RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN XINJIANG IN THE

POST- COLD WAR PERIOD

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

HIMANSHI LOHMORE

Centre for Inner Asian Studies

School of International Studies

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

New Delhi 110067

2018

Date: 23rd July, 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**Religious Extremism in Xinjiang in the Post-Cold War Period**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

Himanshi Lohmore

CERTIFICATE

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

Prof. Sharad Kumar Soni
(Chairperson)

अध्यक्ष / Chairperson
इनर एशियाई अध्ययन केन्द्र
Centre for Inner Asian Studies
अन्तरराष्ट्रीय अध्ययन संस्थान
School of International Studies
जवाहरलाल नेहरु विश्वविद्यालय
Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली / New Delhi - 110067

Dr. Mahesh Ranjan Debata
(Supervisor)

इनर एशियाई अध्ययन केन्द्र
Centre for Inner Asian Studies
अन्तरराष्ट्रीय अध्ययन संस्थान
School of International Studies
जवाहरलाल नेहरु विश्वविद्यालय
Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली / New Delhi - 110067

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Mahesh Ranjan Debata for his relentless support and guidance in the course of this research, without whom it would not have been possible. I'm extremely grateful for the amount of hard work he put into providing me immense knowledge, subject expertise, valuable comments and inputs. All through the course of this research he was extremely patient and cheerfully responded to all my queries and requirements. I would further like to extend my sincere thanks to the Department of Inner Asian Studies and all the faculty and staff for providing me with the base required for this study. The coursework and lively discussions in class really helped me in building up my arguments and creating the strong desire to further study this area.

I am eternally grateful to my family for their constant support and encouragement during the course of my research and providing me with the right encouragement and support in my challenging times. My friends were also of great support during this time.

Lastly, I extend my gratitude to the University for providing all the necessary guidance and infrastructure.

CONTENTS

Abbreviations

CAR   Central Asian Republics

CCP   Communist Party of China

CHRC   Congressional Human Rights Caucus

CPEC   China Pakistan Economic Corridor

ETIM   Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement

ETNC   Eastern Turkestan National Congress

ETR   East Turkestan Republic

GIMF   Global Islamic Media Front

GWOT   Global War on Terrorism

IMU   Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

ISIS   Islamic Sate of Iraq and Syria

LAC   Line of Actual Control

MIT   Mujahedeen Indonesia Timur

NATCG   National Anti-Terrorism Coordination Group

NGO   National Government Organization

OBOR   One Belt One Road

PLA   People's Liberation Army

PRC   People's Republic of China

RATS   Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure

SCO   Shanghai Cooperation Organization

TIP   Turkistan Islamic Party

USSR   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WUC   World Uyghur Congress

XPCC   Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps

XUAR   Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

List of Maps

List of Tables

List of Figures

PREFACE

International politics underwent a drastic transformation in the beginning of 1990s. Breakdown of the erstwhile Soviet Union following the collapse of socialist structure led to the end of Cold War. This change in the world order, from bipolar to unipolar, left a vacuum within the Inner Asian region. The socialist policies, which subjugated religions within the Soviet bloc, failed to stop the revival of religious practices, such as Islam. Almost all the countries in Inner Asia, which have substantial Muslim population, were influenced by two important events: Great Islamic Revolution in Iran and disintegration of Soviet Union. However, Islam took a radical turn in the post-Cold War period resulting in an extremist form and affecting the minds of people in Central Asia and its adjacent regions like Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region (XUAR), a border province of China.

Xinjiang's geography, history, ethno-cultural and religious diversity has added much to its strategic importance. Owen Lattimore calls it the 'pivot of Asia', whereby the frontiers of China, Afghanistan, Tibet, Pakistan, India and Central Asia touch and approach one another. Geographically, Xinjiang's border sharing with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the north and west, Afghanistan in the south has affected the politics, foreign policies and economics of China. Moreover, it has deeply influenced the people, society and culture in Xinjiang highlighting the politics of identity among local people. Religion played a very crucial role after the end of Cold War and the independence of Central Asian Republics. Except Mongolia, all the other neighboring countries gave the impetus to religious identity in Xinjiang the largest province in china in terms of area and Muslim population.

The internal and external factors both are responsible for the issue of religious identity to turn extreme in Xinjiang. Domestic policies, right after the independence of China in September 1949, fluctuated because of the political shifts between right and left further leading to the radical movement between pluralist character of the country and the ethno-centric hegemonic repression, by the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which seriously affected the identities of the nationalities. For instance, Dr Sun Yat Sen's "five-point policy" aimed to unify, assimilate and fuse all people into one Chinese race that shaped the character of CCP's policy towards minorities, policies directed towards cultural homogenization and suppression of ethnic identities gave rise to ethnic

nationalism in China. These policies led to the growth in socio-economic inequalities between the ethnic groups. Han chauvinism and racial discrimination created division in the society and the feeling of 'Us and Them' started defining the difference between the Uyghurs and the non-Muslim Hans. The socio-economic dominance by Hans that widened the gap was characterized by bitterness, anger and a strong sense of injustice among the Uyghurs.

The disintegration of the USSR post-Cold War and the formation of the independent Central Asian Republics has inspired the Muslim minority in Xinjiang to continue their struggle for a separate nation out of China. With the establishment of independent Muslim republics such as Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, whereas, the Uyghurs, the Tatars, and the Salars were the only Central Asian Muslims left in Xinjiang without a separate independent country, named after their ethnic groups. Struggle for separatism was further strengthened by growing Islamic fundamentalism and political Islamist movement across the border of Xinjiang and all around the world.

Post-Mao period witnessed a pro-Uyghur stance by the Chinese government. Deng Xiaoping passed Halal laws and adopted soft and preferential policies such as airing programmes in minority language and affirmative actions. Beijing also strengthened its rapport with Middle East, Central Asia and Pakistan. Deng's Open Door Policy to enhance trading with Central Asia relaxed policies towards Uyghurs which strengthened their religious identity. Uyghurs were allowed to study in madrasas in Pakistan.

Deng's liberal religious policies, interaction between Uyghurs and other Muslims across the world brought about a wind of consciousness about religious identity. Islam in an extreme form started breeding in India. The Baren uprising in April 1990 led to the rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang. Later, a series of ethnic riots in 1990s turned the Uyghur aggression into a violent form of separatism. The Chinese attributed the anti-Chinese and terrorist activities that occurred post-Cold War, not only to separatists, but religious fanatics and "foreign forces;" by directly referring to the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a UN listed terrorist organization.

Against this background, the introductory chapter of this research work deals with the political and cultural background of Xinjiang and its importance focusing on the

region's strategic location. Chapter two analyses various domestic factors that led to rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang. Chapter three highlights the incidents post-Cold War period, that marked the beginning of religious extremism in Xinjiang. The causes of the rise of religion as a factor have been discussed threadbare in this chapter. In chapter four, the policies, programmes and measures taken by Chinese central government to deal with the rise of religious extremism among Uyghurs has been highlighted. The concluding chapter wraps up the research work with its major findings.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Xinjiang, which is known as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), is located in the north-western part of People's Republic of China. The name Xinjiang literally means 'New Frontier' (Debata 2007). Xinjiang has been described as the 'pivot of Asia' (Lattimore 1950), a 'new centre of gravity' in Asia between the great power politics in China, the Soviet Union and the Middle East and as 'pawn of Soviet Union' (Whiting and Sheng 1958) for a period of over three decades from 1911 to 1949 (Dillon 2009).

> "Sinkiang, in its pivotal position in the heart of Asia, will most rapidly transmit to India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran the news that passes from mouth to mouth where few people read or hear radio- news of the meaning in their lives of great political changes in China. Once more, as in the days of the rise of the Han empire, more than two thousand years ago, Sinkiang has become in fact a pivot around which resolve politics, and power, and the fates of men." (Lattimore 1950).

Xinjiang is the largest province of China (1.665 million sq kms), holding on to majority Muslim population known as Uyghurs (Warikoo 2000). Uyghurs are one of the largest ethnic minorities in China. (Christoffersen 1993).

To understand the importance of Xinjiang for China, it is imperative to discuss the following important issues:

1. Strategic and Geo-political positioning
2. Abundant Natural Resources
3. History of the Region
4. Post-1949 policies
5. Post-Cold War dynamics
6. Religion as an important factor

1. Strategic and Geo-Political Positioning

Xinjiang, located in the heart of Asia stretches for over 2,660 miles (1,650 kilometres) from north to south and about 3,220 miles (2,000 kilometres) from east to west. Overall Xinjiang has an area of 1.665 million sq kms (Dillon 2004). Since, Xinjiang is geo-strategically located on the north west part of China it marks an important position in the Inner Asia as a region. Dru C. Gladney (2003) while stressing on the geographical

positioning of Xinjiang, pointed out how the ethnic groups locate their geographic symbolic locations on political, cultural, economic and religious centres based on geographical proximity.

Map 1.

Xinjiang and the Neighbouring Countries

Source: Voa News (2013), "Gun Battle in China's Xinjiang Kills 21 People", [Online: web] Accessed 20th June 2018 URL: https://www.voanews.com/a/gun-battle-erupts-in-chinas-xinjiang-province/1647749.html.

Xinjiang borders the Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the west and north, Mongolia in the north east, Afghanistan and Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir in the south and southwest, Tibet in the south east, Russia on the north west and Pakistan on the south west (Debata 2007). The strategic location of Xinjiang and its geographical proximity with eight countries have created geo-strategic and security issues for the region for many centuries.

Table: 1.

Xinjiang's Border with Neighbouring countries

Country	
Russia	56 kms
Mongolia	1,435 kms
Kyrgyzstan	980 kms
Tajikistan	450 kms
Kazakhstan	1,718 kms
Afghanistan	80 kms
Pakistan	530 kms
India	350 kms

Source: Witt Raczka (1998), "Xinjiang and its Central Asian borderland", *Central Asian Survey,* 17 (3): 374.

Geographically, through Xinjiang, China touches the borders of the Middle East and has acted as a security buffer for the territory China from the invasion of Central Asian steppes. Xinjiang in the contemporary times, provides Beijing with a unique potential to assert its influence in Central Asian region as well as in Middle East. China's authority has greatly been enhanced in Central Asia due to Xinjiang's strategic location. Disintegration of Soviet Union is thus seen as an opportunity to expand its influence and leadership in Central Asia as a region (Harris 1993). Xinjiang's border sharing with 8 countries provides an opportunity to forge trade and economic links to bolster its economy (Panda 2006).

From the geo-political perspective, Xinjiang and Central Asia, both have formed an important transition zone that links great civilizations of China, India, Iran and the Mediterranean. Also the role of this transition zone is of utter importance in regards of political, cultural, economic and ecological development (Clarke 2011). Particularly in the post-Cold War era, China has extended its economic zone to further its interest and to become more powerful in the region.

2. Abundant Natural Resources

The region with its unexplored resources has become one of the most valued province for China in the 21st century when the importance of natural resources has risen. Xinjiang is considered as a region of vast natural resources and immense agricultural potential. The economic importance of Xinjiang increases the region's potential as a resourceful region, and also makes it an important source of power for China in the Inner Asian region. Xinjiang's Tarim Basin includes unexploited petroleum reserves, and is also rich in mineral wealth including large deposits of gas, iron, gold and coal (Harris 1993).

Table 2.

Major Energy Resources in Xinjiang

Energy	Resources reserves	Percentage of China's total	Rank in China
Coal	2,190 billion tonnes	38.00%	1st
Oil	23.4 billion tonnes	21.50%	1st
Gas	13,000 billion cubic metre	23.30%	1st

Source: Duan, Jinhui et al. (2016) "The Energy Industry in Xinjiang, China: Potential, Problems, and Solutions", [Online: web] Accessed 14th June 2018 URL: http://www.powermag.com/energy-industry-xinjiang-china-potential-problems-solutions-web/?pagenum=2.

As seen in the above table, abundance in energy resources has proved to be helpful for China in its ambitious modernization programmes. Xinjiang produces one third of China's petroleum, two-third of its coal and one-third of its cotton Further, it helps China to facilitate trade and commerce with its neighbouring countries. China has been able to secure Gas pipeline projects and its connectivity to neighbouring countries like Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan (Cunningham 2012).

Table 3.

Renewable Energy Resources in Xinjiang

Energy	Resource reserves	Percentage of China's total	Rank in China
Hydroelectric	335.5 billion kW	5.00%	4th
Wind	0.9 billion kW	20.40%	2nd
Solar	2,550 to 3,500 hours of sunshine/year	-	2nd

Source: Duan, Jinhui et al. (2016) "The Energy Industry in Xinjiang, China: Potential, Problems, and Solutions", [Online: web] Accessed 14th June 2018 URL: http://www.powermag.com/energy-industry-xinjiang-china-potential-problems-solutions-web/?pagenum=2.

Xinjiang's solar and wind energy are ranked second and the hydropower ranks fourth in China. The renewable energy of Xinjiang is of high potential for China due to the region's location. Xinjiang has approximately 570 rivers and over 270 mountains. The hydropower production of water resources is 38,178.7 MW. The main source of water resources in Xinjiang are the mainly concentrated in Kiadu, Eerqisi, Ili and Yarkand rivers. Wind energy in Xinjiang is mainly distributed in the northern and eastern parts of Xinjiang. Xinjiang is also rich in solar energy and receives radiant energy annually of 5,430 to 6,670 MJ/m2 with duration of sunshine for about 2,550 to 3,500 hours per year (Duan et al. 2016).

Chinese government, which recognises the importance of these natural resources in Xinjiang and understands well that resource development in the region not only helps the region economically by advancing machinery, power, construction, transportation, chemical industries, communication and other industries but also socially by providing employment and infrastructural facilities in return (White Paper 2003).

3. History of the Region

The Chinese historians claim that "Xinjiang has been part of China since ancient times" and that "Uyghurs have been part of China's 'great family of minzu' for a longer time". Whereas, Uyghurs claim that "Uyghurs have been living in Xinjiang for six thousand years" and "Uyghurs have been distinct from Chinese and established many independent states only to be colonized by Chinese in the recent past". Uyghurs

therefore challenge the Chinese history and restore their collective belief in a 'proud and independent past', imparting new vigour to resist Chinese rule (Bovingdon 2010).

Most of the indigenous population of the modern Central Asia, which also includes the non-Han population of Xinjiang are said to be of Turkic origin and their language is comprehensible to modern the Turkish speakers. Majority of Xinjiang citizen, including Uyghurs, Kirgiz, Kazakh, Uzbek, Tajik and Tatar nationalities share ethnic ties with the Central Asian natives. Most of the indigenous people of Xinjiang, especially Uyghurs, are Sunni Muslims belonging to Hanafi School of Jurisprudence who are greatly influenced by Turkey and the Middle East and altogether dismiss China as their spiritual and cultural home (Harris 1993). Hence, the Uyghurs are culturally, linguistically and historically part of a civilization that is distinct from the civilization that developed in China (Hyer 2005).

The presence of Islam, in Xinjiang can be traced back to the 8th century in Xinjiang. During that time, the Khagans consolidated their power over the Uyghur clans. But later over the next two centuries, the Uyghur Empire asserted itself as a major regional influence and were able to dictate its terms to subsequent rulers of the Tang dynasty, when Uyghur military support became essential for the dynasty rulers. (Cunnigham 2012). Rebellions led by Khoja Muslim leaders like Jahangir, Yousuf Katta Tora and Walli Khan Tora and finally Yaqub Beg subverted the Chinese authority for a brief period (Warikoo, 2000). In 1865, Yaqub Beg, a military official employed by the Khanate of Kokand established a Muslim state in Kashgaria, the first assertion for independence came from Uyghurs. This Muslim state in Kashgaria lasted from 1864 to 1877. The state finally ended with Yaqub Beg's death and then began the Chinese re-conquest of the region in 1877. But Yaqub Beg's campaign set a precedent for future Uyghur separatist movement that appealed to religion and ethnicity (Cunnigham 2012). The Ili region of Xinjiang was then occupied by the Russia in 1871, and then in 1881, by the Treaty of St Petersburg Ili was returned to Chinese sovereignty (Harris 1993). By 1884, Xinjiang was then brought within the administrative structure and was declared as a full-fledged province under the Chinese empire. The later events like the 1911 Chinese Revolution and the extermination of Qing rule led to the fall on Xinjiang in the hands of Warlords, which lasted till mid-1940s (Warikoo 2000).

It has been found out that at no stage, Chinese based states succeeded in holding positions for a long time. According to Lattimore, Chinese based state could only hold the region for about 425 years and the factors responsible for this scenario are its geography and ecology. The other reason being the proximity of the southern Xinjiang that included sedentary oasis cities and the northern Xinjiang with pastoral-nomadic steppe environment. As explained by Lattimore:

> "They (i.e. China) could dominate them (the oases) but they could never fully integrate them with the main expanse of China proper, because the 'cellular' structure of contiguous regions which was characteristic of China was here distorted by special problems of distance and communication and above all by intervals of arid, 'un-Chinese' terrain, which made it impossible ever to draw the oasis-like 'cells' into complete contiguity either with each other or with the main bulk of China… The mere fact that these regions could be dominated and assimilated but not fully integrated gave a certain instability to this flank of the Chinese Empire." (Clarke 2011).

There were several attempts by the Uyghur separatists to establish an independent homeland, separate from China during the first half of the twentieth century. In 1933, there were efforts made by the Uyghurs to establish "Turkish Islamic Republic of East Turkestan" (TIRET) in Kashgar, which later collapsed within three months. (Cunningham 2012). According to the Chinese government, formation of Turkish Islamic Republic of East Turkestan (TIRET) was an effort by few separatists and religious extremist groups in Xinjiang, who are influenced by international wave of religious extremism and national chauvinism. The Chinese government claims that "East Turkestan" is a politicised and unstandardized geographical term which fabricated an "ideological and theoretical system" allegedly claimed by the old colonialists (White Paper 2003). Later in 1945, Uyghurs with Soviet help again attempted to assert their independence by establishing TIRET-II in Yining which was short-lived as well. However, in 1949, when the Communists took over Beijing, Xinjiang was incorporated into the People's Republic of China (Cunningham 2012). In 1955, the province was designated as an "autonomous region" (Harris 1993). But the Chinese government claims that "Since the peaceful liberation of Xinjiang, the 'East Turkistan' forces have never resigned themselves to their defeat and the tiny group of separatists fled abroad from Xinjiang and collaborated with those at home, later, looked for opportunities to carry out splittist activities with the support of international anti-Chinese forces" (White paper 2003).

4. Post-1949 Policies

Post-independence, several policies and programmes were initiated by the government to stabilise the situations in Xinjiang. The period between the 1949 and 1991 was directed towards overcoming the obstacles of communication and distance and to achieve the integration of Xinjiang (Clarke 2011). Right after the independence, five guiding principles were adopted by CCP to handle the ethnic minorities. (1) no region will be permitted to secede from the PRC (2) 'Han chauvinism', the superiority of Han cultural assertion and 'local nationalism' the idea of separatism, will be opposed (3) establishment of autonomous organs by government in regions predominated by minorities (4) freedom of religion, equality between nationalities and the development and preservation of minority customs and language would be guaranteed (5) central government pledged to give aid for the development of ethnic minority regions (Clarke 2011).

Han migration in the region to balance or change the demography of the region is seen as a bold step by the Chinese government. The change in the demography on the Chinese part was to facilitate government action for development of the region but this was seen by the ethnic minorities as an aggressive move enforced on the region. The Uyghurs criticised this move and call it as a process of sinicization to subdue minorities (Debata 2007).

The policies like the Great leap forward (1958-1962), which encouraged Han migration in the region, was followed by launching of the communes, curtailment of the private plots, abolition of material incentives, closure of markets and bazaars and attacks on religion, especially Islam. These policies proved to be premature and destabilizing compared to more "advanced" Han areas of China (McMillen, 1984). This led to loss of economic opportunities for the Muslim minorities.

The Cultural Revolution, which began in later half of 1966 proved to be an attack of the culture and traditions of the minority population of Xinjiang. Radical policies were implemented during the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese Communist Party for the purpose of assimilation took radical stance on minority groups. The national political goals were prioritised over the minority policy (Debata 2007). Minorities were treated harshly, mosques were plundered and closed, a number of non-Han cadres were demoted, restrictions on use of minority languages and script, the faithful Muslims were

intimidated the number of Han cadres and settlers increased, free markets were curtailed and "revolutionary Han models" were set up for universal impersonation (McMillen 1984). This led to a kind of consciousness among the minorities as well as built a fear among them about their identity and faith. This fear of identity dissolution and the racial discrimination faced by the Muslim minority grew and resulted in various peaceful protests. However, the Deng Xiaoping's economic reform policies that were more relaxed in terms of religion and increased the interaction between the Muslims of Xinjiang and the outside world and changed the religious picture in Xinjiang by strengthening Muslim religious identity. Deng promoted common identity and emphasised on socio economic development in the region (Debata 2007).

