

**MULTILATERALISM AND REGIONAL COOPERATION IN
CENTRAL ASIA, 1991-2012**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “Multilateralism and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia, 1991-2012” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Abhishek Srivastava'.

ABHISHEK SRIVASTAVA

CERTIFICATE

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'skp'.

Prof. Sanjay Kumar Pandey
Chairperson (CRCAS)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Badan'.

Prof. Phool Badan
Supervisor

Dedicated to
Amma - Papa

Content

Abbreviations	i-ii
Preface	iii-v

Chapter-1

Introduction: Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature 10-40.

- 1.1 Genesis of Multilateralism in Central Asia
- 1.2 Review of Literature
- 1.3 Theories of Multilateralism and Regional Cooperation
- 1.4 Historical and Cultural linkages of Central Asia
- 1.5 Role of Multilateral and Regional Organization in Central Asia
- 1.6 Regional insecurities; Problems and Prospects
- 1.7 Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study
- 1.8 Research Questions
- 1.9 Hypotheses
- 1.10 Research Methods
- 1.11 Chapterization of Research

Chapter -2

Multilateralism and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia: Historical Perspective 41-81.

- 2.1 Central Asia in Ancient Times.
- 2.2 Central Asia under Mongol's Rule.
- 2.3 Decline of Mongols Rule and Emergence of New Powers
- 2.4 Central Asia: Silk Route and Regional Cooperation.
- 2.5 Silk route: Inception to Modern Times.
- 2.6 Silk Route: Convergence of Civilizations.
- 2.7 Revival of Silk Route in Modern Times.

Chapter-3

Multilateral Organizations in Central Asia: Norms and Institutions 82- 124.

- 3.1 Multilateral Organizations in Central Asia
- 3.2 Central Asian Organizations and Treaties
 - 3.2.1 The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
 - 3.2.2 The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)
 - 3.2.3 The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)
 - 3.2.4 Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (CANWFZ)

3.2.5 The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS).

3.3 Regional Economic Organizations: Future for Single Economic Space

3.3.1 Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC)

3.3.2 CAREC-2020: Focus, Action and Result

3.3.3 Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC)

3.3.4 Eurasian Customs Union (EACU)

3.3.5 Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)

3.3.6 The Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)

3.3.7 The Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA)

3.3.8 Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation to Europe (INOGATE)

3.3.9 Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) and Central Asia Drug Action Program (CADAP)

3.4 Challenges for Organizations: An Assessment.

Chapter – 4

Regional Insecurity: Quest for Regional Cooperation

125-170.

4.1 Regional Insecurities in Central Asia.

4.2 Traditional Security Threats in Central Asia.

4.2.1 Great game: Struggle for Heartland.

4.2.2 New Great Game: New players with old aspirations.

4.2.3 Border Disputes.

4.3 Non-traditional Security Challenges in Central Asia.

4.3.1 Trade and Economic Issues.

4.3.2 Religious Extremism.

4.3.3 Environmental Issues.

4.3.4 Water Security.

4.3.5 Food Security.

4.3.6 Health Security.

4.3.7 Migration and Human Trafficking.

4.3.8 Drugs and Arms Trafficking.

4.4 Areas for Regional Cooperation

- 4.5 Quest for Cooperation.
- 4.6 Obstacles for Regional Cooperation.

Chapter-5
Problems and Prospects for Multilateral and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia. **171- 204.**

- 5.1 Problems for regional cooperation.
- 5.2 Prospects for Regional Cooperation.
 - 5.2.1 Climate Change and Multilateral Cooperation.
 - 5.2.2 Water Problem and Regional Cooperation.
 - 5.2.3 Environment and Cooperation for Common Future.
- 5.3 Regional Economic Integration: Prospects of Prosperity.
- 5.4 Multilateral Organizations: Prospects for Regional Cooperation.
 - 5.4.1 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).
 - 5.4.2 Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program

Chapter – 6	
Conclusion	205-212
References	213-234

List of Maps

	Page no.
1. Map of Scythia Empire	44
2. Map of Kushan Empire	48
3. Map of Seljuk Empire	50
4. Map of Mongol's Empire	53
5. Map of Ancient Silk Route	67
6. Map of Maritime Silk Route	76

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BOMCA	Border Management in Central Asia
CADAP	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
CANWFZ	Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Co-operation Program
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNPC	Chinese National Petroleum Co-operation
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EACU	Eurasian Customs Union
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EU	European Union
EurAsEC	Eurasian Economic Community
ICG	International Crisis Group
IFAS	The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
INOGATE	Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation to Europe
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development
ONGC	Oil and Natural Gas Corporation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SPECA	Special Program for Economics of Central Asia

TRACECA The Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia

USA United States of America

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

Preface

The disintegration of the erstwhile Soviet Union in December, 1991 has changed the landscape of world politics. Soon after the collapse of the Soviet system the five Central Asian republics emerged as independent sovereign nation states on the political map of the world. Since independence the initiatives of integration and regional cooperation have been taking place in the region of Central Asia. The Central Asian countries are in the process of transformation and facing common security challenges like economy and trade issues, extremism and radicalism, disputes related water sharing, human and drug trafficking, etc. The instability and insecurity in the Central Asian countries have affected the direction of the regional integration and cooperation and the project of institution building too is impacted.

Challenges of the 21 century require a broader partnership and cooperation among the countries of the region and also a multilateral cooperation with the support of major countries. Central Asian nations are facing numerous challenges like traditional and non-traditional security threats. Central Asian republics are co-founders of regional organizations including Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Future prospects of multilateral, regional and international cooperation in Central Asia will depend on convergence of national, regional and global interests. For this to happen, first of all it is necessary that strong dialogs among Central Asian republics themselves to take place. Central Asian geopolitical, economic and security challenges are connected and therefore their solutions too can be established jointly by themselves. Future regional cooperation and strong international partnership would promote more stability, economic reforms and democratization of the region and beyond.

Regional cooperation can become an important factor in the maintenance of peace and security in the region, which are necessary for stable economic growth and development. Central Asia faced considerable political, social, cultural changes during the entire 20th century, which have influenced the geopolitics on the one hand and dynamics of international relations in Central Asia on the other.

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Chapter-1

Introduction: Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

The transformation of the international system in 20 century has resulted into formation of cooperation and competition among the nations. In the second decade of the 20 century a multilateral organization i.e. “League of Nations” was established by the international community to pacify the conflicts among the nations. In 20 century inter-governmentalism has been an early reaction to the neo-functionalism infatuation with non-state actors during the process of integration. So, developmentalism and state-centrism are inevitable for the studies of the initial stage of regional integration elsewhere in the world. Multilateralism is a diplomatic term that refers to cooperation among several nations beyond geography. It is facilitating by cooperation among regional countries and inter-regional cooperation. Regional cooperation influences the limited geographical region whereas multilateralism covers greater geographical areas. John Ruggie defines “multilateralism as an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct”. Again Ruggie stated that “states have to ensure satisfaction of their national interests in conformation with certain international norms”.

Governments have increasingly accepted the concept of multilateralism in order to face the challenges that exceed the capacities of individual states. Historically, multilateral institutions have revealed important role of non-state and social movement actors for advancing institution-building and catalyzing social change. In the context of current international politics, multilateralism is very useful in maintaining and promoting global ‘peace and security’, ‘economic development and international trade’, ‘human rights, functional and technical cooperation’, and ‘protection of environment and sustainable development’, etc.

The genesis of multilateralism can be traced out from the 19th century Europe particularly after the end of the Napoleonic War. In 1948, the great powers met to redraw the map of Europe at the Congress of Vienna. The Concert of Europe came to be known as a group of greater and lesser powers that would meet to resolve issues peacefully. Conference of Berlin, for example, in 1884 helped to reduce power conflicts during this period. Such efforts paved way for the later

phase of 19th century to witness peace in European history. After the Second World War the victors learnt from the experience of the failure of the League of Nations. Such realizations lead them to create the United Nation in 1945 with a structure intended to address the weaknesses of the previous body. Unlike the League, the UN relied on active participation of the United States and the Soviet Union the world's two greatest powers of the time. Alongside the development of UN and other political institutions attached to it, the post-war years also saw the development of other multilateral organizations such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (now the World Trade Organization), the World Bank and IMF (Bretton Woods institutions) and the World Health Organization. The collective multilateral framework played a significant role in maintaining world peace during the Cold War period.

Post-Soviet regionalism represents a return to a selective, negotiated openness and resuscitation of traditional preferential trade and military agreement. Regional cooperation is very much important for the newly independent countries. Prof Palmer and Perkins tried to emphasize that in international relations “a region is invariably an area embracing the territories of three or more states. These states are bound together by ties of common interests as well as geography. They are not necessarily contiguous or even in the same continent.” Regionalism is a grouping of three or more states whose goal is the formation of a distinct political entity with the aim of achieving certain distinct goals. Regional arrangement is a voluntary association of sovereign states that has developed fairly elaborate organizational tools to forge among them such bonds of unity. Regional arrangement is an association of sovereign states within a certain area or having common interests in the area for common purpose, which should not be of offensive nature in relation to that area. In other words regional arrangement is an association of states based upon location in a given geographical area for safeguarding the interests of the participants.

The erstwhile Soviet Union disintegrated in December, 1991. Soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the former five Soviet Central Asian republics forming the part of Soviet System namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan emerged as independent sovereign nation states on

the international community of states. These Central Asian states have initiated the process of transformation from the time of their independence.

In the process of their transformation as independent entity these Central Asian countries are faced with so many common security challenges like economic underdevelopment, extremism, water resources, human and drug trafficking etc. The stability and security related issues in Central Asian countries affected the direction of the integration pattern of regional cooperation and building of institutions. Post-communist regionalism is clearly something novel on more than one count. It indicates the “third wave” of regionalism around the world. This wave of regionalism is different from “first wave,” that is associated with closed regional trade arrangements and import substitution strategies. The “second wave” sometimes referred to as “open regionalism” that emphasizes upon regional integration that is compatible with non-discriminatory trade liberalization and openness. In this context it is important to understand the characteristics of the “third wave” of the regional integration pattern which the Central Asian States signify. The “third wave” represents a return to a selective, negotiated openness and resurgence of traditional preferential trade agreement.

In the third wave Central Asian republics have been co-founders of regional organizations including Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Central Asian Cooperation Organizations (CACO), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC,) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), but their effectiveness is different. For the maintenance of peace and security in the region, regional cooperation has become an important factor, something which essential for stable economic growth and development. The 20 century marked challenges in the face of the Central Asian States as they are faced with considerable political, social, cultural changes in the whole period. The beginning of the 21 century brings in new hope in the wake of the geopolitical changes and dynamics of international relations in Central Asia.

Challenges and dynamics of the 21 century require a broader partnership and cooperation among Central Asian countries. These countries are suffering from traditional and non-traditional security threats. Future prospects of multilateral regional and international cooperation in Central Asia will depend on correlations

of national, regional and global interests. It is firstly, therefore, necessary that the process of strong dialogs must be initiated among Central Asian republics themselves. Central Asian geopolitical, economic and security challenges are interconnected and therefore solution to such pressing issues could come jointly from within themselves. Future regional cooperation, strong international partnership would then promote more stability paving the way for economic reforms and democratization to the region and beyond.

It is well known that the last century of the world history is characterized by considerable historical and political transformations and upheavals, including creation of Soviet Union and its dissolution, East-West conflict and many such developments. At the same time, the second part of the last century and beginning of 21 century has brought more optimism in the international political arena as it galvanized the process of globalization, regionalization and the project modern nation building on the foundations of liberal democratic model took place in the different parts of the world.

It should be noted that Central Asia during many centuries had different names, definitions and boundaries and passed through complicated political and cultural interactions. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the terminology used in both Russia and the other former Soviet republics has undergone a change. The five newly independent southern states (now including Kazakhstan) have adopted the term *Sentralnaya Aziya* (the Central Asian states) as collective designation (Engvall, 2006). Post-Soviet newly independent Central Asian nations are confronted by complex threats including the international terrorism, religious extremism, illegal drug trafficking, transnational water sharing, transnational criminal rackets and boundary issues and so on. Security threats in Central Asia are transnational as well as intra-national in their nature and characteristics. In such a scenario regional security in Central Asian States is only possible through the regional connectedness and multilateral cooperation.

Regional cooperation and integration is one of the important aspects of contemporary international relations. The 20 century has witnessed the gradual development of political, economic regional organizations, including North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA), Europe Union (EU), Association of South-

East Asian States (ASEAN), Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) and others. The process of regional cooperation and integration has also gradually manifested itself in the Commonwealth of Independent States space, including Central Asian region.

After the collapse of the Soviet system, Central Asian republics tried to establish new bilateral and multilateral relations with other countries. Within a short span of time the Central Asian nations were formally recognized by many countries and established, with most of them, diplomatic ties and exchanged diplomatic missions. The region's countries have joined the main international organizations; among them the UN, OSCE. The Central Asian nations received memberships in regional organizations, including the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and Organizations of Islamic Conferences. Also the Central Asian republics have been co-founders of regional organizations including Central Asian Cooperation Organizations (CACO), Commonwealth of Independent (CIS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC).

After independence Central Asia gradually became an important region in the world arena due to many reasons.

- I. The availability of rich energy resources in Central Asia and the Caspian region.
- II. Geopolitical location of Central Asia among the regional powers like Russia, China, India, Iran and higher stakes of US, the EU and other major international actors.
- III. Instability in Afghanistan can also be regarded as a source of possible security threat to neighbouring countries and other countries of the world because of the illegal drug production and trafficking, and terrorism.

All these factors have encouraged regional and global players to compete in Central Asia in the post-Cold War era. As a result, post-Soviet Central Asia is

important for the geopolitical interests of the major and regional powers and major international organizations and institutions like the EU, NATO and OSCE.

1.1 Genesis of Multilateralism in Central Asia

From a strategic perspective, the Western countries have been attaching an increased importance to Central Asia's central location at the crossroads of Eurasia. There are some experts who view this as the retuning of the Great Game of 19th century, but with the new players. It is well known that Central Asia, historically, was in the centre of importance to safeguard strategic and economic aspects of interests to different empires in the world history or it can be said that region was more or less in 'Great Game' all the time.

The erstwhile Soviet Union disintegrated in December 1991. As a result, five Central Asian republics emerged as independent, sovereign nation-states on the political map of the world. When the unifying power of the Soviet Union collapsed, there were no mechanisms to deal with regional and internal disputes. Central Asian countries have been facing so many problems since independence for example problems related to border disputes, low economic growth, religious extremism, environmental degradation, food, health, water sharing and threats of organized crime like human trafficking, drug trafficking, etc.

In the given situation multilateral and regional cooperation is essential in the region not only for trade and business but also for traditional and non-traditional security concerns. During Soviet period intraregional cooperation in Central Asia was treated as a single economic subdivision within the "unified economic complex of the USSR." Major plants and industries as well as their production plans were determined from Moscow. During the early years of independence the Central Asian countries were pessimistic about cooperating among each other. As a result, they chose an external strategy which was popularly known as 'export globalism'.

The establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was one of the first regional initiatives in the post-Soviet period. This institution, however, showed little vitality in the military, political and economic areas. But, the efforts made by the CIS in the field of economy have retained the economic

unity of the region. Divisive reactions took place with the collapse of the Russian economy and currency during 1991-93. Another attempt was initiated for trade cooperation by the region. In 1991, the Organization of Central Asian Cooperation (OCAC) was founded by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia. Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine had observer status. The Organization of Central Asian Cooperation was initially created under the name of Central Asian Economic Union (CAEU) in 1994, by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Tajikistan joined the group in 1998, and the Organization was renamed as Central Asian Economic Cooperation (CAEC). In 2002, the CAEC was transformed into the Central Asian Cooperation Organization, (CACO). On May 28th, 2004, Russia joined CACO as a member. Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) is an international organization that ensures multilateral economic cooperation among its member states. The EurAsEC was founded according to the Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community, signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan in Astana on October 10, 2000. In 2006 Uzbekistan joined the Community, but suspended its participation later on. In 2002 Moldova and Ukraine were granted observer status at the EurAsEC, and in 2003 the observer status was granted to Armenia.

Central Asian geopolitical, economic and security challenges are interconnected. The problems of Central Asian countries are more or less the same. They are facing common security challenges, some are traditional and some are newly emerged. Future prospects of multilateral and regional cooperation in Central Asia will depend upon correlations of national, regional and global interests. It is necessary to hold strong dialogs among Central Asian republics. Future regional cooperation and strong multilateral partnership would promote political and economic stability and democratization process in Central Asia.

Major Powers in the world like Russia, USA and China declared their support in establishing peace and stability in Central Asia on the one hand and regional cooperation on the other and these declarations of course are welcomed in Central Asian countries. But, there are some contradictions among them. Russia traditionally views the Central Asian states as being within its sphere of influence and does not wish to see either China or USA involved in the region. Though China recognizes Russia's strong role in the region, it too views USA's strong

military presence in the region as endangering to the safety of its own northwest region.

Since 1991 EU's main instrument in conducting strategy in CIS has been, the "Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation (APC)" that is also signed with all the republics of the former Soviet Union. The European Union initiated the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in May 1996 and with Uzbekistan in June 1996. In July 1999 the agreement became fully operational after ratification by all the EU member states and European Parliament. EU-Tajikistan bilateral trade relations are governed by an Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters. The pending ratification of the APC has been signed with Tajikistan in 2004. The APC signed with Turkmenistan in 1998 has been ratified by the EU in 2009. All five Central Asian countries are beneficiaries of the EU' Generalised System of Preferences.

These agreements do not extend any prospect for admission to the EU and simply serve to effect, on a bilateral basis, European interest in Central Asia. The European Commission has developed a representation network in the Central Asian countries, constituted of EC Delegations, including Almaty, Bishkek, Dushanbe (the last two having a non-resident Head of Delegation). In addition, like in Caucasian region in Baku, the Commission has established "Europe Houses" in Tashkent, which constitute a central point of reference in the country for information about Tacis and other programmes. But, some problem within the EU have yet not led to the development of a unified strategy toward the Central Asian region and the economic and political interests of the large European states in Central Asia differ and diverge. This can be ascribed to both, the internal peculiarities of European politics and to the general geopolitical considerations, including the relations of the EU with the USA and Russia.

The year span of 2000-2001 shows that the dominant theme in the relations between Central Asia and Europe was dominated by the problems of regional security as well as the struggle against terrorism and the drug trafficking. The problem of reconstruction and peace in Afghanistan is critical to the interests of USA, Russia, China and the EU and also for neighbouring countries including Central Asian nations.

In 2008 at the summit of NATO in Bucharest, Uzbek President suggested to rebuild “6 plus 2” platform on Afghanistan and with addition of NATO it became “6 plus 3”. But, it is equally important to include the EU, CSTO, SCO, India and Japan, the fast growing economies so that the goal of reconstruction of Afghanistan and the process of peace-building in that there can be achieved at a faster pace. The Afghan problem can be solved through broader cooperation and active participation of Central Asian countries in Afghanistan. Secure and economically stable Afghanistan is very important for the future of Central Asia.

The EU and NATO declared that both have a clear interest in stable, prosperous and democratic states in Central Asia. They must cooperate with the CARs to attain the objective of energy, regional and global security in the Central Asian Region. At the same time, NATO and the EU are facing common challenges in their relations with these republics. They have to define a perspective that is appealing to the governments that do not intend to join either of the organizations, but are expressing a degree of interest in limited cooperation in a number of specific areas. NATO and the EU have also been faced with the difficulty of finding a suitable balance between, the strategic and economic interests of their member states on one hand and the long-term objective of promoting fundamental political reform in the states of the region on the other.

Furthermore, they have had to reconcile regional and bilateral approaches to take into account the highly divergent interests of very different states. Also there is a growing competition from other actors, notably Russia and US, Russia and China, emerging India (in Afghanistan) with which cooperation may sometimes seem more attractive and less conditional. More specifically, with regard to the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region, it appears particularly important for the EU and NATO to have clear and transparent objectives in order to avoid misunderstandings or suspicions. The West’s action in this sphere is often perceived in the states of the region as an aggressive policy, which seeks to bring about regime change.

The EU and NATO should avoid listing non-negotiable demands, and rather place emphasis on a step-by-step, flexible approach, developing at the same time, if possible, a dialog both with the authorities and with independent groups and civil

society. It would also be useful to re-evaluate the impact of conditionality and sanctions, and to adopt a coordinated, consistent policy. Central Asian partnership with EU, NATO and other international organizations is important for the promotion of stability and security of the Central Asian nations and to assist them in their pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. At the same time stabilization and restoration of Afghanistan economy is one of the key objectives pertaining to the region. NATO has been leading the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), but the situation in Afghanistan has turned out to be that of very complicated. There are multi-dimensional interest of different actors in Afghanistan, including NATO, EU, OSCE and other international organizations, because they have different approaches and understanding about the situation.

India can play a very important role in the Central and South Asian cooperation and Afghanistan would be the bridge. The Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM) is based on the vision of a Greater Central Asia. This, in turn, is based on the premise that Central and South Asia are, or can become, a single integrated unit committed to economic activity and growth. The countries of the region, and particularly India as the leading force of South Asia, have deep cultural and historical ties and many common concerns such as against terrorism, finding outlets for energy supplies, achieving prosperity through economic cooperation, and moving towards enhanced security and stability. This concept further strengthens the spirit of regional security and regional cooperation. Slowly, but gradually India and Central Asia's relations are growing in every sphere. India's major initiative in the region has been that of building the North-South trade corridor. This is being built in cooperation with Russia and other countries. Although this initiative will speed up the flow of goods, especially energy, from Central Asia to India via Iran, the shortest route from India to the region is through Pakistan. India also has expressed its willingness to initiate diplomacy and dialogues with the countries concerned the energy and trade related issues.

In July 2015, Indian Prime Minister visited all the Central Asian states and signed many treaties which would enhance relationship in every sphere. Now India has become member of the SCO, India has always a positive perception of the

potential of SCO as an instrument for promoting regional economic integration, trade and ensuring energy security. It should be noted that improvement in India-Pakistan relations would be a crucial input into linking South and Central Asia relations.

From Central Asian perspective it is in their best interest to have strong dialogue and cooperation in Central Asia based on bilateral and multilateral relations with US, Russia, China, the EU and other international institutions. It can be achieved by participating in different organizations like OCSE, SCO, NATO (PfP programme), where interests can be different and varying but coordination and transparency is crucial. By initiating such a step cooperation between these organizations can be achieved in security, economic and transport projects. Cooperation between regional and international organizations, including the EU, NATO and their partnership with Central Asian countries and regional organization is important for the promotion of stability and security of the Central Asian states. By doing so, the Central Asian States can be assisted with in their pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. At the same time stabilization, both political and economic, for Afghanistan is must be assigned priority.

1.2 Review Of literature

The proposed study deals with multilateralism and regional cooperation and its role in Central Asia since 1991 to 2012. It starts by analysing number of major perspectives of multilateralism and regional cooperation. This study would also try to analyse the historical and cultural linkages among the Central Asian countries. By explaining the historical linkages the study would also examine the regional non-traditional security threats like religious extremism, environmental degradation, water sharing, food scarcity, health deficiency, drug trafficking, human trafficking, small arms smuggling, etc. Besides, this study would analyse the treaties, agreements, resolutions, speeches of leaders of the Central Asian countries, laws and policies of the multilateral and regional organizations of this region. This study would also focus on problems and future prospects of regional cooperation among Central Asian countries in 21st century. Various published literature on the area, which helps to develop the thematic view of this study has

been reviewed here. The books and articles are available to deal with the perspective of these headings: Theories of multilateralism and regional cooperation, Historical proximity of Central Asia, Role of Multilateral and Regional Organization in Central Asia, Regional insecurities; Problems and Prospects have been dealt with.

1.3 Theories of Multilateralism and Regional Cooperation

Multilateralism and regional cooperation has become a dominant discourse after Second World War in the international milieu. Earlier cooperation among countries was based on security concerns but Second World War changed the perception of the scholars worldwide and liberalism became a dominant factor in international politics. The two world wars within a span of twenty years were also one of the reasons for cooperation among countries.

Joseph Nye Jr. (1968) said that the process of de-colonization resulted in the emergence of a large number of new states in Asia, Africa and Latin America. These newly independent countries found the regional framework to strengthen cooperation and integration among themselves to be the most suitable strategy for meeting the challenges of the present unjust world economic order and overcoming internal structural imbalances. Julius. K. Nyerere (1983) pointed out that the regional cooperation is an important phenomenon. As regards to the developing countries, the concept of regional cooperation is referred to the context of their quest for the establishment of a unified community for the purpose of economic, political and military development. Trilok Singh (1983) argued that, regional cooperation seems to be an attractive proposition. Thus “collective self-reliance” has been viewed, on the one hand, as a means for ensuring national self-reliance for individual countries, and on the other hand as a means of intensifying cooperation among the less developed countries.

Haus H. Indorf (1984) argued that the regional framework is intended to minimize tension and conflicts within the region. Regional cooperation is an adjustment for mutual benefit based on national self-interests. Regional cooperation is intergovernmentalism that seeks to harmonize the interests. Sisir Gupta (1964) termed in broader sense, regional cooperation could also mean an attempted tendency on the part of any group of nations belonging to some region or

adjacent regions to cooperate in the field of their national policies or coordinate their efforts in order to promote an ever increasing mutual relationship, as distinct from the relationship with other part of the world. After the process of decolonization, countries came together and start cooperation to enhance their situation. It helps them also to acquire greater bargaining power with the developed countries.

Laszlo Ervin (1981) said that regional cooperation is built on the “constructive exploitation of differences as long term complementariness and on the pooling of markets, labour forces, capital resources, energy access, scientific and technological in the achievement of the necessary levels of collective self-reliance”. S.D. Muni (1984) argued that “regional cooperation is not simply an economic aspiration and rationally designed state actions; rather it is an outcome of a number of complex and mutually incompatible political, strategic and diplomatic initiatives, responses and interests amongst the state and their manager in a given region”.

James N. Shubert (1978) viewed that the functionalist thrust in the regional integration theory concerned itself mainly with economic and social aspect of regional cooperation activities. Simply define; regionalism is a collective action at the regional level to achieve national objectives. Kagan (2002) argued that “multilateralism as an anachronism is one that considers it a ‘weapon of the weak’.”

Ibrokhim R. Mavlonov (2006) said that the unique feature of the Indian economy over the past few decades has been a combination of high growth and stability. It has proved its strength and resilience through this period. India’s economic diplomacy with the Central Asian and South Asian nations also shows a continuing positive trend. High-level visits are exchanged on a regular basis.

Today’s India is not only a reliable business partner on a bilateral basis, but given its own economic potential and rich experience, it is one of the most suitable countries in Asia to promote active economic cooperation between Central and South Asia. India’s political and economic diplomacy with Central Asian and

South Asian nations are therefore strategically important from the perspective of inter-regional cooperation.

Paul Evans (2009) argued in his essay, Does multilateralism have a future in Asia, or is it an empty dream that tantalizes but inevitably disappoints? Is it like the Abbe de Saint-Pierre's eighteenth-century conception of a European federation is highly desirable in theory but, at least in its time, unachievable in practice? Past thinking about these questions has produced scepticism and outright cynicism on the one hand, and occasional bursts of high hopes and brimming optimism on the other.

1.4 Historical and Cultural linkages of Central Asia:

Central Asia has had a turbulent history, sometimes as a "land bridge" for trade and ideas between the world's main civilizations, but since the 19th century increasingly fragmented the locus of fault lines between major powers surrounding the region. K.Warikoo (1995) argued that historically Central Asia has been a witness to several migrations, which have shaped the human geography of the region. The Aryans, a descendant populate of vast areas like Asia, Europe and western Hemisphere, migrated from this region over 3000 years ago. In succeeding periods, other races migrated from Central Asia to South and West Asia as well as to Europe. Among them were Huns, Scythians, Parthians, Mongols and Turks. The spread of Islam led to the reverse movements of Arab and Persian into Central Asia.

Rousseau (2011) argued that from the end of the 19th century to the mid-1990s, Central Asia was almost the exclusive domain of Tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russia. After Cold War the growing multi-polarity in global politics started a fight to secure access to depleting natural resources. Oil and gas have led to the emergence of a 'New Great Game' that has the potential to fix the future structure of the global political and economic system. Rousseau points out that now the battle over the construction of pipelines and the routes they will take is at the heart of this 'New Great Game', which has been playing out in earnest since the mid-1990s.

Audrey Shalinsky (1984) said that the throughout history, the dominant religious affiliation has been cemented with Islam, because Central Asia preserved its religious affiliation faithfully. It served as a place of refuge for Muslim feeling persecution at the time of Soviet rule. At that time religion and culture was the main identifying and cooperating factor for Central Asian countries. Sun Zhuangzhi (2008) pointed out that there have been cultural exchanges and trade between China and Central Asia for thousands of years; it was only after the independence of the Central Asian nations that an equal and mutually beneficial relationship was established among the countries. Over the past decade, sound foundations have been laid to form strategic cooperation in the twenty-first century between China and Central Asia.

Eden Naby (1993) said that in the late 1930's, the pattern of regional identification changed due to the political refocusing of capital and culture centres. Even if those who migrated from in and around old Bukhara maintained a formal association and line of proximity, if housing availability permits. This allows them to participate in the life cycles of regional members.

Alexander Benningsen (1983) said that the present generations of Central Asians are concerned with examining their identities that were hardly or seriously discussed by the Soviet social scientist. According to the reassessment, the pre-Islamic identities of the Central Asians were adequately dealt with earlier.

After Bolshevik Revolution Central Asia was divided into five republics on the basis of their "nationalities" that continued till 1991. The Muslim resistance to brutalities of the Soviet repression continued in many areas, notably in language, culture, agriculture, trade, religion etc.

1.5 Role of Multilateral and Regional Organization in Central Asia

In Central Asia, CSTO, SCO and EurAsEC are the main multilateral organizations with regional players. Since independence Central Asia is facing many challenges in every field. Political reform, economic condition, security problems and nowadays problems are continuously changing faces like drug trafficking, illegal immigration, environmental degradation, religious extremism etc. Role of multilateral organizations has become very crucial after independence.

Sun Zhuangzhi (2008) described the relationship between China and Central Asia by way of geographic, political, economic and security factors. China and the nations of Central Asia share common interests and they are co-operating with each other on bilateral and multilateral level. The role of ethnic separatists, religious extremists and threat of transnational crime, terrorism and regional conflict are mutual concerns. He also argued that the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has created favourable conditions and new opportunities for developing Sino-Central Asian relations. Still, there are problems between China and the Central Asian countries. The main divergence in their view is over economic issues, such as bilateral trade and water utilization.

Muhammad Munir Alam and Muhammad Nawaz Khan (2007), emphasised on the role of SCO as a major player of regional security. They wrote about SCO as a confidence-building mechanism to resolve border disputes. The decision to create SCO was made 10 years ago. Askhat Safiullin (2011) Traced the debate on the importance and influence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on regional security integration in Central Asia, his assessment is mainly focused on the degree of its integration and mainly addresses the interplay between individual state security needs, norms and identities. It was a strategically calculated historic step. In the past decade, SCO has become a generally recognised and influential multilateral association which actively promotes peace and development in the region, and confronts modern challenges as well as threats.

Giragosian (2006) argued that Central Asia has emerged as a pivotal arena of international security with an enhanced strategic significance. Security in Central Asia is a key factor in the broader calculus of Russian, Chinese, and American interests. He said, stability in Central Asia along its periphery further impacts a secondary set of states, including India, Iran and Japan. He has examined the interests of the various powers in Central Asia and the quest for stability and security in the region.

Lal (2006) has analyzed the countries of Central Asia and has observed that the countries are greatly influenced by their Asian neighbours. The relations between the Central Asian states and Russia are still not equal. Russia always wants to play a big role in this region. But the countries to the south and east,

including China, Iran, Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan, also have a powerful but less understood effect on the Central Asian states' security and economic interests. This assessment concludes the mutual interests of the Central Asian states and their Asian neighbours, and considers the implications of these interests for the US. He also analyzed the role of relations between the states of the region in this context, and the important role of multinational organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Erlan Karin (2008) pointed the situation of Central Asia after 9/11. He wrote, before 9/11 Central Asia was a unified geographical and political region but after 9/11 due to differences and the incompatibility of economic, political, military and strategic activities and interests, the pace and methods of transition to democracy and market economy, the existence of disputed territories, and so on, there have been conflicts and arguments between Central Asian states in the past, the most serious being the dispute between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan concerning the border line between them. However, the states of the region, not being confident about their resources and own potential, tried to avoid any serious conflicts. He pointed out that in Central Asian countries before 9/11 their foreign policy and domestic policies in the region were developing separately but today's foreign and domestic events have merged. In the later phase of his article he discussed the relevance of SCO post 9/11 and compared between two regional organizations SCO and CSTO on basis of regional security.

Karina Orozalieva (2010) discussed about the role of SCO and EEC in the process of regional integration in Central Asia. She also argued that the regional and global challenges produced by globalization forced Central Asian countries to find a political position that would satisfy interests of inside and outside actors as well as provide proper environment for stable political and economic development. The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) was founded in 1997 and it's working since 2002. This Program is supported by Asian Development Bank (ADB). It encourages economic cooperation among countries in the Central Asian region.

Linn (2008) argues CAREC is a Comprehensive Action Plan for the development of Central Asian region. CAREC focuses on four key areas of

cooperation: transport, trade facilitation, trade policy and energy. Linn has also discussed different ways for regional cooperation, like- Bringing Turkmenistan as a regular member, improving link with Central Asian regional organizations. Expand the CAREC area of cooperation like, water management and disaster preparedness. The Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) is an international economic organization designed to effectively promote the formation of a customs union and a single economic space among six CIS countries: Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Moldova, Ukraine, and Armenia have observer status. Shadikhodjaev (2008) pointed out EurAsEC is facing internal and external challenges. The main internal challenge is arguably a two tiered legal system that has emerged as a result of “diverse speed” integration in the EurAsEC.

The external challenge is posed by (1) other regional integration projects with similar purposes and subject matter, and (2) the membership of EurAsEC countries in the WTO. Vladimir Paramonov and Oleg Stolpovski (2008) argued in their literature, multilateral cooperation is seen primarily within the framework of such organisations as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The most important of these institutions in the context of Central Asian security appear to be the CSTO and the SCO. Again he pointed out that the CSTO for Russia and the post-Soviet countries is that for now it is the only institution which has a specifically military dimension. The steps being taken by Russia to strengthen the CSTO and to convert it into a military and political block are consistent with the Kremlin's policy for the post-Soviet space, the main aim of which is to increase Russia's influence.

Sebastien Peyrouse (2012) argued that although the 12th Heads of State Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization seems to have produced some more tangible results than those of the previous five years, the fact remains that the organization is a paper tiger in terms of security issues. Its prospects for creating a common economic space have been severely constrained. Its two largest members, Russia and China, are pursuing increasingly divergent policies. As seen from Central Asia, the future of the SCO, and especially its ability to efficiently address important, long-term challenges in the region, is more than ever in doubt.

Jeffrey Reeves (2014) as pointed out in his article considers whether, and to what degree, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) can serve as a security provider in post-2014 Central Asia. The article accomplishes this by contrasting the SCO's strengths and weaknesses against potential (and probable) insecurity in the Central Asian region following the International Security Assistance Forces' (ISAF) planned withdrawal of the majority of its troops by the end of 2014. In his article he concludes with policy suggestions for the SCO's further development that could augment its weaknesses and make the organization a more formidable security actor.

1.6 Regional Insecurities; Problems and Prospects

The post-independence period of these Central Asian states is, however, marked by number of challenges for example; boundary demarcation with neighbouring states, ethnic conflict (that happened in Tajikistan and also in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) and economic problem in the Central Asian countries. Another serious conflict arose over the usage of natural resources, especially on water issue. Environmental degradation in several regions and particularly in area around the Aral Sea is the upcoming threat for the Central Asian countries. Issues of regional leadership among Central Asian countries are also creating obstacle in the way of regional cooperation.

In his article Nourzhanov (2009) has discussed the process of securitization in Central Asia. He identified its convoluted and faulty nature as a factor impeding collective security action in the region. The central Asian republics are dominated by geo-political grand strategy on one hand and particularistic concerns about lack of democracy or transnational threats on the other. He wrote about the issues of conventional security involving in two or more states, such as territorial disputes or resource management, are pushed aside and rarely securitized at the government level. The article outlines conceptual and institutional reasons for this bias, and argues that unless inter-state tensions are properly analysed, debated and addressed, the prospects for security and stability in the region will remain grim.

Anna Matveeva (2007) said that throughout the last decade, the states of Central Asia have been engaged in countless projects and organizational structures aimed at fostering regional cooperation. At first these initiatives were meant to smooth out the disruptive effects of the dissolution of the USSR on their economic and social infrastructure.

However, as tendencies of conflict between the states gained momentum, a regional cooperation approach became fashionable with external actors, since the international community saw it as the quickest road to peace and as a means of preventing state fragility and crisis. Few initiatives survived the decade. Nevertheless, the paradigm of 'regionalism' implying that cooperation which leads to closer integration is the answer to the region's multiple problems only grew stronger and still continues to influence policy approaches today. Adherents of regionalism regard it as a 'good' that both states and non-state actors desire and encourage and they cite its many positive qualities: it can consolidate state-building and democratization, create and lock in norms and values, make states and international institutions more accountable and help to manage the negative effects of globalization. From such a perspective, regionalism is both desirable and necessary and is well suited to address questions of regional governance. It has large, if untapped, potential and 'it is hard to escape the conclusion that overall it is a picture of growing empowerment.

Anand (2006) points out that Central Asia is being impacted by intra-regional competition as well as the strategic interests of both extra-regional powers and regional neighbours. The Peace and security are destabilized due to presence of great power in the region. Geo-strategic importance of Central Asia is underscored by both the discovery of energy reserves and its role as a major hub for oil and gas pipelines and communication corridors. These corridors stretch in all directions connecting India, China, Russia and Europe. While the US influence in the region has already peaked, both Russia and China are cementing their political, military and economic relationship with Central Asian nations. Meanwhile, India has been endeavouring to improve its profile in Central Asia. He explored Central Asia's unique characteristics, the competition among great powers.

Muhammad Munir and Muhammad Nawaz Khan (2007) said that the region is facing big challenges of non-traditional security such as food deficiency, incursions, refugees, illegal immigrants and natural disasters. The issues of regional insecurities must also be addressed through regional cooperation. SCO must develop regional mechanism to overcome these threats. Further they said that “SCO’s members to come further close to protect their regional interests by exploiting the external powers”.

Niklas Swanstrom (2010), made analyses of traditional and non-traditional threats in Central Asia interact and reinforce each other. The weakness of Central Asian states seriously impairs their capacity to deal with security threats, especially non-traditional ones (including environmental threats). The result is that security problems in the region tend to multiply. The combination of weak states with old and new security threats in Central Asia weakens government structures even more and creates a vicious cycle.

Vladimir Paramonov and Oleg Stolpovski (2008) says that the accent at present on political grandstanding and short-term cooperation projects, such as demonstration exercises, reflect the fact that it is easier to state lofty aims than to cooperate in practice. Multilateral cooperation has so far amounted to a relatively cheap and effective means for Russia to project its geopolitical influence. The development of full, genuine economic links is highly problematical for Russia, again they argued that the fact that parochial interests will probably continue to dominate over the development of genuine common interests is a legacy of the parlous situation which these states found themselves in after the collapse of the USSR.

Jay Nathan (2009), argued about the engagement of Central Asian countries with the world in the era of globalization. He said that the economic globalization is the global integration of goods, technology, labour, information, and capital. It is a process based on change, which can lead Central Asian countries to the globalization of their operations: political, technology, market, cost and competitive. Central Asian countries, despite their globalization challenges, can chalk out a path for global engagement with proper management of their resources, especially oil and gas.

Abzhaparova Laura (2009) pointed out in his article entitled, “The peculiarities of the Central Asian multilateral diplomacy”, territorial problems of the present and a role of national diplomacy. Comparative analysis was made on new threats in questions of regional security within SCO and the role of Organization of the Contract about collective security at the present stage of development. Also were provided new forms of diplomacy between the Central Asian states.

Karina Orozalieva (2010) argued about the impact of globalization on Central Asian countries in the areas that are economic, social and political in nature. On the one hand benefits produced by globalization such as migration and remittances can be useful for economic development in the short run but on the other hand, their long term economic impacts can be negative especially in the areas of industry and export. Moreover, it can have a negative effect in the future creating a loss of human capital and distorting traditional forms of social structures within societies.

Johannes. F. Linn (2012) addresses the central question of what are the prospects for regional economic integration and regional cooperation in Central Asia. It starts by briefly reviewing the role of Central Asia in the context of the overall process of Eurasian continental economic integration. It then considers what are the benefits and obstacles of regional integration and cooperation in Central Asia against the backdrop of lessons of international experience with regional integration and cooperation, and looks at four of the most important recent regional cooperation initiatives. In closing, the paper provides an answer to the question whether regional integration and cooperation in Central Asia are for real or only a mirage.

