INTRODUCTION
Introduction

The persistence and resurgence of ethnic conflict in the latter half of the last century presents a paradox to the theorists of contemporary international history. On the one hand industrialism, capitalism and mass communication have created a world of interdependent nations, on the other hand, there has been extra-ordinary proliferation of protest movements all over the world of social antagonisms, of ethnic and religious cleavages and above all of ethnic nationalism in every continent. In the last few years, these movements have undermined the legitimacy of several states and have created new nation-states reversing a long period when the map of the interstate order which was largely frozen.

One of the most difficult tasks in dealing with ethnic conflict is to provide a precise definition of ethnicity. Congruities of kinship, speech, custom and so on seem to have an ineffable and overpowering cohesiveness. The critical features of ethnic groups are ascriptive and exclusive. Its continuity depends on the maintenance of a boundary based on values and identity. However, for purposes of political mobilization, ethnicity also posses objective markers. Hence, both subjective and objective definitions of the term become relevant in the context of ethnic conflict. Thus, ethnic identification can attach itself to one or more of the
following different criteria including (a) race-shared phenotypical features such as pigmentation, facial or hair type (b) kingship-assumed blood ties and alleged ancestry, such as is generally claimed by clans, tribes and occasionally by entire nations (c) religion as a lever of social allegiances, not as a formal belief system about ultimate essences (d) language as a vehicle of communication and symbol of ethnic and cultural identity (e) customary mode of livelihood (f) regionalism in which groups of people are united because of distinct geographical region.

Examining the necessary and sufficient conditions for ethnic conflict is a complex task. No two scholars seem to agree on exact causes of ethnic conflict. Most theories consider a combination of economic, political, symbolic and psychological factors to be essential to the development of animosity between groups. But the primary antecedents vary across cases. A proper understanding of ethnic politics in the regions of the developing world also requires an examination of the role of the colonial powers played in shaping inter-ethnic relations. The need to institutionalize dominance along with security and strategy required the promotion of differential treatment of ethnic groups by the colonial powers during the late nineteenth until the middle of twentieth century. Over time such policies created widespread economic and social disparities between ethnic groups. This policy of preference during the
colonial phase set a precedent for ethnic preference politics in post-colonial period.

The contemporary manifestation of ethnic conflict is a short-term response to the processes of state and nation building is still widely debated. Some hold that ethnic conflict is a psychological result of primordial identities, which are more permanent than those based on class and political orientation. Still others argue for the relevance of situational identities, which are evoked, in certain structural circumstances to advance the material and political interests of across whose primary allegiances and purposes are not ethnic. Ethnic identities are assumed to persist because of shared historical and cultural experiences, but their salience varies both for individuals and the group. Therefore, ethnicity is a political factor with important implications for conflict and security.

In interstate relations transnational linkage between ethnic groups play an important role in shaping ethnic group support. In this context, it can be argued those ethnic ties among peoples across state borders in the international system act as unstated alliance among those people. In other words, similar ethnic groups distributed across different states in a geopolitical context will be likely to form, what are, in effect ‘alliances’. Hence, we can establish a connection between the dyadic conflict level
between two neighbouring states and the presence of a disadvantaged ethnic minority in one state when members of the same minority group are in power in the other. Therefore, transnational ethnic affinities and interstate ethnic conflict relate directly to the problem of state sovereignty and international security.

Currently, the internationalization of ethnic conflicts demonstrate the failure of mainstream international relations theories to examine ethnicity as a meaningful force having significant impact on the intensity of conflictual relations between state in international system, the distinction between interstate or systemic causes and intrastate or unit-level causes in understanding crisis and reasons of ethnic conflict is increasingly challenged. In this context, this work has attempted to address an important question as to why mainstream international relations theory has largely ignored ethnicity as a meaningful force in international politics with reference to Tibet and Afghanistan.

Tibet and Afghanistan present a unique combination having commonalties and differences in their historical trajectories to understand ethnic conflict and its security dimensions.

