised formal education was instrumental in bringing about a cultural revolution. (Badan 2001:41-43)

The teachers training programs were given importance and speeded up with the introduction of compulsory elementary education, then seven year education and the growth of number of secondary schools. (Skvirsky 1968:287)

One of the main goals of Cultural Revolution was radical improvement of public health system. The best thing happened due to Cultural Revolution was emancipation of women. The Soviet Government made laws to provide higher education to the girls.

Before 1930, there were no standard books, but in 1933 the government brought reforms in elementary and middle school textbooks. The shortage of school buildings was tackled by converting mosques into schools. Although there were protests against boys and girls studying together but Soviet authorities not only suppressed such protests but also started programmes for educating parents. Technical schools began to appear in 1920s but the growth of universities was very slow. The soviet authorities funded the Central Asian University in Tashkent n 1920. In 1933, a new university was also established in Samarkand. By 1936, 90 percent literacy was claimed in whole of the Central Asia. (Badan 2001:42-43)

Kaushik writes that “evening schools were opened in all towns in the campaign for the liquidation of illiteracy among adults. There were 31 vocational and technical schools functioning in 1920 imparting education to 5,500 persons.” (Kaushik 1970:176)

Statistical indications (Table1) suggest that “Uzbekistan, once a technically undeveloped society has accepted scientific and technical progress as a major aim of the culture, and that organized, formal education has been fundamentally instrumental in bringing about a cultural revolution. Masses of native Uzbeks and Tajiks in the area have become educated in modern concepts and skills and have risen to important positions in the educational, scientific and political institutions.” (William K. Medlin and William M. Cave 1964, 8(2):166-175)

“Table 1. Higher Education and Graduates in Republics of the Soviet Asian republics

A. Number per 1000 of population having completed secondary and higher education in certain national republics (1959):

Republic	No. for Secondary Education	No. for Higher education
Uzbekistan	234	13
Kazakhstan	239	12
Tadzhikistan	214	10
Turkmenistan	256	13
Azerbaidzhan	261	21

B. Graduates from institutions of higher learning and from secondary specialized schools of semi-professional training (as on 1957):

Nationality	Graduates from Higher Institutions	Graduates from Special High Schools
Uzbek	32,800	34,000
Kazakh	26,300	29,200
Azerbaidzhanian	37,600	38,500
Kirgiz	6,900	7,200
Tadzhik	7,600	9,900
Turkmen	7,000	7,600

C. Enrolments in institutions of higher learning at the beginning of 1958-59 school years:

Nationality	Students Enrolled
Uzbek	28,900
Kazakh	19,700
Azerbaijan	18,300
Kirgiz	5,800
Tadzhik	6,700
Turkmen	5,700

D. Development of Education and professional training in Uzbekistan in recent decades (total population about 8 million)

Scientists and degree holders	1950	1956
1) Scientists(researchers and teachers; includes non-natives)	4,541	6,424
a) In research institutions	1,586	1,936
b) In educational institutions	2,880	4,375
c) In administrative and industrial enterprises	75	113
2) Candidates of Science	1,198	2,100
3) Doctors of Science	159	183

E. Specialists Graduated in Uzbek Higher Schools

Fields	1940	1941-45	1946-50	1951-55	1956*
1) Heavy industry, transportation-communication	487	1,626	2,372	4,659	1,328
2) Agriculture	408	657	1,427	3,992	966
3) Economics	266	709	1,689	2,336	697
4) Law	89	430	1,086	1,774	371
5) Education (incl. Univ.)	1,691	4,662	9,064	24,184	5,268

*About 20% by correspondence”

Source: For all the above Charts, Medlin and Cave (1964) ,“Social Change and Education in Developing Areas: Uzbekistan”, *Comparative Politics Review*, 8(2): 166-175, URL: <http://www.jstore.org/stable/1186435>, Accessed 11 April 2017.

Change in Religious Affairs

The colonial government did not interfere in the native’s religious affairs as Tsarist regime’s policy towards Islam was not clear. During the first 100 years of the Russian connection with Central Asia, there was hardly any question of projecting Russian culture towards the Muslim people of the region. (Wheeler 1966:93)

Till late 1920s, Bolsheviks allowed Muslim institutions to operate. The Waqf land was with the religious institutions and the practice of Islam in accordance with Koranic precepts was never been banned. (Badan 2001:36)

In Uzbekistan the practice of entertaining men and women in different rooms was very common before Sovietisation. It was changed under Soviet rule and all guests whether man or women were started sitting together. The kalym system (bride price) was also abolished but with little success because people started offering expensive gifts instead of kalym. The relation of husband wife also became less formal than earlier. After Sovietisation there were more mixed marriages between people of various Central Asian nationalities –Uzbeks and Tajiks, Kyrghyz and Kazakhs and also between these peoples and Russians, Koreans and other nations. These facts irrefutably prove that the one time national aloofness and religious and other prejudices are being gradually eliminated. Central Asians and Ukrainian mixed well and exchanged each others’ cultural habits like way of cooking, dressing and so forth. (Skvirsky 1968:390-391)

The Soviet ideology was anti-religious. They left no stone unturned to suppress religious practices. By 1942, the four Muslim Spiritual Directorates were brought under close supervision of the CARC (Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults) attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR. (Wheeler 1966:97)

Although the Soviet authorities have never concealed their hostility towards Islam both as a religion and as a way of life, their attacks on it have varied considerably since the revolution. In 1920s the policies related to religion were less suppressive, but by 1940s the religious practices were almost forbidden.

The pilgrimage of Mecca and Medina were banned. Soviet government also banned five time prayers. The skipping of work for Namaz was considered as economic sabotage and involved serious retribution, thus the practice of Namaz disappeared gradually. Even the Friday prayer was abolished by declaring Friday working day. Hence, Muslims could only pray before and after sunset. However, unemployed men and women could offer five time prayers. Soviets also exercised numerous methods to curd Ramadan fasting. Their fastening was tested by offering cigarettes or food. Those who observed were expelled from work. It was made clear by the Soviet party that adherence to Muslim practices was not the way to advancement in Soviet order. (Bacon E. 1996:174)

After Sovietisation the practice of religious slaughtering on Id-Ul-Adha was observed secretly. *Zakat* (charity) was suppressed by the Tsars in 19th century. And later, Muslims were too impoverished to keep this practice alive. Ultimately, the five pillars of Islam viz. fast (roza), prayer (namaz), pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj), charity (zakat), and Islamic faith were weekend during the soviet rule. (Badan 2001:40)

Changes in Status of Women

“Since the beginning of the Soviet period, Soviet leaders have been committed to the ideals of women liberation in all regions of their country- to the ideal of placing women on an equal footing with men in all aspects of economic, social and political life, while simultaneously providing them with full moral and material support for fulfilling their role as mothers. Yet in different areas this aim was approached under very different conditions for different reasons, and in very different ways.” (Lubin 1981: 182)

“1927, the Soviet Government launched what it termed the *hujum*, or offensive, against all traditional, patriarchal social practices deemed oppressive to women, including the marriage of underage girls, bride price, and the most visible symbol of this oppression, the veil. Though some women seized the opportunity to be integrated into public life, others resumed wearing their veils almost as quickly as they cast them off. Male resistance to unveiling was both extensive and violent, resulting in the death or maiming of many women throughout the country. At the same time the Soviet government recommenced its brutal campaign to suppress Islam, viewed by Moscow

as one of the major obstacles to the transformation of women's social roles and as a threat to Soviet political primacy in the region.”¹¹

Soviet Government introduced education and skills for involving women in the production process. Poverty was rampant in Uzbekistan and the battle against poverty denied women the opportunity for self-development; women did not have the time for reading nor the energy to look after themselves. Moreover, the traditionally Central Asian pursuit of conspicuous consumption was an additional factor exhausting women; they, and their families must not be fallen behind others in the quality of their home decor, their clothes and especially in the celebration of family occasions, on which all their savings, collected over years of work, were spent. (Tokhtakhodjaeva 1997:149-165)

In the absence of real social institutions, stagnation and hierarchy reduced the people to replicating the habitual old Muslim norms in their conduct and way of life. While these placed tremendous burdens on working women, those who rejected such norms were doomed to isolation.

The Soviet government introduced equal opportunities for education for both boys and girls on modern lines. Although co-education was resisted by local population but it was maintained by Soviet government. The fact is that women have always remained the most conservative, religious and tradition-bound components of every society. They were considered to be the main determinants not only of the size, but of the values and ideas of the next generation. Soviet policies achieved partial success in truly changing the position of women position. It showed the importance of women in determining the future of the region.

Women of Central Asia could be considered to be playing an enormous in shaping some of the most critical challenges confronted by the Soviet leadership. As far as politics is concerned, before arrival of Soviet regime, the native women had no opportunity to join politics, but Soviet regime provided them the opportunity.

“According to 1959 census, the number of women workers engaged in education, scientific work, art and public health exceeds that of men. There were 157 women

¹¹ Background: Women and Uzbek Nationhood, [Online; web] Accessed 27 March 2017, URL: <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uzbekistan/Uzbek0701-01.htm>

deputies in Supreme Soviets of the USSR and the Uzbek SSR, and more than 30,000 were deputies in other local Soviets. The President of the Republic was also a woman (Yadgar Nasriddinova).” (Kaushik 1970:250)

Thus, the education policy of Soviet government provided equality to women. Their participation in economic and political activities proved significant in raising their status in family and society.

It is analysed that the ideology behind the encouragement of women's liberation in the Central Asian republics has some economic aspect. If women indulge in economic activities and in social system, they would have little domestic concerns. It also promotes smaller family system. The increase in economic independence of women and lesser domestic concerns was the way of achieving the main ideological goal of transforming ideas and values. The indulgence of population in economic activities would leave them with less focus on tradition and religion and the resulting emotional vacuum will then be filled by the loyalty toward the Soviet rule.

On the other hand, emergence of Central Asian women from seclusion under sovietisation in the 1920s and their induction into the production process imposed additional responsibilities on them. In response and in the name of preserving the family as a basic social unit, priority should have been given to addressing the problems created by the qualitative changes taking place in family relationships. But while the state took the multi-faceted socio-economic development of society upon itself, it disassociated itself from the solution of domestic problems and thus a double burden lay on the shoulders of millions of women - from kolkhoz (collective farm) workers to professors. (Tokhtakhodjaeva 1997:149)

Marriage System

Under Soviet Government the marriage ceremonies were performed by registry in the state registration office. Soviet government did not allow for the traditional wedding process performed by the *Mullahs*.¹² Secretly, mullahs were working during Soviet government, but they lived under perpetual fear of arrest. Beside this the rituals of births, wedding and burial also lost their socio-cultural character. The religious festivals also lost their significance as people were forced to celebrate in closed

¹² Muslim priest who perform wedding rituals.

circles. Nevertheless, people of Central Asia have retained their Islamic culture till the present times. The Jadids acted in alliance with Soviet authorities to secularise Islam till 1930 when they were themselves dissolved by the Russians. (Badan 2001:40)

While Sovietisation brought civil laws, civil society in the Soviet Union and especially in Central Asia was a fiction, largely because these written laws were always poorly implemented. Denied protection by the statute law, people had to fall back on traditional norms. Thus, those who reject the family, be it through divorce or through remaining unmarried, are regarded extremely negatively by contemporary Uzbek society. The condemnation of the single has in turn led to an unspoken acceptance of polygamy, which is found in a variety of forms. Although, the practice was banned by law, but not a single offender had been punished for it. (Tokhtakhodjaeva 1997:163)

The most widespread form of polygamy, more commonly found in the rural areas, is where a man, officially married to one wife, enters into practical married relations with another. The second wife usually lives in the same village or city, even though in a different place. The man differs from an ordinary adulterer in that he takes responsibility for the children from both marriages, providing equitable maintenance to the wives and support for the children. Such marriages, especially the second marriage, are solemnised through a Muslim ceremony. Although family law lawyers found themselves coming up against questions linked with the acknowledgement of paternity, the division of inheritance, etc., since polygamy was a taboo topic, this question was never discussed within the framework of the public media. Even discussion about it in private conversation is problematic; among women brought up as Muslims there is something of a ban on talking about certain topics with outsiders. (Tokhtakhodjaeva 1997: 162-163)

Changes in Political and Cultural Life

The Soviet Government had always claimed that by making coercive changes in political and cultural life of the people in Central Asia they had improved material conditions. Lenin and the Communist Party adopted the policy of democratic centralism for building new Soviet Society and culture to replace the old one. The native people had little say in setting the goals and devising the means for the

modernization and development of their own culture and society. The Soviet Government had brought major changes in all aspects of society.

Family is the fundamental unit of a society. Thus, in order to bring change in social structure, the first attack was done on family system. Since the October Revolution of 1917, the material culture and the way of life and family relations in Central Asia have undergone a drastic series of change. The introduction of Russian architecture in Central Asia affected the indigenous architecture. People of Central Asia then started to build new types of houses which are very different from the old ones. The old practice of dividing the houses into two sections— one for males and other for females was abolished and by 1930 there were very few houses left in that structure. (Skvirsky 1968:386)

Before arrival of Russians very little furniture was used but after Russification of the region, people started using beds and wooden furniture as well. In towns and villages Russian type houses started coming up each with a number of rooms, glazed windows, improved cooking facilities and even electricity.¹³ But the interior decoration of the houses was still based traditional lines. With the improvement in the living conditions of the people, they started decorating their houses with carpets, embroidery etc. Earlier only rich afford such decoration. The introduction of collective farming brought more uniformity into housing in Central Asia. (Skvirsky 1968:386-387)

The nomadic life was suppressed with the introduction of Collective farming. Thus, the difference in dressing pattern of nomadic and sedentary was significantly reduced. In order to keep pace with the growing urban culture, the natives try to develop common features for raising cultural standards. Within the houses they preserved national forms of dress. The electrification of cities and collective farm-villages has greatly facilitated house-keeping. Sanitation and house hygiene have improved significantly. (Badan 2001:34)

Prior to Sovietisation widow had no right on her husband's property and land. But Soviet Government tried to bring gender equality and women were given equal rights as men. Soviet Government provided education opportunities to the girls. Even

¹³ Russians brought modern facilities to Central Asia. Cooking gas and electricity were part of Russia's policy in order to improve material conditions in the region.

women were allowed to work in *Kolkhozes*¹⁴ and *Sovkhozes*¹⁵ while some women entered in arts and other professional activities. Women started unveiling themselves in public. There was a radical change from traditional attitudes of central Asian people

Literature and Arts

Language plays an important role in reflecting some particular features of the people who speak it. These features change with change in cultural values. Before introduction of Russians, Arabic alphabet was used in writing in Central Asia. But when Soviet came to power, he focussed on the formation harmonious multi-nation state by introducing national language and culture.

