CHAPTER-II
ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM IN UZBEKISTAN

The terms ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nationalism’ are not new. The term ‘ethnicity’ is derived from Greek word *ethnos* which is in turn derived from another Greek word *ethnikos* that means *pagan or heathen*. The term ‘ethnic’ started being used as an alternative to ‘race’ in the middle of the nineteenth century. (Holborn and Haralambos, 2000: 222). In the narrower sense, ‘ethnic’ means ‘racial’ or ‘linguistic’, whereas in the broader sense it implies all ‘ascriptive’ (and cultural) group identities that include race, language, religion, tribe, or caste (Gold Scheider, 1995: 3). Mainly, there are two approaches to understand an ethnic identity i.e. primordialists and instrumentalists. According to primordialists ethnic identity is natural phenomena; it is biological and genetic in nature. They argue that every person has ‘attachments’ for place of birth, kinship relationship, religion, language and social practices which provide a basis for affection with other people from the same background (Brass 1991: 69). On the other hand, instrumentalists also known as mobilizationists suggest that there is nothing inevitable or natural about ethnicity. Ethnic identities are actively created maintained and reinforced by individuals and groups in order to obtain access to social political and material resources. People take refuge of ethnic identity to fulfill their wishes and ethnic groups tend to be formed when people believe they can gain some advantage by forming them (Holborn and Haralambos, 2000: 232).

Eventually, the term ‘nationalism’ has close proximity with ethnicity. Nationalism is a politicized ethnicity. In other words, it is an ethnic group with a political agenda. An ethnic group must be somehow politically mobilized before it becomes a nation and that political mobilization occurs in the form of some sort of collective objective of recognition (Joireman, Sandra F. 2007: 12). According to Anthony D. Smith there are mainly two kinds of nationalisms, ethno-centric nationalism and polycentric nationalism. In ethnocentric nationalism, both power and value exist in one group. These nationalists consider their group as a vessel of
wisdom, beauty, holiness, culture, power etc. In polycentric nationalism there are many centers of real power and many actors work on a common stage (Smith, Anthony D. 1971:158). Anthony D. Smith (1998:159) believes that there is a little difference between ethnicity and nationality as nations and ethnic communities are cognate, even identical phenomena. The perennialist readily accepts the ‘modernity’ of nationalism as a political movement and ideology, but regards ‘nation’ as either an updated version of immemorial ethnic communities, or collective identities that have existed, alongside ethnic communities, in all epochs of human history.

Anthony D. Smith says the nationalism existing in Central Asia is based on ‘ethnic and genealogical nationalism, as opposed to civic and territorial nationalism (Bingol, 2004:46). Similarly, Walker Connor described the role of ethnic groups in the formation of nations and defines nationalism in a very artistic manner. According to Walker Connor (1994:40) self differentiating ethnic groups are nations and therefore, loyalty to the ethnic group should logically be called nationalism. We can describe the nation as a self-differentiating ethnic group; it is, therefore, the self view of one’s group, rather than the ‘tangible’ characteristics that is the essence in determining the existence or non-existence of a nation. However, in recent years, the words like ethnicity, ethnic conflicts, ethnic cleansing, nationalism and nation-building have engaged the minds of the scholars in a big way, because it has wired the globe in 20th century. It twice led to World War, first in 1914 and second in 1939. Therefore, in many respects ethno-nationalism was at its apogee in the years immediately after World War-II (Muller, 2008:19). It unleashed an explosion of ethno-nationalism to the world it might be the Greek campaign of ethnic cleansing during World War-I or even more deadly German campaigns of ethnic cleansing during World War II. It all led to huge destruction and huge mass deportations, created critical problems like nation building especially to weak, developing and post-colonial states (ibid.: 25-26). Hence, the projects of nation building is high on agenda of the post-colonial states, they pursued vigorously in order to gain legitimacy in the community of nation states (Kaur, 2008:274). Similarly the problem of ethnicity and nation building is on a high alert in Central Asia especially after getting the surprised independence from its colonial master USSR in 1991.
ETHNO-NATIONALISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