There appears a gap in the literature related to the multilateralism and regional cooperation in Central Asia in particular though there is no dearth of literature on the topic in general. The proposed work would make an attempt to study the multilateralism and regional cooperation in Central Asia and the role of multilateral organizations to enhance security and stability among Central Asian countries. There is less literature available on the role of multilateralism facilitating cooperation among Central Asian countries.

Many scholars have focused exclusively on the role of multilateral and regional organizations and participation of governments in eradicating the regional insecurities of Central Asian countries, but the primary goal of the proposed research would be to assess the role of multilateral organizations in enhancing the cooperation among the Central Asian countries and their role to counter the non-traditional security challenges. Besides, the study would analyse the prospects of multilateral organizations and regional cooperation in making of a better future for Central Asian countries, which is lacking in available literature on the theme.

The stability and security in Central Asia affected the direction of integration, patterns of regional cooperation, and building of institutions. Regional organization in the Central Asia- CIS, EurAsEC, SCO and others could be used as instruments of political influence, but practical element of the economic and political partnership. Central Asian nations need strong bilateral and multilateral relations with international and regional organization in terms of new technology, which is needed for economic reforms and for attracting foreign aid and direct investment. Central Asian republics in partnership with other countries are actively involved in the process of realization of transport arteries and economic communications connecting Europe and Asia, the West and the East, and providing the access of the midland states, including Uzbekistan, to the World Ocean.

The perspective planning for transport development will depend on the degree of optimum correlation of global, regional, interregional and national interests in realization of the projects. There are many problems among different actors in Central Asia and Afghanistan, including NATO, EU, OSCE and other international organizations, because they have different approaches and understanding of the situation. It is logical for them continue and widen cooperation between Central Asia nations, major powers, international and regional organizations on Central Asian issues and following could be suggested.

It is necessary to develop the institutional framework of regional cooperation in Central Asia and concentrated particularly on the regional projects, including on trans-boundary water sharing and other issues; To promote regional cooperation and integration in such way that it becomes a tool for better economic and trade relation and promote stability and economic development. The EU, NATO, OSCE

and need to have strong relations and joint projects on Central Asia and Afghanistan with CIS, SCO, Eurasian Economic Community etc. International community needs make joint efforts and increase partnership with Central Asian nations in solving wider range of security problems, including ecological one. International organization ought to work together with Afghanistan, Central Asian republics, Pakistan, India, Iran, and other neighbouring countries and use different mechanisms of the partnership to bring peace and order Afghanistan that assures economic and socio-politico development of the state of Afghanistan.

1.7 Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

Earlier Central Asian countries were considered as handicapped due to their land-locked position, but this view altered by considering them as “land-linked” to the world’s great and dynamic economies. Not only would they benefit from access to their neighbour’s goods, energy, capital and labour markets, but also from the potential transit trade which would develop across Central Asian territory in linking Europe and Asia from East to West and North to South. Central Asia had a turbulent history, sometimes as a “land bridge” for trade and ideas between the world’s main civilizations, today’s a marginalized region. Central Asia had linkages with the regional countries through Silk Route. This route was used for trade purposes in the ancient times. Now it is a time to re-explore the Silk Route for re-advancement of regional connection and cooperation for prosperity and stability in the region.

It is pertinent to analyze the factors that resulted in the re-emergence of Central Asian states from the disintegration of the USSR in 1991 as one of the new challenging regions. Multilateralism and regional cooperation is much needed for Central Asian countries because this region is facing a number of problems. Some of the problems in Central Asia are of cross border in nature. Thus, counter strategy relies on multilateral and regional cooperation. In Central Asia, the new challenges are creating necessary precondition for regional cooperation and attracting international players for cooperation and investment after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Religious extremism, drug trafficking, sustainable development, poverty elimination and infrastructure development, etc. are basic and new area for multilateral and regional cooperation.

Central Asian states have been developing regional cooperation through different components. These states are inter-dependent on each other. No other country possesses a definite comparative edge over the other with respect to economy of the region. Besides, security concerns, environmental degradation are also enhancing regional cooperation and regional stability in Central Asia.

As mentioned above the aim of the proposed study is to examine the role of multilateral organization in facilitating regional cooperation in Central Asia as a vehicle for peace, security and development. The study will focus on the historical connectivity among the Central Asian countries and focus on the multilateral and regional treaties and organizations. The study will also examine the role of the regional organizations in facilitating the cooperation among the Central Asian countries. The increased number of regional insecurities and non-traditional security threats in Central Asia is also creating a situation for cooperation among countries. The study will also examine the common platform for all of the Central Asian countries and regional countries for cooperation and how multilateralism can improve the scenario in the Central Asian countries. Besides, the study would make an effort to highlight the problems and future prospects for regional cooperation and multilateralism in Central Asia.

1.8 Research questions

Following are the questions which the research scholar would attempt to answer in the proposed study.

- 1) What were the historical regional linkages among the Central Asian countries?
- 2) How multilateral organizations evolved in Central Asia?
- 3) What are the institutions of multilateral organizations and how they are functioning in Central Asia?
- 4) What are the basic areas for regional cooperation among Central Asian countries?
- 5) What are the non-traditional security threats in Central Asia?

- 6) How regional organizations are contributing to curb the non-traditional security threats in Central Asia?
- 7) What are the problems for regional cooperation among the Central Asian countries?
- 8) How can Central Asian countries improve and strengthen their cooperation in different areas?

1.9 Hypotheses

- 1) Some of the multilateral organizations focusing on more non –traditional Security threats are creating a common platform for all the Central Asian countries to make a strong regional cooperation.
- 2) Multilateral organizations like SCO, CSTO, EurAsEC, etc. are facilitating co-operation among Central Asian republics.

1.10 Research Methods

The proposed study is based on the historical, analytical and descriptive methods of research. It will be based on critical analysis of the literature related to Central Asia and multilateral organizations in facilitating regional cooperation in the area. The study of historical proximity and linkages of Central Asia with the regional powers is historical and descriptive in nature. The research will also adopt analytical and descriptive methods while dealing with the multilateral organization and regional cooperation in Central Asia.

In order to investigate the various regional security threats in the Central Asia and the quest for regional cooperation, the study will take number of variables like- geographical linkages, form of governments, public opinion and treaties among the countries for regional cooperation, internal and external policies of the Central Asian governments. Non-traditional security challenges in Central Asia like religious extremism, environmental degradation, poverty, health, water sharing, food scarcity, drug trafficking, human trafficking, small arms smuggling, etc.

The study would reflect both inductive and deductive methods for the analysis of benefits of multilateralism for regional cooperation. Proposed research would be based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include various government documents, charter of regional organization like CIS, CSTO, SCO, EurAsEC etc., and document of the bilateral and multilateral treaties of regional countries, Agreements between Central Asian Countries, speeches of the leaders of the republics, reports, resolutions and laws of regional and multilateral organization would be examined during the work. In the course of study the research scholar would make use of various books and articles published in various research journals and other material available on the internet would be used as secondary sources in the research. The relevant information of lectures, seminars, workshop and symposium would also be used to fill the gap. Besides, the work would utilize interviews published in magazines and media. Besides, if the resources permit, the researcher would undertake the field trip to the region to collect the first hand source materials.

Challenges of the 21 century require a broader partnership and cooperation. Future prospects of multilateral regional and international cooperation in Central Asia will depend on correlations of national, regional and global interests. It is necessary first of all to facilitate strong dialogs between Central Asian republics itself. All Central Asian geopolitical, political, economic and cultural and security challenges are connected and solution could come jointly. Future regional cooperation, strong international partnership would promote more stability, economic reforms and democratization to region and beyond.

1.11 Chapterization of Research

Following is the structure of the proposed study.

Chapter -1

Introduction: Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature.

This chapter makes an attempt to study multilateralism and regional cooperation in Central Asia in theoretical framework. Besides, the chapter also focuses on the genesis and evolution of multilateralism and regional cooperation.

This chapter reviews the existing literature on regional and multilateralism in Central Asia.

Chapter-2

Multilateralism and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia: Historical Perspective.

The second chapter deals with the historical aspect of multilateralism and regional cooperation among the Central Asian countries. This chapter also takes up the emergence of different dynasty in Central Asia and importance of “Silk Route” for trade cooperation during ancient times.

Chapter-3

Multilateral Organizations in Central Asia: Norms and Institutions.

The third chapter throws the light on the multilateral organizations like SCO, CSTO, EurAsEC, etc. This Chapter analyzes the norms and charter of the organizations. This chapter further focuses on the creation of the institutions on the one hand and their functioning on the other.

Chapter-4

Regional Insecurity: Quest for Regional Cooperation.

The fourth chapter describes the concept of regional insecurity and non-traditional security challenges. It also analyzes the impact of non-traditional security challenges on Central Asian security. Religious extremism, environmental degradation, poverty, human trafficking, drug trafficking, food scarcity, water sharing, health problem, etc. are major security threats in the region.

Chapter-5

Problems and Prospects for Multilateral and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia.

The fifth chapter shades light on the problems of regional cooperation among the Central Asian countries. It also discusses the hurdles for multilateral and regional cooperation. There is a regional competition for leadership in Central Asia which is making an unusual situation in the region. Different actors are active

in Central Asia. These external actors are Russia, US, China and the EU, etc. These international players have different approaches and understanding of the situation. As a result, their interests are also diversified. This chapter again will focus on future prospects for regional cooperation and multilateralism in Central Asia.

Chapter-6

Conclusion

In concluding chapter the findings of the study and the broad conclusion of the present study undertaken presented. This part verifies the hypotheses and elucidates the possible answers to the research questions. This part would also highlight the gaps between the present knowledge and futuristic approaches.

Chapter-2

Multilateralism and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia:

Historical Perspective

Central Asia's history is long and varied in its nature and character. The origin and heritage of its people are richly complex and open to heated controversy, both within and outside the region. For the last century Central Asia has formed the border between the Russian and Soviet Union, the Islamic world, and the Chinese sphere. The plurality of Central Asian society can be ascribed to the Russian or Russianized elites ruling over Turks and Iranian. We can see the last century of Russian rule not as a revolutionary transformation but as yet another stage in a continuing process, under a regime which adapted to conditions already present and permitted the survival of many of the earlier structures of Central Asian society. In this chapter an attempt would be made to trace the history of Central Asia up to the present, showing what has been continuous in its development, and following the emergence of structures and identities which now can contribute in the Multilateral and Regional cooperation.

Before approaching the history of Central Asian states, we must consider a central factor in its development and geography. Central Asia is now the border between two spheres, so it was earlier a boundary between the two great civilizations of pre-modern history the settled agricultural civilizations and the pastoral nomads of the steppe. Although a frontier, it was not a peripheral region, but an important urban and agricultural centre and a place for trade. The main east-west trade route, the Silk Road, here intersected the northern and southern routes connecting the Middle East to India and to the northern forest- steppe region. In this way Central Asia became heir to both the "Perso-Islamic" tradition of the Middle East and the Mongol heritage of the steppe, and was open to influences from the major cultural regions of the pre-modern world China, India, and the Islamic world.

The history of Central Asia, the land of legends, poems and anecdotes, supplements rich archaeological findings and historical documents. The region is home to ancient societies but relatively new to the state structure. Central Asia is the land where world's major civilizations existed for a long times. It was the crossroads for invaders, a place of historical co-existence of nomads and settled people.

2.1 Central Asia in Ancient Times

The 2,500 years' history of Central Asia is centred on empires and tribes, contains cyclical periods of rich culture followed by periods of destruction. These incidents were repeated many times in the last few centuries. Village settlement first appeared along the southern foothills of Central Asia in 2 B.C. and oases in the delta of Amu Darya (River Oxus) spread south to the Aral Sea to the adjacent with the China. These agricultural settlements had well developed irrigation practices and animal husbandry and it was also populated by ethnic Iranians (Manz, 1994).

Iranians arrived in the area during the course of invasion of Persian Kings on the region. They founded cities like Samarkand and Bukhara; these cities had become famous trade and cultural centre of Central Asia. It was the area of migration movements, from the Scythians in the eighth century B.C. to the Mongols and Uzbeks in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. More than thousand years before the Common Era, Indo-European tribes traversed these lands, and armies of Alexander the Great were here in fourth century B.C. Later nomads of the Turkic, Khanate, Arabs and Mongols populated these lands (Roudik, 2007: 23).

In the western steppes the most famous group of early nomads were the nomads of "Scythia," a loosely defined region spanning from the Black Sea to Eastern Mongolia. From the 8th century B.C. onward, the Scythians waged war with neighbouring civilizations such as the Persians, Greeks, and Mesopotamians. The Scythians were renowned for their superb horsemanship, a characteristic common among all nomadic groups (Invictus, 2006).

(i)Map of Scythia Empire



Source: Indo-Scythian Empire, <http://www.ancient.eu/Indo-Saka/>

The eastern steppes saw no less activity than the western steppes. Like the nomads of the western steppes, the nomads of the east were in frequent contact with nearby civilizations, namely the Chinese (Andreas, 1942).

The Xiong Nu conquered a large region around Mongolia and grew into a powerful confederation. Nearby nomads were incorporated into the empire or driven out. One particular group who fled the Xiong Nu onslaught was the Yue Zhi, who later founded the Kushan Empire far away from their original homeland. As the most powerful nomadic empire the world had yet not seen, the Xiong Nu aggressively waged war against China, now under the rule of the Han Dynasty (Roudik, 2007: 24).

However, the fragile state of nomadic empires could not maintain their conquests in China. Eventually, the Xiong Nu was defeated. Later, punitive expeditions from the Han broke the Xiong Nu Empire into fragmented states. The Xiong Nu fell into tributary status and eventually continued to decline. By the second century AD, the Xiong Nu was no longer a significant force (Andreas, 1942).

At the beginning of documented history the population of Central Asia and the steppe was Iranian. In the 6th century a new dynasty arose in the steppe; i.e. Turks. The Turks originated in Mongolia as the leading stratum of a nomad confederation which for three centuries ruled almost the whole Eurasian steppe. From this period up to that of the Mongol Empire it was the splinter groups from this empire who populated and controlled the steppes of Inner Asia and the Black Sea region. From the ninth century the Turks also began to enter Transoxiana and acquired power even within the sedentary societies of the Middle East. The interaction between the two lifestyles and populations, nomad and sedentary, Turkic and Iranian dominated the history of Central Asia well into the nineteenth century.

The steppes of Inner Asia are vast landscapes abundant in grassland. On these lands, animal herding and domestication became the prevalent way of life. Pastoralism contrasted with the concept of agricultural civilization, such as those

of the river valleys regions, where permanent sedentary settlements developed. Instead, the steppes fostered a nomadic lifestyle. Political boundaries were continuously changing and migrations due to power shifts were a reoccurring event on the steppes. However, the destinations of migrating nomadic tribes were not limited to other regions of the steppes; many entered in irrigated and agricultural lands and adopted the lifestyles of sedentary civilization. Thus, the southern parts of Central Asia are noted for the presence of sedentary kingdoms, many of which were founded by nomadic groups. The invasions and migrations of nomads were an important force in history that greatly affected all parts of Eurasia.

Within this frontier region lays a wide range of geographical terrain, which has affected the lifestyles practiced within it. Marginal lands best used for pastoral nomadic culture combined with rich agricultural land and cities fostering a high sedentary culture, while high mountain ranges have harboured yet a third distinct lifestyle and population. Central Asia's unique configuration is the closeness of different landscapes, and the intimate contact of its different populations. The Aral Sea is adjoined south and west by two deserts the Kara Kum (Black Sands) and Kyzyl Kum (Red Sands), most suitable for a sparse nomadic population (Manz, 1994). In contrast to these, three oases are strung across the region, the Khivan oasis near the mouth of the Amu Darya, the Zarafshan (Zer-avshan) Valley linking Samarkand and Bukhara, and finally the Ferghana Valley north of the Pamirs (Kaushik, 1970).

These regions were highly fertile and surrounded by pockets of mountain and steppe marginal for agriculture but providing good pasture for nomadic populations. To the north of these oases lies the Kipchak Steppe, part of the vast steppe region of Eurasia, which for most of history was dominated by pastoral nomads. To the east and southeast lie the great mountain ranges of Central Asia the T'ien Shan, Pamirs and Hindu Kush. The foothills of these ranges provided summer places for nomads, while the upper elevations were a refuge area for innumerable different populations' remnants of migrations and defeated indigenous survivors from foreign aggression. The close symbiosis of the various populations was particularly striking in the Ferghana valley and in Transoxiana, the region between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers, in which mountain,

steppe and oasis form a continuous patchwork (Manz, 1994). Nomadic states on the steppe region relied purely on the skill of their members. Without strong leadership, these states were usually unstable due to their lack of infrastructures and the scarcity of permanent cities. So dynamic were the steppes that vast empires could rise and fall within a generation (Kaushik, 1970).

However, in their competition against sedentary empires, the lack of internal stability was counter-balanced by ferocity in war. The harshness of life on the steppes made nomads expert warriors and the nomadic lifestyle made them unmatched horsemen. Their prowess in warfare could not be suppressed until the advent of firearms. As mentioned earlier, nomadic conquerors often forged kingdoms after successful conquests into agricultural lands. The nomadic ruling class of these kingdoms usually adopted the original culture of the conquered region, especially its technologies and agricultural way of life¹.

At this time in history 100 AD, four great empires spanned Eurasia: The Roman Empire, the Parthian Empire, the Kushan Empire and the Han Empire. Of these four empires, the Parthian and Kushan Empires were both of nomadic origins. Through these empires ran the famous Silk Road, the major inter-continental trade route of its time. While nomads are often known for war, at many times they were peaceful. They were present on trade routes, often acting as middlemen for far-away traders (Roudik, 2007:22).

Later in 370 AD, the Huns arrived near the black sea, where they displaced the Goths and other barbarians of the area. The expansion of the Huns forced other barbarians into Roman realms, this resulted devastation of the Roman Empire. The Hunnic Empire, a conglomerate of barbarian tribes ruled by the Huns, reached their peak of power in the 450 AD under their king Attila.² But after Attila died, the empire rapidly destroyed (Kaushik, 1970). Another invading group of this time was the Hephthalites, who were driven out from Mongolia by the rising Ruruan power. Forced to migrate, the Hephthalites moved west and

¹Andrew Lawler, "Central Asia's Lost Civilization: The unveiling of a 4,000-year-old civilization calls into question conventional ideas about ancient culture, trade, and religion", available at: <http://discovermagazine.com/2006/nov/ancient-towns-excavated-turkmenistan> November 30, 2006

²Ibid.

(ii) Map of Kushan Empire



Source: Kushan Empire <http://www.worldhistorymaps.info/History/CentralAsia.html>

destroyed the already fragmented Kushan Empire. The Helphalites expanded further, attacked on the Sassanid Empire of Persia and expanding into India (Kaushik, 1970).

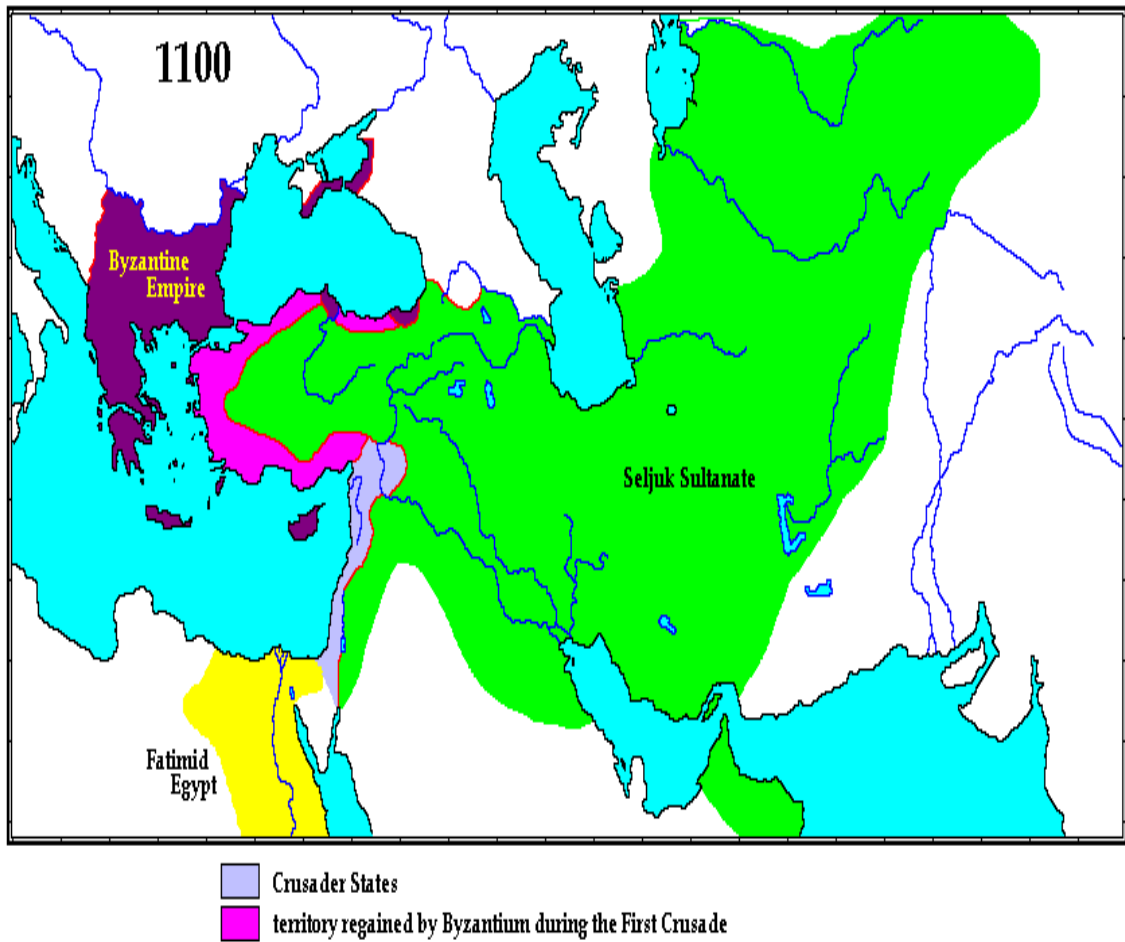
The Episodes of the Scythians, Xiong Nu, Huns, and other nomads show a trend of continual change. On the steppes, the scarcity of permanent cities meant that empires were constantly built and destroyed, and that groups migrated at the dynamics of these power shifts. Steppe peoples such as the Xiong Nu waged wars with their neighbouring agricultural empires, but also served as traders. Furthermore, empires like the Kushans' show that nomads were also capable of building sedentary empires of cities and agriculture. In the next era of history, marked by the movement of Turks and Mongols, such trends become even more dramatic (Invictus, 2006).

In 552 AD, the Ruruan Empire collapsed at the uprising of the Gokturks ("Tu-Jue" in Chinese). Under their Kaghan Bumin and his successors, the Gokturks expanded rapidly to encompass all of greater Mongolia, the lands westward to the Caspian Sea and the lands eastward to Korea. The Gokturks built the most significant steppe empire so far in history, holding large areas of both the eastern and western steppes³. The Gokturks destroyed the Hephthalite Empire and waged wars against China and even against Sassanid Iran. However, the vast empire could not maintain its stability, and split into eastern and western divisions. Both empires were weakened by internal instability and eventually defeated in 630 by Tang China, which soon regained control of the Silk Road (Banuazizi, 1994).

The eastern empire was revived under new leadership and lasted until its collapse in 744 AD. Even though the Gokturk "Kaghanate" disappeared, the term "Turk" was passed on to many subsequent Turkic-speaking peoples of Eurasia, including the future Seljuk Turks. The immediate successor to the Gokturk Empire in the east was the Uyghurs. The Uyghurs, another Turkic-speaking

³Talesman's Atlas of World History Central Asian History, available at <http://www.worldhistorymaps.info/history/CentralAsia.html>

(iii) Map of Seljuk Empire



Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/4ia15g/why_did_most_of_the_turkic_tribes_migrating/

people, were once subjects to the Gokturks⁴. As the second Gokturk Empire declined, the Uyghurs seized power in the region. By the 760s, the Uyghur had renewed most of the old power bloc of the Gokturks while the Tang Dynasty faced rebellion and began declining.

However, the Uyghurs fell due to fragmented forces by the 830 AD. Following the collapse of the Uyghur *Kaghanate*, many smaller kingdoms appeared in the area, but no extensive empire would rule the Eastern Steppes until the Mongols of the 13 century.

The successors of the Gokturks in the west were the Bulgars and the Khazars. The Khazars established a strong *khanate* in the region between the Black and Caspian Sea. The Khazarians kingdom became dominant over the Bulgars and became the major ruling power of the region. The Khazars were also notably unique in their adoption of Judaism as their religion. West of the Khazars, the Steppes near Europe continued to see dynamic influences from the steppes in the form of migrations. One remnant of the Bulgars migrated from the steppes and formed a state near the Danube, north of the Byzantine Empire. The Danube Bulgars would become one of the major powers in the 9th century. Around that time, one century after the abrupt collapse of the Hunnic Empire, the Avars invaded Europe from the steppes (Roudik, 2007: 21).

In the early 11th century, one branch of Turks, known as the Oghuz Turks, migrated into Southwest Asia where they later became known as the Seljuks. The Seljuks would become important in the history of both Europe and the Middle East. At the beginning of the migrations, the Seljuks came into contact with the Ghaznavids, another Turkic dynasty that had built an empire around modern-day Afghanistan. After much warfare, the Ghaznavids were defeated. The Seljuks continued into Iran than captured Baghdad, and expanded outward to encompass vast territories from Central Asia, to Egypt and the Mediterranean. In 1071 AD, the Seljuks advanced into Asia Minor, where they defeated the army of Byzantium at Manzikert (Invictus, 2006).

⁴History of the civilizations of the Central Asia: Volume II, "The Development of Sedentary and Nomadic Civilization", Available at unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001057/105703eo.pdf

The Seljuk Empire was the largest empire in outer Asia but it was originated from inner Asia. However, the empire only lasted about a century. In 1156 AD the empire collapsed due to series of revolts by their small regional kings. Of the many kingdoms that splintered out of the Seljuk Empire, one of the most notable was the Sultanate of Rum in Anatolia, which laid the foundation for future of Turkey (Invictus, 2006).

Their powerful cavalry gave them the upper hand against the Song. The Jurchen captured a significant portion of Northern China, forcing the Song to relocate their capital south. Like many nomadic conquerors, the Jurchen established themselves into local customs, adopting the Chinese Dynastic name of Jin. As lord of Northern China, the Jin saw the steppes nations as their subjects. But the Jin would eventually be overthrown by a new steppe empire⁵.

2.2 Central Asia under Mongol's Rule

The history of Central Asia is full of war heroes; in 1206 AD an ambitious warlord named Temujin united the Mongolian steppes under his rule. He became Chinggis (Genghis) Khan. Chinggis launched campaigns against the Jin Empire, subjugated the Xixia west of the Jin and conquered the Khwarezmian Empire, which ruled the western territory of the former Seljuk Empire. The Jin Empire collapsed in 1234 A.D and the Mongols extended their empire westward. They incorporated the Sultanate of Rum, all of the western steppes and most of Russia by the 1240 AD. Further conquests annexed Southwest Asia, cumulating in the capture of Baghdad and the destruction of the Abassid Caliphate. Chinggis' grandson Kublai completed the conquest of China with the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty in 1271 AD and the final destruction of the Song Dynasty in 1279 AD (Guisepi, 1992).

Although the Mongols had already begun to lose unity by 1260 AD when individual Khanates gradually became increasingly dependent and stronger, the unprecedented magnitude of the Mongol conquests had far-reaching consequences

⁵History of Central Asia; history of the area from prehistoric and ancient times to the present, available at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/102315/history-of-Central-Asia>.

(iv) Map of Mongol's Empire



Source: The Mongol Empire, [http://asianhistory.about.com/od/Genghis_and_Mongol/ss/The Mongol-Empire.htm](http://asianhistory.about.com/od/Genghis_and_Mongol/ss/The_Mongol-Empire.htm)

While earlier nomadic powers had either built vast empires on the steppes of Inner Asia or powerful empires in agriculture lands of outer Asia. The Mongols were the first to hold both Inner and Outer Asia. As a result the boundary between the regions of Persia and the Western Steppes become one entity.

The boundary between China and the Eastern Steppes, as well as the regions of Asia Central all disappeared under the overreaching dominion of the Mongols⁶. Trade was able to flourish between the east and the west, and for the first time since the fall of the Tang Empire. The Silk Road was reopened and again it increased the regional connectivity. On the newly opened trade route, ideas, culture, goods and even diseases were able to be exchanged from one side of Eurasia to another. The massive political realignment also had dramatic consequences on the civilizations of Central Asia. The conquest of China brought about a reunification of the region

The establishment of Mongol power in Russia drastically changed the political situation of the former disunited states in the region. The under a single dynasty establishment of rule in Persia and the Middle East brought Islam rule in the region to brief halt.⁷

Mongols by origin were forest dwelling people who essentially depended on hunting, and the hunting formed the central element of Mongols' cultural life. Dietary people who traded with Mongols have mentioned of their socio-cultural life styles in their accounts about Mongol life that also faced the fury of their lightning raids. Most of the Mongols had adopted the life-style of the herding, horse-riding nomads of the central Asian steppes (Manz, 1994).Mongols essentially adhered to the nomadic communal life. They particularly survival on the herds of goats and sheep they drove from one area to another according to the seasons which they tended with great care as their survival was essentially linked to the wellbeing of these animals. Their staple food was derived from the meat and milk products provided by the herds of these domesticated animals. They also exchanged these animals to obtain grain and vegetables which they traded with

⁶Central Asia v In the Mongol and Timurid Periods; "At the death of Čengīz (Chinggis) Khan in 624/1227 the territory he had conquered was divided between his sons.", available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/central-asia-v> accessed on 7th july 2014

⁷ibid

sedentary farming people of the region where they resided. Hides and dairy products were also traded with other people to obtain jewellery, weapons, and cloth manufactured in urban centres. They dressed in cloths made up of sheepskins, and manufactured boots from tanned sheep hides, and erected round shaped tents that were processed from wool derived of their animals (Manz, 1994).

Temujin was the supreme ruler of nearly one-half million Mongol tribesmen and the overlord of one to two million more nomadic tribesmen when Mongols established the kingdom of Kaghan with the techniques furiously fighting against their opponents. The over lordship over other tribesmen was achieved either by defeating them in the battle by the army of Mongol or other tribesmen themselves voluntarily allied with this promising young commandership of Temujin. But Chinggis Khan, the most well-known Mongol warrior and commander had much greater ambitions. Chinggis Khan, In 1207, embarked on realizing this ambition by initiating campaigns against Tangut kingdom of Xi-Xia in northwest China. The ruler of Tangut kingdom of Xi-Xia was brought to his knees by the campaign under the Mongol Commander Chinggis Khan who in turn had to declare himself as a vassal of the khaghan and pay a hefty tribute. The next campaign taken up by the army of Mongols was the attack they waged on the much more powerful Qin Empire, which the Manchu related Jurchens had established a century earlier in north China⁸.

This campaign for the Mongol armies proved not so easy to succeed as they for the first time had to fight with large, fortified cities their adversaries assumed. The army of Qin Empire, for example, could easily withstand the aggression of these common tribesmen from the steppes. It is pertinent to mention that the Mongol invaders were given fitting reply in the initial phase of resistance by the intricate defensive works that the Chinese had set up over the centuries to deal with nomadic incursions. But the Mongols here in this case proved themselves superior in the war tactics as they with the help of Chinese military commanders developed and devised a whole arsenal of weapons they had acquired. Such acquired and improvised weapons included battering rams, catapults that could be

⁸Ibid

used to hurl rocks and explosive balls, and bamboo rockets spreading fire and fear in the towns under aggression⁹.

After establishing strong footprints in north China Chinggis Khan solidified his empire in the steppes. Later he moved his victorious front towards westward against the Kara-Khitai Empire. After conquering and annexing the Kara-Khitai Empire Chinggis Khan sent his men asking Muhammad Shah II to surrender to the Mongol rule in 1219. At such an outrageous demand by still a little known audacious Mongol Commander, the Turkic ruler of the Khwarazm Empire to the west became infuriated and one of Muhammad's subordinates had some of Chinggis Khan's envoys killed and sent the rest with shaved heads back to the khaghan. Such an insult meted out to the Mongols could not be spared and forgiven and the war followed with Khwarazm Empire that was badly defeated by the Mongol Army. The army of Khwarazm Empire could not cope up with the new siege weapons and tactics the Mongols who had perfected in their north China campaigns and their cities easily fell. The Mongol cavalry literally routed out the army of Khwarazm Empire in the battle. By now the Mongols had learnt the usefulness of the siege weapons and the newly found battle tactics during their fight with the Qin Kingdome and used them repeatedly in the following encounters with their opponent warriors¹⁰.

While Europe and Western Asia were so embroiled in the religious differences between Christianity and Islam; the Mongols were little touched by religious belief or better say they had faintest of ideas about such belief system. As tribesmen from Turkistan making westward offensive to conquer lands, they came under the influence of Islam and accepted it. These developments created a situation that led to conversion of most of the Central Asian Region into Islam. These nomadic people had perfected the arts of archery and horsemanship. The election of Chinggis Khan as the leader of the Unified Manghol Empire speeded

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ "Genghis khan and the great Mongol empire" , available at <http://www.fsmitha.com/h3/h11mon.htm> accessed on 26th June 2014.

up the process of further expansion of the empire and consolidated it to the next level¹¹.

Under the leadership of Chinggis Khan, they fast moved to bring a huge region of Asia under their influence. The former Han city of Jiaohe, to the west of Turfan, was decimated by the Mongols as they passed through on their way westwards. The Mongols had brought such a big territory under their control that it stretched from the whole of Central Asia and from China to Persia, and spanned to the far west as the Mediterranean. The empire was established under the leadership of Chinggis Khan and it was maintained even after his death by the successive Mongol leaders. The expansion of the Mongol empire also brought them in contact with the people following other cultures and made them look inwards in connection to their cultural affairs.

During this era the Silk Road became important that facilitated the communication between different regions of the Empire, and paved the way trading between them. Though Mongols according to the notions of the time were considered less civilized culturally in comparison to the people's culture in the west, they were open to the new ideas thereby the maintained space for accepting newer developments coming from other cultures.

2.3 Decline of Mongols Rule and Emergence of New Powers

As the Mongol empire had expanded and further consolidated, they had made their first contacts with the more prosperous kingdoms to the west of the steppe heartlands of Chinggis Khan's empire. Raids of reconnaissance into Georgia and other parts of the Russian steppe attracted the Mongoles to take up western land under the area of their influence (Roudik, 2007: 38). So the conquest of Russia and Europe was added to their further agenda of expansion of their empire. The subjugation of these regions became the project of the armies of the Golden Horde, which was named after the golden tent of the early khans of the western sector of the Mongol Empire. The territories of the Golden Horde, which covered much of today's south-central Russia, made up the four great khanates. The Khanates were the administrative divisions into which the Mongol Empire

¹¹ Ibid.

had been divided at the time of Chinggis Khan's death¹². The khanate called the Ilkhan Empire that situated to the south of the empire was responsible for the task of completing the conquest of the Muslim territories something that was initiated with the invasion of the Khwarazm domains. The project of the Mongols to conquer the territories of the Islamic world or Europe could not be realized but their success in the battlefield and fury of their assault left indelible impressions on the region.

In 1236, Chinggis Khan's grandson Batu led a Mongol force of upwards of 1, 20,000 shouldered into the Russian territory. From 1237 to 1238 and later in 1240, these "Tartars," as the Russian people called them, carried out the only successful winter invasions in Russian history. The Mongols preferred to fight the battle during winter as the snow frozen Earth provided their cavalry a good footing on the ground and snow frozen rivers blocked the way for their enemies. This provided them with the upper hand in the battle and they defeated the local nomadic groups and the princes one after the other. Cities such as Riazan, Moscow, and Vladimir that resisted the Mongol demand to surrender before them were razed to the ground; people in these cities were massacred or made into their slaves¹³.

These smashing victories of Batu's armies laid the foundation of Mongol dominance in Russia that lasted for two and one-half centuries. Crushing defeats faced by Russian princes in the hands of the Mongols forced them to submit to them as vassals of the khan of the Golden Horde. It also mandated them to pay tribute failing to which they would be ravaged by Mongol raiders. The Russian peasantry suffered the worst because of the Mongol exactions as they had to yield up their crops and labour to satisfy their own princes as well as the Mongol overlords. Because of the fear of being plundered by the Mongol raiders and the fear of being impoverished the peasants of the region fled to remote areas. Such a

¹²“Genghis Khan and the Mongol conquests of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The formation of the ulus”, available at <http://e-history.kz/en/contents/view/490>, accessed on 20th June 2014

¹³Ibid.

situation also forced them to become serfs in the fields of Russian ruling class in exchange of their security from lightning raids of the Mongols¹⁴.

The rural social structure of Russia was changed because sizable number of peasants decided to become labourers for their life time for Russian ruling elites in the mid of 19 century. The majority of the Russian masses would be tied to the lands they tilled and they would be bound to the tiny minority of nobility owning these great estates. The trade links established by the Mongols benefited some Russian towns but sometimes the gains exceeded the tribute they had to pay to the Golden Horde. It is interesting to note that Moscow benefited the most of the trade links in comparison to any other city in Russia. Though the city faced plundering of worst sort and was partially burned down by the Mongol raiders, it gradually started rebuilding itself and its ruling elites steadily swallowed up nearby towns and surrounding villages (Manz, 1994).

The growing influence of the city of Moscow started surpassing the power of Golden Horde in the regions nearby. Since the Mongols were tolerant in terms of their religious inclinations, the Orthodox Church and Moscow benefited out of it. The Metropolitan, or head of the Orthodox Church, was made the representative of all the clergy in Russia, which elevated the church's standing among masses. Because Moscow was chosen as the city of Religious centre, it benefited the Ruling elites in Russia and also put religious clergy in the city of Moscow at an important place in the religious lives of people¹⁵.

The Mongol conquest of the Russian land may not be all that positive in terms of its history, it also founded the ways for some decisive changes to be made in its socio-political structures of the time. In addition to their meaning for Moscow and the Orthodox Church, Mongol contacts led to changes in Russian military structures and the political style of Russian rulers. Therefore, it is also argued that the Tsarist or Leninist claim that the Mongol rule on the Russian land led to the despotism among ruling elites of Russia is excessive¹⁶.

¹⁴ibid

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Brief History of Russia; available at http://missinglink.ucsf.edu/lm/russia_guide/historyofrussia.htm#mongols accessed on 27th July 2014

The Mongol rule made Russian princes to think in the direction of centralizing their power and also deal with the threat of minimizing their powers in the hands of landed nobility, the religious clergy, and prosperous merchants. But the Mongol rule also distanced Russia's touch with Christian lands far in the west. The Mongol rule in Russia had two contradictory effects on the land. On one had it protected a divided and weak Russia from the aggression of much more powerful kingdoms such as Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary as well as the "crusades" of militant Christian orders like the Teutonic Knights that could have stumped out the Orthodox heresy. On the other hand, Russia was cut off from key transformations in Western Europe that were inspired by the Renaissance and led ultimately to the Reformation because of the Mongol rule. Had Russia come in touch with western values, it would have been greatly benefited in terms of political, economic, and intellectual development. Of course the Orthodoxy would not have been the beneficiary of the process (Roudik, 2007: 38).

It is pertinent to mention that the fight between the western divisions of the Mongol Empire, the Il-Khanate and the Blue Horde only resulted in diluting each other's strength. The Il-Khanate waged war with the Mameluks, who had grown into a powerful force, but were not successful. Despite failures to further expand into the Middle East, the Il-Khanate remained as a formidable state until its collapse in 1335, after which the region fell into a state of Chaos¹⁷. Power was restored later by the Turkic conqueror Timur Lenk (Tamerlane). Timur ruthlessly defeated all his adversaries. The Mongol Khans in Russia, the Ottoman Turks, the Mameluks, the Delhi sultanate were all defeated. With the Central Asian city of Samarkand as capital, Timur's empire is sometimes considered to be the last great "nomadic" power of the western steppes. However, the empire was short lived and disintegrated a century after he died in 1405.

The fall of Timur's Empire led to the rising of the Safavid dynasty in Iran.¹⁸ Native rule and Islam were restored because of which a power derived from the steppes could not same influence as it did before. In Russia, the Mongol Khans of

¹⁷"The Decline and Fall of the Mongol Empire", available at <http://medievalnews.blogspot.in/2010/01/decline-and-fall-of-mongol-empire.html>, accessed on 7th July 2014.

¹⁸Ibid.

the Blue Horde and the later Golden Horde had established themselves as overlords as a result of their successful conquests. The Russian principalities became tributary states to the Mongol Khanates. But the 15th century witnessed decline in the Mongol grip on Russia making Russian states increasingly more powerful in the region. By 1503, the Russian principality of Muscovy under Ivan the Great had definitively thrown off Mongol rule. Emboldened with the success Muscovy began its own campaigns of expansion into Central Asia¹⁹.