Afghanistan is a land-locked country in South-western Asia. Its neighbours are Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the north, Iran to the west, the People’s Republic of China to the north-east and
Pakistan to the East and South. The peoples of Afghanistan belong to a variety of ethnic groups, several of which are divided in rival tribes and clans. The dominant group is the Pashtuns, composed of Durrani tribes from which came the kings who ruled Afghanistan from 1747 to 1973 and their rivals, the Ghilazais and the eastern tribes, which spill over into Pakistan. There are also Persian speaking Hazras and Tajiks, Turkic speaking Uzbeks and Turkmen and others spread across states bordering Afghanistan. Thirty-two languages belonging to four linguistic families are spoken in Afghanistan and this itself has been a major element in self-conceptualization of Afghan ethnic groups.

Afghanistan's present shape was determined in the last quarter of nineteenth century and the people of Afghanistan became the inhabitants of a buffer state demarcated by Britain and Russia in order to avoid imperial collision in Asia. The state that developed within the boundaries drawn by these imperial powers never developed the capacity to extract sufficient resources from its own territory and population, instead, it depended on the financial and military resources from foreign governments. A tribally based monarchy oversaw a weak administration imposed on a mosaic of peoples never integrated into a common economy or nationality. They retained their local systems of self-government, often-tribal institutions, which also provided the basis for popular military organisation against foreign invaders and an over-
interfering ruler. This is not to say that the state had no legitimacy. It derived its legitimacy from traditional forms of representation and consultation especially with the leadership of Pashtun tribes, from the incorporation of Sunni Islam into legal system and from a history of ‘Jihad’ or holy war in resistance to foreign invaders. However, the development of the statehood has been usually troubled due to the organisation of the society along tribal and ethnic lines.

After the Second World War Afghanistan faced new changes that occurred in the international system. In the context of global super power rivalry between USSR, and US Moscow increasingly started giving high-priority to Afghanistan in its foreign policy because of its geographic contiguity to Soviet boarders and its geo-strategic location in South-West Asia. Framing that the region could be used as a base from which hostile powers could launch an attack on the USSR, Moscow always expressed concern over the extent of western military presence in the region. Furthermore, Moscow always viewed the region as its own backyard. Afghanistan’s strategic significance together with the dispersal of Afghan ethnic groups in the non-Russian Soviet Central Asian republics always presented a security dilemma for the Soviet defense and security planners.
Meanwhile, the decades of 50s, 60s and 70s with Soviet help witnessed the reconstruction of politically enfranchised Afghan state, which produced a strong army and increased its capacity of administrative surveillance by creating a class of state managers and intellectuals. Though, the domination of Pashtuns in state structure and army left the other ethnic groups dissatisfied. The expansion of the centralized state in the traditional structures of Afghan society along with the internal military and political hegemony of Pashtun altered the balance of relationship between various Afghan communities and the State. The realignment of forces to balance the state-society relationship embarked on remodelling of Afghan state in Marxist-Leninist terms under the influence of Soviet Union. Under the new dispensation, traditional segmentation of society was expressed through new political structures and symbols. Politically, the traditional societal divide started an opening of the political process of opposing factions along ethnic lines. Symbolically, in 1978 the communists change the national flag from traditional Islamic Green to red. For a people attuned to the symbolic gesture, such a sign was unmistakable. Islam became an overarching symbol and language of refusal and protest against the central cultural idioms of the Soviet System from the rule of communist government to invasion in 1979 till the resistance years. But the protracted civil war has created more fragmented Afghan society than ever before. The current situation, however is more intractable than past
episodes of revolt and disintegration of Afghanistan. The fact that both the state and the regional powers are now mobilised around antagonistic foreign sponsored political ideologies and interests, in addition to the traditional pole of conflicting ambitions, make resolution of the conflict difficult. The politicized social consciousnesses of ethnic groups pose a major threat to the adjoining countries like Iran, Pakistan, India etc. in the region. The Pakistan sponsored Taliban and its application of religious ideals to national agenda directly contradicts the national ideology of India and Shiite Iran.

