I was fortunate enough to study at Jawaharlal Nehru University (J.N.U), New Delhi, where I got the inspiration and environment to achieve my childhood dream of higher study. Born in a poor farmer’s family in the remote village of Badampur, district Mayurbhanj (a backward district of Orissa), my journey to J.N.U. in the year 1995 to pursue my higher study was really a turning point in my life. Amidst of many problems I could get the support of my well wishers, friends and teachers who enabled me to complete my M.Phil dissertation entitled as “Democratic Processes And Inter-ethnic Relations in Kyrgyzstan: 1991-1998” in the year 1999.

It is a great pleasure for me that my present research work meant for the award of Doctor of Philosophy at J.N.U., is entitled as “Democracy and Civil Society in Kyrgyzstan; Relevance of Indian Experience.” This work of mine has not only studied the genesis and growth of democracy and civil society in Kyrgyzstan but it has also taken India as a reference model for Kyrgyzstan.

The research work highlights the origin and development of democracy and civil society in Kyrgyzstan and India and their respective strengths and weaknesses in both the countries.

Kyrgyzstan is a small, land-locked country situated in eastern Central Asia. It borders Kazakhstan to the north, Uzbekistan to the west, Tajikistan to the south and west, and the Peoples Republic of China to the east. Before independence it was a part of former Soviet Union. It got her independence on 31st August, 1991.

Kyrgyzstan is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious country like India. History shows that nomadism had been the very nature of Kyrgyz society. Tsarist incorporation gave the Kyrgyz people a new pattern of agriculture and settled farming. The decades long Soviet rule gave some sort of training to the Kyrgyz people for political participation in the communist regime. But it was different from the western liberal democracy. Though there was disruption of social, religious and cultural life of the Kyrgyz people under the Soviet rule but it gave a separate identity to the Kyrgyz people and created a ‘we’ feeling among them. A significant material prosperity was made in Kyrgyzstan during that period.
The failure of Gorbachev's reforms of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost' paved the way for the ultimate disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Kyrgyzstan declared her independence on 31st August 1991.

It is seen that, historically, till the integration of Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan had remained as an inactive entity. so far democracy and civil society are concerned. So, these concepts are relatively new for Kyrgyzstan. Democracy and civil society started to took their roots only after it became independent. These got reinforced after Kyrgyzstan adopted it's own constitution on 5th May 1993. The constitution provides for a secular and democratic political system guaranteeing economic, political, legal, social and religious equality to all it’s citizens, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, language, creed, colour etc., thereby, creating enough space for the development of democracy and civil society in Kyrgyzstan.

Periodical elections, existence of multi-party systems and varied associations, media and press are the positive factors for the development of democracy and civil society in Kyrgyzstan.

Despite of it’s many positive factors, some limitations are cropping up on the way of democracy and civil society in Kyrgyzstan, such as inter-regional rivalry, inter-ethnic conflict, corruption and nepotism, economic recession, growing authoritarianism, Islamic fundamentalism and security issues etc.

In the mean time, it is seen that challenges and limitations before Kyrgyzstan are many but these are not beyond solutions. The democratic process in Kyrgyzstan shows that after independence, under the leadership of the first President Askar Akaev, commitment had been made for a liberal democratic set up, with flourishing civil society. But the trend after mid 1994 onwards reveals that there is a growth of soft authoritarianism in Kyrgyzstan, and there by threatening to the civil society in Kyrgyzstan. The leaders are taking plea that more executive power is needed for handling the economic reforms, Islamic fundamentalism and security issues etc. But it is not the proper way to deal with these challenges. These can be sorted out by democratic process of debate, discussion, bargaining, consensus and accommodations.

India is a multi-religious, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural country like Kyrgyzstan. It has also many constraints and challenges in the functioning of democracy and civil society. But inspite of all limitations India has emerged as a vibrant democratic country whose experience has larger
relevance for Kyrgyzstan. So, India has been taken by me as a reference country for Kyrgyzstan to follow.

The proposed study entitled as “Democracy and Civil Society in Kyrgyzstan, relevance of Indian experience.” has been organized into six chapters.

The first chapter explores the theoretical and conceptual meaning of democracy and civil society and their respective ingredients which constitute them. It also examines the relationship between democracy and civil society and the role of civil society in democratic transition. A comparison between the civil society of a transitional society and western form of civil society has been made. The implications of civil society in Kyrgyzstan has been evaluated.

The Second chapter examines the genesis of civil society in Soviet Kyrgyzstan. Even it has studied the remote history of Kyrgyzstan before her incorporation in the Tsarist empire, till the end of Soviet rule in 1991.

The third chapter has studied the nature of transition from Soviet civil society to Post-Soviet civil society and democratization process. It has also studied the role of political elite in the democratic transition of Kyrgyzstan. The major emphasis in this chapter has been given to institutional changes, political development, the structures created after independence in 1991, the adoption of constitution in 1993, the development of political and social organizations and the key role played by President Akaev to help democracy and civil society to grow side by side in Kyrgyzstan.

The fourth chapter discusses about democracy and civil society in India. It has traced out the existence of democracy and civil society in India since the Vedic age. But after independence democracy and civil society got reinforced. So, major emphasis has been given after independence till today.

The fifth chapter addresses the challenges and limitations to democracy and civil society in Kyrgyzstan. It has extensively focused on the challenges like regionalism, inter-ethnic conflict, corruption and nepotism, economic recession, Islamic fundamentalism, refugee problems and security issues etc.

Chapter six includes a brief summery of the finding of the study.