This thesis, an output of five years of my research in JNU from 1999 to 2004, can be divided into three sections. First part deals with the theoretical issues of ethnicity and nationalism. The next section focuses on the background of conflict in Chechnya. It reflects upon the historical evolution of crisis in Chechnya. And the last section discusses the methods and possibilities of conflict resolution in Chechnya.

An attempt has been made to create a theoretical framework for the explanation of conflict in Chechnya. The prominent theories on ethnicity and nationalism have been integrated with the empirical study of Chechnya. Two core arguments run through this thesis. The first is that the conflict in Chechnya is ethnic in nature. I have discussed how pre-existing cultural elements have been re-discovered and emphasized by the political and religious leadership to impart an exclusive identity to Chechnya. In this sense, I have drawn my insights from three broad schools on ethnicity: primordialist, constructivist and instrumentalist. The second argument is that the resolution of the conflict in Chechnya is possible only through the strengthening of democratic federalism. It has been pointed out that the secession of
Chechnya from Russia is neither feasible in current circumstances nor desirable. The resolution of crisis should be based on negotiations on power-sharing between Russia and Chechnya and restoring the faith of the Chechens. It has been shown by our survey that most of Russians do not support the cause of Chechen independence while the Chechens are also tired of the war of attrition and want to sacrifice their dream of separate nationhood for a normal life which they have not seen since the beginning of war in 1994.

I have tried to specify various possible methods of conflict resolution in Chechnya.

The first chapter is a theoretical discourse on ethnicity and nationalism. It seeks to create a framework which will explain the ethnic conflict in Chechnya and guide us through other chapters. A background of ethnic mobilization in the late Soviet period has also been discussed here. Drawing upon prominent theorists of this field, I have tried to explain the formation of ethnic identity and its transformation into ethnic movement and then nationality.

Chapter 2 presents a general historical background of the conflict in Chechnya. How did Chechen identity emerge and get consolidated into a very powerful movement has been delineated here. The problems of centre-periphery reactions
have also been outlined. It gives a brief account of two wars that have been fought between the Russian army and the Chechens.

Chapter 3 illustrates various applicable models of conflict resolution in Chechnya. This chapter constitutes the crux of the thesis. Here, I have examined the feasibility of secession. The policy of Russia toward Chechnya has also been outlined. The options of centralism, democratic federalism and partition have been compared and contrasted in the light of prevailing domestic and international circumstances. Finally, I have presented the model of democratic federalism as the possible mechanism for the solution of the conflict in Chechnya.

The fourth chapter is based on my survey that I conducted in Russia during my fieldwork. It is based on interviews, interaction and a set of questionnaire that I presented to the people of Russia during my visit. This is based primarily on data and figures that I gathered in Russia. This chapter deals about the Russian perception of conflict and conflict resolution in Chechnya. This chapter tries to verify and substantiate the arguments that I have put forth in my previous chapters.
The concluding chapter focuses on the issue of conflict resolution in Chechnya. Here, I have reasserted my faith on democratic federalism as the most suitable solution of the conflict in Chechnya.

With almost five years of research, I hope that this thesis will provide some new insights on ethnic conflict and conflict-resolution in Chechnya.