

**ETHNICITY IN CENTRAL ASIA:  
THEORY AND REALITY**

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by

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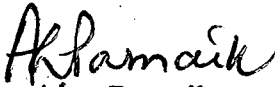
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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, "Ethnicity in Central Asia: Theory and Reality", submitted by K.M.Pari Velan in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of M.Phil degree of this university has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university to the best of our knowledge. This is a bonafide work.

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

  
Dr. Ajay Patnaik  
(Supervisor)

  
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*DEDICATED TO 'KUIKUI'*

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## PREFACE

*“Appearance and reality are one of the distinctions  
that cause most trouble.”*

- Bertrand Russel

Ethnicity is one of the most important aspects of social understandings in the realm of international relations. Ethnicity deals with the issues of group relationships with unique preservation of identities. Each ethnic group has its own unique culture and identity which is distinct from other ethnic groups. Each ethnic has its own way of living which includes dress, food, housing, norms, values, symbols and so on, which are combinely known as cultural markers. So ethnicity deals with each ethnic groups' interaction with other groups in the realm of political, economic and social spheres.

Central Asia as a theatre is chosen for the study of ethnicity in order to understand the dynamics of various ethnic groups interacting vis-a-vis fast changes both in the internal as well as external political milieu. Central Asia has a unique history where various cultures merged at various time span starting from ancient times till the modern period. It is pertinent to understand the historical background to the various ethnic groups living in this geographical area : they are the natives such as Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmen and Kirghiz, and other groups such as Russians, Ukrainians, Koreans, Germans, etc.

In this dissertation an attempt is made to discuss the various theories related to ethnicity and to apply them into the Central Asian context in order to understand the ethnicity dynamics. So it is pertinent to have a conceptual

clarity of ethnicity as well as a clear understanding of the Central Asian region.

The various aspects to be verified are

- Application of various ethnicity theories like Assimilation, Stratification, Ethnic Enclave and Ethnic Resource.
- How does ethnicity and nationality continue to persist inspite of modernisation?
- How does ethnicity is seen as a product of disengagement between territory and culture?
- How pluralism as a model could be applied to minimise and make the multiple ethnic groups co-exist?

In Chapter 1 titled 'Ethnicity Theories- A Literature Survey', the major theories related to ethnicity are traced and discussed in order to see their application to the Central Asian context. The theories discussed are broadly classified into - (i) Order Theories and (ii) Conflict Theories. The Order theory includes (a). Melting Pot Theory (b) Anglo-Saxon Theory and (c) cultural-Pluralism which are widely know as Assimilation Perspective. The Conflict theory covers aspects such as Stratification, Ethnic Enclave and Ethnic Resource.

The Order theories relate to the group dynamics which takes a peaceful forms such as contact, accommodation, integration, acculturation and assimilation as well. Here when two groups come into contact they adjust initially with each others cultures, later they accommodate the differences and

at a point of time either acculturation and/or assimilation takes place both structural and functional. The Conflict theories discuss the aspects which relate to hierarchy and differentiation among groups. Here how the stratification process occurs as well as the final hierarchy of majority and minority group formation is discussed. In Conflict theories how each group tries to bargain for the preservation of their cultural identity, how to improve their socio-economic status vis-a-vis other groups, political access and finally how the mobilisation takes place is covered. Here by and large the conceptual clarity of theories are focussed.

**Chapter 2** titled '**Assimilation Theory and Central Asia**' covers the aspects of Central Asia which includes prevailing ethnic groups, their origins, cultural distinction, their integration into Soviet regime and the various cultural policies of Soviet era which evoked mixed response. So how far the assimilation as such took place as expected by the Soviet regime and how the stratification evolved evidently in the later phase and how far plurality continue to persist are discussed. How each ethnic group succeeded in preserving its cultural identity inspite of modernisation and urbanisation is analysed. The various deterritorialisation policies of the Soviet and how it created space for ethnicity due to disengagement between territory and culture is also discussed.

In **Chapter 3** titled '**Stratification Theory and Central Asia**' we will discuss the issues pertaining to ethnicity, the later phase of Soviet era (that just prior to disintegration) and the post-disintegration phase. The analysis includes how the stratification occurred. Here the failure of assimilation and how plurality of ethnic groups emergence is discussed.



In Chapter 4 titled 'Pluralism as Model in Central Asia', "ethnic enclaves" and "ethnic resource" formation and how each ethnic group in the Central Asian region attempts to preserve their cultural identity vis-a-vis the emerging state formation and socio-economic structures are analysed. Finally, how pluralism as a model would minimise the ethnic tensions and help them to co-exist peacefully is traced. The last section of this Chapter will have a conclusion which testifies the relevance of various ethnicity theories discussed and their applications in the Central Asian region.

## CHAPTER I

### ETHNICITY THEORIES: A LITERATURE SURVEY

*“Theories are required to be general and predictive and therefore capable of assimilating an indefinite number of new observations without themselves radically changing its meaning”<sup>1</sup>*

Ethnicity is a salient feature of numerous societies throughout the world and only a few societies are ethnically homogeneous. Although it has become a very significant issue of study, yet there is not complete agreement on how the subject should be defined. Earlier the focus was on ‘cultural differences’, now it has been shifted to ‘social boundary’. Max Weber defines “An ethnic group is one whose members entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonisation and migration.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite definitional disagreements, a number of characteristics are generally recognised as hallmark of ethnicity; not all of them will be present in every case, but many will be. They include features shared by group members, such as the same or similar geographic origin, language, religion, food, traditions, folklore, music and residential patterns. Also typical are: special political concerns, particularly with regard to homeland; institutions to serve the group and a consciousness of kind or a sense of distinctiveness from others.

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<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 4, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopedia of Ethnicity*, pp. 575.

Further there is some sort of disagreement between race and ethnicity's interlinks. Some scholars distinguish between ethnicity and race. Van de Berghe, defines, race as social classification based on putative physical traits and ethnicity as a classification based on cultural ones. But more commonly, race is seen as a variant of ethnicity. A racial group is then an ethnic group whose members are believed by others if not also by themselves, to be physiologically distinctive. Sociologists recognise that the imprint of history on the contemporary ethnic relations of any society is deep. Lieberman discussed the situation between a migrant group contact with indigenous group. He says one possibility is migrant group dominating the indigenous through conquest. This can be exemplified through Russian penetration into Central Asian region. The other is that the indigenous group dominates, as occurred during the century of mass migration into United States. The crux of the matter here is whether a group is incorporated into a society through force or through more or less voluntary migration.

Stated in very broad terms, three approaches dominate the sociological study of ethnicity. One the **Assimilation** model focuses on social processes and outcomes that tend to dissolve ethnic distinctions, leading to the assimilation of one ethnic group by another or by a larger society. The second approach labeled as **Stratification** model is concerned with the origins and the consequences of inequalities of various kinds among ethnic groups. The third approach focuses on **Ethnic Group Resources/Ethnic Enclave**. Its domain encompasses such processes as mobilisation and solidarity by which the members of ethnic groups attempt to use their ethnicity to compete successfully with others. None of these three approaches could be described as preeminent, and each has a significant presence in contemporary research on ethnicity. Other approaches are viable, but are not theoretically and empirically developed as these three. Other theories are, Van de Berghe's 'ethnicity in sociology' perspective, which views ethnicity as a form of genetic nepotism, a generalisation of the

presumably universal tendency among animals to favour kin. Issac views Ethnicity as 'primordial' deriving from deeply seated human impulses and needs that are not eradicated by modernisation. The most recent attempt stems from 'rational choice theory' which seeks to explain ethnic phenomena in terms of the efforts of individuals to maximise their advantages/utilities. This rational choice theory has been applied to the Central Asian context mostly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, just before the formation of new Central Asian states. A discussion on these aspects is dealt with in the next Chapter.

Since ethnicity is such a complex concept many scholars have chosen to identify ethnic groups as those groups characterised by some of the following fourteen features

- common geographic origins
- migration
- race
- language or dialect
- religious faith
- ties that transcend kinship
- neighbourhood and community boundaries
- shared traditions, values and symbols
- literature, folklore and music
- food preference
- settlement and employment patterns
- special interest with regard to politics
- institutions that specifically serve and maintain the group
- an intense sense of distinctiveness, and
- external perception of distinctiveness<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Frank N Magill, (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 1995, p. 473.

“Ethnicity refers to a sense of belonging and identification with a particular cultural heritage.”<sup>4</sup> Ethnic groups are socially defined on the basis of their cultural characteristics. Members of ethnic groups consider themselves and are considered by others to be , part of a distinctive culture or subculture. These concepts help explain the cultural diversity which can occur in a given society. The definitions given below by a few other Sociologists further gives us deep insights. Milton Yinger defines an ethnic group as one whose members are thought by themselves and others to have a common origin and who share a common culture which is transmitted through shared activities that reinforce the groups distinctiveness, where as Joe R Feagin emphasises that ancestry, whether real or mythical is a very important dimension of ethnic group identity. William Yancey argues that ethnic groups have been produced by structural conditions, so here cultural heritage is not a prerequisite dimension of ethnicity. So for Yancey it is a manifestation of the way population are organised in terms of interaction pattern, institutions, values, attitudes, lifestyles, and consciousness of kind.

A new consciousness is emerging concerning the meaning of ethnicity. Ethnic groups are joining together into larger ethnic groupings. The adoption of pan-ethnic identity is common among Central Asians. “Most theories used to explain ethnicity, ethnic behaviour and ethnic and racial relations have been concerned with the issues of migration, adaptation, exploitation, stratification and conflict.”<sup>5</sup> These theories can be broadly classified into

1. Order Theories
2. Power-conflict Theories

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

Order theories emphasise the assimilation of ethnic groups in a society, whereas Power-conflict theories address the issue of persisting inequality of power and resource distribution between majority and minority groups. Clarity of meanings is very essential for majority and minority groups. Both are complementary concepts that denote a hierarchical relationships of dominance and subjugation between groups. The majority groups are dominating and powerful, the minority are relatively powerless and deprived. These concepts would be later discussed in detail.

Coming back to Assimilation theory, Milton Gordon has described three images of assimilation

- Melting-Pot
- Cultural Pluralism and,
- Anglo-conformity

The assimilation theory is more applicable to Soviet period, that is, prior to the disintegration of the USSR. How Soviet policies tried to forcefully assimilate Central Asians into Russian mainstream would be discussed in detail in the forthcoming Chapters. Aspects like language policy, closing of mosques (discouragement of any faith for that matter), overall cultural assimilation is discussed in detail in **Chapter II**.

Power-conflict theory focuses on involuntary immigration and/or colonial oppression. This theory has stressed on the forced nature of cultural and economic adaptation and it emphasises the role played by the processes of coercion, segregation, colonisation and institutionalised discrimination. This theory is applied both in the earlier as well as the later period of the Soviet era. Aspects like internal colonisation, split labour market and ethnic enclave would be discussed in **Chapter III**.

## 1.1 ASSIMILATION APPROACH

A detail study of this approach would bring clarity and understanding which can be applied and seen in Central Asian context. Assimilation approach has deep roots in classical social theory, where it is often traced to Robert E. Park's formulation of race relations cycle of **contact, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation**. Gordon gave assimilation approach a multi-dimensional concept. He distinguished in fact, among seven types of assimilation, but the "critical distinction lies between the two: acculturation and structural assimilation".<sup>6</sup> Acculturation means the adaptation by a ethnic group of the cultural patterns of the surrounding society. Such acculturation "encompasses not only external cultural traits, such as dress and language, but also internal ones, such as beliefs and values."<sup>7</sup> Gordon theorised that acculturation is typically the first type of assimilation to occur and that the stage of acculturation only may continue indefinitely. Hence the importance of the second assimilation type, structural assimilation. It is defined by him as the entry of an ethnic groups' members into a close or primary relationships with members of the dominant group. He means that structural assimilation is the key that unlocks all other types.

The three models of assimilation are discussed in detail below.

The **Melting-Pot** model of assimilationist theory was implied by sociologist Robert Park's theory of the race relations cycle, suggested in the 1920s. In that theory, Park presented the idea that assimilation involves both cultural and biological processes. In other words, Park conceived of assimilation as accomplished both by the "interpenetration" of distinct cultures, in which each group takes on some of the

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<sup>6</sup> *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, pp. 576.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 587.

other's culture, and by amalgamation, or biological mixing through intermarriage and reproduction.

Gordon criticises melting-pot idealists for failing to discuss whether all groups can contribute equally to the final mixture. Furthermore, since Anglo-Saxons arrived chronologically before other immigrants, they were able to establish the social order into which newer immigrants are expected to "melt." Because of this difference in group influence on the American character and society, Gordon claims that the melting-pot ideal masks the fact that non-Anglo-Saxon are the ones expected to changes. Furthermore, while some differences, such as nationality, can be melted down among whites, other differences, such as race and religion, are either not willingly given up or cannot be melted away. So, white Protestants who wish to can melt into the Anglo society relatively easily, while Jews and Catholics must melt into their respective religious pots. Blacks and other people of colour, however, do not melt down, according to Gordon; they are prevented from doing so by racial discrimination.