The ethno-culture of Central Asia has deep historical roots. From, ancient times the Central Asian region was a meeting point of multiple numbers of distinguished races, communities and tribes. Most among them were nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkic tribes and clans with the common ancestry, culture and language. Being primitive they carried out periodic migrations from one place to other for hunt, food and fodder, and engaged in dreaded conflicts and bloody war from within and without the region. However, some of them like Uyghurs, Karakhanids, Seljugs and Shaibanids settled and carved out vast empires combining together fertile oasis, rich cities, towns, trading and cultural centers (Kaw, 2009: 17). Even many aboriginals of this region like Scyths have been extinct from the earth (Hutton, 2005: 23). In ancient times the Central Asian region was known as Turkestan. There existed four world famous cities of Bukhara, Khiva, Samarkand and Tashkent. Alexander the great concurred most of this territory and established himself at Samarkand. At that time there inhabited the tribes like Persians, Indians, Tadzhiks with several other primeval nomad people (Graham, 1994: 44).

(www.probertencyclopedia.com).
In 334 BC, Alexander began marching to this region and after the decisive battle with Sogdians in 328 BC; he finished his conquest of Central Asia and moved to his famous Indian campaign (Pragn Publication, 2007: 33). According to Chinese chronicles the nomadic tribe called Kangyu or Kadzyuy occupied the entire territory to the north of Amu Darya: Bukhara, Shakhrisabz, Kattakurgan region, Tashkent. The second half of 2nd century BC and 1st century AD Kangyuys were on its peak (ibid.: 35). Kushan kingdom emerged in the middle of the 1st century AD. Kudzula Kadviz I was the founder of the kingdom, under him Kushans conquered the largest part of this Central Asian region. The kingdom of Kushan was corresponder with the name of Yuetji tribe. In Kanishka’s time Kushan kingdom was on its apex. In Central Asia the northern part of Kushan ownership passed through Ghyssar mountain range in the south of Uzbekistan (ibid: 36). Later on, by the middle of the 8th century Arabs thrust into the land of Semireche which resulted into the succession of Uyghurs. The empire of this Turkic group lasted from 744 to 840 (Soucek, 2000: 66). Arab armies and Semitic captured the rich cities of Bukhara and Samarkand and spread the Islam in this whole region. Uzbeks, Turkomans, Kyrghyz, Afghans and many others adopted Islam under the influence of Arabs. Thus Arabs were mainly responsible for spread of Islam in this region (Graham, 2004: 49).

Then Samanids dynasty came into forefront. It was the Iranian dynasty of Transoxiana, Tokharistan was the original home the Samanids. They reached at peak under the reign of three great Amirs: Ismail (892-907), Ahmed (907-913), and Nasr (913-943) (Soucek, 2000: 73). After the collapse of Samanids, this Central Asian region was captured by Qarakhanids. They were the Turks and Muslims like Samanids. (ibid: 83). After that Seljukids and Ghaznavis came to power. They were also Turks with having their roots among the nomads of inner Asia (ibid: 97). In the second and third decades of the 13th century, there occurred a sudden rise of Mongol empire of Genghis Khan. Mongols time period in Central Asia (1220-1370) considered as a traumatic experience in the history of Central Asia. On the other hand Timurids who came after the Mongols can be viewed as most glorious one (1370-1507) (ibid: 123). The Mongol conquest of Central Asia took place from 1219 to 1225, led to a plethora of changes in the population of Mawarannahar. The conquest
quickened the process of turkification in the region because the armies of Genghis Khan were made up of Turkic tribes. These armies settled in Mawarannahar and after getting intermixed with the local population made the local dwellers a minority groups (Pragun Publication, 2007: 47).