A modified and improved Arabic alphabet was adopted by Uzbek in 1923. The Soviet government wanted to divert the Muslims from Koran and other Islamic literature. But Arabic script was not desirable for this as it established a direct link with Islam as Koran is written in Arabic. Although, communists tried to raise the level of literacy but Arabic was not desirable for them. So, abandonment of Arabic was a meant to divert people form Quran and other religious teachings. (Badan 2001:44)

The Soviet Government was aimed at emphasizing the differences rather than similarities among nationalities. So, they focussed on creating a distinct language in order to reduce the possibility of their ganging up against the Soviet rule. The first step taken in this direction was adoption of a unified Latin alphabet to replace Arabic for writing of all central Asian languages. The change of local language was completed by 1930. But in 1940, this was again replaced by a series of modified Cyrillic alphabets. The authorities have had always made clear that Russian should be regarded as a superior language. The adoption of the Russian script by most of the languages meant deepening the process of native culture. It was an attempt to secure hold on far flung regions through common language. The literature in Uzbekistan was not much developed due to low literacy rate. Some literature which existed was translated from Arabic and Persian religious works. The Soviet Government was interested in creating ‘national literature’ written in national languages which has been officially apportioned and systematized. These works were to be national in form and socialist

¹⁴ Kolkhozes were Collective farms in Soviet times.

¹⁵ Sovkhozes were state owned farms of the USSR paying wages to t0 workers.

in content in order to conform to the literary criteria laid down by the soviet government. (Wheeler 1996:104-107)

The literature in Central Asia developed under the ideological struggle between the workers and the peasants, and the bourgeois national writers. The first Uzbek poet and playwright Hamaz Niyazi, started writing serving the Red Army and fighting for the establishment and consolidation of Soviet rule in Central Asia. (Skivsky 1968:323-324)

In the Soviet years the epic tales of Central Asia like the Manas had been put down in writing and published. Also, large funds were allocated for the preservation of historical monuments. (Badan 2001:45-46)

As far as fine arts are concerned, there was barely any fine art before arrival of Russians because Islam prohibits the representation of human form. Hence, paintings and sculptures were non-existent. Music was held in high esteem but its development was hampered by the absence of notation. After the introduction of Soviet rule, fine arts were created and theatres were introduced. All these developments took place under sharp class struggle.

“Soviet artistic regimentation, therefore, has consisted mainly in the introduction and development of new arts regulated by the principles of ‘socialist regime. Artists were suddenly required to produce painting and sculpture, which were not only new to them as forms of expression but were to act as vehicles for entirely new ideas.” (Wheeler 1966:109)

Therefore, it was not surprising that their artistic works lack spontaneity and genuine character. On the other hand the creative arts found expression in architecture, carpet weaving, ceramic and embroidery.

Thus, after a detailed study of the society in Central Asia in general and Uzbekistan in particular, we found that the change in society of Uzbekistan was not from inside but was imposed from outside. This is the reason why after the collapse of USSR in 1991, the old values and belief are being revived in Uzbekistan. The native people are strongly inclined to adopt Islam as their way of life in Post Soviet central Asia but it does not mean that Central Asia is falling prey to Islamic fundamentalism. It is

peoples' willingness to reassert their Islamic identity which was taken off by the Soviet regime. A level of democratic space and secularism is there in Uzbekistan which is necessary to save it from Islamic fundamentalism. Though there are some traditional practices moving the state in a backward direction like polygamy, preference to male child, limited role of women in economy, politics and society etc.

Despite these very real problems, the family was not appeared on the social agenda, and the situation was worsened by preoccupation with the economic crisis. The Soviet state failed to provide equal opportunities for growth and self-realisation of the individual, both in society and in the family and was unable to do so for the reason that this necessity must formulate the social agenda regarding women.

Professor MacIver made a distinction between culture and civilisation as “our culture is what we are and our civilization is what we use”. Russians were not able to distinguish between culture and civilization. But on the basis of above distinction it can be concluded that although the use of Soviet civilization is now widespread in Muslim Central Asia and firmly established there, the adoption of Russian culture is still limited and superficial.

CHAPTER-3

Social Change in Uzbekistan in the Post-Soviet Period

A quarter of century ago a new independent sovereign state emerged on political map of the world viz. Republic of Uzbekistan. Earlier Uzbekistan was a part of USSR where it played a major role in Soviet economy with its huge potential of cotton production. The amount of cotton produced in Uzbekistan played a dominant role in determining the economic position of Soviet Union. In spite having huge potential of cotton production, at the time of independence, Uzbekistan inherited a completely ruined economy from the former Soviet Union.

“As for the living standards of the republic’s population, they also left much to be desired. According to statistics, in 1990, some 70 per cent of the Uzbek population enjoyed the total income, which was below the subsistence minimum, while in Russia and Ukraine, only 30 per cent of their residents was in a similar situation. At the same time, about 60 per cent of citizens in Uzbekistan lived in rural areas and were predominantly engaged in agriculture. Jobs in the countryside were provided by administrations of *kolkhozes* and *sovkhoses* that were considered to be a major production link in the agrarian sector. Very often, local peasants, called ‘*kolkhoz workers*’, had neither work-books nor civil passports. Literally ‘tied’ to the land, they were not entitled to go elsewhere across the Soviet Union, not to mention travelling abroad. The countryside worked to provide the manufacturing industry with raw materials and citizens – with farm produce and foodstuffs.”¹

Since the coming of the Russians, Uzbekistan had undergone various social, political, economical and cultural changes. The major change that came in the society of Uzbekistan was due to the suppression of Islam. Muslim practices were declared illegal and banned. Certain religious teachings were fundamentally contradicted the Marxist-Leninist ideology, so they were all banned. Moreover, the introduction of nuclear family system led to small family and living standard of people got aligned

¹ The living standards of the people of Uzbekistan had been reduced because of the exploitation by Soviet rulers. People were forced to work for the collective production. ‘Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Federal Republic of Germany (23 September 2016), [Online; web] Accessed 02 April 2017, URL: <http://www.uzbekistan.de/en/nachrichten/press-release/information-digest-no-189>’

with modern Russia. The marriage system now became personal affair of youth. Education system moved away from religious to modern scientific education system. Thus, there were changes in all aspects of society.

According to World Culture Encyclopaedia, in the beginning of 1988, Uzbeks revived Islam, particularly in the Ferghana Valley, where mosques have been renovated.²

During Soviet period, religion was suppressed but with the disintegration of USSR people again started their religious practices. The revival of Islamic culture in the region is due to jihadist Afghan and religious broadcasts from Iran, which gained prominence with the Gorbachev's economic and political reform policies like *glasnost*³ and *perestroika*⁴. By the end of 1980s, Gorbachev introduced a radical overhaul of economic and political reforms in the Soviet regime. By the end of Soviet regime the whole social structure was under the influence of modern Russian practices. With the disintegration of USSR, people of Central Asia started reviving their old culture as the suppression was ended. (Badan 2001:183)

Under this programme there was radical overhaul of economic, political and social reforms. With the introduction of such reforms people started their efforts for revival of their native culture. Such reforms paved for the emergence of various religious groups and movements demanding greater cultural autonomy. This autonomy was long denied during the 70 years of the Soviet regime. But after the disintegration of the Soviet rule, widespread and significant changes could be seen in Central Asia.

“After 1991, the independent governments of Central Asia supported modern and folk cultural practices to give authenticity to their political vision of a post-Soviet nation state.”(Sevket and Richard 2014:05)

Literature, Culture and Art

“The colonial nature of the Soviet Union contributed to the broader literature of colonial and post colonial studies, which critiques the domination of a centre over the

² Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their Culture, [Online: web] Accessed 15 March 2017, URL: <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

³ The term was used by Gorbachev in 1986 as a political slogan for openness in government institutions and activities in Soviet Union.

⁴ Perestroika was a political movement by Gorbachev for reformation within communist party of Soviet Union during 1980s. It dealt with restructuring of soviet political and economic system.

culturally different periphery, resulting in hierarchies of knowledge that endure beyond the colonial period.” (Prakash 1995:3-17)

“In the post Soviet space, European theatrical forms were remained in the Uzbekistan’s theatrical forms. It should not be taken as a theory of post colonial period but a critique of a particular type of domination. It shows a hierarchy in which the culture of the centre that is of Europe and Russian dominated the periphery or colony viz. Central Asia in general and Uzbekistan in particular. European-style theatre created certain hierarchies of knowledge and values among culture producers in Uzbekistan. Soviet state also served as an important channel for the adoption of internationally legitimated cultural forms, giving post-Soviet states readymade links to the global community. These links have played an important role in defining post-Soviet identities by giving culture producers a frame of reference for what their national culture should look like.” (Adams 2005:333-334)

“By the late Soviet period, the cultural forms adopted by Soviet creative elites in Central Asia look remarkably similar to those in other modernized states, whether or not they experienced colonial or Soviet rule. The Soviet experience had its own unique features in this modernization process, especially in the way that culture was produced under centralized financing and control, but it also participated in the establishment of international cultural norms that provide legitimisation for the practices of Uzbekistan's cultural elite.” (Adams 2005:335)

“Cultural change in post-Soviet space is often related to the desire to become ‘normal’ again by leaving the experiments of communism and returning to what is familiar from the past. But it is to be noted that before the arrival of Soviet government the people of Turkistan, were themselves moving towards the European culture. During the Jadid period beginning in the 1880s and peaking at the cusp of the revolution European culture made a greater impact than it had during the preceding decades, but not because of the activities of the Russian colonizers. Turkic peoples, especially secularizing Crimean Tatars-Muslims from European Russia-were the main agents through which European cultural forms were first introduced and accepted by Central Asians.” (Adams 2005:333-354)

For Soviet Government culture was no different from the economy and politics, which could be developed and shaped in any manner. The cultural evolution of Central Asian citizen began with the adoption of modern lifestyle. Cultural elites in Uzbekistan today continue to speak in the idiom of cultural development and see the history of their culture in the twentieth century as one of exploding development and progress.

“Instead, the government of Uzbekistan continues to support state theatres at a relatively high level through the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and its theatre administration, O'zTeatr. Since 1991, almost all of Uzbekistan's Soviet-era theatres have been preserved and many new theatres have been built (especially puppet theatres, which provide wholesome, indigenous entertainment for the nation's large youth population). O'zTeatr's thirty-seven theatres put on 120-130 plays every year with the help of over one thousand actors and directors, who earn between \$25 and \$100 per month, depending on seniority and bonuses for additional services.” (Adams 2005: 341)

Post independence, the reaction of Central Asian peoples against socialist experimentation led to a general debate over how to become normal again. This normality is a reaction to the Soviet policies as well as against the track on which Uzbekistan would continue. Hence, since independence, the content of the Uzbek culture has been de-politicized and Socialist content has been removed from the country's culture.

“Uzbekistan has begun a revival of traditional crafts, which suffered from the Soviet view that factory-produced goods were superior to handicrafts. Now master craftsmen are reappearing in cities such as Samarkand and Bokhara, supported largely by foreign tourists. Miniature painting is narrative in character, using a wide palette of symbols to tell their stories. They can be read from right to left as a book, and often accompany works of literature. Wood carving, of architectural features such as doors and pillars and of items such as the *sonduq*, a box given to a bride by her parents, also is regaining a place in Uzbek crafts. *Ikat* is a method of cloth dying, now centred in

the Yordgorlik Silk Factory in Margilan. Silk threads are tie-dyed, then woven on a loom to create soft-edged designs for curtains, clothing, and other uses.”⁵

“Uzbek music is characterized by reedy, haunting instruments and throaty, nasal singing. It is played on long-necked lutes called *dotars*, flutes, tambourines, and small drums. It developed over the past several hundred years in the khanates on the territory of modern Uzbekistan, where musicians were a central feature of festivals and weddings. The most highly regarded compositions are cycles called *maqoms*. *Sozandas*, sung by women accompanied by percussion instruments, also are popular. In the 1920s, Uzbek composers were encouraged, leading to a classical music tradition that continues today. Modern Uzbek pop often combines elements of folk music with electric instruments to create dance music.”⁶

“Uzbek dance is marked by fluid arm and upper-body movement. Today women's dance groups perform for festivals and for entertainment, a practice started during the Soviet period. Earlier, women danced only for other women; boys dressed as women performed for male audiences. One dance for Navruz asks for rain; others depict chores, other work, or events. Uzbek dance can be divided into three traditions: Bokhara and Samarkand; Khiva; and Khokand. The Sufi dance, *zikr*, danced in a circle accompanied by chanting and percussion to reach a trance state is still practiced.”⁷

Family Structure and Daily Life in Uzbekistan

All the changes that a society undergoes reflect in the family, where lies the foundation of nation's future. Thus a crisis in society is manifested as a crisis in the institution of the family, a fact illustrated by the problems facing the family in Central Asia during the Soviet and now post-Soviet periods.

As far as Uzbekistan is concerned, even after the independence, there was joint family tradition in Uzbekistan where male elder was considered the head of the family. Tokhtakhodjaeva, (1997) argued that the village traditions dominate lifestyles: large

⁵ Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their Culture, [Online: web] Accessed 15 March 2017, URL: <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

⁶Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their Culture, [Online: web] Accessed 15 March 2017URL: <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

⁷Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their Culture, [Online: web] Accessed 15 March 2017URL: <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

families served as a means of survival; the soviet system did not abolish gender inequality in practice but independence has brought back unofficial discrimination into the open, while women remain too disorganized against it.

Nevertheless, the family has remained the most reliable defender in the struggle for survival. In the difficult conditions, especially during Soviet rule, only traditional relationships enabled the people to survive. This is the reason why the traditional family, despite all its negative aspects, accorded such high status in the social consciousness of Central Asians. Thus, while the sovietisation of Central Asian society shattered the religious and cultural bedrock of the family, its basic features like patriarchy, were preserved.