5. Post-Cold War dynamics

With the disintegration of erstwhile USSR in 1991, the Cold War came to an end with new realities and possibilities. Situation in Xinjiang worsened in the post-Cold War period. The two major factors that contributed to the unrest in Xinjiang in post-Cold War period are: Firstly, religious crackdown by the government and secondly, external influence especially from Central Asia (Clarke 2011). On the other hand, other factors that compelled China to expand and strengthen its control on the region were: Firstly, the Soviet involvement in Xinjiang region, secondly, intensified transnational economic linkages and the international interest of oil industry in development of the region (Christoffersen 1993). Further, the rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang added fuel to fire. A part of "East Turkistan" forces, both inside and outside China, had turned towards 'splittism' through violent means, declaring terrorist violence as the main weapon and the only way to achieve their goals (Debata 2007). The leader of Baren rebellion, Zahideen Yusuf declared *jihad* or the holy war against China to establish an independent 'East Turkestan Republic' (ETR). This suggest that violence in Xinjiang post-1991 was to some extent influenced by Islamic revivalism in Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan (Clarke 2011).

Several terrorist activities broke out in the form of violence leading to chaos and instability in Xinjiang. There were four waves of terrorist activities in Xinjiang post-Cold War era. The first wave of terrorism existed from 1990 to 1995, wherein the terrorist took the way of arms to acquire power by following organizational and ideological preparation for a decade. The second wave from 1996 and 1997 contained

chain of assassinations which culminated in the region of Ili on 5th February 1997. The third wave began with the end of 1997 till 1999. This period was influenced by foreign forces outside China leading to explosions and assassinations. Lastly, the fourth wave, which started from second half of 1999 and beyond indicated the presence of Islamic extremist organizations in the Xinjiang region that developed its network within China (Debata 2007). In the post 9/11 period, the situation in Xinjiang has remained precarious despite the Global war on Terrorism (GWOT) and the counter-terrorism measures taken by China.

6. Religion as an Important Factor

Xinjiang is considered as a main passageway and a hub for economic and cultural exchanges between the east and the west for centuries. The presence of multi ethnic identities in the region itself proves that Xinjiang has been a shelter place for people from different cultures and ethnic background for many past centuries. On the religious front also, different religions have made place in the region travelling from different corners of the world. For instance, Buddhism born in India, around the first century B.C, was introduced into Xinjiang through Kashmir. Islam spread to the south of Xinjiang in the late ninth century and the early tenth century through Central Asia (White Paper 2003) and since then Islam has been practiced by majority Uyghurs in Xinjiang. There have been several times when the Chinese leaders have played the card of religion in their favour. For instance, the Open Door Policy in the 1980s to expand political and economic interests, Islam was promoted and several Uyghurs were sent to Pakistan and various other Islamic nations. During 1980s, the Muslims of Xinjiang started to relate with the Muslims outside Xinjiang in terms of culture and tradition. Religious education and festivals and culture from other Islamic nations like Pakistan, Middle East and Central Asian nations, proved to be strengthen religious identity which was closer to these Islamic nations and away from the typical Chinese identity. The impact of these policies and the changes were felt in the 1990s, when culmination of various international dynamics took place leading to the rise in religious extremism in Xinjiang. Few violent incidents that were marked as a turning point for the rise in religious extremism post-Cold War period are narrated by an English scholar:

Firstly, the Baren incident in 1990 marks the turning point for Xinjiang pushing the region into the zone of perpetual conflict and violence. Baren is about 50 kilometres to

the south west of the great trading centre of Kashghar, shares borders with the Kashghar counties of Shufu, Shule and Yengihisar and also is close to Pamir mountain range by forming border with Afghanistan. A group of Uyghur men attending prayers at a mosque on April 5th began to criticise the CCP policies that in their view targeted the ethnic minorities. The policies including birth control, nuclear weapons testing and the exploitation of Xinjiang's resources for the mainland China. This later turned into a mass protest where some activists called for *jihad* to drive the Hans out of Xinjiang and to establish an "East Turkestan state. It was reported by the Chinese media that young Uyghur militants had been receiving weapons and training in an Islamic Holy War Force which is financed by the local Muslim population. The Chinese scholars claim that this incident was well planned and was a highly organised operation. The Baren rising brought up the issue of an independent "East Turkestan Republic" into the open for the first time since 1949.

The second incident was in April 1995, known as the Ghulja disturbances. Between April 22nd and April 24th 1995, there was a serious unrest in six towns in the Ili region of the Xinjiang. As many as 50,000 people were reported to have taken part in rallies and demonstrations against Chinese rule in the towns of Monggolkure (Zhaosu), Tekes, Kunes (Xinyuan), Qapqal and Nilka which surround Ghulja, the administrative capital and is close to the border with Kazakhstan. On the April 24th, the climax of the agitation came on with strikes by as many as 100,000 teachers, shopkeepers and workers. The demonstrators handed in petitions to local authorities and called for the end of Chinese rule in the Ghulja region and its incorporation into Kazakhstan. Banners were carried with slogans like 'Establish a Kazakh state', 'End communist rule in Xinjiang' and 'Long live Uyghur Xinjiang'. The CCP state Council and Central Military Commission on April 25th, ordered the Xinjiang CCP and Government and the Lanzhou and Xinjiang Military Regions to 'resolutely, thoroughly and rapidly put down armed rebellion organised by splittists. Also, to 'resolutely crack down upon those organisations attempting dismemberment and those organisations masterminded and supported by foreign forces'. The disturbances were treated as more than mere riots.

The third incident took place in Khotan, in July 1995. On July 7th 1995, after reports that an Imam at the Baytulla mosque has been arrested, a demonstration began. Hundreds of his congregation went to the police and government offices to demand his release. A riot broke out when the Imam's release was refused. There were several

arrests that day and in the weeks that followed. Later, over twenty people were imprisoned following trials that took place in September 1995. There were a series of incidents in 1996, in four counties of the Aksu region which is approximately half way between Kashghar and Urumqi. It was established by the Chinese authority that all these incidents had links with the separatist struggle. A number of loots and robberies took place between February and April 1996. Police claimed that that money looted by the robbers, as they shouted was not for them personally but for the organisation, for *Jihad.* Several imams, known as 'patriotic religious figure' in the eyes of the Chinese authority, were considered traitors by the separatists (Dillon 2004).

These incidents in the later 20th century gave impetus to the rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang. Uyghurs became more inclined towards this new symbolic boundary, Islam, which had featured as an alternative stereotype distinguishing Uyghurs from Han (Finley 2011). Not only did post-Cold War incidents manifest violence and conflict in the region, but also changed the foreign policy dynamics of China in the 21st century. The Chinese authority and media warned against the threat of religious extremism and separatism several times and then the warnings were followed by firm political, social, legal and military actions, taken up at the regional and national level (Shichor 2005)

The Review of the Literature

Against this background, the review of the literature has been discussed in a thematic manner under three sections: a) ethno-national consciousness; b) religious extremism; and c) China's response.

The first theme describes how an issue of ethnicity and ethnic identity in Xinjiang turned to be a sensitive one because of the implications of national and religious consciousness among the two major nationalities in Xinjiang. The multi-ethnic state grapples with the question of balancing indigenous cultural development with foreign influence. Scholars have tried to analyze the origin of ethnic identities and how have they risen in the modern world. For instance, Gladney (1991) says that ethnic identities in the modern world became particularly salient with the decline of the empires and the rise of modern state. On the other hand, Francis (1976) analyses that inter-ethnic relations as a phenomenon of the modern states rose with ethnic identities and inter-ethnic conflict, as nation states were built on the ashes of former empires, ethnic identities became more meaningful for social interaction and discourse. While speaking

on the gradual process of the formation of ethnic nationalism, Francis describes how differences and clash of interests between various groups lead to the rise of different ethnicities, establishing strong identities. Francis also explains how these ethnic identities have acquired importance over the years.

Ethnicity is considered to be manipulated for power struggle as narrated various scholars. Barth (1969) explains how ethnicity is manipulated and altered under varying socio-economic and political situations. Struggle for power or to maintain power, ethnicity seems to an instrument used very frequently. Leach (1954), was the first to argue that ethnic identity is formed as the result of power oppositions. Keyes (1976) argues that the primordial loyalties stemming from a group's basic agreement upon and attachment to an idea of shared descent. Therefore, the subjects of the modern nation states must be integrated into the people. Gellner (1996) proposes that "nationalism engenders nations, not the other way round". He suggests that if culture did not exist, national movements would have had to invent it. Gladney (1991) argues over Gellner's proposition that it is the cultural expression that is manipulated and invented for the sake of nationalist interests, either the state's or those of the community in question. Gladney also argues that "inventions of tradition" are better understood as negotiations over, and reinterpretations of, symbolic representations of identity which is considered as an unceasing process that becomes particularly salient when the nation states takes upon itself the task of legislating national identity. It has been observed that since ethnic groups are a part of state, they find themselves trapped in the state mechanism resulting in creating a gap between the both. State structure that represents nation, thus stands in front of ethnic groups as opposition. Emerson (1969) defines nation as "the largest community which, when the chips are down, effectively commands men's loyalty". Gladney (1991) also explains that in the modern era, it is often the nation state to which ethnic groups find themselves in opposition with. Thus it can be noted that ethnic identities formation is a gradual phenomenon. The rise of nation state, with the changing international order, has acquired an important position, complicating the flourishment of the ethnic identity over the nation. This dissolution of identity over the nation has created resentment within these ethnicities demanding liberty and rights. State on the other hand is responsible for domestic stability and international balancing of relations. One of the primary functions of the state is to maintain national security

where in ethno-nationalist challenges to the state creating various hurdles not only domestically but also internationally.

The second theme is important in the context of the present research work. Huntington (1996) explains conflict in the post-Cold War era outlining a new paradigm. Huntington argued that rather than wars between states, conflict between civilizations would characterize the post-Cold War era, which he dubs as "clash of civilizations." Many conflicts appear to be characterized by nations against states, as ethnic groups seek to realize their aspirations for statehood. The conflict smouldering in Xinjiang has the characteristics of a clash of civilizations as the Turkic-Muslims (Uyghurs) assert their independent national identity against a strong Chinese nation-state (Hyer 2005).

Xinjiang's strategic location and the identification of the inhabitants to a particular religion has made the region vulnerable to external influences. Religious extremism in Xinjiang became a major challenge for China after the disintegration of Soviet Union. The rise of extremism is considered to be an influence of Soviet Central Asian Republics which later caused unrest in Xinjiang, socially and politically affecting domestic and foreign policy of China. Wang Lequan, Secretary of the CCP's Xinjiang Autonomous Regional Committee, is reported to have acknowledged in 1996: "At the moment, there is an ideological trend which advocated Xinjiang's independence and the setting up of an independent country. The effects of the tremendous changes in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the USSR had been felt to a certain extent over the past few years." (Smith 2000).

Gladney (2003) also points out that the post-Cold War and independence of the former Soviet Central Asian Republics has also been a major reason to encouraged the Uyghurs in their quest for an independent 'Turkestan', despite the fact that the new, Central Asian governments signed protocols with China that they would not harbor or support separatist groups. Sheives (2006) mentions about how the contemporary Chinese foreign policy towards Central Asia results from the post-Soviet conditions. Sheives points out two main objectives of China in the post-Soviet period- Firstly, to achieve economic openness (mostly in non-energy trade and cheap consumer goods) with newly independent Central Asian Republics. Secondly, to maintain ethno political stability in Xinjiang. Sheives also talks about the transportation linkages between Xinjiang and Central Asia which not only opened doors to trade, but also led to cross border interaction among the Turkic people.

Other developments like Islamic movement, across the world led to the growth in religious extremism. This was considered revival of Islam and prompted a socio-political model to the Uyghurs as preferable alternative to the Chinese model which they perceived as colonial and culturally invasive. This not only brought some militant Uyghurs close to the Islamic movements, but also developed an irresistible desire among them to establish a political and social order putting Uyghur Muslims at the vanguard. Some Uyghur militants were also influenced by the idea that imposition of a strict Islamic framework might find a viable solution to their social problems (Debata, 2007).

On the domestic front, policies related to demographic changes, Cultural Revolution created discrepancy between the Hans and the Muslim minorities. The Muslim minorities (Uyghurs particularly) felt outnumbered in their own land since the higher political and economic posts were now reserved for the Hans. The clash between the Hans and the Uyghurs deepened. There have been several contributing factors but most importantly, the political structure has become the root cause of unrest in the region. For instance, the full name of territorial unit 'the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region' suggests Uyghurs govern themselves but the reality is something else. The existing system of government has not only denied Uyghurs the freedom to make some political decisions, but also deprived them of the capacity to articulate and debate the interests in public or even to protest about that deprivation. In Bovingdon's (2010) view, the political system has exacerbated conflict and deepened Uyghur discontent.

Peaceful demonstrations in the late 1980s against racial discrimination and socio-economic inequalities gave way first to a violent form that coincided with the 1989 pro-democracy movement in China and then to violent riots in south Xinjiang in the summer of 1990. The Baren incident and marked the beginning of violence in Xinjiang. The separatists started to target Uyghur leaders with suicide bombing. In 1997, in Ili riots for the first time Han civilians were murdered and their bodies burnt on streets (Smith 2000). In 1997, a wave of separatist bombings in Beijing and Urumqi took place that signalled a new level of organized separatist threat (Cunningham 2012).

However, Islam in Xinjiang remains factionalized and politically disorganized. Internal divisions have contributed to the failure of Muslims and on the other hand, disunity on the part of Xinjiang's Muslims continue to favour central control by Chinese government. Thirteen of the 55 groups are acknowledged as Chinese "national

minorities" are Muslim. These groups are divided by historical, cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences (Harris 1993). On the other hand, Gladney (1991) theorizes that Uyghurs portrayed as united around Islamist cause, they continue to be divided from within by religious conflicts, (Sufi and non-Sufi factions), territorial loyalties, linguistic discrepancies, common-elite alienation and competing political loyalties. Disorganization and disunity among the Muslims in Xinjiang can be seen as their failure to claim legitimate demands from the Chinese Central government. This has not only led to the weakening of their stand for the minorities, but also caused a lot of chaos for the government to identify the sections, which are ready to cooperate with the government for the genuine development of minorities and the other section which are the main cause of religious separatism and violence in Xinjiang

The third theme dilates upon the Chinese response to the situation in Xinjiang. In the eyes of the state and many of its Han subjects, the disturbances represented a precocious attempt to break away from the nation-state. Article 4 of the Constitution of the PRC, asserts that the state upholds national integrity making it clear that acts intended to divide the nationalities will not be tolerated.

> "All nationalities in the People's Republic of China are equal. The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops a relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China's nationalities. Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; any act which undermines the unity of the nationalities or instigates division is prohibited (Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress." (Finley 2011).

According to Finley, in their bid to achieve Xinjiang's independence, Uyghurs had failed to fulfil their citizens' duties of upholding nationality unity. This notion was underlined by Wu Shimin, then Director of the Policy Research Centre of the State Ethnic Affairs Committee, in 1998 in the following words:

> "Each nationality must perform appropriate duties. There is no such thing as duties without rights or rights without duties [...] Each nationality, at the same time as fully exercising their equal rights, must also shoulder the task of safeguarding nationality equality, nationality unity and national unification."

This notion thus explains that the individuals from all ethnic groups must take the responsibility to protect and promote national unity to enjoy nationality (=ethnic)

equality and those who seek for separatism themselves forfeit their right to equality in PRC (Finley 2011).

Beginning of 1990s, especially after the Barren riots, saw rise in religious extremism and violence. State restrictions were imposed on all levels. Constraints on religious literature and education was imposed. Hajj pilgrimage came under the constraining policy of the Chinese state, stricter control over media, factual reporting, which was sympathetic to ethnic minorities before was replaced by editorials attacking separatism. In 1995, Central Military Commission decided that: "In the event of an emergency situation of nationality unrest, troops from southern Xinjiang's Military District be deployed without reporting to Beijing for approval" (Smith 2000).

Following the Ghulja riots in 1997, 'Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure' campaign against 'illegal religious activities' was launched. To curb alternate representation in the form of 'local nationalist', strict restrictions were imposed on freedom of speech alternative representations. In Ghulja district, a 'Three-No' policy was established to preventing transfer of information in any form that can incite violence. The 'Three No were: no questioning about the riots, no telling about the riots and no visiting the imprisoned, following the riots (Finley 2007).

Chinese White Paper 'Freedom of Religious Belief in Xinjiang' (2016) reads that

> "China will uphold the role of modern civilization, strengthen international cooperation and improve the people's well-being, so as to prevent the breeding of extremist thoughts. Also prohibition of any organization or individual from splitting the country, disseminating extremist religious thoughts, inciting ethnic hatred, undermining national unity, disturbing social order, or impairing citizens' physical and mental health in the name of religion."

Apart from the limiting policies to counter the unrest in the region, China also tried to provide progressive alternatives for the discontent minorities. Economic advancement and strengthening economic ties to Central Asia in the region has been the important measures Central government focused on to stabilize the unrest in Xinjiang. Xinjiang Party Secretary Song Hanliang has described economic construction as the Party's central task for the l990s, including opening up "a new situation in trade and economic and technological co-operation with various Central Asian countries". (Finley 2007).

Chinese government hopes to promote stability in both domestic and international dimension. The twin goals of China were: domestically, to promote 'modernization'

within Xinjiang and raise the living standards of local people. Chinese government see this as a way to reduce growing unrest in Xinjiang. On the international front, China prioritised to strengthen support of the secular-minded governments of Central Asia Republics against those who favour Islamic rule. (Harris 1993). On the other hand, China has gained attention internationally by depicting religious radicalism in Xinjiang as a threat linking it to the universal terrorism. This led China to join the US-led international "war against terrorism" and gain sympathy and actual support on international level (Shichor 2005).

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region has been a disturbed province since it officially became a part of China in 1949. The main reason for disturbance has been the discontent among the inhabitants of the region, whose demands have not been successfully met by the Chinese government leaving them deprived of their rights and freedom. This led to the feeling of neglect and underdevelopment further giving rise to ethnic consciousness which resulted in a sense of nationalism. For decades, ethnic nationalism continued in the form of silent protests and demonstrations. Early 1990s saw change in international politics and brought about Central Asian dynamics. Disintegration of USSR created ideological vacuum in the Inner Asian region. Religion became an important condition that tried to bind the ethnicities clustered in Inner Asian region together. This external support in the name of religion was projected more powerfully among the various ethnicities in the Xinjiang province. The ethnic identity took the course of religion to strengthen their demands. Religion has given a face to the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang to strive for their identity against the mainland Han population and thus elevating the form of action change from peaceful protests to violence in Xinjiang. In this context, it is interesting to know how the factor of religion has changed the outlook of the suppressed minority making them turn to violence. Ethnic nationalism, which was politically restricted to the state boundaries but after taking the course of religion, has not only changed the fundamental demands of minority domestically, but also induced outside influence and interference in China. The present research work tries to deal with five research questions such as a) What is the problem of China's northwest province of Xinjiang? b) How has revival of Islam affected the situation in Xinjiang? c) What are the factors that led to rise of religious extremism in the post-Cold War period? d) How far have the international events and developments contributed to religious extremism in Xinjiang? and e) What are the

policies devised by Chinese Central government to respond to religion related issues in Xinjiang?

The research work revolves around two main arguments: a) Disintegration of USSR has paved way for revival of Islam in Central Asia and adjacent regions like Xinjiang, and b) Religious revival in Xinjiang has prompted China to devise stringent measures towards minorities in general, Uyghurs in particular. Besides, this research work tries to find out the causes and implications of religious extremism in Xinjiang. Historical, analytical and descriptive methodology have been followed while examining the proposed research study, particularly with regard to the developments after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The primary sources used in this research work include the White Papers published by the Chinese government. These primary sources are being supplemented by secondary sources such as books, journals and newspapers etc. Other governmental and non-governmental sources have also been reviewed and speeches, statements and reports related to various events and incidents have been consulted.

Xinjiang as a region went through various transformation over the years. Xinjiang's strategic location, which has benefitted the region for centuries in terms of resources and political benefits, turned out to play a role not in favour of the Chinese authorities due to its neighbouring Islamic nations, especially with the rise of religious extremism. The Ethnic nationalism in Xinjiang which grew post-independence of the region has taken the colour of religion and turned out to be violent for chaotic creating instability in the region. History has a very crucial role to play in the current situation of Xinjiang. The Turkic identity seems to be replenishing in the region after centuries as a need to rise against the government. Domestic policies have played a very crucial role in mounting the rise of Muslim minorities of the regions. Since the policy of integration and assimilation was seen as a solution by the Chinese leaders, the consequences of these policies were felt much later in the region. The second chapter discusses the domestic factors of the region covering political, economic and cultural aspects and examines how these factors are responsible in the rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang.

Chapter 2: Domestic Policies

After the independence in 1949, Xinjiang which predominantly inhabited by the Chinese Muslims, particularly Uyghurs, went through various transformations. One of major goals right after the independence of Xinjiang was integration, which can be referred in two possible ways, firstly, the relationship between the majority and minority populations of a particular state. Secondly, the pattern through which different parts of nation-state cohere (Clarke 2011). The Chinese government adopted various measures and strategies political, economic and cultural to maintain stability in Xinjiang on one hand, and for the purpose of integration of the region with the mainland China on the other hand.

This chapter analyses various domestic factors that led to rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang. Domestic factors will include Chinese domestic policies, programmes and initiatives that took place in Xinjiang and how it impacted the socio-economic factors in Xinjiang on the whole will be discussed.

