CHAPTER – V
CONCLUSION

In the post-Soviet Central Asian countries that is Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, the issue ethnic upsurge has been high on agenda of political leadership as well as academia. This unexplored area has engaged the minds of the scholars in a big way. It attracted attention of international theorists and strategic analysts because ethnic crisis of this region was seen posing a serious threat to not only the security the region but the world as a whole. There were various factors responsible for such a complex situation of this region. The most significant among them being the tampering done by the rulers of the Central Asia, to the society, culture and traditions of this region for effectively govern the area. The people of this region faced most traumatic treatments during Tsarist and Soviet rule. The Tsarist nationality policies towards non-Russians were marked by stubborn Russification, suppression and divide and rule strategy. It also provoked national, racial and religious antagonism. The stress on Great Russian nationalism was intended to build support for autocracy among other nationalities. The long and arduous seven decades of Soviet rule brought chaotic and troublesome situation for Central Asia. Soviets made this region as a dumping ground of various nationalities. The irrational division of the boundaries of Turkestan and creation of five Central Asian countries in the name of five major ethnic groups of this region was held step that had sown the seeds of long-lasting rivalry among hundreds of ethnic communities of this region.

The unexpected independence of this region held a nightmare for all Central Asian countries. It created an acute power vacuum in this region. There was a need of effective political agenda for governing these countries, as the region inherited serious problems of ethnic clashes, poverty, unemployment and mass migrations. To tackle all such problems and to establish strong, effective and trustworthy governments a strong viable political leadership was required that could take diverse categories of people with them. The most serious challenge before the leadership was to establish the rule that was acceptable to the diverse sections of the society.
The ethnic diversity and complex geographical situation of Uzbekistan made it most vulnerable to ethno-national crisis and other serious problems, among all Central Asian countries. Since independence the Uzbekistan’s governance has remained in the hands of Uzbek President Islam Karimov. Being official in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, he was nominated as the First Secretary in Uzbekistan in 1989, and in 1990, he became the President of Uzbekistan and till today, he is working as the President of Uzbekistan. Apparently he made efforts for creating a democratic polity having space for constructive opposition. He enacted laws related to institutional changes but the establishment of independent trade unions, individual rights did not find much place in a centrally controlled state system. Despite giving enormous and extensive constitutional protections to the common masses of the country, he has actually snatched many political and social rights of the Uzbek citizens. He has banned unsanctioned public meetings and demonstrations and is continuously suppressing opposition figures with harsh and inhuman methods. There are plenty of cases of human rights violations; the most heinous among them was the Tianmen Square style massacre of young students in Uzbekistan’s famous city of Andizan, where hundreds of students were brutally gunned down by Uzbek troops for their demand of establishment of democracy in the country.

Uzbekistan comprises of more than one hundred ethnic groups and there have been several incidents of ethnic clashes among ethnic communities of the country. Thus there is a need for genuine ethnic policy by the Uzbek government to achieve unity in diversity. Initially the Uzbek President Islam Karimov proposed a very well balanced ethnic policy but somehow the policy was not adopted and implemented. The ethnic policy of the government is Uzbek ethnic community centered which has created rift between Uzbeks and other ethnic communities. As a result, the ethnic conflict has become intense. The Uzbekification of everything in the country and deliberate neglect of other ethnic communities and their regions is giving birth to several separatists and nationalists movements like Karakalpakstan separatist movement in Uzbekistan, which is the outcome of willful neglect of Karakalpakstan region and discrimination of the people belonging to Karakalpak ethnic community by Uzbek authorities. Karakalpaks accuse Uzbek authorities for devastation, chaos, poverty and environmental disasters of Karakalpakstan. They are demanding independence from the country. The distinct ethnic
groups are struggling for identity formation and to save their societies, cultures and traditions.

The dilemma the Islamic resurgence has posed for the country made it difficult for the government to resolve this thorny problem. Karimov’s policy of rewriting Uzbek history and his attempts to tampering the religious traditions and customs are also creating disharmony among different communities of the country. The radical Islamic movements may be called the outcome of the repressive ethnic and religious policies of Uzbek authorities. Many radical groups have been formed to confront the Uzbek authorities, most notable among them are the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb-Ut-Tahrir (HT), Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), and Akramiya. All these groups claim that they are fighting for the unification and revivalism of diverse, segregated and multi ethnic society of Uzbekistan. They call it a religious fight i.e., Jihad, however, the others call it terrorism and held them as the biggest threat to the humanity. Some foreign powers are also taking undue advantage of this fragile situation, they are assisting these Muslim fundamentalist groups in and outside the country by providing facilities of dangerous weapons and sanctuaries, which are sabotaging the whole region.