In their book "Beyond the Melting Pot (2d ed., 1970), Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan review the "melting-pot" thesis in the light of continuing ethnic diversity and conflict in New York City. Glazer and Moynihan believed that ethnic groups could join society if they were willing to change, to acculturate. Unlike Gordon, Glazer and Moynihan do not view prejudice as the major obstacle to assimilation. They view internal group weaknesses as the major obstacle; they also cite the lack of a single American identity for immigrants to adopt. Glazer and Moynihan think that American society does melt away the old ethnic culture; however, a new ethnic identity emerges, so the ethnic group remains distinct - neither melt down nor conforming to the Anglo model.



The melting-pot theory envisions an assimilation process that operates on cultural and structural planes. One outcome is a culture that contains contributions from numerous ethnic groups and is adapted by their members. A parallel outcome on a structural plane is a pattern of widespread marriage on ethnic lines in which the members of all ethnic groups participate leading ultimately to population made up of individuals of intermixed society. Melting-pot model application reveals that it is only a fraction of population which is involved in intermixing, which again is deceptive whether it is acculturation only, that is, Central Asians adopting Russians or other dominant cultures.

**Cultural Pluralism** corresponds with a situation in which ethnic groups remain socially differentiated, often with their own institutions and high rates of in-group marriage, and retain some culturally distinctive features. It is very apt for Central Asian society as well as many other societies throughout the world.

**Anglo-Conformity** is widely known in theoretical circle, which is mostly applicable to the West European and the American context. In the Central Asian context it has to be converted as 'Russo-Conformity'. This describes an assimilation that is limited to acculturation, to the behaviour and values of the core ethnic group.

Gordon, who attributes the "Anglo-conformity" thesis to Stewart Cole, states that this ideal requires that immigrants completely abandon their cultural heritage in favor of Anglo-Saxon culture. According to Gordon, those who propose Anglo-conformity as a viable ideal of assimilation view the maintenance of the English language, institutions and culture as desirable. Such views, in his estimation, are related to nativist programs that promote the inclusion of those immigrants who are most like the English as well as to programs that promote the acceptance of any immigrants willing to acculturate on the basis of Anglo-conformity.

According to Gordon, those espousing the Anglo-conformity ideal cannot be automatically heralded racist although, as he puts it, all racists in the United States can be heralded Anglo-conformists. Furthermore, Anglo-conformists tend to assume that English ways and institutions are better than others. Even those who do not support that view argue that, whether they are better or not, they do predominate in existing American society. Therefore, newcomers must adapt to what is already in place. Anglo-conformists also assume that once immigrants have acculturated based on Anglo-conformity, they will be found acceptable and will no longer be the targets of prejudice and discrimination.

While the Anglo-conformity ideal has been the prevalent form of assimilation proposed, the melting-pot ideal has also been an important and influential aspect of assimilationist thought. Particularly in the early twentieth century, those who viewed American society as a new experiment in which diverse peoples came together to guard a new culture saw Americans as a new “race” of people. In this view, the United States was a giant melting pot that received all immigrants, melting them and their cultures down into one homogeneous and unique group.

According to Milton Gordon, in “Assimilation in American Life” (1964), the study of how groups are incorporated into American society has been plagued by two major problems. First, the American legal system does not distinguish groups on the basis of race, religion or nationality. Instead, all individuals are simply considered Americans. In contrast, Gordon says, the social reality is that there are distinct subgroups in American society, organised and identified on the basis of race, religion and nationality. Since the legal system ignores this, the reality is hidden.

The second problem that Gordon defined lies in the manner in which the social sciences have dealt with the reality of diversity in American life. Gordon claims that

social scientists prior to him focused primarily on the cultural behaviour of individuals and groups and on studying the extent to which various ethnic racial groups had adopted the values and behaviour of the dominant group in society - Anglo-Americans. They also focused on studying the attitudes of the dominant group, examining the extent and basis of racial prejudice. This is problematic, according to Gordon, because it ignores the issue of how so many diverse groups are incorporated into the social structure. Further, neither social scientists nor policy makers have made clear what the goals of assimilation are - whether the United States would like to see total assimilation into one culture (a "melting-pot" composed of a blend of cultures) or whether groups would maintain distinct cultures (a view sometimes referred to as cultural pluralism). To Gordon, the major question is: What is the impact of racial, religious, and national diversity on social relations and social institutions in a democratic industrial society such as the United States? To answer this question Gordon argued, sociologists must clearly define assimilation and the various types of outcomes that might emerge from inter-group contact. Consideration of both cultural issues and social structure must be included.

Gordon was the first to distinguish assimilation from acculturation and to propose two distinct types of assimilation: **cultural assimilation** (or acculturation) and **structural assimilation**. Generally acculturation requires a change of culture on the part of the "out-group" in order to adapt to the dominant group. Structural assimilation requires that the out-group enter into the clubs, groups and social institutions of the core group, thereby establishing primary relationships with individuals in the core. Ultimately, total assimilation implies that there are no cultural differences and that out-groups can no longer be distinguished from anyone else.

Gordon defines total assimilation as a process that may require seven steps towards its ultimate conclusion, the blended society.

1. **Acculturation in which an ethnic group changes its cultural patterns to those of the core group.**
2. **Structural assimilation in which the out-group established primary relations with the core group and enters the social structure of the core.**
3. **Marital assimilation in which the out-group inter-marries with members of the core and produces children.**
4. **Identificational assimilation in which ethnic groups stop identifying with their ancestral ethnic group and identify with the core.**
5. **Attitudinal reception in which the core is no longer prejudiced against members of the out-group.**
6. **Behavioural assimilation in which the core stops discriminating against members of the out-group and,**
7. **Civic assimilation in which the out-group has no value conflicts with the core group over governance.**

According to Gordon, although acculturation is likely to be the first step, it may take place without leading to the other steps towards total assimilation. A group may acculturate itself to the norms of the dominant group without acculturation being followed by any further acceptance or integration for a prolonged period of time. In other words, a group's successful acculturation neither guarantees its entry into the sub-society of the core nor guarantees that the core group will stop being prejudiced toward them or discriminating against them. Thus, the process of total assimilation requires cooperation from both sides. The entering group must adapt itself to the core group, and the core group must come to accept the entering group and treat its

members on the basis of their individual merit rather than on the basis of their ethnic, religious or national heritage.

Although Gordon did not believe that acculturation would ensure other forms of integration into the core's society, he did think that structural assimilation was the key to the remaining stages in the process towards total assimilation. For example, once the out-group has entered into close, or primary, relationships with the core group by entering their cliques, clubs and institutions, Gordon believed that it followed "naturally" that individuals would form close relationships, fall in love and marry outside their group. It would be "inevitable", following the formation of close ties with the core, that members of an out-group would begin to identify with the core sub-society, because they would lose their own ethnic identity. By this time, they would have taken on the appearance, dress and behaviour of the core group, so there would be no basis for prejudice against them. Once prejudice declines, it follows for Gordon that negative discriminatory behaviour will cease. Since the formerly distinct group would now be completely accepted into the sub-society of the core, and would be identified with it, the group's members would experience no value conflicts with the core group in civic affairs.

## **1.2 STRATIFICATION APPROACH**

The second major approach to the study of ethnicity as mentioned earlier is 'stratification approach'. This approach is considerably less unified than the assimilation approach, encompassing quite diverse theoretical underpinnings, yet there are some common threads throughout. There is an assumption that ethnic groups are generally hierarchically ordered. There is typically a dominant group, which is often described as the majority group and there is subordinate groups, often called minority. Here the numerical value sometimes does not exist. Secondly, these groups are

assumed to be in “conflict over scarce resources, which may be related to power, favourable occupational position, educational opportunity and so-forth”<sup>8</sup>

In this conflict, the dominant group employs a variety of strategies to defend or enhance its position while minority groups seek to challenge it. Often the focus of the stratification approach is on the mechanisms that help reserve ethnic inequalities, although there has also been some attention to the means that enable minorities successfully to challenge entrenched inequality.

One tradition in ethnic stratification, research has looked into the mechanisms of inequality that are rooted in ideologies, in belief systems that are then manifested in the outlooks and behaviour of individuals. Here ‘prejudice’ is one important factor which is generally defined as a fixed set of opinions and attitudes usually unfavourable to the members of a group. Prejudice is frequently an outgrowth of ‘ethnocentrism’, the tendency to value positively one’s own group and denigrate others. It can lead to discrimination. But prejudice and discrimination as part of study has gained little importance because of the focus on structural mechanisms of inequality. One reason for this shift has been scepticism that prejudice and discrimination by themselves are adequate to account for the depth and durability of racial and ethnic cleavages in industrial societies, especially since these factors have seemed to decline intandem with rising educational levels.

A major theme in the stratification approach is the often complicated relationship on interaction between ethnicity and social class. From this theme to some extent atleast a manifestation of deeply rooted class dynamics is evident. This has led to analyses that emphasise the economic and material foundations of what appear

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*Encyclopedia of Sociology*, p. 311.

superficially to be cultural and ethnic distinctions. Analyses of this type have some times been inspired by marxism, but they are hardly unified to marxists. Steinberg argues that cultural explanation of ethnic inequalities which impute undesirable characteristics to some groups and desirable one to others are often rationalisations of economic privilege.

It is some times argued that inequalities that once rested on an ethnic basis now rest primarily on one of class. It is to be seen in the Central Asian context whether socio-economic split is within the working class. Increasing urbanisation and industrialisation brings in a cleavage between working urban class and rural class.

An economic approach has also been used to explain ethnic conflict which is seen as an outgrowth of the conflicting material interests of different ethnic groups. An example is provided by the theory of the ethnically split labour market given by Bonacich. Such a labour market develops when two ethnically different groups of workers compete for the same job at different costs to the employer. This theory can also be very much applicable to the Central Asian context (in the post Soviet period). It is typical in such situation for the higher priced group of workers to have the same ethnic origins as employers and therefore for the lower priced groups to be ethnically different from both.

An economic explanation of ethnic differences is sometimes placed in a context of world wide colonialism. The notion that subordinate groups form economically exploited internal colonies in Central Asia. This notion is compatible with a hypothesis of cultural division of labour, according to which position in the socio-economic order are assigned on the basis of cultural markers and hence ethnic origins.

The power can also be seen as fundamental to the inequalities, this approach is slight deviation from the socio-economic approach. This 'power' dynamics approach was given by Horowitz and Stone. This is a very general perspective on ethnic stratification and is compatible with such fundamental notions as dominant and subordinate groups. According to it, social class relations are but one instance, no matter how important, of the institutionalised inequalities between ethnic groups. Equally important, ethnic dominance cannot be reduced to or explained solely in terms of social class mechanisms. An implication is that class analysis of ethnic relations can be reductionists, an attempt to explain away ethnicity's causal independence.

Distinguishing empirically between ethnic stratification based on power and that rooted in economic structure has proven difficult. In one attempt Balock has formulated a 'power threat hypothesis' to be contrasted with one derived from economic competition between groups. These two hypotheses can be tested in relationship between discrimination and the size of a minority group. In particular threats to power of the dominant group are expected to result in discrimination, that rises sharply with increase in the size of minority but the same is not true for economic competition.

### **1.3 ETHNIC GROUP RESOURCE**

Theories concerning power differentials among ethnic groups border on the final major approach to the study of ethnicity, with its focus on ethnic group resource. This approach like the stratification approach takes its point of departure from the inequalities among groups. However its vision is less on the domination of some groups over others. It is rather focused on strength of the group, their solidarity and their ability to form separate ethnic sub-economies. Such characteristics can give the group and its members relative advantage or disadvantage in the competitions. So far as the advantages are concerned there may be incentives for the individuals to maintain



their attachments to a group rather than to assimilate. In a sense theories of ethnic group resource can be seen as counter arguments to assimilation theories. Glazer and Moynihan hold the view that inspite of assimilation process to certain extent ethnic group resource operates in the form of interest groups.

Others have argued that ethnicity has become politicised in many contemporary societies, including many industrialised ones, and this leads to an unanticipated ethnic resurgence. Horowitz views ethnic political conflict characterisation in many newly liberated nation states as part in colonial policies and then intensified by anxieties of the groups over their status in the post colonial order. On a different note Nielsen contends that ethnicity offers a wider basis for political recruitment than the chief alternative, that is, social class. Culture is another domain in which the search for group resources has been carried out. The group resource approach is compatible with the cultural pluralist description of the society. The relative success of ethnic groups has been explained in terms of cultural traits. Rosen attempted to explain the configuration of values that is presumed to predispose individuals to success. In Rosen's analysis the presence or absence of particular set of traits in the culture of a group was explained according to the group's history and experience frequently in terms of the culture of society from which it originated. But this sort of analysis, presuming stable cultural traits and routine socio-economic success in social psychological pre-requisites has of late fallen to disfavour.

Going to the understanding of ethnic enclaves theory in detail, there are territories inhabited by a distinct group of people who are separated from the dominant population through difference in language, religion, social class or culture and who are frequently subjected to prejudice and discrimination. Enclaves are established for two major reasons. Some are found in nation and among groups where a distinct sense of injustice exist between people. This sense of discrimination prevents communication and result in isolation and a sense of inferiority amongst minority groups. The

dominant group prosecutes persons deemed inferior, who then withdraw into isolated communities to protect themselves from attack. Enclaves can also be built because of a sense of ethnic superiority or ethnocentrism.