Shortly after the collapse of the Il-Khanate, the Mongols' power started declining to the next as it lost hold of China when the Yuan Dynasty was overthrown in 1368 in favour of the Ming Dynasty. This led to the retreat of the Ruling line of the Yuan Dynasty back to Mongolia. However the Mongols were still a formidable power in war tactics despite being expelled from the region. In 1449, the Mongols were able to conquer the Ming Emperor in a very disastrous campaign for the Ming thereby re-establishing them as the power to be reckoned with. The constant threats from the Mongols led to the construction of the Great Wall of China by the Ming, whose version of the wall is well-known today.

Gradually, after the centuries of the Mongol rule, the sedentary states' rulers found more effective ways of gathering their political power and mobilizing the manpower and resources to wage winning wars²⁰. The rulers of China and the empires of the Islamic belt brought in improvement here in this regard. But still the kings of the nascent states of Western Europe surpassed all other dictators in advances in these spheres. Centralized controlling and better organizing capacities empowered these rulers to increase their national wealth that in turn was channelled in the direction of raising a strong military and arsenal. The competition among European rulers also made them invested largely in technological innovations with military applications such as improved metalworking techniques, the development of evermore potent gunpowder and firearms. It can also be noted that in the 15 and 16 Century the European army was trained at more sophisticated and profession level. The new arsenals such as

¹⁹ "History of Russia", available at <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/plaintexthistories.asp?historyid=ac14> accessed on 27th July 2014.

²⁰ "The Decline and Fall of the Mongol Empire", available at <http://medievalnews.blogspot.in/2010/01/decline-and-fall-of-mongol-empire.html>, accessed on 7th July 2014.

pikes, muskets, fire drill, and trained commanders at disposal, European armies were proved more sophisticated to take on the massed nomad cavalry of the nomads that had overwhelmed the sedentary rulers²¹.

Such a modernization of the European armies could not be matched by the nomads who thus far had maintained upper hand in the battle but now started retreating. States such as Russia that had centralized power as in the case of western European model, as well as the Ottoman Empire in the eastern Mediterranean and the Qing in China by now shared many of the armament advances of the Europeans, moved steadily into the steppe and desert heartlands of the horse and camel nomads. Each followed a conscious policy of settling part of its rapidly growing peasant population in the areas taken from the nomads. Thus, nomadic populations were not only brought under the direct rule of sedentary empires, their pasturelands were ploughed and planted wherever the soil and water supply permitted.²²

These trends suggest that the nomadic war machine had been in decline long before the new wave of innovation that ushered in the Industrial Revolution in the 18 century. But that process sealed its fate. Railways and repeating rifles allowed sedentary peoples to penetrate even the most wild and remote of the nomadic refuges and subdue even the most determined and fierce of nomadic warriors, from the Plains Indians of North America to the Bedouin of the Sahara and Arabia. The periodic nomadic incursions into the sedentary zones, which had reoccurred sporadically for millennia, had come to an end. On the eastern steppes, the lands not conquered by the Qing were taken by the Russians²³.

Thus, it can be said that the Mongol impact on the many areas where they visited and conquered varied considerably. The sedentary peoples on the farms and in the cities, who experienced the fury of their assaults and the burden of their

²¹ *ibid*

²⁷“Genghis Khan and the Mongol conquests of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The formation of the *ulus*”, available at <http://e-history.kz/en/contents/view/490>, accessed on 20th june 2014

²³ The Decline and Fall of the Mongol Empire”, available at <http://medievalnews.blogspot.in/2010/01/decline-and-fall-of-mongol-empire.html>, accessed on 7th July 2014.

tribute, understandably emphasized the destructive side of the Mongol legacy. But the Mongol campaigns also decisively influenced the course of human history in the ways they altered warfare and the political repercussions they generated in invaded areas (Roudik, 2007: 38).

Mongol armies provided openings for the rise of Moscow as the central force in the creation of a Russian state, they put an end to Abbasid and Seljuk power, and they opened the way for the Mameluks and the Ottomans. The Mongol Empire promoted trade and important exchanges among civilizations, though, as the spread of the “Black Death” illustrates, the latter were not always beneficial. Mongol rule also brought stable, at times quite effective, government and religious toleration to peoples over much of Asia²⁴.

On balance, it can be argued that the cost of these by-products of Mongol expansion was far too high. However high the price, there can be little doubt that the Mongol interlude changed the course of human history in major ways. It represented the most significant involvement of nomadic peoples in the development of civilization since the transition to sedentary agriculture in the Neolithic epoch. Just as the peoples of Eurasia had begun to recover from the upheavals caused by Mongol expansion, a second nomadic explosion from central Asia plunged them again into fear and despair.

While Central Asia was still Central Asia, the world has dramatically changed as time moved into the “Modern” period. Though successful for thousands years, nomadic cavalry warfare could no longer maintain its edge against firearms. The rising global presence of “agricultural” states became too difficult for nomadic armies to “sweep and conquer.” Power became more of a matter of economical prowess rather than the skill of individual warriors. Into the modern era, nomadic civilization ceased to be a driving force in history.

2.4 Central Asia: Silk Route and Regional Cooperation

Central Asia has always been regarded as the region of political turbulence because from many centuries it has been the hotbed of power tussles between

²⁴ Ibid

European States and Russia. For example Britain anticipated and became fearful of the fact that some other European powers might take benefit of the political decay of the Islamic world in the 19 Century. Such a fear in fact began with France, and then Russia advancing along the caravan routes of the ancient conquerors, that aimed to establish a new world monarchy. England, in reaction to such advances, registered its protest considering the consequences of the unceasing march of the Russian Empire in the direction of South Asia. Based on these feelings of rivalry between the two states in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, "it was relatively appeared in Europe that the next major war would be the final confrontation between Britain and Russia" (Hormots, 2011).

An in-depth look at the geo-politics of Central Asia, from the Great Game to present-day political power struggles in the regions, the metaphor of 'the Great Game' describes the power competition between Russia and Great Britain in the 19 century over the future of Central Asia. It describes a period of Russian expansion and the moves made by Britain to counter the Russian aggression in the region. Indeed, the Great Game had a stake that was much greater than Central Asia (Hormots, 2011).

Central Asia has been the crossroads of Eurasia. Indeed, it is the point of confluence of four civilizations that have, concurrently, controlled and been controlled by the Central Asian peoples. The civilizations that dominate the region since ancient times, now, are able to exert their influence in other parts of the world (Starr, 2011). Central Asia is bound by the Caspian Sea, Siberia, Mongolia, Tibet and the Hindu Kush. It is an inner region, surrounded by a huge land mass that covers a vast territory of steppes, deserts and mountains, occupying an area larger than Western Europe and about half of the United States (Kandiyoti, 2008).

The independence of Central Asian countries in 1991 may be posited as independence that would impact these states negatively, because all of them depended heavily on Russian financial and security support. Under Soviet Umbrella they were structured in fashion to function as constituents units of major power and not as independent entities. The post-Cold War era has many dimensions in regard of these states. The first is the international dimension. As soon as the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s, Turkey and Iran were

perceived as the major actors in this region. Such a perception is guided by the notion that majority of the population in the Central Asian States is Muslim . The other dimension concerning Central Asia is this region's richness in terms of natural resources and hydro-carbons deposits, especially around the Caspian Sea. Turkmen cannot get it out to obtain hard currency. There is also a 200-mile pipeline from the region to Iran, but it is of low capacity (Kubicek, 2006: 211).

2.5 Silk Route: Inception to Modern Times

The Silk Route is a series of trade and cultural transmission routes that were central to cultural interaction through regions of the Asian continent connecting the European continent through Mediterranean Sea. Trade routes since inception have played a vital role in the regional engagement through cultural, political, military, economic, religious, and artistic exchanges that took place between the major centres of civilization in Europe and Asia. Some of these trade routes (both land and maritime routes) had been in use for centuries, but by the beginning of the first century A.D., merchants, diplomats, and travellers could cross the ancient world from the Mediterranean Sea in the west, to China and beyond, across Korea to the Sea of Japan in the east ²⁵.

This Route is the "greatest route in the history of mankind", the ancient Silk Road (300 BC - AD 100) has made the first bridge among the many civilizations from East to West. It was an important vehicle for trade between ancient empires of China, India, Persia and Rome. Dating back 100 BC, the route was a channel for contact between people and cultures, inspiring the exchange of dialogue, art, religion, ideas & technology. With its richly diverse cultural heritage and its wealth of natural tourism attractions spanning across 12000 kilometres of ancient routes, the Silk Route today offers visitors the opportunity to experience a unique network of destinations, following the footsteps of some of the world's most acclaimed explorers such as Alexander the Great, Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta²⁶.

The history of the Silk Routes pre-dates the Han Dynasty in practice, however, as the Persian Royal Road, which would come to serve as one of the

²⁵ "Trade along Silk Route" Available at <http://asiasociety.org/trade-along-silk-roads> accessed on 22nd August 2015.

²⁶ *ibid*

main arteries of the Silk Routes. It was established during the Achaemenid rule (500-330 BCE). The Persian Royal Road starts from Susa, in north Persia to the Mediterranean Sea²⁷.

The Persians maintained the Royal Road carefully and they expanded it through smaller side roads. These paths eventually crossed down into the Indian sub-continent, across Mesopotamia, and over into Egypt²⁸.

Extending 4,000 miles (6,437 kilometers), the Silk Route derives its name from the lucrative trade in Chinese silk carried out along its length, beginning during the Han Dynasty.²⁹ In the Central Asian region of the trade routes were expanded around 114 BC by the Han rulers, largely through the missions and explorations of Chinese imperial envoy, Zhang Qian³⁰. Trade on the Silk Route was a significant factor in the development of the civilizations of China, the Indian Subcontinent, Persia, Europe, and Arabia. It's also opened long-distance, political and economic interactions between the civilizations. Though silk was certainly the major trade item from China, many other goods were traded, and various technologies, religions, and philosophies travelled along the Silk Routes. In addition to economic trade, the Silk Route served as a means of carrying out cultural trade among the civilizations along its network.

The ancient Silk Route emerged as a natural outcome of interaction among regional traders. The current situation in the region with various unfolding new Silk Route initiatives not only resembles the historical prerequisites, but looks even more promising. New Silk Route projects are instrumental in laying the foundation for regional cooperation, creating political flexibility, improving economic growth, offering trade diversifications, investing in transportation, and in mining and energy sectors.

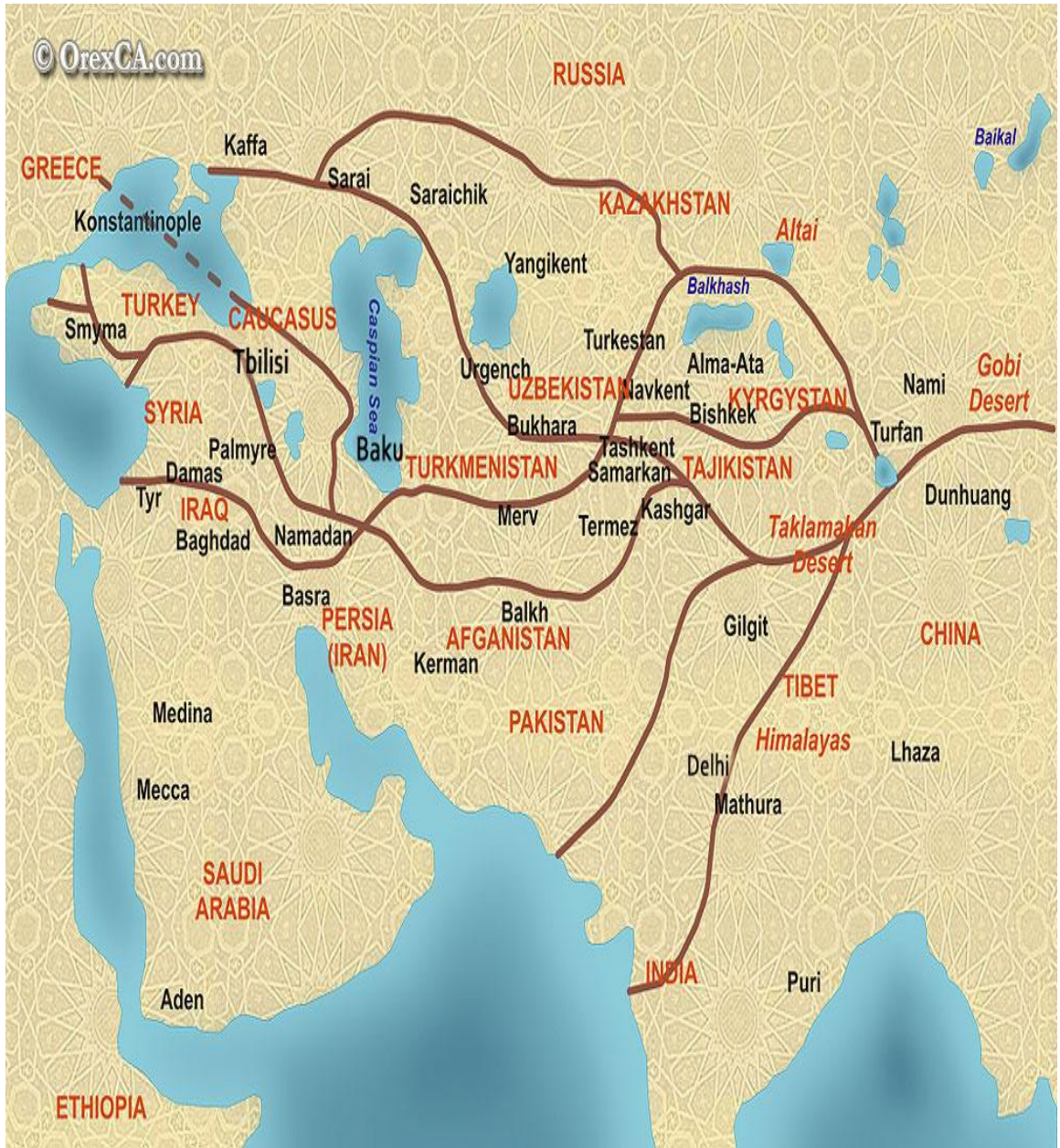
²⁷ ibid

²⁸ Mark.J.Joshua "Silk Road" available at http://www.ancient.eu/Silk_Road/ accessed on 28th August 2015

²⁹ Definition & History of the "Silk Road," or "Silk Route", available at <http://www.silkroutes.net/DefinitionHistorySilkRoad.htm>.accessed on 21st April 2014.

³⁰ibid

(v) Map of Ancient Silk Route



Source: Ancient Silk Route <http://www.orexca.com/silkroad.php>

All of these represent a historically unprecedented chance for the Central Asian republics to become important players in the world economy. Besides, for many countries located on the path of the ancient Silk Route, particularly the landlocked Central Asian states, international trade is the only option to sustain economic growth and development.

The New Silk Route initiatives large and small scale, bilateral and multilateral, governmental and private indicate a positive climate for building a new trade and exchange system that could bring prosperity to Central Asian states much like the historic Silk Route.

2.6 Silk Route: Convergence of Civilizations

The emergence of the Silk Route provided opportunity for the many civilizations to interact among each other, with goods, ideas, culture, philosophy and etc. While many different kinds of merchandise travelled through the Silk Road, the name comes from the popularity of Chinese silk with the west, especially with Rome. The Silk routes stretched from China through India, Asia Minor, up throughout Mesopotamia, to Egypt, the African continent, Greece Rome, and Britain. The northern Mesopotamian region (present day Iran) became China's closest partner in trade, as part of the Parthian Empire initiating important cultural exchanges. Paper, which had been invented by the Chinese during the Han Dynasty, and gunpowder, also a Chinese invention, had a much greater impact on culture than did silk. The rich spices of the east, also, contributed more than the fashion which grew up from the silk industry. Even so, by the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus (27 BCE – 14 CE) trade between China and the west was firmly established and silk was the most sought after commodity in Egypt, Greece, and, especially, in Rome³¹.

The significance of the historic Silk Road lies in its unique nature that no authority or government could ever claim a monopoly on creation and control of the Silk Route. There was not a blueprint of the Silk Route for a very simple reason the Silk Route was so big and complex that its economic strength and

³¹ Definition & History of the "Silk Road," or "Silk Route", available at [http:// www.silkroute s.net/Definition HistorySilkRoad.htm](http://www.silkroute s.net/Definition HistorySilkRoad.htm). accessed on 23rd april 2014

capabilities were unmatched by even its contemporary authorities. The Silk Route emerged as a result of the multifaceted agglomeration of various demands, with supplies and expectations emanating from various sources ranging from the mighty empires to the smallest towns and villages. The Silk Route gradually lost its value and importance in the modern period due to developments in maritime transportation and political circumstances in the region.

Silk, on its way to the west, often got no further than this region of Central Asia. The Astana tombs, where the nobles of Gaochang were buried, have turned up examples of silk cloth from China, as well as objects from as far afield as Persia and India³². Much can be learned about the customs of the time from the objects found in these graves, and from the art work of the time, which has been excellently preserved on the tomb walls, due to the extremely dry conditions. The bodies themselves have also been well preserved, and may allow scientific studies to ascertain their origins.

Later on these Central Asian trade routes caused some problems for the Han rulers in China. Bandits soon learnt of the precious goods travelling up the Gansu Corridor and skirting the Taklimakan, and took advantage of the terrain to plunder these caravans. Caravans of goods needed their own defence forces, and this was an added cost for the merchants making the trip. The route took the caravans to the farthest extent of the Han Empire, and policing this route became a big problem. This was partially overcome by building forts and defensive walls along part of the route. Sections of 'Great Wall' were built along the northern side of the Gansu Corridor, to try to prevent the Xiongnu from harming the trade; Tibetan bandits from the Qilian Mountains to the south were also a problem. Sections of Han dynasty wall can still be seen as far as Yumen Guan, well beyond the recognised beginning of the Great Wall at Jiayuguan. However, these fortifications were not all as effective as intended, as the Chinese lost control of sections of the route at regular intervals³³.

³²Josh "Turpan's Astana Tombs: Burial of Xinjiang's Ancient Kings", available at <http://www.farwestchina.com/2013/02/turpans-astana-tombs-burial-of-xinjiangs-ancient-kings.html>, accessed on 12th may 2014

³³ Silk roads, available at <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/silk-road/> accessed on 23rd april 2014

The most significant commodity carried along this route was not silk, but religion. Buddhism came to China from India through this way, along the northern branch of the route. The first influences came as the passes over the Karakorum were first explored. The Eastern Han emperor Mingdi is thought to have sent a representative to India to discover more about this strange faith, and further missions returned bearing scriptures, and bringing with them India priests.³⁴ With this came influences from the Indian sub-continent, including Buddhist art work, examples of which have been found in several early second century tombs in present-day Sichuan province. This was considerably influenced by the Himalayan Massif, an effective barrier between China and India.

The Silk Route has become important during the Tang dynasty, with relative internal stability in China after the divisions of the earlier dynasties since the Han. The individual states have mostly been assimilated, and the threats from marauding peoples was rather less. The art and civilisation of the Silk Road achieved its highest point in the Tang Dynasty (James, 2015). Changan, as the starting point of the route, as well as the capital of the dynasty, developed into one of the largest and most cosmopolitan cities of the time. By 742 A.D., the population had reached almost two million, and the city itself covered almost the same area as present-day Xian, considerably more than within the present walls of the city. The 754 A.D. census showed that five thousand foreigners lived in the city; Turks, Iranians, Indians and others from along the Route, as well as Japanese, Koreans and Malays from the east (James, 2015).

Many were missionaries, merchants or pilgrims, but every other occupation was also represented. Rare plants, medicines, spices and other goods from the west were to be found in the *bazaars* of the city. It is quite clear, however, despite the exotic imports, that the Chinese regarded all foreigners as barbarians; the gifts provided for the emperors by foreign rulers were simply considered as tribute from vassal states.

After the Tang dynasty, however, the traffic along the road subsided, along with the grotto building and art of the period. The Five Dynasties period did not

³⁴Buddhism and Its Spread Along the Silk Road, available at <http://www.silk-road.com/artl/buddhism.shtml>; accessed on 12th may 2014.

maintain the internal stability of the Tang dynasty, and again neighbouring states started to plunder of the caravans. China was partially unified again in the Song dynasty, but the Silk Route was not as important as it had been in the Tang regime. (Kulchik, 1996).

2.7 Revival of Silk Route in Modern Times

After a long period of remaining obscured, the importance of the Silk Route seems to have been increasing in the recent times. The fight of man against the desert, one of the biggest problems for the early travellers, is finally gaining ground. There has been some progress in controlling the progress of the shifting sands, which had previously meant having to respite settlements. The construction of roads around the edges of the Taklimakan has eased access, and the discovery of large oil reserves under the desert has encouraged this development. The area is rapidly being industrialized, and Urumchi, the present capital of Xinjiang, has become a particularly unprepossessing Han Chinese industrial city (Kaushik, 1970).

The route that has played a significant role in terms of trade is being reopened. The slower trade between the traders of Xinjiang and that of the Soviet Union has improved fast. These developments have worked well to increase trade with the CIS concerning particularly with consumer items as well as heavy industry. During Soviet era, the Central Asian States have greatly contributed to the economy in terms of heavy industrial production and they relied on USSR for consumer goods. Therefore Central Asia's trade with China now fulfil this demand. This trading has been encouraged by the recent trend towards a 'socialist market economy' in China, and the increasing freedom of movement being allowed, particularly for the minorities such as those in Xinjiang. Many of these nationalities are now participating in cross-border trade, regularly making the journey to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Roudik, 2007: 41).

Historically Silk Route has played a significant role in linking regional and international communities through Central Asia for many centuries. Presently many countries that are situated in the vicinity of the ancient Silk Route, especially Central Asia because it is landlocked, Trade system that was developed on the line of Silk Road seems to be the only alternative for their growth and

development. Availability of markets will determine the sustainability of the developing markets; if international cooperation is to be furthered, technological innovations are necessary; trade efficiency will be boosted only if there is the provision of better transportation and logistics; and growing energy demands require international cooperation.

Nationalism grew among people that resided along the Silk Route because of foreign invasion, cultural hegemony and political domination as they remained oppressed for long and wanted to do away with that situation. The five Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan that were part of USSR became independent in the early 1990s. In the same period too Mongolia too sought separateness from Soviet over lordship. Such separatist tendencies have also been exhibited in different magnitudes by the Chinese-dominated lands of Xinjiang (with its largely Turkic population), Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, but the People's Republic of China so far has kept them within its sovereign authority by alternate use of force and persuasion (Karrar, 2009).

The growing economic significance of the old Silk Route gives it confidence for the future. The oil and gas discovered in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Mongolia have inspired visions of a revival of the Silk Roads in the form of oil pipelines and of a resurgence of trade throughout the region, potentially offering great economic leverage to it and its people³⁵.

The New Silk Route projects are instrumental in laying the foundation for regional cooperation; creating political flexibility; improving economic growth; offering trade diversifications; and investing in transportation, mining and energy sectors. All of these represent a historically unprecedented chance for the Central Asian republics to become important players in the world economy. Consequently, there are many large and small scales, bilateral and multilateral projects aimed to reconstruct and revive a trade and exchange system similar to the ancient Silk Road³⁶.

³⁵Definition & History of the "Silk Road," or "Silk Route", available at <http://www.silkroutes.net/DefinitionHistorySilkRoad.htm>

³⁶ Ibid

The Silk Route, from their inception to the present, provided the teacher with an ideal vehicle to introduce students to Asian cultures. Because of the privileged status that was ascribed to the global maritime transportation, the silk road has remained secluded for long but in the modern times it has started regaining its reputation to connect to the landlocked states particularly Central Asian States . Its reclaiming of its previous status can be adjoined to several factors such as political history, economic institutions, art, religions, technology, and geography. It's necessary to mention that the Silk Road has been a vehicle to interconnect many Asian civilizations. It has left indelible imprints on these civilizations that they still interrelate with each other (Oliver, 1992).

Silk Route can once again be seen as an indispensable corridor for transportation and cultural exchange in the context of the birth of the Eurasian Union in the early 1990s and, the rise of the Chinese and Indian economies and their strong re-entry in the world markets, when combined with simultaneously growing energy demands of Asian countries, the need for inland transportation, and the development of new energy technologies and resources. However, while the Silk Road's ancient role as cultural and commercial bridge has been revived, the "New Silk Route," as it is now called, differs in that its Central Asian home. It is today as important as a production zone as it once was as a trade corridor: Central Asian oil and gas are quickly turning the region into a full-fledged international player in its own right (Karrar, 2009).

As a result, all roads no longer merely run through Central Asia, they run to it, marking first power reversal between East and West in five centuries. Further, in what could well be the most significant geopolitical realignment of the 21st century, the new energy scene is re-centring the Middle East eastwards³⁷. These momentous changes, however, leave the New Silk Road vulnerable to the ambitions of powerful states such as the European Union, Russia, China, India, and the United States. Besides having competing designs, these powers exhibit varying degrees of concern for and involvement in issues such as regional

³⁷“Experts see big benefits from 'Silk Road Economic Belt’”, The idea of the Silk Road Economic Belt was first proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping last year. Available at http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/experts-see-big-benefits-from-silk-road-economic-belt-114070600167_1.html accessed on 6 July 2014

development, transportation, trade, and resource exploitation. This in turn intensifies the pressures on an ancient prime land corridor now in search of identity and structure³⁸.

The notion of pipeline politics as the new Great Game, however, is premature. First, the Caspian oil price has to be relatively high in order to be economically viable. Second, the regional infrastructure is too poor to support the industry³⁹. For example, Turkmenistan has a large deposit of natural gas, but the richness of the Central Asian States in natural resources provide them with the immense opportunity and this is one of the aspects why United States and European Union are interested in regional cooperation to take place among the nations of Central Asia having their own stakes involved in the region. This particular aspect of their geographical also provides Central Asian countries to achieve status and prosperity for themselves in international political arena. Today, the United States and China seem immensely interested in the regional cooperation to take place in the Central Asian region and they are interested in the idea of a "New Silk Road," an intertwined set of economic integration initiatives seeking to link East and Central Asia as they have their own reasons (James, 2015).

In 2011, the United States initiated its ambition of greater Central Asian economic and infrastructure integration with the hope that it wants to withdraw from Afghanistan and wants to promote political stability in the region before it does so. On the part of China, it wants to promote China-led Silk Road that would facilitate foreign trade, ensure stable energy supplies, promote Asian infrastructure development; thereby it wants to consolidate Beijing's influence in the region (James, 2015).

The New Silk Route formally termed the Silk Route Economic Belt and also known as the "One Belt, One Road," was first proposed by China's President Xi Jinping during his 2013 visit to Central Asia. This particular project endeavours

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ "Central Asia: Atlas of natural resource", Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management Asian Development Bank Manila, Philippines, 2011.

to reinvigorate the historical vitality of trade and exchanges between Central Asian States and China.⁴⁰ The Economic Belt would then, as intended, promote regional cooperation and facilitate the trade among China, Central Asia, Russia and the Baltic states. In Central Asia, the New Silk Road is designed to pass through Khorgos, Almaty, Bishkek, Dushanbe, Samarkand, and Turkmenistan before reaching Tehran to Europe. The New Silk Route is the landmark initiative of China's economic engagement in Central Asia, serving to meet China's economic needs of developing its western provinces such as Xinjiang and gaining access to energy resources in Central Asia. Starting from the 2000s, Russia has started to reengage with Central Asia with the goal of playing "a dominant or privileged role" in the region (David, 2006). China's increased economic presence in Central Asia may conflict with Russian initiatives to reinstate its prominent regional role, most notably through the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). As Chinese and Russian engagement in the region continues to intensify, it is inevitable that they will vie for the Central Asian countries' attention and resources.

However, interactions between China and Russia in Central Asia need not necessarily be looked at as a zero-sum game as vast size and potential of the economic market within the Russia Central Asia-China triangle would benefit all the actors involved. Therefore it can be argued that the New Silk Road with the EEU is feasible and proves to the benefits of China and Russia's making it a positive sum game in their cooperation in Central Asia. It provides evidence for this claim through examination of the New Silk Road's bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, with a focus on the areas of infrastructure and trade, and evaluating China's overall economic and diplomatic strategy toward the region.

⁴⁰ Anishchuk, Alexei. "As Putin looks east, China and Russia sign \$400-billion gas deal," Available at Reuters, May 21, 2014 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/21/us-china-russia-gas-idUSBREA4K07K20140521#QojSrt3TrQrg2uWD.99> . Accessed November 4, 2015.

(vi) Map of Maritime Silk Route



Source: “One Belt One Road” available at en.xinfinance.com

From the beginning, it can be said, the New Silk Road is a strategic concept to be realized through "bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms," not totally China driven idea. The white paper issued jointly by China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce, stresses cooperation as the mechanism to achieve strategic goals. It states, "The One Belt One Road Initiative is a systematic project, which should be jointly built through consultation to meet the interests of all"⁴¹. More specifically, the above documents points out to several multilateral organizations in which Central Asian countries participate in some form and whose functions align with the strategic vision and objectives of the New Silk Road initiative (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013).

The New Silk Road spans across many of the regional countries, providing incredibly enhanced opportunities for trade and cooperation. In the transportation sector, a key regional multilateral organization is the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), which plays an important role in achieving "road connectivity," a basic component of the New Silk Road.⁴² Many older transportation corridors in Central Asia are northward i.e. Russia oriented, not east toward China.

However, since 2001 CAREC has invested approximately \$28.3 billion in developing these corridors, three of which lead to China. For example, within CAREC Corridor

- I. The Urumqi-Kashgar road connects Xinjiang to Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Russian Federation.
- II. This line links Kazakhstan with China, Russia and western seaports, including Aktau, a port on the Caspian Sea that transports goods to Europe and Asia.

⁴¹ Asian Development Bank. "The New Silk Road: Ten Years of the Central Asia Economic Cooperation Program." Available at <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29389/new-silk-road.pdf>. Accessed on 20 October, 2015.

⁴² *ibid*

- III. From Xinjiang to Kazakhstan a toll expressway connects, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Tajikistan (Kuchins.et.al, 2015)

China's main pipeline project in Central Asia is the Central Asia-China Gas pipeline. These energy pipelines are another major component of regional infrastructure development, have been developed primarily through bilateral efforts. China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has acquired huge energy resource in Central Asia. On the basis of bilateral agreements between China and Central Asian countries, Line A, Line B and Line C have already been completed, running parallel from the Turkmen-Uzbek border through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan before reaching Xinjiang (Andrew et.al. 2015). In September 2013, China signed bilateral agreements with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan to commence plans for Line D. These state-to-state agreements were followed by agreements between and its Central Asian counterparts, such as Tajiktransgaz and Uzbekneftegaz, to establish joint ventures and manage the construction and operation of Line D (Kuchins.et.al. 2015)

It is estimated that in the year of 2016, the annual transmission capacity of the entire Central Asia-China pipeline will reach 85 billion cubic meters, making it "the largest gas transmission system in Central Asia"⁴³. Other major joint projects have been developed between China and Central Asian countries, such as the gas field development in Amu Darya in Turkmenistan. Improved infrastructure constructed through multilateral and bilateral efforts advanced by the New Silk Road initiative is critical to facilitate trade. CAREC's transport corridors aim to facilitate 5 percent of all Europe-East Asia trade by 2017, which will significantly increase the income of the transit countries⁴⁴. Oil pipelines built through bilateral efforts will also boost energy trade. The Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline, which is part of the Central Asia China Gas pipeline network, will transport 55 billion

⁴³ CNPC. "Flow of natural gas from Central Asia.". Available at <http://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/FlowofnaturalgasfromCentralAsia/FlowofnaturalgasfromCentralAsia2.shtml>. Accessed on 22 August, 2015

⁴⁴ Asian Development Bank. "The New Silk Road: Ten Years of the Central Asia Economic Cooperation Program." Available at <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29389/new-silk-road.pdf>. Accessed on 20 October, 2015.

cubic meters of gas annually to China by the end of 2016, approximately 20 percent of China's annual natural gas consumption (Rickleton, 2014).

In addition to trade gains hiked through joint infrastructure construction, Central Asian countries and China are also collaborating to improve regional trade relations. Beyond the formal economic relationships between China and Central Asia, informal trade or "shuttle trade" among countries in the region is also substantial (Scobel.et.al, 2014). Chinese consumer goods are bombarded into the region through Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic without any border customs and excise duties. This illegal encroachment giving advantage of individual traders who transport them take of arbitrage to earn profit.

The New Silk Road initiative will deepen regional cooperation with Central Asian countries to improve border control and reduce entry barriers, so that informal trade will be directed into formal channels, and countries will take relief from tax, customs and security benefits. Cross border transport agreements have already been signed between countries such as Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic. In the Kyrgyz Republic, freight associations also monitoring travel and waiting times so that border crossing and the transnational shipment of goods can be improved (Fedorenko, 2015).

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), initially established in 1996 as "Sanghai-5, later on in 2001 it became SCO. SCO is a multilateral organization, which focused on regional security and will also play a major role in the New Silk Road program. Member states of the SCO include China, Russia and four Central Asian countries, who are involved in the SCO Business Council and the SCO Interbank Consortium to work on multilateral financial and economic projects. At the SCO Summit in July this year, the Russian and Chinese leaders agreed to consider SCO as "a convenient floor for integrating the implementation of the New Silk Road and the EEU"⁴⁵. Both countries Russia and China voiced support for joint infrastructure development and financing development in the region, calling for a common SCO transport system that incorporates and enlarges the

⁴⁵ The BRICS Post. "China's Silk Road wins big at SCO Summit," The BRICS Post, July 11, 2015. Available at. <http://thebricspost.com/chinas-silk-road-wins-big-at-sco-summit/#.Vi6mpGSrQy4>. Accessed on 20th December, 2015

volume of existing transport systems such as Russia's Trans-Siberian and Baikal-Amur railways. The SCO will facilitate China's economic engagement in Central Asia and advance the goals of the New Silk Road⁴⁶.

Another important regional organization is The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) aims to become a powerful economic union that will accumulate "natural resources, capital, and strong human potential" in the region to become a competitive regional bloc in the international economy. Currently, the EEU has five members: Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. Together, the EEU members produce a GDP of \$2,411.2 billion and are the top natural gas producers in the world (Tarr, 2015). The common understanding among its members states is that the EEU seeks to deepen regional economic integration, with its first and foremost goal to create "common markets of electric power, gas, oil and petroleum products." A common market of labour" is the intended next step an economic boost for member countries whose national income relies substantially on remittances. Tajikistan needs Russia as a market to export labour. At the same time, Tajikistan is worried about limitations on its trade with non-EEU countries and constraints on its foreign policy (Tarr, 2015).

This chapter has shade light on the historical perspective of the multilateralism and regional cooperation in Central Asia. The study accommodates the emergence of Central Asian region in general and their different ruler dynasties in particular. In the different era Central Asia has different size according to their ruler. But this place was always surrounded by major civilizations. The ancient Silk route, which makes this whole region more significant and vibrant due to transportation of goods, ideas, philosophy, culture, religion etc. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union five Central Asian countries emerged as independent states.

In the ancient and medieval time cooperation among states was very informal and unstructured. From ancient time they interact each other through Silk Route, they exchanged their ideas and goods, religion and philosophy. In the 20 century across this region regional cooperation and multilateralism has taken place. Many regional organizations like CIS, CSTO and Sanghai-5 etc. emerged.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Many of the Central Asian countries and Post-Soviet countries become member of these organizations.

In the 21 century again China started “The New Silk Road initiative” program with great potential for "win-win" cooperation in Central Asia, between China, Russia and Central Asian countries. For Central Asian countries, an economic relationship with both Russia and China is double insurance. Expanding trade with China enables Central Asian countries to balance against Russia's economic power, which also curbs Russia's political leverage on them.

Chapter-3

Multilateral Organizations in Central Asia: Norms and Institutions

The present System of international relations has two most important aspects identified from the position of world order as a regionalized and multi-sided world. Regionalized should be interpreted as the world's geographic regulation while multilateral system scribes entity regulations. (Tolipov,2009).

Central Asia forms the core region of the Asian continent. This region spans from the Caspian Sea in the West, China in the East, Afghanistan in the South and Russia in the North. Total geographical expansion area ranges nearly four million square kilometres. All the Central Asian republics are land-locked in their geographical locations. The era of 1990s brought immense opportunities to the region because of its vast transitional space, its richness in terms of its vast energy reserves. The disintegration of the Soviet Union enhanced Central Asia's significance for it offered greater opportunities for the great power and regional powers because of its geo-political relevance and vast energy resources. A comprehensive and feasible strategy, for the parties involved in this strategic 'game', should be used as a pre-condition for a successful and efficient geo-strategic agenda.

The erstwhile Soviet Union disintegrated in December 1991. Soon after the collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union the entire Central Asian countries became independent state. Since independence, the Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) are facing common security challenges in the form of crime, corruption, terrorism, and faltering commitments of economic and democratic reforms. The relationship between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is primarily surrounded by the clouds of ethnic and territorial tensions. The maladministration and resultant corruption in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan has the potential to spoil the benefits they could derive by developing their energy resources. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have become major powers in the Central Asian region and are in a position to champion policy solutions and develop mechanism to the common Central Asian problems they together face (Omlichev, 2010).

Historically, Central Asia has played a significant role as it provided a ‘land bridge’ that facilitated trade and ideas between the world’s major civilizations. But the fragmentation experienced in 19 Century has earmarked the fault lines between major powers that surround the region. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the famous colour revolution that occurred in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), have generated opportunities for regional cooperation that potentially can provide benefit to all the Central Asian states. The recent years have witnessed the development in terms of trade and other economic interactions between and among Central Asians States that are largely driven by the dynamic and informal sector, but still opportunities for more regional cooperation and development have not been explored to the extent they could have been. This situation can be located in the legacy of conflicts, security challenges, infrastructural and administrative mismanagement, varying geo-political conceptions for the region, and different degrees of openness and private sector orientation among the countries (Hanks, 2010: 27).

The era of globalization has mandated every country to focus on rapid economic growth. The energy seeking states initiated the process of establishing bilateral relationships with all the five Central Asian states with eye on their rich resources after their independence from the Soviet Union. Central Asian states have their own set of developmental challenges due to their geographical complications particularly because of their limited accessibility to the oceans. The landlocked geographic locations and also pose difficulty for them in establishing communication with world markets. Such a factor makes these countries dependent upon their relationship with nearby states to obtain their communication lines to achieve accessibility to the oceans and world markets (Omlichev, 2010).

But the 9/11 attack has provided importance to the Central Asian States in terms of their geo-strategic significance because of their closeness to the troubled lands. Till this attack took place and jolted the western world, for US, terrorism was a regional phenomenon or what they popularly termed as law and order problem of the concerning states. The 9/11 events made terrorism a global challenge and changed the international security environment making a fundamental transition in the notions of American foreign and security priorities.

This attacked substantially changed the American policy perspective towards terrorism (Freire, 2009:132).

The year 1991 has made a new turning point in the political and economic journey of the Central Asian states. The Central Asian states were no longer under the political, economic and military umbrella of the USSR. After independence, situation was ideal for the new Central Asian countries to make their own way on the international arena and to decide their own fate, priorities and goals. After independence of the Central Asian republics, the time was not only of economic, political and social crisis, but also of new opportunities, including the chance to make new partners and allies. The states like US, Turkey, Iran, India, Pakistan, China and Russia are very much interested in establishing bilateral relations with the newly independent Central Asian states.

After disintegration of the Soviet Union, Central Asia has witnessed to remarkable efforts to strengthen regional integration through cooperation with the establishment of a number of regional organizations. In the previous years after independence, Central Asian countries realized that effective cooperation is not easy; it will take some time and requires a flexible, constructive approach of all major partners. It also requires effective leadership by key countries, institutions and individuals and a careful approach for membership and for the mandate in the organization. There is always a risky cost of duplication when countries become member of multiple organizations. It is always essential to address the issue of membership and mandate of organizations overlapping.

Analyzing regional organizations in different parts of the world, it can be argued that geographical location, common culture, history, and common heritage matters for successful integration of member states in regional organizations (Banuazizi, 1994). Contemporary social scientists connect the notion of regionalism with themes such as common identity, common heritage and cultural values. It is also argued that common heritage and common values matter for successful regional integration and institutionalization process.

Central Asia can also be defined as a region, in terms of their socio-cultural, traditional values. Soviet Union brought more cultural and traditional commonness, called Soviet civic and political culture within these states. During

the Soviet period, Central Asia was seen as one of educationally advanced and modernized of society in the region, which had vital significance for political system and power structure (Kaushik, 2002). The legacy of Soviet brought in the burden of being dependant on Russia to further their goals, political to economic and educational to cultural, for Central Asian States. Even after independence Russia is unaligned part of any Central Asian issues.

Now Central Asian States because of their geopolitical factors and to further their national interests have started to appear as an independent geographical entity. But the complexities in terms of various deputed among them have been posing many challenges for their regional integration. The regional issues such as border disputes, economic instability, religious extremism, terrorism, environmental degradation, use and problems of the cross border rivers, power supply to the countries, transport and communication will have to be tackled collectively if they are to realize integration of the region in real sense.