Despite the breakdown of the family which occurred in the later Soviet period, the family is still an institution which defines social values, above all for women who are predestined to live out their role as the nurturer of children, family and husband. The local population of Central Asia remain concentrated in villages for agricultural production. The state used them for cotton production. Cotton plantation needed people whose way of live prepared them for persistent, laborious work. So, traditional way of life with women subjugation and many children remained undisturbed. (Tokhtakhodjaeva 1997:151-152)

Although under Soviet rule religion was suppressed but it still remained there but only superficially. For the majority of the people in Central Asia, adherence to Islam even in this form was a symbol of cultural identity. The existence of extreme poverty and denied any possibility of spiritual and cultural development, religion was the only means through which people could manifest their national consciousness, identity, rituals, habits social interaction etc. So, their Muslim way of life has been preserved even if in incomplete form. Most of the Uzbek families stay patriarchal with a hierarchical structure and every member of family has and knows own role in family. They have an elderly male as the head of family with indisputable prestige. The head of the family takes all the decisions. He has leading and control duties in family. The wife has subordinate position, who manages the household.⁸

⁸ Uzbek family and Status of Women, [Online: web] Accessed 3 may 2017, URL: <http://www.musawah.org/sites/default/files/Uzbekistan-report%20for%20Home%20Truths.pdf>

Food Habits of the People of Uzbekistan

“People of Uzbekistan are fun loving. They celebrate whenever possible. Their parties usually consist of a large meal ending with *palov*, a rice-and-meat dish synonymous with Uzbek cuisine throughout the former Soviet Union. It is the only dish often cooked by men. The Uzbeks love to have copious amount of vodka, wine and beer after food. The Navruz festival is celebrated all over the Central Asia. On *Navruz*⁹ a special dish is made with milk and seven grains. During Ramadan people fast from sunrise to sunset for 30 days. On 31st day Id-UI-Fitr is celebrated all over the central Asia.”¹⁰

“In Uzbek culture bread holds a special place. At mealtime, breads are spread to cover the entire *dusterhon*¹¹. Traditional Uzbek bread, *tandir non*, is flat and round. In Uzbek culture bread is always torn by hand, never placed upside down, and never thrown out. Meals begin with small dishes of nuts and raisins, progressing through soups, salads, and meat dishes and ending with *palov*. Other common dishes, though not strictly Uzbek, include *monti*, steamed dumplings of lamb meat and fat, onions, and pumpkin, and kabob, grilled ground meat. Uzbeks favour mutton; even the nonreligious eschew pig meat. Because of their climate, Uzbeks enjoy many types of fruits, eaten fresh in summer and dried in winter, and vegetables. Dairy products such as *katyk*, a liquid yogurt, and *suzma*, similar to cottage cheese, are eaten plain or used as ingredients. Tea, usually green, is drunk throughout the day, accompanied by snacks, and is always offered to guests. The *choyhona*, or teahouse, is the focal point of the neighbourhood’s men. It is always shaded, and if possible located near a stream.” (Rajendran, Shivangi 2013)

“Meals are usually served either on the floor, or on a low table, though high tables also are used. The table is always covered by a *dusterhon*. Guests sit on carpets, padded quilts, chairs, or beds, but never on pillows. Men usually sit cross-legged, women with their legs to one side. The most respected guests sit away from the entrance. Objects such as shopping bags, which are considered unclean, never should be placed on the *dusterhon*, nor should anyone ever step on or pass dirty items over it.

⁹ Navruz is the Iranian New year festival. The culture of Uzbekistan is very much influenced from Iranian culture

¹⁰ Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their Culture, [Online; web] Accessed 15 March 2017, URL: <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

¹¹ A mat used for keeping food on it at meal time.

The *Karakalpak*s's¹² national dish is *besbarmak*, boiled mutton, beef, or horse served over a plate of broad noodles and accompanied by the reduced broth. Russians have brought many of their foods, such as *pelmeni*, boiled meat dumplings, borscht, cabbage and meat soup and a variety of fried and savoury pastries.”¹³

Marriage System

According to family code, “the legal minimum age of marriage is 18 years for men and 17 years for women.”¹⁴ As family is the basic structures in society, marriage is imperative for all. Moreover, the practise of child marriage is not uncommon in Uzbekistan even after independence. The revival of Islamic ideas after 1991 has brought the practice of *Kalym* and child marriage in Uzbek society. In some region polygamy is also practised even after declared illegal.

“In traditional Uzbek families, marriages are often arranged between families. Although in urban areas the marriage is fixed according to bride and groom’s choice. In both the cases the approval of the parents is essential. For match fixing the preference is given to members of the *kin group*¹⁵. In Uzbek society, there is a tradition that the younger son and his bride would have to take care of his parents. So, family say in youngest son’s marriage is quite important. People tend to marry in their late teens or early twenties. The expense of the weddings is borne by the bride's family. The husband's family may pay a bride price (*kalym*). The polygamy though illegal but it is still practised in many regions, especially rural areas.”¹⁶

After independence, the cases of divorce have increase manifold, but though it is still rare in rural areas, where patriarchal structure is more dominant. In Uzbekistan, men find it easy to get divorce. Although, women have equal rights, but state institutions are biased toward men and it is difficult for a woman to get divorce.

Since independence, the state has retained Soviet legislation guaranteeing equal rights for women despite the growth in Islamic activities. The government has policies to promote women in education and work. Marriage is governed by secular state

¹² The sovereign Republic of Karakalpakstan is part of the Republic of Uzbekistan

¹³ Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their culture: Uzbekistan, [Online; web] Accessed 15 March 2017, URL:<http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

¹⁴ Family code of Republic of Uzbekistan, Chapter 1, article 5

¹⁵ Close relations which extends to cousins are called kins.

¹⁶ Countries and their culture: Uzbekistan, [Online: web] Accessed 15 March 2017, URL:<http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

institutions rather than the clergy to discourage polygamy. Moreover, women have given full property and divorce rights.

“While these safeguards look good in the law books, in practice things are very different. Strong social conventions make it difficult for women to complain about domestic abuse, and the ultimate step of divorce is discouraged by local community or ‘mahalla’ or neighbourhood councils and by the judicial system. The ‘Mahalla Councils’ are run by the elders of the locality who generally persuade the victim woman to maintain the marriage and not to go for divorce. The intervention of *mahalla* councils is therefore often directed towards placating the abuser, rather than helping the victim.” (Human Rights Watch 2001:03)

Status of Women in Uzbek Society

Everywhere the change in social structure is reflects through change in status of women in that society. In other words, to understand the true status of women in a society it is necessary to know how women feel about their role within the family because family is the smaller unit of society and is traditionally regarded as the sphere of women's realisation. The true development of a society reflects in the freedom and rights enjoyed by the women of that society.

In pre-Soviet Uzbekistan, women’s world revolved around the family and the household chores. From the 1920s on, the Soviet system provide openness to women through equal educational and work opportunities. During soviet rule women started working in schools, hospitals, factories etc. However, sometimes the family pressure prevented women from getting higher education or working outside home. After independence, some women got positions of power, though they still may be expected to comfort themselves with modesty.

Even after decades of Soviet rule, Uzbekistan after getting independence remained a patriarchal or male dominated society, though mother runs the household. According to a report of United Nations 2006 report, “although women make up nearly half of the workforce but they hold only 10 % seats in the parliament, and 18% of administrative and management positions.”¹⁷

¹⁷ United Nations, Press Release(2006), [Online: web] Accessed 12 March 2017, URL: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2006/wom1574.doc.htm>

“Women run the households and traditionally control the family budgets. When guests are present they are expected to cloister themselves from view. In public women are expected to cover their bodies completely. Full veiling is uncommon, though it is occasionally practiced in the Ferghana Valley. Women often view this as an expression of their faith and culture rather than as an oppressive measure. Women are expected to be modest in dress and demeanour, with clothing covering their entire body. In public they may walk with their head tilted down to avoid unwanted attention. In traditional households, women are not allowed to enter the room if male guests are present. Likewise, it is considered forward to ask how a man's wife is doing. Women generally sit with legs together, their hands in their laps. When men are not present, however, women act much more casually. As marriage is the basic unit of society, it is imperative for everyone to marry.”¹⁸

“Women in Uzbekistan are considered as subordinate to men. After getting independence, though constitution provided equal rights to women, but social acceptance to such rights is still low. Even today, there are only 16% women representatives in Uzbekistan’s parliament. Even today, the number of economically active women is considerably lower than the economically active men. There are numerous cases of crime against women. Even the society favours the men and not women in the cases of domestic violence.

There are no specific laws prohibiting domestic violence, to be treated like other crimes. There is practically no public discussion in the media or otherwise on violence against women including domestic abuse by husband or in –laws and divorce. In Uzbekistan domestic violence has a quasi legal status. The facts of domestic violence are either hidden or discussed as isolated cases.” (Ibrahim 2013: 51)

Thus, society of Uzbekistan provides a secondary status to women. There are numerous cases of violence against women and the situation become worse when the state machinery get failed to do justice to the victim. Almost all the government and social institutions prevent women from moving out of a marriage agreement as society does not accept a single woman. An abandoned woman has no right over her husband’s property and she is left with no option but dependence on her parents.

¹⁸ Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their Culture: Uzbekistan, URL: <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

Education System in Uzbekistan

The education system of a country plays a vital role in shaping its social structure. Moreover, school education is always considered as the foundation of a child's attitude towards the society. Today's children will form tomorrow's society. The type of education system a state adopts decides the future of its social structure.

After getting independence Uzbekistan encountered severe problems like shortage of budget, resources etc. to replace the centralised education system of Soviet government. "The education law of 1992 began the process of theoretical reform, but the physical base has deteriorated, and curriculum revision has been slow." (Curtis 1997:418)

"In Uzbekistan, there are two national agencies to supervise the education- Ministry of People's Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. In the early 1990s, the enterprises ran short of money and they began closing the schools or transferring them to the Ministry of People's Education. The Government planned to open new schools but they also ran short of demand. The education experts in Uzbekistan although do not rate them as good in quality but according to Uzbek Government these schools are playing a key role in providing nutrition and education to the children. These schools become essential especially when both parents are working, a common situation during the 1990s. In early 1990s the duration of schooling was reduced from eleven to nine as the government was running short of funds. Moreover, the schools buildings were unsuitable and repair budgets are inadequate, the nutritional level of the food provided to the children was also below state standards. In Post-Soviet era the curricula for vocational studies were also improved to accommodate the expansion the in light industry." (Curtis: 1997:418-419)

In present day Uzbekistan, twelve years of primary and secondary education is compulsory. According to CIA World Factbook, the official literacy rate in Uzbekistan today is 99.6%. However, in the post Soviet era the education standards have deteriorated.

"The rate of attendance in schools is high, but the figure is significantly lower in rural areas than in urban centres. Between 1992 and 2004, government spending on education dropped from 12 percent to 6.3 percent of gross domestic product. In 2006

education's share of the budget increased to 8.1 percent. Lack of budgetary support has been more noticeable at the primary and secondary levels, as the government has continued to subsidize university student.”¹⁹

“In 2007, the Law on Education was revised to more explicitly advocate for the rights of the child and affirm its commitment to providing free compulsory education for all children. The law also addresses the need for pre-school and child protection. In 2004 the National Program on School Education Development for 2004-2009 was adopted with the main objectives of improving the quality of education.” (UNICEF Country Profile: Education in Uzbekistan)

The top three universities for higher education in Uzbekistan are located at Samarqand, Nukus and Tashkent. Tashkent State University is the largest university in Central Asia. Some twenty research institutes offer courses in specialized areas of medicine, veterinary science, and industry and technology. “Private schools have been forbidden since the establishment of Islamic fundamentalist schools in the early 1990s brought a government crackdown. However, in 1999 the government-supported Tashkent Islamic University was founded for the teaching of Islam.”²⁰

At domestic level, TFI (Tashkent Financial Institute) and WIUT (Westminster International University), that was established in 2002, are the best rated among the higher educational institutions of Uzbekistan. Tashkent Financial Institute was established in 1991 by the initiative of the then president of Islam Karimov. “Westminster International University was established in collaboration with the University of Westminster (UK) and ‘UMID’ Foundation. Currently these universities are regarded as the best in its sphere of education both in Uzbekistan and Central Asian countries.”²¹

In 2007, Uzbekistan Banking Association (UBA) had a joint venture with Management Development Institute of Singapore, Singapore and set up MDIST

¹⁹ Country Profile: Uzbekistan (2007), [Online: web] Accessed 25 March 2017, URL: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/Uzbekistan-new.pdf>

²⁰Country Profile: Uzbekistan (2007), [Online: web] Accessed 25 march 2017, URL: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/Uzbekistan-new.pdf>

²¹Information regarding WIUT, [Online: web] Accessed 2 May 2017, URL: <https://www.lawstudies.com/universities/Uzbekistan/WIUT/>

University in Tashkent. It is one of the first international University branches in Uzbekistan. It was established to cover the high demand for professionals in various fields. Since its founding it has trained more than ten thousand graduates. The main mission of the Institute is developing and training the professionals who has background of theoretical and practical knowledge on economy fields, and who will contribute their knowledge to economic development in Uzbekistan.

Such higher education institutes area gaining prominence in Uzbekistan. It resulted in development of job opportunities for people of Uzbekistan, which further helps in raising the living standards of people. However, the unemployment rate remains high throughout.

In 2010 the British School of Tashkent (BST) was established to provide a high-achieving British school, where children learn in a secure and stimulating environment and children of all nationalities are exposed to the English National Curriculum. The school is also able to deliver all local Uzbek curriculum requirements.

Thus, Uzbekistan is moving ahead from a conservative education system to more open liberal and professional education systems. On the other hand, there are several Islamic educational institutions propping up in various regions of the country. The process of revival of old culture started in February 1992, when all central Asian countries launched a cultural revival campaign which called for teaching of Persian and Arabic language in public school system. It is reported that the Central Asian countries are broadcasting Persian and Arabic programmes with the help of Iran. This is the most potent cultural instrument to revive the native culture which is mainly based on Islamic traditions. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union innumerable mosques and *madrassahs*²² have been opened in almost all towns of Uzbekistan.

Religion and Society in Present Day Uzbekistan

The process of revival of old culture started as a retaliation towards the forced Russian culture which came up with Sovietisation of the region. People are now free to adopt their old traditions which is being characterised by the growing number of students in religious institutions, celebration of Muslim festivals as national holidays,

²² Primary schools for Islamic education are called *madrassahs*.

celebrating festivals on state level in the names of outstanding religious leaders of Central Asia, legal spreading of information regarding Islamic standards and values through books, pamphlets, radio and TV etc. and expanding contacts with Muslim countries in the world.

The countries of Central Asia have joined ECO (Economic Cooperation Organisation) and OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) for the development of religious, cultural, political and economic links with the Muslim countries in the world. People in Uzbekistan now send their sons and daughters abroad for higher Islamic education. Thus, the society is moving towards older traditions under Islam on one hand and simultaneously reaching towards scientific and technical development on the other hand.