Ethnic enclaves result from the failure of groups to either accommodate, acculturate or assimilate. Accommodation is reduction of conflict amongst groups as they find ways of living with one another based on mutual respect for differences. Here groups maintain their differences, but agree to live with one another. In places where enclaves develop only physical separation lessens conflict as groups continue to hate and discredit one another and geography keeps them apart. Acculturation, meaning taking over some of the attitudes and beliefs of the other group fail to take place in these situations because contact between different people is rare and they stick to the traditional values. Instead of becoming more and more alike, as would be the case of assimilation, the groups become more and more different. A common culture fails to develop and frequently misunderstanding and miscommunication can lead to violent conflicts. It is as if each group lives in a different world with memories, sentiments, feelings, attitudes, that are unknown to the other.

Societies that are divided in enclaves are not the same as pluralist systems. In this type of arrangement diversity exists and people are divided into many distinct cultures and sub-cultures, but generally there are also larger loyalties towards a government that provides a common framework for their livelihood. People living in enclaves rarely share any loyalty beyond that of the group and turn against the dominant culture or rival ethnic group in periods of conflict. "Generally the greater the differences in class, skin colour, religion, or language the more sharply divided the society will be and more likely the enclave spirit grows and spreads".<sup>9</sup>

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*Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Vol. I, p. 433.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **ASSIMILATION THEORY AND CENTRAL ASIA**

The focus of this chapter is on the Ethnic situation in the Central Asia during pre-independence period, i.e., mainly during the former Soviet phase. Assimilation theory which includes i) Melting Pot Model, ii) Russo-conformity (similar to Anglo-conformity) and iii) cultural pluralism is analysed along the lines of former Soviet policies. The emphasis is on first two models in this chapter. The Soviet phase of 1917 to 1991 is taken into account for understanding assimilation aspects among the various ethnic groups in the Central Asian region.

The main ethnic groups in the Central Asian region are Kazakh, Uzbek, Tajik, Kyrgyz and Turkmen, who are all natives. The migrants in this region include Russians, Tatars, Germans, Koreans, etc. Focus for understanding is made on how Soviets dealt with this region to incorporate it into the Union. The various mechanisms and policies encouraged to assimilate various ethnic groups are to be analysed. Central Asia previously under various Khanates of Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand were brought to Russian control during Tsar's invasion and consolidation period. After the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 this region automatically became part of the wider Union.

#### **Ethnic Background**

A brief account on the ethnic background would be pertinent to understand the assimilation aspects during the Soviet phase in Central Asia.

Central Asia is one of the oldest centers of civilization. The original population of ancient Central Asia and of steppe region was of the same Iranian stock as the Persians. The oldest people in this region are the sogdians of the zeravshan valley and the Khorezmians of Amu-Darya. Various invasions took place in the region having significant influence on various cultures in the region. "The period between the 9th and 10th centuries gave rise to the formation of the Tajiks as a rational group"<sup>10</sup>. On the land adjacent to Tajik territory, the Uzbeks grew to be a major national group. The historical ancestors of the Uzbeks were the Central Asian local people such as the Khorezmians, Sogdians, Massagets and Sakas. The Turks intermingled with the local people in the valleys of Zeravshan, Ferghana, Chach, Khoremas and other regions of Maverannahr. As a result of intermingling with the local people, the Turks adopted their economic mode of life and cultural habits, and the locals who spoke the Iranian language, in turn adopted the language of Turks. This process of ethnic intermingling was active during the 11th and 12th centuries. During the same time the main group of Turki speaking people known as Uzbeks was formed on the territory between Amu and Syr-Darya rivers. The ethnic origin of the Turkmens resulted from the tribal union of the Turkmens and Massagets of the Aralo-Caspian steppe, whose exposure to Turk influence had taken place earlier. At the same time Oguz tribe formed the main ethnic element in their composition.

The ethnic development of the Kazakhs began mainly on the basis of the steppe tribes of Sakas and Usurs, in which Hun ethnic elements played a significant role. So the Kazakh national group emerged from the fusion of the

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<sup>10</sup> Devender Kaushik, *Central Asia in Modern Times*, Moscow, 1970, p.18.

Turk tribe of the steppe with the Kypchaks. The formation of the Kirghyzs began with the Turk tribes of the of the eastern Tien-shan. "Kirghiz clearly manifests the cultural influence of the people of the Altai, Irtysh, Mongols and Sinkiang".<sup>11</sup>

The nationalities of Central Asia represent a complex mixture of various ethnic groups. The Sogdians entered into the composition of the Uzbeks and Tajiks, Sakas and Massagets and that of Turkmens, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, and partly that of Tajiks. The old Turk tribes played a role in the ethnic origin of a majority of people of Central Asia, both Iranian and Turk speaking. "The people of Central Asia are all inter-related through old ethnic ties which account for a number of common features in the culture, economy and way of life"<sup>12</sup>

Their common historical development and joint struggle against foreign invaders strengthened these bonds of unity. However, each group also preserved its distinctive cultural traits despite the unfavourable conditions of those times. The people of Central Asia had each developed a common language, way of life and a distinctive culture. But their ethnic development to a higher stage was retarded by their economic and cultural backwardness.

#### **Ethnic Assimilation:**

After the Bolshevik revolution and formation of Soviet Union, the Central Asia as a whole and culture in particular underwent drastic changes

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p.21.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

through Soviet policies and their implementation. These included the merger of Central Asian region into the former Soviet Union and the consequent delimitation of 1924, concept of egalitarianism and international socialism. Further intermixing of people through deterritorialization, common language formula, common education system and industrial development in this region, further encouraged assimilation. "It refers to the process by which individuals or groups take on the culture of the dominant society, including language, values and behaviour, as well as process by which groups are incorporated into the dominant society".<sup>13</sup> Sometimes it could be a two way process also, where both groups mutually exchange cultures, values, customs, norms, etc. As mentioned earlier, the two main models of assimilation theory i) the 'melting pot model' implies that both cultural and structural exchange process takes place, where each group takes on some of the others' culture and by amalgamation or biological mixing through intermarriage and reproduction; ii) Secondly 'Russo-conformity' or same as 'Anglo-conformity' implies accommodation to dominant culture by smaller groups.

**i) Melting Pot Model**

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The October Revolution opened up for the people of Central Asia the path to independent national development. The former Soviet Government's accomplishment of fixing the national state boundaries in 1924, helped them in other national consolidation. The formation of national republics led to their speedy cultural and economic advancement. Since the establishment of former Soviet power, "the Uzbeks, totaling 6,015,000 are the fourth largest nationality

<sup>13</sup> Frank N. Mabill (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Sociology*, p. 96.

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in former Soviet Union; total number of Kazaks were 3,622,000; Tajiks, 1,397,000; Turkmen 924,000; and Kirghiz consisted 967,000".<sup>14</sup>

The former Soviet policy of self-determination is significant in knowing the relationship established with Central Asia. In the 'decree on Peace' the right to national self-determination as one of the basic principles of its foreign policy is evident. This principle is also found in a series of other decrees of the Russian Federation such as "Declaration of Rights of the people of Russia, the declaration of Rights of the Working and exploited people, the Appeal of the Council of People's Commissars to the Toiling Muslims of Russia and the East; etc."<sup>15</sup> The decree demanded the establishment of just and democratic method on the basis of equality of rights for all people and nations. It also guaranteed all nations' political, economic, and cultural development along with preservation of local culture and basic rights. While the decree on peace proclaimed the principle of national self-determination primarily as a principle of international law, it was included in the declaration of rights of the Working and Exploited People as a principle of national development within the state.

The declarations of the Rights of the People of Russia, were implemented in the resolutions of the First and Second Soviet Congresses. The Rights of the Nations to Self-determination decided to make certain principles as basis of its national policy such as : Equality and Sovereignty of all nations in Union, Right to Self-determination and free development of the national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territories of the Union. These principles guaranteed the nations not only the freedom to secession but

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<sup>14</sup> Devendra Kaushik, op. cit., p.27.

<sup>15</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p.250.

also their free development, thus establishment of Federation paved the way for assimilation at later stage in a number of ways. The idea of setting up a state based on the federative basis was legally secured in the declaration of "Rights of the Working and Exploited People". It stated that "the Russian Soviet Republic is established on the principle of free union of free nations as a federation of Soviet National Republic"<sup>16</sup> The formation of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was the first step towards the founding of national states by the people of Central Asia and it was an event of great political significance in their national development. Thus the basic idea of right to self-determination secured the Central Asians the basic rights in order to gain confidence and to assimilate further.

The next step of assimilation was 'the national state delimitation of 1927'. It resulted in national Soviet Socialist Republic formation. Two of them - Uzbek SSR and the Turkmen SSR were formed as Union Republics within former USSR, others as autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics within SSRs. National delimitation was impossible immediately after the October revolution due to the slow formation process of the peoples of Central Asia into nations, difficulties in mutual relations among various nationalities inherited from the past feudal and colonial regime. "The policies pursued by the former Soviet government of Turkestan, Bukahra and Khwaresm prepared the ground for national delimitation by creation of national divisions, establishment of languages, literature and press of indigenous nationalities"<sup>17</sup> The territorial commission concluded its work at the beginning of September 1924. All the

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<sup>16</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 123.

<sup>17</sup> Devendra Kaushik, *op. cit.*, p. 205.



nationalities were equally represented on it. The extra-ordinary session of the central executive committee of Turkestan gave its legal affirmation to the delimitation proposal and conferred upon the Uzbeks, Turkmens, Kazaks, Tajiks and Kirghiz the right to opt out of the composition and establish their own national state formation.

As a result of the national delimitation a number of nationally homogenous states appeared in Central Asia in place of the former three multinational states. This helped resolving the complex national tangle which considerably hindered the process of their assimilation and socialist development. "The old demarcation of political and administrative frontiers was solely a product of military strategic and political exigencies of the time of Tsarist conquest"<sup>18</sup> It created a stable basis fore a speedy removal of economic and cultural backwardness of the Central Asian nationalities by bringing people closer to each other. It ensured that each nation learnt the method of coexistence, accommodation, acculturation and exchange of values, customs, norms and cultures mutually. So national delimitation was a significant breakthrough in former Soviet point of view as far as assimilation is concerned. It ensured the Central Asian nations to build confidence to remain attached to the Union. Secondly it paved the way for ethnic groups to interact in much closer context. Thirdly, for migrants like Russians it facilitated their settling in Central Asia and encouraged assimilation. Ethnicity as a product of disengagement between culture and territory will be dealt at the end of the chapter.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p.212.

As mentioned earlier assimilation has two processes. a) Cultural and b) Structural. Regarding the cultural assimilation, delimitation facilitated various ethnic groups to get further intermixed. The intermixing was done in such a way that for example, in Kazakhstan according to Soviet Census of 1989, Kazak population consisting of 39.7%; Russians 37.8%; Germans 5.8%; Ukrainians 5.4%; Uzbeks 2.0%; Tatars 2%; Uighurs 1.1%; Belorussians 1.1%; Koreans 0.6%; and Azerbaijanians 0.5%. It was such an ethnic composition which paved the way slowly for closer contacts between each other. The former Soviet policies reflected the idea of 'Melting Pot Model' i.e., merger of ethnic groups culturally as well as structurally. These are reflected through practical policy implementation. Apart from national delimitation other policies are collectivization, massive industrialisation, education, urbanisation, etc. Another illustration to portray the ethnic mixing would be as follows: "In 1926, the ratio of eponymic ethnos accounted to 57.1% in Kazakhstan, 66.6% in Kirgizstan, 70.2 % in Turkmenistan, 74.2% in Uzbekistan and 74.6% in Tajikistan".<sup>19</sup> The remaining population were other ethnic groups.

New agricultural policies and industrialization programmes facilitated closer interaction between new migrant Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and natives, particularly in Kazakhstan for exploring mineral resources in the northern region. There was massive migration from outside. "The natives got reduced from 57.1% in 1926 to 30% in 1930 itself"<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Sergei Panarin, 'Muslims of the Former USSR: Dynamics of Survival' in *Central Asian Survey*, 1993, Vol. 12(2), p.145.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 154

The settlement structure reflects rural-urban assimilation. Prior to the Bolshevik revolution the share of urban population was lesser than 10% among the indigenous population. The post-revolutionary period was characterised by the upsurge of urbanisation and significant increase in urban dwellers. The Uzbeks and Tajiks were showing significant signs of urbanisation. Significant urban centers built by Soviets were Tashkent, Dushanbe, Navoi, Nurek, etc. Urbanisation paved the way for easier assimilation, since different ethnic groups interacted in close quarters. Moreover, there was not much of traditional bonds to stick to one's own cultures, values, customs, etc. So urbanisation helped as a leveling ground for 'Melting Pot Model'. Urbanisation was very much triggered by collectivization and industrialization.