After the death of Genghis Khan in 1227, his empire was divided among his three sons and also emerged the situation of power struggle among various tribal groups of this region. One tribal chieftain, Amir Timur (Tamer Lane) emerged from these struggles in the 1380 as the dominant force of Mawarannahar. Though, he was not a descendent of Genghis Khan but he became the de-facto ruler of Mawarannahar and made Samarkand as his capital. He conquered all of western Central Asia, Iran and southern steppe region of Aral Sea. He also invaded Russia during his invasion of China in 1405 (Pragun Publication, 2007: 48).

Timurid dynasty was replaced by Shaibanids under the leadership of Uzbek Khan (Soucek, 2000: 147). Shaibani Khan, the grandson of Abul Khair, was the first Uzbek Khan, who achieved an unprecedented glory and unique position in the land of Central Asia. He emerged as a great conqueror, a shrewd politician and an extremely powerful empire builder (Haider, 2002:71). Khutba was read in the name of Shaibani Khan with name of his deceased grandfather Abul Khair, the great Uzbek ruler of the steppes (ibid.:114). Shaibani became the master of the entire Transoxiana and also became responsible to sack Babur from Central Asia forever. Shaibani’s empire was intended from Caspian Sea in the west to the borders of China in the east and from the bank of on the right side of Syr darya in the north to the Central Afghanistan in south (ibid.:117). These legendary Uzbeks have their genealogy from Juji, the eldest son of Genghis Khan. Uzbeks are said to have included 92 tribes in their orbit: Manghit, Qunghrat, Qiyat, Qipchaq, Khtai, Qanghi, Keneges, Durman, Targhut, Shoran, Shirin, Tama, Bahrin, Girai, Aghrikur, Anghit, Barkut, Tubin, Tam, Ramdan, Matin, Busa, Yajqar, Qitwai, Dojar, Jaurat, Qurlaut, Mehdi, Kilaji, Sakhtiiyan, Qirq, Ming, Yuz, Saroi, Loqai, Qurshechi, Kerait, Chaqmaq, Utarchi, Turcoman, Arlat, Kait, Qirghiz, Qalan, Uishun, Ormaq, Chubi, Lechi, Qari, Moghul, Hafiz dad Kaln, Belad Bustan, Quchi Qatagahan, Barlas, Yabu, Jalair, Misit, Naiman, Samrjiq, Qarlug,
Arghun, Oklan, Qalmaq, Fuladchi, Jaljat Uljin or Olchin, Chimbai, Tilabi, Kalmuk, Machar or Majar, Ojinbai, Badai As, Kilchi, Ilaji, Jebergen, Botiyai, Timan, Yankuz, Tatar Uighur, Baghlan or Baghan, Tanghut, Shagird, Pesha, Tushlub, Onk, Biyat, Ozjolaji, Josolaji, Tuwadiq, Ghariband Jit. Thus, the origin of the term Uzbeks was a political rather than ethnic (ibid: 47). Actually, it was the Tatar warriors or tribe who first made up that conglomeration of people called Uzbeks. They preferred to call themselves by the name of Uzbeks rather from their race or ethnicity (Allworth, 1990: 32).

In 1885, albeit, the revolt led by Dervish Khan Tore broke out in Ferghana Valley. The main centers of this revolt were districts of Andijan, Osh and Marghalan. But, the mighty Russian troops rapidly put down the rebellion. Then, in 1890s the most important rebellion took place in this region, which is called Cholera riots of 1892 following Cholera epidemic, owing to the object poverty, which engulfed the population of the region. In order to steer the epidemic out, the Russian authorities took measures which deeply shocked local feelings because they ran counter to the traditional customs. Then again in 1898, a revolt broke out in Andijan which spread immediately to the districts of Osh, Namangan and Marghalan, in order to establish the Khanate at Tashkent and Samarkand. But, the Russians quickly suppressed the revolt and executed the leaders of that revolt (Rather, 2004:15).