After getting independence native people of Central Asia are now strongly inclined to adopt Islam as their way of life. The influence of Islam can be witnessed in considerable increase in religious rituals and practices in Uzbek society. During Soviet period religious practices were banned and mosques were closed by the Soviet government. But the revival of old practices is visible now. “More people say their prayers than in the Soviet period, whether in private or at the mosque; more people fast during Ramadan than before; the number of those performing the hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, has increased massively. Births, marriages, and deaths are solemnized in more Islamic forms than before, with prayer assuming a more central role in the proceedings than before.”(Adeeb 2007: 139)

“The effect of Islam in the region in the daily life of the people cannot be ignored since it has emerged as a potential force that has influencing the cultural, economic, political behaviour of the people. But the revival of Islam should not be confused with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. There are some forces which can lead to such threats for example the militant brand of Islam known as ‘*Wahhabism*’,²³ which has been very much active in Ferghana Valley of Uzbekistan. The impact of revival of Islam on the social life of the people of Uzbekistan is also prominent. The women of Uzbekistan under Soviet rule enjoyed equal status with men. But they are now forced

²³ Wahhabism is an Islamic doctrine and religious movement founded by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. It is ultra conservative and advocates use of militant forces for establishing monotheism and puritan Islamic practices.

to confirm to the fundamentalist social practices. Women who follow *Wahhabism* have abandoned their colourful dresses and now adopted full veils from head to toe. Some girls voluntarily wear *hijab* (head scarf). In some areas of fundamentalist Islam people are demanding withdrawal of girls from schools of co-education. All such practices are resulting in effecting the status of women in Uzbekistan's society.” (Badan 2001:188-189)

On one side there are some negative impacts of revival of Islam and on the other side the revival of Islam and Islamic culture in central Asia can be seen as people's willingness to regain their Islamic identity. The high level of corruption that existed during Soviet period had brought down under growing influence of Islam.

“According to the information provided by the State Committee of Uzbekistan on Religious Affairs, Uzbekistan is a secular state where the government does not impose any restrictions on religious or belief communities. But the government tries to supervise the religious worship and belief, by overseeing the Islamic hierarchy, Imam's sermons and the substance of their religious materials. The policy of Uzbek government towards religion is policy based on an uncompromising premise of ‘that which is not controlled is forbidden’. In the course of the past years, the Uzbek Government has continued to persecute and harass those who practise Islam outside government controlled system.”²⁴

Impact of Economic Reforms on Uzbek Society

At the time of independence, Uzbekistan was the least developed country in Central Asia. In the initial years of independent government, steps were taken to achieve market economy. The government was very cautious and moved unevenly to develop industries and to establish market economy.

“After getting independence Uzbekistan adopted market economy. At that time the social and economic indicators in the central Asian states fell short of the standards of the region as a whole. All five Central Asian states are landlocked and distant from world markets--depended heavily on an intricate Soviet system of trade routes and energy pipelines for essential input supplies and exports. The country's rich

²⁴ The government of Uzbekistan is vigilant towards Islamic fundamentalism. (EWG, July 2009). EWG is a non-governmental, non-commercial network of independent experts in Uzbekistan who focus on studying how law and public interests affect each other.

agricultural potential, abundance of minerals and fuel resources, though, made it highly attractive outlet for foreign investors. After a long period of isolation and exploitation by Soviet rule, these countries faced the challenge of exploiting its resources more effectively to improve living standards, while simultaneously introducing the systemic changes required for a market framework and integration of its economy to the world market.”²⁵ (IMF 1999)

Since independence, Uzbekistan remained committed to building a secular, democratic and law-governed country, with a socially-oriented market economy state based on its own ‘Uzbek model’²⁶ of progress. The country is determined to strengthen its national identity and simultaneously remain committed to universal values in order to develop harmony with the world community. It is committed to gradual transformation of economy while at the same time emphasising social stability.

“The ‘Uzbek Model’ of development has focused on developing industrial and manufacturing capacity in a predominantly agricultural economy, using direct and substantial state guidance. An important objective of the strategy has been to raise living standards and expand employment opportunities, while protecting vulnerable groups against abject poverty.”²⁷

In order to facilitate the development of market economy, the reorganisation of the administrative structure and reorientation of its functions have been undertaken by the government. New institutions have been created in the form of associations and concerns, especially in certain key sectors of the economy such as food industry, consumer industry, gas industry and so on. In rural sector new economic relations are introduced. Small scale farming for subsistence and sale is gaining momentum. Family farming is being encouraged to cater to the market needs of the society. Private enterprises have also been set up in big cities such as Tashkent. In order to

²⁵ A paper published by IMF explained the worse condition of economies of Central Asian countries and how market economy adopted by Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries led to the economic stability. It also deals with the external policy regarding trade, capital flows and external debt. [Online: web] Accessed 22 March 2017, URL: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/nft/op/183/index.htm>

²⁶ The Uzbek Model – of transition to a socially oriented market economy based on five key principles developed by country's President Islam Karimov: the priority of economics over politics; the state is the main reformer; the rule of law; strong social policy; a step-by-step transition to market relations.

²⁷ Uzbekistan Living Standard Assessment: Policies to Improve Living Standards, [Online: web] Accessed 13 March 2017, URL: worldbank.org/curated/en/787831468317937285/summary-report

promote private trading and capital market, shareholding societies have been set up. “For instance, in Tashkent two such societies, 'Trade House' and 'Asia Continental', have been set up with an initial capital fund of 100 million roubles”. Moreover, network of commercial bank have been built to strengthen monetary credit system. (Gidadhubli 1994: 295)

“In 2001, Uzbekistan adopted for sustainable economic development. This was a robust period of active democratic renewal, reform, and modernization. As a result of these reforms, Uzbekistan was able to overcome the negative impact of the global financial crisis, and in a historically short period of time, to ensure the stable and dynamic development of the national economy along with consistently improving standards of living and welfare.” (Embassy of Uzbekistan to USA 2016)

“At present, the unemployment rate in Uzbekistan is about 8.9 %, with a high rate of unemployment among youth. Though they comprise a small share of the poor, the unemployed have the highest poverty rate among the working age population.”²⁸

The government of Uzbekistan has adopted various means to raise the living standards of the people. “The key actions include macroeconomic stability and proceeding with fundamental structural reforms. The policies include facilitation of private sector and small and medium sized enterprises, improvement in agricultural output and income, improving health and education services, better social protection, poverty monitoring are some of the steps taken by the government for the betterment of living standards of the people.”²⁹

“The economic development, especially in cities resulted in the development of living standard of the people. A farmer now in Uzbekistan is a businessman and an entrepreneur. “The new rich In Uzbek society tend to buy and show off expensive cars and limousines, apartments, and clothes and to go to nightclubs. Foreign foods are also signs of wealth, as is a disdain for shopping in bazaars. Newly rich people of

²⁸Trading Economics, 1991-2017 data, [Online: web] Accessed 3 May 2017, URL: <https://tradingeconomics.com/uzbekistan/unemployment-rate>

²⁹Uzbekistan Living Standard Assessment: Policies to Improve Living Standards (2003), Volume 1: Summary Report, [Online: web] Accessed 13 March 2017, URL: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/14825/259231UZ1Livin1ds0Assessmen t1111SR1.pdf;sequence=1>

Uzbekistan also have developed a trend of visiting foreign countries. People in cities have more wealth than rural people as job opportunities in cities are better.”³⁰

In Uzbekistan within the period of independence have emerged new principles of the modern urban design taking into account the previously applied historical experience. The contemporary urban environment has already become the reflection of all changes that swept through the country. Now it is based on modern social idea, new advanced technologic adoption, opportunities and values of the new age. All these factors have determined the priorities of the artistic design of the contemporary cities.

Technological Development and Society

Technology and human life share a close relationship. Every society has a cyclical co-dependence over technology. Our daily lives are incomplete without technology. More technological advancement makes society more open and transparent. The technological advancement of a society reflects in its industrialization and urban culture. It describes the growth of a society in which a manufacturing industry plays a major role. The scientific and technological inventions have modernized the society. Remarkable changes in the whole system of social relationship are visible. New ideologies are coming up replacing the traditional ones.

In Uzbekistan also, technological and scientific advancement has affected the social institutions. The impact of technology can be felt in every aspect of social structure. The shift of production system from household to industries has changed the family organisations. Marriages are becoming unstable and the instances of divorce and separation are increasing. Although, technology has helped in women emancipation but it has also contributed to the stresses between relation of men and women at home. On one hand, women are coming out from home and indulging in economic activities, on the other hand they are also compelled to fulfil their homely duties.

In cities, the idea of secularism, rationality and scientific attitude are gaining prominence among people but and they are becoming less religious in their outlook. Science developments have shaken the foundations of religion. But in Uzbekistan, the percentage of such people is less due to the revival of Islam. After getting independence, reviving the traditional culture became the slogan of the state. As a

³⁰ Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their Cultures, [Online: web] Accessed 15 March 2017, URL: <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

result, people are more inclined towards Islam, though moderate one. In cities the impact of technology is more prompt.

“Joint Development Associate International (JDAI) began community development and humanitarian assistance in Central Asia in 1992. JDAI has primarily worked in Uzbekistan. It has provided technical and financial assistance to communities, institutions, women-led families, disabled children and adults, and others who are socially and economically disadvantaged. The company has provided clean water to rural communities, micro finance programs to encourage a variety of family businesses, health education, leprosy training for national doctors, computer training, along with humanitarian aid, as required. The long-term goal of the company is to enable individuals, families, and communities to determine their own future using their own resources, abilities and opportunities.” (Worley 2005)

People in Uzbekistan are getting treated drinking water in cities. The problem of untreated water still exists in rural areas. With better technical development people have access to improved medical facilities, means of communication, internet etc. Technology has provided business opportunities to local people by providing needed goods and services, while allowing the entrepreneurs to learn the basics of free enterprise. It has also resulted in improved health, better education and more advanced technology to increase competitiveness.

With better living conditions a society can achieve high levels of development. Earlier all agricultural activities were done by people, now with the introduction of machines in farming, people in Uzbekistan get more leisure time. They send their kids to school and colleges instead of engaging them in farming. Thus, in Uzbekistan technology has played a vital role in social progress.

Change in Political Culture

History is evident that abrupt change in ideology invariably leads to great shocks of adjustment. Economic reconstruction leads to collapse of production system and results in bankruptcy of a nation. Soon after independence Uzbekistan was dealing with such economic adjustments. In order to bring back the economy on track Uzbekistan chose the path of democratic government, though controllable democracy.

“Since its declaration of independence on September 1, 1991, Uzbekistan got the opportunity to reinstate the traditional state system which was destroyed in 1917, the year of the Soviet takeover. The time was ripe to reconstruct this unique thousand-year-old state structure, while taking into account the effects of the immense changes in the economy, morality and public consciousness that resulted from the years under the Soviet dictatorship. The Soviet rule had always used Uzbekistan as a source of raw material specially cotton, and exploited its natural resources. The government paid no heed to social and economic development of the state. Market economy in conjunction with democracy was considered to provide better living standards to people of Uzbekistan.” (Sharipov 1993: 26-29)

In order to establish democracy, Uzbekistan considered both its historical ideals as well as modern realities instead of refusing past seventy years of its history. It is clear that communism was never a popular ideology in Uzbekistan’s society, as immediately after disintegration people moved back to their old tradition and culture. Communism was something imposed from above and maintained by coercion. After getting independence, “Uzbekistan opted for authoritarian rule, seen as essential in transition process to achieve internal stability.” (Badan 2001:91)

“Uzbekistan was first among five Central Asian Republics to introduce presidential form of government.” (Sharipov 1993:26)

“The President of the Uzbekistan is the Head of the state and holds supreme executive authority in the country.”³¹ Though the constitution provides for democratic form of government but they grant power to the President. So, the essential institutions of a democratic political system like separation of power, powerful judiciary, periodic elections, free media etc. have not been nurtured. (Curtis 1997:446)

“Uzbekistan has a multi party system with members of parliament representing main political interests and various strata of society. Uzbekistan adopted a very effective education system which helped Uzbek people to become so optimistic towards their development. Although Uzbekistan claimed to be a democracy but in reality this is managed democracy in which rights of citizens are controlled by the government

³¹ Article 89 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, [Online: web] Accessed 12 march 2017, URL: <http://www.gov.uz/en/constitution/>

according to its needs. The government has tightened its grips since independence cracking down increasingly on opposition groups in the name of maintaining stability in the state. The political life revolves around the President only. Other political institutions like Parliament, the prime minister and the cabinet have given very limited powers. The judiciary is subordinate to the executive i.e. President. Corruption is widespread at all levels and clan membership is a vital qualification for holding powerful positions.” (Country Profile: Uzbekistan (2007))

The post independence political development in Uzbekistan shows that people were so fed up of the Soviet system and now they are used to of strong central control. Although there are some instances of resistance also but they are overcome in the name of maintaining peace and stability.

“Uzbekistan is divided in twelve provinces, one autonomous region of Karakalpakstan Republic, 156 regions and 123 cities. Every province has a chief executive known as *Hakim*. Although, *Hakim* is appointed by the President, with conformity of the local legislatures who are elected by popular vote, but the Presidential power is dominant. Even in autonomous region of Karakalpakstan, the officials are powerless against the central government.” (Curtis 1997:448)

“For local governance, there are *Mahallas*, or neighbourhood councils of elders which provide the most direct governance. Some opinion polls have ranked *mahallas* just after the president in terms of political power. In practice, *mahallas* are subordinate to the local representative of the executive branch, who approves the selection of the community leaders and pays the salary of the *mahalla* committee chairmen. *Mahallahs* address social needs ranging from taking care of orphans, loaning items, and maintaining orderly public spaces, to sponsoring holiday celebrations.” (Human Rights Watch 2001: 13(4D))

Along with Russia, the political development in Uzbekistan is also influenced by the wars and movements going on in neighbouring countries. For example the Orange revolution in Ukraine also impacted Uzbekistan. The countries of Central Asia now become less authoritarian and introducing reforms in political economic sphere. Similarly, in Uzbekistan political reforms were introduced.

“The amendments to the law on the 2008 elections became an important stage in developing the electoral system. By increasing the number of seats from 120 to 150, of which 135 deputies are elected from political parties, 15 seats in the Legislative Chamber are allocated to deputies of the new Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan. The electoral legislation also stipulates that women make up at least 30 percent of nominees from political parties for deputy seats. The abolition of the position of the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, which was initially occupied by the President, was an important step in the course of liberalizing the country's political system. The Prime Minister was empowered to lead the Government's day-to-day activities, bearing personal responsibility for its efficiency, to chair Cabinet meetings, and to make decisions on the state and economic management. With a view to continuing decentralizing power and liberalizing the political system, President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov initiated the Concept of further deepening democratic reforms and establishing civil society with stipulated major amendments to the legislation.”³²

Environment and Society in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has always been rich in natural environment but the decades of neglect by Soviet rule combined with skewed economic policies has put Uzbekistan under one of the most serious environmental crises among the CIS countries. The high dependence on agriculture of the country led to heavy use of agro-chemicals and diversion of huge amounts of irrigation water from the two main rivers viz. Syr and Amu Darya. Moreover, the country has persistent lack of water treatment plants. All these factors have caused enormous health and environmental problems in the region.