1. Demographic Transfer

After 1949, the efforts to resettle Han Chinese was carried out by the Chinese government at the provincial level first. Party leaders in both Beijing and Urumqi advocated consistently on Han immigration to increase stability of the region. The idea to change the demography of Xinjiang was a deliberate attempt by the Chinese government to have a strong grip over the region at all levels. At all different levels of administration and economy, Han Chinese dominated. It has been pointed out several times that nearly all migrants in Xinjiang are Han rather than any other nationalities. The local Uyghurs view the migrants with discontent since they believe that these illegal migrants took away the jobs which legitimately belonged to them. Implementation of official settlement policies promoted by the Chinese government changed the population landscape of Xinjiang (Starr 2004).

One scholar dubs this policy as 'settler colonization' which has been entirely covert on the part of Chinese government. The Chinese government has always denied charges of engineering state-sponsored population transfer and underplayed the increase of

Hans in minority areas such as Xinjiang by often attributing it to "seasonal migration" (Becquelin 2004).

Xinjiang saw the increase in Han in-migration due to Chinese government's policy of increased investment in developmental projects which attracted Han influx, both by illegal means and by official sanction. Hans from poor Central province of China were attracted by various government projects which created many economic opportunities and increase in the demand of labor. This led to the Uyghurs believe that only the Hans benefit from the government's policy (Clarke 2011). Dru C. Gladney (1998) have used the term 'internal colonialism' viewing the Han influx in Xinjiang. According to them, there was an apparent ethnic division of labor in Xinjiang to the extent that Han predominate in largest cities in addition to huge income disparity which created resentment among the Uyghurs (Sautman 2000).

The State Council policy report (1996), advocated new settlement strategy on the settlement of regions even in deserts. The aim was to attract youth from the poor central provinces. The government wanted to implement "a new channeling system, designed to establish migrant settlements, to manage and open the desert and build China's desert agriculture". This was felt for the development of 'arid and poverty stricken western region'. The other factor for Han in-migration was to control Xinjiang through the process of Urbanization, which would enhance Chinese control in Xinjiang towns and cities since growth in urban areas will push for better administration and increased commercial functions (Clarke 2011).

There were several policies introduced by the Chinese government over the time in Xinjiang which led to increase in Han migration. For instance, during the Great Leap Forward (1958-66) and Cultural revolution (1966-69). Han migration took place on a very large scale. (Christoffersen 1993). Around 3 million Hans migrated in Xinjiang between 1950 to 1978. The Great Leap Policy, which emphasized on economic advantages was a policy wherein, to facilitate the process of development Han Chinese were recruited on large scale. On the other hand, the launch of 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' in August 1966 also encouraged Han settlement all across China (Debata 2007).

Table 4.

Population of Han and Ethnic minorities in Xinjiang

Ethnic Group	1953	1964	1982	1990	2000	2010
Uyghur	74.7%	54%	45.8%	47.5%	45.21%	45.84%
Han	6.1%	32.9%	40.4%	37.6%	40.57%	40.48%
Kazakh	10.1%	6.7%	6.9%	7.3%	6.74%	6.50%
Hui	3.1%	3.6%	4.3%	4.5%	4.54%	4.51%
Kyrgyz	1.4%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.92%	-
Others	4.6%	1.8%	1.7%	2.2%	-	2.67%
Total	4,874000	7,441,800	13,081,500	15,156,900	18,459,511	21,813,334

Source: Yuan Qing Li, (1990) "Population Changes in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (1949-1984)," *Central Asian Survey*, 9: 57; M.Freeberne (1966) ,"Demographic and Economic Changes in the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region," *Population Studies*, 20 (1): 108; Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics, Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook, (1996), Beijing: China Statics Press 52; and China Data Centre (2011), "China 2010 Census Data Released", [Online: web] Accessed 5 July 2018 URL:https://chinadatacenter.org/Announcement/AnnouncementContent.aspx?id=470.

It was observed that Hans were concentrated in Urumqi, Shihezi and Karamay by 2008, the three largest cities of northern Xinjiang. Hence, it can be observed that demographic centre of the province has been shifted towards north of Xinjiang as well (Howell and Fan 2011). Murat Auezov, the former Kazakh ambassador to Beijing had said that the Uyghurs are "struggling to preserve their cultural identity against an officially sanctioned mass influx of Han Chinese into their region" (Hyer 2005).

Inflow of large number of Hans was maintained in Xinjiang by the Chinese government, which gave special attention to migrants such as educated youth, technical workers and politically reliable cadres. Careful selection of non-Han officials was followed in the training and promotion of loyal Uyghur cadres. Non-Hans and Uyghurs from regional and local government were roped in to highlight party policies, which were unpopular among the Uyghurs of Xinjiang. This was done to ensure that those non-Han officials never develop local power base. (Gardner Bovingdon 2010).

It is noteworthy to mention here the policy "Assist Tibet, Xinjiang and Border Regions" which aims at promoting transfer of Han Chinese in great numbers in the government cadres to 'combat domestic and foreign forces'. The Chinese government justifies this policy on the grounds that Han immigrants were a necessity to provide technical expertise for the development of the region in addition to control the 'splittist' tendencies developed among the locals (Weston and Jenson 2012) The Uyghurs reported very little improvement in their economic status compared to the economically well off Hans monopolizing the benefits of rail-road connectivity and educational development. They were infuriated by the Han influx and the uneven development in Xinjiang, which led to violent opposition towards the Chinese state (Singh 2012)

 It has also been found that there is an ethnic division of political power structure. This can be observed by the fact that the Xinjiang Regional Party committee has minority members that included the deputy secretaries, but the top party posts at regional, prefectural and county levels are generally reserved for the Hans (Sautman 2000). Marginalization of Uyghurs is reflected in the lack of representation in the Xinjiang CCP wherein only a third of party members comprised ethnic minorities. Although, it has been stated that head of an autonomous region, prefecture or county must be a member of the ethnic group in power as prescribed by the China's policy on regional autonomy, it has been found out that none of the first secretaries in the Party are from an ethnic minority (Clarke 2011). The regional CCP Secretary, Wang Lequan, his predecessors Song Hanliang, Wang Enmao, Wang Feng and the even current General Secretary of CPC, Xi Jinping is a Han. It has been observed that minorities hold prestigious, but less powerful state offices. Many Han cadres are part of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) which is often cast as (Sautman 2000).

Population transfer policy by the Chinese government has encouraged development in Xinjiang. However, it is a major source of discontent among the non-Han population in Xinjiang, particularly the Uyghurs. Immigration of Han in Xinjiang is considered as one of the main causes that hampers Uyghur independence and is responsible for their backwardness in socio, economic and political dimension (Debata 2007)

2. Role of XPCC

The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) or *Xinjiang Shengchang Jianshe Bingtuan* (Debata 2007) which was established in 1954, is entrusted by the Chinese government the duties that involve cultivation and guarding the frontiers of Xinjiang (White Paper 2003). XPCC was a key element of the CCP's ability to consolidate its control over Xinjiang and an example of utilization of military manpower for economic and infrastructural development. XPCC was primarily a Han institution and became a central conduit for the transfer of Han settlers into Xinjiang. The dual function of The XPCC included to facilitate the economic development of the region and to ensure its integration with the state via the establishment of the Han settlement. XPCC had brought millions of Han Chinese soldiers and civilians to engage in activities related to mining, agricultural development and to build cities in the areas that were less populated (Hastings 2011).

The role of XPCC summed up by a British scholar in the following words:

> "The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps is a reliable and important force in safeguarding Xinjiang's social stability and in building and protecting the border. The existence and development of the Corps constitute an unsurmountable obstacle to international hostile forces and national splittist forces in and outside the country in their attempt to 'split' Xinjiang. Over the last 40 years, the one million cadres, workers, and staff members of the Corps have made indelible contributions to reclaiming lands, to building Xinjiang, to safeguarding the border, and to bringing about Xinjiang's economic development and social progress." (Dillon 2004).

It has been believed that XPCC has been on a "historical mission" to "reclaim land and garrison the frontier". The main aim of XPCC has been to populate the borders of Xinjiang with the strategic transportation axis so as it becomes easy for the Han population to engage in the economic activities at the time of peace and military emergency at the time of crisis accordingly. After the disintegration of USSR and the emergence of the Central Asian Republics that borders Xinjiang, the primary goal of the Corps shifted to an "internal" threat which was ethno nationalist unrest from the external threat (Becquelin 2004).

3. Preferential Policies

Deng Xiaoping's liberal policies in 1970s were directed towards minority-oriented and accommodative policies (Debata 2007). The efforts were made to wipe out ill-feelings that resulted from the attempts made during the Cultural Revolution against Islamic practices and traditions. Several changes took place in Xinjiang in favor of the minority population. Mosques were reopened and several were repaired and refurbished by governments special financial allocations. In June1980, Xinjiang Islamic Association was rejuvenated by the Urumqi authorities. Xinjiang Islamic Association instructed to organize and support Islamic forms of academic studies. Quran and other religious texts were again available in local shops. The Party leadership also decided to officially reinstate the Arabic script for the Uyghur and Kazakh languages. Enhancement of unity between believers and non-believers and development of friendly contacts with the Muslims abroad in line with the China's overall foreign policy was stressed upon. Later, within two years, about 1,800 people from the non-Han groups were elected as deputies and committee members of the People's Political Consultative Conferences at different levels in Xinjiang. However, it was maintained that religious elements should encourage patriotic spirit and support the leadership of the CCP and also not use religion to spread rumors, undermine nationalities' unity or sow dissension (McMillen 1984).

The Community Party also undertook Affirmative Actions for greater social equality and to promote positive Han-minority relations. The Chinese authority devised "preferential policies" that focused on school admissions, family planning, promotion of minorities, regional infrastructural support, financing and taxing (Debata 2007).

Chinese authority also focused on rectifying the urgent socio-economic needs and problems of southern Xinjiang by lowering or suspension of rural and pastoral taxes. Controls were relaxed on former minority landlords and herd owners. There was an increase in the production of commodities that aimed at the non-Han people. The main highway was upgraded which was between Urumqi and the Tarim Basin across the Tianshan Mountains was upgraded (McMillen 1984).

4. The Great Western Development Programme

The Chinese to win Xinjiang's loyalty understood that if they want something from Xinjiang, they must first be prepared to give something in return. The Chinese authority, by promoting stability through economic development and China's influence through different policies hoped for maintaining peace in Xinjiang. China by promoting "modernization" within Xinjiang and by raising living standards want to lower the discontent among the masses of Xinjiang (Harris 1993).

Deng Xiaoping reasoned about the development of China on the regional levels in the latter half of the 1980s. He justified his uneven policy of coastal development and formulated "two overall situations" strategy with the regional development at two stages. Firstly, the coastal areas will be supported by the central government, later, once the areas reach the level of sufficiency, the support will be then provided to the interior areas. It was made clear by Deng that the central government will play a crucial role as to safeguard the territory and initiate organized and coordinated development of the region that will benefit all of China. Deng added that:

> "If the rich become richer and the poor become poorer, there would occur polarization that is exactly what a socialist system should and can avoid. One of the solutions to the problem is that the areas that become prosperous first pay more profits and taxes to help the development of poor areas. It is, of course, no good if this is to be done soon. … It can be assumed, however, that we should give prominence to the issue when we attain a moderately high standard of living at the end of the century. At that time, developed areas will continue to develop, and help underdeveloped areas vigorously by various means, e.g. paying more profits and taxes and transferring technology. … In sum, as far as the whole nation is concerned, we will definitely resolve the problem of disparities between the rich coast and poor interior gradually and smoothly." (Holbig 2004).

In 1992, Deng Xiaoping's policy of development of the coastal regions proved to be disadvantageous for the interior regions. The socio-economic gaps were more evident after the policy implementation. It was believed that the historical and natural factors had been major reasons leading to the biasness of government investments, which eventually led to excessive gaps and regional disparity (Holbig 2004).

There is evident economic disparity in two regions of Xinjiang that has flared violence in the recent times. The northern Tarim basin has attracted huge investments due to the region being resource rich compared to the southern western region that borders Central Asia. The southern region is dependent more on agriculture constricting infrastructural growth (Singh 2012). The economic stimulus towards large scale infrastructural projects has not been proved to be of great advantage to the Muslim minorities due to various reasons that include, lower levels of education and lower proficiency in Mandarin (Clarke 2011). There was a divide between the privileged "rich" from the coastal areas and the ethnic minority population belonging from the interiors where political discontent had persisted for long (Holbig 2004).

The Chinese leader Jiang Zemin propagated "Opening Up the West" after mid-1999 as a strategy for socio-economic development of the country's interior regions targeting to narrow the gap with the prosperous coastal areas. It was described as a "soft" policy, with the intension to pacify the discontent minority masses (Holbig 2004). The main goal of this Policy was to push Xinjiang for 'unified development' with the national economy (Christoffersen 1993). In 1996, Jiang declared that by 2000, the problem of rural poverty will be solved. Jiang said:

> "the conditions for speeding up the development of the central and western regions have by and large existed, and the time is ripe... In continuing to accelerate the development of the eastern coastal region, we should lose no opportunities to speed up the development of the central and western regions. From now on, this should become a major strategic task for the party and the state, and should be placed in a more noticeable position" (Debata 2007).

In 2000, the head of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Li Dezhu stated that the 'developmentalist' approach, which is by accelerating economic and cultural development, is the key for the stability in Xinjiang. As clearly expressed by him:

> "So the final solution for these problems lies in developing social productivity in areas of minority nationalities. The strategy to promote social and economic development of western China is a fundamental way to speed up the development of minority nationalities, and a necessary choice to solve China's nationality problems under new historical circumstances." (Clarke 2011).

However, this Chinese policy has come under attack from several quarters. The massive investments in industrial, infrastructure and state environmentalism under this policy prompts a high degree of dependence and supervision of Xinjiang through the central government. Due to traditional strategic considerations, this relationship with the central authorities is reinforced majorly by three elements: firstly, by the projected increased dependence of the country on Xinjiang's oil and natural resources, Secondly, Xinjiang's geo-political positioning at the crossroads with the Central Asia and lastly, the perceived threat of Islamic fundamentalism in the context of emerging ethnic unrest (Becquelin 2004). One Indian scholar dubbed it as a 'dumbbell' strategy which emphasized on domestic and also cross national trade and investment in Xinjiang (Panda 2010).

5. Cultural Policies

In 1949, the Chinese central government classified all religions as popular superstitions vilifying scientific thinking and labelled itself as atheist (Caprioni 2011). The Chinese state closely managed language and religion in case of Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. There have been alternate period of 'soft' and 'hard' towards cultural and religious expression. The 'soft' approach whenever needed for state benefits was characterized by tolerance and encouragement. The 'hard' approach meant 're-education' and 'reforms' on various levels (Clarke 2011).

Language is one of the most important characteristics of different ethnicities or minorities. It is not only useful in art, culture and oral sharing of histories, but also plays a very crucial role in identification of ethnicity and defines them as a group (Weston and Jenson 2012). Uyghurs in the southern Xinjiang are not well versed in Chinese language. Since Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities belong to the Turkic Islamic groups they prefer Turkic (Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz) languages. Whereas, the Chinese Hans and Hui speak Mandarin, which has led to widening of communication gap between the Han Chinese and the Muslim minorities (Warikoo 2000).

The Open Up West campaign, wherein there has been emphasis on linguistic assimilation as an attempt of homogenization of culture and identity and also the dominance of Chinese language over the local language. In all higher education institutions, modern standard Chinese has been an essential despite the legal dispositions that stipulated the autonomous areas to freely organize their curriculum in

their own language (Becquelin 2004). Since 2001, censorship of media and cultural activities was used by the state as an instrument of social control. The authorities had restricted the use of Uyghur language in the educational institutes and there has been increase in the censorship of Uyghur literature that dealt with their cultural or political history (Clarke 2011). In 2002, there has been a shift to an all-Chinese education, with the introduction in Chinese and to teach all courses in Chinese at the Xinjiang University and other higher educational institutes. Minority languages are viewed as inferior compared to Chinese language. The decision was justified by the Party Secretary Wang Lequan, as he considers the indigenous languages "out of step with the 21st century" and the decision was necessary according to him to "improve the quality of ethnic minorities". It has been observed that the language policy categorized the Uyghur language as disloyal. This shift towards the Chinese education is viewed by the local population with a lot of uncertainty and ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, the locals resent the Chinese language imposition on educational system, since this gives a strong governmental message. On the other hand, the ability to learn and speak Chinese improves the chances of receiving better education and also is considered as an advantage in the labor market (Becquelin 2004).

For the Muslim minorities of Xinjiang, religion has provided them an alternative source of authority than the Chinese government. Therefore, Chinese communist party is more suspicious of the Muslim minorities, because Muslim minorities in Xinjiang are more rigidly unified compared to other groups (Weston and Jenson 2012).

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), Uyghurs faced widespread persecutions, massacres and mosque closings because of rise in ethno-religious identity among them (Gladney 2003). But after the 1980s reforms, the Chinese government became a lot tolerant towards spiritual expression and guaranteed freedom of religious belief to minorities like Uyghurs. But even then, the Chinese authorities stressed on, that if "party members are atheists and should energetically attempt to spread atheism" (Caprioni 2011). It was felt that after the Deng Xiaoping's policy reforms, the Muslim minority have taken advantage of the liberalized economy and the religious policies keeping the fluctuating Chinese radical politics in mind (Gladney 2003).

Late 1980s, mosques became more powerful since the government seem to lost control over religion. After the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca resumed after a long time, many

Muslims from Xinjiang returned from Mecca with religious video cassettes and literature which further led to the feeding of Islamic radicalism. Government's ban on the religious activities were evaded by the Uyghurs by trying to increase household meetings and secret gatherings. It is observed that the awakening of Islamic fundamentalism abroad and the growing distress and alienation on the part of Uyghurs in Xinjiang have contributed to reliance on Islam by Uyghurs compared to the past (Shichor 2005).

After 1989, strict regulations were adopted by the Chinese government that curtailed contacts between the Muslims in Xinjiang and the outside Islamic world. The new restrictions forbid interactions between Muslim clerics and foreigners and also prohibition of teaching that involved history of Uyghur and the preaching of *jihad*. There were several restrictions imposed on the Han academicians and professional researchers in Xinjiang and there was stoppage of foreign access and their counterparts in Beijing and Shanghai. Chinese citizens were not permitted to study abroad in two countries particularly, Iran or Pakistan. Further, no tie ups, professors or Al Azhar books of Egypt were permitted (Harris 1993).

The rise in ethnic conflicts and violence compelled the Chinese authorities, officials and party functionaries to control educational and media establishment in Xinjiang and have denounced the "infiltration, subversion and sabotage by hostile foreign Islamic elements" for fueling the separatist movement in Xinjiang. In 1990, a local newspaper, Xinjiang Ribao called to end religious interference regarding the issues related to education, administration and judiciary. The newspaper stressed on the need to prevent "unfriendly foreign organizations and individuals and their local supporters from using religion for their dangerous designs" (Warikoo 2000).

In the early 1990, after the violent Baren incident in Kashgar district, the Chinese authorities made a retrospection of the entire situation and finally came to the conclusion that the riots broke off due to banning of construction of a mosque by the local authorities near the Kashgar airport, which coincided with Ramzan, the religious fasting month for the Muslims (Warikoo 2000). and the government's attempts to prevent and shut down the construction of Islamic schools and 'Illegal' mosques were the major reasons of ethnic minority grievances (Clarke 2011).

In the post-Cold War period, Xinjiang witnessed reassertion of state control over religions and cultural practices of the Uyghurs. From December 1990 to January 1991, the authorities implemented regulations on the 'management of religious activities and regulations on management of clergymen'. Two strict regulations were implemented to provide guidelines for the management of religious affairs and also to strengthen the 'means to exercise administrative control over religion'. Main goal of these regulations was to prevent religious interference in administrative and judicial matters. According to an official of the Religious Affairs Bureau, matters such as marriage, education and family planning had been 'out of control' in some parts of Xinjiang. The Chinese government enforced clampdown on 'illegal religious activities' which included closure of mosques, religious schools and the religious leaders who were considered 'subversive' or 'independent' were disciplined (Clarke 2011). In February 1991 in Urumqi, a report issued by the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences had accused the Muslim separatists of penetrating Xinjiang through literature, radio broadcasts and videos and using Quranic schools for political indoctrination to establish reactionary organization which would seek separatism and later, the opportunity for "counter-revolutionary insurrection" (Harris 1993).

In 1996, the Chairman of Xinjiang Autonomous Regional Government, Abdulahat Abdurixit in the regional CCP Committee meeting emphasized to focus on the role of religion in ethnic conflict and social unrest, addressed in the committee:

> "[W]e sternly cracked down on violent terrorist acts and separatist and sabotaging activities carried out by an extremely small number of ethnic separatists. In light of actual conditions, localities and department formulated specific implementation measures and plans; provided specific regulations on managing religious venues, clergy personnel, the content of scriptural teaching, and the Talifu (students). They put forward regulatory requirements and improvement suggestions on ethnic customs and habits and religious ceremonies and activities. They investigated illegal religious activities, cleaned up and outlawed underground scriptures schools, scriptures-teaching venues and martial arts halls and carried out supervision, monitoring and education of ideologically reactionary Talifu. This has dealt a firm blow to illegal religious activities." (Dillon 2004)

The Baren incident had marked a turning point in the relation between Uyghur and Chinese state. Mass protests called for a *Jihad* against Han "infidels" and an independent East Turkestan gave the violence a religious overtone (Kuo 2012).

