CHAPTER III
TAJIKISTAN- INDIA: POLITICAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS
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One of the basic directions of the foreign policy of Tajikistan in accordance with the Messages of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon of the Majlisi Milli Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan is expansion of ties with the countries of the Asian continent, and in particular with India, which is one of the biggest countries of the world (Nazarov Umed 2007: 29).

Political relations between India and Tajikistan are at an excellent level. There has been regular exchange of visits at the highest levels. India and Tajikistan also share close defense and security relations and share common perspective on regional issues. Prime Minister Vajpayee paid an official visit to Dushanbe in November 2003 and President Imomali Rahmon (Imomali Rahmonov) visited India for the fourth time in August 2006.

The relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of India improved and increased after the state visit of the President of the republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon (August 6-10 2006). During the visit, the two countries signed several Agreements, which will improve bilateral relations in economy, scholarship, cultural, energy sector and others in near future (Salohiddin Nasriddinov, 2007: 14).

Further, there are regular interactions amongst various Ministries and Departments both countries. Joint Working Groups and Inter Governmental Commissions on matters of mutual interest have been constituted which meet at regular intervals. India opened its Embassy in Dushanbe in 1994 and Tajikistan opened it Consulate in Delhi in 2003, which was upgraded into a fully fledged Embassy in 2006.

The breakup of the USSR and the ensuing five years of civil war left Tajikistan in a precarious economic and social situation. It saw an erosion of nearly 80 percent of its pre independence GDP. Tajikistan has looked to international donors and friendly nations...
for assistance for its reconstruction. Government of India has accordingly concentrated its aid efforts on important sectors like pharmaceuticals, food processing, information technology, hydro-power and technical manpower development etc. The last sixteen years have seen a large number of high level exchanges and each visit has been an occasion to put in place the legal and juridical framework for bilateral cooperation.

The tone for Tajikistan-India political relations was set by the visit of Prime Minister Abdumalik Abdullojanov in February 1993 to India. This visit was the first and significant milestone in Tajikistan and India relations. In post-Soviet era, it was the first high-level visits by a Tajik leader to a capital other that Moscow, while the president of Tajikistan Imomali Rahmon visited China in March 1993 (Muthu Kumar 2007:25).

It is striking that Tajikistan first choice was India. Notwithstanding the present political status of Abdullojanov, the current leadership of Tajikistan does acknowledge that February 1993 visit was the first and significant milestone in Tajikistan-India relations. During the 1993 visit, four agreements and one protocol were signed. The two Prime Ministers signed the 'Declaration on Principles and Directions of Cooperation'. Besides, a Credit Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding on Air Services was also signed. After February 1993, President Imomali Rahmon came on an official visit to India in December 1995, a working visit on 22 January 1999 and other official visit in May 2001 and state visit on August 2006. Each visit brought Tajikistan and India closer.

The common concern about the threats of terrorism and religious and ethnic extremism and separatism found reflection in the Declaration of Further Development of Friendly relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of India signed during the state visit to India of the Tajik President Imomali Rahmon from 11 to 16 December 1995. The Declaration clearly shows how both countries appreciated each other’s problem and gives support to each other. The Declaration, in part, reads:

"Both sides agree that long term and stable relations of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries meet the fundamental interests of the two countries and the two peoples... they are convinced that it is necessary for multi-
ethnic, pluralist states to cooperate actively to preserve their state structures from the threats of terrorism and religious or ethnic extremism and separatism.

The Republic of Tajikistan welcomed India's efforts to promote stability, understanding and cooperation in South Asia and calls upon all states in region to honor their commitments under existing bilateral agreements (Shimla Agreement) and not to resort to cross-border terrorism and hostile propaganda.20

The Declarations clearly shows how both countries appreciated each other's problems and give support to each other. India fully supported the attempts of Tajik leadership to accommodate opposition forces in the political system. Tajikistan is the only country in the region today where there is power sharing arrangement with the opposition (Pandey 2007:51).

Prime Minister Vajpayee invited President Imomali Rahmon to pay a working visit to Delhi on 22 January 1999 while en route to Dushanbe from Hanoi. President Rakhmon's visit laid the foundation for strategic cooperation. The one-to-one talk between two leaders was path-breaking as it gave impetus and a basis for implementation of an active strategic cooperation for security, peace and stability in the region. Subsequently, Prime Minister Vajpayee extended invitation to President Imomali Rahmon to visit India in May 2001. It was followed by Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Tajikistan in November 2003 which facilitated the consolidation of mutual interests and enhanced cooperation (Muthu Kumar, 2007: 32).