Radical reorganisation of socio-economic structures in the Central Asian region again facilitated assimilation between groups. They include series of reforms: First, land and water reforms in 1920-21 and second land and water reforms in 1925-29 and massive collectivization programmes since 1929. Large scale cotton campaign was undertaken, known as 'cotton independence' programmes. "Uzbekistan had nearly 71% of cotton plantation mechanized".<sup>21</sup> In 1935 'premium system' was introduced to stimulate growth in cotton production. By "1938, 99.8% of land in Uzbekistan and 99.2% of that in Tajikistan"<sup>22</sup> for example were collectivized. As far as the industrialisation is concerned "Gross industrial production increased by 422 percent in Uzbek and 780 percent in Tajikistan between 1928 and 1940",<sup>23</sup> Great uniformity in

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<sup>21</sup> Ajay Patnaik, *Central Asia Between Modernity and Tradition*, New Delhi, 1996, p. 58.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

distribution of industrial structure and well developed agricultural sectors were main features of the new division of labour. Supported by the region's favourable climate, a very heavy investment in some specialized infrastructure proved extremely successful. To illustrate further, "Central Asian Republics produced about 95% of the former Soviet Union's raw cotton and cotton fiber, 15% of its vegetable oil, 100 % of its machinery for equipment for cotton growing, more than 90% of its cotton gins".<sup>24</sup> One sided specialization of production for industrially advanced region was stopped and balanced growth was encouraged. There was evident growth of working class. Thus quantitative growth of the working class brought in qualitative change in the social structure. Soviet policy makers took care to remove region-wise disparity. But still there were disparities which became evident at the later stage. The lag between industrial development and preparation of local nationalities took time to fill the gap. This lag was caused due to traditional customs and orthodox outlook. Still rural-urban migration was considerably significant. Indigenous female labour grew larger. By "1979 29.2% of Uzbeks, 28.2% of Tajiks, 19.6% Kirghizs and 32.2% of Turkmen lived in urban areas."<sup>25</sup>

Further the level of assimilation efforts could be understood from the Russian immigration to this region. According to the 1989 former USSR Census, the Russian population in the region numbered 9,500,000 and constituted 19.2% of the total population. These statistics are in fact at the fag end of the Soviet regime, as there was outmigration which started from 60's itself. Still Russians accounted for "21.5% of population in Kirghizia, 7.6% in

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<sup>24</sup> Rumer, *Central Asian Cotton Economy*, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup> Ajay, K. Patnaik, *Central Asia between Modernity and tradition*, New Delhi, 1996, p. 59.

Tajikistan, 8.4% in Uzbekistan, 37.8% in Kazakhstan and 9.5% in Turkmenia".<sup>26</sup> In Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan the proportion of Russians living in the countryside is considerable, approximately 20 and 10 percent in 1989 itself. This shows how assimilation was encouraged even in rural areas. Many settled down due to strong cultural and structural bond. The results of an ethnological survey in Kirghizstan showed that they would remain attached to the Central Asian land itself as their home land. One data illustrates "only 14% of Russians would advise the young generation to leave Kirghizstan while 31% suggest that young should study Kirgiz and Kirghiz culture and become full-fledged citizens of the country".<sup>27</sup> During 1970's for instance, some analysts noted that Russians in Central Asia married at an early age than in other regions, especially as compared with the Baltic Republics. This undoubtedly was influenced by the marriage behaviour of the local nationalities. This illustrated the structural assimilation. There were reports which suggested that the Russians settled in Central Asia were encouraged to marry the locals. This occurred in quite a number of instances. There are instances for 'Melting Pot' Model attempted by Soviets. They have many flaws also, in number of occasions such policies either failed or backfired. The negative impact will be dealt later at the end of the chapter.

#### **Russo-Conformity Model:**

As far as the 'Russo-Conformity' or Russification is concerned it is nearly a policy which encouraged only cultural assimilation and not much of

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<sup>26</sup> Valery A. Tishkov, 'The Russians in Central Asia and Kazakhstan' in Yoccov Roi, *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, p. 290.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 278.

structural ones. Here it is a process of acculturation in which an ethnic group changes its cultural patterns to those of the core group (Russian, so the process is called Russo-conformity). Similar model called Anglo-conformity was discussed by Milton Gordon. The locals/minority groups abandon their cultural heritage for dominant/majority culture, i.e., Russian. Here dominant group's language, institution and culture are seen so desirable.

Language policy is one of the major tools for encouraging Russo-conformity. Russian language and culture were made reference points for other cultures, they were encouraged through the educational system, the mass media, party and government structures and especially via the system of training managerial and intellectual elites and military services. Central Asians were encouraged to adopt the Latin alphabet for their language in late 1970's which again later was replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet. Manifested in the later change was an increased effort by the Bolshevik leaders to facilitate the process of Russification in Central Asia. Under Stalin, Great Russian Nationalism became one of the principal driving force of the society. "The internationalist ideology directed towards creating a genuine 'Homo Sovieticus'"<sup>28</sup> After Stalin, the Communist regime intensified its Russification policy, under Khrushchev, The 22nd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party advanced a radical concept of fusion of the Soviet peoples, implying their merger and homogenization.<sup>29</sup> Further at the 26th party Congress in 1981, Brezhnev urged in his speech for encouraging the migration of Muslim workers from Central Asia and the

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<sup>28</sup> Arthur Saganev, 'Russia and the Great Power Ideology', *Central Asian Survey*, 1993, 12(2), p. 170.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 170.

Transcaucasus to the Russian Federation for the purpose of assimilation.<sup>30</sup> Linguistic equality and nativization were followed. The Russians living in the Muslim republics were required to learn native languages. But still only 0.9% of Russians in Kazakhstan for example claim to have the fluency in the native language. This reflects the linguistic asymmetry towards 'Russo-conformity Model', and not 'Melting Pot Model' as claimed to be among former Soviets. Some scholars have called the Soviet policies as 'Great power ideology'. Even though mutual exchange of culture was supposed to have been encouraged, but 'Russo-conformity' was more evident as the following data reveals: "the percentage of Russians with a free command of the titular nationality's language is insignificant from 4.5% in Uzbekistan to 0.9% in Kazakhstan".<sup>31</sup>

Religious policy was aimed at breaking the native solidarity and to encourage Russo-conformity based on uniting all into an international socialism. Mosques were closed and by 1941 of the 25,000-35,000 mosques open in 1920, only about 1000 remained later. More over all of the 14,500 Islamic religious schools were forcibly closed down.<sup>32</sup> The motivation of Soviet policy makers in minimizing the role of Islam and institutions responsible for its social reproduction and maintenance were two fold, one ideological and secondly pragmatic. Ideologically, Islam in particular and religions in general were considered incompatible with requirements of modern secular society, with socialist way of life, therefore, it was checked. Pragmatically, Islam helped for only intra-regional solidarity and assimilation. It was considered as

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 171.

<sup>31</sup> Valery A. Tishkov, *The Russian in Central Asia and Kazakhstan in Yoccov Rol's, Muslim Eurasia Conflicting Legacies*, 1995, p. 298.

<sup>32</sup> Arthur Sagadeev, op. cit., p. 170.

impediment to inter-regional closeness as it was considered to be essential in the former Soviet Union. Secondly between natives and migrants it would have been an obstacle for closer cultural and structural assimilation. The Soviets also allowed traditional kinship and religion based structures of communal authority, gender and family relations, and all Islamic norms governing rights of private property and inheritance.

In order to gain 'Russo-conformity' they further advised methods like opening major educational institutions such as Soviet schools, as well as many other institutions of socialization and community services such as peasant unions, pioneer and *Komsomol*, youth organisations, 'Red Chaikhanas', women's clubs, the Red Army, literary campaign groups, atheist clubs, the press and electronic media. "New institutions served simultaneously as agencies of education and secularizing changes".<sup>33</sup> Schools and affiliated organisations served as the principal instruments of desirable social assimilation including diffusion of modern culture of Soviet morality. Russo-conformity includes secularism, atheism, strong labour ethic, sacrifice for collective and absolute loyalty to state, dissemination of Marxist-Leninist ideology, communistic principles of social and economic organisation. The Soviets attacked Islam and Muslim family structure and function, as well as Soviet sponsorship of an alternative code of morality based on communist ideology though these were reportedly less effective in rural areas.

Russo-conformity Model of assimilation functioned through political contour or centralised State's concentration of power through Communist Party the state apparatus of the erstwhile USSR. 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' was

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<sup>33</sup> Cave Medlin, *Education and Development in Central Asia*, p. 75.



the necessary instrument for the construction of the socialist system and the realization of other revolutionary objectives through the management, control and mobilization of all social forces, natural resources and means of production in the society. The goal was of fusing state and society into a combined societal state dictatorship which would eliminate its class enemies and create the economic, cultural and political environment for socialism. Soviet power in the Central Asian region was consolidated with the help of large Russian settler communities, both urban and rural. Cleavages from anti-Bolshevik Muslim resistance movements like Bashmachi revolt, Alash Orda, Young Bukharans and the Kokand Autonomous Movement, the Soviet Russians defeated the opposition by about 1924 through a combined strategy of withholding food from the starving Muslim population and of applying massive military force. By 1925 the people of Central Asia had lost all traces of political autonomy, and this region's politics and economy were managed from Moscow by Russians and/or Russified natives loyal to the Soviet regime. "Centralized control of military, police, political and economic power in Muslim Central Asia by the Russian communist elite was complete and undeniable".<sup>34</sup>

Economic control and creation of dependency in Central Asia in another 'modus operandi' of Soviet. Approximately 96% of the raw cotton produced in Uzbekistan used to be shipped out for processing and manufacturing to the former RSFSR, the Ukraine,, Byelorussia, and other republics, to Eastern Europe and elsewhere. In effect, Central Asia has been excluded from textile manufacturing and rendered dependent on Russia even for cloth manufactured from its own cotton. With more than 70% of Central Asia's best arable lands

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<sup>34</sup> Nazif Shahrani, "Central Asia and the challenge of the Soviet Legacy", *Central Asian Survey*, 1993, 12 (1) pp. 126

under cotton, dependency on Russia for staple foods has been another major effect of cotton monoculture. Industrialization, whether extractive or productive has been another important means for the former Soviets to create and perpetuate Central Asian dependency. All modern industrial development in Central Asia came from outside. That is, all equipment and machinery was brought to the area from Russia and run primarily by the Slavic operators and managers. The high degree of industrial, manufacturing and marketing dependency of Central Asia remains virtually unchanged even now.

### **CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ASSIMILATION MODEL**

The terminal phase of former Soviet Union reflected the failures or mismanagement of Soviet policies towards assimilation model. Another evident aspect is the leverage of 'Russo-conformity Model' over the 'Melting Pot Model'. It seems that 'Melting Pot' has rarely occurred if at all, so only 'Russo-conformity Model' is rather more obvious. The policy formulation and implementations seemed to be done from top level and there was utter negligence to count the feedback from bottom.

From the speeches of Lenin and Stalin initially it looked like egalitarian policies, aimed at 'international socialism'. The aim of national delimitation policies, language policies, new agricultural and industrial policies all seemed initially to promote equality and assimilation. Here again assimilation is two way process of mutual exchange of cultures, values, customs, etc., among all groups equally. So it was more of 'Melting Pot Model'. But the later phase, showed more of 'Russo-conformity Model'. The point of difference is that

instead of encouraging mutual exchange of cultures structurally as well as culturally, the influence is more of acculturation.

The utter failure of 'Melting Pot Model' is evident from continuation of ethnic enclaves rather than the complete or partial assimilation through the national delimitation policy of 1924. Considering the ethnic composition of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the Tajik minority in Uzbekistan has felt victimized or deprived by overt discrimination from the very outset of Soviet rule. Before 1917, Tajiks made up the majority of the population in Samarkand and Bukhara. But according to the 1926 census the numbers changed dramatically. This aroused deep indignation among the Tajiks and provided the impulse for a separate Tajik republic in 1929. Another grievance Tajiks had was that the Zerafshan valley and the other fertile areas were consigned to Uzbekistan. The Uzbek minority in Tajikistan also regarded itself as the victim of discrimination. The status of Uzbek in northern Tajikistan has so deteriorated that they have begun to demand that their enclave be united with Uzbekistan. Like this even in other regions of Central Asia the territorial claims continued. So the national delimitation even in intra-regional level failed to bring in 'Melting Pot Model' of assimilation.