In the meanwhile, Russia started showing its keenness in this rich Central Asian region. In 1717-18 Russians Tsar Peter the Great sent his mission to acquire the Khiva. Russia continued its expeditions to conquer this region (Soucek, 2000:1997). In 1847 Russian forces captured the great horde of Kirghiz and all races of Central Asia began to talk about the coming advance of the Russians and the need to fight them. After, acquiring Tashkent in 1865, Russians defeated Uzbeks and Turkomans at the battle of Irdzhar in 1866. In 1868 a treaty was made between the Emir of Bukhara and the Tsar, whereby Samarkand and Bukhara given to Russia (Graham, 2004:65). The Russian conquest of Central Asia was completed by 1884 with the acquisition of Merv. Tashkent was made the seat of the Russian Governor and administration (Soucek, 2000: 202). Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century, the Russian empire
was in complete control of Central Asia. The territory of Uzbekistan was divided into three political groupings: the Khanate of Bukhara and Khiva and the Guberniya (Governorate General) of Turkestan (Pragun Publications, 2007:56).

However, in 1901 the Socialist Revolutionary party was formed. Its most noted leader was Victor Chernov. This party was mainly constituted against the repressive measures of Russian tsars and represented the older populist tradition of Russian radicalism and was influenced by Marxism. They played an important role in history of this whole region. The Socialist Revolutionaries were committed to overthrow the existing Tsarist order. (Kaushik, 2006:50) Eventually, the October Revolution of 1917 started a new era with the establishment of Soviet rule in this whole region. Tashkent was made the capital of Russian Turkestan by Soviet government with the hope to solidify all pearls in one string (Rather, 2004:16) With the advent of this revolution, many divergent political trends and ideas emerged. It was the first time when Central Asians discovered nationalism and began to consider the benefits of forging a greater commonality of interest within their own clans and ethnic groups coupled with Islamic revival. Pan Turkism, advocated by Jadids and other urban intellectuals, sought to unite the Turkic-speaking people of Central Asia into a single state, Turkestan that would be free of Russian control and governed by Islamic precepts. (Rashid, 2002: 33). In April 1918, the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Turkestan was formed under the Soviet Federation (Capisani, 2000:107).

However, among the nomadic ethnic groups, a form of tribal or clan nationalism emerged, for example, the Uzbeks, meanwhile, the traditional Ulema and Mullahs, who had been left alone under the Tsars, feared a loss of power in either a Bolshevik or an ethnic nationalist state. Nonetheless, they saw a political opportunity in the turmoil of the times and called for the creation of an Islamic state governed by Sharia (Islamic law) (Rashid, 2002:35).

Actually, under the Tsarist and Soviet rule the people of this region had traumatic experiences. It had been made a dumping ground for various nationalities. This constant socio-economic and cultural transformation of this region, over the year, led to the emergence of a complex situation. The roots of ethnic conflict in
Central Asia lie during the colonial policies of the Old Russian Empire. The Tsarist nationality policy towards majority of non-Russians emphasized stubborn Russification, suppression and the divide and rule strategy of deliberately provoking national, racial and religious antagonism. The stress on Great Russian nationalism was intended to build support for autocracy among other nationalities, particularly in border lands. In result, the Russian population increased in numbers in Central Asian republics. In Kazakhstan, Russian constitutes 41% of the total population and in comparison Kazakhs are only 36% in numbers. (Lakshmi, 2003:27).

Similarly, through the succeeding Soviet era various methods were tried and applied at different times and in different regions. In Central Asia political and social institutions and usages were suppressed and subverted. But, the Soviet nationality policy was engraved with one central problem, they were required to maintain a balance between two conflicting interests; to assure the continued dominance of the Russian majority and of its values, language and cultural heritage and at the same time to reduce the alienation of non Russian nationalities and to guarantee that they will be equal, valued and respected members of Soviet multinational community. In practice, soviet policy fluctuated between these impulses (ibid; 28)