The Imomali Rahmon's state visit to India in May 2001 resulted in signing of five agreements on mutual-legal assistance in criminal matters, on prevention of illicit trafficking in narcotics, on long-term cooperation in the field of industry, MOU on technical cooperation and agreement for direct air services between Dushanbe and New

Delhi, besides a Joint declaration on principle of Mutual Relations. The Indian Prime Minister announced a 5 million US $ grant for buying Indian goods and services. The Tajik President fully supported India's claim for a permanent membership of the UN Security Council. The two sides also called on the international community to combat terrorism in view of the threat posed by it to peace and security.

Agreements signed during President Imomali Rahmon's visit to India (9–12 May 2001):

- Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters;
- Agreement on Drug Demand reduction and Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Precursors and Psychotropic Substances and Related Matters
- Agreement on Long Term Cooperation in Trade and Economic Cooperation and Cooperation in the Field of Industry
- Air Services Agreement
- Joint Declaration on Principles of Mutual Relations
- Memorandum of Understanding on Technical Cooperation

Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Tajikistan in November 2003 was both necessary and important. The visit, as expected, further strengthened and expanded Tajikistan-India bilateral cooperation within the framework of common geo-strategic interests. Its relevance is linked to the fact that India is facing cross-border terrorism, while the Taliban remains undefeated. That Taliban is not formally governing Afghanistan is a relief, but their being undefeated makes Afghanistan unstable. Stability in Afghanistan is vital for both Tajikistan and India (Muthu Kumar, 2007:35).

This visit gave a special focus to forging closer relations and enhances bilateral cooperation. Both sides agreed to jointly combat terrorism, expand defense cooperation and identified other strategic areas of cooperation. During the visit, two very important agreements were signed to establish a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter-Terrorism and Extradition Treaty. The joint Declaration on Friendship and cooperation between the two countries said:
The sides were pleased to note that India has opened a cultural center in Dushanbe, which is functioning since January 2003 and has helped re-establish the cultural bridges between both countries. They also noted with satisfaction the commencement, for the first time, of direct flights between Dushanbe and New Delhi from 18 February 2003. The sides welcomed the establishment of Tajikistan’s diplomatic mission in New Delhi in October 2003.

The sides noted that humanitarian cooperation has shown steady increase. They recalled the delivery of food aid worth US$ 5 million by India to Tajikistan in September-October 2003 and placement, annually, on medium-to long-term scholarship of nearly 70 Tajik students and professionals in India. They took note of the substantial progress in the plans to set up, under India aid a fruit-processing plant and an institute for information technology (IT) in Dushanbe.21

Agreements signed during External Affairs Minister’s visit to Tajikistan (28-30 January 2003)

- Agreement on Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism.
- MoU for setting up of a fruit processing plant.

Agreements signed during Indian Prime Minister’s visit to Tajikistan (13-15 November 2003)

- Agreement on Visa Free regime for Diplomatic Passport holders
- Tourism Agreement
- MoU on Cooperation in IT Sector
- MoU on establishing a IT Centre in Dushanbe
- Extradition Treaty

Joint Declaration on Friendship and cooperation

From 6 to 10 August 2006 at the invitation of Indian side, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon made a state visit to which was attached the greatest importance. President of the Republic of Tajikistan, as a mark of respect to the Indian people and the state visited the grave of a great historical figure, the leader of the Indian people - Mahatma Gandhi. The Head of State of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon placed flowers on the memorial and observed a minute of silence.\(^{22}\)

The visit began on August 6, 2006 with the participation of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and members of the delegation accompanying him in New Delhi in the opening ceremony of memorial at the “Bogi Bedil”, Tajik poet Mirzo Abdulkodir Bedil and held on the occasion of the commemorative ceremony. At the ceremony, Emomali Rahmon launched the book on memorial scientific, literary and cultural work of Mirzo Abdulkodir Bedil, one of the most important representatives of Tajik Science and Culture. Emomali Rahmon stressed that on that day, at the beginning of the 21st century these works are proof of the historical connection between the people of Tajikistan and India. First of all, President said, that poems of Bedil could be an important factor in the strengthening of friendship and all-round cooperation between Tajik and Indian people. That event was an important for promoting of Aryan culture in the capital of the India.\(^{23}\)

The state visit of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Republic of India was widely reported by the media of India, who noted the great importance not only for two friendly countries, but also for the whole region. The first state visit of the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to the Republic of India was important for the further development of Tajik-Indian cooperation. India and President of Tajikistan took major initiative to promote regional cooperation in the field of hydroelectric power, the establishment of a regional electricity market, the realization of projects in the field of

\(^{22}\) (www.tajikembassy. in)
\(^{23}\) Ibid.
transport and road construction, as well as to promote the economic recovery of Afghanistan.