Party cadres penetrated into rural and pastoral area of Xinjiang in 1991. Their main goal was to combat the twin evils of 'national splittism' and 'illegal religious activities'. Song Hanliang, the party secretary of XUAR announced at the 'XUAR mobilization meeting for 1991 Rural work' that the provincial party and government had decided on to organize 18,000 cadres into 'rural working groups' to 'stabilize' the situation in the region, promote 'social education', develop 'grass roots party organization and 'deepen' rural reform. Song, specifically emphasized on how the cadres must uphold the party's 'ideological and cultural' position in the countryside which according to him was 'recaptured and fortified' after the 1990s Baren incident. According to him, cadres would function in a way to educate the masses on the party's 'basic lines' concerning, maintenance of 'motherland unification, patriotism, socialism, opposing national splittism and national unity. The state by 1994-1995 began to implement policies that aimed to undermine the growing influence of religion in Xinjiang, which included curtailing mosque construction, proscribing religious education, banning the public broadcast of sermons and tight control over the number and age of ethnic minorities permitted to go on the Haj pilgrimage (Clarke 2011).

6. Impact of Chinese Domestic Policies

The Chinese authority see both, the 'national unity' and the external influences as the major challenges in context of Xinjiang in its development. But on the contrary, the Chinese authority has failed on the 'ideology' of 'developmentalism' and instead, this process contributed to economic, political and cultural marginalization of Muslim minorities (Clarke 2011).

The party's belief that the economic development would be successful in bridging the gap between the Han and the ethnic minorities proved it to be wrong. The Xinjiang Party secretary acknowledged that the economic development will not be enough to contain the rise of feeling of separatism in Xinjiang. According to Becquelin (2004), "Currently, there is a belief that the first priority for Xinjiang is to develop its economy. These people believe that after Xinjiang's economy develops, people's living standards will improve so the issue of stability will be resolved naturally. This belief is wrong

and dangerous. Economic development cannot eliminate separatists and cannot prevent them from separating from the motherland and seeking independence." Further Becquelin states that the entire 1980s and 1990s rhetoric was contradicted through this statement that reflected a real paradigm shift for the Xinjiang's party-state apparatus. In the view of the Muslim minorities, any display of cultural identity was clearly perceived with an intention to promote "separatism" (Becquelin, 2004). The central government and the provincial government elucidated on how continued 'social stability' would guarantee Xinjiang's economic development and in turn the social development will help in guaranteeing 'social stability'. However, the Chinese government has ignored the fact that maintaining the social stability often became a major factor in contributing to ethnic minority opposition and thus leads to jeopardize the goal of economic development. It has been felt that while economic development can facilitate the maintenance of social stability, it should also be noted that maintaining social stability can guarantee development economic development. XUAR Chairman Abdulahat Abdurixit stressed on that the government "must use economic development to maintain stability", to ensure political stability and to guarantee economic development in Xinjiang (Clarke 2011).

In 2001, a high level investigation report by the Xinjiang CCP Committee discloses the deteriorating condition of the ethnic groups under the policy that pushed for withdrawal of the state-command economy and encouraged introduction of market economy:

> "The strategy of 'choosing from both sides' [Han and national minorities] in hiring has been more and more challenged following the establishment and perfecting of the market economic system. ... The power of intervention of the government has continuously decreased, and the difficulties of finding a job for the minority laborers have become bigger and bigger, especially in contracted farm work and non-public industrial work; and implementing equal opportunities measures have become less and less practicable." (Becquelin 2004)

This proves that the Party leadership, is very well aware of the fact that the policies implemented over the past decades have not only increased marginalization of the ethnic minorities, but has also manifested contradictions to all the official documents that emphasized on claiming major improvements in the living standards of the minorities (Becquelin 2004). Economic development is used as an instrument to deal

with the instability in Xinjiang but the policies devised by the Chinese government to alter the situation in the Xinjiang is of no great help since the government has failed to fulfil desperate needs of the population including employment generation and maintaining socio-cultural autonomy (Singh 2012). Therefore, the authorities do recognize the problems arising due to economic development which was perceived by the state as a cure for social and political instability (Clarke 2011).

The XUAR CCP Chairman, Wang Lequan pointed out:

> "Xinjiang lags behind in economic development, and some new situations, new contradictions, and new problems have occurred with the intensified efforts to carry out reforms and with continued adjustments of interests. As a result, contradictions among the people have become salient."

Wang defines the occurrence of opposition by ethnic minority which has further been increased as a 'contradiction amongst the people' and also points out the reason being the economic gap created by state development policies. (Clarke 2011).

One of the main reasons of ethnic tensions between the Han Chinese and Muslim minority in Xinjiang is the struggle for Xinjiang's natural resources. Uyghurs have resisted Beijing's economic policies due to the widespread perception that Beijing uses Xinjiang's natural resources that includes oil, cotton, wool, aluminum, coal etc. without adequate compensation provided to the minority inhabitants (Christoffersen 1993). It has also occurred that the local people been forced to pay higher prices for their own resources, which were siphoned off to the developed regions of China (Singh 2012). The Chinese policy in Xinjiang is criticized as it considered as the main cause of resentment among Uyghurs. The fundamental approach of China's minority policy to ease ethnic tensions is flawed as it works against the government's efforts to promote prosperity and equality in a multinational state (Kaup 2012).

Kaup (2012) argues that the territories of minority are less developed than the Han territories. Also, it has been felt that the minorities lack the technical skills and capital which are needed to develop on own. To this scenario, the government's efforts of developing ethnic regions have resulted in resentment among minorities. Hence it has been believed that the Chinese central government in Beijing shape Xinjiang's economy according to its needs. For instance, for the purpose of integration of the

regional economy with the national economy, huge amount of money is poured in and on the other side, when the economy dips, investment is restraint. The central authorities insist on "growth-oriented strategy" that favors economic development and neglects asymmetric development in economy and the identity issues in society (Singh 2012).

On the religious front, the Muslim minorities in Xinjiang have been frustrated as they feel that the government policies to improve their living conditions are implemented on at the cost of their way of living. The process of scrutinizing the religious and spiritual practices by the Chinese government is resented by the minorities in Xinjiang (Panda 2010). Kaup (2012) raises the question over the central demands for religious and cultural rights be redressed over the economic development. According to her, heavy handed policy has been used by the government to contain even the hints of support for separatism leading to strengthening of ethnic sentiment in Xinjiang. Therefore, the Chinese policy of 'repression and reform' in regard to the religious and cultural practices has resulted in discontent among the people and opposition towards the state. (Clarke 2011).

 In Bovingdon's (2010) view, the political structure has become the root cause of unrest in the region that has exacerbated conflict and deepened Uyghur discontent. For instance, the full name of territorial unit 'the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region' suggesting Uyghurs govern themselves but in reality the existing system of the government has denied Uyghurs the freedom to make political decisions for the own interest, and on the same lines have been deprived of their capability to debate their interests in public or even to protest about that deprivation. Even though Beijing claims that the primary reason for Uyghur dissent was radical Islam, but on the contrary socioeconomic concerns and lack of political autonomy were the real reasons (Haider 2005).

Besides, the domestic policies by the Chinese government in Xinjiang, what mattered the most was the external factors that played a significant role in Xinjiang. The international changed dynamics not only provided China to enhance its economic and political position in the international platform, but also brought in the aspect of security against rising religious extremism in Xinjiang. China on one hand faced the challenge of rise of fundamentalism in Xinjiang and on the other hand wanted to make use of the

opportunity to rise as an economic power in the region. The change in the international dynamics that have directly impacted Xinjiang in political, economic and majorly on the cultural levels will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter III: Major Factors

1. External Factors

There have been 4 major factors responsible for the rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang: First, Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms in the 1970s and the ending of Xinjiang's forty-year isolation and opening up of the China's western border after 1987 to its neighbors and allowing contact with the rest of Central Asia through Trade and commerce. Second, revival of Islam following the Great Islamic Revolution in Iran, which was well funded and inspired Xinjiang's Muslims to define their ethnic nationalism in religious colour. Third, disintegration of Soviet Union and establishment of five Central Asian Republics that has inspired Uyghurs in Xinjiang to have similar independent nationhood. Fourth, China's outward approach towards economic advancement and cooperation for strengthening its international positioning through the 'Great Islamic Circle' (Starr 2004).

1.1 Deng Xiaoping's Open Door policy

China's Open Door Policy launched during Deng's regime became a means to explore Xinjiang's potential thin two ways. Firstly, by supplying raw material to the coastal region of China to maximize its industrialization process; and secondly, to provide a nexus of a 'Silk Road economy' in the 'Great Islamic Circle'. This would help in the development of domestic and foreign interaction and development of both (Christoffersen 1993).

During the 1980s, China's outward approach in terms of extending relations with other countries for economic development was used by the Muslims outside China to improve their connections with those living within China. Foreign funds have been used to establish mosques, funding of scholarships and theological schools and import religious material like Quran, particularly from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iran (Harris 1993). In 1980s, the Xinjiang provincial government liberalized its religious policy, which permitted increased cross border linkages. Hence, Muslim population of Xinjiang were encouraged to establish friendly contacts with the Muslims outside the country (Christoffersen 1993). For instance, the state's tolerant approach and the 'reform and opening' economic policies led to enhancement of linkages with Pakistan.

Greater knowledge about the political trends and dynamics that developed in the wider Islamic world were brought in as ideas by the travelers and traders from Pakistan (Clarke 2011). Thousands of Chinese citizens, the Muslim minority, particularly Uyghurs from Xinjiang had undertaken Haj and travelled for business to Turkey, the Gulf, Egypt, Pakistan and Central Asia (Harris 1993). Even Saudi Arabia poured in finances to establish madrassa and build mosques (Haider 2005).

The economic circle was formulated by the Chinese government as a regional economic bloc that links the border region with contiguous states for the purpose increasing development in terms of trade and economy. These 'regional economic circles' first emerged in the 1980s as a defensive response to the resentment against its coastal strategy. For the Chinese economists, the 'Great Islamic Circle' was of major importance to Xinjiang. China's "Great International Circles" strategy, which was also referred as the "Great circulation" strategy, pressed on for the coastal region's industries to have "both ends towards the outside" which pushed towards import of raw materials and energy from the world market to use in the production process and to export the finished products, without placing pressure on scarce domestic energy sources (Christoffersen 1993). The state also encouraged the Xinjiang Muslims to develop and strengthen relations with the Central Asian and Pakistani Muslims to facilitate economic benefits. This was further encouraged by the state towards the relaxation of travel restrictions and relaxed policies in terms of religion in Xinjiang. This also included state's approval for education of Xinjiang mullahs and imams abroad, particularly in Pakistani madrassahs (Clarke 2011).

However, Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms, which were promoted with the devious goal of integration of Xinjiang with mainland China proved to be contradictory in its consequences in the later period, post-Cold War (Christoffersen 1993). The proposed foreign policy initiated as an outward-oriented economic strategy on the lines of cross border trade and economic links contributed to the economic development of the region, but was greatly responsible for bringing Xinjiang's ethnic minorities, especially Uyghurs, come in closer contacts with the Islamic culture and society of Soviet Central Asia (Clarke 2011). The interaction between the Chinese Muslims and the Muslims outside China, which included Middle East and Pakistan, manifested Islamic nationalism, which aimed for the unity of Islamic ummah and to create national units, wherein Islam is the basis of universal unity (Harris 1993).

Deng's polices had also opened door to what one scholar has termed as the "Taliban syndrome" which is 'flourishing of jihadism'. Large numbers of Xinjiang's Islamic militants were reported to be trained by Afghan Mujahedeen and are openly guided and sponsored by Pakistan's *Jamaat-e-Islami*. Later, they actually participated in battles against the Soviet backed by Kabul regime. On the other hand, Uyghurs from Central Asia and China trained in the camps along the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in northern Afghanistan too aimed at establishing Islamic state based on Sharia and later allied with al-Qaeda and Taliban and became an inspiration for ETIM (Kuo 2010).

1.2 Islamic Revivalism

Most of the indigenous people of modern Central Asia which includes the non-Han population of Xinjiang are of Turkic origin. Xinjiang's 13 ethnic groups share ties with Central Asia, including Uyghurs, Kazakh, Uzbek, Kirgiz, Tajik and Tatar nationalities. The indigenous people of Xinjiang, like the other Central Asians identify their culture more with Turkey and the Middle Eastern traditions compared to China way of living (Harris 1993). It was hence then observed that most of the Uyghurs base their idea of the state away from Beijing. In their view, they relate more to either Independent East Turkestan or pan-ethnic Central Asian caliphate. On the similar grounds, their Islamic religious centers are located in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt. Culturally and traditionally, Uyghurs relate more to Turkey and Central Asian nature. (Nicholas 2004).

The late 1970s period signifies the emerging trend of Islam following Islamic Revolution in Iran. Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the Islamic radicalism in Iran (Shichor 2005) were the two major factors that fueled Islamic radicalization. In the late 1970s, the "spillover effects" of Islamic Revolution also led to Islamic resurgence in Central Asia in 1980s and 1990s. Under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran propagated its official policy to spread and export Islamic Revolution. Islamic Revolution was spread by Iranian ideologues through mass media and by launching the propaganda that aroused religious passion. The Iranian Islamic Revolution aimed to replace the form of Islam that existed popularly in the world with the puritan Islam, which was followed in Iran (Debata 2007).

It has been clear that the threat to Xinjiang has not just been emanating from the Soviet Republics, but also from the revivalism of Islam which has turned into a major political force in Central Asia. The Pan-Turkish renewal in Central Asia as well as Xinjiang was

later perceived by China as a greater threat than the overt Islamic inspired movement in Xinjiang. The Chinese feared the '*jihadist*' and their political movement which led to a number of developments leading to spread to radical Islam in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan (Clarke 2011). Beijing has very often condemned foreign agents and governments for inciting Uyghur unrest in Xinjiang. The external support for radical Islamism in Xinjiang mostly comes from Pakistan and Afghanistan. These two countries were an easy access from Xinjiang where Uyghurs were either sent or escaped to attend local madrassahs for Islamic knowledge and to follow the religious trends (Shichor 2005).

Radical Islamists from Pakistan and the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan played very crucial role in the Islamic revivalism and the rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang. In the 1990s, with the emerging Islamic consciousness and laxity of government policies in terms of religion proved to be dangerous for Xinjiang. For instance, a number of Uyghurs travelled to Pakistan to study Islam (Haider 2005). The Pakistan-Xinjiang highway, also known as the Karakoram Highway opened in 1982 and 1986, which is a 500-mile-long highway connecting Xinjiang's Kashgar with Islamabad. The Highway became a major factor for the transmission of radical ideologies and also helped in the movement of Uyghur militants (Kuo 2012). The Karakoram Highway was constructed to foster trade relations and to enhance political and logistical control by both the countries over their territories (Haider 2005). The construction of Karakoram Highway not only facilitated trade between Xinjiang and Pakistan, but also contributed in facilitation of the generation of cultural flows. This later proved to be a barrier in the state's integrationist project in the region. Pakistani traders with time, played a crucial role in providing cultural link between Xinjiang and Pakistan. The Pakistani influence came in the form of 'education of Xinjiang's mullah and imams' in the Pakistani madrassahs (Clarke 2011). In 1980s, greater social, economic and religious freedoms granted to Uyghurs in Xinjiang and further, the opening up of the Karakoram Highway led to the fueling up of religious awareness among Uyghurs (Haider 2005).

Due to its proximity, China had allowed Xinjiang Muslims to study abroad in madrasas in Pakistan in the late 1980s. Uyghurs studied with Afghani Taliban and Taliban supporters in Pakistan's madrasas, which inspired Uyghurs to establish a Muslim state in Xinjiang by visualizing Pakistan or the Taliban as models. This education also had Pan-Islamic political impact on the Uyghurs, which taught that Xinjiang Muslims that

they must embrace political Islam with the agenda to unite and secede from the PRC (Kuo 2012). In 1990, ethnic nationalist movements in Soviet Union were at rise which and on the other side there was the rise of Mujahedeen in Afghanistan leading to the possibility of the infiltration of same politico-ideological dimension in China's north west frontier (Clarke 2011).

In March 1990, activities that involved arming of young recruits had increased in Xinjiang. In April 1990, a Chinese language channel of Xinjiang Television showed a video wherein the Uyghur language documents instructed for *jihad* and urged for an armed Turkic nationalist uprising for an "East Turkestan Republic". Later, General Wang Enmao confirmed the involvement of seven separatist groups with foreign connections. It was found out that the arms involved in the uprising in Xinjiang were transported from Afghan Mujahedeen, which was routed through the Pakistan's path via Karakoram Highway. Two Pakistani nationals were arrested for inciting unrest in Xinjiang, alleged to be operative of Pakistan's 'Inter-Services Intelligence' (Warikoo 2000).

Pakistan influenced Xinjiang's culture in many ways. Firstly, the interaction due to trade and transfer of goods that included women's veil, posters of Muslim holy sites, jewelry that has symbolic Islamic importance and several copies of Quran. These goods represented Islamic value and culture and became a trend in Xinjiang. The other way Pakistan greatly influenced religion in Xinjiang is through education. In the late 1980s, local Muslims were allowed by the Chinese authority to travel and study in madrassahs. These students on their return became an important instrument of strict Islamic teachings (Starr 2004).

It has been reported that Pakistan's *Jamaat-e-Islami* and *Tableeghi Jamaat* sponsored Uyghur Muslims from Xinjiang for education and providing them training in *jihad* at Syed Mawdudi International Institute, Islamic University, Lahore and other madrasas and training centres. China raised this issue by supporting Pakistan in the protest against the involvement of Pakistani Islamic parties' in infiltration process of Islamic militants into Xinjiang (Warikoo 2000). The groups, *Jamaat-e-Islami* and *Tableeghi Jamaat* were responsible to influence the Muslims of neighboring Central Asian states of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These organizations encouraged an orthodox

Islam and advocated undertaking of *jihad* and targeted the Muslims who were ruled by non-Muslim states (Clarke 2011).

According to Indian Intelligence report, Pakistani military trained Uyghurs in camps near Mirpur across the "Line of Actual Control" (LAC) from India. On the other hand, Pakistani *jihadi* groups were also involved in providing training to Uyghurs in camps in Baluchistan and also supported Uyghur militants in southern Xinjiang from the Al-Badr camp at Ooji at the Afghan-Pakistan border (Clarke 2011). There have also been several reports that clarified that the Pakistanis have been promoting the idea of establishing a Muslim state in Xinjiang by setting Pakistan or Afghanistan's Taliban as the model (Starr 2004). The exposure to Islamic culture proved to be of great disadvantage for the China since it only helped in strengthening of Islamic identity and promote Muslim brotherhood among the Islamic masses, within and outside Xinjiang.

1.3 Disintegration of Soviet Union

China and Islamic world meets at Central Asia due to geographical proximity. Three Central Asian Republics namely, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, share borders with Xinjiang. New set of challenges emerged for China after the disintegration of Soviet Union, which included, dealing with the uncertain prospects of the newly independent Central Asian Republics and the issue of regional revivalism of Islam (Clarke 2011). The collapse of Soviet Union eventually led to the exposure of China's border to Iran and later to Afghanistan, which was previously restricted by Central Asian border (Mackerras and Clarke 2009). This resulted in increased religious separatism in Central Asia and influenced China's border with Middle Eastern style (Harris 1993). The disintegration of Soviet Union brought the possibility of establishing an independent Uyghur-nation state. In 1994, several Uyghurs (in Xinjiang or abroad) demanded sovereign "Uyghurstan" on the line of the independent Central Asia Republics. (Starr 2004).

A vacuum created due to the disintegration of Soviet Union seemed to have created instability in the region and has provided an opportunity for the Islamic resurgent to grow support in Xinjiang. The instability in the Central Asian Republics directly affect Xinjiang due to not just its geographical proximity, but also cultural affiliations. Hence collapse of Soviet Union proved to be a major threat for Xinjiang.

The character of Sino-Soviet relations determined the Soviet policy in the Central Asian Republics as well as Chinese policy towards the Uyghurs during the post-Cold War. Kazakhstan has the largest group of Uyghurs among the other Central Asian Republics. Uyghur culture is supported by the Kazakhstan government through educational and cultural institutions. In Kyrgyzstan, Uyghurs are settled in 2 regions: north and south, following different cultures. No cultural institutions were set up for Uyghurs in Kyrgyzstan during the Soviet period. In Uzbekistan, Uyghurs are mostly found in Tashkent and Fergana valley. Most of the Uyghurs in Fergana valley are said to be the descendants of Uyghur migrants of Kashgaria (Southern Xinjiang). Since Uzbek and Uyghurs belong from the same subgroup of Turkic family they have strong cultural bond. Turkmenistan consist of the smallest group of Uyghur population in Central Asia. It has been said that the Uyghur community in Turkmenistan started with the migration of 272 Uyghur families in 1890. Tajikistan reports no significant numbers of Uyghur population except for a small community in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan (Mackerras and Clarke 2009).