The end of the first decade of the 21 century is impacting the multilateral relationship between the Central Asian States that has the potential to destabilize the region. Such a development can be divided into four major issues concerning the region.

- I. The calls connected with a problem of religious extremism, terrorism, separatism, and drug trafficking.
- II. The calls connected with the international, interstate and regional contradictions.
- III. The calls which are defined by geopolitical position of the region, its natural resources, ethno territorial problems.
- IV. The calls connected with a low standard of living and development of technology in the region, migratory, demographic and environmental problems (Laura & Dauletbek, 2011).

Regional organisations are established to foster mechanisms of cooperation among states, which are willing to develop their common belonging to a geographical space, a geopolitical entity and economic bloc etc. As such they deal

with very different realities depending upon whether the unifying factor is based on a criterion that is geographical (African Union), cultural (Islamic Cooperation Organisation), geopolitical (North Alliance Treaty Organisation) or economic (Association of Southeast Asian Nations).

The development of regional organisations has been one of the main trends of international affairs since the end of the Second World War and revival with the post-Cold War called 'New World Order' (Giragosian, 2006: 146). Compulsion of globalisation have also revitalised economically oriented regional organisations, or trade blocs like South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA), Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) as well as institutions aimed at promoting a so-called multi-polar world order through different organization like Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS), India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA), Russia-India-China (RIC) etc. Regional organisations are diversified in their objectives: some of them strive to be platforms for dialogue between countries with a long tradition of animosity; others have clearly stipulated objectives of economic and political integration (Ahrens & Hoen, 2013).

The success of regional organisations cannot be measured solely on the basis of the success of integration processes, but also, in many ways like active cooperation for regional security through dialogue. Regional organisations do not have any systematic links with global trends towards regionalism, which promotes concerted actions within a region and shapes a common regional identity on the international scenario. The development of regional organisations is still less of a synonym for multilateralism, defined as promoting a world with multiple superpowers and their regional allies, and sometimes regarded as a way to counter alleged American hegemony (Ahrens & Hoen, 2013).

Among the Central Asian states, since independence Turkmenistan has been a fervent partisan in support of unilateralism or bilateralism, and has been very much reluctant for both regionalism and multilateralism due to its neutrality policy. Other country of Central Asia, Uzbekistan has conducted more contrasting policies, endorsing regionalism when it thinks it is in a leadership position and unilateralism when it views its sovereign rights as not being respected. Tashkent has shown little interest for multilateralism, instead giving priority to pursuing

bilateral relations (Nourzhanov, 2009: 98). Largest state in Central Asia, Kazakhstan has aimed at being a staunch defender of regional cooperation or regionalism above all and of multilateralism too. On the other hand Kyrgyzstan played the card of multilateralism very early in 1998 as symbolised by its accession to membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Tajikistan also pursues and combines various strategies in accordance with the domain and the actors involved.

The above diversified international positioning of each Central Asian state impacts the future of the development of regional and multilateral organisations in the region. Some are conceived as the embodiment of a bilateral relationship with a powerful neighbouring countries mainly Russia and China, others as institutionalising a strong regional or cultural identity that each state can lay claim to or reject Eurasian identity, Islamic identity; and others still as aiding integration into the world economy CAREC, or merely as sites of dialogue CICA (Gavrillis 2012: 29).

After independence of Central Asian countries the important fact regarding regionalization of this region is based on the role of China and Russia. Therefore, while analyzing the region, one can conclude that regional institutions of Central Asia either led by Russia or China. It shows the interconnectedness or interdependency of Central Asian countries on China and Russia for political, economic and security reason. At the same time, neither Shanghai Cooperation Organization nor Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) not even Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) includes all Central Asian countries, only Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are full-fledged members of these regional and multilateral organizations. It means, SCO and CSTO serve as a platform only for four Central Asian countries to discuss common security challenges with China and Russia, whereas Turkmenistan is left behind from regional scope. In EEU only two countries of the Central Asian states are member led by Russia. In the analysis of Regional Security issues in the region, one can note that all Central Asian countries acknowledge challenges such as terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, security threat from Afghanistan, migration flow, human trafficking, organized crime and drug trafficking. These are the common concern of all Central Asian countries.

The desire of the Central Asian States to foster regional cooperation and project a common for all the five countries and explain the interest accorded to the role of regional organisations, based on the idea that.

- I. All the five Central Asian states seem to share the same political and economic trends resulting from the collapse of the Soviet system;
- II. Along with Northeast Asia, Central Asia has the lowest number of regional organisations in comparison to any region in the world, these countries of the region are comparatively least integrated in economic and strategic terms;
- III. A common strategic identity is projected onto the region, that of being a 'crossroads', a 'buffer zone' or a 'balance' between the main world and regional powers;
- IV. The Central Asian states are facing economic problems and also facing significant problems of development and security that would be better dealt with through regional cooperation;
- V. Some of their problems are trans-boundary in nature like water, energy, transport, and potential Islamic insurgency, and therefore necessitate regional cooperation (Collins, 2009).

These five notions are actually of a different nature and confound regionalism, regional integration and coordination on some specific issues. This confusion is maintained by all the major actors involved in the region. Several neighbouring external actors, Russia, China and Iran, are interested in developing regional institutions that reinforce their legitimacy as regional powers and project their own foreign policy culture abroad. Their idea of regionalism in fact sometimes corresponds more to a hidden bilateralism and a strategy for an anti-American multi-polarity. As for international organisations and non-contiguous external powers, such as the United States, the European Union or Japan, they tend to consider regional integration to be a kind of first step towards more multilateralism.

3.1 Multilateral Organizations in Central Asia

After more than two decades of the independence of the Central Asian states, they have initiated to develop relations with many countries on multilateral and regional as well as on the bilateral basis. Azerbaijan's relations with the Central Asian countries are basically focused on energy, transport routes and trade (Kuchins.et.al, 2015). Georgia sees Central Asia as an important geopolitical partner, so it has started to strengthen its energy security and in diversifying foreign investments. Central Asia is not a major foreign policy target for Caucasus countries. The EU, the U.S. and Russia are essential to the economies of the South Caucasus countries and play an influential role in the unresolved conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno- Karabakh (Buyers, 2003). The security problems and low level of development of the South Caucasus countries have left little space, so far, for constructive engagement beyond direct neighbours and influential powers (Fried, 2006: 102).

Regional initiatives in Central Asia currently vary in nature. As such, organizations are diverge in their focus, legal form, status, scope of action and membership, operational modalities and the degree to which they are legally binding. Some have a founding charter, membership procedures, regular summits as well as implementation mechanisms. Others exhibit less formal mechanisms. Some of the Central Asian states play a leading role in them, while in others they are recipients of projects drawn up by external actors. Regional organizations can be classified according to very different criteria.

3.2 Central Asian Organisations and Treaties

Organisations that have been created to manage the civilised discourse between former Soviet republics are the most numerous. Initiated by Russia, in other instances Kazakhstan, post-Soviet regional integration has been a zigzagging process, as some Central Asian states distanced themselves from the post-Soviet framework. Russia's strategy to develop more integrative organisations, but with fewer members, has been altering regional dynamics of integration (Fuller, 1994).

First, it should be noted that there are very few organizations and treaties that link exclusively all the five Central Asian countries, and none of them include Afghanistan. A first Central Asian Economic Cooperation (CAEC) was created in

1994, with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan signing the Treaty on the Formation of an Integrated Economic Space (IES), Tajikistan joined in 1998 in the post-civil war (Fried, 2006: 103). CAEC's achievements were largely lower than anticipated as ties between former Soviet republics became more distant with each country unwilling to develop joint strategies. In 2002, with a change in the regional geopolitical situation due to American presence in Afghanistan, the four members tried to re-dynamise the organisation by transforming it into the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO).

The objective of CACO was to form an integrative economic space and coordinating external policies, especially in relation to Afghanistan. But the idea has not been successfully achieved (Ushakova, 2003: 124). In 2005, CACO merged into EurAsEC and was *de facto* dissolved with Russia's accession. In 2007, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev made a proposal for a new Central Asian Union similar to EU, but it was rejected by Uzbekistan because president Islam karimov keeps the country under strong authoritarian rule, and it was his assumption that unification with partially liberalised countries would shake his power (Bekeshova, 2007). Rather Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have signed a 'Treaty of Eternal Friendship'. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have also decided to set up a free trade zone. In 2007 Presidents of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement establishing an 'International Supreme Council' between their two states (Kangas, 2008). The main objective of this council was to promote common economic space, customs union and common currency (Bekeshova, 2007).

3.2.1 The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was created by the Minsk Agreement (8 December, 1991) and that of Alma-Ata (21December, 1991), and aims to maintain economic and security integration between the majority of the former Soviet republics. In the adopted Declaration, the participants of the Commonwealth declared their interaction on the basis of sovereign equality⁴⁷. 12 states are member along with the all five Central Asian countries. The five Central Asian states joined it following the Alma-Ata agreement. Turkmenistan never

⁴⁷ "About Commonwealth of Independent States" available at <http://www.cisstat.com/eng/cis.htm>; accessed on 15 July 2015

ratified the CIS charter but considered itself a member until 2005, after which, in order to be consistent with its UN-recognised status of ‘perpetual neutrality’, it received associate observer status. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a regional multi-governmental organization, whose principle objective is to cooperate in political, economic, environmental, humanitarian, cultural and other fields among a number of former Soviet Republics.

Council of Heads of States is the supreme body of the CIS. It discusses and settles the fundamental issues that are connected with the activity of member states in the sphere of their common goals. The inter-parliamentary assembly of the CIS Member States holds inter-parliamentary consultations, discusses problems of cooperation within the Commonwealth. It has initiated joint offers in the field of national parliament’s activity. The CIS Economic Council was established in order to ensure unified application of the agreements of the CIS Member States. It’s based on the economic commitments and contracts by means of the settlement of disputes resulting from the economic relations. The CIS Executive committee is a unified, permanent, executive, administrative and coordinating body of the Commonwealth of Independent States⁴⁸.

Since 2016, Kyrgyzstan has a Chairmanship of CIS after Kazakhstan⁴⁹; it is led by a one-year rotating chairmanship and deals with any questions of importance. Decisions are made on a consensus basis, and are accelerated by a process in which states lacking interest in an issue leave the decision to those members with more of vested interests. The CHS and CHG are the only bodies of CIS having been authorised to adopt binding decisions for members who ratify the decisions. Other CIS institutions work in an advisory capacity, although, according to a 1994 CHG decision, they have the power to make final decisions within their area of remit. The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (CMFA) is the CIS’s main executive body (Kazantsev, 2008). In September 1993, the heads of states signed the treaty on the establishment of economic union. All the states have

⁴⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus; available at <http://mfa.gov.by/en/organizations/membership/list/c2bd4cebdf6bd9f9.html> accessed on 12 April 2016.

⁴⁹ On January 20, 2016, a press conference on the Chairmanship of the Kyrgyz Republic in the CIS in this year was held; available at www.mfa.gov.kg. Accessed on 12 April 2016.

decided to develop concept of transformation of economic cooperation within the CIS. Economic cooperation is based on principle of free movements of goods, services, workers and capital⁵⁰. In 1994, CIS members signed an Agreement called “CIS Free trade zone”⁵¹.

In 1995, the member states have agreed upon “CIS Collective Security Council”. The Collective Security Council is based on the concept of collective security. The declaration adopted by the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and their basic objective was to strengthen the military cooperation among the member states. In chapter (I) Article 4 of the charter says that

It emphasizes on the formation and development of common economic space, common Eurasian markets, customs policy, cooperation in development of transport and communication systems, health care and protection of environment, issues of social and migration policy, struggle against organized criminality, cooperation in the field of defence policy and protection of external frontiers. The present list may be supplemented on the mutual agreement of member states⁵².

In chapter (III) Article 11 of the charter says that

The member states shall pursue the coordinated policy in the field of international security, disarmament and arms control formation of Armed Forces and shall maintain security in the Commonwealth, including that with the help of groups of military observers and of collective peace-keeping forces⁵³.

In the area of prevention of conflicts and settlement disputes, chapter (IV) article 17 says that

The Commonwealth member states shall refrain from actions, which are likely to cause losses to other

⁵⁰ Commonwealth of Independent States, available at <http://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/commonwealth-independent-states-cis/>. Accessed on 20th April 2016

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² Commonwealth of Independent States: Charter International Legal materials, Vol. 34, No. 5 (September, 1995), pp. 1279-1297: available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20698492>. Accessed on 13 April 2015.

⁵³ *ibid*

member states and result in the aggravation of eventual disputes. The member states shall in good faith and in the spirit of cooperation do their utmost for fair and pacific settlement of their disputes by means of negotiations or for the achievement of the agreement on the proper alternative procedure of the settlement of the dispute. Should the member states fail to settle the dispute with the help of means described in the second part of the present Article, they may submit it to the Council of Heads of States⁵⁴.

Chapter (V) article (19) of the charter strive cooperation in the area of Social economic and legal fields among the member states. It says that

The member states shall cooperate in economic and social fields in the following directions: formation of common economic space on the basis of market relations and of free transition of goods, services, capitals and labour resources, coordination of social policy, elaboration of joint social programmes and measures on relaxation of social tension caused by the economic reforms, development of transport, communication and power systems, coordination of credit and fiscal policy, promotion of development of trade and economic relations among the member states, encouragement and mutual protection of investments, promotion of standardization and certification of industrial products and goods, legal protection of intellectual property, stimulation of development of common information space, realization of joint measures for protection of environment, rendering mutual assistance in elimination of the consequences of ecologies disasters and of other kinds of emergency situations, implementation of joint projects and programmes in the field of science, engineering, education, health care, culture and sports⁵⁵.

It implements decisions made by the CHS and CHG, facilitates information exchange between members and coordinates CIS decisions in relation to third parties and international institutions. The Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) has been performing the similar duties at a lower level, involving technical duties, and coordinates military cooperation among the member states (Kazantsev, 2008). The Council of Ministries of Defence supervises inter-governmental structures such as the CIS committee of Chiefs of Staff, the military-technical committee, the 'Engineering Education Coordination Committee', the Military Communication Coordination Committee and the Meteorology Communication Committee (Kazantsev, 2008).

⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁵ *ibid*

For the enhancement of economic cooperation within the CIS, the Strategy of CIS economic development till 2020 was adopted in 2011. The provisions of articles of a new treaty are based on the norms and rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Presently there are all of the actual exemptions from free trade regime; also an agreement on non-expansion of the list and non-increase of the rates of duties and agreement on conducting negotiations among the member countries for gradual abolition of the remaining exemptions in free trade regime⁵⁶. This resolution is directed at the creation of conditions to increase global competitiveness of economies of the CIS member states and convert into economy of knowledge. The principle objective of the Program is the creation of the interstate innovative space uniting possibilities of national innovative systems.

In the year of 2013 during Belarusian chairmanship, it was decided to strengthen the CIS capacity. There was interaction efficiency increase of CIS countries on implementation of joint ventures in the area of economic, investment and innovative projects. CIS has also started complex utilization of potential of interregional and border cooperation, assistance to increase the availability of ecological “green” technologies in the Commonwealth, expansion of practice of using their symbols. Together with all member states conducted more than 70 considerable economic, environmental, humanitarian and interregional activities⁵⁷.

CIS member states have also adopted the programs of cooperation on fight against human trafficking for 2014-2018, they decided to jointly fight against terrorism and other violent manifestations of extremism for 2014-2016, they have also approved policy against illicit drug trafficking and counteraction of drug addiction for 2014-2018. The Interstate program of joint efforts to fight against crime for 2014-2018 has already been accepted. Heads of States approved the “Agreement on formation of Interstate Council on corruption counteraction” and the “Concept of cooperation on combating crimes committed with the use of information technologies” (Shoemaker, 2012).

⁵⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus; available at <http://mfa.gov.by/en/organizations/membership/list/c2bd4cebdf6bd9f9.html> accessed on 12th April 2016.

⁵⁷ *ibid*

CIS states have also formed an International youth forum “Friendship without borders”, whose agenda contained bright presentations of delegations of the CIS countries, round tables, and important social events, became very interesting and substantial. Within this forum, they organized interesting discussions in their participations that are based on the themes such as their traditions, culture and history of their countries. The representatives of the CIS countries were given an opportunity to get acquainted with the experience of activity of euro-regions “Neman” and “Lake-land”. The Forum of the creative and scientific intellectuals of the CIS States became a notable event. During the Forum such topics as education, youth policy, information policy and development of media, cultural cooperation and maintenance of historical and cultural heritage, development of tourism, medicine and others were discussed⁵⁸.

3.2.2 The Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)

The Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) was signed on May 15, 1992 for five year term, with the possibility of further prolongation. The Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan became the members to the CSTO. On 1st November 1995, treaty was registered by the United Nation Secretariat⁵⁹. Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Georgia signed the next year and the treaty took effect in 1994, while Ukraine, Moldova and Turkmenistan refused to join it because of tensions with Moscow. The Treaty was transformed into an international organisation and reformed in 2002 under a charter signed by the five founding states except then Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan again joined the organization in 2006 (ratified by its Parliament in 2008). On 2nd December 2004 the United Nation (UN) General Assembly adopted a resolution for granting the observer status to Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in the UN General Assembly (McDermott, 2012).

In 2016, Armenia will preside over the Dushanbe summit as a chairman of this organisation. The CSTO has many organs like Council of Collective Security,

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ “CSTO Basic Facts”, available at http://www.odkb.gov.ru/start/index_aengl.htm, accessed on 12th April 2015.

comprised of heads of state and represented by a general secretary that is responsible for making decisions and assuring coordination among member states. Three bodies are in charge of implementing decisions in their areas of competency: the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Council of Ministers of Defence and Techno-Military Cooperation and the Committee of Secretaries of Councils of Security for questions of national security. CSTO United Staff is the permanent body of the organisation and of the Council of Ministers of Defence (McDermott, 2012).

The fundamental objective of CSTO is to continue and strengthen close and comprehensive relations among the member states. It's also cooperating in the area of foreign policy, military, technological spheres, coordination and joint efforts in combating international terrorism and other security threats. The CSTO aims to guarantee the collective security and territorial integrity of its member states, to provide military aid in the case of aggression towards one of its members, and to fight against terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and cross-border criminality. In chapter (II) article (iii) charter articulated that

The purpose of organization are also cooperating among each other in foreign policy coordination on international and regional security issues, the establishment of multilateral cooperation mechanisms, including a military component, the development of cooperation in the counteraction to modern challenges and security threats, such as international terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal migration, transnational organized crime, information and cyber security, military-technical cooperation⁶⁰.

In chapter (III) article (vii) says that the area of activities

“In order CSTO joint military exercises are carried out annually in one of the member states. They simulate terrorist attacks (Rubezh) or anti-narcotics operations (Kanal), and permit interaction between border guards and other police and military units. New operations include Arsenal to fight against arms trafficking,

⁶⁰ Charter of CSTO, available at http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/Varios/2002_Carta_de_la_OTSC.pdf, accessed on 12th April 2016.

Nelegal against illegal immigration, and Proxy against cyber criminality⁶¹.

In the same chapter article (viii) says about the coordination against international terrorism and extremism.

The member States shall coordinate and harmonize their efforts in combating international terrorism and extremism, the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and arms, organized transnational crime, illegal migration and other threats to the security of the member States. The member States shall carry out activities in these areas in close cooperation with all interested States and international intergovernmental organizations, and primarily under the auspices of the United Nations⁶².

So, CSTO universally believes the importance of security interests of the member states, internal peace, military power, homeland defence etc. CSTO have some basic military goals in order to complement and support regional objectives.

- I. To deter aggressors: avoid challenges, deploy a superior power, instil fear of reprisals, deceive and demoralise opponents.
- II. To defeat aggressors: destroy the enemy armed forces, limit collateral damage, calm the insurgency and destroy terrorist's places.
- III. To train forces: improve the mobility of land forces, develop the military power, improve anti-missile capabilities, improve defence in case of chemical or biological warfare, improve information dominance.
- IV. To create strong coalitions: promote compatible doctrines, improve joint/combined training, promote interoperable logistics, strengthen security assistance, obtain or maintain overseas bases.
- V. To promote technological cooperation, improve projection needs and programmes management, reduce procurement time, improve applicability between services, lower costs (Sarcinschi, 2014).

⁶¹ ibid

⁶² ibid

During 2008-2011, Members of CSTO took important decisions in the sphere of foreign policy cooperation in the field of military formation as well as to counter challenges and threats. In particular, the Plan of activities of the CSTO Member States to collectively counter illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors on 2008-2011 was adopted. The Plan of collective actions of the CSTO Member States to implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy for 2008-2012 and the Program of joint actions to create a system of information security of the CSTO Member States were adopted⁶³.

3.2.3 The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic and military organisation which was founded in 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In 1996 Except for Uzbekistan, the other countries had been members of the Shanghai Five. It was renamed in 2001, the SCO is the successor to the Shanghai Five Group established in 1996 to settle border disputes inherited from Soviet times between China and four post-Soviet states Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The status change from the Shanghai Five to SCO, and the new shift in focus from border delimitation to regional security, was typified by Uzbekistan's membership in 2001. In 2004, SCO granted observer status to Mongolia and in 2005 to Iran, India, and Pakistan and to Afghanistan in 2012. Belarus, Sri Lanka and Turkey are classified as Dialogue Partners. Turkmenistan participates in some meetings, but has no specific status.

The main objectives of the SCO are to strengthen relations among the member states, promote cooperation in political affairs, economics and trade, scientific-technical, cultural, and educational spheres as well as in energy, transportation, tourism, and environmental protection, safeguard regional peace, security, and stability; and create a democratic, equitable international political and economic order. With assistance from the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, SCO members

⁶³ "CSTO Basic Facts", available at http://www.odkb.gov.ru/start/index_aengl.htm. Accessed on 12April 2015.

have developed an intergovernmental agreement on facilitating international road transport⁶⁴.

In Article (1), SCO charter elaborated their tasks and goal as a regional organization.

The main goals and tasks of SCO are to strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good neighbourliness among the member States. To consolidate multidisciplinary cooperation in the maintenance and strengthening of peace, security and stability in the region and promotion of a new democratic, fair and rational political and economic international order. SCO initiated jointly fight against 'three evils' terrorism, separatism and extremism, in all their manifestations, to fight against illicit narcotics and arms trafficking and other types of criminal activity of a transnational character, and also illegal migration. SCO is also encouraging the efficient regional cooperation in such spheres as politics, trade and economy, defence, law enforcement, environment protection, culture, science and technology, education, energy, transport, credit and finance, and also other spheres of common interest. To facilitate comprehensive and balanced economic growth, social and cultural development in the region through joint action on the basis of equal partnership for the purpose of a steady increase of living standards and improvement of living conditions of the peoples of the member States. SCO approaches to coordinate the regional integration into the global economy; to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the international obligations of the member States and their national legislation. The member states also maintain and develop relations with other States and international organizations; to cooperate in the prevention of international conflicts and in their peaceful settlement; to jointly search for solutions to the problems that would arise in the 21st century⁶⁵.

In article (3) charter of SCO, member states described the areas of cooperation.

The main areas of cooperation within SCO shall be the following maintenance of peace and enhancing security and confidence in the region; search of common positions on foreign policy issues of mutual interest, including issues arising within international organizations and international forum; development and implementation of measures aimed at jointly counteracting terrorism, separatism and extremism, illicit narcotics and arms trafficking and other types of criminal activity of a transnational character, and also illegal migration; coordination of efforts in the field of disarmament

⁶⁴ Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), available at <http://www.russiatourism.ru/en/contents/deyatelnost/international-activities/cooperation-in-international-organizations/international-organizations/shanghai-cooperation-organization-sco/>

⁶⁵ "Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization", available at en.sco-russia.ru/load/1013181846 Accessed on 16th May 2105.

and arms control; support for, and promotion of regional economic cooperation in various forms, fostering favourable environment for trade and investments with a view to gradually achieving free flow of goods, capitals, services and technologies; effective use of available transportation and communication infrastructure, improvement of transit capabilities of member States and development of energy systems; sound environmental management, including water resources management in the region, and implementation of particular joint environmental programs and projects; mutual assistance in preventing natural and man-made disasters and elimination of their implications; exchange of legal information in the interests of development of cooperation within SCO; development of interaction in such spheres as science and technology, education, health care, culture, sports and tourism. The SCO member States may expand the spheres of cooperation by mutual agreement⁶⁶.

SCO considers religious extremism, terrorism and separatism is “three evils”. Drug and human trafficking is also potential threats to the region. Its neighbours share the fear that instability in Afghanistan will spread beyond its borders. Due to security concern SCO adopted a resolution in charter, article (10)

The Regional Counter-terrorist Structure established by the member States of the Shanghai Convention to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism of 15 June, 2001, located in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic, shall be a standing SCO body. Its main objectives and functions, principles of its constitution and financing, as well as its rules of procedure shall be governed by a separate international treaty concluded by the member States, and other necessary instruments adopted by them⁶⁷.

For the implementation of goals and objectives of the present Charter, the structure are divided in many bodies, like The Council of Heads of State; The Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers); The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs; Meetings of Heads of Ministries and/or Agencies; The Council of National Coordinators; The Regional Counter-terrorist Structure and the Secretariat. The supreme body of the SCO is the Council of Head of State (CHS), which convenes annually to adopt decisions and give instructions on organizational issues. The Council of Head of Government (CHG) meets annually to discuss the SCO’s strategy, adopt its annual budget and address key issues on economic and

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid

security cooperation. Several annual meetings are organised at the level of Speakers of Parliament; Secretaries of Security Councils; Foreign Ministers; Ministers of Defence, Emergency Relief, Economy, Transportation, Culture, Education and Healthcare; Heads of Law Enforcement Agencies, Supreme Courts and Courts of Arbitration; and Prosecutors General. The organisation has two permanent bodies the Secretariat, based in Beijing, and the Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure, located in Tashkent.⁶⁸

Apart from military cooperation, economic cooperation has become one of the more promising goals in recent years. At the Ufa summit in 2015, SCO member states adopted the “SCO Development Strategy”, which included bolstering finance, investment, and trade cooperation as a priority over the next ten years. Basically Chinese policy has pushed the organization to focus on economic cooperation with proposals like launching a development fund and a free-trade zone. However, Central Asian member states, in need of infrastructure and energy investment, have been responsive to these overtures, despite Russian sensitivities to China's expanding influence in former Soviet satellites (Albert, 2015).

Some of the SCO member states like Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan possess some of the world's largest reserves of oil and natural gas, driving interest in expanded energy cooperation among members and regional countries. At a June 2006 summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin called for an "energy dialogue, integration of our national energy concepts, and the creation of an energy club". During that meeting, member states discussed establishing a "unified energy market" for oil and gas exports. On the one hand Kazakhstan and Russia are dominant energy exporters on the other China is looking for energy resources for its growing demand and, Uzbekistan increasingly needs its energy resources for domestic development and consumption, and the economies in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan remain weak. Members "prefer to keep national control over their production, supply, and consumption mechanisms (Albert, 2015).

Energy cooperation is one of the distinct features of the economic exchanges among SCO member states. China pitched the establishment of a smaller, regional

⁶⁸ Ibid.

version of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, named inter-SCO Development Bank in 2010. Suddenly Moscow felt fear that the institution would make Beijing as its dominant financier. The SCO's consensus based decision making procedures have enabled Moscow to block the emergence of the SCO Development Bank for years, Though the final document from the 2015 Ufa summit did not address the status of the bank, there are indications that Russia may be more willing to cooperate with China moving forward (Albert, 2015). In 2016, Uzbekistan will preside over the Tashkent summit as a chairman. There are many issues like economic cooperation, emergence of ISIS threat will be in focus.

The SCO could establish a small number of special border zones, with preferential custom and simplified visa regimes but also intensified security monitoring to block illegal transit. They could also finance Afghan-led development projects and include Afghanistan in the infrastructure projects that they are building across the Central Asian landscape. Among other benefits, these measures would help the entire region and manage the threats with the inclusion of India and Pakistan as a permanent member.

3.2.4 Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (CANWFZ)

It was signed in 2006 by the heads of all five Central Asian states, and which came into force in 2009. In Article (3) each party has undertakes that

Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone constituted an important step toward strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, promoting cooperation in the environmental rehabilitation of territories affected by radioactive contamination, and enhancing regional and international peace and security⁶⁹.

Member states commit to not producing, acquiring, testing, stocking or possessing nuclear arms. Charter of CANWFZ also includes in article (6) regarding environmental component.

Each Party undertakes to assist any efforts toward the environmental rehabilitation of territories contaminated as a result of past activities related to the development, production or storage of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive

⁶⁹ “Text of the treaty”, available at disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/canwfz/text

devices, in particular uranium tailings storage sites and nuclear test sites⁷⁰.

In that treaty, it's binding that each country has to resolve the ecological consequences of nuclear infrastructure installed on its territory under the Soviet regime. CANWFZ is the first denuclearised zone in the northern hemisphere, bordering the atomic powers such as Russia and China as well as Iran, which is on the verge of acquiring nuclear capacity⁷¹.

Therefore, CANWFZ has the only such strict points in treaty, but its success must be qualified. Public opinion in Central Asia is largely anti-nuclear, which can be traced to the legacy of the Perestroika years. With the exception of Kazakhstan, not any Central Asian countries are in favour of returning to civil nuclear energy. In ecological terms nuclear energy is seen as a negative inheritance of the Soviet Union, and in a complex geopolitical environment the risk of proliferation is very high. In addition, for the dismantling of infrastructure linked to the Soviet military complex, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have received significant subsidies from the international community. The other three countries never possessed such infrastructure. The symbolic signing of CANWFZ therefore came at no political cost and as recognition of a reality (Kayasan, 2010: 82).

3.2.5 The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS)

It was created in 1993 by the all five Central Asian countries, to attract funds for Aral Sea-related projects and to foster the rational use, protection and control of trans-boundary waters. It is divided into three main bodies:

- I. The Executive Committee which groups each member state filial.
- II. The Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC), which instituted two River Basin Organisations (BVOs) for the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, and whose rules of operation did not receive approval until 2008.

⁷⁰ *ibid*

⁷¹ *ibid*

- III. The Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD), created in 1994, which supported the UN Economic Commission for Europe's initiative on sustainable development in Central Asia⁷².

The objective of IFAS is to coordinate cooperation at national and international levels among the Central Asian countries in order to use existing water resources more effectively, and to improve the environmental and socio-economic situation in the Aral Sea Basin. IFAS serves as a platform for a dialogue among the countries of Central Asia, as well as the international community⁷³. Efforts of the Central Asian countries continuing to cooperation among each other and aiming to improve the ecological and socio-economic situation in the Aral Sea basin. Development of mutually acceptable mechanisms for integrated water resources management and environmental protection in Central Asia has taken up into account in the interests of all states in the Region.

3.3 Regional Economic Organisations and Creation of Single Economic Space

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Central Asia has witnessed repeated efforts to strengthen regional integration through cooperation with the establishment of a number of regional organizations with Central Asian participation. Central Asian countries and their partners and their regional organizations respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges of regional cooperation and integration. Central Asian countries need to realize that effective cooperation is not an easy task; it takes some time and requires a flexible, constructive approach with all major partners. It also requires effective and collective leadership by all Central Asian countries. Where multiple regional organizations overlap in membership and mandate, it is essential to address the risk of costly duplication. In this section study will assess the specific implications for the economic cooperation among the Central Asian countries.

⁷² Serving the People of Central Asia, available at <http://ec-ifas.waterunites-ca.org/about/index.html>, accessed on 22 June 2016.

⁷³ *ibid*

3.3.1 Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC)

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program is a initiative to promote development through cooperation, leading to accelerated growth and poverty reduction. It's a partnership program of 10 countries like Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. This program is also supported by six multilateral institutions like Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), United Nation Development Program (UNDP), and the World Bank are working together to The Program's long-term vision.

With the rapid economic expansion of the People's Republic of China and Japan to the east, the Russian Federation to the north, and India and Pakistan to the south, there is unprecedented opportunity for CAREC countries to emerge as a centre of trade and commerce and also to achieve higher levels of economic growth, and reduce poverty level. CAREC helps Central Asia and its neighbors realize their significant potential by promoting regional cooperation in four priority areas⁷⁴.

- i. Transport
- ii. Trade Facilitation
- iii. Energy
- iv. Trade Policy.

CAREC aims to expansion of trade volume and improve competitiveness through a focused and results-driven programme of regional projects. They have initiated many programs in many sectors like in transport, trade facilitation, energy, trade policy and economic corridor development. It supports the whole set of transport projects, both east-west and north-south, which are grouped under six large corridors. It comprises two or three routes in some places, and combines

⁷⁴“The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC)”, Asian Development Bank, “Regional Cooperation and Integration” available at <http://www.adb.org/countries/subregional-programs/carec> accessed on 12 February 2016.

maximum rail and road capacities⁷⁵. CAREC has identified a medium-term (2011-2015) rolling list of priority investments and technical assistance projects with over 70 transport projects amounting to over US\$20 billion. A CAREC Institute was created in 2006 to serve as a virtual information hub. It supplies training and web-based information in transport, trade and energy as well as tools to analyse the programme's strategic and sectoral projects (Linn & Pidufala, 2009).

3.3.2 CAREC 2020: Focus, Action, Results

At the 10th ministerial conference in 2011, members endorsed the 'CAREC-2020' plan for the enhancement of the comprehensive action. CAREC 2020 is a strategic framework for the central Asia regional economic cooperation program. It's adopted for the period of 2010-2020, that will guide the program in its next 10 years. CAREC 2020 reflects required enhancements to the Comprehensive Action Plan to move CAREC toward its vision of Good Neighbours, Good Partners, and Good Prospects. These include the following:

- I. Expansion of trade and improved competitiveness through a focused, action-oriented, and results-driven program of regional projects and initiatives in transport, trade facilitation, energy, trade policy, and economic corridor development.
- II. There is a strong need for a CAREC Institute for capacity building and share knowledge, to support CAREC priority sectors and themes as well as second-tier areas such as agriculture and public health.
- III. There should be two types of goal (i) Medium and (ii) Long Term Identification of a medium-term (2011–2015) rolling list of priority investments and technical assistance projects, representing key regional projects that are also included in the member states.
- IV. Country ownership of projects and initiatives and their mainstreaming into the national development plans of participating countries. The existing partnerships will be strengthened, and partnerships broadened to include

⁷⁵Central Asia Regional Economic Community, Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy (Dushanbe: CAREC,2007).

other development partners such as bilateral donor agencies and the private sector.

- V. CAREC member states set up a sector committees for performance monitoring. There is also annual assessment for development effectiveness by senior officials through the CAREC results framework. The result framework is being improved by introducing indicators for CAREC 2020's strategic objectives of expanded trade⁷⁶.

3.3.3 Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC)

Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) was founded on 10 October 2000 at Capital of Kazakhstan, Astana by the initiative of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and inspired by the model of the European Union (EU). EurAsEC is an economic organization originated from CIS. It's aimed to form common external customs borders, to develop common external economic policy, tariffs, prices etc. and other functioning parts of a common market, adapted from Eurasian community (Pomfert, 2009:57).

It was a Russian attempt to create a close economic cooperation due to East-West divide. It includes five founding members, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Uzbekistan joined the organization in 2006 but suddenly in 2008 it's withdrawn his membership due to Russia-US 'Great Game' in the region. Later on Three states have joined with observer status: Moldova and Ukraine in 2002, and Armenia in 2003. In the charter of EurAsEC, article (2) says that

The purpose of formation of the 'Eurasian Economic Community' is for the Contracting Parties to effectively promote the process of formation of the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space, and to implement other objectives and tasks outlined in the above-mentioned agreements on the Customs Union, the Agreement on Deepening Integration in Economic and Humanitarian Spheres, and the Agreement on the Customs Union and Single Economic Space, in stages as scheduled under the above documents. Any agreements earlier made between the Contracting Parties, and resolutions of the integration

⁷⁶ "CAREC 2020: A Strategic Framework", available at <http://www.carecprogram.org/index.php?page=carec2020-strategic-framework>, accessed on 21st March 2016.

management bodies remain effective to the extent that they do not contradict this Agreement⁷⁷.

EurAsEC is the successor of the first Customs Union in the post-Soviet space signed between Russia and Belarus in 1995, to which Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan adhered later, and of the second Custom Union and Common Space agreements signed in 1999, both of which are dead (De Micco, 2015).

Key objectives of EurAsEc include the following Agenda:

- I. Establish a free trade regime.
- II. Creating a unified customs tariff and a unified system of non-tariff regulation measures.
- III. Create a common financial market among the member states.
- IV. Coordinating the principles and conditions for transition to a common currency.
- V. Opening a common market for transportation services and a unified transport system.
- VI. Establish a common energy market (Linn & Pidufala, 2009).

EurAsEc is also supposed to ensure free movement for its citizens, and to coordinate social policy with the aim of providing a common labour market, a common educational space and coordinated approaches to healthcare and labour migration. In EurAsEC, Interstate Council is the main decision making body, comprised of heads of state and government. It meets annually at the level of heads of state, and twice at the level of heads of governments. Council decisions are consensual and binding for all member states. The presidency of the Interstate Council is rotated annually with countries serving according to Russian alphabetical order. The Council issues assignments for the Integration Committee, and submits questions and recommendations to the Inter-parliamentary Assembly and the Court of Justice of the Community (Newman&Thakur, 2006).

⁷⁷ Agreement on Foundation of Eurasian Economic Community available at http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/treaties/en/eurasec/trt_eurasec.pdf

The Secretariat of EurAsEC has appointed by the Council. It has two headquarters, one in Almaty, the other in Moscow. The Integration Committee forms the EurAsEC is the permanent body of the deputy heads of the member states, who meet at least four times a year. They took decisions by the two-thirds majority. Russia has 40 votes; Belarus and Kazakhstan each have 20 votes, and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan each have 10 votes. Court of Justice of the EurAsEC has been designated for the settlement of the economic disputes between parties, as well as disputes resulting from the implementation of resolutions by EurAsEC bodies (De Micco, 2015).

In June 2009, EurAsEC established an Anti-Crisis Fund with US\$8.513 billion. Russia and Kazakhstan contributed \$7.5 and 1 billion respectively, Belarus \$10 million, while Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia provided one million dollars each.⁷⁸ The Fund assists member countries in overcoming consequences of the global financial crisis, allocates stabilization credits to participating countries with low income levels and ensures their long-term economic and financial stability. It has two main instruments: financial credits granted to finance budget deficits as well as to support balance of payments or national currencies, and investment loans (Rakhmatulina, 2011).

The major activities of Eurasian Economic Community for the near future comprise.

- I. Transportation is the major concern area to resolve the questions concerning unified tariffs, increase of products transportation volume, simplifying of customs procedures, creation of transnational transport and consignment corporations.
- II. Energy is the base of this economic community. They should try to enhance common hydro-energetic complexes located in Central Asia and resolving water and electricity supply problems, common energetic balance.

⁷⁸Economic Community Integration Committee Secretariat, Eurasec Today (Moscow, 2011), 40.

- III. Migration is big issue for the Central Asian societies. Socially protecting migrants, creating an effective regulation and control system for migration of workers should be introduced.
- IV. Agriculture sector should be major area of cooperation among the member states of Eurasian Economic Community. Conciliating agrarian sector policy in EurAsEC member states, developing common agrarian market in member countries, reducing of transportation and storage costs, realizing agricultural products, creating new market institutions in these domains⁷⁹.

3.3.4 Eurasian Customs Union (EACU)

Under the leadership of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, they pushed EurAsEC for a new phase of integration. Eurasian Customs Union (EACU) was the first phase of the project, it began in July 2010. “These states have adopted unified rules and procedures regulating mutual trade and established a ‘Single Customs Tariff’ (SCT) and unified customs area. They were interested to establish an unified non-tariff protection measures, anti-dumping legislation and compensatory tariffs in their trade with other countries” (Tolipov, 2010: 109). Member states of the Custom Union abolished customs controls at their common borders in July 2011. The supreme body of the Custom Unions continues to be the EurAsEC Interstate Council, but a unified regulatory standing body is the Customs Union Commission (CUC). The CUC comprises a representative from each member state who is either a deputy head of government or a government member vested with the necessary authority. Votes are distributed between the parties as follows: Belarus, 21.5%; Kazakhstan, 21.5% and the Russian Federation, 57 percent⁸⁰. The Customs Union Commission Secretariat, based in Moscow, this is the working body of the CUC.

The second phase of the integration project began in January 2012 with the creation of the Common Economic Space (CES). Its mission is to develop an effectively functioning common market for goods, services, capital and manpower.

⁷⁹ “Eurasian Economic Centre, from legal analysis information and investment support”, available at http://www.eurasian-ec.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2&Itemid=7 accessed on 16th may 2016.

⁸⁰ Eurasian Economic Community Integration Committee Secretariat, Eurasec Today (Moscow, 2011), 33.

This is to conduct coordinated tax, monetary and credit, currency and finance, trade, customs and tariff policies. The Common Economic Space focuses on the development of a unified transport, energy and information systems. Since 2009, Russia has adopted the ruble in its trading with Kazakhstan and Belarus, and debates about the possible creation of a monetary union have been recently revived (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013: 118).