During the meeting the President of Tajikistan expressed appreciation to India for the invitation to carry out this visit and for the warm welcome, as well as for the continued assistance and support. He stressed that the friendship and comprehensive cooperation with the Republic of India are among the main and important regional and international strategy for Tajikistan. Expressing satisfaction with the political dialogue at the highest level, President Emomali Rahmon pointed to the importance of the development of inter-parliamentary and military ties between two countries, stressing that today Tajikistan’s needs in the military, aviation, technical expertise, as well as assistance to its border security. The discussion of these and other issues in Tajik-Indian cooperation was continued during the meeting with the participation of official delegations. Both sides stressed that the possibilities of improving cooperation between the two countries including great chances in the fields of energy, science, education, health and cultural.

The Indian side, in view of the accelerated development of the Tajik economy and the very favorable conditions for investment in various sectors, including energy has taken a great interest in a joint meeting with Tajikistan’s facilities for the processing of aluminum, as well as to cooperate in the field of information technology. Parties considered the establishment of the Information Technology Center in the name of Bedil, as well as the construction in Dushanbe five-star Hotel, as examples of the development of bilateral cooperation. They supported the proposed Interstate Commission for trade and economic and technological cooperation and also technological exchange experience, describing it as an important factor for further expansion of bilateral economic cooperation. In discussing regional and global security, the two sides strongly reiterated that the problems around of the Middle East could only be solved by diplomatic means. The parties also called for the strengthening of cooperation and collaboration in the interest of maintaining security and stability in the region. After the meeting two countries signed five bilateral documents:
President of on the topic Tajikistan Imomali Rahmon attended and spoke at the International Conference “The role and place of Tajikistan in Regional Cooperation”, which was held at the Indian Council for World Affairs in New Delhi on 8 of August. The conference was organized at the direct initiative of the President of Tajikistan, the Embassy of Tajikistan in India, Indian Council of World Affairs and India - Central Asia Foundation. Prominent scholars of both countries, representatives accredited in New Delhi diplomatic corps and numerous journalists, attended it.

During his speech, President of Tajikistan described members on the role and important contributions of Tajikistan in the decision of the Central Asia and Afghanistan issues. Emomali Rahmon invited all countries in the region to play effective role in the normalization of the situation in Afghanistan and its post-war reconstruction. The fight against drug production and trafficking needs a very close cooperation. He stressed that the realization of strategic projects of Tajikistan in the field of energy, transport and road construction is an important measure of Tajik nation on the way out of the country from the deep internal problems and communication crisis. President of Tajikistan also noted that the projects to build large Hydropower stations, a regional electro-transmission line,
regional railways and roads have been recognized and supported, as an important factor in the development of cooperation between the regions of Central and South Asia, by the political leadership and the people of Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. He expressed satisfaction that India has expressed its interest in participation in the regional cooperation. Speakers at the conference of the representatives of the political leadership of India and scientists supported the proposals of President of Tajikistan. It was also noted that in order to bring about a better understanding of Tajikistan and its history and culture, the Research Institute for Central Asia named after Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad in Calcutta translated the book by Bobojon Gafurov “Tojikon”. Tajik specialists translated to the Tajik language works of Rabindranath Tagore. The Conference stressed that the development of cultural relations and mutual exchange in cultural and historical ties showing history of civilizations, with many common roots originating from the ancient Aryan civilization can play an important role in strengthening and promoting relations between the two friendly countries. The President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon made a great personal contribution in the promotion of unlimited possibilities for the development of bilateral, regional and international cooperation.

The Joint Declaration on Further Development of Relations, Friendship and Cooperation between the two countries signed on 7 August 2006 again emphasized “the close historical ties of culture and traditional friendship of their people and their adherence to the ideals of peace, democracy, multi-culturalism, multi-ethnicity and secularism”. Some of important points are as follows:

"Expressing its outrage at the barbaric terrorist acts carried out on 11 July 2006 in Mumbai and Srinagar in India, Tajikistan conveyed its solidarity with the Government and the people of India and expressed its deepest condolences to the victims and their families... The two countries resoled to make concerted efforts for an early realization of the proposal to conclude a Comprehensive Convention on International terrorism, which is before the UN General Assembly. The parties expressed satisfaction at the results of the second meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism that was held in New Delhi during 3-4 August 2006."
...the two parties confirmed their interests in studying investment opportunities in all sectors and particularly hydro energy in Tajikistan. The Parties welcomed the signing of Memorandum of understanding between two governments on cooperation in the energy sector. India offered to rehabilitate the Varzob 1 hydropower plant in Tajikistan.