After the independence of the former Soviet Republics, Uyghurs were settled in Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, western countries and Turkey. In the early 1992, an International Uyghur Union was set up in Alma Aty with the objective to seek self-determination and protect human rights of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. In June 1992, a new Uyghur party "For a Free Uyghuristan" was set up in Kyrgyzstan that aimed for creation of Independent State of Eastern Turkestan (Warikoo 2003). Uyghur delegates from the five Central Asian Republics attended this meeting. Presence of Uyghur minorities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and on the other hand Kazakh and Kyrgyz minorities in Xinjiang complicated China's relation with these two Central Asian states. In Kazakhstan, proliferation of Uyghur political organization after the collapse of Soviet Union started. A legal political party 'Uyghur Liberation Organization' was formed in Kazakhstan which represented about 150,000 Uyghurs that resided in Kazakhstan (Clarke 2011). Two types of Uyghur organizations operated in Kazakhstan, one was the cultural-educational organization legally operating to look after local problems of Uyghurs and second was the non-registered political organization, that propagated for the independence of East Turkestan (Mackerras and Clarke 2009). All these associations and activities point out to the fact that Uyghurs formed their bases in the Soviet Republics on legal grounds and gave China reasons to

be more suspicious of the newly independent Central Asian countries that supports legality of these organizations and their activities.

The Central Asian Republics also went through various transformations to establish themselves as stable nations since, economic stagnation and political instability persisted for a long time after their independence. For instance, civil war broke out in Tajikistan and ended only in 1997 with the peace accord, though violence persisted and the Islamists retained control over the country. (Mackerras and Clarke 2009).

The Central Asian Republics are viewed with deep apprehension by the Chinese leadership. The problems attributed by the Chinese analysts to the Central Asia are related to Islam, economic difficulties, pan-Turanianism (Late 19th and early 20th century political movement in Turkey), and most importantly the influence of two Islamic countries Turkey and Iran. It was analyzed by Harris (1993) that "since there is "no dominant nationality" in Central Asia, emergence of a 'strong state' united around anti-Han sentiments on the China's peripheral region was not possible."

1.4 The 'Great Islamic Circle'

Gaye Christoffersen (1993) talks about the concept of the 'Great Islamic 'Circle'. The term 'Great Islamic Circle' has its origin from the reformist Han Chinese economists. As they propagated to use cross-border Islamic identities to facilitate Xinjiang's opening. Initially this strategy was adopted to target the Soviet Central Asian and later the Middle Eastern region. Christoffersen (1993) has placed focus on the transnational linkages in the context of China. According to him "the transnational linkages have acquired importance over time and China has been making the best use of it to benefit economically and ensure development of Xinjiang.". It was accepted that the transnational linkages influence the 'bargaining process' which starts firstly by increasing the control of centre over the regional apparatus to further foreign economic advancement, and then later, by providing an alternative source of development support to the regional government for finally enhancing its bargaining position with the centre (Christoffersen 1993).

Since 1991, China has visualized Xinjiang's topography as an asset and not as an obstacle to its integration (Clarke 2011). The process of globalization and trans-nationalization has certainly mitigated Chinese control in Xinjiang (Starr 2004). With

the coming up of the age of industrialization and infrastructural growth, transnational alliances and trade have been growing in China, and in this process Xinjiang has played a crucial role due to the fact that the region possesses abundant natural resources.

There have been cultural links between the Xinjiang Muslims and the regions that border West and Southwest to China. The reestablishment of these cultural links took place due to cross-border trade and renewal of contacts with the kins abroad. The cross border cultural influences are not only due to historical cultural ties, but also due to global cultural movements that have a great impact on it. The cultural influence from states like Pakistan and Afghanistan have been religious, in terms of exposing the region to various political movement which have become widespread in the Islamic world. The cultural influences from the CARs are characterized as more secular. The north of Xinjiang is influenced more by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the south by Pakistan (Starr 2004)

To reduce the tension on the borders, Moscow had pursued China to improve its political ties over its borders and within the strategic triangle. Railway became an infrastructural need for the economic development of the north-west region as viewed by the reformist organizations in Beijing and Urumqi. This also became a route to the 'Great Islamic Circle' for the Muslims of Xinjiang. This route facilitated border trade, family visits and trips to Mecca, that linked the Muslims of China, Middle East and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s (Christoffersen 1993). Since the reopening of the Eurasian railroad that linked Urumqi and Alma Ata in Kazakhstan in 1991, the markets flourished in China and Eastern part of Europe leading to increase in cross border trade between Xinjiang and Central Asia. There was dramatic increase in overland travelling between Xinjiang and Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan due to the relaxed policies related to the travel restrictions by Deng Xiaoping. This eventually led to the policies that prioritized trade over national security (Gladney 2003).

After the disintegration of Soviet Union, there was a revival of political, cultural and economic linkages which were suppressed for a long period across the region. The Chinese government perceived the importance of Central Asian Republics through the prism of Xinjiang region. The increase in economic relation with the Central Asian Republics became necessary for the stability and also the development of Xinjiang.
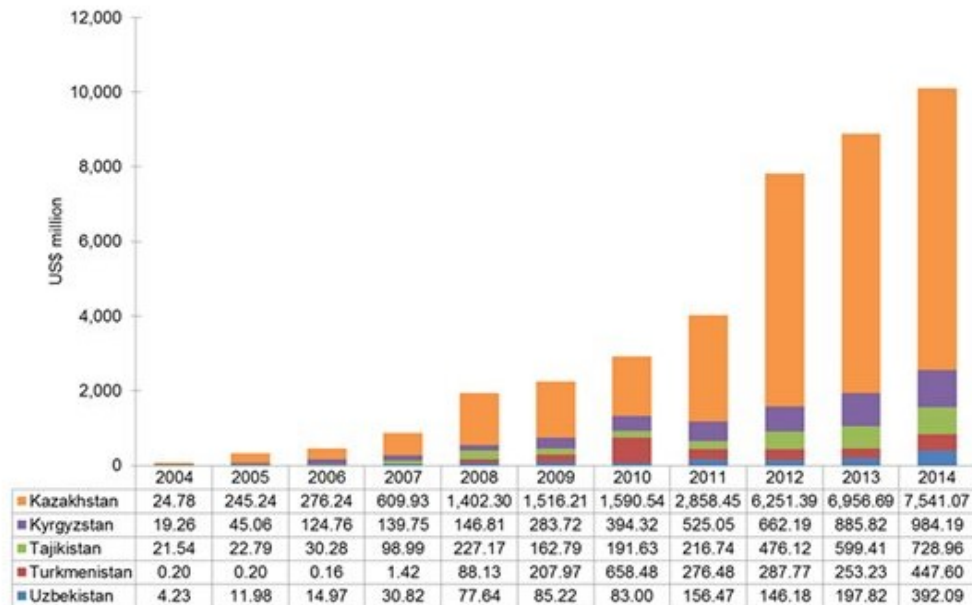
China's trade with Central Asian Republics were done at three levels, which was, government to government, regional trade and border trade. It was China's attempt to extend its policy of "opening up" to the Central Asian states. This was a measure to integrate the Central Asian Republics to the 'Great Islamic circle' without generating the integration at the domestic levels (Clarke 2011). There was an initial boom in trade after the breakup of Soviet Union with the newly emerged CARs. The liberalized environment gave the required space for the private trade to flourish. Disintegration of Soviet Union left a vacuum in the old Soviet internal framework of trade which was filled by the Chinese traders (Starr 2004). The disintegration of Soviet Union was seen by China as an opportunity to extend its influence on the newly independent states by capitalizing on Xinjiang's historical linkages with Central Asia (Clarke 2011).

China's desire to expand its power in the Central Asian Republics was also due to the absence of significant presence of US. (Clarke 2011). The breakdown of Soviet Union left a power vacuum in the international political economy that relied on the bipolar world order in the post-Cold War period. China, an emerging economy is seen as a threat by US. The US activities in Central Asia apart of a grand strategy for global domination is summarized in the following words:

> "Various countries in Central Asia have been good neighbors of China … China has signed mutual trust treaties with regard to border regions with these countries. China has constantly strengthened its political, security, economic and trade relations with Central Asian countries. To this American press explains it this way: China is the 'potential enemy' of the Unites States; and Central Asia is China's great rear of extreme importance. The penetration of the United states into Central Asia not only prevents China from East to West, thus 'effectively containing a rising China'." (Mackerras and Clarke 2009)

Figure 1.

 China's Stock of Outward Direct Investment to Central Asia

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Kazakhstan	24.78	245.24	276.24	609.93	1,402.30	1,516.21	1,590.54	2,858.45	6,251.39	6,956.69	7,541.07
Kyrgyzstan	19.26	45.06	124.76	139.75	146.81	283.72	394.32	525.05	662.19	885.82	984.19
Tajikistan	21.54	22.79	30.28	98.99	227.17	162.79	191.63	216.74	476.12	599.41	728.96
Turkmenistan	0.20	0.20	0.16	1.42	88.13	207.97	658.48	276.48	287.77	253.23	447.60
Uzbekistan	4.23	11.98	14.97	30.82	77.64	85.22	83.00	156.47	146.18	197.82	392.09

Source: Chan, Louis (2015), "An Overview of Central Asian Markets on the Silk Road Economic Belt", [Online: web] Accessed 16th May 2018 URL: http://economists-pick-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/Research-Articles/An-Overview-of-Central-Asian-Markets-on-the-Silk-Road-Economic-Belt/rp/en/1/1X000000/1X0A4C4W.htm.

One of the other reasons why China diverted towards the Central Asian states was the availability of oil in the Middle East (Clarke 2011). Since 1990s, China' foreign source of oil import has been the Persian Gulf. Beijing was dependent on the Middle East for its imports (Starr 2004). Due to increase in the consumption of oil, the domestic production was hit in the early 1990s thus making the country dependent on Middle East especially for crude oil imports (Clarke 2011). Therefore, Beijing is careful to handle the problems of Uyghurs in Xinjiang due to the fear of alienating the states that hold the supply of contemporary strategic energy resource (Starr 2004). This made China strategically vulnerable in the energy supply sector. Therefore, to reduce the strategic vulnerability, there was a shift towards Russia and Central Asia for uninterrupted oil supply (Clarke 2011).

Increase in the trans-border trade between Xinjiang and the adjoining region of Pakistan, Kyrgystan and Kazakhstan resulted in deepening of communication between the Turkic peoples of Xinjiang and their ethnic brethren in Central Asia, Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. (Warikoo 2000).

There were many Uyghurs (from Xinjiang or Central Asia) that fought alongside the mujahedeen who had returned to Xinjiang through the Karakoram Highway, which was built to facilitate trade between Xinjiang and Pakistan. They eventually joined the nationalist movement and agitated violently for independence in Xinjiang. Therefore, several factors like a) the cross border linkages created by the Uyghurs through access provided by highway, b) Beijing's policy to expand Uyghur economic and travel links with Pakistan in the 1980s and c) Beijing's consent to support anti-Soviet operations, culminated in radicalization of Uyghurs in Xinjiang (Haider 2005).

The economic factor seen by China as an opportunity to rise as an economic power by increasing trade through the 'Great Islamic Circle' with the neighboring Central Asian Republics and Middle East proved to be disastrous for China since the medium of connection with these states not just facilitated trade and commerce, but also facilitated the movement of the forces that were responsible for the rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang.

2. The Baren incident

The Baren incident suggested that the showcase of radical Islamic ideology during the uprising portrayed the external threat not only from the Soviet state, but the nature of the incident changed to the influence from movements within the territories of the Soviet Union itself (Clarke 2011). After the Baren incident, the Uyghur threat in Xinjiang was discussed both inside and outside of China. It was felt that it is not only the domestic factors but external forces have also been involved (Shichor 2005). Tensions in Xinjiang escalated in the post-Cold War era and this was attributed to the two major factors that impacted Xinjiang the most: Firstly, the disintegration of Soviet Union and independence of Central Asian Republics. Secondly, increased interaction and mingling with the outside world on China's part, especially the cultural connections with the Central Asian Republics and the financial aid from Middle East (Harris 1993). But it was also felt that the real concern for the security of Xinjiang came to rise after the disintegration of Soviet Union, which was due to external and internal dynamics

both. Both these dynamics included revival of Islam and the post 1978 economic policy, which brought in the importance of international dynamics in Xinjiang (Clarke 2011).

Several Chinese leaders pointed out the rise of external influences in Xinjiang after the Baren incident. For instance, Premier Li Peng in the 1990 warned in a National Conference which focused on 'Nationalities Affairs' against foreign "reactionary and splittist forces" which "carry out their infiltration activities while hoisting the nationality banner and donning religious outer garments." (Harris 1993). Part Secretary Wang also pointed out that the separatists are 'religious reactionaries', who want to establish an 'Islamic kingdom'. But on the other hand, there have been evidences that the leaders of the Uyghur rebel movement are not simply religious fanatics, but are Pan Turkic nationalists. The neighboring Turkic-speaking countries supports their movement. Despite the pledge by the governments to not support the Xinjiang separatist movement by the governments of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the supporters of the movement openly operate from these countries (Hyer 2005) The change of international environment and its implications on China's north west frontier was also anticipated by Chinese authorities in their speeches. In 1996, Wang Lequan, the secretary of the CCP's Xinjiang Autonomous Regional Committee acknowledged: "At the moment, there is an ideological trend which advocated Xinjiang's independence and the setting up of an independent country. The effects of the tremendous changes in the Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the USSR had been felt to a certain extent over the past few years." (Smith 2000). Further, the Chairman of the Nationalities Affairs Commission, Ismail Aymat asserted that "certain elements are using religion as an instrument to create regional discord. Meanwhile, a number of foreigners are engaged in provocative activities" (Clarke 2011).

The Chinese government worry about the situation when the Muslim movement at the international level including Asia and Middle East combines with religious extremism and challenges the Chinese authority. There has also been the fear that the Uyghur movement can radicalize the minorities internally, including the ethnic Tibetans or non-Muslim Chinese. There is a possibility of the rise of religious extremism issue due to the external factors because of the increased religious extremism and political instability that persists in the neighboring state like Pakistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan (Davis 2008).

3. Uyghur Movement and Terrorism

Since the early 1990s, the Uyghur leaders attempted to create an international umbrella organization for the unification of all Uyghur nationalist groups. This led to the meetings of the Eastern Turkestan National Congress (ETNC) and later the formation of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), in April 2004. These organizations aim to promote the independence of Eastern Turkestan through political and peaceful means and by lobbying parliaments, governments, media and NGOs (Shichor 2005). Uyghurs from Turkey also support the movement. In Istanbul, in March 1998, a demonstration in front of the Chinese embassy called for "freedom for East Turkistan". Slogan calling for the exit of CCP and the PLA from Xinjiang and the establishment of "Xinjiangstan" have been common during many demonstrations (Hyer 2005).

A number of "Islamic" organization were enlisted by the Chinese authority which included, the "Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement" (ETIM) and the "Eastern Turkestan Islamic Party of God" that are responsible for using and combining Islam and nationalism (Shichor 2005). In 2002, the Bush administration added the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" to its "terrorist watch list". This action was taken because apparently it was found out that the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" was planning to attack a US embassy in Kyrgyzstan. The "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" was held responsible for a number of acts of terrorism in China, which included, arson attacks, assassinations, bombing of hotels, cinemas, buses, markets and departmental stores (Cunningham 2012).

China currently faces the security threat in three dimensions by the Uyghur. The first dimension is the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), which is a Uyghur terrorist group linked to Al-Qaeda fighting in Syria and Afghanistan. TIP, in 1997, fought for the creation of independent Islamic state in Xinjiang as a part of caliphate in Afghanistan (Soliev 2018). TIP, according to one of the Chinese reports, between 1990 to 2000, has been responsible for carrying out "200 acts of terrorism, resulting in at least 162 deaths and over 400 injuries". Since then there have been several attacks, for instance, in 2008, there was an attack on paramilitary troops killing 17 in Kashgar and in 2013, a suicide vehicle attack killing 5 and injured several in Tiananmen (Yee 2017). The second is related to the ISIS and other related groups linked to Uyghur militants in Southeast Asia and Middle East. This group has particularly been a threat to Chinese interest in Turkey

and the Middle East. It has been found out that the Chinese Uyghurs covertly travelled from Xinjiang to Turkey and then via Southeast Asia to Iraq and Syria. South east Asia is used by the radical Uyghur as a transit route (Soliev 2018). The evidences about the Uyghur militants aligning with the Al-Qaeda and IS has become a concern raising the issue of the local Uyghur separatists coming under the influence of Transnational *jihadi* cause (Yee 2017). Third is the Malhama Tactical, which is a militant group Syria-based positioning itself as an 'elite unit of military instructors'. In 2017, this group issued an online statement mentioning the Uyghurs and also had threatened Beijing with 'bringing the war into Xinjiang'. By publicizing the Uyghur cause, Malhama Tactical is trying to increase its recruitment and funding for its operations (Soliev 2018).

The growing transnational linkages between the Uyghurs militants and the terrorists affiliated to al-Qaeda in Central and South Asia and Middle East is both worrisome for the Chinese government and the international community. The US National Security Advisor, Susan Rice in a recent visit to China alleged that the Uyghurs from Xinjiang have travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight for the Islamic state (ISIS) terrorist insurgency. Therefore, the implication of the conflict in Xinjiang is global. There have been statements issued by the *Jihadist* groups in the Middle East, South Asia and Syria-Iraq based ISIS supporting Xinjiang's independence from China and urged for Xinjiang's integration into a global Islamic Caliphate (Cao 2018). By taking active part in the armed conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan, Uyghur *jihadists* have increased their military capabilities, geographical reach and manpower. Due to the engagement with ISIS, Al-Qaeda and other groups linked to *jihad*, they have acquired more sophisticated tactics, combat skills and ideological propaganda (Soliev 2018).

For the purpose of expanding transnational networks, Al-Qaeda has been successful in attracting Uyghur militants and IS also has shown interest in the Uyghurs plight to expand its transnational networks. IS Al Hayat media in a speech released in July 2017, entitled "A Message to the *Mujahedeen* and the Muslim *Ummah* in the month of Ramzan", Bakr al-Baghdadi, IS leader hinted towards China to be the target for attacks. He also pointed out about the denial of 'Muslim' rights in China in comparison to the other countries where the Muslims resided. The propaganda magazine, *Islamic Turkestan* was released via "Global Islamic Media Front" (GIMF) which is an outlet of Al-Qaeda indicating the alignment of Uyghur led Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP) with Al-Qaeda. In a video in 2016, Ayman Zawahiri, Al-Qaeda leader has urged the Uyghurs

in China to "strengthen the fire of *jihad*" to deal better with the Chinese authority. The presence of Uyghurs has also increased in Southeast Asia, especially in Philippines and Indonesia. In 2016, Uyghurs were detected entering Indonesia to join the East Indonesian group, called the Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT) (Yee, 2017).

China prepared a list in December 2003 listing four "East Turkestan" terrorist organizations. The organizations included the Eastern Turkistan Liberation Organization (headquarter in Istanbul), the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement, the World Uygur Congress (Germany based) and East Turkistan Information Center (Germany based). It has been found out that the "East Turkestan" terrorist have been fighting several guerrilla war in Kashmir, Afghanistan and Pakistan. There have been reports from the Indian intelligence that before few weeks of the death of Osama bin Laden, Abdul Shakoor Turkistani was appointed by Al-Qaeda the chief of Turkistan Islamic Party and also the new commander of training camps in Pakistan (Huasheng 2013).

With the rise in terrorist activities, China with several other nations has joined hands against growing terrorism which is a global issue. For instance, India and China have both joined hands to fight against terrorism and have started joint military exercise called Hand-in-Hand in the Yunnan province of China. This exercise was from 19th to 27th December 2007, involving 103 troops from both the countries. Further, in 2008 and 2010 also both the countries conducted joint military exercises (Debata 2010). Hence, not only does intelligence reports suggest the growing of terrorism and its support by few Uyghur members, the international community condemns any kind of act that is a threat to mankind as a whole. Terrorism is no more restricted to territories but has become transnational in its structure and reach affecting globally.

4. International Response

Beijing has been criticized for its harsh treatment of Xinjiang's Muslim Uyghur population. This matter has been raised several times in the European Parliament and also in various U.S. administration commissions. Reports from Amnesty International, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Asia Watch have indicated the figures of prosecution and persecution of Xinjiang Muslim minorities. China has also been blamed for plundering Xinjiang's natural resources and for creating an imbalance in the demography by encouraging Han immigration (Shichor 2005).

Al-Bilad, the official newspaper of Saudi Arabia had warned China about "suffering of (its) Muslims whose human rights are violated". Turhan Tayan, Turkey's Defence Minister also officially condemned the way China is handling the minorities issue. Several Muslim nations including Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian states have criticized the harsh treatment of their fellow Muslim brothers in China (Gladney 2003). In 2010 also, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish Prime Minister addressed in a press conference and described Chinese actions against the Uyghurs as "nearly genocide". He also threatened to take the issue in UN at the G-8 Summit (Debata 2010) Tehran also in 2009 sided with its Muslim brotherhood in Xinjiang. Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani, an Iranian religious leader in 2009 was associated with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and he urged other international institutions to intervene in this issue regarding the Uyghurs. He further added:

> "We just thought that only the bullying West violates Muslim's rights and deprive them of their basic rights, but reports from China indicate that in that part of the world the unprotected Muslims are being mercilessly suppressed by yesterday's communist China and today's capitalist China." (Debata 2010).

In March 2005, the Uyghur leader Rebiya Kadeer was released with the help of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Kadeer gave her testimony on 27th April 2005 in the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (CHRC), the Department of US in Washington DC. There, the Representative of CHRC, Susan O' Sullivan was present and also the representatives of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, the two premier human rights organizations (Debata 2010).