As far as the economic factors are concerned the paradoxes are sharply ingrained in the social fabric in Central Asia. Few conditions leading to failure of assimilation and emergence of rising ethnic conflict are: i) Socioeconomic inequality among ethnic groups in a region ii) economic inequality among the regions of unified state, especially if a different ethnic group is predominant in each region; and iii) worsening of economic conditions in the region, especially if the decline is worse than in other regions. "The economic inequalities among

ethnic groups and regions seem to cause resentment among the disadvantaged group, fuelling hatred of the other, the outsider, the foreigner or the migrant".<sup>35</sup> So the persistence of inequality minimised the chances of assimilation. Worsening economic conditions contribute to the resentment of minorities presence and poor living conditions had direct impact on anti-immigration sentiment. This resulted in Russian out-migration. Actually Russians represented the well off and there was considerable economic inequality between the indigenous people and the Russian immigrants. For example, in 1914 Russians made up only one fifth of the industrial workers in Turkestan, but held three quarters of jobs requiring skilled labour. Because of the lack of proper policies for equality and coexistence there were a number of native revolts like Basmachi movement, Young Bukharans, Kokand Autonomous movement, etc. Western academics called the period between 1927-41 as 'the assault period'. It was mentioned that great efforts were made by Moscow to reduce the influence of Islam: cultural and lingual difference between different groups were emphasized. "In 1930's while Stalin continued the integration policy, his approach to the national problem was more repressive and officially endorsed supremacy of the Russian people".<sup>36</sup>

The failure of proper assimilation is further reflected in the number of riots and disturbances between 1988 to 1992. "The first such occurrence took place in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan in February 1989".<sup>37</sup> Then came

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<sup>35</sup> Yalman Onaran, 'Economics and nationalism: the case of Muslim Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey* (1994) 13(4), p. 449

<sup>36</sup> I bid, p. 295

<sup>37</sup> Yaccov, Ro'I, 'Central Asian Riots and Disturbances 1989- 1990: Causes and Consequences, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 10. 1991, p. 23

riots in Osh, Fergana valley Novyiuzen, etc. claiming heavy losses of lives and property. They spread however to the larger towns of Margilin, Fergana, Kokand and Namagan, etc.<sup>38</sup> The full extent of the impact of Soviet rule was both positive/negative and constructive/harmful and its real and potential effects are tremendous. To certain extent the prevailing political and economic realities in Central Asia are continuation or the strong influences of the Soviet policies also. The very fact that national communist parties continue to rule of course under different names. The Soviets' developmental goals and objectives formulated were radically different from those of national development and modernisation programmes in other societies. Some of the failures of assimilation are hinted in closely linked elements of Soviet policies. They are absolute control of political and military power by Russian Bolsheviks and secondly, large scale economic extraction, as well as creation and fostering of long term economic and technological dependency upon Russia and Russians. Thirdly, systematic destruction of traditional Muslim Central Asian societies and cultures and finally the creation and establishment of a new alternative 'Russo-conformity' society.

The failure of assimilation is further reflected in economic conditions. The economy of Central Asia, along with the rest of the Soviet Union was in fast decline in the 1980's. The economic problems were also complemented with water shortage and ecological deterioration. "Alarming unemployment close to 30% of population ecological disaster, and real collapse in sanitary conditions was accompanied by decline in wheat production in Kazakhstan from an average of 16 million tons a year before 1980 to 15 million tons in

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

1981 and 11 million tons in 1982".<sup>39</sup> Unemployment and unequal employment distribution reflects the failure of assimilation. The continuity of vast ethnic differences between the immigrant Russian and natives further depicts the picture of failure of 'Russo-conformity' also. The very fact that immediately after attaining independence all the states of Central Asia announced their respective native languages as official language reflects the lack of 'Russo-conformity'. Then came the revival of Islam as practice and way of life and reopening of Mosques. According to Fuller, there is no doubt that as Islamic revival is under way in all republics of Central Asia to one degree or another.<sup>40</sup> Islam is still the primary cultural force of the region. All these portray that even though certain amount of positive development and assimilation took place in this region, still there are enough evidences to depict that 'Melting Pot Model' and 'Russo-conformity' have failed.

So the Central Asian ethnoses have proved that the "deposits of collective experiences here are 'myths and memories, symbols and values which so often define and differentiate nations'".<sup>41</sup> The Central Asian ethnic identities became implicit and unarticulated. The failure and continuation of distinct ethnic identities particularly in the light of national delimitation reflects how ethnicity is seen as a product of disengagement between territory and culture. The myth, memories, symbols and values often adopt to new circumstances to accord new meanings and function. Unified Soviet policies of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p.498

<sup>40</sup> Gramhner E. Ruller, 'The New Geo-political order' in Ali Banmazizi and Myron Weiner (eds.), *The New Geo-politics of Central Asia and its Borderlands*, p. 226.

<sup>41</sup> Anthony D. Smith., *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, 1986, p. 98.

language, developmental activities in fact gave impetus to organise and assert their distinct identity.

Even though historically all the native Central Asian ethnoses had distinct identities, they revealed only in case of need. That is during initial phase of Soviet period in the form of Basmachi revolt, Alash Orda, Young Bukharans, Kokand Autonomous movement, etc. And again in the last phase of former USSR. This reflects that the instrumentalist view of ethnicity is more relevant here. It is more of mobilization popularly. Instrumentalist view hold that ethnicity as a modern phenomenon with political and economic bases and mobilises masses for wealth power and prestige. So this is more of combining economic and political interest with 'cultural effect'.

As Gellner views "modern industrialization paves way for rapid mobilization through education and media influence".<sup>42</sup> In Central Asian case also in a way modernization facilitated them to mobilize fast as ethnic enclaves which provided economic and political conditions. Application of assimilation theory facilitated to understand the inner dynamics of ethnic coexistence and assimilation to certain extent. At the same time failures of assimilation became clear with it.

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<sup>42</sup> Ernest Gellner- *Nation and Nationalisms*, Oxford, 1983, p. 73.

## CHAPTER III

### STRATIFICATION THEORY AND CENTRAL ASIA

Stratification relates to hierarchical ordering of ethnic groups and in terms of majority versus minority. Here the majority group is the one which enjoys the social, political and economic advantages of a society, and minority is the one which is deprived of those advantages. In Central Asia during the last phase of former Soviet period, there was evident emergence of stratification which manifested in the form of ethnic violence during late 80's and early 90's.

Stratification theory, in this Chapter is applied to the last phase of former Soviet Union and formation of newly independent Central Asian states. The analysis would cover how ethnic stratification occurred, how migrant superordination continued. Both 'Internal Explanation Model' and 'External Explanation Model' is applied to understand the ethnic stratification. Along with it, differential power model is also analysed to know stratification in Central Asia.

'Ethnic stratification' refers to a persisting ranking system in which rewards, privileges and power meted out to social and ethnic groups are unequal and supported by social structures and institutions.<sup>43</sup> There are two kinds of explanations are there to interpret the stratification: i) 'External Explanation' meaning "the belief that the lower social position minorities occupy primarily result from the unequal opportunity structures that restrict minorities, and its 'Internal Explanation', refers "to the belief that the lower social positions

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<sup>43</sup> *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, p. 1081.



minorities occupy are attributable to their deficient cultures."<sup>44</sup> It became very evident by the end of the Soviet phase that differentiation was very evident among ethnic groups, which when given a particular circumstance of 'glasnost' and failures of 'perestroika' led to open antagonism. This reflects the amount of stratification in Central Asia. Evident antagonism became explicit in the form of inter-ethnic violence and clashes. Starting from 1986, a number of cases were reported. In June 1986, Tajiks attacked all those whom they regarded as foreigners. In October the same year, Kyrgyz students attacked non-Kyrgyz students in Bishkek. In December again in Alma-Ata there was violence, starting with students shouting nationalist slogans on the streets of Alma-Ata including 'Kazakhstan for Kazakhs' and 'not to Russian administrators'. The apparent cause of the demonstrations was the replacement of the Kazakh First Secretary of Kazakhstan Communist Party with a Russian. In the late 1988 and early 1989, various skirmishes took place between Uzbeks and non-Uzbeks as the Uzbeks also went after the same targets - the foreigners. They attacked any one who did not understand their language. In May, violent demonstrations in Ferghana valley turned into riots against the Caucasians. The violence in different parts continued in early 90's also. The rise of nationalist sentiments and interethnic conflicts once again coincided with deteriorating economic conditions in Central Asia. "There were literally divided villages along ethnic lines, open hostility towards Russians all round the region and hatred".<sup>45</sup> The regional disparity between the Russian republic and the non-Russian republics actually increased after 1940's. The

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 1081.

<sup>45</sup> Yalman Onaran, 'Economics and nationalism: the case of Muslim Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 13(4), 1994, p. 447.

removal of redistributive subsidies to the region towards the end of the Soviet Union also came along with the deteriorating economic conditions.

The theories of ethnic conflict assert, in one way or other, that the competition for power, privilege and scarce resources in multi-ethnic societies. Propel participants to oppose each other as members of different ethnic groups with ascriptive loyalties and conflicting interests.

The struggle of ethnic groups for scarce resource, equality/distribution and recognition within the state framework as for autonomy or independence is not a new phenomenon. They sometimes result in violent conflict, which has its roots inherited in the process of state formation and nation building. They were widespread in Europe during that time, they also occurred after the breakup of Tsarist, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian empires at the end of first world war. Such struggles appeared in the aftermath of decolonization during 1950's and 60's, within the successor states of the European empires in Africa and Asia. Recent times they were witnessed as a result of dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Ethnic groups have competition due to contact which ends in either accommodation or enmity/conflict. The counterpart of ethnic group strives for recognition, equality, etc. "The ensuing confrontation between the in-group and the excluded, the majority and the minority, the dominant and the subordinate, between rival claimants to the power and resource of the state has become one of the foremost contentious issues in political struggles and civil strife around the

globe in contemporary times"<sup>46</sup> Public opinion is often severely shocked by the excessive violence that is frequently associated with such conflict, leading to massive loss of life and considerable material destruction. Many of the conflicts appear as confrontation between ethnic groups, and public opinion often refers to them as the expression of tribal hatred on ancient enmities. There are frequent confrontations between politically mobilized ethnic groups and an existing state. From the perspective of nation-state, the existence of ethnically distinct sub-national groups, particularly when they are politically organized always represent a potential threat, a destabilizing force. This is especially the case when power in the state rests principally with dominant or majority ethnic group, or when the society constitutes an ethnically stratified system.

Two rival conceptions of nationalism as the ideology of the modern nation-state have competed for historical legitimacy up to the present time. The first identifies the nation with all people who form legally part of the territory of a sovereign state, regardless of their ethnic characteristics. Thus all the inhabitants of former Soviet Union were Soviets or just as all inhabitants of US are Americans, or all citizens of Swiss Confederation are Swiss. This may be labelled territorial or civic nationhood, and it is determined by the state itself through law and shared citizenship. The other conception of the nation is based on ethnic criteria. Here the defining characteristics of membership are shared cultural attributes such as language or religion, as well as the idea of a common history rooted in the myth of common ancestry. According to this conception, membership

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<sup>46</sup> Rodolfo Stavenhagen, *Ethnic Conflicts and the Nation-State*, UNRISD, London, 1996, p. 1.

in an ethnic nation is inherited. As in civic nationhood here too is a necessary referent; not so much as the space to which citizenship rights and legal systems apply, but rather as the historical homeland from which the ethnic nation emerges and to which it is for ever tied. Ethnic nationalism strives to unify the ethnic homeland with the actual territorial unit over which a people ought to have a degree of control. Numerous ethnic conflicts explain the underlying tensions between these two notions of nation. The potential danger is represented by the numerous Russian population who now constitute national minorities in a number of former Soviet republics. Over time, however, these two seemingly contradictory and mutually exclusive conceptions of the nation may in fact converge. "Numerous modern nations are in fact amalgamations of different constituent ethnic groups, such as English, while states that were built on the avowed principle of territorial and civil rather than ethnic, sovereignty have acquired in time a clear ethnic identity of their own, such as French".<sup>47</sup> While it is true that there are many more ethnic groups, peoples or nations than constituted states. Ethnic group identity is the result of internal factors such as common life styles, shared beliefs, but also the outcome of the relations the group entertain with other distinct but similarly constituted groups and with the state in any given country.

Whether ethnic groups are called communities, nations, nationalities, peoples, minorities, tribes or ethnoses is a matter of convention. The republics of former Soviet Union are made up of 'titular nationalities' or 'non-titular nationalities', who each have different legal status which carries, among others,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

implications for economic privileges, educational facilities and social services. That is why stratification in employment, sharing of resources, privileges, power sharing etc., erupted, leading to a clear demarcation/hierarchy between migrants and natives.

Changes in global political and economic changes and minimized role of state has impact on ethnic groups and their assertion. One is the changing nature of nation-state in a time of supra-national integration and the dwindling economic functions of central governments. It is no longer possible to speak about national economies in the way it was fashionable to do so as recently as the post-second world war period. The new global economy internalizes productive processes, technology frontiers, consumer behaviour, financial flows, banking activities and so forth. The imposition of the free market ideology leads every where to a drastic reduction of state intervention in the economy. In these circumstances when the state no longer controls the kind of resources it can redistribute to ethnic and regional situation. As it is reported " ..the removal of redistributive subsidies to the region also come along with the deteriorating economic conditions."<sup>48</sup> So the ethnic groups compete among themselves for there shrinking resources, or they struggle for greater control over their own resource at the regional level and local levels. When national resources are scarce, competition between ethnic groups may escalate, thus contributing to greater ethnic identity and awareness.