Thus, after the revolution the shortage of food, unemployment and semi anarchy were the cause of sufferings of the native population. It also increased the hostility between Russians and Muslim. The Tashkent government in December 1917 declared to be invalid and destroyed religious foundations and law courts. The Tashkent government ordered all the cotton, the chief product of the region, to be confiscated. The policies of looting, extortion and expulsion of the native population followed and added to the miseries caused by famine and unemployment (Rather, 2004:18). Furthermore, in the Khanates of Bukhara and Khiva, ethnic tension between Uzbeks and Turkmen persisted throughout 1920-21. Local conflicts in Khwarezm prompted a proposal from Moscow to divide the region into separate regions. The ethnic aspirations and sharpening inter-ethnic aspirations and sharpening inter-ethnic sharpening inter-ethnic tensions hastened the delimitation process (Patnaik, 2003:25).
Meanwhile, in 1924, the Soviet policy of national delimitation of boundaries of Turkestan created a more traumatic situation in this region. According to the Soviet authorities, the main goal of the national delimitation was the establishment of more ethnically homogenous political entities. Albeit, Dr. Francine Hirsch argued that by 1924, Soviet border making was based on three main principles: national ethnographic, economic and the principle of administrative order. The national ethnographic principle implied correspondence between perceived national ethnographic lines and political borders. Economic arguments focused either on the necessity of preserving economic formations that crossed national ethnographic lines, or on the economic needs of the entities in the making. The principle of administrative order, however, was, if not explicitly, based on all union concerns (Haugen, 2003:181). On the other hand one of the advocates of the divide and rule policy, Dr. Paul Goble assisted that Stalin deliberately drew the borders, just to create tension between the various Central Asian groups (ibid; 182). In fact, during the demarcation of the boundaries, the seeds of the ethnic conflicts and rivalry were sown by the Soviets. There were number of such areas which were really ill suited for the division, Ferghana valley was one of them. Ferghana valley had a great economic significance due to its rich cotton and other natural resources.

Mainly Uzbeks and Kyrgyz staked a conflicting stakes in Ferghana valley, especially, with relation to the towns of Kokand, Ferghana, Andijan, Osh and Namangan. However, when borders were drawn, Andijan and other important towns of Ferghana were placed with the Uzbek Republic, while Osh was included in the Kyrgyz oblast. In this case, the Central Asian Bureau received a considerable amount of appeals and protests (ibid; 189). Similarly, Tashkent city became the cause of the Uzbek-Kazakh tension. Both, the Uzbek and Kazakh sides insisted that the city should be included in their republics, because, Tashkent was important centre both economically and administratively. There was no room for negotiation on this issue, and the struggle over Tashkent came to poison the delimitation process: (ibid. 194).

However, on May 11, the Central Asian Bureau passed the resolution, which included the city of Tashkent in the Uzbek republic. It gave a sound blow to Kazakhs.
In an article in the newspaper Ak-Zhol, Mendeshev, the leader of the Kazakh ASSR, claimed that a Kazakh republic without Tashkent would be like a body without a head. (ibid: 196). They argued that Tashkent city is predominantly and perhaps even entirely Uzbek. On this basis, they insisted that Tashkent must join with the Kazakh Republic (ibid: 195). On the other hand, pro-Uzbeks contended that the entire idea of the national delimitation would be meaningless, if a city such as Tashkent with 96,000 Uzbeks and only 172 Kazaks should not be included in the Uzbek republic (ibid., 197). Similarly, the town of Tashauz and Charjou region of Farab district became the cause of tension between the Uzbeks and Turkmens. Both, these groups were making claims over Tashauz and Charjou regions. Though, Turkmens claims were approved and both regions went to Turkmen republic, which gave rise to Uzbek-Turkmen rivalry (ibid: 187).