Both parties noted with satisfaction the expansion of cooperation in the sphere of the personnel training within Cooperation (ITEC) programme and other programmes. India agreed to offer greater opportunities for Tajik nationals to pursue learning of the English language and other courses in India. India would also provide facilities for scholars from Tajikistan to undertake research and academic activities at the Center for Central Asian Studies at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

The two Parties expressed their support to government of Islamic republic of Afghanistan for sovereign, stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan... (http://meaindia.nic.in/declarestatment/2006/08/07jd01.htm)

Agreements signed during the visit of President Rahmonov to India (6-10 August 2006)

- Joint Declaration on Friendship and Cooperation
- MoU on Foreign Office Consultations
- MoU between ICWA and Tajik Academy of Sciences
- MoU between Department of S&T and Tajik Academy of Sciences
- MoU on Energy Cooperation
- Cultural Exchange Program 2006-2009

After successful visit of President Imomali Rahmon back in 2006 the president of India was officially invited by her counterpart to visit Tajikistan. President of India Shimiti Pratibha Devising Patil visited Tajikistan from 6 to 9 Sep 2009. She attended the National Day celebrations of Tajikistan and delivered a speech (See in Appendix). We can conclude from the above statement of the Indian president that the official visit of Tajikistan in 2009 was fruitful, and will surely help in the maintenance of regional cooperation as well as security of the region.
Other than high level visits, there were many other important visitors from Tajikistan. These included the visit of the Minister of Security Major General Saidameer Zuhurov (April 1999) and his successor Khayriddin Abdurahimov (June 2000, June 2002 and March 2004); Minister of defense Colonel General Sherali Khairullaev (December 2001 and January 2005); Minister of Trade and Economy, Hakim Husseinovich Saliev (December 2001); Chairman of the Upper House of Parliament and Mayor of Dushanbe, Mahmadsaid Ubaidulloev (January 2003); Minister of Culture, Karomatullo Olimov (June 2003); and Chairman of the Lower House of the Parliament, Saidullo Khairullaev (May 2006).

**Official Visits to India**

2005: Visit of Col Gen Sherali Khairulloev, Defence Minister (January)

2006: Mr. Matlubkhan Davlatov, Economic Advisor to the President, Mr. Nazarov

Minister for Transport (May 3-6)

2006: 12 - member Parliamentary delegation headed by Mr. S. Khairulloev, Chairman of Majlis-i-Namandoyogan (lower chamber of the Parliament)

2006: Lt Gen Nadirov, First Deputy Defence Minister

2006: Mr. Hakim Soliev, Minister for Economy and Trade (July)

2006: State visit by President Rahmonov (6-10 August) accompanied by 7 Ministers

2006: Mr. Yuldashev, Deputy Foreign Minister (July)

2006: Mr. Yatimov, First Deputy Foreign Minister (November)

2007: Mr. Ilolov, President of the Tajik Academy of Sciences (January)

2008: Mr. Gulomjon Bobozoda, Minister of Economic Development and Trade (November)

2009: 10 member Tajik Parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Olim Salimov, Chairman of Parliamentary Commission on International Affairs (24 February- 3 March)

**Official Visits from India**

2005: Shri. S.N. Menon, Commerce Secretary (July)

2006: Shri. K. C. Singh, Additional Secretary (MEA) (January)

2006: Shri. Prithviraj Chavan, MOS (PMO) (September)
2007: Shri. N. Ravi, Secretary (East) (August)
2007: Shri. G K Pillai, Commerce Secretary (October)
2008: 4-member Parliamentary delegation headed by Shri Syed Shahnawaz Hussain (April)
2008: Shri Murli Deora, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas as Head of Indian delegation at SCO summit in Dushanbe. (August)
2009: Shri Divyabh Manchanda, AS (ERS) (April)
2009: Air Marshal D.C. Kumaria & Shri Subhas Chandra, JS (MOD) (May)
2009: State visit by president of India Shimati Pratibha Devising Patil (6-9 Sep) (For more details see appendix)

Cultural Relations

India and Tajikistan were welded together through a network of routes criss-crossing Kashmir and its peripheries. Many scholars, historians, geographers and travelers – Ibn Battuta, Al-Beruni, Sharafuddin Yazdi, Mirza Haidar Dughlat, Abdul Fazl, Jahangir, Hasan Shah and others including Europeans like Francois Bernier, George Forster, H.G.Bellow, Charles Hugel and George Trebeck – have furnished exhaustive accounts of the Silk Route connecting India and Central Asia through Kashmir. Incidentally, these included the one that linked Punjab and Kashmir with Sogdiana (constituting Tajikistan and Afghanistan), Andijon, Tashkent, Badakhshon, Bactria (Balkh/Afghanistan), Gandhara (Peshawar) and China across the Pamirs, Hindukush, Karakorum and the Tie’n Shan mountains (Kaw 2007: 8).