“The environmental devastation in Uzbekistan can be best exemplified by the catastrophe of the Aral Sea. The Amu Darya and Syr Darya were diverted for cotton cultivation and for other industrial uses because of which once the fourth largest inland sea has shrunk to a great extent to about one fourth of its size. The region has become prone to extensive storms of salt and dust from the sea's dried bottom. The salty storms are resulting in destruction of historical and cultural monuments. Experts assert that salt and dust from Aral Sea have raised the level of particulate matter in the

³² Embassy of Uzbekistan to United States, “Social Issues”, [Online: web] Accessed 28 March 2017, URL: http://www.uzbekistan.org/social_issues/

atmosphere by more than 5%, seriously affecting the global climate.” (Lubin in Curtis 1997: 402-403)

The drying up of Aral Sea has also hugely impacted the agriculture, ecosystem, and health of the local population. The people of the region are suffering from skin diseases. Due to toxic and salty storms there are problems of birth defects, typhus, tuberculosis, childhood anaemia, various kinds of cancers. “Around 50% people living in Aral Sea region have kidney diseases due to salinization of water. Aral Sea region has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. Some women have as many as 10 miscarriages. Frequent miscarriages have drastic effect on health of women. The high IMR linked is with high rates on anaemia among women who drink water with sand and stones. The anaemic women are unable to deliver healthy babies and there are serious cases like morbidity in the region which may be linked to high risks of cancer. In the 1980s only 17-20% of pregnant women had anaemia. The level worsens during pregnancy—about 70% of pregnant women in Karakalpakstan have severe anaemia by the third trimester.” (Ataniyazova 2003:3)

Martin Fletcher (2007) wrote in *The Times*, “Even today, 29% of local people suffer from respiratory illnesses, and 47% of women of fertile age suffer from blood diseases such as anaemia. Rates of cancer, miscarriages, IMR, birth defects, tuberculosis, kidney and skin diseases have soared. With poor health facilities by the government the spending over health and medicines put extra burden over peoples’ income.”

“Communal water systems do not meet health standards; much of the population lacks drinking water systems and must drink water straight from contaminated irrigation ditches, canals, or the Amu Darya itself.” (Hays 2008)

“The desertification of the region led to loss of plant and animal life. The arable land is reduced. Due to poor climatic conditions the agricultural produce is also depleted. The sand of the dried sea bed that blows inside the agricultural fields contaminates the earth and forced the farmers to compensate the loss by putting more pesticides and fertilisers in the soil poisoning it even more. The high level of fertilisers needs more water for irrigation and the burden ultimately falls on the groundwater resulting in depletion of groundwater level.” (Kumar R. S. 2002:14-20)

The reduction in agricultural produce is forcing the rural people to find alternate source of income. Thus, people are moving away from agriculture and seeking jobs in cities. The migration of people from rural Aral Sea region to the cities is overburdening the cities.

“In urban areas, factories and auto emissions are a growing threat to air quality. Very few factories’ smokestacks in Uzbekistan are equipped with filtration devices, and none has the capacity to filter gaseous emissions. Air pollution data for Tashkent, Ferghana, and Olmaliq show all three cities exceeding recommended levels of nitrous dioxide and particulates. High levels of heavy metals such as lead, nickel, zinc, mercury, and manganese have been found in Uzbekistan's atmosphere, mainly from the burning of fossil fuels, waste materials, and ferrous and nonferrous metallurgy. Especially high concentrations of heavy metals have been reported in Toshkent Province and in the southern part of Uzbekistan” (Curtis 1997:404-405)

The government of Uzbekistan though made some oral commitments to address the environmental problems, but the reality is that the governmental remain confused and ill defined in dealing with the threat. The expansion of the old agencies without proper planning has led to the formation of a web of bureaucratic agencies that has made the process more complicated in spite of attacking the real problem. New NGOs and environmental organisations are formed, some are in close ties with government and some are working independently. The case of growing population has now become a common concern for all. Local people themselves are moving towards some solution, raising awareness and forming local bodies. Considerable number of opposition parties and groups frame their agenda around population control. However, the lead role is being played by the NGOs for spearheading environmental initiatives, particularly in regard to conserving and protecting regional water resources.

Though steps have taken to combat environment issues like monitoring of factories, charging fines over mismanagement of resources etc, but little has been achieved. The obstacles are a lack of law enforcement in these areas, inconsistent government economic and environmental planning, corruption, and the overwhelming concentration of power in the hands of a president who shows little tolerance of grassroots activity. International donors and Western assistance agencies have devised programs to transfer technology and know-how to address these problems. But the

country's environmental problems are predominantly the result of abuse and mismanagement of natural resources promoted by political and economic priorities. There is an immediate need of strong political will for tackling with environmental and health problems for the very survival of Uzbekistan.

Although the present economic, social, political, environmental situation is average in Uzbekistan but it is working positively in attaining its MDG (Millennium Development Goals).

“In 2001-2013, Uzbekistan was able to nearly halve its poverty rate – from 27.5% to 14.1%. For various socio-economic groups living standards have also improved, poverty rates among families with children under 16 have been reduced to more than half between 2007 and 2013. Rapid growth of per capita income was accompanied by the reduction of inequalities in 2015. Poverty is reduced at the national as well as sub-national level. Universal access has been achieved in the field of education. Enrolment in secondary education is maintained at 98-99.8%. In case of gender equality, parity has been maintained in enrolment in primary and secondary education, and since 2009 in professional colleges. Women’s employment in small businesses and private entrepreneurship rose significantly. The proportion of women in the Executive Power increased 5 times from 3.4% in 2005 to 16% in 2013. For improving the quality of life, the under-five child mortality rate is reduced. Regional disparity in child mortality rates is decreased by 57.3% between 2000 and 2013. The target on halving the proportion of underweight children under five years of age has been achieved. Maternal mortality ratio fell to 20.0 per 100,000 live births in 2013, surpassing the national target of 22.6. There is a slowdown of the spread of HIV after the peak of 2009 while the number of HIV tests increased 3.5 times. In order to improve the quality of life, water and land resources are better managed. The current system of protected areas allows for the comprehensive protection of biodiversity and ecosystems and their sustainable use. Energy and power supply has been improved with the development of infrastructure and an efficient system of energy supply. The amount of pollutant emissions has substantially decreased. Access to an improved

water source, adequate sanitation facilities and access to waste management is provided.”³³

Thus, there are lot of changes that came in the social, political, economic and environmental structure of Uzbekistan after 1991. Although a certain level of development is seen in social development with better education system, better economic conditions, improvement in the status to women in society etc. but there are still some problems which need immediate attention. Rise of Wahhabism in Ferghana Valley, growing level of pollution, unemployment, growing population and its heavy dependence over limited resources are the areas of concern. After independence the society has developed but there are considerable differences across regional, ethnic and religious groups on indicators of socio-economic status. These groups are not confined to a particular area but are scattered all over the country. The common perception of social change is not as simple as it is visible. Although society is now heading towards better living standards but the problems of ethnicity, regionalism, religion with other issues like drug abuse, child trafficking etc are also heading up in Uzbekistan. The next chapter deals with the problems and challenges which Uzbekistan’ society is facing at present.

³³ Millennium Development Goals Report, Uzbekistan (2015). [Online: web] Accessed 13 March 2017, URL: <https://www.slideshare.net/alnargiza/millennium-development-goals-report-uzbekistan-2015>

CHAPTER-4

Challenges to Social Change in Uzbekistan

Change is basic rule of nature. Like other systems social system also undergoes several changes. Every new change brings new experience and society moves toward a new social structure. A society often has sufficient knowledge and experience to make well informed better decisions. Some decisions are welcomed and some are resisted by the structuring elements of society. The social elements sometimes pose challenge to the change which can facilitate change as well as hinder the path of social change. For social development, changing people's behaviour on health, social, environmental and other issues is one of the hardest things to do.

After twenty five years of independence, Central Asian societies are witnessing the emergence of new demographics, cultural and social transformations that confirm the end of 'Post Soviet' period and entry into a new phase of history. The society in Uzbekistan has moved from traditional Islamic country to communist state under Soviet rule and again it is undergoing change in this modern era. On one hand it is progressing with better living standard, education, economic development and on the other hand it is moving towards pre-Soviet religious system. There is revival of Islam. The revival of Islam is affecting aspect of the social, political and economic life of the state.

“In last 26 years of Independence, Uzbekistan has made significant improvement in economic and human development. But the level of development is not uniform. There are significant differences across the regions as well as between rural and urban areas. The income difference between eastern and far western and mid western areas is huge. The poverty level in western regions is higher than other areas. In addition to remoteness, religion, ethnicity, regionalism, status of women, economic statuses are other barriers to economic development and social inclusion. The betterment in social conditions is hampered by such issues. Social hierarchies based on ethnicity and religion, are distinct features of Uzbek society. The discourse on social change in Uzbekistan weaves together two seemingly contradictory views. The first is that Uzbek society is marred by unchanging ethnic, religious and regional divisions that

effectively prevent excluded groups from upward economic mobility and inclusion in the social and political mainstream. The second downplays group boundaries and maintains that Uzbek society is changing through processes of modernization, such as urbanization, migration, and mobilization by political parties and civil society organizations.” (Bhat and Rather 2011:86-87)

“Uzbek society even though it has experienced industrialization and urban culture, in essence was slow to throw off the powerful remnants of medievalism in social life. Secularization of social life proved to be purely superficial and modern culture was not born out of an evolutionary process of societal and economic development. It became clear after collapse of Soviet Union.” (Musawah 2009:01)

Even today there are many challenges which are hampering the progressive social change in Uzbekistan. Although the Republic of Uzbekistan has adopted a Constitution which provides for equality of different groups before law and abolition of formal hierarchies, discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and religion still persists.

Ethnicity and Social Change

“Uzbeks form the largest ethnic group in Uzbekistan. Various other groups have been settled in Uzbekistan and speak different languages and dialects. Uzbek, Tajik, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Tatars, Karakalpaks and others are believed to have migrated to Uzbekistan from the north and south, but are often considered as indigenous nationalities of Uzbekistan. In the Fergana valley region there is also an additional number of ethnic groups with separate identities. Despite considered as Uzbekistan people, these ethnic groups are far from homogeneous, and there is considerable variation both within and among the ethnic groups in terms of living conditions and political influence.” (Bhat and Rather 2011:86-87)

“The increase in the indigenous population and the emigration of Europeans has increased the self-confidence and often the self-assertiveness of indigenous Uzbeks, as well as the sense of vulnerability among the Russians in Uzbekistan.” (Curtis 1997:409)

“Of all the religious groups in Uzbekistan, the Buddhists stand out as particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, especially in areas where they are living as minorities

in a Muslim cultural environment. The minority religions make up a socially and economically disadvantaged group. Issues related to the regional identity of the Uzbek population are high up on the political agenda at present. Political tension surrounds the divide between the populations of the various regions. The Buddhists have traditionally been under-represented in the Uzbek political structures, bureaucracy and army. The effects of prolonged impoverishment on inter-ethnic relations in such heterogeneous societies as those of Central Asia are likely to be unfavourable, because poverty is seldom evenly spread between ethnicities, and minorities are often made scapegoats for it. The neglect of ethnic minorities in Uzbekistan is also a challenge to overall development of the society.” (Bhat and Rather 2011:86-87)

“Many of these ethnic groups in Uzbekistan were artificially created by Soviet rule. Before Soviet rule the whole Central Asia was ruled by the Khanates without since 16th century. The creation of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in October 1924 formed a new kind of Uzbek identity. The Soviet policy of cutting across existing ethnic and linguistic lines in the region to create Uzbekistan and the other new republics also sowed tension and strife among the Central Asian groups that inhabited the region. In particular, the territory of Uzbekistan was drawn to include the two main Tajik cultural centres, Bokhara and Samarqand, as well as parts of the Fergana Valley to which other ethnic groups could lay claim. This readjustment of ethnic politics caused animosity and territorial claims among Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, and others through much of the Soviet era, but conflicts grew especially sharp after the collapse of central Soviet rule.” (Curtis 1997:409)

“The Ferghana Valley has always been the most diverse and prosperous region in whole Central Asia. It has remained the centre of cultural and religious development in the region. Consequently, it is often seen as a source of ethnic conflict. The region suffered badly after disintegration of USSR and its now-struggling economy puts different groups in competition against one another for control of resources and political power. Minor clashes between different groups happen regularly in the valley. What is important to notice, though, is that virtually all cases of ethnically-motivated tensions were not caused by a primordial, supposedly irresolvable ethnic hatred but by very practical competition over scarce resources or disagreement over the role of minority groups in local politics. Essentially, what is often regarded as

‘ethnic tension’ is simply group competition that takes an ethnic form in a context in which the state cannot deliver services and resources to its citizens.” (Belafatti 2014)

“Large part of these issues could be solved with more accountability in decision-making processes at a local level, which would in turn result in better administrative performance and limit the scarcity of resources behind many of the recent clashes. However, even if these are caused by very practical concerns and take place between somehow artificial ethnic definitions, they still dig gaps between communities that end up consolidating ethnic contraposition and fuelling desires of revenge which may prove extremely hard to quell.” (Belafatti 2014)

In such a diverse country the ethnic conflicts are unavoidable. In Uzbekistan, most of the times the conflicts are caused by scarcity of resources and lack of economic opportunities due to which individuals unite under one group to fight for common group interests. The lack of political opportunity to minority groups is also a reason for ethnic conflicts. Such conflicts always become an obstacle in the way of social development and betterment of country as a whole. “The Uzbek society is marred by unchanging ethnic, religious and regional divisions that effectively prevent excluded groups from upward economic mobility and inclusion in the social and political mainstream.” ((Bhat and Rather 2011:87)

Religion and Social Change

Religion and society always influence each other. Religious organizations can be affected as they gradually adopt the worldview of society through the process of secularization, while society can be affected as religious adherents act out their religious belief systems in the world. Religious groups act to affect the politics of a society either to change laws that are more in keeping with their religious views or to work together to elect politicians who will do this for them in the political arena.

“Although Central Asia had remained isolated from the rest of the Muslim world since the 1920s, the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 and the Mujaheddin’s resistance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s had facilitated the growth of Political Islam in Uzbekistan, particularly in Ferghana Valley.” (Karagiannis 2006:261-280)

Today the Islamic way of life reflects in every aspect of Uzbekistan's society. During Soviet rule, traditional Islamic activities were suppressed. People were not allowed to profess their religion in public. Certain inhuman practices like child marriage, kalym system were abolished by the Soviet government. But after getting independence the old traditional culture is reviving in Uzbekistan.