Tajik experience was bitter as in boundary demarcation in 1924, Tajik dominated area remained in Uzbek republic. Tajiks spent five years in the subordination of Uzbeks. Then, in December 1929, Tajikistan acquired the status of Union Republic. It was much smaller in size and economically weaker than other Central Asian republics. The relationship between Tajiks and Uzbeks always remained tense due to several reasons. Uzbeks have the Turkic origin and Tajiks have the Iranian origin. There is also a linguistic difference among them. Moreover, the two ancient sedentaries of the Central Asian civilization were in Samarkand and Bukhara. Both, these cities were Tajiks dominated. But during the delimitation process both cities went to Uzbekistan, which given the incurable wound to Tajikistan (Dash, 1996: 107-08). In addition, the dispute of Karakalpak territory could not be resolved until today. The Karakalpak region is situated on the border area between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan near the Aral Sea. This region was made an autonomous region of Kazakhstan in 1925 and designated as an ASSR in 1932, still within the Kazakhstan. Lastly, it was given to Uzbekistan in 1936 and till date, it is the only surviving autonomous area in this region under the patronage and Uzbekistan (Capisani, 2000:108).
So, the aim of reorganizing of Central Asia was to destroy the unity of the region and thus, eradicate the nationalist tendencies, which had been built up during the revolution (Rather, 2004:35). According to Shireen T. Hunter, the main objective of Soviet national delimitation policy was to consolidate Russian power and to protect Russian interests - whether ideological or strategic. Borders were drawn just to facilitate Russian manipulation and intervention. Another aspect of Soviet Union’s nation building strategy was to invent new histories and cultures for the national entities. In doing so, they resorted to a good deal of historic revisionism and outright falsification, creating cultural rivalries among the republics and estranging them from cultural relations beyond their borders. Rather than generating and cementing a sense of common national identity and blunting ethnic, tribal and regional differences, Soviet-era nation-building and cultural development added new layers of division to those already existing in the Central Asian societies (Hunter, 1996:9-10).

However, Professor Ajay Patnaik argues that the Soviet state played an important role in helping the formation and consolidation of national territorial identities in Central Asian region. The Soviet state helped in nation-building process through the standardization of national languages, the creation of national symbols and the classification of the population based on nationality for all official purposes. Radical changes were also made in this process which included economic modernization, mass education, establishment of prestigious institutions of ‘national statehood’ based on a new powerful indigenous stratum- the administrative, creative and scientific intelligentsia, and strengthening the structure and function of indigenous languages (Patnaik, 2003:30). But, this viewpoint has a lesser support than the earlier view. Russian colonization and the Soviet system brought advanced civilization, science and technology to Central Asia and helped to develop the economy and culture in the region but it is strongly believed that Russian colonization and the Soviet domination of Central Asia exploited this region and virtually made a prison for minority ethnic groups (Liu, 1998:76). Despite the territorial delimitation, Soviet power delimited population of this region, in a new way. For instance Soviet rule attempted to reinforce Uzbek identity as part of a greater Soviet identity and as an antidote to pan-Turkic, pan-Islamic or Turkestan identities. This involved the creation
of a single standard Uzbek literary language distinct from other Turkic languages and Uzbek historical heroes separate from other heroes of this region (Fierman, 1997:362).

Moreover, the traditional family and social bonds were also spoiled because the society based on the patriarchal structure in which the head of the respective groups enjoyed great authority was perceived as a threat to the establishment of Soviet power. The Soviet regime found that the famous Basmachi rebellion was the product of such social structure (Haugan, 2003:98). The concepts of Kolkhozes and Sovkhoz were introduced by Soviets. Kolkhozes were collective agricultural enterprises formed by means of voluntary joining of small peasant households, established under the guidance and assistance of the state. Each collective farm was endowed by the state with a definite plot of land, granted under the special deed for its eternal use. Solkhozes or state collective farms were owned and managed by the state. These were regarded as models of large scale farming. As a result of collectivization and the formation of Kolkhoz settlements, the clan settlements were broken down (Rather, 2004:49). The dress pattern of people also got many changes. Influence of towns and educational development led to wearing of new types of dress. Young people began to wear English suits and overcoat. Most of the women left out the use of parindhaz, (traditional veil). Reportedly, Communists forced the women to do so and there was a lot of opposition to it. In Uzbekistan 21 women were reportedly killed by the masses for not wearing the veil in 1929, sign of sabotage by Soviets in the social life of this region (Rather, 2004:52). Thus gradually Soviets started to lose their popularity and local support in this part of the Soviet regime. In the 1920s, the Uzbek Bolshevik leader, Faizullah Khujayav (a former Jadidist and young Bukharist activist and the first President of the Uzbek Socialist Soviet Republic) realized the impossibility of trying to protect this region’s cultural unity. His idea of the cultural unity of this region became the biggest enemy of his life. On 13 March 1938, he was executed by the Soviet regime, which marked the end of the Soviet policy of collaboration with indigenous elites of this region (Capisani, 2000:109).
Eventually, Pan Turkism, advocated by the Jadids and other urban intellectuals, sought to unite the Turkic speaking people of Central Asia into a single state, Turkestan that would be free of Russian control and governed by Islamic precepts. Amongst the nomadic ethnic groups a form of tribal or clan nationalism emerged. The Kazakh Ordas, for example, created Alash Orda, a political party that was actually allowed to govern much of the Kazakh steppe. Alash orda’s nationalism was both anti-Russian and opposed to ethnic groups regarded as oppressors of the Kazakhs, such as Uzbeks at that time (Rashid, 2002:33).