Tajik-Indian relations go back to very ancient times. Linguistically the non-Dravidian (Indo-Aryan) languages in India and the Tajik language belong to the same language family. In the early middle ages, besides trade relations, our forefathers were also connected through cultural relation, and some of the most well known instances of these relations include adoption of the game of chess and the magnificent world classic “Kalil Dimna” (Panchatantra), part of the world treasure of culture, by our ancestors thought their reinterpretation.
The history of the Tajik material culture goes back to the remote past. The given cultural heritage was enriched by the Achaemenids, Greeks, Soghdians and Kushans. While as the Soghdians imparted religions such as Nestorian Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, as well as their own alphabet and other knowledge, to peoples along the trade routes, the Kushans, with their base in India, played an important role in the expansion of Indian religion, Buddhism, in China and among the Turks. Chinese involvement in this region waxed and waned, decreasing sharply after the Islamic conquest but not disappearing completely even as ties between India and Central Asians grew steadily in the years to come. The conquest of the Arabs began in the early eighth century. Consequently Islam spread most rapidly in cities and along the main river valleys, both in Central Asia and India. It continued in its role as commercial crossroad; linking India, the steppes to the north, and the Islamic heartland. In the development of modern Tajik national identity, the most important state in Central Asia after the Islamic conquest was Persian-speaking Samanid24 principality which came to rule most of what is now Tajikistan, as well as the territory to the south and west. During their reign, the Samanids supported the revival of the written Persian Language that supplanted Arabic as the written language for most subjects.

Tajik people are one of the oldest ethnic groups in Central Asia. More than ten centuries ago, the Tajik dynasty was founded by Tajik king, Ismoil Somony, also known as Samanid Dynasty. Archeological finding and manuscripts tell us that, Ismoil dynasty consolidated its position during 4th and 5th centuries. During this period, Ismoil dynasty had one language (TAJKI) and religion. In the 5th century, we find one verse in Tajik language diary. In the ninth century, it became the formation of Samanid dynasty complete as Samanid Tajik State. Samanids are said to be of the Tajik origin. They contributed adequately to the growth and development of Central Asia and Indian civilizations in diverse fields. Given geographical proximity, the Tajiks had quite intimate and profound relations with the Indians from quite early times. This relationship

24 (The Persian dynasty which ruled in Transoxiana and then in Khurasan, was at first as subordinate governors of the Tahirids and then later autonomous, virtually independent rulers from 819-1005 AD, The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol.VIII, edited by C.E.Bosworth, et.al.E.J.Brill, Leiden,1995.pp 1025-1031.)
was particularly marked in the field of culture and scholarship. It strengthened in the 10th century A.D when the army of Sabaktagin entered India and transmitted several Turko-Persian linguistic influences to the Indians. After that, his son Mehmud Ghaznavi\textsuperscript{25} invaded India several times and, in the process, annexed India’s most fertile region of the Punjab to the Ghaznavid Empire. In the wake of these military expeditions, Mehmud Ghaznavi spread monotheism at the cost of age-long Indian polytheism.

The new religio-cultural Islamic thought pierced into the mind and soul of Indians far and wide. The successors of Ghaznavids, the Ghurids\textsuperscript{26}, while the occupying the Eastern parts of Central Asia, carved out a vast Muslim empire in the central and southern parts of India. Later Mughals under Zahirud-din Babur\textsuperscript{27}, who hailed from Farghana, supplemented it by capturing many other parts of Northern and Southern India. In fact, attracted by variegated specialties, Babur made India his second home where he spent his whole life along with his companions including men of letters, nobles, artisans and craftsmen from Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia. These variegated immigrants settled in India’s big cities and towns. Many of them joined the service of rulers as nobles which eventually broadened the scope of Turku-Persian influence in the new land called India. With that set in an Islamic trend which automatically influenced every Indian faculty and which Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru encapsulated as “Islam shook India and gave it new life. Society which had nearly lost the ability to grow was re-energized. The stagnant art had new and competitive life particularly marked in Northern India which eventually emerged as a celebrated Indo-Islamic model” (Jawaharlal Nehru 1989: 283).

\textsuperscript{25} Ghaznawids is the name given to the dynasty of Turkish origin which was founded by Sebuktigin, a General and a Governor of Samanids. With Ghazni as capital, the dynasty lasted for more than 200 years from 977-1187 AD in eastern Iran and what is now Afghanistan and finally only in parts of Panjab with Lahore as its center, The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol.II edited by B.Lewis, Ch.Pellat and Schacht., E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1983, pp.1050-1055.