Under the Soviet Union the religion was heavily controlled: mosques were closed and Muslim education was banned. "Beginning in 1988, Uzbeks have revived Islam, particularly in the Ferghana Valley, where mosques have been renovated. The call to prayer was everywhere heard five times a day before the government ordered the removal of the mosques' loudspeakers in 1998."¹

"The state encourages a moderate form of Islam, but Karimov feared the creation of an Islamic state. Since the beginning of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan's terror campaign in February 1999, he cracked down even further on what he perceived as extremists, raising claims of human rights abuses. The government now is particularly concerned about what it labels Wahhabism, a fundamentalist Sunni sect that took hold in the Ferghana Valley following independence. Most Sunni Uzbeks are led by a state-appointed mufti. Independent imams are sometimes repressed, and in May 1998, a law requiring all religious groups to register with the government was enacted. In addition to leading worship, the Muslim clergy has led mosque restoration efforts and is playing an increasing role in religious education."²

The people of modern Uzbekistan are still under the influence of traditional religious culture. There are new Islamic institutions and higher education centres coming up in the country. People are sending their wards to other Muslim countries for higher education in Islam. But Islam is not considered as a serious threat in Uzbekistan, because the so-called "official Islam", that segment of religious life revolving around the functioning mosques, registered mullahs and officially recognised religious communities, is closely monitored and regulated. All working mosques and clerics are registered with the Council for Religious Affairs.

¹ Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their Culture, [Online; web] Accessed 15 march 2017, URL: <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

² Erlich, Jeff, Countries and their Culture, [Online; web] Accessed 15 march 2017 URL: <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan provides for a secular state and establishes the separation of religion and state. However, the government's policy towards Islam contradicts the spirit of the constitution. "Since the early 1990s, the Karimov regime has attempted to utilise the Muslim religion as a tool in solidifying its monopoly on power, while fostering patriotism among ethnic Uzbeks. In 1992, the Uzbek leader wrote that 'Islam is the religion of our forefathers, the substance and essence of the Muslims' daily existence' (Karimov, 1992, p. 18). Moreover, Karimov performed the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) in May 1992 and his government takes pride in subsidising citizens' participation in the annual hajj. The Uzbek authorities have also sponsored a variety of events celebrating great Muslim thinkers like Imam Bukhari and Khoja Bahoutdin Naqshband. In other words, the regime has encouraged the re-Islamisation of the Uzbek state. From its point of view, Uzbek identity cannot be separated from Muslim identity. It is not a surprise, therefore, that the Uzbek authorities have constantly harassed evangelical Christian congregations that have launched an intense proselytising campaign targeting ethnic Uzbeks." (Karagiannis 2006:263)

"The minorities under law are given equal rights but there are instances of discrimination against them. The politicisation of Islam in the region has resulted in the formation of secret organisations like Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Hizb Ut-Tahrir Al-Islami. IMU is associated with Al-Qaeda, Taliban and other jihadist groups of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia. It aims to overthrow the government of Uzbekistan and create an Islamic Caliphate. All these are posing the threat of Islamic fundamentalism in the region." (Karagiannis 2006: 263)

Women in Uzbekistan

The progress of a society can be understood by the status of women in that society. More precisely, how a woman feels about her role in the family is the true criteria for understanding the progress made by the society. It is because family is traditionally regarded as the sphere of woman realization. Uzbekistan has always been a patriarchal society, where role of women is limited to the household only. After getting independence though some positive changes are made but the social structure is still inclined towards patriarchy.

The constitution of Uzbekistan guarantees equal rights to women and men and other laws like family, labour, criminal code also contain non-discrimination clause. But the social and legal situation of women in Uzbekistan is influenced by religion, local traditions, the Soviet rule and changing social norms since independence. Depicting the situation of Uzbekistan regarding women Ozge writes, "It is clear that in Uzbekistan, all citizens of the country must be treated equally in the matters of family and social life before the law. However, despite such laws, especially underage marriages of women cannot be prevented. It is stated that in 2006, 4.9% of the girls between 15-19 years were either engaged or married. Demographic and Health Surveys from the year 2002 indicate that 61.3% of such marriages were conducted without the will of the girls. Also, many marriages have no official registration, so the women who want to leave that kind of marriage would not have any legal rights to protect and guarantee them in the case of divorce and widowhood."(Oz Ozge 3013:136)

"Women's subordination in the family and having several children are common for Uzbek society as consequence of the strict religious restrictions of life according to *adat* and *shariyah*. Such type of conservative society is maintained throughout in Uzbekistan's history through the routine of daily life, forms of social interaction, rituals, and habits. Such environment has always cultivated generally negative attitudes toward a person's individual value. Where man sought importance within their own families to be a master in their own home, women are considered as subordinates and dependent on males. Man has leading and control duties in family. The wife has subordinate position, she has role of manager of her household, nursing for husband, children and for elder members of family." (Musawah 2009:01)

The male child is given preference in decision making in family affairs. In cases of arrangement of a bride parents ask opinion of their elder son. Girls are under the control of their brothers. If elder child is a boy, he should assign the work for other children what they should do at farm or at home.

"The national action plan to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee's Concluding Observations draws attention to the need to eliminate gender role stereotypes within the Uzbek family and society. Although they are not part of any law or policy,

notions about the traditional role of women, connected to motherhood, children, and family, are prevalent and are often at odds with women's public roles in political office or in business. Such patriarchal values have become more pronounced in the years since Uzbekistan's independence from the former Soviet Union. The number of economically active women remains considerably lower than the number of economically active men. Women's economic opportunities are still greater in the informal sector, and women are more likely to earn income through small family-based businesses such as farming or handicrafts. The government has undertaken programs to provide women with formal jobs, many of which focus on developing home-based work.”³ (ADB 2014: xi)

“Uzbekistan joined the UN Convention on Discrimination against Women in 1995. Since then various initiatives were taken which aimed at encouraging girls to pursue their education. A mass-media campaign was also encouraging girls to select from a wide range of careers, and the Government had launched a school program, which advocated gender parity as a basis for morality.” (United Nations 2006)

The Islamic culture thus plays its role in every aspect of society. The girl education is not given due importance as her ultimate goal is considered to get married and have children. It is very difficult for girl to prolong the time of the wedding after an engagement for continuing education or other reasons. Family of the boy can refuse for her education and it will be shame for family. It is usually the reason of dropping girls from secondary or high education.

“The problem of dowry as well as kalym still persists in Uzbekistan. The bride is supposed to bring all goods for her new house. There is exchange of gifts between families and they should be given according to the status of the family. If mother in law is not pleased by the presents she usually criticizes the bride and the gifts. The criticism usually becomes the reason for conflicts between bride and the mother in law.” (Musawah 2009:02)

³ ADB's Gender Assessment Report (2014); the report is based on surveys in Households and potential beneficiaries to change the socio-economic positions of the households.

On the other hand there is a culture of bride price (*kalym*). The marriage is as costly for boy as is for a girl. The amount of *mehar*⁴ is fixed according the price of the dowry brought by the girl. The daughter in law has to do all the daily chores. “In present day Uzbekistan, women occupy secondary status in the society. In the patriarchal structure of society men behave aggressively and dominate women, as a result women never get justice. The early marriage tradition in Uzbekistan results in incomplete education of women, bigger families with more children and lack of welfare of women.” (Ibrahim 2013:50)

The other problems in patriarchal families are domestic violence, polygamy and divorce. The domestic violence statistic doesn't exist. Society does not recognize domestic violence as humiliation of rights of women. Society considers that humiliated woman is punished for her bad behaviour or she does not do her woman's obligations well. Women are afraid of losing the status of married women. Also she worries for the future of her children, especially girls because it will be difficult to find husband for daughter of single woman. The form of protests of woman against regular domestic violence generally resulted in suicide. The cases of domestic violence lie under quasi-judicial status and social norms prevent women from filing complaints against such tortures. Man claims that wife should be absolutely submissive to his orders. He considers his wife and children as his property. .

“There is problem of divorce in the patriarchal society of Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan, there are neighbourhood councils for family disputes. But these neighbourhood councils rarely support women who saw an exit from domestic violence in divorce. It is because the neighbourhood councils express opinion of patriarchal environment of neighbours and relatives. They pressed on a woman to persuade to return to the family in favour of the future of children and to adequately play her family role as subordinate and submissive person.” (Human Rights Watch 2001:20-23)

“Problem of divorce became actual because the right of women to have part of family property was broken because it belonged to parents of husband and she could not receive place there after divorce and parental sides of relatives do not give place for her living and so very often women stayed after divorce outside at the street. Many of

⁴ In Islamic tradition, the groom has to give a particular amount to bride as a mandatory payment which legally becomes her property.

them were forced to migrate illegally to capital or abroad for work in domestic servitude. There is great number of victims of human-trafficking among divorced women who were before victims of domestic violence. Today, several NGOs are coming up in demand of new legislations for domestic violence and crime against women. Between 1995 and 2005 Uzbek NGOs questioned the legality of neighbourhood councils and advocated that they had no rights to be a barrier for willing of woman to claim divorce. After advocacy on this topic woman could appeal to court about divorce without permission of neighbourhood councils.” (Musawah 2009:04)

“Cases of suicide by the victims of domestic violence are alarming in Uzbekistan, particularly in cases when women end their lives by self-immolation. According to Social scientists of Uzbekistan, female suicide was one of the first social problems to be openly discussed during the brief interlude of glasnost. Since then, the government has not allowed to open these cases in the press, although it was discussed in a report produced by the Gender in Development Unit of the Cabinet of Ministers for the United Nations, Beijing+5 review, and also in the government’s report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, reviewed in January 2001. According to NGO activists, persistent inattention to violence within families, contributes to the number of female suicides. Often, local officials turn their attention to cases of family violence only when they fear that women may be on the verge of committing suicide.” (Human Rights Watch 2001: 41)

“After 1991, the practice of polygamy is also increased. In Uzbek society, polygamy is discussed as to support single women who have right to have family and children. Ideologists of polygamy contempt single women and recommended to restore polygamy in official legislation. Although civil legislation forbids polygamy it exists according to *adat*. Practice of polygamy is wide spread in new rich strata and clergy. There are many cases of non-adult girls involved to polygamy. The second wife has no legal status of married woman and very often they become victims of domestic violence. In cases when husbands of these girls push them out from home they have no legal protection. Without education, profession and home, most of them fall in the trap of trafficking of women.” (Musawah 2009:404)

“Divorce in Uzbekistan is not difficult especially if the application was made with the mutual consent of both spouses. However at the same time, there were some legal provisions which aimed to protect women in these situations, such as a husband cannot divorce his wife if she is pregnant or if they had a child under one year of age (article 39 of family code).⁵ In Urban areas women are more educated and they raise their voice against unlawful divorce. But the rural women still depend upon neighbourhood councils for such aid.” (Ibrahim 2013:51)

In order to get social recognition economic independence is a must. The representation of women in formal sector of economy is very less in Uzbekistan. Most of the women working in formal economic activities belong to urban areas.

“The labour market exhibits distinct gender patterns, with women overly represented in public sector jobs (health care and education), which carry lower salaries, and men predominating in technical and other more profitable fields (construction, transport and communications, and industry). Comparing the distribution of women and men in several sectors of the labour market across time, gender gaps appear to be increasing in sectors where men predominate but decreasing in fields traditionally held by women. This dynamic suggests that men are more able than women to enter non-traditional jobs. Women also are underrepresented in upper managerial positions. Such patterns of occupational segregation—both horizontal and vertical—contribute directly to the gender wage gap and impede inclusive growth. Unemployment and limited jobs continue to be the primary push factors for labour migration, and men represent the larger share of migrants. Still, labour migration is becoming increasingly feminized, and women’s lack of competitiveness in local labour markets is leading them to seek work elsewhere. As single-income households struggle to survive on the remittances of the male migrant, women are making important contributions to the family budget.”⁶

As far as women’s representation in political life is concerned, the state has paid little attention for bringing structural reforms. Moreover, steps have been taken to prevent

⁵ Family code, Part 7, Article 39 says that, ‘A husband does not have the right without his wife’s consent to initiate divorce proceedings during his wife’s pregnancy and for one year after the birth of a child.’

⁶ The survey conducted by ADB in Uzbekistan shows the status of women in Uzbek society. Women although more engaged in family businesses but the status of women in society is improving with their engagements in economic activities.

women from trafficking, to eliminate gender stereotypes in public and professional life. The lack of financial resources, limited opportunities to access leadership experience, gender bias society are some problems which prevent women from choosing a political career.

“The top official keep raising their voice about women’s under representation in political positions and governance. In 200, quota system was introduced, according to this, 30% candidates of political party should be women. As a result, the number of women in the Oliy Majlis (National Assembly) has increased with each election. Still, women account for only 16% of all members of legislative, representative, and executive bodies in Uzbekistan. It indicates that women have not yet obtained the critical minority considered necessary for an effective voice in decision making or agenda setting. However, it is an improvement from 1992 to 1998, when women’s representation was a fairly steady 9.4%. Although a number of women hold very high offices— for example, the speaker of the legislative chamber and the ombudsman for human rights— women remain underrepresented in other branches of government. For example, a mere 4.2% of seats in the Oliy Majlis are occupied by women. Women are also underrepresented in bodies of local authority; there are no female *hokim*⁷, although there are female deputy *hokim*.” (ADB 2014:23)

“In Uzbekistan, the water supply and sanitation system is also impacting women’s life. Uzbekistan has inherited a well developed network of water supply and sanitation. But the lack of maintenance led to poor sanitation and water supply. There is significant variation in access to safe drinking water. Inadequacies in the water supply and sanitation system affect entire populations but particularly affect women because they are primarily responsible for water collection and storage as well as other domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing, and the hygiene of children and other family members.” (ADB 2014: xiii)

The gender assessment report of Uzbekistan by ADB found out that “Uzbekistan has a legal and policy framework for the advancement of women but has not developed policies on mainstreaming gender into national and local development processes. The phrase ‘gender equality’ is largely understood to refer to social issues of particular concern to women; integration of gender issues remains limited in hard sectors such

⁷ Hokim are the local leaders who work in neighbourhood councils.

as infrastructure development, transport, and energy. State programs generally address immediate concerns (for example, maternal mortality, job creation, or support for small businesses) but not underlying gender inequalities”.⁸

Deeper structural disparities in position of women and men in the socio-economic construct, the difference in their level education, their relative access to assets and resources, their ability to influence decision making and their access to social protection are some major barriers to gender equality in Uzbekistan. Moreover, the tradition and culture of Uzbekistan put women at a second place after man. Education, financial independence and modern values are lacking in Uzbek society. They are hampering the process of social change in the country.