Tibetan situation has certain geo-political and historical similarities like Afghanistan; Tibet being a land-locked state became a pawn on the imperial chessboard. The players were British-India and imperial China and the game finally sealed the fate of Tibet by the its eventual takeover of Tibet by People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1950. If the Tibetan and Afghan situation are contrasted then we find that Afghanistan invited external intervention due to internal ethnic and elite competition and cultural distinction, whereas differences among the four regions (Amdo, Khan, Ü, and Tsang) of Tibet are relatively superficial, yet it was colonised in the absence of any elite competition. The Tibetan ethnic protests of 1959 and 1989 against the Maoist hegemony and Confucian China is an indication of the absence of mechanical solidarity with the dominant society. Here, the conflict is between Confucian and Buddhist
social structures. At the same time, the Tibetan ethnic nationalism has not succeeded in achieving independence from the Chinese yoke. There are chiefly three factors behind it. The Chinese State power under the control of Hans has grown much stronger. Secondly, since nearly 90 percent of the so-called nation-states are in fact multinational states and therefore potential and actual cases of ethnic conflict, the international community has a vested interest in maintaining the territorial integrity of each other for security reasons. And finally, small-scale nationalism involving only minority communities fail to generate the required social power for political expression of their democratic will.

We have used a common framework for both Tibet and Afghanistan because of their significance for the security of concerned powers in the region and seek to discern and explain the construction of security and strategy and ethnicity to insure that the question raised are examined in a systematic and substantive manner, and it facilitates comparison.

The study has analysed the impact of ethnic conflict on the state structure. We have also tried to understand the process of politicisation of ethnicity in both Tibet and Afghanistan in light of the external military interventions to explain the factors behind social power of Afghan and Tibetan ethnicity. This work also explains the understanding of state-
society relationship with reference to ethnic conflict undertaken in this study.

This research has undertaken a comparative study to provide a fresh perspective on the Tibetan and Afghan situation from the point of view of ethnic conflict and international security. In this work, I have explored the relationship and significance of individual events in their contemporary manifestations the causes of their being historically so and not otherwise. And to develop historically valid explanations and generalizations in case of Tibet and Afghanistan, comparative historical analysis with selected slices of national historical trajectories as units of comparison has been employed. Having employed the method of comparative historical analysis this research aims to understand the fundamental concepts related to the topic in explicit elaboration, viz. social structure of ethnicity and its historical evolution, pattern of ethnic formations in the developing world with special reference to Tibet and Afghanistan. An in-depth analysis has been undertaken with critical reference to the existing theories on ethnic conflict to establish causal links between domestic and interstate ethnic conflict and international security. In this work concepts from disciplines like History, Sociology, Political Science, International Relations, Strategic and Defence Studies, Diplomacy and International law have been uniformly applied. These academic tools have been of great use to analyse and study the situation
in Tibet and Afghanistan within the frame work of ethnic conflict, strategy and international security.

This study is organised in five chapters. Chapter one critically reviews and appraises the debate on ethnic conflict and its international dimensions by linking it up with interstate security. It sets the context for the country specific chapters that follow. The Second chapter investigates the cases of Tibet and Afghanistan. These two countries have been selected on the basis of their strategic weight as well as their significance for regional security. This chapter also deals with regional security crisis following external interventions in both the countries. Chapter three deals with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and maps out its impact on Afghan society. It also deals with the politics of Afghan resistance and involvement of big powers in it. Chapter four has its focus on the conflict emerging out of Buddhist and Confucian social structures on account of the Chinese attempts to Hanaize Tibet. It also deals with the Sino-Tibetan conflict and the endemic strain between, objectives and policies of the Han dominated Maoist State on the one hand and the subjugated Tibetan civil society on the other. Chapter fifth taking cue from the discussions in the preceding chapters has sought to develop historically valid explanations, with the help of important events from national historical trajectories of Tibet and Afghanistan as units of comparison. This chapter has also outlined the observations made in course of this dissertation.