\textsuperscript{26} The name of eastern Iranian dynasty which flourished as an independent power in the 6th/12th century and the early years of 7th/13th century and which was based on the region of Ghur in what is now central Afghanistan with the capital at Firuzkuh, The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol.II, pp. 1099-1104.

\textsuperscript{27} Zahir ad-Din Muhammad, soldier of fortune, first of Mughal rulers in India, diarist and poet, was descended on his father’s side in the fifth generation from Timur and thought his mother Kutluk Nigar Khanum in the fifteenth degree from Changiz Khan. He was born1483 and succeeded his father Umar Shayakh as Mirza of Farghana in 1494, The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol.I, edited by H.A.R.Gibb, et. al., E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1986, pp 847-849.
Over a period of time, this trend absorbed local influences which broadly gave way to a mixed indo-Islamic culture in India. The Taj Mahal, as the 8th wonder of the world Fatehpuri Sikri, mausoleums of Akber and Jahangir, Red Fort and the Lahore palace are such architectural masterpieces which emanated from the aforesaid Tajik-Indian cultural union. The specimen of Indian gardening, designing, gold smithy, weaving and the like sources of human ability and talent, are the other examples of the Indo-Tajik and Persian relations in a wide context. To reiterate Sultan Mehmud Gaznavi and his successors had offered incentives to many groups of Central Asian writers and learned men, artisans and craftsmen to settle in Lahore with the consideration to beautify the capital city of the Punjab by their skill and talent. As a consequence, Lahore did not take much time to grow as a celebrated scientific and cultural center on the analogy of Bukhara, Ghazni, Nishapur and Balkh etc. According to Sarhang Khawaja Abdul Hamid, the writer of the biography of the famous poet of the Punjab, Persian language was declared as an official language in Northern India. The capital of Ghaznavids, the Lahore, assumed title of Gaznain (Khawaja Abdur Rasheed 1947: 7).

A Pakistani researcher, Yameen Khan, reports that the new languages stimulated and stirred the thought and mind of the Indian writers. This is exhibitive of the strong linguistic relations between the alien Persian knowing and native Persian speaking people. Because of these intermixing and linguistic ties, the Persian became the language of the court and the commoners in whole of Punjab and its environs (Lahori Karachi: 35.) The contribution of the famous poets of the Ghaznavid period, Abdul Farj Rumi, Ata Yaqoob Naukook, Masood Sad Salman, Abu Abdullah Roozbeh and Uthman Mukhtari is really worth appreciating in this regard. They transmitted the dominant structural elements of the Persian language to the Indians and, in that, passed on the legacy of the famous Tajik poet, Rudaki, to the Indians and their literary history. The writings of the Samanid poets, Rabia, Daqiqi, Firdousi, and Abu Ali Sena, also influenced the mind and soul of the Indian writers and scholars.

Because of the spread of Persian language, Delhi assumed status next to Samarqand in literature and culture. Similarly, Jaunpur attained the name of “Indian
Shiraz” and Kashmir as “Little Iran” (Geeti Falah Rastgar, 1350: 819-20). As a matter of fact, due to Persian and Central Asian influences, Masood Sad Salman (1046-1121 A.D) and Amir Khusrau (1201-1325 A.D) compiled their verses in the Indian language which later came to be called as the Urdu. They also made use of their traditional literary elements in their writings, partly because the renowned scholar of the East, Abu Raihan Alberuni, had used thousands of Sanskrit words in writing his book titled “Alhind”, besides narrating and translating the ancient Indian epical works like Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagvatagita, Vishnu-Purana and Patanjali book. Consequently, the Urdu language presented a combination of Persio-Arabic languages, in the form of what in Indian dialect is called as the khadi boli and which gradually spread in north, south and other parts of India. In due course of time, the local languages of the Bengali, Kashmiri, Telugu, Tamil etc., were also inspired by the Persian and Tajik literature. The great Urdu poets in the Indian sub-continent like Amir Khusru Dehlvi, Mulla Wajahi, Wali Aurangabadi, Mir Aman, Saroor, Ramchander, Nazir Akberabadi, Mirza Galib, Hasrat, Mohammad Iqbal and Faiz Ahmad Faiz produced masterpieces bearing Persian/Tajik influences. These master pieces emerged as the golden treasured of the world.

The cultural relation between the people of Tajikistan and India indisputably has an ancient and rich history deserving attention. The state of these relations always depended on historical situation, Political views of governments, state of science and culture and world outlook of the people of both the countries. Suffice it to say that with the coming into existence, another era of cultural relations of the Soviet Union and India started. In fact we really have very ancient traditions of interaction with India in the field of culture. While emphasizing this fact people of both countries take pride in it, but ascertaining the facts form the past, however are still not enough.