On the other hand, the Uyghur movement has been seen as a failed movement due to several reasons. It has been portrayed that the Uyghurs are united around the Islamist and separatist causes. But it has been found that they are divided on levels of religious conflicts, for instance, Sufi and non-Sufi Muslims, discrepancies in language, territorial and competing political loyalties and common-elite alienation (Gladney 2003). It has been found out that the diaspora of Uyghur organizations is weak, small and is hardly coordinated. There have been several attempts to create an umbrella organization to unite all the groups to agree on similar agendas and executive programmes, but failed. After the death of Uyghur leader, Isa Yusuf Alptekin, who after China's independence

in 1949 sought asylum in Turkey (Debata 2010), the transnational Uyghur movement has become leaderless and fragmented (Shichor 2005).

Even in Xinjiang, the relations between the Turkic groups are uncoordinated. Within and outside Xinjiang, among the Turkic Muslims there seem to be very little hope of Pan-Turkic solidarity. There has been no support from the neighboring countries including Inner Mongolia and Tibet, wherein the local minorities have long been demanding separate homeland (Debata 2010). It has been established that Xinjiang is an undisputed part of China but on the other side, the international community is not silent on the violation of Human Rights in China. The other issue that attracts attention is the support of terrorism, which is condemned by the international community as a whole is one of the other reasons why the Uyghur cause is not supported by several nations.

Therefore, international factors have not only affected Xinjiang domestically but have created situations that led to the consequences globally. The Chinese authority to save its north west frontier and in the effort to maintain stability in the region has come up with several policies and programmes. The Chinese response to the unrest in the region has gone beyond its domestic sphere to call for international regional cooperation since the issue of religious extremism has reached beyond the boundaries of China. These responses will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter IV: China's Response

China blames on several factors that responsible for the rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang. Firstly, the unspecified 'western forces', secondly, contact between Xinjiang's Muslims and the Muslims abroad leading to mosque construction and Islamic education, thirdly, the collapse of Soviet Union and independence of Central Asian Republics and fourthly, claiming that the only handful of 'counter-revolutionaries' are responsible for carrying out separatist activities (Harris 1993).

Since it was evaluated by the Chinese authority that the rise of religious extremism in the post-Cold War period is the result of domestic and international factors combine, the Chinese authorities opted for the strategies to settle the instability and issues in Xinjiang with the policies both domestic and foreign, complementing each other. It was crucial for China to come up with the policies, since it was felt that until the internal dynamics of Xinjiang are settled, the foreign forces will keep on adding fuel to the issues that have persisted in Xinjiang for a long period and vice-versa. Therefore, this chapter will discuss the policies by the Chinese government as a response to the rise of religious extremism on the Central level to combat the "three evils" impacting both the internal and foreign dynamics of Xinjiang.

The Chinese government on the issue of religious extremism defines it character:

> "Religious extremism is not religion, but tries to make use of religion. It is by nature anti-human, anti-society, anti-civilization and anti-religion, and is an important ideological foundation for violent and terrorist activities. Since the Cold War, religious extremism has become increasingly rampant in the international arena, frequently committing acts of terror and violence, for instance, the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S., the November 13 terrorist attacks in France, and the March 22 terrorist attacks in Belgium. Those attacks have severely undermined world peace and regional security, and become a malignant tumor in contemporary international society." (White Paper 2016)

The Chinese authority stresses on the basic ideology of the 'three evil' forces that are responsible for creating unrest in Xinjiang. The 'three evil' forces considered by China as religious extremism, separatism and terrorism are the root cause of instability in Xinjiang and the Chinese authorities have taken several elaborate, concrete and

practical steps to counter these evils (Warikoo 2010). The 'three evils' by the Chinese government are viewed in terms of cross-nationalism that pose challenge to the security, stability and unity of the country. The Chinese government thus explains the states idea to promote stability in the region against the 'three evils':

1. "Three Evils" and the Freedom of Religious Belief

The issue of religion and nationality has taken a center stage in the region wherein, the "Eastern Turkistan" perceives religion as pretext to split Xinjiang from the mainland China by resorting to violence. On the other hand, China claims to take the route to promote mutual respect, communication and dialogue and advocates "a harmonious world". China propagates that there is a need to conduct religious exchanges in a planned way with other countries and also the need to guard China from overseas infiltration by the 'religious extremists'. There needs to be a distinction made between the 'three evil' forces and the freedom of religious belief. For the promotion of social development, stability and national progress, advanced culture should play a guiding role (Warikoo 2010).

It has been stipulated by the Constitution of PRC that:

> "Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state." (White Paper 2016).

The Chinese nationalities policy has been reconsidered by the Chinese scholars that is believed to be based on the Soviet (Marxist-Leninist) theory which proved to be a failure with the collapse of Soviet Union. It has been argued that the Soviet nationalities policy was adopted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which recognizes different ethnic groups to be the nationalities of China. Soviet Union established on multi-national federation of different nationalities which was controlled by Moscow. China on the other hand does not offer the right to political secession unlike the Soviet model. It has been believed that the concessions and special policies in terms of university admissions, family planning programmes, dual school system and administrative positions favoring ethnic minorities have been the root cause of the rise in unrest in

Xinjiang, since these policies have only "strengthened and politicized minority group identity" (Warikoo 2010).

The Chinese authority urges that "it is an undeniable obligation of all countries and people, even the religious believers to fight against religious extremism since it is the common enemy of all humanity. To prevent religious extremism in Xinjiang, a policy of 'de-extermination' has been adopted to safeguard fundamental interest of the people and country and it should be seen as an important battle against the rise of religious extremism by the world community." (White Paper 2016).

"Re-education camps" were introduced in Xinjiang in a covert way wherein, large numbers of Muslims were detained for its enrollment as reported by Adrian Zenz (2018). This is seen as an important step by the Chinese government since the radical ideas that have instigated a 'holy war' with the help of 'outside forces' through foreign visits and internet sources and have led to incite the feeling of Islamic fundamentalism. Beijing has turned into a surveillance state that keeps a check on the Muslims of Xinjiang through facial-recognition technology and by forcing them to install spyware on phones to monitor their online activities. On the other hand, the "de-extremification" campaign was launched in 2017 as a part of "re-education" campaign (Denyer 2018). In 2014, the concept of "transformation through education" came into existence in Xinjiang applied on the Muslim population. (Zenz 2018). These campaigns by the Chinese government are efforts to eliminate the 'radical ideology' settled in the minds of people through the process of 're-education'.

China's constitutional principle is 'full equality among ethnic groups'. As the constitution stipulates "All ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China are equal", this principle is based on the 'Law of the People's Republic of China' also reflecting on 'Regional Ethnic Autonomy and the laws' that devise the policy of equality amongst other ethnic groups. On the other hand, the policy of 'Regional ethnic autonomy' was also adopted by China to tackle the problems of ethnic groups and as fundamental political system for the country. The implementation of 'regional national autonomy' by China is because of various reasons that include history, will of people and national conditions (White Paper 2009).

The first counter-terrorism law in China deals with "details and supplements the national law in defining terror activities and terrorists, security precautions,

intelligence, investigations, countermeasures and punishment" (Yee 2017). The Chinese authority define terrorism as "any premediated and violent criminal act against any person or property with the intent of spreading fear or causing harm for a political purpose, whether executed individually or by a group of people" and the term "terrorist" is referred to the separatists and illegal religious groups, which are located in the problematic areas like Xinjiang (Panda, 2010).

The Chinese White Paper (2018) states that religious extremism and violent terrorist activities will be dealt with as per Chinese law. China opposes "all forms of extremism that instigates hatred, incites discrimination and advocates violence by distorting religious doctrines and also forbids any discriminatory behavior in the name of religion, ethnicity or religion". The "Regulation of Religious Affairs" prohibits any individual or any organization from advocating or sponsoring religious extremism or using religion to undermine ethnic unity, divide the country or any engagement in terrorist activities (White Paper 2018). The 'Regulations on Religious Affairs' by the PRC's State Council and the 'Regulation of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on Religious Affairs' by the Xinjiang's local government have both reflected on the basics of the Constitution that endorses the idea that that "citizens enjoy freedom of religious belief" and also that "the state protects normal religious activities." (White Paper 2016).

XUAR CCP Committee held a conference from 3rd to 6th May 1996, to discuss the implementation of the central government's important instructions on preserving Xinjiang stability. The conference identified 'political power' as a 'key link' to ensure Xinjiang's stability and hence immediately focused on the rectification of party organizations at the lowest levels to negate the influence of the religious forces that had infiltrated the party. The Conference further decided on the implementation of three measures- the strengthening of 'propaganda and education' amongst the ethnic minorities, elimination of religious influence in education and increased censorship of the 'cultural and publication market'. Ethnic separatism was characterized as 'a reactionary political stand' and the state's struggle against it now was 'a life-and-death class struggle' in which it was stated that there could be 'no compromise or concession whatsoever'. Chinese authority through the 'Strike Hard Campaign' also stressed on eradicating 'splittist' tendencies within its own structure of authority in the region and hence on of the major facet of the campaign was the CCP Disciplinary Committee calling for harsh punishments for the officials found guilty of actions 'detrimental to

the stability of Xinjiang' (Clarke 2011).

At the provincial level, Xinjiang has called for the crackdown on extremism and terrorism with the relevant laws and regulations that include, "Counterterrorism Law of the People's Republic of China" and the "Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China" (White Paper 2016). The Chinese government monitors all the religious activities which included speeches and sermons od Imams under the law on "Prescriptions on the Management of Religious Activities in Xinjiang". This law stipulates that all the religious activities and groups should be taken up within the legal norms by maintaining social stability in the region, and also upholding the unity and integrity of China as a nation. Politicization of Islam and its misuse by interfering in the society, government, judiciary and administration will not be allowed. To train Imams and religious preachers, Xinjiang Islamic Institute has been established to preach within the norms (Warikoo 2010).

At the instruction of Chinese central government, provincial authorities in Xinjiang launched 'Strike Hard Campaign' on 1st May 1996. This was a step taken by the Chinese government to crack down the 'national splittist forces'. It came as a product of the Chinese strategy after the conclusion of the Shanghai Five Agreement. 'Document No.7' was a confidential document received by the Xinjiang CCP that stressed on the Central government's perception of the scope of the threat to China's position in Xinjiang. The document outlined the CCP Central Committee's concerns regarding the prevalent 'illegal religious activities' and the activities of the external 'hostile' forces in Xinjiang:

> "The separatist organizations abroad have reinforced their collaboration, reinforcing day after day their efforts to infiltrate and carry out sabotage in Xinjiang. Within Xinjiang, illegal religious movements are rampant. Groups are formenting trouble, assaulting Party and government structures, bombing and committing terrorist attacks. Some organizations have already turned from underground to semi-public, to the point of openly confronting the government… there is also a possibility that this as yet limited chaos and turmoil may influence Xinjiang's and the whole country's stability." (Clarke 2011)

The new restrictions imposed by the Chinese government during the 'Strike Hard Campaign" were as follows:

a) Any form of Islamic dress including wearing hijab was forbidden in schools, entry to mosque was prohibited for the children under the age of 18;

b) Government employees including members of CCP, the Communist Youth League and retired employees were all forbidden to enter the mosque;

c) Prohibition of mosques from involving itself in any dispute relating to family planning and marriage or reading out the Islamic marriage contract before the couple being issued with a valid civil marriage certificate;

d) Banning of printed or taped material relating to separatism or religious extremism;

e) Outlaw of teaching of religion other than a mosque which has been registered (Dillon 2008)

The Document No. 7 identifies separatism as the greatest threat not only to Xinjiang as a region but to the whole nation (Dillon 2008). The anti-Chinese demonstrations and terrorist activities were not just attributed to separatists, but religious fanatics and "foreign forces". This was considered as the direct reference to the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" (ETIM) which is an internationally recognized terrorist organization (Hyer 2005).

The second phase of the 'Strike Hard Campaign' began in 1996, the Chinese government rounded up thousands and executed hundreds of Uyghurs who were suspected of violence and 'separatist' activities. (Hasting 2011).

During the February 1997 demonstrations, many banners raised displayed Islamic religious expressions and since then, many neighborhood mosques became the focal point of anti-Chinese activities. The government not only clamped down on what they considered "illegal religious activities" but also closed many mosques (Hyer 2005). In 1997, "Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure" was launched as a national wide campaign. This campaign called to erect a "great wall of steel" by China against the separatists in Xinjiang. The campaign intended to clamp down on the increase in crime, corruption and violence besides imposing severe restriction on the practice of religion. (Starr 2004).

The deputy chief of the Xinjiang procuratorate, Hasimu Mamuti had accused Uyghur separatists and "religious extremist forces" for encouraging "Pan Islam" and "religious fanaticism" to deceive "people who have little common sense, no knowledge of the

truth and only a naive love for religion" to create public opinion in support of national independence. He also argued that "all the disturbance, chaos and violent terrorism… are almost without exception connected to illegal religious activities." He later concluded by saying that, "if the illegal religious activities are not resolutely stopped, if the unlawful and criminal separatist activities under the cover of religion are not resolutely dealt with, there will never be any peace in the region" (Hyer 2005).

In 1998, New Criminal Law was passed by the National People's Congress redefining "counterrevolutionary" crimes as "crimes against the state". This law permitted punishment for severe prison terms and even execution. The "crime against the state" included action that included involvement of "ethnic discrimination" or "stirring up anti-ethnic sentiments" (Starr 2004)

2. Economic and Cultural development

China focuses on Economic development and development of cultural education. China aims at developing the economy in Xinjiang for the purpose of uplifting the people in the border areas and improve their living standards. It has been believed by the Chinese that the idea if "three forces" may have deep historical reasons, but one of the main causes of it is low living standards of Uyghurs and their belief that "everything can be changed as long as independence is achieved". Therefore, military attacks are seen no solution to achieve the goals of harmonious living. Chinese authority emphasize on the built up of economic base and the improvement in cultural quality of life through scientific development as the solution to create a good social environment in China (Warikoo 2010).

2.1 Economic Policies

Beijing perceives economic development as a very important tool to undermine the rise in religious extremism in Xinjiang and hence through Great Western Development Strategy, resources have been committed for the economic development of the region. To enhance China's Western region and to maintain stability in the minds of Muslim minorities, $125 billion has been spent for south to north water diversion, power transmission west to east, twelve highways connecting Xinjiang to Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan. (Cunningham 2012).

In 1992, Song Hanliang, the party secretary of XUAR, stressed on the XPCC to 'make new and greater contributions towards accelerating Xinjiang's development'. Song pushed XPCC and acknowledged that there is a need to emancipate their minds and renew their concepts for region's development. It was reminded to XPCC that 'all preferential state policies for Xinjiang are applicable to the Production and Construction Corps' and the only key to change the situations in Xinjiang was to 'cherish the guiding ideology that stresses economic work'. It was also announced that the regional and central authorities granted the XPCC to engage in borer trade and encouraged 'to open wider to the outside world' for the reason to 'make inroads into domestic and foreign markets'. Xinjiang's economic integration with Central Asia and China became central function of XPCC. Moreover, role of XPCC in the post-Cold War era widened due to the implementation of 8th Five Year Plan. XPCC was responsible for opening and operation of the 'Eurasian Continental Bridge' that will be helpful in connecting Xinjiang's economy with the Central Asia. Wang Enmao, CCP Party Secretary in Xinjiang under the overall guidance of the Chinese govt. The 9th Five Year Plan (1996-2000) embodied the strategic guiding principles of the party and state for narrowing the gaps between regions in economic development', promoting development in Xinjiang. The 9th Five Year Plan pushed for the development of the 'pillar industries' for the facilitation of trade and economic development with the Central Asia. In 1996, the XUAR CCP Chairman Wang Lequan in the 4th Session of the 7th XUAR Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference outlined the central government's commitment to implement 'double opening' strategy in Xinjiang, which reaffirmed the state strategy that aimed for integration and control in Xinjiang (Clarke 2011)

Due to the change in geopolitical situation in Central Asia, China being conscious of the new threats has been following elaborate policies to ensure stability in Xinjiang. These policies include:

a) Policies focusing on the oil resources (18 billion tonnes) for future economic growth. Several agreements are concluded with countries like Japan and Britain for the purpose of setting up various joint projects for exploration of oil and petro-chemical and ethylene projects.

b) Policies that facilitate crossborder trade adjoining Xinjiang with the Central Asian states by creating Special Economic Zones.

c) Policies to influence the Islamic states like Pakistan, Iran and Middle East through various incentives and sale of arms in return for dollars to secure political support of these nations over the Chinese presence in Xinjiang. Several high power delegations and Muslim leaders from Central Asian states and Iran have visited Xinjiang during the past few years. China through this policy aims to ward off Islamic criticism in Xinjiang and to some extent has succeeded in legitimizing its position in Xinjiang (Warikoo 2000).

The strategy of "double-opening" is another effort by China to tie Xinjiang into "China proper". This was a process that required the Xinjiang integration into Central Asian economy and also establishing cooperation and security with the Central Asian states. This strategy is described in the following words:

> "Thus, security within Xinjiang was to be achieved by economic growth, while economic growth was to be assured by the reinforcement of the state's instruments of political and social control, which in turn was to be achieved by opening the region to Central Asia. Importantly, the economic opening to Central Asia would come to offer Beijing a significant element of leverage to induce Central Asian states to aid it in its quest to secure Xinjiang against 'separatist' elements." (Tukmadiyeva 2013).

There was sudden focus on Xinjiang's petrochemical industry. With the rise of the importance of the petrochemical industries and the inclusion in the government's 'double opening' strategy, these industries became the 'pillar industries". By channelizing the focus on petrochemical industries, China reoriented its energy strategy towards Central Asia. One of the major goals was transformation of Xinjiang into a transit route that flows towards eastward 'Central Asian gas and oil'. (Clarke 2011). China has initiated several projects and development programmes in Xinjiang that include roads, railways, buildings, telecommunications, high rise residential apartments, oil refineries, industries and so on. The capital of Xinjiang, Urumqi is growing towards higher development due to massive industrialization and so are Uyghur dominated regions that include Khotan, Kashgar etc. China has initiated a policy to involve various Provinces/ Counties outside of Xinjiang for the socio-economic development of areas in Xinjiang (Warikoo 2010).

Beijing launched "Go West" campaign for the economic development of six laggard western regions. Due to Xinjiang's strategic geographic location, natural resource

endowment and the arable land, the region has been the top priority. The main objective of the programme was Xinjiang's role in international trade. For stability and to address the issue of separatism in Xinjiang, "leapfrog development" has been undertaken to push "Go West" programme. Xinjiang was given the status of "extraordinarily important strategic status" in the national development programme. A conference was held to strategically plan "leapfrog development". Establishment of Special Economic Zone was decided in Kashgar and Special Trade Zone status was given to Korgas and Alatau ports, which made Xinjiang an important gateway to Central Asia. Further, the implementation of "pairing assistance" programme was discussed in the conference under which financial and technical assistance will be provided to nineteen cities and provinces in Xinjiang. The Chinese leaders saw economic development as the solution of the instability Xinjiang has been facing for a long time, drive by logic that "if the region can develop fast enough, Uyghurs will accept Chinese rule and their dissatisfactions will disappear" (Tukmadiyeva 2013).

The close relationship between Xinjiang and central authorities is essential due to the traditional strategic consideration which are reinforced by three elements: firstly, China's increased dependency on oil and natural gas resources, secondly, Xinjiang's geostrategic positioning with the Central Asian crossroads, and thirdly, the ethnic unrest which is nurtured by the Islamic fundamentalism (Becquelin 2004). Beijing conference in May 2010 on Xinjiang has marked a new thrust in the Chinese policies towards Xinjiang through increased investment, technological innovation, pace of development and ethnic-religious stability (Warikoo 2010).

Xinjiang promotes "welcoming in" and "going global" to enhance mutual understanding and friendship with other countries. For instance, organization of the "China Xinjiang Culture Exchange Group" with countries in Europe, Middle East and Oceania. On the other hand, the Chinese delegations also participate in the "China Islamic Culture Expo and Art Show" which is held by the Islamic Association of China in Turkey, Indonesia and several other countries (White paper 2016).

2.2 Cultural Policies

The principle enshrined in the Constitution of the PRC says that the religious groups and affairs should not be subject to control by the foreign countries. By upholding the principles of independence and self-government, the religious groups and believers are

allowed to manage religious affairs themselves in accordance with the Constitution and law (White Paper 2018). China considers maintaining unity among the ethnic groups as a significant task due to following reasons: firstly, for national unity, the unity of ethnic groups will lead to safe guarding of country's unification and prevention of conflicts among the groups that can cause instability in the country; secondly, social stability depends a lot on the unity of ethnic groups. It has been believed by the Chinese authority that only such unity can lead the society to harmony and guarantee long lasting-security and peace (White Paper 2009). Thus several cultural policies have been implemented by China to win the support of minorities by promoting their culture and traditions through several ways:

a) To promote and preserve all objects, cultural sites, historical evidences and episodes of Xinjiang, which will demonstrate China's political and administrative jurisdiction.

b) Numerous sites that have been ascribed national and cultural importance are presented and appropriated as treasured ancient Chinese civilization.

c) To promote cultural tourism through Uyghur shrines

d) Promotion of Uyghur handicraft that include musical instruments, wooden articles, brassware, knife etc. In Kashgar, the Central Asian bazaars function to cater the need of the local people in Xinjiang cities and towns. These bazaars have developed as international trading centres with adjoining nations of Central and South Asia.

e) Promotion of Uyghur music and dance at national level for the creation of better cultural and social understanding between Han and Uyghur communities. Uyghur boys and girls perform dance at National Stadium at several occasions. Even in Beijing Olympic in 2008 several dance performances were presented by Uyghur artists.

f) All China Entrance Examination is a platform through which Uyghurs are drawn into national mainstream through weightage points and uniform system of entrance examination (Warikoo 2010).