For the first time in post-Soviet history, an integration project is endowed with a supranational executive body, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), which replaced the CUC in July 2012, and comprises all the deputy prime ministers and a board of experts. Its functions have been substantially expanded, since it is also tasked with implementing a coordinated macro-economic policy between member states, setting up a trade regime with other countries and developing a unified policy to support industrial and agricultural production. “EEC decisions are obligatory as far as implementation is concerned, but should the body fail to reach agreement on any given issue, the final decision is taken by the Higher Eurasian Economic Council, which operates on a consensual basis” (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013:119).

3.3.5 Eurasian Economic Union

The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is initially to be a free trade and economic zone, which is expand from that of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus to Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It is expected to include a number of other countries, in particular several of the post -Soviet states. The EEU at its core sits across Northern and Central Asia as well as some countries of Eastern Europe. This is an attempt to bring together a group of unsatisfied countries, some of which have struggled to find their own identity following the disintegration, firstly of the Soviet Union and later, the ineffectiveness of the CIS⁸¹.

The Customs Union came into existence on January 1st, 2010. On 18th November 2011, all the presidents of the member states signed an agreement and set a target of establish the Eurasian Economic Union by 2015. On 29th May 2014 saw

⁸¹Eurasian Economic Union”, Trudos International; available at <http://www.hampshirechamber.co.uk/uploads/Intl%20Trade/Eurasia.pdf> accessed on 21st March 2016.

the signing of the Eurasian Economic Integration Agreement setting 1st January 2015 as the day it will come into force. Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia are the three founder states and later on Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, joined within the next twelve months, with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, having made positive noises, likely to follow during 2015. Uncertainty still surrounds the membership of Azerbaijan, and likewise Georgia, which whilst continuing to seek inclusion in a wider Europe, has also spoken of the benefits of membership to the Eurasian Economic Union. However Ukraine has applied for observer status in August 2013 is now firmly in the grip of internal conflict, making any agreement with the Union highly unlikely within the foreseeable future⁸².

Economically the Eurasian Economic Union is of considerable interest to the European Union in particular. As it is currently structured, the Union is the EU's third largest trading partner representing some 10.8%. The Eurasian Economic Union keep their eyes on two of the world's major trading blocs, China and the Indian sub-continent and based upon 2013 statistics, is currently the world's 8th largest trade block, but if fully realised, would see that move to 4th⁸³. World's largest deposits of Oil and Gas, precious metals and gem stones are reserved in territories of the member states. In 2013 the region supplied 40% of Europe's oil and a 1/3rd of its gas demand. Despite the increase of alternative energy supplies across the continent, demand for energy continues to grow at a faster rate than these new sources can be developed ensuring, at least for the immediate future that the Eurasian Economic Union will maintain its dominance as Europe's energy provider⁸⁴.

Although the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union is ostensibly a trading bloc, the politics is also involved both, internally between potential member states as well as internationally. Countries like US, Turkey, India China are very much interested in the region. This, to a greater or lesser degree, focuses on the re-establishment, if only by proxy, of the Soviet Union. It may be possible by the former Soviet republics, to acceptance of the dominance of Russian in trade area,

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

within the Union, but that the power it gives should not be turned into political coercion from Moscow as it so often did in the past. They demand a constitutional mechanism for the guaranteeing of the sovereign right of each member state to determine their own future.

The treaty reflects the basic aspects of any international organizations. The principles of sovereign equality of the member states and their territorial integrity respected each of the member states. The treaty also establishes a mechanism for consensus in decision-making at all levels and the principle of equal personnel representation in the union bodies. The aim of Eurasian Economic Union's treaty is to "improve the well-being and quality of life of the citizens of Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus and provides for the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour, a coordinated economic policy. The effect of the integration in the form of the aggregate GDP growth by 2030 is estimated at about \$900 billion"⁸⁵.

3.3.6 The Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)

The Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) is a special UN programme for promoting regional cooperation between Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It was established in 1998 by the presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Azerbaijan joined it in 2002 and Afghanistan in 2005. It is supported jointly by the UNECE and UNESCAP. Objective of the program is to strengthen the sub-regional cooperation among Central Asian states and its integration into the world economy⁸⁶.

In the line with the overall objectives, SPECA Programme Working Group on Statistics (PWGS) is cooperating with major partners in the region.

⁸⁵ "Eurasian Economic Union Treaty signed in Astana", available at <https://charter97.org/en/news/2014/5/29/100457/>. Published on 29 May 2014, accessed on 13th March 2016.

⁸⁶ "The Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)"; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)", available at <http://www.unece.org/mission.html>. accessed on 23 March 2016.

- I. Promote and coordinate capacity-building programmes and activities in SPECA member countries.
- II. Promotes the compliance of national statistical methodology and dissemination practices with international guidelines and recommendation.
- III. Stimulates the exchange of best national practices among SPECA countries.
- IV. Secures funds and technical assistance for statistical capacity-building operations from multilateral and bilateral donors⁸⁷.

SPECA programs play a significant role in the energy security of Europe and Asia. This is a potential transport hub between the two continents and plays an active role in the fight against such global security challenges as terrorism, religious extremism or drug trafficking. These countries have also been facing unique challenges too, like all of them are land-locked, they follow divergent paths of economic development and there is a rapidly growing gap between the income levels of energy exporting and non-energy exporting states (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013:120). All of the Central Asian states are facing an urgent task of diversifying their economies, moving away from their present status of energy and commodity exporters. Strengthening regional cooperation is a key precondition for the rapid, balanced and sustainable economic development of all the countries of the region. Only through close regional cooperation can they fully capitalize on their strategic advantages and fight jointly and effectively the challenges that can potentially destabilize the region.

3.3.7 The Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA)

The Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) is an ambitious interstate programme. Its aim is to support the political and economic development in the Black Sea Region, Caucasus and Central Asia by means of improvement of the international transport. TRACECA was established in 1993 by the signing of a multilateral agreement on international transport for the development of transport

⁸⁷ *ibid*

initiatives. Baku was made into the permanent secretariat of TRACECA that was established in March 2000⁸⁸. Mr. Mircea Ciopraga heads the organization as the Secretary General from 2015 to until now. TRACECA has five working groups: maritime transport, aviation, road and rail, transport security, and transport infrastructure. The creation of a new bridge to replace and protect the heritage bridges is one of the specific programmes it has successfully implemented⁸⁹.

TRACECA in its aims has supported the political and economic independence of its member states by enhancing their capacity to access world markets through alternative transport routes. It also encourages further regional co-operation among the member countries and increasingly being a catalyst to attract the support of international financial institutions (IFIs) and private investors. All the five Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine have benefited from its initiated programmes⁹⁰.

The strategic framework of the TRACECA comprises a many agendas. In order to achieve the desired objective of delivering a sustainable, efficient and integrated multimodal transport system at TRACECA levels

- I. Assisting in the development of economic relations, trade and transport communications in Europe, Black Sea region and Asia.
- II. Ensuring access to the world market of road, rail transport and commercial navigation.
- III. Ensuring traffic security, cargo safety and environment protection.

⁸⁸ “Asia Regional integration Centre”, available at <https://aric.adb.org/initiative/transport-corridor-europe-caucasus-asia>, accessed on 14 June 2016

⁸⁹ *ibid*

⁹⁰ “International Cooperation and Development: Building partnership for change in developing countries”, available at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/central-asia/eu-support-transport-development-central-asia_en, accessed on 24th April 2016

- IV. Harmonization of transport policy and legal structure in the field of transport.
- V. Creation of equal conditions of competition for transport operations⁹¹.

EU projects on safety and security in transport have resulted in the adoption by the member countries. TRACECA's regional action strategy on Maritime safety and security and environmental protection has started in November 2011. It also a regional started road safety action plan that was adopted in November 2011. There are also many projects that have been successfully under TRACECA, for example, during 2011-2014, there was a project on logistics processes and motorways of the seas, during 2012 to 2015, civil aviation safety and security project and again between, 2012-2015 there was transport dialogue and networks interoperability II project so was maritime safety and security II project during 2012-2015⁹².

Odessa organized the twelfth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on TRACECA on 1 June 2016. The representatives of the member states of "Basic Multilateral Agreement on International Transport for Development of the Europe-Caucasus-Asia" (OMC) and international organizations participated in the meeting. This meeting was presided over by the Chairman of the Committee of the Ministry of Transport Investment and Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This meeting in particular proved to be crucial since the representatives discussed on issues of development of the international transport corridor TRACECA, measures to implement the Concept of development of international road transport, increasing the attractiveness of the car and competitiveness of TRACECA routes. They also discussed the progress of the activities of the regional countries of TRACECA strategy to ensure maritime safety and the environment till 2021⁹³.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ "Strategy of Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor for 2016-2026 was adopted -MID RK", Available at Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov official website; <https://primeminister.kz/news/show/69/prinjata-strategija-po-razvitiju-transportnogo-koridora-evropa-kavkaz-azija-na-2016-2026-gg-mir-rk/01-06-2016?lang=en>, Published on 1st June 2016. Accessed on 20th June 2016.

One of the most pressing issues on the agenda was the approval of the IGC Strategy for the development of the international transport corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia for 2016-2026. The strategy provides for a sustainable multi-modal network, facilitating the smooth and uninterrupted movement of goods, making full use of the transit potential of the corridor, increase the role and function of the TRACECA corridor as an important alternative to other international transport corridors, the ministry informed. It should be noted that in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the framework of the "Nurly Zhol" in order to develop the Trans-Caspian route in 2015 a large-scale infrastructure projects were launched. In addition, within the framework of the Coordination Committee of the Trans-Caspian international transport route, container trains have been organized between China-Kazakhstan-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey and also from China through Kazakhstan to Iran”⁹⁴.

3.3.8 Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation to Europe (INOGATE)

The Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation to Europe (INOGATE) programme is an international energy cooperation programme between the EU, all the five Central Asian countries and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. INOGATE came in to being in 1995 as an EU support mechanism dealing with oil and gas transportation to Europe. The programme was operational from 1996 to 2016. Initially it was particularly concerned with oil and gas pipelines running from and through Eastern Europe and the Caucasus to the EU. For the development and enhancement of pipeline, a formal 'Umbrella Agreement' was signed by twenty one countries in Kiev in 2001⁹⁵. In 2004 conferences in Baku, Azerbaijan and in Astana, Kazakhstan, INOGATE evolved into a broader energy partnership between the EU and countries of the former Soviet Union, (excluding the Russian Federation and the Baltic States, but including Turkey), and concentrating on four major objectives.

⁹⁴ ibid

⁹⁵ “The INOGATE program: building partnership for energy security”, available at http://www.gie.eu/conference/presented/2013/S4_04a_INOGATE_LLSaidISsa.pdf, accessed on 24th March 2016.

- I. Enhancing energy Security.
- II. Convergence of member state for energy markets.
- III. Address sustainable energy development.
- IV. Attracting investment for energy projects of common and regional interest⁹⁶.

So, through INOGATE, energy security and convergence of energy market provide good opportunities to many member states. They have been satisfying their energy appetite through energy cooperation. It's also provided immense opportunity to the Central Asian countries to sell their energy without get dependent on Russia.

3.3.9 Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) and Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP)

The fight against drugs trafficking and security are some of the major challenges for the five Central Asian countries from their independence. The EU here in this regard has taken initiative and started two multi-annual regional programmes namely the 'Border Management Programme in Central Asia' (BOMCA) that supports the modernisation and reform of border management in the five Central Asian states. The other one is the 'Central Asia Drug Action Programme' (CADAP) that primarily assists Central Asian countries with their policies and measures aimed at reducing the demand for illegal drugs substances⁹⁷.

Under the BOMCA, EU has allocated a sum of €33.6 million to for the period of 2003-14. This programme can be regarded as EU's largest regional programmes that aim to aid and support the Central Asian States in the areas enunciated above. Through BOMCA, EU is helping the Central Asian countries in the adoption of modified border management methods to strengthen their border security thereby enhancing enhance their legal trade and transit. Border guards, customs administration, ministries of the interior, health and agriculture, veterinary and

⁹⁶ ibid

⁹⁷“ International Cooperation and Development: Building partnership for change in developing countries: Central Asia Border Management”, available at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/central-asia/eu-support-border-management-central-asia_en, accessed on 26 March 2016.

quarantine services have been immensely benefited because of this initiative by EU⁹⁸.

The benefits of the programmes can be summed in the following points for the convenience to understand it more accurately. Central Asian governments have received assistance for the implementation of European Integrated Border Management (IBM) practices in their own border management strategies and action plans.

- I. Training is enhancing the professional skills of border control and inspection officers.
- II. Deputation of law enforcement officers, notably at airports and railway stations. They have received advanced training in halting the trafficking of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals.
- III. Improvements made to the working conditions of staff at border crossing points and border outposts.
- IV. Stronger connections established between national, regional and international stakeholders through national and regional platforms”⁹⁹.

BOMCA has also spearheaded a program called, cross border conflict prevention in Farghana Valley. The year 2012 has become remarkable for a five year cooperation plan for 2012-2017. This program was signed by the authorities of Batken Oblast of Kyrgyzstan and Sughad Oblast of Tajikistan. There were two main objectives to operationalize this programme.

- I. Enhance dialogue among cross border communities to reduce ethnic tension and reach mutual solutions.
- II. Enhance dialogue among cross border communities with law enforcement agencies. Depute border guards and customs officer in conflict zone¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁸ *ibid*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

In 2001, CADAP was introduced in the Central Asia that aims at gradual adoption of EU and international good practices by Central Asian nations to do away with demand for drugs. The EU allocated €20.7 million to the programme for the period 2001-13¹⁰¹. CADAP attempts to reproduce the model of the EU Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), which campaigns against drug trafficking by concentrating on border securitisation, information and intelligence sharing, and prevention. CADAP has helped created airports and Central Asian border posts with resources and services such as detection equipments, dog brigades, legal assistance and training designed for anti-drug agencies. Recently from 18-20 May, 2016 in Kazakhstan and 23-25 May in Tajikistan BOMCA carried out a technical mission in order to support the border agencies of both countries in their efforts to improve the efficiency of ‘green border’ surveillance and develop risk analysis¹⁰². The regional headquarters of both BOMCA and CADAP are in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. All the other four Central Asian countries have also branches. Projects are coordinated with international partners like the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Asian Development Bank (ADB), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)¹⁰³.

3.4 Challenges for Organizations: An Assessment

In the analysis it can be said that the majority of Central Asia’s regional and multilateral organisations primarily are the forums for discussion. The final

¹⁰⁰ Border management in Central Asia; <http://www.undp.org/content/brussels/en/home/ourwork/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding/successstories/bomca.html>

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² “Technical mission on “green border” surveillance in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan”, Published on 2nd June 2016, available at <https://www.bomca-eu.org/en/news/54-technical-mission-on-green-border-surveillance-in-kazakhstan-and-tajikistan>. Accessed on 20th June 2016.

¹⁰³ International Cooperation and Development: Building partnership for change in developing countries: Central Asia Border Management”, available at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/central-asia/eu-support-border-management-central-asia_en, accessed on 26 March 2016.

documents that are adopted in various meetings and summits usually are declarations of intention. Therefore it can be said they play a crucial role in the process of socialisation thereby providing them with tools to the transmission of the rules and guidelines, particularly to their leaders and policymakers as to how they are supposed to behave in the international system.

The SCO's here in this regard can be said to be the organization in the region that has successfully achieved this objective role in socialising Central Asian states with their Chinese counterparts. It has played a substantial part in making it possible to lower, at least in part, the historical distrust between the regions and has been successful in generating a constructive working atmosphere with and among the Central Asian States. The proliferation of SCO commissions, for working groups has given rise to an intense diplomatic ballet throughout all sectors, from the political to cultural. Regional organisations are also platforms for meetings where Central Asian leaders socialise in the more classic sense of the term, and can be used as informal channels of debates and discussions. Regularly decried, CIS structures have nevertheless made it possible to keep open channels for dialogue among the former Soviet states, and their effectiveness most often plays out behind the scenes, where presidents are able to discuss, in an informal manner, the tensions among them (Nourzhanov, 2009: 97).

However, it is not so easy to assess the 'success' or 'failure' of regional organisations particularly because majority of them do not have clearly defined benchmarks that can be monitored; their audits are barely brought in the public domain as they are often carried out internally. For those with an economic mission, distortion effects and corruption among other causes limit their effectiveness, since they have to operate in an environment of weak governance. According to which sorts of measurement or evaluation performances can their results thus be judged? Two may be taken into consideration, namely the level of outputs (the extent to which the official mandates and specific goals have been fulfilled), and the level of official and unofficial expectations of member states.

Regional organisations outside of either Russian or Chinese sphere of influence do not exhibit coherence while implementing agreements. Most of these regional organisations do not have proper mechanisms in place for the

implementation such agreements, as there is no unanimity between the member states. For the successful implementation of them they are supposed to give a certain encouragement so that these agreements translate into binding on the parties according to their own legislation. “However, the absence of common jurisdiction in most areas and lack of bureaucratic relay on important and related matters and of systems to settle disputes, considerably weaken the scope for potential collective action”¹⁰⁴. Such ambiguity on the part of legislative procedures has resulted into several treaties having not been signed by the heads of state or government. Such a situation has arisen because these agreements have not been ratified by national parliaments, or have been ratified but not translated into decrees (Paramonov & Stokov, 2007).

The lack of the implementation mechanisms particularly in case of economic agreements is critical in the case of regional organisations. This has led to the problematic situation as the issues in the realm of economic area have remained untouched. “Many regional trade agreements exist only on paper and their impact on trade regimes has been limited. In 1994, the CIS Agreement on the Establishment of a Free Trade Area was signed but never implemented”.¹⁰⁵ By 1999, a list of common exemptions from the free trade regime was established but never applied. In 2000, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan agreed to adopt a Common External Tariff Schedule (CETS), but the objective was never achieved (Pomfert, 2006). At the end of 2005, only Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan had managed to agree to the CETS, which involves only 63% of the lines of EurAsEC’s commodity classification.

In the area of security, two events confirmed the difficulties regional organisations face in making the transition to any kind of collective action. First, post-2001 Afghanistan for the SCO and the second event was of 2010 in Kyrgyzstan for the CSTO, as well as more generally the fight against drug-trafficking (Pomfert, 2009). Afghanistan became a symbol of one of the SCO’s first public relation failures. “In 2001, the US intervention, launched only a few weeks

¹⁰⁴ Asian Development Bank, ‘Regionalism and Multilateralism in Central Asia’, in *Central Asia: Increasing Gains from*

Trade through Regional Cooperation in Trade Policy, Transport, and Customs Transit, 38 (Manila: ADB, 2006).

¹⁰⁵ Alexander Libman, *Studies of Regional Integration in the CIS and in Central Asia: A Literature Survey* (Saint Petersburg: Centre for Integration Studies, 2012).

after the attack of September 11, demonstrated the capacity of the world's premier superpower and its European allies to engage rapidly and massively in a new war theatre that the SCO defined as part of its 'sphere of influence'. Instead of an organizational response, SCO members reacted unilaterally. Moscow's rapprochement with Washington and the opening of two US military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan displeased Chinese authorities and weakened political confidence among member states" (Wishnik, 2002: 23).

Despite this new media visibility and even though Afghanistan became an observer member in 2012, the SCO remains an absent actor on the Afghan scene, and has few means to influence Afghan realities in the coming years. While the SCO has criticised the International Security Assistance Force's lack of success, none of its members are willing to send troops to Afghanistan. All conduct bilateral political relations with Kabul. "Russia involved due to its Soviet past, China due to its massive investments in the exploitation of resources, Kazakhstan due to its humanitarian aid and cereal sales to Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan and Tajikistan due to energy exports and common ethnic groups in northern Afghan provinces" (Yenikeyeff, 2011: 66).

However, there has been no attempt to unify these individual approaches into any kind of collective action. Creating a collective military force is not among members' objectives, and even collective action in civilian reconstruction is not discussed in the SCO framework. The CSTO was confronted with a quite similar dilemma in 2010. The inter-ethnic riots in Osh in South Kyrgyzstan made clear the dearth of adequate regional mechanisms for cases of internal crisis. Despite requests from interim Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva for Russia to intervene in the name of the CSTO agreement, no external involvement occurred. Moscow refused to intervene, rightly citing the lack of a juridical framework for action, since the CSTO only provides for solidarity between member states in the case of an attack from third states or forces identifiable as foreign, not in domestic conflicts. Uzbekistan was strongly opposed to any CSTO intervention for fear that Russian forces would then settle permanently on its southern borders (Troitskiy, 2012). Based on that failure, Russia led an attempt to amend the CSTO charter to include points on the ability to 'react to crisis situations threatening security, stability, territorial integrity

and sovereignty of member states', which was adopted in December 2010 (Troitskiy,2012).

However, it is highly improbable that Russia, even if it does have the legal capacity to do so, will want to see its soldiers intervene directly in the political or social crises of Central Asian countries. It's a high time for the countries of the Central Asian states and the region to coordinate properly for the peaceful and prosperous region.

Chapter-4

Regional Insecurity: Quest for Regional Cooperation

The initial years of 21 century is marked by profound changes in the structure of world politics. The revolution in science and technology shortened distance. The development of modern weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction, had already undermined the defensibility of territorial boundaries. The increase in several common security challenges enhanced international interdependence among various actors of the international politics. States have responded to these developments with internal and external adjustments in all spheres particularly economic, political and military. External adjustment is manifested in the formation of regional cooperation, which was gaining ground steadily since the end on the World War II.

Regional security is one of the important phenomena in world politics. After the Cold War period liberalize and globalized world has opened the doors for the gradual emergence of multilateralism on the one hand and rise of regional powers on the other. No doubt the emergence of new power structure has increased the importance of regional security. “Regional security is itself a direct outcome of visible trends in the contemporary world as much more frequent case of humanitarian interference in the internal affairs of states; diminished pertinence of traditional armed conflicts. These trends pushed the idea of regionalism to the forefront, demonstrated to all that the so- called sovereign answer to contemporary challenges is ineffective and put a collective response to such challenges” (Buzan & Waever, 2003).

Regional security partnership is the security management among neighbouring countries, which is based on the inter-government cooperation to deal with security threats and enhancement of security, stability and peace in the region. The state actors ensured peace and stability through various mechanisms such as formal security treaties, international organizations, joint action treaties, trade and other economic agreements, multilateral dialogue process, confidence building measures, measures of preventive diplomacy and the process dealing with domestic environment.

Countries from the same region or extra regional countries compose a regional organization, which is based on the principles of.

- I. Partner governments declare principles of peaceful relationship commitment and avoid power confrontation.
- II. Encourage cooperation for management for regional security problems.
- III. Operative agreements to create multilateral offices and new international organization to deals with perceived security threats (Azizian, 2010).

In such a condition, certain extent of security de-nationalization and, in the long term, also the constitution of security community can emerge from the establishment of a regional security. The security arrangement of a region is an arrangement of co-management and all the countries contribute as a partner within the framework of institutions. As long as security partnership develops the security culture and policies of the countries in the region will come closer to one another, and a 'security community' can emerge.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 gave the nations of Central Asia i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, their much needed independence. After two and a half decade, the five Central Asian countries are still struggling in many areas. The years of political transition have been marked by significant turmoil, including the 1992-1997 civil war in Tajikistan; the 2005 violence in adjoining Uzbekistan; Kyrgyz President Akayev's relatively peaceful overthrow in 2005 (the so-called 'Tulip Revolution'); and the leadership change in Turkmenistan. Meanwhile, virtually all the Central Asian states are struggling with various forms of instability that threaten their immediate and long-term security (Troitskiy,2012).

The development of geopolitical processes over the last twenty five years demonstrates that Central Asia has become one of the key factors in Eurasian regions, with major impact on the overall climate related issues of the continent and similar is the case with the global security issues that emerged from time to time. Central Asia's influence is felt on several fronts, primarily those of combating

international terrorism and supplying oil and natural gas (Karimova, 2010). At the same time, growing importance of this region carries certain risks. “The Central Asian region has become an integral part of the global security system and in the area of economy it also became sensitive to the effects of the multiple factors and processes that traditionally determine the course of global political, economic, cultural, and ideological playground” (Ataov, 1997). It can be said that “the difficulty lies in the fact that as the region’s geopolitical role grows, its states are supposed to increasingly involve in the complex political, diplomatic, financial, and economic processes, which in turn, require a constant evolution of quality and flexibility of strategies to protect the national interests of the particular state” (Karimova, 2010).

Undoubtedly, each Central Asian country seeks, in its own way, to fight the challenges they face, based on its national interest priorities. However, since independence there was a challenge before the states of the region about strengthening Central Asia’s role in maintaining global political and economic security while at the same time minimizing the impact of the factors that can bring instability to the region. In fact, taking into consideration the full range of existing threats and challenges, Central Asia at this stage is constantly forced to decide between two different options i.e. the enhancement and strengthening of its position as an outpost of international stability and an integral part of the world economy or minimizing the impact of negative factors that could decrease the level of security in Central Asia (Katzman, 2010).

The fall of communism in the Soviet Union not only ended the Cold War, but it also resulted in the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Being a multinational union the collapse led to the rise of 15 newly independent states. Noticeably, all of them host various ethnic and religious minority groups, but the states have also identified a single ethnic group that accounted for the majority of its population. After the disintegration all these states began the process of transition from a highly centralized political system based on a centrally command economy to a form of free enterprise having a political system consistent with the emerging new economy. None of them was prepared to embark on this gigantic political and economic project alone. Without any surprise, with few exceptions mainly the small Baltic States i.e. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; the other states have thus far failed to end this process of

transition, or even to build the foundations of a democratic political system based on a corresponding economic system (Katzman, 2004).

Today, despite differences, the economies of these nations are neither capitalist nor socialist, although they have all the negative aspects of these economic systems. Their political systems represent a spectrum of authoritarianism, retaining many aspects of the Soviet totalitarian system including repression and human rights abuses. They run almost exclusively by former Soviet elites turned nationalist. In fact, during the 25 years since the Soviet Union's fall, transition involving these economic and political characteristics has become a permanent feature instead of a passing phenomenon. This is especially evident in the Caucasus and Central Asia. As the least-developed, least-industrialized and least-prosperous regions of the Soviet Union, the region's transitional process has been especially agonizing with significant short-term and long-term social, political and economic implications for their constituent countries as well as for their neighboring regions.

Failure to come out of the transition and the distortion of the economy of Central Asian countries are unable to provide the basic facilities of their populations, in most cases unlike the Soviet economy. The rapidly widening gap of income between the overwhelming majority of the population and the small fraction of affluent people benefitting from the post-independence economy has polarized these societies which is a recipe for internal instability and conflict (Kaliyeva, 2004). Thus, an effort to encourage broader regional partnership is much needed and should be focused on a few priority areas.

4.1 Regional Insecurities in Central Asia

History of Central Asia has been turbulent throughout the centuries. Major countries have always been attracted by this region. In ancient times this region was a juncture point for many civilizations. This region has been a "land bridge" for trade and ideas, bringing different parts of the Eurasian landmass and its civilizations closer (Akbarzadeh, 2004 :792). Recently, this region has become the locus point of fault lines between different powers as they ran into their military and political limits in the face of the mountainous topography and the independent people of the region. As a result, since the 19th century the wider Central Asian region has been

fragmented and becoming a region of barriers as well as conflict rather than economic and people-to-people connections.

Changing geopolitical circumstances due to the break-up of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s and the overthrow of the Taliban regime and also the end of major conflict in Afghanistan have opened up many opportunities for regional economic cooperation, which potentially can be helpful for all of the countries in the region. A distinct trend in international security in the post-Cold War era is, the phenomenal rise of traditional and non-traditional threats such as religious extremism, economic development, environment degradation, water security, food security, health problem, narcotics and human trafficking, small arms smuggling etc. (Heath, 2003).

4.2 Traditional Security Threats in Central Asia

Traditional conception of security emphasizes on the territorial integrity and national sovereignty as primary goal which should be protected by the country at any cost. The notion of traditional threats is essentially related to external military threats that seek to undermine the security of the sovereign state and its territorial integrity. “Post Second World War period was a time of resurgent realism which centred security in the autonomy of the nation-state and emphasized the use of force as a means to resolve conflict between states” (Patnaik & Chenoy, 2011). Morgenthau considered that, “security of the state was best achieved by the maximization of military powers”. During the Cold War period, security perspectives were based on state based approach of classic realism and neo realism, which considered military power as the corner of national security (Heywood, 2014).

The security concept that evolved in the 1980s broadened the concept of security and included non-military security threats or non-traditional security threats. These threats are originating from economy, social, environmental and political issues. It focuses on human security and is based on the empowerment of the people vis-à-vis various problems, conflicts and issues. Security threats in Central Asia are both external and internal, for which military security is essential.

At the time of disintegration of the Soviet Union, there was no significant degree of enthusiasm among the Central Asian countries for the independence. Their awareness of the depth of dependency of their country on Moscow and the enormous

number of problems that they, as independent state, would have to face were largely responsible for their reluctance (Peimani, 1998). Later on these processes touched Central Asian republics, whose basic problems on the stage of building of independence were serious threats and challenges in the sphere of ensuring the security. Fulfilment of the requirements of existence of any sovereign state is strongly connected with ensuring of its own security and necessity of protection its own interests (Daneykin. et.al, 2015).

4.2.1 Great Game: Struggle for Heartland

For centuries, Central Asia has been the object of rivalries and machinations by the Great Powers. During the nineteenth century, Britain feared that another European power might take advantage of Islamic Asia's political decay. An in-depth look at the geo-political and strategic importance of Central Asia, from the Great Game to present-day political power struggles in the regions. The metaphor of the Great Game describes the power competition between Russia and Great Britain in the 19 century for Central Asia. It describes a period of Russian expansion and the moves made by Britain to counter the Russian aggression in the region. Indeed, the Great Game had a stake that was much greater than Central Asia.

During 19 century relationship between Tsarist Russia and British Empire was viewed with some ambivalence. On the one hand the cultural distance, technological backwardness, was regarded as incompatible with the progress of Britain and on the other hand, the enormous scale of the Russian Empire and its expansionist ambitions were of concern to the British, who kept a close eye on their rival's moves (Danvers, 2015). The British believed that Afghanistan would be the next step in Russia's strategy, before it took India over definitively. Due to this concern, Britain declared the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1842), one of the first and most important conflicts of the Great Game and, simultaneously, a misfortune for the British, who failed to establish a regime in Afghanistan favorable to their political interests (Raudik, 2007). However, the country, in the eyes of the British, continued to be a key element in the strategy of containment of Russian expansionism.

This Game was a started by two imperial powers, for political dominance, control and security of the territories located between the Russian and British Empires. For Russia, controlling Afghanistan and the neighboring regions

represented an important step in ensuring access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. As a result, the Russians conquered the territories that later would give birth to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. From the British point of view, the control of the area was essential to ensure the protection of all Indian colonies (Danvers, 2015).

The Great Game involved three main phases (Horsman, 2001). The first began with the expansion of the Russian Empire in the Caucasus and Central Asia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, generating alarm signals in the East India Company, the de facto power in India. Fearing Russia's intentions, the Company sent officers to explore the way, by land, to the northern border of India. During the nineteenth century, the British government sought to engage more intensely in Central Asian issues, transforming the Great Game, until then, private in nature, into an essential element of the defense of the empire, as well as of foreign and colonial policy (Yenikayeff, 2011). The methods that were used encompassed resorting to secret agents, occasionally combined with overt military action.

This first phase of the Great Game ended in 1907 with the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention (Horsman, 2001). In turn, the second phase of the Great Game lasted about ten years - from 1907 to 1917. The methods used were essentially the same as in the previous phase: resorting to secret agents who sought to manipulate local populations and tribes. Finally, the third phase of the Great Game took place after the Russian Revolution of 1917, when the Bolsheviks, under Lenin's command, set out to "liberate, by means of armed revolt, the whole of Asia from imperialist domination" (Horsman, 2001). This third phase culminated in the consolidation of Bolshevik power over the former tsarist domains. Regardless of the individual goals or fate of the various actors, the main objective - security and power of the two empires - remained unchanged.

4.2.2 New Great Game: New players with old aspirations

In the 20 Century, the old version of the Great Game entered the annals of history and another one emerged with the new players like Iran, Turkey, India, China and USA. With the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, the balance of power in the global politics has changed in favor of the United States, which replaced Great Britain as a world power. Since that time, Washington would

seek to not only contain the Soviet enemy, but to also assert its influence in the Middle East, coveting the 'black gold', as well as other resources indispensable for the growth and consolidation of a great power.

This period is often called by commentators on geopolitics as the New Great Game (Edwards, 2003). It is a term used to describe the new geopolitics in Central Asia, which is characterized by a competition between the United States, Britain and other NATO member states against Russia, China and other states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), for influence, power and hegemony in Central Asia and Trans Caucasus.

However, in the New Great Game, the competition does not focus on the effective control of a geographical area. This rivalry focuses, rather, in what many analysts call the 'regional policy of oil' (Kleveman, 2003). Such a game was re-launched from 1992-1993 by the Americans, who took advantage of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the weakness of Yeltsin's Russia, with the ultimate goal of preventing the rebirth of their great rival. In practice, Washington expected to increase its presence in the states that once formed part of the Soviet Union, as in the former Eastern Europe and in the Balkans. This objective was facilitated not only by the United States but also Iran, Turkey, India, Pakistan and China took advantage of the power vacuum that resulted from the collapse of the Soviet Union to push into the region (Kozhokin, 2009).

Since then, another power play has been underway with Russia and China as major players. At one time, after 9/11, United States too was aiming to be a decisive factor in Central Asia. United States tried hard for the strategic position by using money power, promoting dissent through fancily titled color revolutions and human rights campaigns. However, it ended up making the Central Asian authoritarian regimes wary of it. Russia continues to be a major strategic, political and economic partner in Central Asia. From Soviet times, the network of original Central Asian oil and gas pipelines was almost entirely laid in the northern direction towards Russia. So was the case largely with trade flows (Kozhokin, 2009).

The change came after terrorist attack on World Trade Centre and Pentagon, when the leaders of the world began to acknowledge the region's strategic

importance. The US started wooing the Central Asian states for bases to be used as station for its troops and military aircraft. It was successful too because Central Asian states were anxious to loosen the Russian hold over them. But the relationship soured steadily and the US is no longer an ardent suitor. By now the 'new' Great Game is largely a regional affair (Dogra, 2015).

The regional actors like India, Iran, Turkey and China have grave political and economic interest in Central Asia. The fact is that the region has become a significant player in multiple ways. When the fear of terrorism and Islamic extremism first started being talked during several occasions in Central Asian states bordering China in the 90s, its response was to set up a security mechanism. In the 1996 for the deterrence of the Islamic extremism in the region Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan came together and made the Shanghai Five that graduated in 2001 to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization when Uzbekistan officially become member. It was never intended to replicate NATO, but to serve as a forum for active security related consultations (Kavalski, 2010).

Now we can easily notice that the dawn of a possible Cold-War between the United States and Russia beginning on the issue of Syrian crisis and perhaps spreading throughout different parts of the West Asia. Persia the ancient name of Iran played a significant role during the Great Game era and is a key player in this whole drama that's on these days in the region. While history charts its own course, it is unlikely that we will see Russian ascendancy in the region, just as they never gained a foothold in the Indian subcontinent in the 19 century (Danvers, 2015).

Over the long time, a failure to find an acceptable solution to the crisis in Syria will severely undermine the interests of US globally and West Asia particularly. USA and their allies in the region could collapse under the weight of the war and the burgeoning growth of refugees. Terrorist groups could have a permanent safe haven in Syria from where they can operate their activities, hurting the US throughout the region and beyond, including the homeland. Europe will suffer with an unabated flow of refugees to its shores, which will affect US economic, political and strategic interests. The Russia- US cold war in Syria can destabilize the Eurasian region and shade of conflict can approach up to Central Asian region (Kavalski, 2010).

The most pervasive challenge to international stability is the one posed by extremist non-state armed groups and also by terrorism. With the trend towards globalization and an increasingly interconnected world, these threats and challenges go beyond state systems. In the post-Cold War environment, religious extremists were able to attract recruits from different backgrounds, professions and countries. Global mobility and communication has greatly facilitated their transnational reach and made terrorism a widespread phenomenon (Anand, 2006).

4.2.3 Border Disputes in the Central Asian region

Territorial disputes in Asia remain a serious challenge to peace, stability, and prosperity of the region. In fact, of all border disputes, those over territory tend to be nearly twice as likely as other issues which lead to armed conflict. A mix of political and economic interests, normative reasons and competition over scarce natural resources has been suggested as drivers of conflict over disputed borders. In Asia today, geopolitical shifts, natural resources and environmental degradation are a source of concern and conflict.

Political changes which took place in the 1991, made the formation of a principally new regional security system in the Post-Soviet Central Asia necessary. Central Asia was the part of a huge, politically, economically and ideologically homogeneous state, cut off from the external world by the Iron Curtain policy of USSR. The region has gained importance due to its key strategic location and vast supplies of energy resources.

Border demarcation in Central Asia initiated with the purpose of creating new countries and nations that started in 1924 and finished in 1936 defined the present day five Central Asian states. Lenin was convinced of the need for national delimitation and recommended drawing an ethnographic map of Turkestan, separated into Uzbekiya, Kyrgyziaya and Turkmeniya (Roudik, 2007). As a result of this process, Turkmen tribes were united under a new state called the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). The Uzbeks, Sarts, Tajik, Turks, Karluks, Kipchaks under a common name of Uzbeks, were united into the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR).

The Kyrgyzs (present day Kazakhstan) and Kara-Kyrgyzs (present day Kyrgyzstan) were united under the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast (Gavrilis 2012).

Further creation of new countries and nation took place, when in 1994 the Kazaks and Tajiks as well as Kara-Kalpaks expressed their discontent at being swallowed by other nationalities and claimed autonomy. The Central Asian Bureau of the Russian Communist party took the claim into account and carried out major work on delimitation. As a result, five administrative units were created: Uzbek SSR, Turkmen SSR, Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), and the Kyrgyz and Kara-Kalpak ASSRs. In 1925, Kyrgyz ASSR was renamed Kazak ASSR (Gavrilis, 2012).

Independence for the Central Asian states reopened a Pandora's Box of border disputes. Many of the current difficulties can be traced directly back to a difficult Soviet legacy. Moscow established administrative borders of its Central Asian republics in the mid-1920s, which followed neither natural geographic boundaries nor strict ethnic lines¹⁰⁶. Soviet planners often avoided drawing more homogeneous or compact republics for fear that they would fuel separatism. Further, given the highly centralized nature of Soviet planning, economic and transportation links were designed to cross republic borders freely. Goods flowed largely unimpeded across these internal borders and people would notice little more than a plaque or a small police outpost as they moved between republics. The situation is complicated by the fact that unlike external borders of the region. The demarcation of the borders among the Central Asian countries is still not complete. Therefore, territorial uncertainty reinforced by a critical shortage of water and land resources contributes to the escalation of regional tensions especially in the border regions of the Central Asian States (Gavrilis, 2012).

Central Asia faces pressing and sprawling problems in the delimitation of its borders. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan all accepted the old administrative Soviet borders as their state boundaries rather than opening historical territorial claims. This was an important step against a possible host of irredentist claims. Nonetheless, as those administrative boundaries had never been demarcated and were only general

¹⁰⁶ "Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict Potential", International Crisis group, Asia report no-33; published 4th April 2002, Available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/033-central-asia-border-disputes-and-conflict-potential.aspx>. Accessed on 18th July 2014.

outlines¹⁰⁷. Many of the current difficulties stem directly from the unique circumstances surrounding the creation of internal borders within the USSR.

In drawing the Soviet republic borders, planners in Moscow did not construct administrative units along strictly ethnic lines given the complex mosaic of ethnicity in Central Asia. Neither did Moscow design the republics to follow the contours of natural geographic divisions nor did Soviet planners take great care not to construct republics whose ethnic composition was same. There was also a high degree of arbitrariness in how these republics were initially demarcated. Central Asia covers a vast amount of territory and only minimal effort was made to explore the ramifications of administrative divisions on the ground. While such an approach served Moscow's tactical and strategic needs well at same time, it has created thorny border disputes today¹⁰⁸.

As it is known, the geographical landscape and climatic conditionality of resettlement of native ethnic groups of Central Asia in contemporary time was not the initial element at formation of the region's geopolitical borders. Up to the contemporary time, political borders in existing state formations did not coincide with territories of ethnic resettlement (Tynan, 2012). For example, the territory of Kokand Khanate included modern Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Bukhara emirate included not only territories of the modern southern Uzbekistan, eastern Turkmenistan and Tajikistan but also a part of northern Afghanistan. The large rivers of Central Asia - Syr-Darya, Amu Darya, Zeravshan, Ili, Tedzhen and Mugrab were not real internal geo-political boundaries. During the 19th century, the compression of traditional geopolitical space has led to a new, as though to Semi-European structure of territory under the pressure of the Russian and British empires from the north to the south (Rahman 1998).