Besides this, at the end of April 1969, ethnic riots broke out between Russians and Uzbeks in Tashkent, during a football match. Fifteen Russians were reportedly killed in the riot. This was followed by a large scale demonstration by the Uzbeks, demanding that Russians should get out of Uzbekistan. Then, Soviet government used the army to break up the demonstration and 150 Uzbeks were arrested (Liu, 1998:78).

Soviets adopted strong punitive methods to eliminate every sort of anti-Soviet campaigns. Till 1929 Soviets had crushed almost every anti-Soviet element including the popular Basmachi movement, which had thousands of supporters. So, soviet regime completely dominated this region for the next six decades and Central Asia was cut off from contact with the outside world, as the Soviet Union closed its borders with Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and later with China. Central Asians learned nothing about the political ideas that shaped the twentieth century, including developments in Islamic thinking and political movements that were going on just across the border. When independence finally came in 1991, the Central Asians were still in the mould of 1920s. So, the crisis in Central Asia today is directly related to the stunted political and ideological growth, which the communists ensured by their actions in 1923 and afterwards (Rashid, 2002:35).

Since independence the Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were wracked by crippling problems, like massive unemployment, consumer and food shortages, poverty and most notably the fragmentation of society along clan/tribal, local and ethnic lines. There were haunting fears of a recurrence of the bloody ethnic violence in Ferghana Valley (Critchlow,
In result, in June 1990 tensions originating from perceptions of unfairly distributed land and housing erupted but particularly bloody series of riots in Ferghana valley concentrated in the city of Osh and the nearly town of Uzgen. The Kyrgyz and Uzbek population clashed, leaving about 200 people dead and many more injured, in what seemed to announce an era of ethnic conflict in the region (Fumagalli, 2007:567). Now every leading ethnic group in this region is endeavoring to get ethnic legitimacy. The republics continue to exist according to their political birth certificates of 1924. They counter pose this ethnic nationalism to all universalistic ideologies, such as Pan-Turkism, Pan-Islamism, and Pan-Turanianism. The main root cause of all these problems is that not all citizens are members of the dominant ethnic group, and not all members of the ethnic group live in the country. So, while maintaining the principle of ethnic legitimacy, these new states have a twofold project: to keep their non-native citizens and to assimilate the others; and to maintain a status quo on frontiers. (Roy, 2000:173). Basically, such an ethnic consciousness in Central Asia operates at three levels—one in relation to Russians and other Europeans, second in relation to other titular groups in the region and finally between tribal, regional or clan based groups within each larger ethnic group. Within their particular political and social frameworks, Central Asians may identify with any of the many identities-religions, ethnic, tribal, territorial or linguistic. These multiple identities enable actors to create and negotiate multiple and overlapping meanings and loyalties (Patnaik, 2003:154).