In 1999, a White Paper was released by the State Council Office titled "National Minorities Policies and its Practice in China", which outlined generous policies towards the minorities. Also in 2006, in a meeting of Chinese National Islamic Council, the Chairman of National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative

Congress, Jia Qinglin requested the Muslim leaders to play a positive role in maintaining stability and building a "harmonious society" in China. The Director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, Ye Xiaowen stated:

> "As Chinese Muslims advance with the nation, this is our response to the many turbid misunderstandings that tarnish the Muslim image: Islam is a peace-loving religion. Chinese Muslims love peace, oppose turmoil and separation, advocate tolerance and harmony, and treasure unity and stability." (Davis 2012)

In mid 1990s, the Chinese authority devised the "Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure Campaign". The CCP Regional Secretary, Wang Laquan argued that social progress and economic development will only be possible with the social stability and national unity. Wang came up with the following programme during the 'Strike Hard Campaign' aiming at:

a) To eliminate the spread of separatist propaganda through publicizing the achievements of CCP and the government;

b) For the development and welfare of people, promotion of 'advanced' units and the contributions of individuals;

c) Directing the campaign at the extremist religious propaganda, a rectification campaign that strengthens education at grassroots level for officials and ordinary people;

d) To find practical solutions to the problems for the ethnic groups in minority areas;

e) Emphasis on the education of people at the lower levels;

f) Strengthening of government leadership before the local bodies (Dillon 2004).

The Xinjiang Party Committee linked separatism with the ongoing unlawful religious activities and confirmed the importance of religion in the dynamics after the Baren rebellion. In 1996, the Chinese authority came up with a 13-article document outlining the regulations that controlled periodicals, Islamic books and the products related to audio-visual by United Front Work Department, Chinese Communist Party's Propaganda Department, Culture Department, Press and Publications Bureau and Nationalities Affairs Commission. The regulation focused on scrutinizing of publications related to Islam (Debata 2007).

Later in 2008, measures were taken to combat "infiltration" in schools, Mass campaign was called by the Xinjiang government to promote the "Three Upholds, Two Opposes", which implied upholding social stability, ethnic unity and unification of motherland, while opposing illegal religious activities and ethnic separatism. In 2008, implementation of "two-point system" was introduced which called for the high-level officials to monitor the leaders and mosques directly to increase state control over religion (Weston and Jenson 2012).

The Chinese government from time to time has promoted Uyghur culture at national levels and at several occasions when there came a need to put a restriction on the activities that can encourage religious extremism.

3. Cooperation with the International Community

The other way for China was by building rapport and strengthening cooperation with the international community, particularly the independent Central Asian Republics. Since the three 'evil forces' are extremely active in Central Asian nations, it became a necessity for China to strengthen cooperation and construct a legal mechanism to tackle the issue of separatism, extremism and terrorism (Warikoo 2010). China's relation with Central Asia was central to its strategy in Xinjiang. There were some major issues that were targeted by the China through its relation with Central Asian Republics: Firstly, military confidence building measures and border demarcation and external aid to separatists, particularly Uyghurs. Secondly, facilitation of economic cooperation (Clarke 2011). These issues will be discussed in detail in this section.

In relation to Confidence building measures in 1994, the Chinese Prime Minister, Li Peng on a tour to Central Asian Republics addressed the Uzbek parliament speaking of a new era of China-Central Asian relations emphasizing on economic cooperation, stability in political relationships, China's non-interference in Central Asia's domestic affairs and the building of New Silk Road (Dillon 2004). In 1992, discussions regarding border demarcation, troop reduction and border security were held between the foreign ministers of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan. China put forward the concern before these governments not to tolerate or allow activities aiming at 'splitting China' from their territories. In 1992, high level meetings took place between the Chinese representatives and the presidents of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In 1993, the Chinese President and the President of Tajikistan Imamali Raikhmanov

visited Beijing and a joint statement was issued based on 'mutual relations'. The statement was based on the central principle that 'the two sides should not allow a third country to use its territory to impinge upon the sovereignty and security of the other' (Clarke 2011). The government of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in 1996, during the 'Strike Hard Campaign', supported Chinese clamp down on the extremists. In Kyrgyzstan, Ittipak (Solidarity), Uyghur community newspaper which criticized the Chinese policies was banned in March 1996 for three months by the Justice Ministry (Dillon 2004) Later, in 2006, China and Turkmenistan signed a cooperative treaty in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress to continue crack down on separatism, extremism and terrorism. Similar cooperative agreements were signed with the South and Central Asian countries including Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to crack down the 'three evil' forces (Warikoo 2010).

In the post-Cold War, period, China's foreign policy became more inclined to three guiding themes of 'preservation, prosperity and power'. To follow this trilogy, 'peaceful rise' was the policy to be adopted. This was a concept that evolved from China's strategy of building "comprehensive national power", based on continued development and economic growth for China. This entire process encouraged diplomatic relation with neighboring states that included 'cooperation', integration', 'multiculturalism', 'regionalism'. China's reorientation of energy policy towards Central Asia and Russia was indeed a strategic maneuver than a 'market' approach to energy security (Clarke 2011).

3.1 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

The 'double opening strategy' was another way to push the relations with Central Asian states (Warikoo, 2010). The Chinese President Xi Jinping at the end of 2013 announced "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) or "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI). This is considered as China's most ambitious foreign policy and economic initiatives. Through this project Beijing aims to connect the underdeveloped hinterland of the country to Europe through Central Asia. The other plan is to connect the "Maritime Silk Road" to the fast-growing Southeastern region to the China's southern provinces. (Cai 2017).

In 2013, as China proposed, BRI through various infrastructural projects will aim at improving worldwide interconnectivity besides promotion of global trade links. (The Hindu 2018). The OBOR policy proposes to link China to Europe via Central Asia and

Russia through trade and transport. The geographical location where the "Belt and Road" meet is expected to benefit about 3 billion people in the region comprising Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and China together (Chibber 2017).

Figure 2.

China's Maritime Silk Route

Source: Arpi, Claude (2017), "The Dream Corridor", [Online: web] Accessed 14th May 2018 URL: http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/the-dream-corridor/.

In 2013, a work conference on 'peripheral diplomacy' was convened by Beijing, which is considered as the first ever meeting that focused on policy towards neighboring countries since the People's Republic was founded. Xi Jinping added in the Conference that the China's neighbors had "extremely significant strategic value". While pointing out that the improvement in the relations between China and its neighbors which will lead to strengthening of economic ties and cooperation in security aspect, Xi stated:

> "Maintaining stability in China's neighborhood is the key objective of peripheral diplomacy. We must encourage and participate in the process of regional economic integration, speed up the process of building up infrastructure and connectivity. We must build the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, creating a new regional economic order." (Cai 2017)

Figure 3.

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

The "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" (CPEC) is one of the flagship projects which is supported by both China and Pakistan enthusiastically. The "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" connects Kashgar in Xinjiang with the port of Gwadar in Baluchistan. This project is estimated at $46 billion clearly showing the geostrategic rationale intersecting with its economic drivers (Cai 2017).

CPEC though faces the challenge of terrorists and insurgents from Pakistan since Pakistan has failed to control its border against terrorism. With the kind of different terrorist and separatist organizations operating within and outside Pakistan seems to pose a serious challenge to both the countries. For instance, the separatist extremist organization, The Turkistan Islamic Party, operating in Xinjiang has alleged links with Pakistani outfits including Al-Qaeda (Sahai 2018) For the protection of Chinese personnel Pakistan has raised roughly two divisions of 15,000 security force from Gwadar to Khunjerab pass (Indian Defence Update 2017). Lu Shuling, the former Chinese Ambassador to Islamabad while analyzing the importance of CPEC, believed

that the Gwadar port would be of immense economic importance to reduce political problems in Xinjiang and Pakistan. (Cai 2017).

4. International Coalition Against the "Three Forces"

China wants to strengthen the strategic role of Xinjiang in countering terrorism. Since Xinjiang is strategically located on the north western frontier of China and had been considered as the place where concentration of terrorist activities is high, the government has to undertake counter-terrorism measures. Xinjiang's counter terrorism department has been strengthened with the coordination and coalition of international community to join hands against the 'three evil' forces.

4.1 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) according to the Chinese authority will ensure counter-terrorism on the regional level. This is China's way to develop friendly relations with South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia and to leave no space of action for the three 'evil forces' (Warikoo 2010). Shanghai Cooperation Organization dates back to 1996, when there was a need to settle the border issues between Central Asia and China with Russian involvement (Aris 200). In 1996, the reason behind the dialogue between the "Shanghai Five" including China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia was the Uyghur issue. Later, in 2001 it was institutionalized as SCO. China, through its diplomacy of "separatist containment with neighboring Central Asian states" wanted to assure its control over Xinjiang region. (Tukmadiyeva 2013).

The SCO's main goals are: "strengthening mutual trust and neighborliness among the member states; promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade, the economy, research, technology and culture, as well as in education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and other areas; making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region; and moving towards the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order."

The SCO Charter is based on "historically established ties between their people" and reaffirm the "norms of the international law related to the maintenance of international peace, security and development of good neighborly and friendly relations, as well as cooperation between States" guided by "the provisions of the Declaration on the

Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization of June 15, 2001" (Shanghai Cooperation Organization 2009).

The SCO Charter refers to "maintenance of peace and enhancing security and confidence in the region" and on international cooperation on the dynamics of traditional security- "coordination of efforts in the field of disarmament and arms control". However, the member states' main concern circles around the terrorism, narco-trafficking, separatism and organized crime that focus on the region as non-traditional security threats. The reason being, that in Central Asia the security issues are more of transnational and less of interstate (Aris 2009).

SCO's internal policy is based on the principles of: "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, mutual consultations, respect for cultural diversity, and a desire for common development, while its external policy is conducted in accordance with the principles of non-alignment, non-targeting any third country, and openness." (Shanghai Cooperation Organization 2009).

In the Post-Cold War period, China's growing concerns about separatist and militant activity led Beijing to reorient SCO's focus from confidence-building measures and border demarcation to trans-border threats such as radicalism and Islamic extremism. (Cunningham 2012). Many Chinese concepts like "Shanghai spirit", the new security concept and the concept of the "three evils forces" have been incorporated in SCO. The "Shanghai spirit refers to mutual advantage, mutual trust and consultations, respect for diversity. The new security concept refers to mutual advantage, mutual trust, collaboration and equality. The "three evil forces" refer to "separatism, extremism and terrorism" (Huasheng 2013).

SCO is considered as a structured, comprehensive and inclusive regional organization and SCO is open to a number of dialogue partners and observers. Article 16 adopted in 2002 in the SCO Charter stresses on the consensus over the decisions among its members. It is considered comprehensive since its missions are inclusive of various intergovernmental facets" such as economy, security, diplomacy, security, culture, trade and education. (Cabestan 2013).

Shanghai Cooperation Organization consists of two permanent bodies: The SCO Secretariat based in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-

Terrorist Structure (RATS), based in Tashkent (Shanghai Cooperation Organization 2009).

The function of RATS is routinely analyses anti-terrorist activities. These activities include advising and proposing ideas to combat the "three forces", creating data bank of personnel involved in terrorist activities, gathering and sharing relevant information among the member states, helping the graining experts, organizing seminars and talks related to anti-terrorism and maintain a good relationship with other international security organizations. (Huasheng 2013).

The term "three evil forces" was adopted by SCO on China's insistence referring to terrorism, extremism and separatism. These "three evil forces" became the buzzword of security concerns of SCO. SCO passed the Shanghai Convention against Terrorism, Extremism and Separatism on 15th June 2001, the day it was established. In 2007, highlighting the rise of terrorist activities, the Treaty of Friendship, cooperation and Long-term Good Neighborliness was passed (Huasheng 2013). During the Shanghai summit, the presidents of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan maintained that their countries are "opposed to any form of splittist activities" in separate meetings with President Jiang Zemin. These meetings reflected that these countries take the guarantee to not permit any 'splittist' activities within their boundaries by the Uyghur émigré organizations (Clarke 2011).

The Chinese President, Xi Jinping in 2015 SCO meeting said that: "Upholding security and stability in our region is a common concern for all member states. The SCO has the responsibility to prevent instability forestall the spread of terrorist and religious extremist ideologies and stop forces with hidden agenda from undermining peace and stability in our region". He further added on that "strong measures should be taken to advance counter-terrorism, drug control and defense cooperation, increase SCO security operation capacity, and strengthen the network of law enforcement cooperation." (The Hindu 2018). SCO has been responsible for creating regional security cooperation among the Central Asian nations.

Xi Jinping addressing the 2017 SCO meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan stressed on enhancing security and cooperation: "At present, the international and regional situation is undergoing profound and complex changes. Destabilizing factors and uncertainties are on the rise. Only through cooperation can countries properly meet

threats and challenges. China is willing to work together with all parties to strengthen the sense of community with a shared future, and build a common home of security, stability, development and prosperity." He further emphasized that "It is important for SCO countries to bring our people, youth in particular, closer to each other, so that the good-neighborliness and cooperation between us will be carried forward by the future generation" (The Hindu 2018).

SCO has conducted several "Peace Mission" which have been very comprehensive.

Table 5.

The SCO's Joint Military Exercises

Code name	Year	Participants	Place
Tianshan-1	2006	China, Kazakhstan	China's Xinjiang
Tianshan-2	2011	China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	China's Xinjiang

Source: Huasheng, Zhao (2013) China's View of and Expectations from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, *Asian Survey,* 53 (3):443.

The SCO welcomes its newest members in Kazakhstan in 2017 by giving full membership status to India and Pakistan. SCO now with 8 full members, 4 observer countries and 6 dialogue partners covers about 60 percent of the Eurasian landmass, more than 20 percent of global gross domestic product and nearly half of world's population. The SCO members, between 2013 to 2017 have collaboratively destroyed over 500 training bases run by armed militants, foiled more than 600 criminal activities related to terrorism, arrested about 2,000 international terrorists, confiscated some 10,000 guns and over 1 million bullets, about 1,000 self-made explosive devices and over 50 tons of explosive material as reported by the director of the bloc's anti-terrorism committee, Yevgeniy Sysoev. Sysoev in an interview with the Xinhua also shared the information that the SCO member countries have taken a step ahead by blocking about 100,000 websites between 2016 and 2017. The blocked websites published about 4 million pieces of information that advocated extremism and terrorism (The Hindu 2018).

Thus, SCO arose not only as an organization that focused on border negotiations but expanded its scope to developing cooperation in fields of economy, defence and

security. SCO proved to be beneficial for resolving territorial issues and also for creating an international security system (Debata 2007).

4.2 The "War against Terror"

After the attack in United States on World Trade Centre and Pentagon on 21st September 2001, a massive crackdown on terrorism was launched by US. China was first among the few nations to support the United States "War against Terror" (Debata 2007). Beijing after the 9/11 incident turned the international situation successfully to its advantage. A new connotation was given to the "Uyghur issue" which now was conducted under the "War on Terror". (Tukmadiyeva 2013). This gave impetus to the Chinese government "to protect its porous borders from an influx of more violent forms of Islam from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan." Action against the Uyghur militants was initiated after the US 9/11 attack (Cunningham 2012).

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson declared that "in order to safeguard peace and stability of China's border areas, we are fully entitled to implement security measures along our border". This situation was used as an opportunity by Beijing to put limits on the Uyghur "separatists". The spokesperson further added: "Uyghur separatists have participated in terrorist activities and have colluded with international terrorist groups. We hope that our fight against the East Turkestan forces will become a part of the international effort against terrorism, and [as such] it should win support and understanding." (Starr 2004).

Since then, Xinjiang's security aspect has become linked with the global and regional scenario. There was the concern of spillover of terrorism in terms of ethnoreligious term from Central Asia to Xinjiang. After the involvement of United States in Central Asia, Beijing closed its border with Pakistan the very next day (Starr 2004).

In the post 9/11 period, China established "National Anti-Terrorism Coordination Group" (NATCG) and Secretariat which was headed by Hu Jintao. Simultaneously, the "National Ministry of Public Security launched Anti-Terrorism Bureau" was established which took the responsibility of planning, research, coordination, guidance and undertaking national anti-terror agenda. In 2002, Qian Qichen, China's Deputy Prime Minister had claimed that the government of United States in Guantanamo Bay, the detention centre in Cuba had detained over a dozens of Uyghurs. They were reportedly captured in the wake of taking over the town of Mazar-e-Sharif. This

incident reinforced China's case over the separatists being linked to the Al-Qaeda network leading to Chinese support to USA's global war on terrorism (Dillon, 2004). China hence participated in several bilateral and multilateral activities post 9/11 against anti-terror activities. For instance, In October 2002, joint anti-terror bilateral military exercise was conducted by China with Kyrgyzstan and in 2003, China took part in anti-terror multilateral military exercise with members of SCO dubbed as "United-2003" (Debata 2007). The 'war on terror' thus provided the opportunity to China to combat 'terrorism' in Xinjiang in a legitimate way as a part of international effort. China through the 'war on terror' reframed its struggle against separatism in Xinjiang to global context portraying the unrest in the region as the work of 'terrorists' (Clarke 2011).

The Chinese policies and action to prevent instability caused by the religious extremism thus have majorly taken a turn towards her foreign policy. The foreign policy of China thus includes various principles that helps the nation to fight against the rising consequences of religious extremism. Through transnational linkages, regional cooperation and several bilateral agreements, China has made sure that in this battle against the rising extremism China is not alone and has the tactic support of the international community.

CONCLUSION

China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) through various centuries has gone through a number of transformations. Its strategic location and abundant natural resource attributes have made it of utter importance to China in recent times, especially in the post-Cold War period. The strategic location of XUAR was one of the crucial aspects for the region due to the imperial power struggle between two colonial powers Britain and Russia during the 19th century Great Game. In the contemporary times, especially in the last three decades, the region has served as China's gateway to Central Asia and beyond. After thoroughly studying the Xinjiang problem through the prism of this research work, which includes a broad survey of literature, the following findings have been found.

Firstly, the XUAR is a sensitive region of China, which has been witnessing separatism by the Uyghur ethnic minorities, who are in majority in this northwestern province of the Middle Kingdom. Even though the Uyghurs' demand for a separate state of East Turkestan and efforts to have one such is around a century old, since the "peaceful liberation of Xinjiang" and its incorporation into the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the demand is vociferous. As it is a well-known fact, the Uyghurs were able to establish short-lived Turkic Islamic Republic of East Turkestan (TIRET) in 1933 and 1940s. However, in the last seven decades or so since the Chinese takeover of Xinjiang in 1949, the Chinese Central government has been too strong and overbearing for the Uyghurs' dream for a separate nation out of China. Even though the Uyghurs have been making constant efforts, both peacefully and also resorting to violent means at the region, national and international levels, to achieve their goal, but it is so far found to be a day-dream.

Secondly, the attitude of the Chinese central government towards Uyghurs since the establishment of the PRC has been frustrating for this ethnic Muslim majority in the restive region. Uyghurs believe to have been ditched by Mao Tse Tung, the Chinese supreme leader, who took to the reign of the PRC after the independence. Mao Tse Tung, during his famous Long March in 1936 and subsequently during the civil war with the nationalists, had promised some sort of autonomy to Uyghurs once the communists win the civil war. Uyghurs believe, even many western scholars do, that the change of name of Xinjiang to Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on 1 October 1955, is just an eye wash, without conferring any real autonomy on the Uyghurs.

Thirdly, the policies of the Chinese central government towards Uyghurs in the last seven decades since independence are a cause of distress among the local population. From the Chinese point of view, the Chinese central government had to take calculative measures, perhaps strict measures many a times, to keep this strategically important region under the communist control, and the reasons are both internal and external. From the internal point of view, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Mao's leadership understood well that Uyghurs would be a difficult task keeping in view their attempt to establish TIRET twice in two decades, between 1933 and 1949. From the external point of view, threat from a domineering Russia on the neighborhood under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, which had not only been active in the Xinjiang region since 19th century Great Game period, but also had provided moral, military and monetary support to the Uyghurs during the TIRET-II in 1940s. In addition, the emergence the US as an important world power after the end of World War II, which did not bode well for China as the Chinese leadership believed that US might not tolerate the creation of another powerful communist regime, which would be troublesome for its ambition in the later stage. Hence, the Chinese central government opted for a clear-cut and aggressive policy under vigilance on XUAR, and this was not welcomed by the local people, especially the Uyghurs. The first and foremost effort in this regard was to enhance the Han population in XUAR, which was a mere 6.7 per cent in 1949, in comparison to the 88 per cent of Uyghurs. As per the latest information, the Han population has increased to some 40 per cent, a staggering seven times increase in seven decades, and Uyghurs have decreased to 44 per cent of the total population of XUAR. The Chinese leadership perhaps desired to alter the demographic profile of XUAR so that both internal and external threats could be kept under control.