Other aspects of the Soviet regime further complicated border arrangements. Inter-state borders may have had much less meaning during Soviet times but in reality it matters today. As a result, the borders between the republics were drawn and then redrawn on several occasions and there continue to be disputes as to

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*

whether subsequent border changes were officially ratified by Soviet authorities, with implications for the legality of the claims by today's independent states. For examples In September 1929, the Khujand District of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan was handed over to Tajikistan and its name changed to Leninabad Province. A decade later, Uzbekistan was given a portion of that area back when a large canal was constructed in the Ferghana Valley¹⁰⁹. Tajikistan was not the only republic to exchange territory with Uzbekistan. The remote territory of Karakalpakistan was part of Kazakhstan in 1924, but by 1938 it had been transferred to the Uzbek Republic (Gleen, 1999).

The full catalogue of land exchanges between the Soviet Central Asian republics is extensive but territorial claims were further muddled by the frequent leasing of facilities or areas with natural resources from one republic to another. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan leased land from each other in 1946 and these leases were still in force when the USSR collapsed. Uzbekistan refused to give back its leased land when the lease expired in 1992, leaving the inhabitants of this area in a legal limbo between two states (Gleen, 1999). Other countries had similar leasing arrangements. Uzbekistan leased gas fields in southern Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyzstan in exchange leased pasture lands suitable for cattle purpose. Again, the status of these territories has been a source of discord. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan alone managed to agree an amicable resolution of their leases. In 1993 the prime ministers of the two countries signed an agreement on returning all leased lands to their sovereign states by 1996 (Gleen, 1999).

In many ways, it was not a problem for the Soviet Union to draw the borders. In a highly centralized economic and political system, inter-republic borders had a very less significance. Heavy industry, agriculture, the flow of goods and people all were designed to serve the Soviet interest. During Soviet time visas were not required for internal travel and often only a plaque or small police post would mark an inter-republican border. Ethnic groups living in different republics had easy access to family and friends just across the administrative boundary. Economic inputs, such as energy, were highly subsidized and flowed freely from one republic to another in keeping with the doctrines of central planning (Goble, 1997).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

However, with independence, the high stakes involved in clarifying territorial rights quickly became evident. The flows of subsidized energy supplies stopped. Transportation links were often severed. Control of territory meant direct control over resources that could produce hard currency or improve a country's strategic position. Issues like land leasing and water rights had to be settled on a bilateral basis instead of being adjudicated by Moscow. With the introduction of new currencies, tariffs and customs duties, economic cooperation became less frequent, not more (Giragosian, 2006).

Not surprisingly, with the long-term leasing of land and facilities between Central Asian republics, the frequent redrawing of borders, clashing historical claims, lingering ethnic tensions and demarcating borders were a controversial process for Central Asian states. In the first years of independence, there were expectations that the national borders within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) would remain open and trade would continue to flow freely (Giragosian, 2006)

At the end of the 20 Century two developments brought the issue of border demarcation sharply into focus. The first activity was of armed guerrillas crossing from Tajikistan through Kyrgyzstan in 1999 and 2000 with the aim of overthrowing the regime in Uzbekistan. After this incident Uzbekistan took strict measures to protect the country by mining its borders and restricting free movement across its frontiers.¹¹⁰ Since Uzbekistan's actions occurred in the absence of an agreement on borders, neighbors viewed them negatively amid growing concern that Uzbekistan was unilaterally determining its boundaries.

The second development was on 30 August 2000, when Russia announced to withdraw from "Bishkek Accord-1992" that underlined the need to demarcate Central Asia's borders and establishment of visa regimes by Central Asian states and most particularly Russia. "Bishkek Accord" that allowed visa free travel between almost all member countries of the CIS (Kaminski & Mitra, 2012). Moscow's decision to establish a visa regime was tied to security concerns, especially the smuggling of narcotics and contraband, illegal immigration, and belief that terrorists

¹¹⁰ "Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict Potential", International Crisis group, Asia report no-33; published 4th April 2002, Available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/033-central-asia-border-disputes-and-conflict-potential.aspx>. Accessed on 18th July 2014.

and organized criminal gangs were operating freely within the CIS because of the visa-free regime. With the introduction of visas, it quickly became necessary to institute border checkpoints at agreed boundaries, spurring the Central Asian states to push forward with border talks.¹¹¹

In Central Asia, there are many potential sources of inter-state conflict including border or territorial disputes as well as real or perceived interferences in one regional state's internal affairs by another. For example, the border disagreements and territorial disputes between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan that revolve mainly but not exclusively around the potentially rich Ferghana Valley could well ignite a military conflict between any two of them. Conflict between Uzbekistan and its neighboring Turkmenistan has the potential to escalate should the current course of relations continue.

The death of Turkmen president Saparmurad Niyazov in December 2006 and subsequent ascension to power of President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in February 2007 have not settled the dividing issue in their nation's bilateral relations (Achilov, 2012). Moreover, war and instability could well expand from one regional country to another, owing to the existing ripe situation. For the same reason, instability in the form of the on-going low-intensity war in Afghanistan, could well spill over into the three neighboring Central Asian states of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, the separatist movement of Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang Province, although not very strong and active these days but it has potential to cross the border into neighboring Kazakhstan, where a few million Uyghurs reside. In light of the extensive ties of various natures between the Caucasian and Central Asian countries and neighboring countries like Iran, Turkey, China, and Russia and also non-neighboring countries like the United States, including a regional grouping of states like the European Union with long-term interests in these regions, at least some of these conflicts could even lead to regional conflicts, involving these states in support of their regional friends and allies in other form (Danvers, 2015).

¹¹¹ *ibid*

The biggest challenges to the Central Asian security are internal. The painstaking process of nation-building, the social and economic transformation, ethnic diversity, border disputes and a catalogue of other issues are all sources of conflicts and instability in the post-Soviet Central Asian Republics. The core issue is the ethnic composition of each state. Since no nation-states existed in the centuries before Russian conquest, substantial transmigration of ethnic groups became a potential challenge of the region.

4.3 Non-Traditional Security Challenges in Central Asia

In 21 century threat perception is changing and transcending mere defense of territory to identifying other areas of conflict within nations that could explode into threats to human security. The idea of non-traditional or comprehensive security has begun to be widely accepted. These days the world is facing challenges from non-traditional sector are dangerous than traditional ones. Trade dispute, food security, water security, poverty, ethnic and religious extremism, environmental issue, these are the serious challenges before human civilization. These non-military threats to security pose a potent danger to a nation's progress, development and unity.

Re-conceptualization of security became necessary because of gradual but fundamental and long-term changes in the international system. Some of the prime factors which necessitated a new thinking on the concept and scope of security studies were the demise of Cold War which led to a globally interdependent world (Chouhan & Pathania, 2011). The report of UNDP in 1994 was the first explicit document where 'human security' and other important elements of 'Non-traditional security' were mentioned. In the new concept of security Mahbub-ul Haq said "security would be equated with the security of individuals not just security of territory". He further said that "we need to fashion a new concept of security that is reflected in the lives of our people, not in the weapons of our country. Fundamentally human security will be achieved through development not through arms" (Chouhan & Pathania, 2011).

After the independence in 1991, Central Asian republics are facing major challenges in different areas, which are going to pose the biggest challenge to the Central Asian countries. The drying up of the Aral Sea is affecting the health and lives of millions of people in the region (Patnaik & Chenoy, 2011). The region was

viewed as mostly unstable and fragile especially after 9/11 once again international interest in the Central Asian region renewed. The great powers were seen jostling with each other for enhancing their role in the region. Some experts also used the term ‘Greater Central Asia’ but the Central Asians have preferred to be viewed as a Eurasian region rather than any other term coined by outside powers.

Despite widespread perception that the region is mostly unstable and fragile, over the past 25 years the Central Asian Republics (CARs) have been able to strengthen their sovereignty and have consolidated their territorial integrity.

4.3.1 Trade and Economic Issues

In the ancient times Central Asia was the hub of global trade, during that period the famous Silk Route crossed the Central Asian region. The republics of Central Asia are struggling to implement strategies for economic development since becoming independent of the Soviet Union in 1991. Today’s economic structure of Central Asia is one of low density and long distances. The combined population of the countries in Central Asia is approximately 63 million, spread unequally over a relatively large geographical area, including large deserts and high mountainous, with limited connectivity. Despite these conditions, the countries of Central Asia have benefited from increased integration into the global economy over the last decade, largely driven by natural resources and labor.

Economic development in Central Asia is an important issue. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union provided centrally command economic space in this geographic region. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, it was revealed that Central Asian economies were incapable of competing in the world market. After the disintegration, there was no alternative market-based system in place to serve as a substitute for the Soviet market system. Due to centrally command economy each of the former republics was not economically self-dependent. The sudden demise of the Soviet system meant a total and sudden collapse of economic systems of all the Central Asian republics (Bryd & Martin, 2015).

During the first stage of post-Soviet transition in the Central Asian states, it was widely believed that the shift to a market system could be coordinated or, at least, closely tied to integration at the regional level. The small scale of national market,

the lack of direct access to sea transportation, to cooperative links inherited from the old Soviet system. The Central Asian countries have attempted to create an integrated union since the independence in 1991. The main goal of this integration was to establish economic or customs union like the European Union model (Rumer & Zhukhov, 2014).

Each Central Asian state has its own specific economic potential and there are strong regional contrasts. Kazakhstan's economy boomed in the first decade of the 21st century, and its GDP represent close to 60% of the total GDP of Central Asia. Uzbekistan come in a distant second with a GDP half of Kazakhstan's size and then comes Turkmenistan, whose GDP is again half as large as Uzbekistan's. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan's have a minimal share at regional GDP, at less than 5% for each (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013). Despite their differences the Central Asian economies are all stamped by their overreliance in exports on raw materials.

Moreover, today, the Central Asian republic has been attracting the interest of all the regional countries like India, China, Turkey, Iran etc. The Central Asian region has abundant of energy resources. Secondly, this region has a strategic and geopolitical importance on the Eurasian continent. The most active and influential players in Central Asia have been Russia, United States of America and China so far. But recently, particular interest in the region of Central Asia is expressed by the European Union as well. Because the sea trade links between the EU and China, the most important European trading partner, is costly due to the background of the limited capacity of the main sea gate to Europe - the Suez Canal, the Central Asian region is becoming a strategically important commercial land bridge (Rumer & Zhukhov, 2014).

Despite their rhetorical acceptance of regional cooperation with neighboring Turkic countries, all have chosen an external strategy which might be called export globalism. "Export globalism" implies dealing on world markets for the sale of raw materials and the purchase of capital and some consumer goods. No particular trading partner in the region is given preference. Rather, they seek most-favored-nation (MFN) treatment and membership in the World Trade Organization, along with loans, technical aid, and investments from national and multilateral sources. Indeed, the Central Asian countries have recently taken *ad hoc* protectionist measures against

each other. Lack of convertibility of the Uzbek currency has complicated small-scale trade with the region. In practice, a true regional strategy has not yet emerged, though it would contribute much to the common economic development (Kaminski & Mitra, 2012).

When the Russian-dominated Ruble zone collapsed in 1993, the five Central Asian states were forced to adopt national currencies and establish central banks. In January 1994, three of them formed a Central Asian Union (CAU) and entered into a free trade agreement. Tajikistan was wracked by civil war at the time and Turkmenistan declined to participate due to their neutrality policy in external relations (Kuchins, 2015). A coordinating council and a Central Asian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (CABRD) were established by year's end. In principle, there was to be free trade among the three members of the union, though technically trade among them had already been opened by a separate Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) treaty. Tajikistan joined the Central Asian economic group in 1998 (Kuchins, 2015). The CABRD has had some modest success, including funding several small multi-state enterprises.

The Central Asian Cooperative Organization (CACO), supposedly to better reflect its broadened mandate of dealing with illegal immigration, transportation, free-trade zones and water sharing. Despite name changes and frequent summit meetings, however, trade policy has never been coordinated, either for intra-regional commerce or for the more crucial exchanges with Russia and the rest of the outside world. Kazakhstan has frequently imposed measures to block imports from Russia, notably after the Ruble devaluation in 1998 (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013).

In 1994, Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbaev, began to promote what is now called a "Eurasian Union" consisting of Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and since 1998 Tajikistan" (Tarr, 2015). This body could be consistent with the Central Asian group, not to mention the CIS, is uncertain, however. Overlapping preferential trade agreements are an economic absurdity. In any case, thanks to internal disagreements, neither group was effective. Russia insisted on a higher external tariff than did Belarus and Kyrgyzstan. Since Kyrgyzstan joined the World Trade Organization it requires most-favored-nation treatment for all partners. Russia also continues to charge a value-added tax on exports, an unusual practice regionally and

internationally (Tarr, 2015). Central Asian regional trade is further hampered by its Soviet-era transportation system.

Late in 1996 Uzbekistan made its new currency, the Sum¹¹² non-convertible into hard currency, while the Kazakh ‘Tenge’¹¹³ and the Kyrgyz currency Som¹¹⁴ were convertible only for small transactions and current-account trade¹¹⁵. The Uzbek action, only partially reversed by May 2002, particularly impairs intra-regional trade, because Uzbekistan is the only country in the region that has borders with all the other Central Asian countries¹¹⁶.

Efforts to resolve economic ills through inter-republican or regional organization have not flourished. In 1993, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan formed a customs union, but a lack of resources and Russian opposition to any program of which it is not a part have hampered full implementation. Similarly, Russia unsuccessfully opposed Central Asian membership in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), founded by Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan in 1992. Turkmenistan's reluctance to enter into any multilateral regional agreement also has stifled attempts to find common solutions to common problems (Kasenov, 1997).

Growths in the Central Asian region have been slowed to a lower-than-expected 2.4 percent in 2014, from 3.7 percent in 2013¹¹⁷. This reflected a sharp Ukraine-crisis, spillover effect, from weakness in Russia. Russia's economy also

¹¹² Sum is the name of National Currency of Uzbekistan

¹¹³ Tenge is the name of National Currency of Kazakhstan.

¹¹⁴ Som is the name of National Currency of Kyrgyzstan

¹¹⁵ Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia: Final Report Prepared for the Asian Development Bank (Washington, DC: Development Alternatives, 1998).

¹¹⁶ Uzbekistan is executing a staff monitored program with the IMF that calls for lifting all restrictions on access to foreign exchange since mid-2002, as well as further trade liberalization. In the longer run, “Uzbek officials intend to intensify our economic cooperation with other countries in the region.” Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies for the Period January 1–June 30, 2002, Under the Staff Monitored Program (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2001),

¹¹⁷ “Global Economic Prospects: Europe and Central Asia - Jan 2015”, The World Bank; available at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/01/13/global-economic-prospects-2015-europe-and-central-asia>; accessed on 6th March 2016.

slowed to 0.7 percent in 2014¹¹⁸. Russian economy stalled due to Ukraine-crisis, economic sanctions, and falling crude oil prices in the world. Russia also interacted with a structural slowdown, although a depreciating Rubble and increased public spending supported exports and industrial production in the final quarter of 2014 after a sharp contraction in mid-2014¹¹⁹.

In order to achieve a state of competitiveness within the global market, many experts proposed that Russia and the countries comprising Central Asia once again focus on a single economic unit such as existed during the reign of the Soviet Union. None of the scholars proposed that the politics of the Soviet era be revived, only the economic cooperation that existed at the time of the Soviet Union between these various, now independent, nations. Of course, creating a state of cooperation between these varied sectors of the economy is not without obstacle.

4.3.2 Religious Extremism in Central Asia

Central Asia has been a cohesive region, though geography played an important role early on and divided the region along distinctive nomadic and sedentary fault lines. The fertile land and water have been contested commodities in the mostly semi-arid steppes of Central Asia. Kingdoms with centers in Merv, Khiva, Samarkand and Bukhara emerged essentially as oasis civilizations along the ancient Silk Road (Allison, 2004). They produced rich history and culture; they also had a sophisticated authoritarian structure and a conservative attitude toward religious issues. In contrast nomads in the north generated a culture that was more lax about religious observance (Allworth, 1994).

The region has been a battlefield between different empires and their legacy can still be traced to three formative influences: its Samanid (Persian) legacy, Timurian (Turkic)/Mongol legacy and more recent Russian/Soviet legacy (Olcott, 2001). The nomadic and sedentary divide, as well as Persian/Turkic divide, have a lot to account for in terms of differences between the present-day states of Central Asia and geopolitical interests in the region. The countries themselves are a later invention of Stalin who artificially drew borders and created the lands or ‘Stans’ named after

¹¹⁸ *ibid*

¹¹⁹ *ibid*

the ethnic group predominant in the region. A shared history but and regional integration and border disputes have produced source of potential conflicts (Olcott, 2001).

After the independence of the Central Asia, this incident unleashed a flood of religious activity in the region. Along with the moderate and traditional forms of the Islamic faith, radical Islam regains their foothold in the Muslim communities of the Central Asian republics. Islamists have been less successful in gaining support in the communities of indigenous populations of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan than among the Uzbek and Tajik minorities (Omelicheva, 2010).

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, scores of ethnic Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Turkmen and Kazakhs were separated from their titular nationalities by the tangled borders of the newly independent states. In the past, the high concentration of Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks in the villages bordering the neighboring republics created a context for inter-ethnic clashes in the multi-ethnic communities of the Central Asian republics (Omelicheva, 2010).

Today, however, the ethnic conflict does not constitute a major threat to regional security. Instead the rise of radical Islam has been viewed as the most alarming development in the Central Asian region. The problem of religious extremism and terrorism in Central Asia has been associated with activities of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb ut-Tahrir and a number of less known radical Islamic movements, such as Akramiya, Hizb an-Nusra, and Tablighi Jamaat among others. The IMU is a terrorist organization is infamous because of a series of terrorist attacks. Ideologically speaking; the IMU is a jihadist movement that is not truly Islamist (Naumkin, 2005). Followers of these ideologies have no interest in the transformation of society and converting people to their beliefs. They have no political program beyond the conquest of power and the subsequent imposition of their vision of Islam upon people (Khalid, 2007). Another group that has been increasingly active in Central Asia is the Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (The Party of Islamic Liberation). It pursues the same goals as the IMU but officially eschews violence.

All Central Asian states have adopted restrictive religious policies and measures in an attempt to control the extremism. The bans on unregistered Islamic organizations and persecution of the thousands of Muslims suspected of being in collaboration with Islamists drove radical Islamic groups underground and spreading their numbers and popularity in the region.

The search for a new identity led many to look for values that were rooted in religion. Yet in the mean time, the form of Islam that began to reappear was benevolent and tolerant. This was due to the influence of Sufism and also due to the spread of modern education as well as the emancipation of women. Typical organizations in this vein were the Jamaats in Uzbekistan, self-help organizations that focus on social welfare, oppose militancy, and see a greater role for Islamic values in society (Khalid, 2007). The International Tablighi Jamaat organization is also active in Central Asia, its aim to strengthen the Islamic values in the society. In spite that extremism was not an integral part of the religious ethos of Central Asia, but it nevertheless emerged thanks mainly to external support largely due to external support (Khalid, 2007). As Tajik scholar Muzaffar Alimov states,

“There was a clear activation in the nineties of foreign religious organizations in the countries of Central Asian region. The period saw a rise in the number of foreign emissaries from Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan and the Gulf countries. They were engaged in propagating different Islamic tenets and Pan-Islamic ideas, which were irrelevant for the people of the region” (Omelicheva, 2010).

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have tried to implement their religious agenda in Central Asia. Significant financial flows from Saudi Arabia were available to propagate the ultra-conservative Saudi doctrine of Wahhabism in the region (Mukhametrakhimova, 2006). The eruption of the Tajik Civil War provided an opportunity for foreign groups to further cement their contacts in Tajik extremist group. The opposition, consisting of both religious and non-religious components fled to Afghanistan, where they received training, arms, safe havens and financial assistance. Special study camps were set up to impart religious knowledge. It is estimated that nearly 100,000 Tajik opposition members relocated to Afghanistan between 1992 and 1997 (Kleveman, 2003).

The rise of the Taliban and their ability to hold on to power had a profound impact on Central Asia. The Taliban’s rapid advance into northern Afghanistan

fuelled apprehensions about a possible 'Greater Afghanistan' that could destabilize, if not break up the newly formed states. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan sought the help of Russia in militating against this challenge, but both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan tried to ensure their security by means of a bilateral dialogue with Pakistan (Marsden, 1998). On a visit to Tashkent in October 1996 President of Pakistan Farooq Leghari assured the Uzbek president that the Taliban had no territorial ambitions beyond Afghanistan's borders, a message which he repeated in Almaty on 28 October, 1996 (Marsden, 1998).

Kazakhstan's President NurSultan Nazarbayev issued a warning that the Afghan conflict should not spread beyond its borders (Marsden, 1998). The Taliban's impact on Central Asia was visible during the rising profile of the IMU, with its declared objective of jihad against the Karimov government in Uzbekistan (Rashid, 2002: 253). The IMU leadership received enormous support from the Taliban to accomplish this objective. The Taliban in turn wanted the IMU to create diversionary activity to draw attention from its own struggle with the Northern Alliance.

Martha Brill Olcott, a U.S. specialist on Central Asia, said that "... allegations that the IMU was tied to the Al Qaeda network were well documented by materials seized in their camps in northern Afghanistan in late 2001 and early 2002"¹²⁰.

During the War on Terror, it fought alongside the Taliban, with an IMU faction still based in FATA of Pakistan. The Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT), very much active in the West Asia, has worked across Central Asia to realize its dream of a new Muslim Caliphate that would destroy existing states and abolish other faiths. Religious extremism and terrorism are not the products of economic hardship but they gain legitimacy in the environment facing poverty and unemployment. Uzbek president Islam Karimov said that

The harsh realities encountered during the transition period, such as the objective differences among members of the population and natural distinctions in level of property ownership, have induced parts of the population to adopt a Soviet like mentality and call for a return to an illusory utopian equality, or to launch a pseudo-struggle against

¹²⁰Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, Regional Security", Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations, 29 October 2003, available at <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1387>

luxury and excessiveness a return in essence to the artificially levelled standards that make society flat, gray and backward ...In these circumstances, ideas such as Islamic Wahhabism have become deceptively popular¹²¹.

It cannot be denied that foreign religious extremists have successfully used economic incentives to lure people into their work. In a lecture in April 2005, former Uzbek Ambassador to Iran, Khaydarov said that

A sense of futility, that causes people to turn to religious ideology". Teachers in Uzbekistan, he said, make US \$12 a month, while religious groups pay new members as much as US \$200, mainly with funding from Saudi Arabia¹²².

The only solution to this problem is to generate more economic development, which has been underway across Central Asia during the last six years. This same challenge faces all those who would like to see Afghanistan develop along moderate and productive lines. Once the War on Terror was launched, the scale of terrorist activities in Central Asia dropped, notable exceptions being the series of blasts in Tashkent in 2004 and the assault on Andijan in 2005 (Jonson, 2006).

Religious extremism will continue to flourish across the region as long as Afghanistan- Pakistan based terrorist groups are not destroyed. Improvement in economic conditions and the spread of open, participatory politics would to an extent mitigate people's hardships, and thereby reduce further the likelihood of extremism and terrorism. This in turn will depend on the emergence of new elites and new leaders across the region. It is likely that the future leadership and new elite would be more focused on economic development and growth than their predecessors. Their agenda should be foster the integration of their national economies with the world economy. Aware of their landlocked status, current leaders are already paying greater attention to the expansion and diversification of transport corridors. Participatory politics in Central Asia is at a nascent stage, but with the passage of time and new leaders at the helm, democratic cultures and institutions could once more begin to evolve (Karimova, 2010).

¹²¹Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty First Century* (Cambridge Mass, 1998), p. 24.

¹²²Amb. Abdusamat Khaydarov, "Rise of Islamic Extremism in Central Asia", 28 April 2005.

4.3.3 Environmental Issues

Environmental issues are defined as problems with the eco-systems, which are the result of human interference or over exploitation of the resources. Environmental problem causes due to deforestation, air and water pollution, over-population, soil erosion, destruction of biodiversity, littering destruction of natural habitats, destruction of natural resources etc.

Environmental degradation and scarcity of food and water or the unequal distribution of natural resources are emerging as an important trigger or accelerating factor of conflict within and among the nations. Although present time we can see mainly at the local or at the sub-state level. Environmental decline and resource scarcity reflecting series of socio-economic problems such as population pressure, poverty, forced migration, refugee movements, political instability and ethno-political tensions are intertwined. Environmental degradation and unequal distribution of natural resource both causes and outcomes of the socio-economic conflict and these are intensified by them. These negative environmental changes are the result of resource-intensive, partially resource-wasting patterns of production and consumption, and of inadequate agricultural practices.

The geographical area of Central Asia is largely arid and semi arid and very sensitive to environment. Environmental changes are posing extremely serious threats to Central Asian region because of the arid environment. Most of the people in Central Asia live in the rural countryside. Rural areas, especially the rural communities will be the adversely effected by environmental changes. The Central Asian regions have experienced numerous environmental challenges, which are seriously hindering region's economy, water security, food security health degradation etc. One of the most serious environment problems is affecting development process in the Central Asian countries.

4.3.4 Water Security

Central Asian region is subject to a number of major environmental concerns, including the decision of the Aral Sea, the depletion and degradation of river and irrigation waters. For centuries river-water irrigation has been essential to the agricultural cultivation of this semi-arid area. However, river water, particularly when linked with irrigated land, is perhaps the only regional environmental issue that

demonstrates a ‘probable linkage between environmental degradation and the outbreak of violent civil or interstate conflict’ (Allison and Jonson, 2001).

Aral Sea and more importantly water through the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers act as a cultural, economic, geographical and political core for Central Asia. The Aral Sea Basin encompasses nearly all of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan as well as Kazakhstani Oblasti of Qyzylorda and Shymkent, and also the parts of Afghanistan and Iran. It Support 75% of Central Asia’s population and contains 90% of its surface water (Kuzmits, 2006).

The present water crisis can be attributed to a large extent to two Soviet policies. First, the establishment and demarcation of the five Soviet Central Asian republics and second is the rapid expansion of irrigation agriculture since 1950s. These two processes created a regional economic complex, but also led to the associated problems and tensions. The misallocation or over allocation of water is key factor of conflicts between the states. The water of Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Kashka Darya and Zeravshan are shared between at least two states of the Central Asian region. Disputes over water pertain both to the energy and environmental issues that creating insecurities in the region. For Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan water is their main source of electricity. Water issues are also vitally important for the downstream states that suffer from water scarcity and are the hydrocarbon producing states: like Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Kuzmits, 2006).

This situation exists within a context where foreign powers like Russia and the EU have also weighed in on water issues in Central Asia. In as much as issues of water security have come up to the forefronts of public debate, there have been repeated crises, notably between Uzbekistan and its neighbours. Regulation of the flow and allocation of irrigation water is essential to maximize agricultural yields, prevent desertification and avoid open conflict between upstream and downstream (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) powers. Several international agencies have established forums to negotiate these water issues, both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have adamantly refused to participate, preferring the go-it-alone approach of negotiating with or strong-arming their weaker upstream (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) neighbours.

Since independence of the Central Asian countries 1991, water disputes and conflicts have continued with respect to the two largest basins, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, as well as the Aral Sea. However, the more recent clashes have to do with the Syr Daria River. It passes through the Ferghana Valley, the epicentre of Uzbek-Tajik-Kyrgyz tensions, and a potential hotbed of Islamic extremism (Allison, 2008). Its ethnic heterogeneity has also spawned conflicts. To the degree that Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan can use it, they will reduce their demand for energy uses and also export electricity, which is still a “scarce factor” in Central Asia. Thus, the economic security of upstream (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) states depends upon being able to convert water into hydroelectric power, while for Uzbekistan, water is equally important for irrigating cotton, not just for economic purposes, but even more as a basis of social and political control (Aramstrong, 2014).

Therefore, there is much tension over Kyrgyz and Tajik plans for electric power installations. Beatrice Mosello of the Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces has written that, “Tension also derives from conflict over the Toktogul reservoir. This was a massive hydroelectric facility, built in the 1970s by the Soviets in the Kyrgyz part of the Syr Daria and linked to a massive set of water control installations on the same river.” Later on Toktogul became a major point of contention between Kyrgyzstan and the downstream (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) countries. Kyrgyzstan preferred to release water from this reservoir during the winter season so as to provide for the country’s heating and other needs. However Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan rely on that water to irrigate cotton and other crops during the summer (Barman, 2004:63).

In April 2009, Central Asian leaders invoked foreign recommendations at the water summit, thus essentially inviting foreign intervention in these issues. Experts from European Union have also criticized Tajikistan’s Rogun dam project. They said that “it entails high risk and replicates past reckless Soviet industrial planning (Marat, 2008).” These disputes over water derive from Soviet practices and the failure of the Central Asian states to improve on these practices regarding irrigation and water use, or to find a basis for cooperation. As a result, these disputes between the upstream and downstream states have become permanent. Again in 2009 Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have jointly planned to build more dams to produce electricity. Both countries wanted to meet their own energy demands and they have also decided to

sell hydro energy to the neighbours like Pakistan, Iran, and India (Marat, 2008). The Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have opposed to this idea, because their economies heavily rely on cotton, wheat, and rice, which could affect without the water coming from the Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will be impossible to grow. Thus at the moment Central Asian countries are locked in seemingly endless disagreement (Marat, 2008).

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, had visited the Aral Sea in 2010 with his conclusions at the time mentioning this as "one of the worst environmental disasters in the world," needing to involve the whole world rather than simply the countries of Central Asia. The "Sustaining Livelihoods Affected by the Aral Sea Disaster" programme was implemented in 2012 (Armstrong, 2014).

In the absence of formal institution on regional cooperation the issue of water has become issue of conflict and it's a serious concern for national security for Central Asian states. Now they have developed a zero-sum mentality for their neighbours, one side's gain is the other's loss. This securitization process or dynamic also relates to these states' pursuit of self-sufficiency-not regional integration-and their ambition for a high degree of state control over key resources. Thus, across Central Asia the potential for disputes is almost structurally determined.

4.3.5 Food Security

Food security is directly related to the supply of food, and available to all individuals. Throughout history we have seen concerns over food security existed. Indicators and measures for food security are derived from country level household income and expenditure surveys to estimate per capita caloric availability. In general the objective of food security indicators and measures is to capture some or all of the main components of food security in terms of food availability, access and utilization or adequacy. While availability (production and supply) and utilization/adequacy (nutritional status/anthropometric measures) seemed much easier to estimate, thus more popular, access (ability to acquire sufficient quantity and quality) remain largely elusive. The term "food security" was defined at the World Food Conference, 1974 with an emphasis on supply. They said that food security is the

Availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices¹²³.

The final report of the 1996 World Food Summit states that food security "Exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" ¹²⁴.

In the continuation of food security debate the WHO stated that there are three pillars that determine food security, first is food availability, second food access and third food use. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) adds a fourth pillar: the stability of the first three dimensions of food security over time (Lioubimtseva & Henebry, 2009). In 2009, the World Summit on Food Security stated that the four pillars of food security, i.e. first availability, second access, third utilization and fourth stability.

Earlier, the study have broadly discussed about water scarcity in the Central Asian region. Agriculture and food production is dependent upon water. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Central Asian countries went through their own individual transformations, leading to a highly diversified socio-economic picture today. One of the most acute issues countries in the modern world face today is food security. Central Asia is a highly agrarian region, there are largely population living in the rural areas. Central Asia is facing a number of food security challenges shaped by both traditional and modern food practices. While undernourishment, mostly driven by traditional diet, remains a challenge in countries such as Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republics (Lioubimtseva & Henebry, 2009). We can also see the roots of food security challenges lies due to political, social and economic turmoil, which took place in the region during the post-Soviet transition period. After independence

¹²³ Commission of the European Communities, "World Food Conference, Rome, 5 to 16 November 1974. Communication from the Commission to the Council. SEC (74) 4955 final, 9 December 1974". available at http://aei.pitt.edu/15701/1/SEC_%2874%29_4955_final.pdf . Accessed on 21st August 2013.

¹²⁴ "Rome declaration on world food security and world food summit plan on Action-1996" available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.HTM>. Accessed on 12 June 2014.

traditional trade routes were broken, forcing newly created countries to adjust from regional specialization to independent diversified economic structures.

In Central Asia is a region of perennial food-deficit countries. Trade in food commodities plays a critical role in ensuring food security in Central Asia. Some countries are landlocked in the Central Asia; they have difficult access to international export markets and fragile regional trade linkages. Central Asian countries are highly vulnerable to breakdowns in food trade flows that can severely affect the food security of their populations.

The region have faced sever hit by the food price crisis in 2008, when global food commodity prices spiked and exporters that traditionally supply the region closed their borders. Poor local production conditions compounded the effect of these disruptions in imports. Under these circumstances, staple-food prices increased very high, with the poor bearing the brunt of the high cost of food. After 2012 in the post-crisis environment, several factors have contributed to maintaining a precarious balance between food commodity supply and demand in the food-deficit countries of Central Asia. Rising fuel and transportation costs, along with strong demand growth and rapid inflation, have pushed real and nominal prices up.

In the present context of heightened prices and volatility in international food markets, a better understanding of how Central Asian wheat markets function is critical for monitoring and early detection of threats to food security. Improved understanding will also enable effective food assistance planning and development programming. While most of the Central Asian government interventions focus on short-term measures such as reducing domestic food prices through trade or price control. Long-term food insecurity still exists and risk is also very high, which may render inadequate and require national action plan for regional and multilateral cooperation.

4.3.6 Health Security

In 21 century the overall concept of ‘human security’ is growing so much concern from local level to global level. Health security is the part of human security. The universally accepted definition of World Health Organization (WHO) defines global health security as the “activities required to reduce the vulnerability of people around the world to new, acute, or rapidly spreading risk to health, particularly those

that threaten to cross international borders”¹²⁵. The health security describes the capacities required for countries to prepare for and respond to public health threats and reduce the risk of these threats crossing borders. The risk is very much high for developing and least developed countries due to mal-infrastructure to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to emerging and re-emerging disease. There are many causes for health insecurity like inadequate investment in health sector, unexpected policy shift, food and water borne disease and bio-terrorism, chemical and radioactive element.

After independence in 1991, the former Soviet countries of Central Asia have undertaken profound changes to their health systems, affecting governance arrangements, financing mechanisms and health care delivery. Although the countries of Central Asia differ in many respects, most notably in terms of their socio-economic structure but also Tajikistan’s experience of civil war between 1992 and 1994 and Turkmenistan’s neutrality policy, they have shared many of the same challenges in reforming their health systems in the region collectively¹²⁶.

Historically Central Asian people are nomads. Before the 20 century, Central Asia was inhabited mainly by the nomadic people of the steppes and deserts. They are settled people living in the oases and river valleys. For thousands of years, the region was a crossroad for the inter-mingling of populations, cultures and religions, with a long history of successive invasions by powerful neighbours, including Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Turks and Russians. These also include the Soviet legacy, a marked economic decline in the initial years of transition.

Population of the Central Asian countries are living in the rural areas with poor infrastructure. All the five countries have also share a similar pattern of disease with very high rates of non-communicable (the main cause of death), but also high rates of communicable disease (in particular tuberculosis, but increasingly also HIV/AIDS), and high maternal and infant mortality rate (Nourzhanov, 2009).

In the 2012 report, these five Central Asian countries have almost 190 000 people practise injecting drug use. While the number of new HIV infections person is

¹²⁵ “Global Health Security Agenda”, Centres for disease control and prevention, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/healthprotection/ghs/faqs.htm>, accessed on 24th April 2013.

¹²⁶ Ibid

decreasing globally, in Central Asian countries it's 14th times higher than 2000.¹²⁷ In addition, the five Central Asian countries have a high ratio of hepatitis C in this group (5–75%), and the highest rates of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) in the world, with people who inject drugs among the most vulnerable. In the Central Asia the government is highly ignorant about prevention of HIV/AIDS. However, only 11% of all HIV-prevention investment focuses on populations at higher risk.¹²⁸ Only one third of population, who inject drugs are reached by needle and syringe programmes. Due to lack of health facility very few people receiving antiretroviral therapies, who are suffering from HIV.

4.3.7 Migration and Human Trafficking

Migration system is understood as a people from particular countries migrate to other countries due to historic, cultural, demographic and political factors and its lead to structural transformations in recipient and donor countries. Migration and trafficking are basically separate phenomenon but its inter-related issues. Migration may take place through regular or irregular channels and may be freely chosen or forced upon the human beings as a means of survival during conflict time, in economic crisis or because of environmental disaster. 'Human Trafficking',¹²⁹ is fundamentally different; usually it involves the movement of people for the purposes of exploiting their labour or services. The vast majority of people who are trafficked are migrant workers. They are seeking to escape poverty and discrimination, improve their lives and send money back to their families.

¹²⁷ "Central Asia in the spotlight: growing HIV epidemic among people who inject drugs", available at <http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/sections/press-releases/2012/06/central-asia-in-the-spotlight-growing-hiv-epidemic-among-people-who-inject-drugs>, accessed on 27th June 2015.

¹²⁸ Ibid

¹²⁹ In November 2000, the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, defines trafficking as: "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. The definition makes clear that trafficking covers not only the transportation of a person from one place to another, but also for their exploitation is part of the trafficking process. It also states that trafficking is not limited to sexual exploitation and also takes place for forced labour and other slavery like practices. This means that people who migrate for work in agriculture, catering, construction or domestic work, but are deceived or coerced into working in conditions they did not agree to, are also defined as trafficked people.

In recent years, trafficking has flourished due to many reasons. This is a high profit, low-risk enterprise. The risks of getting caught are low because traffickers use many measures in order to retain control over the migrant and thereby ensure that they are either unable or unwilling to contact or co-operate with the authorities. These mechanisms include.

1).Threat of violence: They use different means of violence, which includes torture; rape etc. this is commonly used by traffickers as a means of ensuring the compliance of migrants. In the long term it is the threat of violence against family or friends in countries of origin which proves the most effective deterrent to those who consider trying to escape or reporting their traffickers to the authorities.

2).Irregular immigration status and control of movement: Many trafficked people enter in any country with clandestinely or false documents. In the migrant worker case, they have entered legally but traffickers normally take away their passports and other travel documents so that the migrant cannot prove that they have a right to be in the country.

3).Debt Bondage: In order to pay for the travel to take up the well paying jobs abroad that they have been promised, most of the migrants borrowed money. Migrants who have debts money to the family members back home will feel that they have no alternatives as they cannot return home without the money they owe (Kaye, 2003).

Migration and trafficking from central Asian countries is not a new phenomenon. The five Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are strategically located between Russia, China, South Asia and the Caucasus. After independence in 1991, all countries have had difficult transitions and face uncertain futures. Central Asian countries have enormous fossil fuel reserves, hydropower, in some and mineral wealth in others, the region has witnessed a major decline in living standards in the last decade of 20th century. Due to poorly managed transition the Central Asian Republics facing many challenges because of ill-equipped to function as autonomous economic units and partly. The Soviet legacies are still remaining in the field of politics and economy, alongside imperfect markets and limited privatization and democratization.

Factor for migration from Central Asia

1).Culture and history: Central Asian republics have good and historical linkages with the Russia. This is one of the key factors shaping migration flows in the post -Soviet space. This migration system was formed within the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union. It was based on socio-economic ties among nations and countries and on the spread of the Russian language as the main instrument of communication within the former Soviet Union.

2).Infrastructure and Geography: This is also a big factor among migrants. It is also obvious that Russia and Kazakhstan have good infrastructure and also have convenient location from the standpoint of Central Asian migrants. Despite being located in the heart of Eurasia in terms of transport, Central Asian states have a much stronger link with Kazakhstan. They take transport through Kazakhstan with Russia, than with China, Afghanistan, Middle East and other regions. Russia and Kazakhstan can be reached from rest of the four Central Asian countries by various means: by railroad and motor vehicles, by sea and air.

3).Political Relations: On the one hand Central Asian countries have very good relations with Russia and other regional countries like China and Turkey. Within Central Asia they have visa free regime and with Russia also, this is also determine significant scale of migration flows. At present citizens of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan (the only exception is Turkmenistan) can enter Russia without a visa. Kazakhstan offers visa free entry to citizens of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Russia and some other states. Of course, political relations sometimes get strained, which has some impact on temporary labour migrants.

4).Economy: Since independence Central Asian countries are facing numerous economic challenges. The main economic prerequisites prompting the departure of population from one place to another, this is the typical push factors. Stagnation of production, low wages, widespread poverty, high unemployment, lack of jobs is the major concern areas of the Central Asian countries. On the other hand, economic pull factors are in force in recipient countries Russia and Kazakhstan. These countries are offering numerous employment opportunities in different industries and they have also higher wages. In this context typical migration model, based on pull and push

factors, has emerged among Central Asian countries on the one hand and Russia and Kazakhstan on the other hand.

5).Social factor. This factor is always playing key role in decision-making regarding the need to migrate. In many Central Asian people, their conscience reproduces behavioural stereotypes that are oriented towards labour migration to Russia as a strategy of success in life. It's also considerable share of young people after graduating from school choose to seek employment in Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkey preferring this to higher education institutions and regarding migration as a more successful strategy of behaviour (Bartolomeo,et.al, 2014).