One should not confine oneself with pride, howsoever legitimate, in the relations in the past. At present they must build their relations in accordance with the demand of the time. Besides they must have good long-term plans envisaging further development. Today, by the will of history and fate, Tajikistan has been a free independent state for nearly two decades now and has the opportunity to have direct contacts with other
countries of the world. The president of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon has always been emphasizing that Tajikistan needs to have economic and cultural contacts, cooperation with all the neighboring states. India is unquestionably one of such states. It is one of the great powers of Asia that in a comparatively short period has been able to liquidate the grave consequences of the colonial period. While adopting non-aligned policy it formulated its foreign policy on the basis of this principle. Precisely owing to this policy and its selfless character in while establishing relations with foreign countries India has earned great prestige and authority in the international arena. Proceeding from this same principle in the year 1992 India was one of the first foreign countries to officially recognize the independence of the Republic of Tajikistan and establish diplomatic relations with Republic of Tajikistan in the same year.

For the first time high-level government delegations of independent Tajikistan visited India in February 1993. A very important and useful document- the protocol on cooperation between the two states consisting of six points was signed during this visit. The fifth point of this protocol related to “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and government of the Republic of India on cooperation in the field of Culture, art, science, mass media, film and sports”.

In December 1995 during the official visit of the president of the Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to India five more important documents were signed including the “Agreement on Science and Technological Cooperation”. In October 1998 the Director General of the Indian Council for Cultural relations Mr. Himachal Som visited Tajikistan. During this visit the problems of cultural cooperation and opening of a cultural center of Tajikistan in India and cultural center of India in Tajikistan were discussed.

On January 22, 1999 on his return journey from Vietnam, the president of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon made a brief halt at Delhi and had a meeting with Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister of India, in which they discussed the problems of mutual cooperation between the two neighboring states, the situations in the region, and finally on the invitations of the Government of the Indian Republic the President of
Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon had warm and useful meeting with the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, the President of India K.R Narayanan and the Vice-President of India Krishan Kant.

Some examples of first steps in the field of cultural cooperation during the period since Tajikistan attained independence. First of all it must be mentioned that one of the social organizations working continuously for promoting cultural cooperation is the Society of Friendship and Cultural Relations of Tajikistan and India. The contribution of this society in organizing various events dedicated to important dates; including the national festivals the Tajik-Indo friendship Society organizes exhibitions of Indian books, meetings, lectures, Indian film-shows and other programmes.

Every year the Department of Indian philology in the faculty of Oriental studies of the Tajik National University holds two or three scientific conferences devoted to the issues of languages and literature in which Orientalists of Tajikistan take an active part. In the works of these conferences the officials of the Indian Embassy in Tajikistan also make a rich contribution. During the last few years scientific conferences dedicated to 120th birth anniversary of the outstanding Indian writer Prem Chand, 50th birth anniversary of the formation of Indian Republic have been organized. A conference on the “Role of Hindi language in the uniting the Indian People”, was held with a high level of participation by scholars form Indian side Dr. Shamim Ahmad Quraishi took part in the conference (Habibullo Rajabov, 2003: 138).

The Tajik scholars participated and presented papers in the international scientific symposiums and conferences held in India. The scholars of the Academy of Science of Tajikistan and also form the Tajik State National University presented papers in the conferences dedicated to Mirza Ghalib, Babajon Gafurov, on the Problems of medicine etc. at the Delhi and other cities of India.

The Cultural Center of India attached to Embassy at Dushanbe has also made weighty contribution to the development of cultural relations between Tajikistan and
India. On the initiative of this center six-month’s courses for studying Hindi language and learning Hindi classical dance (Kathak) and musical instruments are facilitated. The Center regularly organizes scientific conferences, lectures, seminars, meetings etc. in which the leading scholars of India and Tajikistan take part. Just in the year 2000-2001 several conferences and seminars were held here, including the conference on syntheses of Sufism and “Indian Culture” on April 27, 2001, on “communication revolution in India” on August 9, and another conference on “Yoga-the indispensable system of health and joy” on September 16. It should be emphasized that in the development of cultural relations and important role is played by the publication of fiction of the Indian authors. The literature of the people India is the most valuable source of information about the life of different people of India.

In Tajikistan side by side with studying language, literature, history, philosophy, geography and art of India, attention is also being paid to popularization of Tajik literature in India. Thanks to the great Indian writer the late Rahul Sankrityayan all the well-know novels by Sadriddin Aini, the outstanding Tajik writer, have been translated into Hindi language. As early as the beginning of 20th century the Rubait of Omar Khayam was taken up for translation by Maithilisharan Gupta and Harivansharai Bachchan. At present a cultural and enlightenment center called “Lamp of Life” is functioning at the Kandil Juraev Tajik Pedagogical University in the city of Dushanbe. In the premises of this Center there is a permanent exhibition “The World of Khayam” along with the corner “Khayam in India” (Habibullo Rajabov, 2003: 140).