Human Trafficking

“Human trafficking is one of the most dangerous types of transnational organized crimes. It has become a problem for the world community, including in Uzbekistan. Children and women are main target of this crime. UAE, Russia, Kazakhstan, Thailand, Turkey, India, Indonesia, Israel, South Korea, Malaysia, Japan, Costa Rica are the main countries to which Uzbekistan’s women and girls are trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Not only women but men are also trafficked for various purposes. From Uzbekistan, men are trafficked to Kazakhstan and Russia as forced labour in construction, cotton and tobacco industries. There is also internal trafficking of men and women for the purposes of domestic servitude, forced labour in the agricultural and construction industries, and for commercial sexual exploitation. Many school-age children are forced to work in the cotton harvest each year. The children are forced to work in cotton farms instead of going school. The cotton industry in Uzbekistan is a big business and is completely controlled by the country's brutal authoritarian regime. Along with this, children in Uzbekistan are also engaged in prostitution. Young girls are reportedly trafficked to Persian Gulf, Asia and Europe for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.” (Trafficking in Persons Report 2008:257)

⁸ The gender assessment report of ADB in Uzbekistan did a survey. The Uzbekistan country gender assessment builds on a previous assessment, conducted in 2005, and the experience gained by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The 2005 assessment provided an overview of gender issues in a number of broad areas as well as general recommendations for gender mainstreaming in ADB projects.

“The Penal Code prohibits the recruitment of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation, with higher penalties for taking children out of the country. In 2003, the government prosecuted 101 people for trafficking-related crimes; as of February 2004 there had been 80 convictions.”⁹

The government of Uzbekistan is making significant efforts to tackle the problem of human trafficking but it is not fully complying with the minimum standards for eliminating the problem of human trafficking. Moreover, the government still needs to amend its criminal code to increase penalties for convicted traffickers. The government is reluctant to fulfil its duty to provide assistance to NGOs which are providing assistance to victims of trafficking.

According to US directorate of state report on human trafficking, “The government also did not take steps to end forced child labour during the annual cotton harvest. However, in March 2008 Uzbekistan adopted ILO Conventions 138 (on minimum age of employment) and 182 (on elimination of the worst forms of child labour) and is working with ILO on implementation. The Government of Uzbekistan also demonstrated its increasing commitment to combat trafficking in March 2008 by adopting a comprehensive anti-trafficking law. The new law establishes a coordination mechanism for government ministries responsible for various anti-trafficking efforts, promises state funding will be used to provide victim protection and assistance, and ensures that victims will not be punished for acts committed as a result of being trafficked.”¹⁰

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the major section of the victims of trafficking and prostitution is of adolescent children. Most of the children come from impoverished rural families which are unable to deal with the economic problems. The government spending on social safety is negligible in the country due to which children of poor and broken families fall prey of trafficking. “IWPR found that

⁹ The department of Labour’s 2004 findings on worst form of child labour. URL: U.S. Dept of Labor Bureau of International Labor Affairs, (2005), [Online: web] Accessed 6 April 2017, URL: www.dol.gov/ilab/media/reports/iclp/tda2004/uzbekistan.htm

¹⁰ The department of Labour’s 2004 findings on worst form of child labour. URL: U.S. Dept of Labor Bureau of International Labor Affairs, (2005), [Online: web] Accessed 6 April 2017, URL: www.dol.gov/ilab/media/reports/iclp/tda2004/uzbekistan.htm

teenage girls are bought and sold as commodities, and in some cases shipped off to become sex slaves in the Gulf. While some argue that the legislation is incomplete, the main problem seems to be enforcement. IWPR heard reports of corruption in both the judiciary and the police. In addition, where law-enforcement agencies are doing their best to protect minors in the sex trade, they are often badly under-resourced.” (Babakulov, Domagalskaya, Lyanskaya, Pyatibratova, and Sadanov 2004),

The increasing criminal activities including Human trafficking is a result of lack of awareness, poverty and education in Uzbekistan’s society. The victims of such crimes do not get social acceptance. Various NGOs are working for bringing awareness for trafficking and sensitivity towards victims along with law enforcement agencies. For bring productive social change in Uzbekistan, society need to be aware and sensitive for human development.

Economic Problems

Uzbekistan is a developing country. The government is working on creating jobs and reducing the scope of administrative interventions. The state is reforming the inspections and permit regimes, reducing barriers in registration for new businesses and start ups along with tax reforms. However, there are many areas of concern in the country’s economic development.

Uzbekistan is a *'doubly landlocked'*¹¹ country having no access to sea. Its location makes external trade both difficult and expensive. Although Uzbekistan is rich in mineral resources but they are far from fully exploited. “Despite its GDP growth – even during the global economic recession – Uzbekistan still suffers from its incomplete transition to a fully market oriented system. The country is excessively reliant upon a handful of commodities (gold, oil and gas and cotton), which represent more than 60 % of its exports as well as a significant share of the country's GDP.” (Bendini 2013:08)

The economy plays a vital role in transforming the social structure of a country. After gaining independence Uzbekistan adopted for a market based economy. Although the progress was a cautious one but it has shown respectable achievements. “Still 16% of Uzbekistan population live below poverty line. Uzbekistan is still a predominantly

¹¹ Uzbekistan is surrounded by the landlocked countries and it is also landlocked.

rural society and agriculture is a dominant sector of country's economy. While Uzbekistan has experienced increased urbanisation but 75% of people in extreme poverty still live in rural areas. Child health care is also a problem in the country with 34 children die within one year of age on every 1000 live births." (UNDP in Uzbekistan 2015)

There is a lack of medical facilities in rural areas. In the Aral Sea region people are suffering from various diseases due to pollution and climate change. Children are born with abnormalities. It has a drastic impact on the country's regional economy also. The drinking water so polluted and state provided water and sanitation facilities are not maintained properly. People are forced to rely on untreated water which brings health problems. Unhealthy people cannot earn and the burden of treatment brings double burden on their pocket.

"One of the most difficult challenges the country is facing is a lack of employment opportunities, and a high disparity in living standards between rural and urban areas. High unemployment and low wages have resulted in a mass labour migration to Russia and Kazakhstan, while remittances have accounted for about 10-12 percent of the nation's GDP between 2010 and 2014." (UNDP in Uzbekistan, 2015)

Uzbek economy is mainly dependent on agriculture and mineral resources. Lack of market economy is adversely affecting the business climate in the country. Moreover, the system is neither transparent nor competitive. "In 2012, Uzbekistan ranked 152 of 185 economies in the World Bank's Doing Business assessment. Corruption is endemic in Uzbekistan and affects all aspects of the country's economic and public life. Uzbekistan ranked 170 of 176 countries in the 2013 'Corruption Index' report published by Transparency International. Most aspects of the economic life of the country are influenced by corruption or nepotism. A recent report the German Bank Bayern Landesbank concludes: 'it is to be assumed that a substantial portion of the foreign exchange flowing into the country via export earnings and foreign investment ends up in the foreign bank accounts of the leadership hierarchy'." (Bendini 2013:10)

"After independence Uzbekistan moved towards market economy. However, Uzbekistan's road to a market economy is far from success, almost all sectors of economy are under state control. The economic system is dominated by elites and

characterised by sever distortions. The overall business environment remains difficult, and foreign investments is encouraged only in selected cases. Social development has consistently lagged behind economic growth, and poverty has shrunk more slowly than could be expected.” (Bendini 2013:26)

Other important issues in the society of Uzbekistan include lack of awareness for socio-political reforms, lack of environmental concerns, lack of transparency in governance and economic structure. There are a number of environmental challenges compounded by the country’s geography and climate, by its rapidly-increasing population, and by its economic activities including those that have damaged the nation’s fragile ecosystems. Steps have been taken to combat ecological issues and poverty but there a long way to attain standardized position in the field of health, education and social development.

Environmental Problems

There is a complex relationship between human and natural environment. Human exploit natural resources for it material benefits. But it is also important to preserve this environment for living a healthy life. In Uzbekistan, the problem of environment damage is becoming worse with time. The Aral Sea region is facing drastic ecological damage. The Aral Sea has shrunken to one fifth of the volume of water it held in 1960. The burden of irrigation from Syr Darya and Amu Darya that started during soviet regime led to depletion of water level in Aral Sea. In order to grow cotton in this saline area the region requires excessive irrigation as cotton is highly dependent on water. Most of the Aral Sea region now has turned into dry saline wasteland.

Due to lack of water the ecological system of the region get disturbed. Many animals and plants are now extinct from the basin region. Windstorms bring high amount of salt and sand with them, as a result of which people of the region are suffering from many skin diseases, tuberculosis like diseases. The dust storms which also contain salts, harmful chemicals, pesticides etc. have adversely affected the health of the people in the region. This toxic dust causes respiratory illness and certain types of cancer.

“The drying up of the Aral Sea has impacted on the local climate. Previously, the Sea played a moderating role. Loss of the Sea is leading to shorter, drier summers, longer,

colder winters, and decreased precipitation. Reduced growing seasons are contributing to decreased agricultural productivity.” (Whish-Wilson 2002:29)

Lakes and rivers in Uzbekistan have become very polluted due to flow of industrial wastes in the water bodies and use of pesticides and fertilizers in agriculture. This contaminated water is responsible for certain types of health disorders in the region. Moreover, excessive use of agricultural chemicals including DDT has also poisoned the soil in crop-growing areas.

“Due to the drinking of contaminated water, people are suffering from water borne diseases like cholera, typhoid, diphtheria etc. The consequences are more severe form women. There are cases of continuous miscarriages due to poor environment and high levels of pollution. Children are suffering from malnutrition especially in Aral Sea region. Poor health conditions in society can never leads to better socio-economic development. The level of productivity decreases due to poor health.” (Ataniyazova 2003:03)

Uzbekistan joined the United Nations in 1992. It is an active member in several UN programs and its specialised agencies. It is also a member of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. “Since 1991, Uzbekistan has been a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and in 1999; it signed the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation with the European Communities and their Member States.” The cooperation with other countries has provided better technology and monetary help for tackling with the problem of environment decay. (UN Environmental Performance Review 2001: 05)

Several NGOs are working in Uzbekistan to raise awareness among people for saving the environment and controlling pollution. Although government has also launched some programs like in 1999 the National Strategy on Sustainable development, which emphasized integrated development and outlined policy goals such as supporting ecosystem integrity through efficient natural resource management, mitigating the impacts of economic growth on natural environment, environmental protection, leveraging international co-operation for climate change efforts and the need for a climate change policy. There are specific policies and laws on water, efficient use of

energy, emissions and forests; however they are not developed within an overarching framework of climate change policy.

With the above discussed issues there are several other social issues which are although not very critical but can become so if not paid attention. For example drug abuse, child trafficking, growing Islamic fundamentalism etc. Such problems can never let a society to progress. The most recent study of the prevalence of problem drug use in Uzbekistan was held under the auspices of UNODC in 2006. “It estimated that the number of problematic drug users in 2006 was 0.5 % of the adult population, or 80 000 people. Drug treatment specialists have expressed caution about this high figure, and more reliable analysis is required using standard scientific epidemiological methods. The study also found out that most of the injecting drug users are also suffering from HIV disease. An analysis of the social situation of people who committed drug crimes showed that 48.3 % were unemployed, and 26.5 % had committed crimes previously. People aged 18–30 accounted for 17 % of the total.”¹²

In Ferghana valley, the wahhabism form of Islam is spreading roots. With the growing problem of global terrorism, it is necessary to have a watch over such activities. The people in Uzbekistan are moving towards Islam even after several years of Soviet rule. In Central Asia though people practice moderate Islam but the rising trends of going abroad for higher Islamic studies, opening of new madrassahs and Islamic universities shows revival of Islam in a new manner. Such issues are slowing the speed of social progress in Uzbekistan.

¹² European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug addiction (EMCDDA) (2014), The study in Uzbekistan over Drug abuse was made under Central Asia Drug Action Program.

Chapter-5

Conclusion

This research work was an attempt to understand the process of social change in Uzbekistan through the lens of various theories of social change. It is a complex task to comprehend the process of social change in any society because there are a variety of factors which contribute towards bringing about a change in the social structure and more often than not, one can see that the overall change that a society witnesses is an amalgamation of the interplay between these factors. In order to develop a coherent understanding of what social change implies and how it comes into being, this research work made an attempt to explore some major theories regarding social change.

With special emphasis to understand the social change in Uzbekistan, it can be stated with a certain degree of confidence that resorting to any one particular theory which encapsulates how this society has evolved will not do justice towards explaining the underlying complexities. However, various theories, with their own set of merits and demerits, provide some useful insights to look into the matter.

If a person attempts to look at the change in a society through evolutionary theory it can be found that change is inevitable and is a characteristic feature of human society. The internal forces that are present in a society are the drivers of this change. This is applicable for each society and Uzbekistan is no exception to it. But within evolutionary theory, the multi-linear theory of evolution can be a better fit towards understanding social change in Uzbekistan. The reason being that this theory uses a periodic approach and emphasises the importance of major incidences and unparalleled social, historical and environmental circumstances that play a defining role in explaining the particular course of change that takes place in a society.

As a reaction to the theory of evolution, functional theory of social change postulates that a society is a balanced system of mutually dependent socio-economic establishments which serve their functions to maintain the society. When Sovietisation of central Asia was taking place, Soviet Government tried to change the

social and cultural systems of Uzbekistan in the name of modernisation. There was systemic liquidation of traditional institutions and culture, building of a new soviet society to replace the older one. The society in Uzbekistan was reluctant to accept this change in its customs and traditions. As a result, there was a constant tussle between internal forces and forced external pressure. Ultimately, Soviet system did prevail but people still managed to partly maintain their culture, though not completely.

Another alternative method to analyse the changes in societies can be through Cyclic theory which postulates that civilisations and societies change in cycles of birth, growth, maturity and death, in the same way that an individual takes birth, attains maturity, get old and die. A variant of Cyclic theory which is called Pendular theory of social change can be applicable to Uzbekistan's society. It states that the course of history continues to fluctuate between two poles; ideational and sensational. At present, the society in Uzbekistan is striving for betterment while struggling with challenges that are impeding the pace at which progress is taking place.

The economic theory of social change should also be given due importance because economic development of a society is important if the society is aiming to achieve better living standards. One prominent economic interpretation of social change is Marxism. Marxist theory rests on the fundamental assumption that changes in the 'economic infrastructure' are the prime factors that induce a change in social order. There is always a struggle going on between the haves and have nots. Marx was of the view that the class struggle provided an impetus for social change. Although, Marx failed in achieving a classless and stateless society, his contribution in understanding the concept of social change cannot be neglected.

In case of Uzbekistan, under Soviet government the social structure was based on equality. The government, in order to maximise the production, included women in the production system. The economic independence of women made them aware of their importance in socio-economic structure. If one looks at this from a Marxist point of view, the inclusion of women into the socio-economic structure actually facilitated and paved way for economic development as well as social development. The conflict theory of social change believes that a society's transition and evolution is not a smooth process. The conflict groups constantly struggle and by way of this struggle, the society gradually evolves. But as P.S. Cohen (1968) writes, "The contention that

group conflict is a sufficient condition for social change is obviously false. It is arguable that structured conflict, when it involves a fairly equal balance of forces, actually obstructs change which might otherwise occur.” Uzbekistan’s society can be considered an apt example to understand this because strong and comparable differences between regional, ethnic and racial groups exist here. Such circumstances make it somewhat difficult to promote economic development through welfare policies. This kind of up gradation in a society requires a certain degree of consensus to prevail. In such a situation, conflict may lead the society towards a deadlock rather than change. If a society has some pre-existing and deep socio-economic divisions, it might fetter the process of development and constrain the onset of change.