Central Asians are being increasingly trafficked abroad, both for low-skilled labour and for prostitution¹³⁰. Mainly Central Asian women went to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Turkey, with which the mostly Turkic-speaking countries in the region have cultural and economic ties. But there is also trafficking among the five countries. Tajik women are known to have ended up in Uzbekistan, a place they consider more stable than Tajikistan. Uzbek women, in turn, have been brought to Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyz women to Kazakhstan, which is also popular as a transit country because of its flight connections from Almaty¹³¹. While trafficking of men and children also occur but most victims are women. They are trafficked abroad for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The increase in trafficking in women is an unintended consequence and a “female underside” of globalization¹³².

The Central Asian governments are concern about the trafficking issue: Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan acknowledge that the problem exists, and cooperate with international organizations on the issue. They have taken actions such as developing anti-trafficking legislation and adopting governmental action plans to combat this phenomenon.¹³³ On the other hand Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan still do

¹³⁰“The rise in vice”; Trafficking in Central Asian Women: The Economist 359 (No.8226), June 14, 2001.Almaty.available at <http://www.economist.com/node/656522> accessed on 21 January 2014.

¹³¹ ibid

¹³² “The rise in vice”; Trafficking in Central Asian Women: The Economist 359 (No.8226), June 14,

¹³³U.S. Department of State. 2003. Trafficking in Persons Report. Washington, D.C.; Available at <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/>; accessed on 22 January, 2014.

not even acknowledge that trafficking is a problem in their respective countries. The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) reports on Uzbekistan

Officially, trafficking in women and violence against women as understood by international experts do not exist. And if trafficking does not exist, there is no problem. However, in fact, this problem exists and hundreds of girls and young women are sent abroad illegally (officially as tourists) in order to earn money to live. They are promised employment as nannies, tutors, sitters, etc. However, most of them do not get the jobs they were promised and end up busy in the business of sexual services. At the same time, the oriental mentality... not to appeal to law enforcement bodies or public organizations prevents not only the presentation of statistical data, but also prevents trafficking from being officially recognized as a problem¹³⁴.

As a result of such differing positions on the trafficking issue among Central Asian governments, this problem is uneven throughout the region. All the Central Asian countries have to take serious call against human trafficking through regional mechanism and multilateral cooperation.

4.3.8 Drug and Arms Trafficking

The illicit trade in drugs in Central Asia represents a major challenge to the region's long term stability. Illegal trafficking in drugs is linked to a host of social problem, including a rising incidence of HIV infection, higher crime rates, corruption and connection to terrorist groups and organized crime. These challenges inhibit efforts toward increasing stability via economic and political reform by diverting resources and funding into interdiction and control. Furthermore, drug addiction is not only a threat to the states of Central Asia themselves, but the countries of the region also serve, to varying degree, as conduits for the movement of opiates to the broader Eurasian region.

Drug production and trafficking intertwined with the issue of the proliferation of small arms is the production and trafficking of illicit narcotics, which is a major destabilizing factor and security concern, not only for a particular country but for all five Central Asian states. The last three decade has seen a tremendous increase in the

¹³⁴International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (2000). A Form of Slavery: Trafficking in Women in OSCE Member States; Internet; available at http://www.ihfhr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=1921; accessed on 22 January 2014.

production and trafficking of drugs in and from Afghanistan. Profits of drugs are a key source of financing that sustains terrorism and extremism in the region. There are very strong connected linked among criminal groups and networks for drug trafficking oversee the safe passage of drugs through Afghanistan and Central Asia to markets of Europe (Latypov, 2012).

The crime terror nexus is illustrated by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The IMU, both a criminal and terrorist organization, appears primarily concerned with financial gain and successfully used terrorism in the early 2000s to maintain and secure routes for transporting narcotics (Hanks, 2010). Central Asia's geographical continuity to Afghanistan is the most important factor affecting regional drug trafficking. Approximately one third of the drugs produced in Afghanistan an annual average of 120 tons or more, primarily heroin are transported through Central Asia (Latypov, 2012).

In addition, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the civil war in Tajikistan, and the struggle against the illicit drug trade in Iran have created conditions resulting in increased drug trafficking through Central Asia. It's very easy to drug smuggling over the borders between Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Factors that affect drug smuggling in the region and promote drug transit in Central Asian countries include the long common border between Afghanistan and the countries of Central Asia and the increase in demand for narcotics in Central Asia and Russia.

In the process, the region was awash in arms, readily available for the extremists and terrorists who remained in the border areas even after the Soviet forces had withdrawn. An additional source of arms supplies was the huge stockpiles of weapons left behind by the retreating Soviet forces, which fell into the hands of the Mujahideen (Yang , 2008: 341). A major central locale for the production, sale and proliferation of weaponry is Darra Adam Khel in the North West Frontier Province, commonly known as the 'Main Open Arms Bazaar' (Latypov, 2012) Arms production in Darra was regarded as a cottage industry, but has gradually become a large industry, free of government control and taxation. The arms bazaar of the NWFP is also renowned for the wide range of weaponry that it has on sale. Moscow also contributed to the proliferation of arms in the region.

The beginning of the 'War on Terror'¹³⁵ in September, 2001, led to the influx of arms in the region. Pakistan became a frontline state once again in this war on terror, with a primary role to ensure the security of the supply route through the North West Frontier Province to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and to provide other logistical support (Hanks, 2010).

A related problem with HIV and drug addiction in Central Asia is the dearth of treatment and prevention programs and the low quality of health in general. Drugs are also tied to increase criminality and corruption in Central Asian countries, further, weakening the foundation of civil society and social stability. The corruption linked to drug smuggling extends throughout the entire interdiction apparatus in Central Asia, from border guards to highly placed official in government ministries. The instability brought on by the drug trade and its ramification in Central Asia represents a serious threat to political stability and social and economic development.

4.4 Areas for Regional Cooperation

The concern area for regional cooperation has come in the security sphere. Central Asian policymakers turned to one another because of events in Afghanistan, increased drug trafficking, human trafficking into Tajikistan and the incursions of Islamic forces into the area (Kangas, 2008). While the Central Asian states are all officially secular, Islam holds an important place in their domestic and day to day life. Nearly all the presidents, most of whom are former communist functionaries, have proclaimed their loyalty to Islam, except Uzbekistan. They are working to accommodate to establish the clergy, tried to reduce the youth and rural unemployment that breeds fundamentalism, and increased surveillance and repression of dissidents. The Central Asian states have entered into military consultations, coordinated responses, and implemented domestic military reforms (Kavalski, 2010).

The Central Asian Battalion (CentrAsBat) was organized under the auspices of NATO by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan in 1997 (Kasenov, 1997). All

¹³⁵ After the terrorist attacks on World trade centre and pentagon on 11th September 2001, the president of the USA George.W. Bush administration declared a worldwide "war on terror," involving open and covert military operations, new security legislation, efforts to block the financing of terrorism. This term was used first time on 29th September, 2001. Washington called on other states to join in the fight against terrorism asserting that "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."

three of these states have participated in military exercises with American, Russian, and CIS troops. Surprisingly, all these security alignments were initiated by interested parties from outside Central Asia. Most of the CentrAsBat troops serving at the Tajik-Afghan border are Russian natives. CentrAsBat has not been used to combat Tajik insurgents and also not fought against Taliban in Afghanistan. The incursions of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Batken, Kyrgyzstan, in 1999 and again in 2000 were repelled by Uzbek forces unilaterally entering a neighbouring state, as well as by Kyrgyz army units (Kangas, 2008).

In view of the small number of Islamist invaders and their failure to recruit indigenous allies, many observers think that the Uzbeks are exaggerating the external threat to justify stricter domestic control. Some scholar said that “however, regard the high rate of youth unemployment in the Fergana Valley as a fertile ground for future Islamic radicalism”. Security fears, whether genuine or exaggerated for domestic political purposes, have induced the Central Asian states to welcome the NATO and CIS training, equipment, and forces that they once declined (Malhotra.et.al, 2014).

Central Asian economists generally recognize that regional cooperation would be favourable for the regeneration of Central Asian industry and ultimate growth renewal. After all, in the Leninist version of Marxism, the international division of labour was a principal tenet and supposed advantage of socialism over monopolistic-imperialistic capitalism. As of early 2000 no Central Asian country has recovered the level of GDP it had achieved in 1989 (Linn, 2007).

Besides exploiting natural resources for export, renewed growth in Central Asia will depend in some greater part on local manufacturing for local needs. In Central Asia it's requires an efficient production with minimum assured output to achieve reasonably low costs. For example, assembly of automobiles or farm machinery is subject to economies of scale that cannot be fully exploited at the scale of Kyrgyzstan, or even Uzbekistan (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013).

Similarly for electronics goods and probably consumer appliances, earlier it was provided by Soviet factories to Central Asia. That trade has ceased altogether. Revival of civilian machine-building industry would make sense in Central Asia only with access to the regional markets. In view of accumulated technical skills in all

these countries, the potential for development is considerable if trade and business outlets can be assured (Malhotra.et.al, 2014).

A free trade area in Central Asia would constitute a much larger market than any of the isolated countries. An economic union allowing free movement of goods and production would be better for regional entrepreneurship. There are high possibilities for the investment from foreign investors in this larger market. While the market for Coca-Cola, Snickers candy, cigarettes, and personal communications already seems to be large enough in each of these countries and monopoly privileges or exclusive franchises actually increase the profitability of exclusive access of the market seems too small and fragile for big ticket items with substantial after-sale service. So-called gravity models of international trade, whose parameters have been estimated by the World Bank, indicate that in view of the closeness of the Central Asian markets, Soviet-era trade therein was sub-optimal, particularly if high costs of transport are taken into account (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013).

To assure the efficiency and progressiveness of industrial structures in Central Asian area must have several competing manufacturers in each product market. As shown by the experience of Japan, Western Europe, and the United States, it is mainly competition that spurs innovation, cost-reduction, and management efficiency. Central Asia must create a large enough arena to accommodate workably competitive industries that can survive and thrive without budgetary subsidies. But ensuring competition by fostering medium and small sized industries are neglected aspect of economic reform in all the Central Asian countries. Even in free-market Kyrgyzstan, enterprises with more than 500 employees still produce more than half of all industrial output. Only social functions have been spun off. There has been little or no horizontal de-concentration of market structures to increase competition (Linn & Pidufala, 2007).

The governments have preferred to regulate monopolies with stifling price controls rather than encourage free entry from domestic and nearby foreign sources. Openness across regional borders would increase competition among the Central Asian countries; it would also tend to reduce petty government interference in the market. It's quite difficult to counter interferences and corruption without a vigorous parliamentary opposition and court system. (Linn & Pidufala, 2007).

In the social aspect Central Asia faced considerable political, social, cultural changes in the whole period 20th century and the beginning 21 century. After disintegration of Soviet Union, it was new stages of the geopolitical changes and dynamics of international relations in Central Asia. For centuries Central Asia was in the backwater of global political and economic attention, tales of “Great Games” and “Silk Roads” notwithstanding. However, interest in Central Asia from outside the region has been on the rise in recent years: Central Asia’s energy resources are of great importance to its neighbours in Europe and Asia.

Regional cooperation has been a long-standing theme of official proclamations. President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan has called for a "single Turkestan," though the majority of his speeches stress national independence. Former president of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akayev and president of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev have also recognized an ethnic kinship with their neighbours (Malhotra.et.al, 2014). The countries languages are closely related, though not mutually intelligible, except for Tajik, related to Persian. Their Muslim religious and customary practices are similar. Rural Kyrgyz and Kazaks are traditionally nomadic pastoralists; the Uzbeks and Turkmen have been settled agriculturists.

There are many environmental issues that threaten human security in the region. These include the growing demand for water and energy, along with the difficulties the countries face in agreeing on resources allocation. Still this region has not find any solutions to deal with increased pollution, changes in hydrological regimes and the legacy of past industrial and agricultural practices. These challenges could lead to high security risks (Malhotra.et.al, 2014). There is a growing understanding that environmental degradation, inequitable access to natural resources and trans-boundary movement of hazardous materials can increase the probability of conflict, and thereby pose a risk to national and regional security, especially to human security threats. Environmental problems, such as resource scarcity stemming from diverse factors including over-exploitation and population growth, can act as threats to people’s security. This has the potential to cause conflict both at community and national levels.

However, the links between resource scarcity and conflict are not always clear and require greater study and research. The stability and security of Central Asia has

been affected the direction of integration and transformation process, patterns of regional cooperation, and building of institutions. Central Asian republics have been co-founders of many regional organizations including Central Asian Cooperation Organizations (CACO), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), but integration process is still not completed. Challenges of the 21st century require a broader partnership and cooperation. Future prospects of multilateral regional and international cooperation in Central Asia will depend on correlations of national, regional and global interests. It is necessary first of all strong dialogs between Central Asian republics itself. Central Asian geopolitical, economic and security challenges are connected and solution could come jointly. Future regional cooperation, strong international partnership would promote more stability, economic reforms and democratization to region and beyond.

4.5 Quest for Cooperation

Since independence from the Soviet Union, Central Asian leaders and economists have always spoken favourably about the prospect of regional cooperation among Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Their rhetoric and joint proclamations call attention to their common Turkic and Muslim background, as well as their shared Soviet experience. The Central Asian states acknowledge the need for a common regional market permitting a rational division of labour and a better bargaining position with outsiders. The common legacy of Soviet rule is, of course, beginning to show signs of exhaustion. Use of Russian as the common language in regional affairs is an important example (Kazantsev, 2008).

During the initial years after independence, regional cooperation was arguably less attractive than what might be called “export globalism” (Kaysan, 2010). Multilateral trade and investment ignored geographical or ethnic affinity. With the breakdown of Soviet markets, staple goods became the main commodities for exports of the Central Asian countries. Uzbekistan could sell its cotton most profitably in the West; Turkmenistan, its natural gas; Tajikistan, its aluminium and gold; Kyrgyzstan, its gold; and Kazakhstan, its oil leases (Linn, 2007). Regional cooperation among the Central Asian states has been not so satisfactory, despite the salient problems of slow growth, water scarcity, and Islamist extremism, human trafficking, arms smuggling

and etc. In all of these policy areas, powerful political factors diminish the potential for cooperation. First, these are all new states, and they naturally wish to reinforce their weak national identities by symbolic, administrative, and economic means. Central Asian manufacturing markets revive on a regional basis would require some countries to forgo development of product lines, close facilities while expanding to the others neighbouring markets.

Each Central Asian state has its own specific economic potential and there are strong regional contrasts. Kazakhstan economy boomed in the first decade of the 21Century and today its gross domestic product (GDP) represent close 60% of the total GDP of Central Asia (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013). More than time is needed to develop regional cooperation. Based on experience elsewhere, countries must have high employment growth before they will risk the shutdowns and competition that regional integration might bring. Central Asia countries has numerous areas for cooperation, such as

- 1).For the common security concerns to fight against religious extremism and terrorism. Central Asian states can cooperate in defence sector
- 2). Cooperation in the area of trade, commerce and business. They can develop a common market.
- 3).Due to environmental degradation, de-forestation, and desertification and for water issue, all Central Asian countries have to promote cooperation among each other.
- 4). All Central Asian countries have shared history, culture and tradition, so they should all have to come together for common socio-cultural concern.

The most promising agent for regional cooperation would be multilateral donors. They are truly interested in fostering the region's prosperity, if only to prevent instability and emigration. The Asian Development Bank, to which all the Central Asian states belong, has promoted regional cooperation in Southeast Asia with its Mekong River plan and has undertaken a number of road projects to connect trans-border area in Central Asia (ADB report, 2012). The same is true for the technical assistance programs run by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the United Nations (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013). These

communication and transportation projects are promising for commercial and industrial activity in Central Asia. Free-trade zones in Central Asia would function better, if the European Union, the World Bank, the UNDP, and the Japanese Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (JOECF) cooperate at regional level and offer for major loans and assistance (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2013).

These donors, unlike the major military powers, are not in conflict with one another and are open to joint ventures for the benefit of the Central Asian region. But the major challenge is lack of coordination efforts among donors. With careful negotiations, large firms could be persuaded to open facilities for different product lines in each of the cooperating states so that all would be benefitted. Multinational firms with eventual Central Asian equity participation could provide some of the mortar that would rebuild the region's division of labour on free market principles (Kayasan, 2010).

4.6 Obstacles for Regional Cooperation

Central Asia has to deal with a 'spaghetti bowl effect', which includes the overlapping goals and logics of regional organisations. The growing number of non-coordinated multilateral agreements negatively impacts regional integration by creating geopolitical tensions between the main external actors and, economically, 'potentially distortive trading incentives (Linn, 2009). During the analysis process, we notice the failures of many regional organisations in Central Asia; it is appropriate to look into the goals of Central Asian states. Their aspirations of regional integration, conceptions foreign policy objectives and authoritarian political cultures are not necessarily favourable for collective agendas, even being directly contradictory to such efforts. Eminent economists Johannes Linn have been campaigning for the progressive elimination of a number of agreements, notably those that will probably lose all meaning if the majority of Central Asian states become members of the WTO.

With the broader agendas of external players at the geopolitical level, contradictions also exist within the region. The ruling elites of Central Asian states are very much concerned about autonomy in the management of their domestic affairs, thus wanting to avoid dealing with any potential new 'big brothers' that may hunger after the role formerly played by Moscow (Laruelle, 2013). But at the same

time we can see the all attempts to create regional cooperation among the only five Central Asian countries are members, have therefore failed, due to a lack of political will and coordination. Intra-regional cooperation is impeded by multiple tensions between political leaders, unresolved border issues, contradictory geopolitical orientations and an inability to find a consensual resolution to the regional water and energy nexus (Ebel & Menon, 2000).

The two major countries of Central Asia are in particular hampered regional cooperation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan proceed their unique 'neutrality' position in their foreign policy and have declared its reluctance to engage in any multilateral or regional cooperation and refuses to envisage, even symbolically, any loss of sovereignty. As well as Uzbekistan's fluctuating decision for the regional integration is also responsible. Although there are many factors, which make Central Asia an important region in the world politics.

- 1).The availability of rich energy resources in Central Asia and the Caspian region.
- 2). Geopolitical location of Central Asian continent among such regional powers like Russia, China, India, Iran and Turkey and there are also highly interested extra regional powers like US, the EU.
- 3). After 9/11 incident, the American 'War on Terror' agenda in Afghanistan also make this region more important and crucial for US. Due to presence of US, Russia and China become more active than earlier.
- 4). The newly emerged threats in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are like illegal drug production and trafficking, extremism and terrorism can also be regarded as a source of possible threats to neighbouring countries.

All these and other factors have encouraged regional and global players to cooperate in Central Asia in the post-Cold War era. As a result, post-Soviet Central Asia has emerged important geopolitical area of the major and regional powers and major international organizations and institutions as well.

Chapter-5

Problems and Prospects for Multilateral and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia.

Cooperation is a natural phenomenon, it occurs in every society. In the 21st century, countries are cooperating at the bilateral level, regional level as well as multilateral level. The states are successfully realizing their interests through regional or multilateral cooperation. Regional and global stability is a powerful factor for cooperation in the present times. As we are approaching the silver anniversary of the independence of the Central Asian States, it is an appropriate time to review what they have learned in these 25 years about the efficiency of the regional cooperation in responding to the challenges in the region. After 9/11 major geopolitical shifts took place and internal dynamics have changed in between which set the stage for greater power competition in Central Asia. But not only competitions, cooperation on a multilateral and regional level have also flourished in the Central Asian region; to encounter the newly emerged security threats and also for further cooperation in the future.

Eurasian continental space is defined as the region that covers all of Europe and Asia. It also includes the Arab Peninsula and the Middle East. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and opening up of China in the 1980s, the tightly bifurcated world order tore down and the new world order initiated. In the new world order, the 'Eurasia' can now integrate with the "economic globalisation" process. The regional integration process started in the last century but it was truly based on the "military cooperation". In the contemporary world, Eurasia has captured the largest share of world trade which is happening by virtue of rapid economic integration process in this region.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, fifteen states became independent. The emergence of Central Asian states as an independent entity, dramatically crafted the geopolitical significance of the Eurasian region. It changed the scenario and the once marginalised Central Asian countries during the cold war years have once again assumed their strategic importance in the region for major powers. Very few regions in the world have better experienced the reality of contemporary international relations, governed by the principles of cooperation and conflicts. The Central Asian countries have been the onsite witnesses of such an

experience. On the one hand, the major powers like United States, Russia, and China are extending cooperation with each other to achieve some sort of peace and stability in the region against terrorism and radicalism. Whereas, on the other hand, they are also competing to gain strategic control over the rich natural resources of the region, especially oil and gas. This competition was evident and an example of power struggle called “Great Game” in the 19 century but at that time it was for control over the ‘Silk Route’. In 20 century nature and objectives of the game has been changed, now it’s called the “New Great Game”.

Contemporary Central Asia is in the process of transformation and facing numerous security challenges. The integration process is affected in Central Asia due to instability and insecurity in this region. It has also affected the process of institution building and regional cooperation. Central Asian countries are co-founders of many regional organizations including Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), but their effectiveness and working area are different. For the harmonization of the transport routes and easily connectivity to Europe, Central Asian, and Caucasus Republics, as well as China, Iran, Pakistan and India are involved in the process of above organizations.

These developments have great significance for Central Asia. Central Asian economies were mostly driven by Moscow during Soviet days. Now Central Asian states are increasingly looking towards China, US, Europe, and India to gain support and benefits while maintaining strong links with old partner Russia. Central Asia’s neighbours like China, Russia and extended neighbour India have a large share in the global economy. In the present day world order they count among the most dynamic economies of the world. That is why the Central Asian countries want to come more and more close to these states.

Central Asian countries never felt having been handicapped due to their land-locked geographical location because in the ancient times, they were the part of the popular “Silk Route” which used to pass from the region. The passage of the “Silk Route” from the region was a boon for these countries and it provided greater opportunities to them for being “land-linked” to the world’s great and dynamic

economies of the time (Kuchins.et.al, 2015). Even in the present time the Chinese initiative of “One Belt One Road” program is also relying on this “land-linked” region. This initiative will not only benefit from the access of goods, energy, capital and labour markets but also from the potential transit trade route. This route will again develop a link across the Central Asian region to Europe and Asia from East to West and North to South.

All the five Central Asian republics which were the part of the USSR started to become members of different regional organizations like CIS, Custom Union, CSTO, SCO etc. in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. They started to follow their independent foreign policy and established bilateral relations with many countries after getting independence. The sudden collapse of Soviet system has raised serious implications for the Central Asian states. The Soviet policies not only stressed ethnic and linguistic awareness but also drew the boundaries of the Republics in a manner that exacerbated historical rivalries and tensions by creating large ethnic minorities. There were riots in Kyrgyzstan in 1990 between the Uzbek and Kyrgyz community, while the instability in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was also rooted in ethnic tensions.

The disintegration of Soviet Union necessitated a collective approach towards the regional issues of common concern. On the question of civil war in Tajikistan, the Central Asian states took a collective approach keeping their common concerns in mind. After the outbreak of civil war in Tajikistan, the spread of the war across national borders was a major cause of concern for other Central Asian governments. Central Asian leaders frequently met to seek resolutions to stop the ongoing grave situation in Tajikistan. They supported the Russian proposal to establish a peacekeeping force in the country. Relations with Moscow have always been at the top of the foreign policy agenda of all five Central Asian states for both political and economic reasons (Hormats, 2011).

The Central Asian voice could be louder and more audible in world politics through the regional and multilateral cooperation. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are the regional competitors; this regional competition is prevailing since independence. Gradually it was also felt that the CIS is not in a position to respond to the regional aspirations of the Central Asian states. Russia is still a major factor in the regional

groupings. In most of the regional security and economic organizations, Russia is playing a leading role. After disintegration in 1991 which was the starting phase of different forms of regional cooperation, out of which some were 'indigenous' to Central Asian countries whereas other organizations involves the regional major powers like Russia and China (Rakhimov,2010).

In the post-Cold War era, many countries have become regional and global players. The heartland of Eurasia became the "playground" for the regional powers due to geopolitical and geo-economic interests. At the same time many multilateral organizations and international institutions like United Nation (UN), the European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) etc. have increased their presence in this region. The western countries started attaching an increased importance to Central Asia's central location at the "crossroads of Eurasia" (Kozhokin, 2009).

5.1 Problems of Regional Cooperation in Central Asia

Gradually, with the passage of time, Central Asia is able to make an impact on the global politics. Multilateral cooperation and regional integration are bringing with it both benefits and challenges. To have a regionally integrated market for the barrier-free trade and investment across the region is necessary for sustainable growth. In the recent trends, it can be noticed that globalization and regionalism are coexisting at the same time in the present global economic scenario. On the one hand, long and complex negotiations resulted in the global framework created under the World Trade Organization (WTO) is in vogue whereas, on the other hand, trend towards regionalism have noticeably intensified in the global economy and politics across the globe.

The ongoing European Union crisis has raised a range of questions about regional integration, particularly relating to integration process and its validity. It is well known that major powers like, Russia, US, and China offered their support for peace and stability in Central Asia. Traditionally Russia always wants to make its sphere of influence on Central Asian states as having proximity with them and also does not wish to see either China or US involved in the region.

The Central Asian countries accepted the idea of regional cooperation as a vital strategy for development and the consolidation of security. As the study has

discussed earlier that they have many common social and environmental problems and that could only be addressed by comprehensive regional cooperation. This is argued that the separately Central Asian economies are too small and weak to attract the interest of foreign investors. Only after integration, Central Asian countries would create a larger economic space. After this process, foreign investor can come in the region for investment. Through regional approach, Central Asian countries can also stress on training programmes and different forms of technical assistance. This form of cooperation would have a greater impact, and be more cost effective.

However, soon after independence it became very clear that there are many obstacles in the integration process.

- 1).The newly independent Central Asian states were acutely sensitive to matters of national sovereignty; they were very much reluctant to cede powers of decision-making and control to multilateral institutions.
- 2).There is trust deficit among the Central Asian countries.
- 3).The diverging interest of Central Asian countries and Major power involvement.
- 4).There are issues of national dignity and honour that impinge on attitudes to socio-economic issues.
- 5).The culture of dependency on major power.
- 6).There is a lack of confidence in regulatory instruments which engenders a deep sense of insecurity.
- 7).Distribution of resources (Lawington, 2013).

Thus, these problems are exacerbated by asymmetries between Central Asian states. All five states are different in their size and territory, resource endowment, population, defence capability and access to transit routes. During negotiations with the big neighbours, the smaller states like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan feel vulnerable. The small states are very much suspicious about this fact that 'collective goods' will not be distributed equitably. In their perception their territorial integrity will not be respected by the big states (Linn, 2012).

In Central Asia, the bureaucracy of younger generation has relatively less administrative experience rather than older generation, who worked in the Soviet bureaucracy. This new generation often finds it difficult to adapt to new system. The result is that institutions for inter-state cooperation may be in place, but frequently they do not function effectively. After disintegration, the Central Asian countries for the first time started engaging themselves in the bilateral negotiations. Earlier as a part of Soviet regime they were never exposed to such bilateral dialogues as these affairs were managed by supreme Soviet authority leaving no space at regional level. This is another adverse factor is the weak tradition of regional cooperation. There is little practical understanding of how to plan and manage multilateral projects. Consequently, such skills must be acquired almost from scratch (Ibatullin, 2015).

Yet the most serious potential obstacle for regional integration is the polarization of the two larger states i.e. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The leaders of these states have adopted very different attitude and policies for regional integration. Kazakh president Nursultan Nazarbayev has consistently advocated good relationship with Russia within the framework of a Eurasian alliance.

Meanwhile, Uzbek President Islam Karimov has distanced himself from Russia and has a bent towards USA. However, it is not clear whether this posture is motivated by strategic considerations or whether it is an attempt to bolster personality cult. Sometimes Uzbekistan has adopted a critical view towards the various regional organizations. Sceptical question marks on its membership of these regional organizations undoubtedly hamper the legitimacy and validity of the organization. On the other hand, Kazakhstan has pursued a more measured and consistent approach towards regional cooperation. Kazakhstan is working steadily towards establishing itself as the central pole of attraction.

Undoubtedly, this internal dissension weakens the prospects for Central Asian integration. In some situation we can see Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have avoided taking sides and thereby prevented further fragmentation.

There are also many reasons for ineffective regional cooperation in the world. At the same time, same situation is reflecting in Central Asia too.

- 1). Lack of political commitment ownership by leaders.

- 2). Lack of funding mechanisms.
- 3). Lack of transparency.
- 4). Lack of engagement by the private sector and civil society.
- 5). Lack of a clear results agenda and monitoring of progress (Linn, 2012).

However, the situation deteriorated, resulting in serious regional rifts due to non-cooperation among regional leaders. Early in the 1990s, regional integration in Central Asia, regarded as a means to ensure regional stability and security and achieving economic development. But intensified ethnic conflict and civil war became increasingly violent. During initial years after independence, there was rise not only in outright fighting but also in conflict-related problems, such as the illegal migration of people, drugs and arms smuggling, environmental issues especially water sharing dispute among states etc.

These conflicts became a catalyst for terrorist activity in the region. These terrorist activities often linked to extremist Islamic slogans and separatist movement. Many scholars predicted that Central Asian region may face worse situation by the “Domino effect” of the Tajikistan civil war during 1992-97, but fortunately it didn’t happen. However, there was a “spill-over” effect of this incident. It intensified by violence and lawlessness that continued till the peace agreement in 1997¹³⁶.

The emergence of Taliban in 1996-97 in Afghanistan emerged as a major event for this region. A militant Islamist group and the ultra-conservative group made a disastrous situation in the neighbouring states of the Central Asian countries. Suddenly drugs and arms smuggling increased and the cross-border crime-terror nexus intensified religious extremism in the Central Asian countries. The initial years of the new millennium Central Asian countries faced a long and severe drought situation and it further enlarged the list of ongoing problems by adding issue such as uncontrolled population movements, illegal migrations particularly from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to neighbouring countries. In the later years Central Asian states

¹³⁶ “General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan”, available at http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/tajik_gen_agree_19970627.pdf , published on 9th April 2002. Accessed on 12 March 2016.

have seen the draught situation in consecutive years. Such environmental catastrophes intensified popular discontent and anger among the citizens of the Central Asian countries (Marsden, 1998).

Due to the deteriorating socio-economic conditions, militant and extremist groups start mushrooming in the Central Asian region, they also propagated anti-establishment agenda. They grounded their footprints in the region and used that situation to become popular in the Central Asian republics, especially in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Uzbekistan has become a soft target of terrorist activities; those groups are also involved in organized crimes.

Neighbouring countries like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have also suffered from unrest and terrorist activities in the region. Separatist groups particularly Uighur's in Xinjiang province of China have also links with the terror incidents in the region. Nevertheless, these primary security threats are cross border in nature. Drugs and arms smuggling, militant, religious extremism, separatism, human trafficking and environmental issues are such threats that can only be addressed by collective regional initiatives. Regional alliances are always in favour of small states, not only for multiplying the resources but also to save them from the 'big states' (MacFarlane & Torjesen, 2005).

Water sharing issue is also a source of conflict between Central Asian states. Water is a fugitive resource, it moves freely from one country to another. It crosses the political boundaries of many countries without a passport in the form of rivers, lakes and aquifers. Trans-boundary waters resources make hydrological interdependence among nations. Central Asian states have started to securitize water-related issues due to national concerns over economic development. The issue of water has become important in Central Asia. The maximum fresh water comes from the high mountain ranges of Pamir and Tien Shan in the Eastern range of Central Asia. It has contributed in the two main rivers of the region, "the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya", flowing West and North towards the Aral Sea (Armstrong, 2014).

This is the region with arid and semi-arid global vegetation zones. In this region, agriculture is completely based on the irrigation system, which demands sophisticated water distribution systems. After the end of the Cold War, we can notice the consequent decay of "traditional security threats," and gradually the

concerns regarding the water shortage and policy agenda on water sharing. It causes alarming responses from worldwide as well as lively debate about the implications of this problem in terms of conflict resolution strategies.

Water distribution system became associated with security concerns, a phenomenon that has been labelled as the “securitization of water resource management” (Marat, 2008). This means that water issues are linked to “national security concerns, thereby taking them out of the normal domain of technical management and placing them in the secret and closed domain of security officials” (Buzan 1998). This phenomenon is also important that “something is designated as an international security issue because it can be argued that this issue is more important than others and should take absolute priority an existential threat” (Buzan, 1998). It can be said, “if securitization triggers conflict over water resources, ‘de-securitization’ may be the optimal long-range option” (Buzan,1998).

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, economic development was the major concern among the Central Asian countries. By retaining the elements of common economic space after the disintegration of USSR, these states believed in the possibilities of speeding up economic processes through integration of the region and political methods. In the initial years after their independence subsequently the economic factors began to exert a deep influence on interstate cooperation in Central Asia leading to divergences in their approach to economic reforms and development.

Regional leaders have undertaken many initiatives to establish regional cooperation. The initiatives promoting regional cooperation in the region have sometimes become successful but sometimes the initiatives are not translated into real action. Border and Water issues have remained some of the major impediment for the real cooperation to take place among and between Central Asian countries. These issues are considered as the potential sources of conflict in the region. In the last twenty-five years, no mechanism in the central Asian region has been established to resolve the conflict of water related issues. In September 2006, the establishment of a nuclear-free zone, popularly known as the Treaty of Semey, is the only exception to the failure of cooperation and integration without the direct participation of external actors in the region (Lewington, 2010).

The involvement of external powers is also a major concern; there are several instances of the rivalry between China and Russia for influence and dominance in the Central Asian region. Recently, Kazakhstan joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) led by Russia, with Kyrgyzstan. Through the process of regional integration, Chinese leadership wants to draw their sphere of influence on Central Asian countries; meanwhile, Russia wants to keep Central Asia as a satellite by pushing the regional countries to join the Russia-led EEU.

Chinese policymakers want to use the region as a natural resource provider. For example, The initiative of China's president Xi Jinping's "The One Belt One Road" implying the creation of a US\$ 40 billion fund to develop infrastructure in neighbouring countries, including Central Asian states. Earlier Moscow was steadfastly opposed to this Chinese idea. In this way the region has become the competition ground for the two competing projects: the EEU led by Russia; and the "One Belt One Road" led by China. Earlier China was primarily concerned about the security of their North-West region, and for the Central Asian region too. So, they created jointly Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a Central Asian centred security organization, where China and Russia both are members (Zhambekov, 2015).

In a different approach, the Central Asian states have similar concerns about Russia and China. Initially, only three of the Central Asian states have joined regional security organizations in 1996; Shanghai-Five, later on in 2001 Uzbekistan joined and this organization renamed as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Objective of this organization was mainly to become an anti-terrorist centre (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) and the CSTO is also a security cooperation organization (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). So, there is overlapping and ambiguity between these two bodies. It is the obvious question that, how to interact with them.

5.2 Prospects for Regional Cooperation

If we look at the region, we find that, it has spread "over four million square kilometres, the post-Soviet states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan cover an area larger in size and are home to approximately 62 million people. Central Asia is the heartland of the Eurasian continental space, where Eurasia is cover all of Europe and Asia, including the

Middle East and Arab Peninsula” (Brezzezinski,1999). In the 21 century Eurasian place is gradually working on the economic globalisation process. After the Cold War this is the first initiative, where two major continents are uniting for their economic aspirations. On the basis of one indicator of the integration process, we can say, today Eurasia has the largest share of world trade taking place between Eurasian economies. These developments are very much important for the Central Asian Developmental process.

During Soviet times, Central Asian economies were mostly designed from Moscow. Now they can increasingly look towards China, South Asia, Europe and the Middle East to gain access to markets while maintaining strong links with Russia. Central Asia’s neighbours make up a large share of the global economy and count among them the most dynamic economies of the world. Where previously it might have been accurate to consider Central Asian countries as handicapped by their land-locked position, it is now more appropriate to think of them as facing great opportunities for being ‘land-linked’ to the world’s great and dynamic economies” (CAREC report, 2012). Now Central Asian countries are not only benefitting from access to their neighbours’ goods, energy, capital and labour markets but also taking benefit from the potential transit trade which is developing across the Central Asian region by linking from Europe to Asia.

Since independence, Central Asian republics have opted for the path of regional integration as well as multilateral cooperation. In third chapter, study has discussed many regional organizations, which are working with the Central Asian states. There is also duplicity and overlapping in the aims and objectives of regional organizations and their effectiveness is also different. In Central Asia, still many areas are a source of conflict, which need broader cooperation and participation of all five states, major powers and international organizations.

Central Asian republics and regional countries like China, Iran, Pakistan, India etc. are involved in the process of integration of the transport arteries and communications which are connecting Europe and Asia, the East and the West thoroughly. It is also pertinent to mention that the extended neighbour India is also trying to make inroads in the field of engaging itself with Central Asian countries.

Through the initiative of International North South Corridor (INSTC) India and Russia, the two big economies having stakes in the region have signed an agreement to build a trade corridor that will go from Mumbai to Moscow in 2000. As per the estimates, the project is supposed to be completed by 2017. This project under consideration intends to connect Russia and India via Iran and Azerbaijan. The future prospects of the route also want to explore the possibility of connecting to Central Asian States. This corridor, if developed soon without any political hassle among the parties concerned to the agreement, will prove to be one of the biggest trading corridors providing tremendous impetus to the growth story of the participant countries.

Central Asia has become a playground for major powers. There are many players in Central Asia and Afghanistan like Russia, USA, China, the EU as well as many international organizations also have interest in the region like NATO, ADB, CSTO, EEU and other international organizations. They all have different approaches and understanding of the situation in the region. Challenges in the nature of trans-border require a broader partnership and cooperation. Future prospects of multilateral regional and international cooperation in Central Asia will depend on the convergence of national, regional and global mutual interests. First of all, it is very necessary to establish a mutual dialogue process among Central Asian republics. Regional cooperation would promote more stability, economic reforms and democratization in the Central Asian region. There are many areas where threats are common for the Central Asian region. Central Asian geopolitical, economic and security challenges are connected and the solution could come jointly.

5.2.1 Climate Change and Multilateral Cooperation

Many of us take climate for granted; we believe that it will be always available for humankind. Climate change and other hazards situation make disastrous set of interactions between humankind and environment. The Central Asian region is emerging as a transitional economy after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Central Asian countries are facing complex environmental challenges. This area is largely arid and semi-arid and full of grasslands, deserts and some rangelands. Due to Green House Gas (GHG) related climate change, projections suggest considerable changes in the desert and semi-desert vegetation. The grasslands, livestock and water resources are the worst affected in this region because of climate change.

The Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea are big oceans of the region. In the Central Asia, there are two major rivers, “the Amu Darya, and the Syr Darya”. The water sharing from these rivers has become bone of contention among the Central Asian States. Central Asian countries have developed massive irrigation systems. Cotton, wheat and Paddy are the main crops produced in the region which are heavily dependent on water resources. Among the various environmental disasters, the drying up of the Aral Sea is one of the major causes of concern because it is considered as the lifeline of the Central Asia region. Drying Seas are the potential threat the livelihoods of Central Asia’s population.

During the Soviet time, Central Asian republics were not aware about their legal rights about the usage of the fresh-water resources from the Aral basin, because that time “the water system was considered a purely domestic resource within the territorial borders of the Soviet Union”. At that time Soviet authorities managed the Aral basin as an “integrated and highly interdependent harvest system” (Marat, 2008). After the breakup of the Soviet Union, it led to a situation in which the political borders no longer coincided with the physical borders and then principal water system undergirding the economic and social structure of the region.

In 1991, the new territorial borders artificially divided up the water system among five Central Asian republics, creating new asymmetries of capabilities between ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’ users and at the same time generating competing interests over water allocations. State breakup, in short, introduced new claims of ownership rights over the trans-boundary water resources and related infrastructure in Central Asia. The successor states of Soviet Union inherited the previous system for water management without a centralized authority to guide it. After the disintegration they could no longer rely on Moscow to allocate water among Central Asian republics and to provide mechanisms for conflict resolution.

In the Central Asia, problem of climate change is moving from purely environmental issues to developmental deficiency. “Failures to adapt to climate change, such as decreased precipitation, glacial melting or heat waves, can lead to societal instability and may evolve and exacerbate conflicts or multiply threats. The increased likelihood of prolonged drought means that farming communities need techniques or crops that rely on lower water use. For example increased vegetation

around water areas can prevent soil erosion and minimize the effects of floods” (Ibatullin, 2015).

Central Asia is a disaster-prone area, exposed to natural hazards. Impacts of natural disasters are worse and adversely affect trans-border populations. So, it needs larger cooperation for the common cause. Such incidents can affect bilateral relationship between Central Asian countries. Now through regional cooperation Central Asian republics can prevent such vulnerable incidents or control their effects. It also offers an opportunity to build an understanding among the authorities, and specifically between the “ministries of emergency situations”. The benefits of cooperation can be further enhanced, particularly with regard to industrial sites or radioactive waste deposits with a high risk of trans-boundary pollution. By involving local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGO’s), disaster response organisations and the communities can make environmental situation better in the region (Ibatullin, 2015).