Fourthly, the transfer of Han population to Uyghur dominated XUAR led to discontent among the Uyghurs. According to Chinese view, since the population of China was increasing by leaps and bounds, the government thought of transferring the mainland Chinese population to sparsely populated areas like Xinjiang. The Chinese officials even openly declared that any Chinese citizen, be it Han or any of the 55 national minorities, can reside in any part of the country. Thus under a state-sponsored programme the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, thousands of mainland Chinese people, mostly youth, were sent to Xinjiang. Hans, being educated and technically sound than the Uyghurs, occupied the socio-economic sector leaving the Uyghurs in disgust. The agrarian economy of Xinjiang was entrusted to a Han para-

military structure, Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) brought Xinjiang's agrarian sector under its control much to the dissatisfaction of the Uyghurs.

Fifthly, the Xinjiang issue which started with an ethnic angle between two groups, the Hans and the dissatisfied Uyghurs, suddenly took a nationalistic turn, after the political power in Xinjiang remained under the control of the CCP and socio-economic sector was taken over by the Hans. Han-Uyghur ethno-racial differences became the single largest cause of dissent and discontent among Uyghurs. The excesses committed by the CCP and its cadres during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, especially against the history, heritage and culture of the Muslim Uyghurs, added fuel to fire. The suppression of religious practices and the attack on Islamic teachings have been perceived by the Uyghur population with the suspicion of imposing cultural homogenization or sinicization on the minorities of Xinjiang. Thus took birth a sense of nationalism or national consciousness among the Uyghurs, who through both intellectual and violent efforts, tried to free themselves from the dominating regime. Uyghur scholars, like Turghun Almass, started redoing of their history, which was diluted by the Chinese. While the Chinese claim to have kept Xinjiang under their control for 2000 years since the Han dynasty rule by providing evidences, Uyghurs claim to have a historical-cultural link with the region for over 6000 years. However, nobody buys the Uyghur argument.

Sixthly, the discomfort, disgust and discontent among Uyghurs due to the policies of the central government during the rule of Mao Tse Tung (1949-1976) compelled the next leadership (Deng Xiaoping) to think many a times before bringing out policy towards minorities such as Uyghurs. Deng, who ruled the most in China during the initiation of the process of liberalization in the country in the year 1979, tried to rectify the mistakes committed during the previous regime and devised a relatively pro-Uyghur policy, which included some relaxations in the realm of religion and culture. The process of infrastructural development in various parts of Xinjiang under the ambit of the 'Great West Development' Programme eventually led to economic prosperity in the region in terms trade, infrastructure, transport etc. However, Deng's policies were criticized too on the ground that the pro-Uyghur attitude of the Chinese leader wanted the Uyghurs pacified so that the natural resources of resource rich Xinjiang could be used for the development of the eastern coastal China as the first effort to make the liberalization process in the country successful. The loss of control over their own resources and the use of these resources for the development of eastern coastal region

of the country enraged the local populace (Uyghurs especially), who in turn decided to rise against the Chinese authorities. The Uyghurs started voicing their opinions about their culture being suppressed in the name of national interest and development.

Seventhly, the problem in Xinjiang which started with ethnic angle after independence, and took a nationalistic turn during the Cultural Revolution period, further added religion (Islam) as an important segment of the Uyghur issue in Xinjiang. The Uyghur agitation, which started with the silent dissent, took a religious colour and a violent turn in the post-Cold War period with religious extremism and violent separatist activities on the rise. The first and foremost reason to the problem was domestic policies initiated by Deng Xiaoping. The relaxation in religious policies propagated by the Chinese central government during Deng Xiaoping's rule in 1980s not only connected the Uyghurs in Xinjiang with the Islamic idea but encouraged them to strive for their political and cultural rights on the Islamic ideology. The flow of cultural ideas appealed to the Muslim masses of Xinjiang more and the Muslim population in Xinjiang felt more connected to the Muslims in abroad (Middle East and Pakistan) compared to the Han. China's policy of greater interaction for economic benefits from these Islamic nations backfired post-Cold War in the form of several violent incidents. Engagement of Xinjiang with Pakistan, which was struggling with the problems of the rising insurgency and terrorism supported by the Taliban supporters from Afghanistan also proved to be of a big disadvantage for China in the form of rising religious extremism in Xinjiang. The opening up of Karakoram Highway and sending the Uyghurs for Islamic education only promoted Muslim brotherhood and the Pan-Islamic ideology among the Muslims of Xinjiang.

Eighthly, the dissatisfaction among the Uyghurs coupled with the developments across the globe in late 1970s, throughout 1980s and early 1990s brought out an entirely new dimension to the whole problem of Xinjiang. The wave of religious revivalism in the Islamic nation started with the Great Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, which was a major source of inspiration for all Muslims across the globe. Further, the disintegration of Soviet Union in the 1990s followed by the independence of Central Asian Republics inspired the Uyghurs as well. The Central Asian Republics, which shared not just the boundary but culture, history and tradition with the population of Xinjiang, were seen as a direct influence on Xinjiang and its population. Since most of these nations are Muslim dominated they could easily influence the minorities, Uyghurs in particular to rise for their distinctness and voice their opinion for preservation of their identity. The

other implication of the end of Cold War was the change in world order from bi-polar to unipolar creating a vacuum in the world economy and politics. This gave China an opportunity to rise as a powerful economy in the region and fill the gap left by the Soviet Union. Since oil has been an important factor in economy and the abundance is only to be found in Middle East, China extended bilateral relations with the Middle East, the region which that consist of the Muslim population mainly. This idea of closeness with the Islamic nation for economic benefits was converted as the strategy of the 'Great Islamic Circle' as the name suggests. The exchange of economic transaction also was led by exchange of Islamic ideas, culture and traditions. This interaction and inter-connectedness proved to be adding fuel to the already existing consciousness taking the colour of religion and later religious extremism in Xinjiang.

Ninthly, the Chinese government has devised various propositions looking at the perpetuity of unsatisfied Minorities, especially the Uyghurs and the rise of violent incidents in Xinjiang. The first step Chinese government took to understand the rising unrest in the region is by accepting the cause as the "external factors" in various speeches. On various events, the Chinese leaders put forward right from the beginning of the 1990s that the international factors have come into being in case of rising unrest in region. The Chinese government acknowledged it with the rise of "three evil" forces and the measures to combat these "evil forces". The Chinese efforts to combat religious extremism have varied with time to time. The use of 'soft' and 'hard' policies has been framed by the Chinese government as measures to maintain stability in Xinjiang and battle with the "three evil forces". The Chinese government acknowledged that the "three evil forces" working together against the state to cause instability in the region and hence came up with measures or response that included the domestic and foreign policies both, since it was realized that the cause, the "three evil forces" itself has its roots in domestic sphere and its very deeply being influenced by the "external forces". Several rights and freedoms have been provided in the Chinese Constitution which helps the minorities to promote their identity and live a dignified life. The Chinese government only objects to any activity that can incite violence or any kind of extremism among the masses. Post-Cold War, the Chinese government realized that by promoting the culture of minorities can the feeling of Chinese Nationalism be aroused. Several cultural policies that encouraged Uyghur culture including dance, music, language and monuments were given place at national level events and programmes. This was a step by Chinese government that not only helps the culture of minorities to

grow but also a measure to dismiss the feeling of neglect that have taken grounds in the hearts of Chinese over the years. China has also attempted to strengthen cooperation with the international community through the means of confidence building measures and by increasing economic cooperation. These two measures are adopted by the Chinese government especially in the context of neighboring states that include Central Asian Republics and Pakistan. Since the cooperation of these states are required to battle together against the "three evil forces", political and economic engagement through alliances and Bilateral agreements strengthens the common purpose.

The International Community has criticized the Chinese government on grounds of violation of human rights. Several reports conducted by the Amnesty International and Human Rights watch have indicated the detention and even persecution of Uyghurs in large scale. But on the other hand, the reports that suggest Uyghurs joining terrorist organizations have loosened the Uyghur support. After the 9/11 incident in United State and the response as "war against terror" was launched, China was successful in forwarding the issue of Uyghurs who have turned towards Islamic extremism against the state creating instability in the region. China taking a step forward has also strengthened its efforts to put curb terrorist activities on the regional level through the establishment of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). By including India and Pakistan as permanent members of SCO, the Organization has strengthened its position against terrorism, since India and Pakistan have for long also been facing the issue of terrorism and the contribution of these states will only help build up security against the rising terrorism.

Last but not the least, it is a fact that there has been an increasing wave of radical religious activities in Xinjiang leading to violent separatist and terrorist attacks in and around Xinjiang, which have resulted in loss of lives and public property. China understands well how important Xinjiang is for her as a strategic frontier on its northwest, the main gateway to resource-rich Central Asia and beyond, a mascot for its energy inroads into the Muslim world, besides being a vital cog in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Thus China has tactfully and assiduously mobilized the international opinion against the Uyghurs, who are now dubbed as terrorists, in addition to taking stern domestic measures such as political, economic and military. Not only the Uyghurs, their sympathizers, but also the entire world know the capability of China, a global economic and military giant, and how difficult it is to carve out a separate nation of East Turkestan out of China. Since no country in the world is interested to earn the

disfavor of China for the cause of Uyghurs, the need of the hour for the Uyghurs is perhaps to shun violent separatist, extremist and terrorist activities against PRC and assimilate into the Chinese mainstream not only to share the fruits of China's economic prosperity, but also to upkeep its historical-cultural identity as one of the national minorities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(*Indicates Primary sources)

Ahrari, M. Ehsan (2000), "China, Pakistan, and the Taliban Syndrome", *Asian Survey*, 40 (4):658-671.

*Amnesty International (2015), *China: Draconian Anti-Terror Law an Assault on Human Rights*, 4th March 2015.

Arpi, Claude (2017), "The Dream Corridor", [Online: web] Accessed 14 May 2018 URL: http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/the-dream-corridor/.

Aris, Stephen (2009), "The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: 'Tackling the Three Evils'. A Regional Response to Non-Traditional Security Challenges or an Anti-Western Bloc?", *Europe-Asia Studies,* 61 (3):457-482.

Becquelin, Nicolas (2004), "Staged Development in Xinjiang", *The China Quarterly*, 178: 358-378.

Bovingdon, Gardner (2010), *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land*, Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Cabestan, Yean-Pierre (2013), "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Central Asia, and the Great Powers, an Introduction One Bed, Different Dreams?", *Asian Survey,* 53 (3):423-435.

Cao, Xun et al. (2018), "Digging the 'Ethnic Violence in China' Database The Effects of Inter-Ethnic Inequality and Natural Resources Exploitation in Xinjiang", *China Review,* 18 (2):124-140.

Cai, Peter (2017), "Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative", [Online: web] Accessed 1 July 2018 URL: https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/understanding-belt-and-road-initiative.

Caprioni, Elena (2011), "Daily Encounters Between Hans and Uyghurs in Xinjiang: Sinicization, Integration or Segregation?" *Pacific Affairs*, 84 (2): 267-287.

Chan, Louis (2015), "An Overview of Central Asian Markets on the Silk Road Economic Belt", [Online: web] Accessed 16 May 2018 URL: http://economists-pick-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/Research-Articles/An-Overview-of-Central-Asian-Markets-on-the-Silk-Road-Economic-Belt/rp/en/1/1X000000/1X0A4C4W.htm.

China Data Center (2011), China 2010 Census Data Released", [Online: web] Accessed 5 July 2018.

URL:https://chinadatacenter.org/Announcement/AnnouncementContent.aspx?id=470.

Chhiber, Ajay (2017), "China's One Belt One Road Strategy: The New Financial Institutions and India's Options", [Online: web] Accessed 1 July 2018 URL: https://www2.gwu.edu/~iiep/assets/docs/papers/2017WP/ChhibberIIEPWP2017-7.pdf.

Christoffersen, Gaye (1993), "Xinjiang and the Great Islamic Circle: The Impact of Transnational Forces on Chinese Regional Economic Planning", *The China Quarterly,* 133: 130-151.

Chung, Chien-peng (2002), "China's "War on Terror": September 11 and Uighur Separatism", *Foreign Affairs*, 81 (4): 8-12.

Cunningham, Christopher P. (2012), "Counterterrorism in Xinjiang: The ETIM, China, and the Uyghurs", *International Journal on World Peace*, 29 (3):7-50.

Clarke, Michael E. (2011), *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia- A History,* New York: Routledge.

Davis, Elizabeth Van Wie (2013), *Ruling, Resources and Religion in China,* Palgrave Macmillan, U.K.

Davis, Elizabeth Van Wie, (2008), "Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China", *Asian Affairs*, 35 (1): 15-29.

Debata, Mahesh Ranjan (2007), *China's Minorities: Ethnic-Religious Separatism in Xinjiang,* New Delhi: Pentagon.

Debata, Mahesh Ranjan (2010), "International Response to Uyghur Separatism in Xinjiang", *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, 14 (4):55-78.

Defence Update (2017), "Examining the strategy behind China's OBOR- Analysis", [Online: web] Accessed 14 May 2018 URL: https://defenceupdate.in/examining-strategy-behind-chinas-obor-analysis/.

Denyer, Simon (2018), "Former inmates of China's Muslim 'reeducation' camps tell of brainwashing, torture". [Online: web] Accessed 21 July 2018 URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/former-inmates-of-chinas-muslim-re-education-camps-tell-of-brainwashing-torture/2018/05/16/32b330e8-5850-11e8-8b92-45fdd7aaef3c_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.7612bd4badf8.

Dillon, Michael (2004), *Xinjiang-China's Muslim Far Northwest*, London and New York: Routledge Curzon.

Finley, J. Smith, (2007), "Chinese Oppression in Xinjiang, Middle Eastern Conflicts and Global Islamic Solidarities among the Uyghurs", [Online: web] Accessed 18 October 2017 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10670560701562333

Finley, J. Smith (2011), "'No Rights without Duties': Minzu pingdeng [Nationality Equality] in Xinjiang since the 1997 Ghulja disturbances", *Inner Asia,* 13 (1):73-96.

Freeberne, M. (1966), "Demographic and Economic Changes in the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region," *Population Studies,* 20, no. 1: 108.

Fuqiu, Gao (2002) "The Real Purpose of the American March into Central Asia", [Online: web] Accessed 15 July 2018 URL: http://libertyparkusafd.org/Hale/Special%20Reports/American%20Empire/The%20Real%20Purpose%20of%20the%20American%20March%20into%20Central%20Asia.pdf.

Gladney, Dru C. (2003), "Islam in China: Accommodation or Separatism?", *The China Quarterly*, 174:451-467.

Gladney, Dru C. (1998), "Internal Colonialism and the Uyghur Nationality: Chinese Nationalism and its Subaltern Subjects", [Online: web] Accessed 15July 2018 URL: https://journals.openedition.org/cemoti/48.

Gladney, Dru C. (1996), Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic, Harvard: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University.

Haider, Suhasini (2018) "At the heart of the Silk Road" The Hindu, New Delhi, 23 June 2018.

Haider, Ziad (2005), "Sino-Pakistan Relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs: Politics, Trade, and Islam along the Karakoram Highway", *Asian Survey*, 45 (4):522-545.

Harris, Lillian C. (1993), "Xinjiang, Central Asia and the Implications for China's Policy in the Islamic World", *The China Qarterly*, 133:111-129.

Hastings, Justin V. (2011), "Charting the Course of Uyghur Unrest", *The China Quarterly*, 208: 893-912.

Holbig, H. (2004), "The emergence of the campaign to open up the West: ideological formation, central decision-making, and the role of the provinces", *The China Quarterly*, 178, 335-37.

Horner, Charles (2002) "The Other Orientalism: China's Islamist Problem", *The National Interest*, 67: 37-45.

Howell Anthony and Fan Cindy C. (2011), "Migration and Inequality in Xinjiang: A Survey of Han and Uyghur Migrants in Urumqi", *Eurasian Geography and Economics,* 52 (1): 119-139.

Huasheng, Zhao (2013), "China's View of and Expectations from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization", *Asian Survey*, 53 (3): 436-460.

Hyer Eric (2005), "Pan Turkic Nationalism in Xinjiang: A Clash of Civilizations", *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs*, 18 (1): 17-32.

Israeli, Raphael, (1981), "The Muslim Minority in the People's Republic of China", *Asian Survey,* 21 (8): 901-919.

Kuo, Kendrick T. (2012), "Revisiting the Salafi-jihadist Threat in Xinjiang", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 32 (4): 528-544.

Lattimore, Owen (1950), *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia*, Boston: Little Brown Publishers.

Li, Yuan Qing, (1990), "Population Changes in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (1949-1984)," *Central Asian Survey,* 9: 57.

Mackerras, Colin & Clarke, Michael (2009), *China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: History, Transition and Crossborder Interaction into the 21ˢᵗ Century*, London & New York: Routledge.

McMillen, Donald H. (1984), "Xinjiang and Wang Enmao: New Directions in Power, Policy and Integration?", *The China Quarterly*, 99: 569-593.

Millward, James (2004), "Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment", *Policy Studies 6*, Washington: East West Centre.

Overmyer, Daniel L. (ed.), "Religion in China Today", *The China Quarterly Special Issue,* New Series, no. 3, Cambridge and NY: Cambridge University Press.

Panda, Damodar (2006), "Xinjiang and Central Asia: China's Problems and Policy Implications", *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs*, 19 (2): 29-44.

Panda, Jagannath P. (2010), "The Urumqi Crisis: Effect of China's Ethno-national Politics", *Strategic Analysis*, 34 (1): 9-13.

Potter, Pitman B., (2003), "Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China", *The China Quarterly*, 174: 317-337.

Raczka, Witt (1998), "Xinjiang and its Central Asian borderland", Central Asian Survey, 17 (3): 373-407.

Sautman, Barry (2000), "Is Xinjiang an Internal Colony?" *Inner Asia*, 2 (2): 239-271.

Sahai, Dananjay (2018), "China's terror dilemma in CPEC: A Xinjiang strategy?", [Online: web] Accessed 5ᵗʰ June 2018 URL: https://www.orfonline.org/research/china-terror-dilemma-cpec-xinjiang-strategy/.

Singh, Bhavna (2012), "Unrest in Xinjiang", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47 (6):27-29.

Singh, Bhavna (2010), *Ethnicity, Separatism and Terrorism in Xinjiang: China;s Triple Conundrum*, IPCS Report

Shichor, Yitzhak (2005), "Blow up: Internal and External Challenges of Uyghur Separatism and Islamic Radicalism to Chinese Rule in Xinjiang", *Asian Affairs*, 32 (2): 119-135.

Sheives, Kevin (2006), "Beijing's Contemporary Strategy Towards Central Asia", *Pacific Affairs,* 79: 205-224.

*Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (2009), "The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation" [Online: web] Accessed 21 July 2018 URL: http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/.

Smith Joanne (2000), "The Shift towards Ethno-political Ideologies among Xinjiang's Youth", *Inner Asia*, 2 (2): 195-224.

Soliev, Nodirbek (2018), "China Xinjiang Province", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 10 (1): 53-56.

Space Marketing Initiative, (2018) "Chinese president's memorable remarks on Shanghai spirit, SCO cooperation," The Hindu, 7 June 2018.

Starr, S.F. (2004), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, Routledge, New York: Armonk.

Toops, Stanley (2004*), Demographics and Development in Xinjiang after 1949, Working Papers 1*, Washington: East West Centre.

Toops, Stanley, (2000), "The Population Landscape of Xinjiang/East Turkestan", *Inner Asia*, 2 (2): 155-170.

Tukmadiyeva, Malika (2013), "Xinjiang in China's Foreign Policy towards Central Asia", *Connections*, 12 (3): 87-107.

Voa News, (2013), "Gun Battle in China's Xinjiang Kills 21 People", [Online: web] Accessed 20 June 2018 URL: https://www.voanews.com/a/gun-battle-erupts-in-chinas-xinjiang-province/1647749.html.

Warikoo, K. (2000), "Muslim Separatism in Xinjiang", *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, New Delhi, 4 (3-4):32-55.

Warikoo, K., (2011), *Religion and Security in South and Central Asia*, New York: Routledge.

Warikoo, K. (2010), "Separatism, Extremism and Terrorism: Challenge to Central Asia's Security", *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, New Delhi, 14 (4): 3-43.

Warikoo, K. (2016), *Xinjiang - China's Northwest Frontier*, Routledge.

Weston, B. Timothy and Jensen, Lionel M. (2012), *China in and beyond the headlines*, Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

*White Paper (1999), "*National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China*", Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, PRC.

*White Paper (2003), "*History, Development of Xinjiang*", Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, People's Republic of China.

*White Paper (2009), "*China's Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of All Ethnic Groups*", Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, PRC.

*White Paper (2016), "*Freedom of Religious Belief in Xinjiang*", Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, PRC.

*White Paper (2018), "*China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief*", Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, PRC.

*White Paper (2005), "*Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China*", Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, PRC.

Whiting, Allen S. and Ts'ai, General Sheng (1958) *Sinkiang: Pawn or Pivot,* East Lansing, Michigan.

Yee, Stefanie Kam Li (2017), "China (Xinjiang)", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses,* 9 (1): 57-59.

Yee, Herbert, (2005), " Ethnic Consciousness and Identity: A Research Report on Uygur- Han Relations in Xinjiang", [Online: web] Accessed 18 June 2018 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1463136042000309035.

Zenz, Adrian (2018), "New Evidence for China's Political Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang", [Online: web] Accessed 21 July 2018 URL: https://jamestown.org/program/evidence-for-chinas-political-re-education-campaign-in-xinjiang/.