With the financial support by Indian Embassy and Ministry of Culture of Tajikistan a concert “Some moments with the poetry of Bedil” was organized on March 27, 2002 in the premises of the Sadriddin Aini Opera Theatre. The noted Tajik singer Qurbonali Rahmonov and the group “Somon” performed at the start of the concert which was highly appreciated by large audience. Many more examples may be listed which confirm the fact that the Embassy of India makes great contribution to the cause of cultural collaboration between two countries. The screening of Indian films is also a means of communications with India. Such examples may be cited in large number. But
all this is a first step and we hope that future relations will become far more widespread and stronger, and that will serve that cause of peace and cooperation.

In order to expose the Indian public to the culture and traditions of Tajik people, the Embassy of Tajikistan in India organized a weeklong event of Tajik songs and dances with the participation of the musical Ensemble of song and dance, Rukhshona. This group had concert in Delhi from 13 to 17 January 2006 (Nazarov 2007: 46). A similar event took place in October 2008, during the Tajikistan week in India, organized by Tajik Embassy and ICCR, when a group of traditional Tajik singers entertained the Indians in Delhi and Bangalore, one of the entertainer who is a famous singer in Tajikistan (Noziya Karomatulloh) and now in India through Indian Council for Cultural Relations fellowship is engaged in learning of Indian Classical Vocal at the Shree Bharatiya Kala Kendr. Many more examples may be listed which confirm the fact that the Embassy of India makes great contribution to the cause of cultural collaboration between the two countries. It should be mentioned that every year graduate and post-graduate students and research workers are sent to India form Tajikistan for studies or for improving their professional skills. Every year planning is done for sending of more than fifty student and probationers to India. Those sent from India successfully study in the Tajik Medical University.

Above line is also reflecting in the statement of Amar Singh, the Plenipotentiary Embassador of the Republic India in the Republic of Tajikistan in an interview with Marziya Saidova -

"You are correct in saying that we have common cultural and historical ties. I would add that we are two branches of the same tree. Our history has many commonalities, and our geography binds us together. We live in a common cultural space. We are building on these strengths through education, through the TV and media and films, through our Cultural Center, and through scholarships for higher education in India for Tajik scholars. We send nearly 70 Tajik experts to India each year for specialized training in English, in computers, finance and banking and other scientific and technical areas. It is a very successful programme and we hope the Tajik experts benefit from this exposure and training. We are also proud of the nearly 300 Indian students who are enrolled at the
Tajik State Medical University. The Embassy, with the assistance of Indian Council for Cultural Relations continues to bring cultural troupes to Dushanbe and other cities in Tajikistan. This year too we have already organized two very popular cultural events and hope to bring in a few more before the end of this year.28

IT Centre: India assisted in the establishment of an IT Centre of Excellence in Dushanbe. It was commissioned in August 2006. The IT centre was set up with a modest grant of US$ 0.6 million. The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), a Government of India establishment executed the project. The Tajik National Centre for Patents and Information, an outfit of the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade administers the IT Centre. In addition to providing the equipment for the center, CDAC has trained the centre’s faculty members in India. The intention to establish the IT Centre is very laudable. But the project has a very tight budget. Whichever way the IT Centre is perceived, it would need an additional grant of at least US$ 1.4 million, if it is to make an important contribution to human resource developments in Tajikistan.

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). Scholarships for university education are India’s best tools in human resource development. Training under ITEC covers wide and diverse areas of specialization. Similarly, ICCR scholarships facilitate education in most study program, excluding medicine and engineering, in any university in India. Over 250 Tajiks have benefited from ITEC training in English language, banking and finance, information technology, income generation, industrial development, rural development and management. In addition, Tajik diplomats have attended training modules at the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs. In view of the unqualified success of the ITEC programmed, institutions and establishments in India receive every year at least 80 ITEC trainees from Tajikistan (Muthu Kumar 2007: 30).
Over 114 ICCR – sponsored Tajik students have successfully completed their studies from Indian universities and most of them have studied economics, sociology, management and business administration. Outstandingly, most of the ITEC and Indian universities' alumni on return to Tajikistan are high on demand with banks, governmental, non-governmental and international organizations because of their qualifications, skills and familiarity with the English language. Importantly, most of them hold good positions in the government establishments, banks, international organizations and NGOs active in Tajikistan. For the academic year 2006-2007, 20 students of Tajikistan have been given ICCR scholarships for post-graduate study programmes and now 30 students. At the same time, Indian students are studying at the Tajik State Medical University and Polytechnic University in Dushanbe.