This research work also attempted to explore how technology has played a major role in bringing about Social change via introducing a relative change in social structure. The development of information technology, for example, has brought people closer. Uzbekistan is no exception to this because as a result of advancements in information technology, the spread of information has made society here aware of the happenings in the other parts of the world. In cities, rather than an overt emphasis on religion and religious thoughts, people are becoming more secular, rational and scientific in their approach. Rationality and scientific attitude have shaken the very foundations of religion and the role of technological developments in bringing about this change must be taken seriously. The technological development has improved the living standards through betterment of means of communication, medical facilities and access to clean drinking water which are all a product of technology.

Although one must exercise caution and also recognize that problems such as unemployment, pollution, environmental degradation etc. are a reflection of poor use of technology. Specifically, the problem of environmental damage in Uzbekistan is a result of over exploitation of natural resources, especially during Soviet rule. Because multiple factors, be it religious, technological, economic or educational are responsible for bringing transformations in the Uzbek society, there isn’t one unified theory that can do justice to understand the process of this change. Rather multiple theories provide us different perspectives to look into the situation

With regards to the social history of Uzbekistan, it has always been a traditional and patriarchal society. The culture of Uzbekistan is very much influenced by its

neighbouring countries and their civilisation especially the influence of Persian culture is very prominent because the very first people who inhabited the region near Amu Darya in Uzbekistan were nomads from Iran in 1st century BC. In 7th century BC, Arabs invaded Central Asia and this is how the new religion, Islam was introduced to the region. Thus, the ethnic composition of Uzbekistan includes ancient tribes having characteristics of both Iranian and Arab culture. By 10th century BC Islam became the region's main religion and way of life.

Before the arrival of Russians, the political system was completely based on Islamic laws. Uzbekistan had feudal political power structure. The administrative system, land tenure, the taxation system was Perso-Arabic. The rulers were cruel and oppressive and common people had no say in political processes. The society was purely patriarchal. Women had no right to property and her life revolved around the family only. There was joint family system which usually had two generations.

There was patriarchal society, the eldest male being the head of the family. Mothers played an important role in children's socialisation and elders in the family taught social norms and values to their children. There were large families. Agriculture was the main source of income and all family members worked on farms. Women were considered to differ from men in their roles, potential and abilities. Their life was limited to the household and upbringing of the children. Both child marriage and polygamy were practiced in Uzbekistan.

Tashkent, the most important city, was captured by the Tsarist army in June 1865. Tsarist regime did not interfere with local tradition and culture. But when Bolshevik Party came to power in 1917 drastic changes were made in all spheres of the society, economy, politics and religion. For the first time in Central Asia's history women were given equal rights. They became part of the economy. The introduction of Russians also changed the daily life of the people. The influence of Russian culture on local people could be seen in their dressing patterns, cooking, decoration of houses etc. People now became more open and less patriarchal. Girls and boys were given equal education in co-education schools. Modern education system came to replace the old Islamic schools. Soviet government played a vital role in introducing modern education in the Central Asian countries.

Soviet regime was secular and did not believe in any religion. It suppressed the Islamic tradition. Mosques were closed and converted to libraries, schools and state offices. Russians for the first time brought fine arts to Central Asia. Thus, the Soviet system brought some positive changes in the society.

Although Soviet government provided social progress but there were some negative impacts also. Soviet government was against religious activities. The reason for suppression is purely economic. The state wanted people to work in factories and produce more and more. The Soviet state failed to provide equal opportunities for growth and self-realisation of the individual, both in society. Moreover, the forceful suppression of religion and tradition made people reluctant to accept the changes. This is the reason why after 70 years of Soviet rule, after getting independence people turned back to their old tradition and have embraced Islamic culture again.

Post Soviet Uzbekistan had to deal with severe economic problems like collapse of production system and bankruptcy. In this scenario Uzbekistan went for adopting democratic government though a controlled democracy. The political development in Uzbekistan was also influenced by the wars and movements going on in neighbouring countries like Orange Revolution of Ukraine. “In 2008, electoral reforms were introduced in Uzbekistan which includes increasing the number of seats from 120 to 150, delegation of some presidential powers to parliament and Prime Minister and reservation for 30% deputy seats to women in all political parties.”¹

Immediately after getting independence Uzbekistan government was running out of budget. The funding for education was cut down and the construction of new schools was delayed which in turn impeded the development of education in the country. The theories of social change impress upon the idea that education is one of the drivers of social change so in a way these budget cuts can be looked at as fetters in the process of progress. But the country has made efforts for educational reforms and as a result of such efforts, today Uzbekistan has 99.6% literacy rate. (CIA World Factbook 2016)

In order to accommodate an upsurge in light industry, the vocational curricula were modified. However, the standard of education has fallen in post Soviet era. The funds

¹ Embassy of Uzbekistan to United States, “Social Issues”, [Online: web] Accessed 28 March 2017 URL: http://www.uzbekistan.org/social_issues/

for primary education have been cut down while government has continued to subsidise University education. However, the shortage of basic infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories, computers and data banks, and publishing facilities for propagation of research findings have had a negative impact on the quality of higher education.

The constitution of Republic of Uzbekistan provides equal rights to both men and women. The government supports secular Islam. The revival of Islamic culture is visible in all aspects of society. The people of Uzbekistan follow moderate Islam. In the field of art and culture the European theatrical forms are visible in Uzbekistan. Cultural change in post-Soviet era is often related to the desire to become "normal" again by adopting the practices which are familiar from the past and leaving the experiences of communism. But it should be noted that before arrival of Soviet rule, people of Central Asia were themselves inclined towards European culture. Uzbekistan's pace of reform has been slow and delayed even after attaining independence. Therefore, the culture production in Uzbekistan remains much like the way it was under Soviet rule. The Soviet government wanted to generate loyalty for the state among the people, so it tried to retain control over culture production by controlling the forms of expression and limiting expression to approved national traditions and universal human values.

The change in society is best reflected in family structure as family is the basic unit of any society. Moreover, to get an insight into the status of women in society it is necessary to know what impression women have about their role in the family. In Uzbekistan, the family life did not change much after independence. There is still joint family system and male elder is still the head of the family. Male child is given preference.

Following independence, the cases of divorce have increased in Uzbekistan. For men giving divorce is easier. "Although, the constitution provides for equality, but state institutions prevent them from getting a divorce. Despite the growth in overt Muslim observance and Uzbek traditional customs since independence in 1991, the state has retained Soviet legislation guaranteeing equal rights for women, and the government has policies to promote women in work. Legal marriage is governed by secular state institutions rather than the clergy, and women have full property and divorce rights.

While these safeguards look good in the law books, in practice things are very different. Strong social conventions make it difficult for women to complain about domestic abuse, and the ultimate step of divorce is discouraged by local community or ‘mahalla’ councils and by the judicial system. It shows the strong patriarchal character of the society.”²

This research work found that some of the problems and challenges that are hampering the social progress in Uzbekistan are ingrained in the very nature of the society in the form of patriarchy, lack of modern education, old religious rules, lower status of women in social structure etc. and these are all reflective of the age old traditions and customs. Apart from this, modern world problems are also visible in Uzbek society like drug abuse, human trafficking, pollution and environmental degradation and so on.

Amongst all these problems, issues pertaining to women deserve to be discussed with a special emphasis when social progress is being discussed in a society. Uzbekistan has poor record in political representation for women. In 2008 political reforms, the government has provided for 30% reservation for women in the parliament. Still at present there are only 16% women parliamentarians. In addition to women’s political representation, if the government really wants to emancipate the women, it needs to raise consciousness amongst people regarding the role and place of women in the society. To shift perceptions among men, gender should be given prime importance in the Government’s human rights programmes. In order to achieve social progress women emancipation is a must. No society can be called progressive if their women are not given their due rights in social structure.

In Uzbekistan, women are still confined to the sphere of household. After getting independence although women started taking part in economic activities but this change is only seen in cities. Rural areas are still conservative and more patriarchal. Saima Ibrahim (2013) argues that “there are no specific laws prohibiting domestic violence, to be treated like other crimes. In some areas polygamy is prevalent despite its illegal status. There is practically no public discussion in the media or otherwise on violence against women including domestic abuse by husband or in laws. In

² IWPR (2006), “Divorce System works against Uzbek women”, IWPR, [Online: web] Accessed 3 March 2017, URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/divorce-system-works-against-uzbek-women>

Uzbekistan, domestic violence has a quasi legal status. The facts of domestic violence are either hidden or discussed as isolated cases.”

The awareness regarding woman emancipation is now taking place with the introduction of democratic government. Uzbekistan’s constitution has provided equal rights to women as men. Still the status of women is subordinate to men in the society especially in rural areas. Government of Uzbekistan in 1995, after joining UN’s Women’s anti -discrimination Convention started giving priority to the development of non-governmental organizations which are working for the cause of women emancipation and the country now has about 200 NGOs.

“The non-governmental organisations are working in three basic areas: promoting women’s involvement in the country’s evolving market economy and improving their situation in the employment market, ensuring equal access to education and job skills through educational programmes; protecting women’s health and strengthening family planning practices; and protecting the interests of the mother and child.”³

After joining the UN Convention in 1995, girls’ education was given importance. There are provisions for rewards and awards for girls who are talented in education and other co-curricular activities. It also includes a presidential award that provides for educational funding for girls all over the country. The government has taken initiatives to draw girls in the sector of information and technology by opening IT centres throughout the state.

In spite of having tense geo-political situation, economic difficulties, the Uzbekistan Government has continued to work toward women issues. In recent years, the NGOs working for women have also become intrinsic for the democratic transformation of the country. Mekhr Women’s Association and the Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan are the best examples of NGOs with entrepreneurial activities.

The society of Uzbekistan is also influenced by the culture in neighbouring countries. Uzbekistan is a double landlocked country. It has always remained dependent on neighbouring countries for trade routes. Moreover, Central Asia lies between

³ UN Press Release (2006), “Economic, Political, Social Problems, Tense Geo-political Situation in Region Impede Implementation of Women’s anti-discrimination Convention” [Online: web] Accessed 12 March 2017, URL: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2006/wom1574.doc.htm>

crossroads of two civilisations; the impact of which is clearly visible of people of Central Asia. In more than two decades of independence, their societies, conditions of living of the inhabitants and several ethnic groups living in the country have experienced radical changes. The Orange revolution in Ukraine also influenced the political culture of Uzbekistan, as a result of which electoral reforms were introduced in 2008.

The then president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov initiated the procedure of making the democratic reforms more poignant and setting up of civil society by liberalizing political system and decentralising power with major amendments in the legislation. Accordingly, some powers of the president were transferred to the parliament and the prime minister. The amendments provided for the introduction of new procedure for nomination of the President as well as approval of the prime minister over government's decisions. Thus, it increases the parliament's oversight over the government. For the reformation of the society, an efficient system of state has become and public governing has become essential, which can ensure the irreversibility of democratic reforms.

Governments of Central-Asian states, including Uzbekistan in the past have faced the problem of Islamic fundamentalism during Afghan migration. Thus, in order to maintain internal stability, it has to deal with the growing problems like conflict escalation between secularism and Islamic fundamentalism. "According to M. Kaylan (2008), 'the natural resources of Central Asia, from Turkmenistan's natural gas to Kazakhstan's abundant oil, cannot reach the West free of Russia and Iran except through that narrow conduit in the Caucasus. Moscow's former colonies in Central Asia are Afghanistan's most desirable trading partners'."⁴

With the introduction of Afghan migrants in the region the influence of Islam is getting deeper. There are apprehensions that Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan could be affected by the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism. Moreover, the outcomes of the squabble in Afghanistan especially in relation to terrorism and drug trafficking generate grave security risks for Central-Asian states. The problem is serious because

⁴ Viteazul Mihai (2015), "The Impact and Effects of Afghan Migration in the Central Asian States" *International Conference, RCIC*, National intelligence Academy, Romania [Online: web] Accessed 15 March 2017], URL: <http://www.afahc.ro/ro/rcic/2015/rcic'15/AP/Mihalache.pdf>

the boundaries of Uzbekistan with Afghanistan are easily accessible, that further provides an open way to Russia and Europe for drug trafficking.

The challenge of environmental degradation is proving dangerous for the people of central Asia, especially in Aral Sea region. People of the region are suffering from diseases such as Skin cancer, tuberculosis and several water borne diseases. Children are malnourished and women face pregnancy related complications. In some areas continuous miscarriage is reported due to lack poor water and air quality. These problems always reduce the pace of social development. Poor health affects the productivity of workers which reflects in production and ultimately economic development is reduced. The government of Uzbekistan should also work for the betterment of environment. The degradation of Aral Sea region is a serious problem in the country, due to which people of this region are suffering from several diseases. It is the duty of the state to provide better living conditions to its citizens including clean drinking water and sanitation, better health facilities and employment opportunities.

The society of Uzbekistan is facing a lot of other problems such as human trafficking, drug abuse, child labour etc. The government of Uzbekistan has to take some firm actions to end the use of forced labour during the cotton harvest. Measures like eliminating cotton production quotas, increasing remuneration, improving working conditions for workers in the cotton harvest, eliminating forced child labor from the cotton harvest should be taken by the government in order to establish a society based on just human values. The government should provide funds to the NGOs working for eliminating human trafficking as these NGOs are also assisting and sheltering victims who are not admitted to the state-run shelter. The government should develop formal mechanisms to ensure that victims of human trafficking would not be penalized for acts committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking, amend the criminal code to protect the identities of trafficking victims, and encourage prosecutors to proactively seek victim restitution in criminal cases.

The research is based on the hypothesis that traditional society, limited role of women in social process, patriarchy, religion, traditional economy and large family structure made the people of Central Asia reluctant towards Soviet reforms. Moreover, the same reasons are now become hurdles in furthering the process of social change. The Government is now promoting NGOs for development of women and to protect their

rights. In the field of education some modern schools and universities have opened based on Western system. In 2002, Westminster International University was established in Tashkent to promote higher education and to train youth for international diplomacy. On one side Uzbekistan is progressing in terms of economy and education standard and on the other side its moving backward when it comes to Islamic fundamentalism and standard attributed to women in society. Modern education, awareness for environment protection, access to justice for vulnerable groups, respect for human values and adherence to human rights principles are some grass root steps which need to be taken in order to ensure social progress.

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