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<sup>48</sup> Yalman Onaran, 'Economics and Nationalism: the case of Muslims in Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 13(4), 1994, p. 498

The competition and conflict over power at the political center may not be as enticing to an embattled ethnic group when state resources are scarce as when they are abundant. Moreover when a major economic resource is to be found in one ethnic region, ethnic groups may find it in their interest to try to exert control over these resources from the central state. As in the Central Asian region there is huge natural resource potential, this tendency is evident. In another case, when the dominant elites in the political center feel that they are subsidizing the periphery in an unequal relationship as in the case of Russia towards its peripheral states, it is the center which breaks away first or decides to allow the disintegration. "After the independence of Baltic countries, it was the Russian federation which first broke with the Soviet Union and not the peripheral republics that had been dominated by Russia."<sup>49</sup>

There can be classification of ethnic conflict as: (1) vertical ethnic conflicts i.e. between the minority ethnic group versus dominant/majority ethnic group, which is able to exercise cultural hegemony over the previous one. This was the case of Central Asia in the pre-disintegration phase. The second is horizontal ethnic conflict between two or more groups, this is the case of Central Asian states in the post independent stage, where the ethnic groups fought among themselves without any involvement or role of state, like violence in Dushanbe, the Ferghana Valley, Novyi Nzen, Ashkabad, Osh and so forth. "Armenians were attacked by Uzbek in Samarkand, recent immigrants from Daghestan were attacked by

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<sup>49</sup> Rodolfo Stavenhagen, *Ethnic Conflicts and the Nation-State*, UNRISD, London, 1996, p.30.

Kazaks... there were major clashes between the Uzbek minority and the Kyrgyz majority in the Osh region of Kyrgystan".<sup>50</sup>

In numerous cases, ethnic minorities who are marginalized or discriminated against may organize and mobilize in order to achieve full equality with the rest of the population. A different kind of situation obtains when a subordinate ethnic minority demands recognition of its group by the state, which may involve specific legal status, cultural identity, territorial autonomy and other aspects related to the distinctiveness of an ethnic group within the wider polity. Unattained group rights may lead to attempts at political secession. This could be the case of northern Kazakhstan predominantly lived by Russians. After the new formation of independent Kazak state, the Russians themselves became a minority due to various factors and are now in search of identity, rights, etc. They need security in all fronts like language issue, employment, political participation etc. Same is the case of migrants in other Central Asian states also.

Sociological theorizing influenced by Marxism analysed social classes and the class struggle, but never took the ethnic perspective into account. Marxist analysis steered away from the study of ethnicity and ethnic relations as these themes did not fit easily within the framework of historical materialism. This emphasis on class and related concepts; economic interest groups, elites, occupational categories or on social and political institutions prevented recognition of the relevance and importance of ethnic identities and relating them

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<sup>50</sup> Yalman Onaran, 'Economics and Nationalism: the Case of Muslim central Asia', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 13(4), 1994, p.496.

meaningfully to social dynamics. "As a consequence of 'post modernist' influences, more attention has been now focussed towards the sphere of culture and identity."<sup>51</sup> Further in this context, a shift from class to ethnicity as the focus of attention by social scientist also signals the trend from a more positivist social science to a post- modernist approach. As a result of the critique of the nation-state and the critique of class as sufficiently viable organizing principles, there has been a reserved interest in the resurgence of community, which is clearly addressed by the rediscovered importance of ethnicity-related issues. "Local communities as anthropologists, well known, are frequently quite hierarchical and undemocratic".<sup>52</sup> Local communities may generate new or alternative approaches to development and they often are able to mobilize resistance to invasive and destructive economic forces, as has been demonstrated by Central Asian natives regarding deterioration of economies and environmental degradation in their region. Ecocide and ethnocide are the two inter-linked processes, and as a result, the struggle for the environment is a struggle for the survival of ethnic groups and their cultures as well.

## **EXTERNAL EXPLANATION**

"It is the belief that the lower social positions minorities occupy primarily result from the unequal opportunity structure that restricts minorities." This 'external explanation' perspective can be applicable in two phases in Central Asian situation to understand the dynamics of ethnic stratification: firstly in the pre-

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<sup>51</sup> Rodolfo Stavenhagen, *Ethnic Conflict and Nation-State*, UNRISD, London, 1996, p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.



disintegration phase, where local/native ethnic groups were themselves a minority in the wider former USSR structure, secondly in the post-disintegration stage where the new formation of states based on predominant ethnic groups, Russian and other migrants became minorities. Basically the focus is on the unequal opportunity structure which brings in disparity between groups.

In the pre-disintegration phase, the various policies of Soviets like national territorial delimitation, collectivization, industrialization, education policies and so forth had a decisive impact on the unequal opportunity structure. Firstly, the national delimitation of 1924, scattered the native ethnic groups in such a way that even in their own region they became minority. The classic case is that of Kazakhstan: "In all, by 1962, number of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan dropped to 29%.<sup>53</sup> The various influences of former Soviet policies were as follows: During the 1920s the Kazak pastoral economy suffered, but partly recovered because some of the pastures were taken away from the Russian settlers and returned to nomads and Semi-nomads. In 1920s forced collectivization had tremendous negative effect on the locals. "About 55,000 nomadic and semi-nomadic households were forced to settle, many in waterless region where not only agriculture but even pastoralism was impossible".<sup>54</sup> Some were forced to towns and cities to turn them into industrial workers, but they could not even get proper jobs there. They became helpless and had to undergo some hardships. Kazakh herds were decimated. "In 1928, there were 30,350,900 head of livestock, by 1933, their number decreased

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<sup>53</sup> Anatoly M. Khazanov, 'The Ethnic Problems of Contemporary Kazakhstan', *Central Asian Survey*, 1995, p.247.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 248

almost 85% to 4,800,600".<sup>55</sup> Here the political aims were achieved, the traditional nomadic way of life was brought to a halt, the Kazaks were 'domesticated' and became a 'minority' in their own country. Meanwhile, the Russian and Slavic migrations to Kazakhstan continued. In the 1930s and 1940s the industrialization of the republic stimulated these movements. In the 1950s the virgin land campaign stimulated a fresh wave of migration. By 1939 the number of Russians in Kazakhstan had doubled compared with 1920 and by 1979 this number had doubled again. In addition, in the 1930s and particularly in the 1940s, Kazakhstan became one of the Gulag areas and one of the main territories for resettlement of various deported groups and people, like the Poles, Koreans, Germans, Chechens, Ingush, Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, Greeks, and many others.

Contrary to the expectations of the Soviet leadership and the assurances of Soviet scholars, the complicated ethnic composition in Kazakhstan did not evoke 'internationalism' and the rapprochement of the Soviet peoples. On the contrary ethnic tensions increased and social and economic competition between members of different ethnic groups grown wider. Members of the working class and of the middle class from the indigenous population are small in number. Blue collars and a majority of the middle class came from other ethnic groups - Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars, Germans, Koreans, and several others. "By 1990, Kazakhs provided 51% of the administrative personnel but only 3.0% of the skilled labour and 11.3% of the unskilled work force".<sup>56</sup> This reflects the unequal opportunity structure.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

During the Soviet period the modernization process in Kazakhstan involved minimal participation by the native population many of the positive equalizing programmes were not so effective or they were not properly implemented. The limited industrialization involved in the attraction work force from outside, and not the creation of an indigenous working class. Kazakhstan attracted immigrants from European Russia to occupy those positions in industry that demanded skilled labour. The construction of industrial complex did not take in to account local needs. While the production of consumer goods had to be imported into the republic, it contained large mining and heavy industry enterprise. "In 1979 the Kazakhs constituted only 20.8% of the urban population, where 69.1% of them continued to live in the rural areas".<sup>57</sup> This reflects the uneven development and persistence of disparities. Until recently 93% of Kazakstan industry was directly subordinate to all union ministries from Moscow.

Educationally and professionally, the new migrants (natives) from the rural areas are at disadvantage and encountered strong competition from other ethnic groups. Moreover, social advancement and career promotion for the urban population required a good command of Russian language. So language was one main instrument for unequal opportunity structure. This put the Kazakhs in an under privileged position in comparison to Russian-speaking urbanites and intensified stratification. The migrant population and locals had different incomes, values, life-styles and maintained fewer contacts. "The high level of ethnic heterogeneity of Central Asian cities and urban areas resulted in the emergence of

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

Russian language as main language of interaction, higher education and skilled professional jobs".<sup>58</sup>

In general there were heavy inequalities. In 1920, Russians held 0.72 'desyatins' of cultivated land per capita while the indigenous people had only 0.32 'desyatins' per capita during the famine. Russians lost 28% of their cultivated land, settled indigenous people lost 39% and nomads 45%".<sup>59</sup> This reflects the unequal structure even in the agriculture. When the USSR existed, Russians were employed primarily in development of industry, transport and urban construction. Of course their social and professional pattern is basically different from the employment pattern of the local nationalities, since the former were mainly among the specialists in technical fields. Only in Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan the percentage of Russians employed in agriculture is still high, they worked mainly as machine-operators and in animal husbandry and as agricultural specialists. In contrast, people of the titular nationalities are predominantly employed in agriculture. In cities Russians work mostly in trade and the services; among white-collar workers and the professional intelligentsia they constituted the majority. "According to 1979 data the share of Russians employed in the industry ranged from 22.4 to 32.6% of the entire working population in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzia, Tajikistan and Turkmenia, and in construction from 12.2 to 18.2%. For the Titular nationalities the respective figures were from 9.2 to 11.1% industry and from 4.8

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<sup>58</sup> Ajay Patnaik, 'Ethnicity, Culture, and Migration in Central Asia', *Central Asian Quarterly*, Summer 1994, p. 43.

<sup>59</sup> Yalman Onaran. 'Economics and Nationalism: the Case of Muslim Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 12(2), 1993, p.195.

to 8.4 in construction. The proportion was 15.2% in Kyrgyzia and from 2.7 to 3.4% in the other republics while the figures for the titular nationalities were from 52.6 to 56.9%".<sup>60</sup> This data reflects explicitly the amount of disparity in the structures. The social and professional differentiation along ethnic lines was and remains greater than in other regions of the former Soviet Union.

## **INTERNAL EXPLANATION**

It is the belief that the lower social positions minorities occupy are attributed to their deficient cultures. The development of Central Asia from an agrarian society to a socio-occupationally more differentiated society had its own problem because of strong traditional values and customs among the natives. "The hold of archaic customs and traditions was strong and as a result the emergence of new traditions, including those in the sphere of everyday culture, had been slower, compared to the European nationalities".<sup>61</sup>

It is indeed significant to know the cultural background of Central Asians in order to understand the impediments it created for the native ethnic groups to occupy coveted social positions. Central Asia can be explained as a cultural region that stretches from Khorazem to the Gobi desert in the north eastern line. This region shares historical, cultural, linguistic Iran-turkic present and past. Even though they are divided along nomadic and sedentary traditional social structure, nonetheless they shared several important features. One is uniform Sunni Islamic

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<sup>60</sup> Valery A. Tishkov, 'The Russians in Central Asia and Kazakhstan', in Yacov Ro'I's *Muslim Eurasia- Conflicting Legacies*, USA, 1995, p. 303.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

sect affiliation, secondly, the past history of inter-relationship flowing from the role of Bukhara as political pivot, thirdly, stronger retention of own cultural identity as apparent through language use and historical pride.

Throughout central Asia, the dominant religious affiliation has been and is with Islam. Religion is the main identifying factor among Central Asian vis-a-vis outsiders. The newly important cities informally divided to reflect quarters on sections representing the old regional identities also. Those who immigrated from in and around old Bukhara maintained a formal association and lived in proximity, if housing availability permits. This allowed them to participate in life cycles of regional members. "When a Bukhara family member dies, for example the mourning meals and services are announced to entire Bukharan community in Dusharbe"<sup>62</sup> Here it seemed that each extended family used to send atleast one representative to the ceremony.

Few other illustrations for their cultural sticking were as follows: Central Asia's Chief gynecologist has mentioned that, "vast majority of women were advised not to bear more than one or two child. Still they become pregnant because contraception was either unavailable or was rejected as contrary to custom and religion".<sup>63</sup> This illustrates how tradition and customs prevented them from availing modernization facilities. In all spheres of life it had tremendous effect, in economy they had only unskilled jobs, in social sphere very few availed modern

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<sup>62</sup> Eden Nabby, 'Ethnicity and Islam in Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 12 (2), 1993, p. 157.

<sup>63</sup> George E. Mirsky, 'Central Asia's Emergence', *Current History*, October 1992, p. 334.

education. By and large their strong attachment to traditional cultures, customs and values paved the way for ethnic stratification. "Traditional pattern of belief, lifestyles, behaviour, and attitude towards work, successfully restricted Soviet style modernization".<sup>64</sup> Of course within atheist Soviet ideology, Islam was, if not banned at least not encouraged. But people knew they were Muslims and observed religious practices such as those concerning circumcision, marriage, and funeral rituals. This illustrates their attachments to traditional religious practices. "Lack of correspondence between the economic and the social factor was a major reason for the resilience of super structure, which was strongly influenced by traditionalism."<sup>65</sup> So the 'Internal Explanation' perspective explains why there was stratification on ethnic lines and secondly as a region why Central Asia remained backward. Central Asia remained as a region with the highest population growth rates. There was low level of migration from rural to urban areas among the natives. This traditional outlook had rippling effects on hampering social developments." Such things as early marriages, fewer divorces and strong ethnic propensity for large families are causes of the high rate of the Central Asians."<sup>66</sup> Large families due to traditional customs and values hampered social mobility. "The average family size in Central Asia was about six, as compared to European republics where the average size of family was only three."<sup>67</sup> The large family size restricted the women from attaining the education and employment also. This had

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>65</sup> Ajay Patnaik, 'Modernisation, Change and Nationality Process in the USSR', in Shams-ud-din (ed.), *Perestroika and the Nationality Question in USSR*, New Delhi, 1990.