5.2.2 Water Problem and Regional Cooperation

From inception water has been perceived as a ‘global common’ for all. Thus, it needs collective action in order to avoid “tragedy of the commons”. The Dryness of the Aral Sea in Central Asia is one of the world’s greatest examples of human created ecological disasters. Day by day high demand for water is increasing and shrinking water resources are deepening the conflict and competition among Central Asian republics. This is a big obstacle in the way to find the possibility of a viable regional approach to replace the water management system of Soviet Union. “The root causes of this issue and argues that tensions over water have ‘spilled-over’ in Central Asia, creating a vicious political climate that has slowed down the process of integration” (Zhambekov, 2015).

The “de-securitization of water resource management opens the way to negotiated agreements between and among the Central Asian States, and the consequent sharing of benefits” (Daoudy 2007). According to Daoudy, “the simplest and most useful general framework to date divides benefits from cooperation over a shared river basin into environmental, economic, political, and catalytic categories. From there, levels of conflict or cooperation are largely determined by the incentives”. He further argued that “when environmental protection becomes a

specific management objective, it can start to drive the type of cooperative spirit needed for any form of benefit-sharing” (De Micco, 2015).

Water sharing borders have almost always fuelled some tensions between the bordering states. These conflicts cannot be considered in isolation, as they are tied up in factors larger than relations between states. These conflicts are affecting “national security, economic opportunity, environmental sustainability and fairness in the Central Asian region”. In 2006, the UNDP Human Development Report contends that “one problem with the polarized debate generated by the water war rhetoric is that it has diverted attention from more pressing and more relevant human security concerns” (UNDP Report, 2006).

Indeed, the human dimension is fundamental when speaking about water-related issues, as “water is not necessary for life, it is life” (Marat, 2008). In this sense, “water sharing should never be understood as a zero-sum game, in which one country’s gain is another’s loss it could be like as interdependence through trade can expand the economic benefits for all, so we can implement cooperative interdependence in water”.

Cooperation in water distribution area is hence likely to have a “spill-over” effect; it can encourage the cooperation in other areas too. In this way, cooperation in water distribution area may encourage broader cooperation in different areas too. All these analyses pin-point that water can become the ‘fuel’ for conflict and cooperation.

However, where cooperation fails, it intensified the social and ecological disasters, which are inevitable consequences in such scenario. We have seen in the case of the Aral Sea, which is the most visible and dramatic example of non-cooperation over water distribution management. There are five main causes identified for the failure of institutions and agreements in dealing with water distribution in the Central Asia.

1. Limited Mandates

Organizations on river basin in Central Asia were expected to work on specific technical areas, such as collecting data or monitoring flows across the border. The narrow scope of their activities greatly limited their ability to develop broader

systems of benefit sharing that are necessary to cope with basin-wide socio-economic and environmental challenges. The Interstate Commission for Water Coordination¹³⁷ (ICWC) is merely entitled to focus on water division, but this organization is not entitled to deal with agriculture and energy sector, which are the sectors that consume most of the water” (Ibatullin, 2015).

2. Constrained Autonomy

The Interstate Coordination Water Commission (ICWC) and the International Fund for the Aral Sea (IFAS) have become a locus for interstate rivalry. It has constant disputes about staffing patterns and country representations demonstrate. The institutions have been accused of lacking transparency and under-involving NGOs. The Water Users Associations (WUA’s) and other institutions are interested in the decision-making process. The ICWC has even been dubbed “a club for water officials that makes no real decisions” (ICG Report, 2012). There is a balm on the IFAS and ICWC because both organizations are located in Uzbekistan and moreover, raise concerns about a bias in favour of their host country”.

3. Weak Institutional Capacity

In the emerging Central Asian institutions, there is lack of technical expertise, poor staffing and poor executive direction in designing programme objectives and projects characterise in the water management institutions in Central Asia. As a legacy of Soviet Union, which tolerated no independent water management, local authorities today still lack the experience that is necessary for resolving water-related conflicts. Moreover, in both the IFAS and the ICWC, decisions are made by consensus. During conflict days between Central Asian countries, that makes all the system paralysis”.

4. Insufficient Financing

Financing is the major key for any institution. The process of negotiation for the development of effective water management can be as important as the outcome. But balanced negotiations are costly, as they often stretch over long periods and

¹³⁷ “It established in 1992 in accordance with the Agreement on Cooperation in the field of joint management, use and protection of trans-boundary water resources between Central Asian states. ICWC is a regional body of IFAS on joint resolution of the issues of management, rational use and protection of trans-boundary water resources in the Aral Sea Basin”.

require technical data and expertise. Earlier the IFAS was intended to serve as a funding mechanism for the implementation of Aral Sea programmes. However, IFAS has failed to extract adequate contributions from the five Central Asian states due to mainly their precarious economic situations. Member states have not politically committed themselves to the water organisations. According to the ICWC, “only Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan keep up their payments to the two bodies”. The worst financing situation is worsened by the failure to recognise the need for collaborative maintenance arrangements. Moreover, funding from external actors has prominently been concentrated around the ‘Aral Sea catastrophe’ and neglected better management of the two contentious river basins (Amu Darya and Syr Darya) in the region” (ICG Report, 2012).

5. Lack of Enforcement

This is very much important ability of institutions to enforce agreements on the parties. As enforcement failures weaken their credibility and create disincentives for compliance with negotiated agreements. The institution faces number of administrative problems, including a lack of unfettered access to all countries. Although they have staff everywhere, some countries require visas for visits by senior officials, which prevent surprise inspections. Moreover, there are not sufficient funds for equipment and monitoring, and no powers designated to close facilities or impose fines when quotas are exceeded”.

In sort of water will probably not be a cause of armed conflict in the near future for Central Asia, but water is an increasingly important factor that can constrain relations between the five states and an important contributor to local conflicts. In rural areas, water shortages are already inhibiting economic growth and limiting opportunities. Greater effort is needed to manage and use water more efficiently in Central Asian or the five republics will find themselves struggling to survive.

There are some fundamental policy recommendations to the Central Asian states to pacify water related conflicts.

- I. To manage reciprocal relations, and in accordance with international water law, Central Asian states need to work out an equitable sharing agreement for water and to avoid doing appreciable harm to others. All the five states would evolve a system to create an inclusive decision-

making and dispute resolution. They can learn from other international river basins to illustrate how to achieve a similar result in the Central Asian context.

- II. The involvement of the civil society and NGO's will prove to be important to take into account when envisaging plans for regional cooperation. The case of the Mekong River Commission illustrates a successful attempt in this case. Similarly, the Nile International Discourse Desk has been created with the aim of promoting the participation of civil society groups in the context of the Nile Basin Initiative".
- III. These suggestions could be implemented after the consideration by the Central Asian states. They should recognise the necessity of cooperating to efficiently use water resources. "If Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan recognised the Aral Sea as a common regional resource, whose degradation affects them all to the same extent, the water discourse in the region could finally be "de-securitized", thus creating a sound prospect for cooperation (Shishkin, 2012).

5.2.3 Environment and Cooperation for Common Future

With water sharing issues there are many other issues which are at considerable risks such as natural disasters, earthquakes, floods and landslides in the Central Asian region. In the Central Asia Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are the most mountainous countries, are also at risk from avalanches and mudslides. There are major concerns about the capabilities of the Central Asian republics to deal with these types of disastrous situations. The Central Asian organisations are not prepared for environmental disaster readiness in theoretical, human and technical terms. "All the Central Asian countries constitutes Ministries of Emergency Situations, but international organisations and specialised NGOs consider them to be poorly prepared for managing risks" (Romanowski, 2016). Earlier they have been focus on their risk prevention capacity, rather than management.

This is the major lacking point of Central Asian organisations; they are fundamentally reactive and not preventive. Management aimed at future events does not form part of the working methods inherited from the Soviet system. Only Kazakh government adopted “2030 Strategic plan for the environment and natural resources”, to have committed to major long-term efforts in the risk management model (OECD Report, 2013). The Kyrgyz government has been always ignored the warnings of seismologists, for example “the government was warned about seismic movements in the Osh region two days before the earthquake of 1 January 2008, but it neither warned the population nor took measures to deal with a potential quake” (Lioubimtseva & Henebry, 2009). Except Kazakhstan, few plans or tools have been developed to respond to a major event, and financial resources remain inadequate. In the Central Asian republics, “there are lack of coordination between the projected annual budget for disaster management and the magnitude of potential human and economic losses caused by catastrophes” (Lioubimtseva & Henebry, 2009).

The lack of collective regional efforts in disaster management is directly proportional to the hazards. Now, Central Asian republics have initiated some limited forms of regional cooperation in this area for example “In October 2010, a memorandum was signed between the Ministries of Emergency Situations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for the creation of a Central Asian Centre for Risk Prevention and Resolution. The centre will be in charge of the UN development programme for ‘strengthening risk prevention potential in Central Asia’, which is financed by the EU” (De Micco, 2015).

In the future prospects, countries should establish cooperation between ministries; they should provide better evaluations of regional risks collectively and participate in “international disaster management networks”. International organisations like World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have suggested to local governments that they should set up a local body for risk management. World Bank and ADB will also support through the finance. This would give them immediate access to cash assets in disaster situations. “Central Asian governments have been reluctant to finance risks that are only potential.

The Central Asian governments prefer to rely on national or international non-state programmes, often conducted by NGOs such as UNDP, the Office of United

Nations for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid and UNICEF, as well as donors such as the Swiss Development Cooperation and Japan's International Cooperation Agency and the Red Cross" (Romanowski, 2016). The Central Asian republics are hoping that the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) or the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) would provide financial assistance if a large-scale catastrophe would have occurred.

Central Asian region is not prepared for hazards or environmental disaster due to weak economic condition. So, it is much needed for the Central Asian countries to initiate regional economic integration for wellness of the population of the region.

5.3 Regional Economic Integration: Prospects of Prosperity

Regional economic integration is the process of countries to achieve national interests by establishing healthy relations with others. It expands national markets to the regional trade hub. In globalization, it can be thought of as an alternative to international overlapping or how one relates to the rest of the world. But unlike globalization, regional integration is geographical and in some cases political in nature. Expanding national markets and input sources beyond national boundaries is one of the most convincing arguments in favour of integration process. With an expanded market for goods and services for both output and inputs higher economic growth and improved welfare can be expected. Across the world regional integration process helps more efficient resource allocation in line with the principle of comparative advantage.

If, result has shown enhancement in productivity economic growth may accelerate and it will also generate the employment through the process of regional integration. But at the same time it is also important to realize that sometime integration may not generate the same benefits for all stakeholders.

Soon after the independence, the Central Asian countries owing to small productivity already available in form of cooperation like CIS. It was first step of the newly independent states of the Central Asia in an integration process. With the entry in the Commonwealth of Independent States, it was an attempt by common efforts to decide the general problems which have arisen on the post Soviet space. However, CIS was not enough efficient at that time and therefore functioning of

Commonwealth was ineffective. After independence there were common regional problems of Central Asian states. Within the framework of other inter-state associations by objective expediency there was a creation of regional organization in the Central Asia (Olcott, 2011). There was necessity to take joint efforts for regional problems and call for a coordination to ensure efficient socio economic development of countries of the Central Asia, supported with common understanding of political managements of countries.

During initial year of independence, the Central Asian states were not very enthusiast to develop cooperation among each other. This is especially true with regard to major country Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The Central Asian “trinity” (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan) searched a common agenda for cooperation among member states, in order to prevent contradictory policies or even confrontation. In 1994, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan formed an Integrated Economic Area, establishing an Interstate Council and Councils of Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers (Tabyshalieva, 1999). Those agreements mainly cover industrial cooperation, the legal basis for visa free movement of labour among the three countries, policy coordination on migration and other issues. However, this co- operation exists more in theory than practice and is limited to a few common economic issues.

After collapse of the USSR, major powers like USA, China, EU, India and Turkey have shown their interest in this region. They have started their involvement in this region through economic and security cooperation. It was also a big opportunity for the Central Asian countries to benefit from access to their big neighbouring economies. Central Asian countries tried to overcome the legacy of disintegration that haunted all of the former Soviet republics. As the Soviet Union broke up, the long-established intensive economic links between the republics were dramatically ruptured. This contributed to the deep and protracted economic downturn throughout the former Soviet Union (Linn, 2004).

Former Soviet countries along with Central Asian republics recovered from the transitional economic recession from the late 1990s to the initial year of new millennium. In the new century this region emerged as one of the most dynamic economic regions in the World (IMF Report, 2011). They re-established their old

trade links among each other, with their big neighbours as well as with the rest of the world. Intra-regional trade among Central Asian countries grew five-fold from 2000 to 2008 (Olcott, 2011). However, despite this rapid growth, the share of intra-regional trade in Central Asia relative to the region's overall trade dropped dramatically after independence while it increased in other part of Asia. This demonstrates that there remains much to be done to improve the interconnectedness of the five Central Asian countries with each other and with their neighbours too.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and United Nation Development Program (UNDP) carried out a comprehensive assessment of trade opportunities and constraints. The ADB and UNDP reports projected a significant potential increases in trade and resulting benefits from systematic improvements in these areas. Moreover, with a halving of the cost of transcontinental shipments through Central Asia, the region would become cost competitive with maritime shipping, while further enhancing its advantage in terms of much shorter time requirements.

However, there are many challenges to realise these gains in the political and governance realms. It is not confirmed about the benefits from regional economic integration and cooperation in Central Asia. In terms of governance, Central Asian countries suffer from limited accountability in public decision-making and policy process, pervasive corruption, smuggling and drug trafficking, all of which serve the interests of the governing elites and undermine their willingness and ability to control security forces and border control agents effectively. Accordingly, governments find it difficult to implement their stated intentions to pursue the goals of improved border management, control of drug trafficking and reduced behind-the-border harassment of private business and investors (Shishkin, 2012).

Along with the global economic integration process worldwide, regional integration has progressed simultaneously in many parts of the world. This process was lead by Europe and it was closely followed by Asian continent. But the Asian continent could not match the progress with regional cooperation like other regions of the world. In fact, most efforts to create and sustain regional organisations have fallen woefully short of lofty political pronouncements. Even the European Union, long held out as the paragon of successful regional cooperation, has always had notable shortcomings in the way the regional institutions have functioned and Europe

has recently run into dramatic problems as a result of the poorly designed common currency project of the Euro, combined with weak macro-economic management and structural policies in individual EU countries (Soros, 2012).

In economic area, “regional integration can be examined as eliminating the artificial barriers to free trade between participating countries and harmonization of different methods of economic development assistance”. Participating members harmonize their economic policies with one another, in both economic and political spheres, during the process of integration (Nye, 1968). There are mainly three main reasons for the creation of regional trade blocks.

- I. The general interest of states in this form of cooperation due to geographical proximity and perceived opportunities for the formulation of common economic, social and cultural interests.
- II. In the integration process ideological considerations motives and convergence of interests, can be a facilitator of the idea of a constitutional association.
- III. When a cost and benefits analysis is conducted on this membership, if the benefits of membership are shown to outweigh the costs, it speeds-up regional integration processes.
- IV. Another important reason is national security. Regional trade exchanges are created with the hope of discouraging war between member states” (De Melo.et.al, 1992).

According to this argument there is a process that provides for five different stages of regional integration:

- A. Free Trade Area (FTA)
- B. Customs Union
- C. Common Market
- D. Economic Union
- E. Political Union.

This model has been used in many regional integration processes like European Union and many other are in process like Eurasian Economic Union.

Furthermore, this model is very much relevant for economic integration, and it is widely used among developing countries. A recent review of the experience with regional cooperation initiatives worldwide and in Asia concluded with nine lessons that are highly relevant for Central Asia.

- I. A Building effective regional institution is difficult, takes a long time, and requires incremental, gradual, and flexible implementation with visible payoffs.
- II. It is preferable to keep the number of members in sub-regional and regional organisations manageable. Membership should be based on shared geography and common regional interests.
- III. Adequate funding mechanisms for regional investments are essential.
- IV. Successful cooperation requires leadership at the country, institutional, and individual levels.
- V. External assistance can be helpful in setting up and sustaining sub-regional institutions, but it cannot substitute for ownership of the process from within the region.
- VI. Open regionalism, that is the creation of institutions that are open to extra-regional participation and do not discriminate against non-regional economies in the long term is the most successful strategy as demonstrated in the case of East and South-East Asia.
- VII. Regional economic cooperation organisations that involve ministries of finance or economy and central banks tend to be more effective than those that rely on the leadership of line ministries or foreign affairs.
- VIII. Transparency and the engagement of the business community and civil society strengthen the mechanisms for regional cooperation.
- IX. Monitoring and evaluating the performance of countries under regional agreements is important, as are incentives for better compliance (Tynan, 2012).

Since 1990 Central Asian share in total trade dropped precipitously, as we have noted earlier, intraregional trade has expanded significantly in terms of volume. In part this reflects three factors.

- I. Overall trade expanded very rapidly, more rapidly than GDP, as the ratio of trade to GDP rose from an already high level of 63% in 2000 to 76% in 2008” (ADB Report, 2010)
- II. All the Central Asian countries have similar economic structures. All countries are relying on natural resource based exports, and hence one would expect relatively low intraregional trade shares.
- III. During Soviet days there were no external borders and hence free trade within Union. Central Asian countries introduced significant barriers to economic exchange across their sovereign borders after independence (Tarr, 2015).

In the Central Asian region, there is large number of regional organisations and forums were set up in the years following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. With the cooperation of major power there are also many multilateral organisation with overlapping memberships and mandates creating a “spaghetti bowl” of regional organizations. There is a perception that most of the regional organisations in Central Asia have been characterised by weak organisation. These organizations are funding with little or inconsistent engagement by key countries and national leaders and none of them was able to affect decisively (Linn & Pidufala, 2008).

5.4 Multilateral Organizations: Prospects for Regional Cooperation

In fact, many obstacles have prevented effective regional cooperation in Central Asia, but through involvement of major countries in Central Asia effective regional organizations emerged as multilateral organizations. There are some signs, however, that regional cooperation has been given a new impetus in the last few years, albeit coming from very different directions.

There are three most prominent organizations, The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), led by China and Russia; the Eurasian Economic Union, led by Russia; recent initiatives and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation

programme (CAREC), led by the Asian Development Bank with the support of China. All organizations are leading by the major and external powers.

5.4.1 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Regional security organization like Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is created 1996 in the name of Shanghai-5 on Chinese initiative, comprising three Central Asian states bordering China (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and Russia. In 2001, when Uzbekistan become member it renamed as Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The aim was to build confidence building measures on the Northern-West Chinese borders thus interrupting eventual irredentist Uighur-Turkic movements an aim that China is also trying to achieve through enhanced economic cooperation with Central Asia (Promfert, 2011).

Due to Chinese initiative and strong pushing from its side the SCO has become one of the best working regional organisations in Central Asia with clear cut policies that were the more so underlined after the 9/11 incident. The organisation boosts an anti terrorist centre that was under Russian initiative - transferred from Bishkek to Tashkent in order to convince Uzbekistan to actively participate in the organisation and as a trade-off for Uzbekistan's proposal to include Russia into the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (Promfert, 2011).

The member states declared that the "Shanghai Spirit". This spirit is, "mutual trust and benefit, equality and consultation, respect of diversified civilisations, and seeking common development". They represent the guiding principle of the organisation as members seek to cooperate in three areas. These are

- A. Security
- B. Economics,
- C. Humanitarian concerns.

While principally focusing on Central Asian regional security concerns, including cross-border drug trafficking, terrorism and crime, the SCO since 2003 also has made regional economic development and cooperation one of its goals."

(Linn and Pidufala, 2008). There are number of factors explain the performance of SCO.

- I. China and Russia are the leading two member countries, on one side they do not necessarily see eye to eye on key regional economic development challenges, such as trade development and energy. On the other side Russia concerned about China's growing influence in the Region and its interest in maintaining control over regional oil and gas transit (Cooley, 2012).
- II. Since on the one side SCO principle is based on the consensus decision-making and non-interference, on the other side it is not in a good position to resolve conflicts among members, such as border closures or regional water management conflicts.
- III. China supports the Central Asian members of SCO with significant financial resources, notionally under the umbrella of SCO and in support of regional infrastructure.
- IV. SCO has not established close relationships with any of the other regional organisations yet. This is noticeable that SCO should develop good relationship with regional organizations in Central Asia.
- V. The secretariat of SCO is based in Beijing. It has limited mandate and limited technical capacity for developing, implementing and monitoring effective economic cooperation strategies for Central Asia (Cooley, 2012).

A number of these constraints were highlighted in connection with official contributions to the 2012 SCO summit in Beijing. Former Chinese President Hu Jintao in 2012 stated that “called for the SCO to be built into an effective platform for increasing international exchange and influence”. Later on former Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cheng Guoping, who referred to the need to “balance regional stability versus the principle of non-interference”, to balance “the ability to act versus adhering to the principle of consultation to reach consensus”, and the need “for the SCO to improve its process, rationalise the working mechanism, and

improve its decision-making efficiency (Ahrens & Hoen 2013)”. Thus it appears that China in particular wishes to turn SCO into a more effective regional organisation for economic cooperation in Central Asia than it has been hitherto. In recent development India become member state in SCO and Pakistan will assume in next year.

Volodin said that “the new geopolitical configuration of the SCO can not only give additional impetus to economic growth in the member countries, but also facilitate the transition of the world system from its current turbulent state to a smooth evolution” (Volodin, 2016). New Delhi and Islamabad entered in Eurasian game and for assessing the prospective multilateral projects in the Eurasian space in a transport revolution. There are four nuclear powers in SCO with India and Pakistan. The total population of the SCO states will be around three and a half billion people, combined GDP is estimated to be close to \$ 30 trillion (Volodin, 2016).

In addition, China and India remain the most actively developing economies of the modern world. This is the general picture. "The expansion of the SCO, whose assets include rich mineral resources of the Central Asian states, will allow to develop general rules of trade in these resources in the framework of the organization, that are less susceptible to market fluctuations,” (Volodin, 2016). This attempt improves the economic cooperation among member states and strengthens the regional security in the Af-Pak region. But at the same time India has not very good relations with Pakistan and China, so it can influence the “consensus base decision making” process.

5.4.2 Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program

Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program was emerged as a regional initiative for Central Asian states started by the Asian Development Bank in the late 1990s. CAREC’s principal goal is development through cooperation, its long term vision for this initiative is “Good neighbours, good partners and good prospects”.

In the first annual ministerial conferences of CAREC in 2002, it set the target to make substantial efforts for the intra-regional economic cooperation among Central Asian states and its integration with its emerging neighbours. CAREC is

working on different areas of regional cooperation; it does involve mainly in the regional development, development of regional trade, energy corridor and transport. Basically this is not a “formal treaty-based organisation”, but an informal forum which is supported by organisational structure. CAREC hold annual ministerial meetings, complemented by more frequent meetings of senior officials and of technical committees which prepare strategic plans and investment programs. CAREC is a unique body, its working with multiple multilateral agencies and with different countries.

In this platform it allows the cooperation and coordination not only among the member countries but also many multilateral financial agencies for regional integration and development. With the cooperation of multilateral agencies CAREC’s has formulated a clear and persuasive vision for regional cooperation through multilateralism CAREC is based on the notion that “its location at the core of the dynamic Eurasian continental economic space allows it to transform its traditional handicap of land-locked location into an advantage of land-linked development” (CAREC Report,2012).

CAREC celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2011, of its existence as a regional forum in Central Asia. CAREC perceived a strong growth in regional investments and technical assistance activities in its first ten years of experiences. CAREC funded primarily by the many multilateral agencies, with Asian Development Bank (ADB) as a major source of funding. Central Asia has seen major investment after 2006, when ministers approved its “Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP)”. Group of ministers in CAREC had developed sectoral strategies and roadmaps for the regional integration of the Central Asian region. Advisory committee of CAREC member states and multilateral organizations had approved total \$14 Billion for regional investment, under the CAREC umbrella (CAREC Report, 2011). The core focus area of CAREC is “3-T”

- A. Transport
- B. Transit
- C. Trade

This 3-T Facilitation Strategy of CAREC identified six most important transport corridors. It connects Central Asia from east to west and from north to south and it's also connecting Central Asia with the "Eurasian transport arteries". For every route, it requires investment or infrastructure bottlenecks as well as key border crossing points. It is also very much important to improve border transit and logistics arrangements in the region. This is also a major concern to establish of a "corridor monitoring programme", where time and cost of transit could be measure and it will be based on regular vehicle surveys. In the ways of regional cooperation identified, CAREC has a number of strengths, in line with many of the lessons from the international experience.

- I. CAREC believes in the alliance of action-oriented pragmatic countries and institutions. It also encourages the long-term vision and a clear focus on a few key priority sectors.
- II. CAREC focuses on mutual understanding and consensus through work in its technical committees and senior officials meetings. In the ministerial conferences it leads to constructive discussions and agreements among the member state.
- III. Particularly "Finance, Transport and Commerce" division participates in the meetings of CAREC technical session.
- IV. It has developed a better action plan and sectoral strategies within a framework, against which progress is monitored and evaluated regularly.
- V. CAREC always tried to coordinate investment and capacity building program for the member state. For this work CAREC always focus on the mobilisation of the multilateral organisations for financial assistance.
- VI. CAREC always organised training program through its affiliate CAREC institute. CAREC has supported the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

- VII. CAREC believe in the notion of transparency in its work. It has provided all the documents of meetings and events, through their public website “www.carecprogram.org” (CAREC Report-2011).

Meanwhile CAREC is facing many challenges. There are many obstacle in the process of regional integration.

- I. In CAREC, this is major fault that, some important regional players are missing. In 2006 Russia was formally invited to join CAREC, but Russia never formally responded to the invitation. Since then it appears that CAREC members have lost interest in get Russia into the CAREC fold.
- II. Since its inception CAREC pursued a very active and overall successful program in the transport and trade facilitation area. It has also marked a very significant progress in the energy and trade policy sector. But in the area of water resource allocation and management, CAREC has become a very reluctant player. It suggested that, “this is the bilateral issues, so countries should have to deal with on bilateral basis”.
- III. CAREC is playing greater role in infrastructure, trade and transit area but it is not working in the “soft” areas, for improving the legal, regulatory, and administrative aspects of trade, transport, and energy sector management.
- IV. This is one major lacking point of CAREC is that, “it has not attracted the attention of the top leadership in Central Asia. Because of that, and because of limited efforts at building broader stakeholder awareness in the region, CAREC has not been able to gain a lot of visibility in Central Asia as an important regional forum”.
- V. In the regional development process, there are lacking the links between the regional sector strategies and national development program. These factors have shown the contradictory picture of CAREC ability. Due to this reason the intensity of cooperation among the multilateral agency of CAREC’s member states has suffered.

- VI. There is also lack of understanding and proper links between non-member partners and other regional organisations.
- VII. The CAREC secretariat has done somehow to coordination between regional organisations in Central Asia, but it needs more effective coordination among partners and organisations.
- VIII. In Central Asia, Participation of civil society and private sector is very much limited till date. For the regional development program, CAREC is not getting support from every section of society.
- IX. The impact of CAREC work is very limited. It does not focus in training activities and regional capacity building program. CAREC Program has to focus on analytical work and they have to produce some significant results.
- X. In the regional development program, CAREC is not including the knowledge institutions (universities, think tanks, etc.) in the region (CAREC Report -2012).

From the inception CAREC has shown least interest to address all above the situation collectively. There are many issues, which has posed a direct challenge to improve in its core mandate of fostering integration. Through regional coordination, the obstacle in trade, transport and trade facilitation can improve. Among these many examples are the following.

- I. There was a tension between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan over Tajikistan's planned to build the hydro dam at Rogun. Uzbekistan has made a strong objection over this idea. The Uzbek action has severely affected Tajikistan, with rail transit and blockage of Tajikistan's access to electricity and gas imports.
- II. Kazakhstan blocked exports of grains during the food crisis 2008-2009, including to its Central Asian neighbours. Kazakhstan has done this because in the interest of protecting its domestic consumers.

- III. In 2010 Kazakhstan closed their border during the unrest in Kyrgyz Republic.
- IV. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan has stopped the existing “regional electric power dispatch mechanism”. It was initiated since Soviet times. This step is directly undermining the regional integration process of energy market. This is major objectives of CAREC Program in energy sector.
- V. These are the few contentious issues which is affecting the bilateral relation between Central Asian states as well as this is also affecting the process of regional integration. In the conflict resolution area CAREC can do so many things at the multilateral level.

The “Strategic Framework of CAREC 2020”, was approved by ministers in November 2011. This report has promised to address some of the concern areas identified above. CAREC is trying to increase “country ownership and outreach, better linkage between regional and national plans, improved planning and sequencing of the multi-year project pipeline, a stronger CAREC Institute, and renewed efforts to engage the multilateral institutions, other donor partners, as well as private sector and civil society organisations as stakeholders”. In the future program CAREC program should focus on many areas like.

- 1). The engagement of countries leadership more actively.
- 2). CAREC should not avoid hot-spots of regional tensions. CAREC should be more actively participate to resolve all the conflict prone situations.
- 3). CAREC program should search more areas of sectoral policies.
- 4). CAREC’s Secretariat should become a truly regional entity of Central Asian region.

Without these important issues are not properly addressed, the regional aspiration of cooperation will remain ineffective. The fate of CAREC will remain unchanged and its future will be uncertain. This is the reality of any multilateral

organisations. On the one hand multilateral organisations have no mandate generate political consensus among fractious or disinterested regional partners, but on the other hand this is not the fault of the multilateral institutions. On the contrary, the CAREC has done attributed a significant degree in the area of regional infrastructure and it has also made remarkable improvements in administrative practices and regional policies.

Chapter-6

Conclusion

The Soviet Union disintegrated in December 1991. Soon after the dissolution, the five Central Asian republics gained their independence. Since independence the Central Asian republics are facing multiplicity of challenges. Many of them are new in their nature and character while many of other such problems have historical legacy. Whether problems and challenges faced by Central Asian States are new or old, they are deeply rooted within and outside of the Central Asian territory. The study clearly maintains that the challenges faced are mainly non-traditional in nature. It is also to be maintained that the challenges surrounding the issue areas of economic instability, rising religious radicalism/ extremism among members of their population, water security, environmental issues that have internal as well external facets have the potential of being more acute in the future.

These challenges before Central Asian states' security and stability within and outside of their borders are reversely affecting the patterns of regional cooperation, direction of integration, and building of institutions. There are many regional organizations in Central Asia, such as Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) that are acting or have the potential to act as the vehicle of promoting economic and political cooperation in the region.

Since the Treaty of Westphalia, wave of regionalism started taking shape but the end of the Second World War raised the aspirations of states for more meaningful regional integration. The end of the Second World War was a melancholy example of human and material destruction making nation states to urge for international peace. However this phase of international politics is not devoid of contradictions as soon after the World War second, the world was divided in Capitalist and Communist blocks again threatening the world peace. Though these emerged groupings to avert the journey of human race to the next stage of havoc NAM being prominent amongst them, world still marched towards the divisions championed by the Soviet Union and the US. However times passed and the clouds of doubts about meaning regional integration were cleared. In the present context it is featured that regionalism is increasing regardless of the level it begins at despite of the influence

which global economic change has had and, transformations in the balance of power, with the end of the Cold War. These and many other such factors have furthered the participation new regional groups and the process also revived the older regional organizations. Thus, the "new" regionalism is more varied and has an impact on economic relations between different regions of the world.

After the end of Cold War the idea of multilateralism is gradually resurging to the next level of its progress. In the new millennium scholars and practitioners of world politics posit that balance in world politics would only occur through 'multilateralism and regional organization'. Traditionally, multilateralism is described as the practice of policy coordination among three or more states through formal and informal international governmental institutions. Multilateralism is the process of interconnectivity while the regional cooperation creates a sense of interdependence among partners involved.

The process of development of multilateralism is in a state of constant flux and has continuously invoked broader debate about the nature and direction of globalization and the implications of global change for the international system and world order in the 21 century. It became abundantly clear that we are witnessing the evolution of globalization from technology to terrorism that has made the world a much smaller place and changed the patterns of interaction among states, business, and civil society on the international level.

In the era of globalization 'competitive cooperation' is an emerging phenomenon in the world politics. This phenomenon has led to the transformation in the psyche of the international community of states wherein national boundaries are opening gradually but territorial sovereignty and national interests have also become the areas of concern. The concept of visa free regime exists at the regional level; for example European Union, Central Asian region etc. but illegal migration from less privileged to the prosperous places and human trafficking are making some participatory actors a bit hesitant of such initiatives. Sometimes problems create conflict among countries but at other times such challenging situations may invoke them to fight against those evils collectively.

Regional organisations do not have any systematic links with global trends towards regionalism that may promote concerted actions within a region and shapes

a common regional identity on the international scene. Among the Central Asian states, Turkmenistan has, since independence, been a fervent partisan in support of unilateralism or bilateralism, and has averted as much as it could, its attempts to both regionalism and multilateralism. For its part, Uzbekistan has conducted more contrasting policies, endorsing regionalism when it thinks it is in a leadership position and unilateralism when it views its sovereign rights are at stake. Tashkent has shown little interest for multilateralism, instead giving priority to pursuing bilateral relations. Kazakhstan has aimed at being a staunch defender of regionalism above all, and of multilateralism to a lesser extent. Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, played the card of multilateralism very early on, as symbolised by its accession to membership of the World Trade Organisation in 1998. Tajikistan pursues and combines various strategies in accordance with the domain and the actors involved. The above diversified international positioning of each Central Asian state impacts the role and the development of regional organisations in the region.

The present situations of regional integrations that are taking place across world exhibit dialectical, jointly conditioned but internally antagonistic processes, first globalization and second regionalization. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the international politics witnessed the onslaught of globalization and the rise of non-state actors in the 1990s onwards. It is recognized that the conventional understanding of multilateralism had to be revised to reflect a dramatically changed political, economic, and social landscape of a globalizing international system. The future of world politics is lying in the cooperation among regional organizations; for example, situation in Afghanistan is creating vociferous insecurity conditions in the region. The EU, NATO, OSCE etc. need to have strong relations and joint projects on Central Asia and Afghanistan with CIS, SCO, and Eurasian Economic Union. Afghanistan historically has been known as the “graveyard for empires”. And therefore to avoid any untoward development in case of any particular stake holder in the processes of rebuilding of Afghanistan, it would be a better strategy to fight against terrorism by the regional organizations through greater regional cooperation.

Challenges of the 21st century require a broader partnership and cooperation. Future prospects of multilateral regional and international cooperation in Central Asia will depend on correlations of national, regional and global interests. Therefore it is necessary that the Central Asian republics must initiate strong dialogues among

themselves to draw out a common strategy to deal with the issues faced by them. Such endeavors would then be aided and supported by the actors whose interests would be taken care of in the process. It is pertinent to mention that Central Asian geopolitical, political, economic, and cultural and security challenges are interconnected in nature and therefore the solutions to such challenges could only be found jointly. Future regional cooperation and strong international partnership would promote more stability, economic reforms and democratization to the region and beyond. Central Asian countries have a strong and better developed linkages, that are based on the collective history and cultural background. For a long period of history the Central Asian people have lived in general space of different empires and or the states of modern times e.g. they all were part of the Soviet Union till its disintegration in 1991.

Historically aboriginal inhabitants of Central Asia are ethnically connected. The commonalities among them in terms of culture, history, ethnicity etc. can be exploited for creating space for enhancing emotional proximity and contacts among Central Asians. Central Asian countries have established bilateral relations with different countries and multilateral engagement with international and regional organizations in a new world order. These initiatives by Central Asian countries for developing strong partnerships with other countries actively involved in the process of regionalization and economic communications connect Asia and Europe, the East and the West. The same initiatives can also be adjoined to the development regional cooperation among Central Asian States themselves.

The entire research project has been founded on the two hypotheses as the basis of research. The first hypothesis is “Some of the multilateral organizations focusing on more non-traditional security threats are creating a common platform for all the Central Asian countries to make a strong regional cooperation”. In Central Asia, there are numerous regional organizations, which are exclusively working in the area of non-traditional security threats, like Regional Anti-terrorist Structure (RATS) of SCO, the International Fund for Saving Aral Sea (IFSA), Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), the Special Program for the economics of Central Asia (SPECA) and the Central Asia Drug Action Program (CADP). The trans-boundary security challenges like water scarcity, environmental degradation, economic and trade issues, drugs and human

trafficking are creating alarming situation in the region. The common threats are creating common platforms for the Central Asian countries to cooperate among each other. These organisations are trying to improve the situation of Central Asian countries through greater participation. All the Central Asian countries are co-operating each other under the umbrella of regional organizations.

The second hypothesis deals with “Multilateral organizations like SCO, CSTO and EurAsEC, etc., are facilitating cooperation among Central Asian republics”. Since the time of their independence Central Asian countries are reluctant to cooperate among each other. The external engagement for the development of Central Asian states was necessary as they were less developed and less prosperous. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have exhibited positive willingness in terms of their inclination towards regional cooperation. Such a proposition can be substantiated based on their participation in the regional organizations such as SCO, CSTO and EurAsEC. The case of Uzbekistan posits different narrative as it has always switched off its positions between participating in multilateral organization when it suits to its interest and at other times it has remained wary when the situation was otherwise. Turkmenistan has always showed general reluctance while becoming party to any regional arrangement in the region thus it has remained caught up with its policy of “perpetual neutrality”. But in overall analysis the above mentioned three organizations have covered up the major challenges of this region thereby also providing stimulus to the Central Asian countries to cooperate among each other. In the present context there has occurred see change in the attitudes of Central Asian countries for they are co-operating among each other from security sphere to economic areas all because of multilateral organizations.

In the light of the above analysis all the two hypotheses stand verified. Though other factors might have also contributed to the regional cooperation in the Central Asian Republics, but the stand of the hypothesis seem to be vindicated.

In spite of above said factors, there are also several reasons for the promotion of multilateralism and regional cooperation in the region. Though there are some other factors that influence the role of multilateral organizations in strengthening regional cooperation in the region. Some of them can be identified as the education

sector which includes prominently the science and information technology as well as the health sector.

Central Asia is a 'land-link' place between East and West, North and South on the Eurasian super-continent. Central Asia's stability and prosperity is therefore of great importance not only for the region but also for Eurasia as a whole. In the Central and South Asian cooperation the role of India is very important. Slowly, but gradually grooving India-Central Asia economic relations. India's major initiative in the region has been building the North-South trade corridor. This is being built in cooperation with Russia and other countries. Although this initiative will speed the flow of goods, especially energy, from Central Asia to India via Iran, the shortest route from India to the region is through Pakistan.

The perspective planning for transport development like North-South corridor will depend on the degree of optimum correlation of global, regional, interregional and national interests in realization of the projects. There are many problems among different actors in Central Asia and Afghanistan, including NATO, EU, OSCE and other international organizations, because they have different approaches and understanding of the situation. There is logic for future continues and wider cooperation between Central Asia countries, major powers, international and regional organizations on Central Asian issues and following could be suggested.

- I. It is necessary future development of institutional framework of regional cooperation in Central Asia and concentrated on the particularly regional projects, including on trans-boundary water sharing and other issues
- II. To promote regional cooperation and integration in such way that it become a tool for better economic and trade relation and promote stability and economic development.
- III. The EU, NATO, OSCE and need to have strong relations and joint projects on Central Asia and Afghanistan with CIS, SCO, Eurasian Economic Union.

- IV. International community need joint efforts and increased partnership with Central Asia states in the solving wide range of security problems, including ecological one.
- V. International organization is best to work together with Afghanistan, Central Asia republics, Pakistan, India Iran, and other neighboring countries and used different mechanisms of the partnership on Afghanistan.

Since connectivity continues to be a handicap, India will have to come up with innovative ways to overcome it and increase its presence to a meaningful level. One way of doing that is to 'Make in Central Asia.' For example, Indian firms could set up a fertilizer plant to utilize Turkmen gas in Turkmenistan and a refinery in Kazakhstan near an oil field, overcoming the geographical barrier. But we must move quickly, as the Chinese are way ahead in this new Great Game.

Today, Central Asia is a dynamic mix of local actors redefining themselves along both vertical and horizontal strategic axes. The states of post-Soviet Central Asia today adopt very different attitudes toward larger competitors, including India and China that suit to their own interests of their own fashion. Relations among these states are at best cautious and worst hostile; they affect and project different attitudes about their affinity for or antipathy to the East and West.

However, by increasing trade with all parts of the region through improved infrastructure would potentially decrease the base for radicalization and extremism. Analysis of the above regional groups' experiences show that an infrastructural system for economies connectivity is required to achieve more efficient integration among the regional states. Here, "connectivity" is meant to include not only physical e.g. transport, energy and telecommunication infrastructures, but also non-physical "soft" infrastructure development policy, promotion of trade, border management such as customs service, duties, visa regime etc. connections within the region through development of necessary infrastructure that will facilitate free movement of goods, people and services across the region. People to people contact can also play a major role in the larger cooperation among the regional states. Cooperation between regional and international organizations, including the EU, NATO and

partnership with Central Asian countries as well as with the regional organizations is important for the promotion of stability and security of the Central Asian countries to assist in the pursuits of sustainable economic development and poverty eradication. In this way Central Asian states see themselves on a common pathway to the same future.

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