Karimov is accused of deviating from this ticklish issue by focusing attention of the world on economic issues and even manipulating the facts and figures of economic growth and development and concealing the real problems. In fact, all post-Soviet reforms in Uzbekistan have been with a view to strengthen Karimov’s grip on the public and political realms. In order to justify his strict measures and to heighten state control over the public domain, he has portrayed the Islamic insurgency, symbolized by the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and Hizb-Ut-Tahrir (HT), along with the Taliban’s seizure of power in Afghanistan in 1996, as a severe threat to the Uzbek way of life. The current socio political situation in Uzbekistan is catastrophic as it has dramatically deteriorated over the years. Therefore, there is need sincere efforts to tackle the problems of ethno-nationalism, Islamic extremism and sham democracy in Uzbekistan. Otherwise, the spiraling social and political turmoil may lead to further aggravated form of ethnic upsurge.
The Uzbek authorities should adopt the policy of true multiculturalism in which the system should be in a position to accommodate all the cultures, traditions, languages, rites and rituals of diverse ethnic communities of the country. The symbolic multiculturalism needs to be discarded in favor of truly multi-cultural agenda. Also the declared policies of good governance enshrined in the Constitution of the country need to be properly implemented. There should be enough space for each community to survive in a healthy manner in the country. There should be equal treatment with the members of the diverse ethnic communities and all should have the equal opportunity of growth and development with some special provisions and opportunities for marginalized ethnic communities like Karakalpaks who are living in very pathetic conditions and urgently require the special care for survival and development. The authorities should make sincere efforts to create the sense of one Uzbek nation-state in all the citizens of the country. The slogans like ‘Uzbekistan for Uzbeks alone’ should be discarded in favor of ‘unity in diversity’ should be given and promoted.

The Uzbek Government should adopt appropriate economic policy with special focus on the development of the neglected regions like Karakalpakstan which are the victims of the natural disasters also. The authorities should make proper policies to eradicate poverty in the country and must generate the employment opportunities for the poor and unemployed without any discrimination on the basis of their ethnic community. The policies should be made to enhance the education level in the country, with special attention to be given to the marginalized ethnic communities of the country. There should be equal opportunities for holding government offices to all the citizens of the country irrespective of their ethnic origin and there should be enough space for their representations in the policy framing.

The new religious policy should be imbibed by the Uzbek government which should respect all religions existing in the country with a special attention to Islam, because, the majority of the populations in the country are Muslims and Islam always remained an integral part of the Uzbek society from age old times. It helped the people of this region to unify the people as political groups. Therefore, the authorities could also use Islam to unify the people of the country by bringing all such scattered people of the
different ethnic communities under the canopy of Islam. The Uzbek government should also put a check on the mushrooming activities of terrorist and militant organizations in the country. The special attention should be given to stop cross border infiltration and sanctuaries of terrorist training within the country or outside country. The peace talks may be organized with the leaders of the militant organizations to solve the problem of terrorism in the country. The global help can also be taken to solve the problem of terrorism because the menace of terrorism is swiftly spreading its tentacles in the region and the leaders of those organizations are targeting the people of the region especially the youth for their membership by giving misinterpretation of Islam. However, on the one hand Islam can be helpful in unifying the people of the region, on the other hand it can be disastrous due to the its misinterpretation by some terrorist organizations for their political and strategic interests. There should be establishment of true form of democracy with having features like multi party system, free and fair elections etc. There should be enough space for the opposition and the incidents like Andizan massacre should be strictly avoided.

Uzbekistan is going through a very critical situation because the ethnic rivalry among different ethnic communities is enhancing day by day and Karimov regime has failed to arrest ethnic rifts among diverse ethnic communities of the country. His wicked policies are leading to many separatist movements in the country. The iron fisted ruler Islam Karimov is skating on a very thin ice which could breakdown as it has happened in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. The lack of truly multi-culturalism is responsible for most of the country is suffering from.