<sup>66</sup> Ajay Patnaik, 'Ethnicity, Culture and Migration in Central Asia', *Central Asian Quarterly*, Summer 1994, p. 42.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

tremendous impact on women from attaining social mobility by in turn affected the whole native groups. Even joint family system also restricted the migration and social mobilization. So the qualitative change was smaller in proportion, all these had detrimental impact and in turn made the native/indigenous population to remain in lower socio-economic positions.

## **DIFFERENTIAL POWER**

"It is a situation in which the majority group and minority groups have unequal access to power, it reacts in the dominance; of the majority group and subordination of minority group."<sup>68</sup> The fundamental project of the Bolshevik Revolution was to capture political power and concentrate it in the sole control of communist party-state apparatus of the former USSR. Soviet power in the region was consolidated with the help of large Russian settled communities in both urban and rural areas. By 1925 the people of Central Asia had lost all forces of political autonomy and Central Asian politics and economies were managed from Moscow and by Russians and /or Russified natives loyal to the Soviet regime, centralized control of military, police, political and economic power in Central Asia by the Russian communist elite was complete and undeniable. Horowitz and Stone's, power dynamics approaches to ethnicity is very much relevant to the 'stratification' in general and 'differential power' situation in particular. Thus sociologist Donald L. Noel identified three elements: such as ethnocentrism, competition and differential power as basis of ethnic stratification. He contends that of the three, differential power is essential not only for the emergence of racial and ethnic stratification but also for the maintenance of a stratification system.

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<sup>68</sup> *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, p. 1081.



Marvin Olsen notes that 'the basic themes that link together stratification and race relations are inequality and conflict both of which are direct outcome of power exertion. The majority access to the society's resources including power resources is disproportionately large in comparison to that of minority groups.

During the disintegration and the emergence of independent Central Asian states there has been quite a substantial change in position of migrant Russian and natives vis-a-vis majority and minority status. The new formation of Central Asian states after the disintegration of Soviet Union reduced the dominant/majority Russians in to minority within their respective new states. Russians now in new political structures feel insecure and defenseless in the backdrop of ethnic tension and clan infightings. "As many as 72% of the Russians living in the Kyrgyzstan's urban centers said that Russians must be protected"<sup>69</sup>. This illustration portrays their plight. There was huge emigration among Russians from this region back to Russia due to insecure minority status following Soviet disintegration. Still the Central Asia is the process of institutional/state building. only recently they have made their constitutions, protecting rights of Russian minorities. Only in the course of time their position and status will be clearly known.

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<sup>69</sup> Valeny A. Tishkov, op. cit., p. 303.

## CHAPTER IV

### PLURALISM AS A MODEL

This chapter will focus how 'pluralism as a Model' is important to Central Asian States. Prior to this analysis, another important ethnicity theory, 'Ethnic Enclave Model' and 'Ethnic Resource Model' would be discussed. Illustration is mainly from post-disintegration ethnic situation. In the current situation how each group is to equally share the economic resource, political participation and social security is the main concern.

### ETHNIC ENCLAVES MODEL

"Ethnic enclaves are isolated communities free from the majority population, that are usually intended to maintain customs and traditions that are under attack by outsiders. Enclaves are usually created by groups that feel oppressed by outside force".<sup>70</sup> In the case of Central Asia, the natives remained isolated and deprived of socio-economic facilities compared to the migrant outsiders. The assimilation seemed to have failed overall. Even though the former Soviet policies such as national delimitation aimed at mixing the ethnic groups, the language policy tried to assimilate, nationalities policy and cultural policies, collectivization and industrialization tried to assimilate, overall it has failed due to the very fact that ethnic groups maintained their distinct identity. Only there was partial evidence of assimilation in urban areas, where the locals/natives adopted the Russian language and culture. Fractional percentage indulged in cultural as well as structural assimilation i.e., apart from adopting

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<sup>70</sup> *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, p. 468.

the values, customs and norms of dominant culture, they intermarried with other ethnic groups, mainly migrant Russians. Evidently the distinctiveness of each ethnic group is seen just around the disintegration time. The ethnic riots and violence is evidence of enclaves, where there were reportedly organized group violence. This illustrates the existence of enclaves.

The ethnic enclave theory was developed by Portes and Bach (1985), although its intellectual ancestry is considerably older. "Ethnic enclaves are territories inhabited by a distinct group of people who are separated from the dominant population by difference in language, religion, social class, or culture and who are frequently subjected to prejudice and discrimination".<sup>71</sup> From this definition enclaves are formed on the basis of differences in language; in case of Central Asia also language was area of contest between the natives and migrants. Former Soviet state promoted Russian as official link language. "Russian language proficiency became a necessity for education, culture and advancement in all urban professions".<sup>72</sup> The Russian language and culture were reference point for all culture that was transmitted forcibly from center to the periphery. Another reason for enclaves are that the Russians residing in the Union republic had no overwhelming motivation to learn the languages of the titular nationalities and integrated into the non-Russian ethno-cultural environment. Apart from the socio-political and language situation that was comparatively favourable for the local Russians, possibilities for meeting their wider cultural requirements, Russian was the language of office work and social services. "In this region the Russian and the titular population kept a

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>72</sup> Eden Naby, 'Ethnicity and Islam in Central Asia' *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 12(2), 1993, p. 156.

cultural distance from one another and were in effect isolated communities with their own social niches of everyday contacts.”<sup>73</sup>

Religion played another key role in segregation between natives and migrants. Islam being the predominant religion continued to persist in spite of atheist policy of the former Soviet regime. Even though Islam was discouraged (for that matter any religion) by closing mosques, reducing the role of clergies, destroying Islamic texts and literature, etc. Still Islam was way of life and deep cultural attachment for the locals. Religion played a key role in formation of enclaves. “Islam and Muslim practices in Turkistan became the target of a multifaceted, intense, systematic and sustained attack by the Soviet state”.<sup>74</sup> Then local culture played significant role in maintenance of enclaves, when there was attack through the Soviet policies.

Enclaves are established for two major reasons. Some are found in nations and groups where a distinct sense of injustice exists between peoples. As in case of Central Asia also they felt discriminated and injustice thrust on them in the form of former Soviet policies which helped only the migrant Russians. This sense of discrimination prevents communication and results in isolation and sense of inferiority within the minority group. Here the explanation of minority group is very essential. They are “defined by their powerlessness relative to other groups in a society, and majority groups are the reverse: they dominate other groups”.<sup>75</sup> Charles Wagley and Morin Haris have

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<sup>73</sup> Valery A. Tishkov, ‘The Russians in Central Asia and Kazakhstan’ in Yaccov, Ro’I (ed.) *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting legacies* (1995), p. 93.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.93.

<sup>75</sup> *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, p. 834.

put forward a widely accepted definition of the term 'minority group'. They argued five characteristics as essential: I) relatively powerless, ii) distinctive culture or physical traits; iii) distinctive traits cause them to become self-conscious social units; iv) established rule of descent exist among them; v) endogamy practices (i.e. marriage within their group). Almost all these characteristics are applicable to Central Asian people, and only formed their own ethnic enclaves. Powerlessness and their distinctive culture kept them isolated. Ethnic enclaves result from the failure of groups to accommodate, acculturate or assimilate.

### **ETHNIC RESOURCE MODEL:**

This model again is essential for understanding the ethnic formation and mobilization. This approach, like the stratification approach, takes its point of departure from the inequalities among the groups. However, the focus is less on the domination of some groups over others. "It is of a more balanced competition, which is affected by characteristics of the groups, such as their number, their solidarity, and their ability to form separate ethnic sub-economies".<sup>76</sup> Such characteristics can give the group and its members relative advantage or disadvantage in this competition. In so far as advantages are concerned, there may be incentives for individuals to maintain their attachments to a group rather than to assimilate, as in the case of local Central Asian ethnic groups to be just attached for certain economic benefits, but not true assimilation. In a sense, theories of ethnic group resource can be seen as counter-arguments to assimilation theories. Glazer and Moynihan gave politically based explanation for continuing importance of ethnicity all over.

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<sup>76</sup> *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, p. 581.

They acknowledge that assimilation is to certain extent possible at the initial phase. Ethnicity takes on importance in the political sphere, i.e. ethnic group became 'interest groups', reflecting the interest of many similarly situated individuals. Others have argued that ethnicity has become 'politicized' in many contemporary societies, including many industrialized ones and this heads to an unanticipated "ethnic resurgence" This view strengthens the view that ethnicity continues to persist in spite - also as a product - of modernization. Because any society which undergoes modernization, at least minimal level of modern communication, transportation, etc. is given to it. So it becomes easy to achieve mobilization.

Bell states one basis for ethnic resurgence, "politics is increasingly replacing the market as chief instrument of distribution and that recognize only group claims, thus enhancing ethnicity's political import".<sup>77</sup> Whereas Horowitz sees the ethnic political conflict characterizing many third world nations as originating in part as colonial policies and then intensified by the anxieties of groups over their status in the post-colonial order. On a different note, Nielsen contends that ethnicity offers a wider basis for political recruitment than the chief alternative, social class. Ethnic politicization can be focussed on the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization, which is epitomized in separatist movements in modern states. Mobilization can be regarded as one manifestation of ethnic solidarity. 'Solidarity' ethnic groups can be defined as "self-conscious communities whose members interact with each other to achieve common purposes, and mobilization occurs when members take some collective action to advance these purposes.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.581.

## **CULTURAL PLURALISM:**

“Pluralism is the acceptance of group diversity and the preservation of ethnic differentiation within a larger society”.<sup>78</sup> Pluralists are not the same as enclaves, in the former there is a type of arrangement where diversity exists and people are divided into many distinct cultures and subcultures, but generally there are larger loyalties to a government/system that provides a common framework with which people can identify in times of crisis or trouble. People in enclaves rarely share any loyalty beyond that of the group and turn against the dominant culture or rival ethnic group in periods of conflict. In enclaves, because of past injustice and discrimination, groups living there, whether self-imposed or involuntary, feel totally outside the system and lack any sense of obligation to aid other groups.

The enclave model applicable till the disintegration period, where the locals/natives had to feel discriminated culturally, socially, economically and politically. Now after the disintegration in the phase of independence, state-building and institution-building stage, it is essential for acceptance of pluralist model, where the Russians and other migrants are themselves minority now within each new Central Asian state. It is all the more fragile than ever, so care is needed to treat the security and prosperity of each ethnic group.

## **PRESENT SITUATION IN CENTRAL ASIA:**

The present ethnic composition of Central Asia, statewise: (Source: Europa Year Book, 1996)

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p. 408.

- i) **Kazakhstan: Kazak – 44.3%; Russian – 35.8%; Ukrainian – 5.1%; German – 3.6%; Uzbek – 2.2%; etc.**
- ii) **Kyrgyzstan: Kyrgyz – 52.4%; Russian – 21.5%; Uzbek – 12.7%; Ukrainian – 2.5%; German – 2.4%; etc.**
- iii) **Tajikistan: Tajik – 62.3%; Uzbek – 23.5%; Russian – 7.8%; Tatar – 1.4%; etc.**
- iv) **Turkmenistan: Turkmen – 73.3%; Russian – 9.4%; Uzbek – 9.3 %; Kazak – 2.0%; etc.**
- v) **Uzbekistan: Uzbek – 71.4%; Russian – 8.3%; Tajik – 4.7%; Kazak – 4.1%; Tatar – 2.4%; etc.**

Here the slow depletion of migrants who were active during former Soviet period is very notable. This reflects the reversal of majority/minority positions particularly in the social and political milieu. The states of Central Asia after acquiring their independence unexpectedly with little preparation have entered a transitional period in their histories. This period is characterized by a search for new formulae and socio-political foundations of national development and for their own niche in the new geo-political space. In as much as the disintegration of the USSR took place under the slogan of the 'doctrine of ethnic nationalism', it is only natural that the proclamation of so called national states within the borders of the former union republic should be made on behalf of the 'titular' ethno-nations: the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Tajiks. These nations are mainly socio-cultural constructs of the Soviet period. In the past 70 years they have undergone an extremely intensive process of 'nation-building' with the regional, religious and dynastic clan identities of the past giving way to a new ethnicity based on the concept of the



socialist nation. This new ethnicity was closely bound to the national-state delimitation determined from above. The nation building process was attended by radical changes of economic modernization, promotion of mass education and establishment of institutions. In 1960's to 80's saw a noticeable shift of the demographic balance in favour of the 'titular nations' which now became the majority in all states.

### **RUSSIANS IN PRESENT SITUATION:**

The Soviet nationalities policy and the persisting centralization contributed to the powerful thrust of Central Asian periphery towards national self-determination. But a major problem that the new post-Soviet states have to tackle is developing their statehood, the state and fate of non-titular population, which is sufficiently numerous component in these states. Central to this problem is the fate of the Slav, primarily the Russian population. According to the 1989 census, the Russian population in the Central Asian region constituted 19.3% of the overall population. The Russians who settled as migrants came as result of industrialization and urbanization. They were settled in better positions. "The share of Russians employed in industry ranged from 22.4 to 26.2% of the entire working population".<sup>79</sup> The social and professional differentiation along ethnic lines was and remains greater than in other regions of the former USSR. This is the precise cause of ethnic stratification and ethnic enclaves.

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<sup>79</sup> Valery A. Tishkov, 'The Russians in Central Asia and Kazakhstan' in Yacov, Ro'l's, *Muslim Eurasia – Conflicting Legacies*, p. 292.

The Russians have been faced with the problem of finding a new niche in the changing economic and socio-cultural situation. For example the "Russians in Kyrgyzstan who wish to work in trade and services, as middle men or in finance are three times as numerous as those already employed in these fields. Yet their prospects of orating representatives of the titular nationality, who are even now predominant in these occupations and are desirous of increasing their representation in them in the future are dim indeed".<sup>80</sup>

More active involvement of Russians in free enterprise could provide a partial solution to the problem. However, the prospects for such an involvement are limited as a result of insufficiently developed market relations and shortage of initial capital. According to one survey only 16% of Russian urban dwellers in Kyrgyzstan would like to become owners of private enterprises, while the number of such people among the Kyrgyz is twice as high. Many Russians are pessimistic about their chances of acquiring property in Kyrgyzstan and nearly a quarter think that, given a future process of privatization, their chances are worse than those of Kyrgyz. The situation is especially complicated for those of the Russian intelligentsia whose work involves contacts with the local population and knowledge of one of the languages of the titular nationality. Insufficient knowledge of the language of the titular nationality is a formidable obstacle for Russians working in public health, education, culture and in administrative work and is a principal argument in favour of their dismissal. Such a state of affairs may further reduce the already insignificant number of Russian teachers, doctors, lawyers, writers and

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

journalists, which would be detrimental to the entire Russian-speaking population, including people of the titular nationalities close to Russian culture.

Both Russian old timers and recent migrants have an increasingly keen ethnic consciousness and are worried by the disregard to the state authorities for this national, cultural and religious requirements and by growing Islamicization and traditionalism in official circles. The vigorous manifestation of sovereignty in the realm of language has been a major instrument in the titular groups assertion of its dominant political and socio-cultural status and has proved to be an especially sensitive issue for the local Russians. Concerning the law of the state language, “the overwhelming majority of Russians in Tashkent (for example) 79 percent said they would prefer to have two state languages: Uzbek and Russian”.<sup>81</sup> In Kyrgyzstan too, the Russian population is greatly concerned over the status of the language law. “over two-thirds of the respondents (68 percent) said the law had changed the position of Russians”.<sup>82</sup> “Most of them said the law had first and foremost an adverse effect on the Russians’ social status, that is, it made it more difficult to enter institutions of higher education (24%), limited job and promotion opportunities (17% and 16% respectively) and increases the chance of being sacked (13%)”.<sup>83</sup>

Regarding the citizenship issue, dual citizenship – that of their country of residence and of Russia is seen by many Russians and people of associated nationalities as a way to stabilize their status. “Russians of 74% in Tashkent

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

said they would like to have dual citizenship where as 58% in Kyrgyzstan preferred dual citizenship”.<sup>84</sup> Equally they wanted to stay in respective Central Asian states though some persons wanted to leave. From these illustrations one thing evident is that many ‘migrant’ population would prefer to stay. This brings in the concern for pluralism. As mentioned in the beginning, it is the acceptance of group diversity and the preservation of ethnic differentiation within a larger society.

In the former USSR, Russians enjoyed for decades the comfortable status of a people dominating all the major socio-cultural areas. “The Russian language and culture were reference components of all culture which was transmitted forcibly from the centre to the periphery in the education system, the mass media, party and government structures, and especially in the systems of training managerial and industrial elites and military service”, (which was seen a ‘Russo-conformity’ in the second chapter). In these circumstances, Russians residing in the union republic had no compelling motivation to learn the languages of the titular nationalities and integrate in to the non-Russian ethno-cultural environment. All levels of education were available in Russian, and Russian was the language of office work and the social services. As a result, in Central Asia Russians basically retained their cultural profile (This is what is seen as failure of ‘Melting Pot Model’ in the second chapter).

Although there were intensive inter-ethnic contacts and a higher level of linguistic Russification, the Russians and titular population kept a cultural distance from one another and were in effect isolated communities with their own social niches and circles in everyday life, rites, behaviour, especially in

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

rural areas. Most Russian folk traditions and rites are performed strictly within their own communities and their Muslim neighbours do not even know of their existence. Nowadays, the Russians have an increasingly keen ethnic consciousness and are worried by the disregard of the state authorities for their national, cultural and religious requirements, and by the growing Islamicization and traditionalism in official circles.

The vigorous manifestation of sovereignty in the realm of language, which has been a major instrument for the titular group to assert its dominant political and socio-cultural status, has proven to be a sensitive issue for the local Russians. In Uzbekistan, the Russians are worried about the new laws which established Uzbek and Kyrgyz respectively as the sole state languages. The deterioration of inter-ethnic relations in Central Asia in recent years has been mainly caused by the upsurge in ethnic nationalism and by inter-clan and inter-regional disputes that climaxed in a series of ethnic conflicts and even in the case of Tajikistan , in a devastating civil war. Russians who suffer the consequences of the current economic crisis which principally hits the urban population, feel that they are being 'ousted' from prestigious jobs and 'forced' out of the republics in which they live. The enactment of the laws on language and citizenship, anti-Russian nationalist rhetoric and the actions of local radicals and fundamentalists affecting the Russians' everyday affair, evoke a painful psychological reaction among Russians.

The new socio-cultural and political status of the Russians in the former Central Asian republics has led a considerable number of them to adopt ethno-political position that is significantly at variance with the stand taken by the leadership of the republic in which they live and by a large proportion of the

titular nationalities. Most of the Russians are unprepared to accept the status of ethnic minority in this region. Well aware that the exodus of Russians would jeopardize their economic projects, the leaders are taking steps to assure them safety and protection. In some areas Russians have formed their own national organizations or joined with local nationalities to organize democratic and civil associations. On the whole the political inertia of the Russians in Central Asia is largely a result of their despair regarding the prospect of their continued presence in the region.

The Soviet regime spent much effort and considerable resources to achieve what was officially termed the 'complete solution of the nationalities question'. On the one hand, centralized control over the non-Russian nationalities were iron clad and assimilation policies were encouraged. On the other hand, the development of education in the republics and among the small indigenous people was strongly encouraged, cultural activities were promoted and national cultural institutions were established and supported. As a result of the policy of nativization, the major Soviet nationalities developed their own intelligentsia and managerial power, as well as an influential party bureaucracy. From the 1960's onwards the gap that existed in the social structure of the main ethnic groups was practically abolished as a result of quotas and preferences in the sphere of education and in the process of urbanization.

Over the last few decades, population growth among the non-Slavic peoples was also considerably higher than among the Russian, Ukrainian and Baltic nationalities. Moreover, beginning in the 1970's Russians emigrated increasingly from areas of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus, whereas their presence increased in the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Belarus and in Kazakhstan.

Consequently, in the former areas the local 'titular nationalities' exploited to obtain increasing control over the institutions of power and distribution of resources, whereas in the latter areas, as a result of the changing demographic balance, the titulars feared losing control in their own republic and becoming subject to an even greater degree of acculturation in favour of Russian culture.

When the Gorbachev reforms weakened the power of the political centre and the dominant ideology itself was challenged by those who had wielded it for so long, the nationalities policy of the former Soviet Union was undermined by the national elites who had become its main beneficiaries.

"Ethnicity as a basis of group solidarity and ethnic nationalism as a political doctrine effectively challenged Gorbachev's vision of a new multi-ethnic post-socialist Soviet Union".<sup>85</sup> It was according to Valery Tishkov, a kind of 'national answer' to the nationality question. "Emblematic of the political changes of the times was the fact that at the 1989 session of the Congress of People's Deputies, the President of the former USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, had to pledge allegiance not to the 'people' as he insisted, but to the peoples of the Soviet Union as the Congress decided". This reflects the lack of assimilation or unity but rather the persistence of pluralism. Gorbachev's policy of gradual political liberalization and administrative decentralization was challenged first by the Baltic republics, where nationalist movements openly advocated secession, soon followed by similar movements in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Moldavia. While the conflicts between the centre and the periphery were mostly of vertical and political nature, they were

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<sup>85</sup> Rodolfo Stavenhagen, *Ethnic Conflict and the Nation State*, UNRISD, London (1996), p. 58.

accompanied by some sporadic displays of inter-communal violence and ethnic conflicts at the lower levels mainly between non-Russian titular nationalities and local minorities in several republics. Leaders of autonomous republics started movements to raise their status to the level of Union republics in order to avoid their double subordination to the all union centre and the republican centres.

Due to the long standing contradictions between the 'ethnic territories' and 'administrative territories' principle, ethnic conflicts followed the disintegration. Why and how these conflicts develop is ultimately related to the way ethnic and national identities have been constructed.



## CONCLUSION

The idea of the nation-state as a political concept emerged in nineteenth century Europe and which is still considered to be the main building block of the world system. They carry much of the responsibilities for so many of world's ethnic conflicts, past and present. What resulted, however is a world divided into number of territorial political units, which have become the main actors in the international system. Yet within the borders of most of these states there exist numerous ethnic, national, racial, linguistic or cultural groups who either do not identify with the dominant model of the nation-state, or who are not accepted as full members of this state or nation which it purports to be or represent, or who are actually excluded from it. In fact, the majority of independent states existing today are composed of more than one ethnic group and this diversity poses challenges to governance and to the prevailing concept of the nation-state itself. One of the problems is that numerous states do not legally recognize the ethnic pluralism existing within their borders, and those that do are still struggling with ways to deal with diversity constructively. Ethnic and cultural diversity by itself does not necessarily lead to conflict between ethnic groups. To be sure, social conflict is inherent in human society, and under certain circumstances, it takes the form of ethnic conflict. But this is not to say that in multi-ethnic states all social conflict necessarily takes on ethnic characteristics, nor that other forms of conflict disappear because of ethnic confrontations. However, when ethnic conflicts become particularly acute, and especially when they turn violent, they easily displace and subsume other kinds of political and social, as well as economic, conflicts. So the most inevitable model which can be considered for Central Asian states to adopt is

**'pularalism' as model to minimize ethnic tensions, and to respect and protect all ethnic groups equally in the present situation.**

In the analysis of 'Ethnicity in Central Asia: Theory and Reality' various main ethnicity theories were applied in order to understand the validity of theories as well as the ethnic situation in the region. Conceptualization is undertaken to get the essence of both the empirical phenomena as well as different concepts which purport to describe and explain it. In the course of theoretical analysis various conceptual clarity as well empirical reality is sought.

Initially ethnicity as a product of disengagement between territory and culture was seen as part of Soviet policy of national delimitation which led to deterritorialization. Initially assimilation policies were successful and later it failed. Secondly ethnicity continues to persist inspite of modernization as is discussed while analysing stratification theory in Central Asia. Here the continuation of inequalities to power, privilege and resources are discussed. Certain modernizing facilities itself paved the way for ethnicity. The validity of ethnic stratification is seen from empirical data of various ethnic clashes/tensions during and immediately after disintegration. Thirdly the emergence of ethnic enclaves are discussed in fourth chapter. Here the majority and minority concepts are discussed. Then the rise of ethnic resource is seen as par of instrumentalist perspective of ethnicity, while ethnic enclave is more of primordialist perspective. In the same chapter the main theme of the chapter 'pularalism as model' which is very suitable to the present fragile ethnic situation in Central Asia. All the Central Asian states are in the process of their state formation, they are building their new socio-economic and

political institutions, so stability and order is the prerequisite. Even it is pertinent for future peace and prosperity in the region as whole.

The modernization theories based on the works of Karl Deutch and Black who viewed that national, ethnic identities gradually disappear due to industrialization, urbanization, and so forth have failed in the context of Central Asia, as it was evident in failures of assimilation and continuation of stratification and ethnic enclaves. So the primordialist views of Connor, Issac, and Horowitz, that very modernization leads to reinforcement, crystallation and articulation of ethnic identity is, to a large extent, valid. It is clear that mere modernization is not enough. Rather sustainable and balanced development with equitable distribution of power and resource and recognition of identity among all ethnic groups is essential.

The failures witnessed during the former Soviet period regarding ethnic/nationalities should be seen as lesson to present rulers to take care of the present ethnic situation which is a fragile issue, if not it could boomerang, with chaos and disorder. So it is neither an 'end of history' nor a 'clash of civilization' situation, ethnicity is delicate but still an issue which can be sorted out with positive political will.

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