The Case of Uzbekistan

It was on 31st August 1991 that Supreme Council of Republic of Uzbekistan passed the resolution for the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan”. The Supreme Council in its statement adopted on August 31, 1991 by the sixth extraordinary session proclaimed that territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan together with Karakalpakstan Republic as a part of its structure, shall be indivisible and inviolable (Rather, 2004:122).

Uzbekistan constitutes the total area of 447, 400 Sq. Kms. (425, 400 Sq. Km. land and 22,000 Sq. Km. Water), it includes the southern portion of the Aral Sea with

35
a 420 Km shoreline. Uzbekistan stretches 1425 Km from west to east and 930 Km from North to South. It shares its border in the South-West with Turkmenistan, which is approximately 1621 Km and in the north with Kazakhstan which is approximately 2203 Km and in the South and the east with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which is around 1161 Km and 1099 Km respectively. It is the only Central Asian state to border all the other four and also shares a short border with Afghanistan to the South i.e., 137 Km. It is one of the only two doubly land locked countries in the world, along with Liechtenstein (www.uzbekistan.org).

The physical environment of Uzbekistan is diverse ranging from the flat, desert topography that comprises almost 80% of the country’s territory to mountain peaks in the east reaching about 4500 meters above sea level. The southern portion of Uzbekistan is characterized by the foot hills of the Tian Shian Mountains, which rise higher in neighboring Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and form a natural border between Central Asia and Asia. The most fertile part of Uzbekistan is the Ferghana valley, which has an area of about 21,440 Sq. Km. (www.en.wikipedia.org). The two largest rivers feeding Uzbekistan are the Amu Darya (ancient name Oxus) and Syr Darya also called Gilzariyan, it was also referred to as Nahri Shah. Both of these rivers also seem to be a natural boundary for Uzbekistan. The third important river of this region is Kuhik called Namik in ancient times and later on known as ‘river from paradise’ for its fertility giving power (Haider, 2002:18-21).

Uzbekistan has significant portion of natural gas, petroleum, coal, gold, uranium, silver, copper, lead, zinc and tungsten. As in 2001, Uzbekistan was third largest natural gas producer in the Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS) and it is one of the largest gas exporter of the world and vitally, it is one of the largest cotton producer of the world. It was fourth largest producer of cotton in the world during Soviet era (Ilkhamov, 2005:165-166). Such a treasure of tremendous natural resources and strategic location of Uzbekistan make it the most important country of Central of Asian region. The total population of Republic of Uzbekistan is 27,313,700. The distribution of the population can give some idea about the possible faultlines along ethnic lines which is given as under.
The area and the population are distributed as under:

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<td>1. Andijan region</td>
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<td>1,899,000</td>
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<td>2. Bukhara region</td>
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<td>3. Ferghana region</td>
<td>Ferghana</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>2,338,000</td>
<td>2,997,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jizzak region</td>
<td>Jizzak</td>
<td>20,500</td>
<td>831,000</td>
<td>1,090,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kashkdarya region</td>
<td>Karshi</td>
<td>28,400</td>
<td>1,812,000</td>
<td>2,537,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Khorezm region</td>
<td>Urgench</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>1,135,000</td>
<td>1,517,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Namangan region</td>
<td>Namangan</td>
<td>7,900</td>
<td>1,652,000</td>
<td>2,196,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Navoii region</td>
<td>Navoii</td>
<td>110,800</td>
<td>715,000</td>
<td>834,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Samarqand region</td>
<td>Samarqand</td>
<td>16,400</td>
<td>2,322,000</td>
<td>3,032,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Surkhandarya region</td>
<td>Termiz</td>
<td>20,800</td>
<td>1,437,000</td>
<td>2,012,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Syrdarya region</td>
<td>Gulistan</td>
<td>5,100</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>698,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Tashkent region</td>
<td>Tashkent</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>4,450,000</td>
<td>2,537,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Karakalpakstan (autonomous region)</td>
<td>Nukus</td>
<td>165,600</td>
<td>1,343,000</td>
<td>1,612,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. City of Tashkent</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2,192,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>447,400</td>
<td>21,73,000</td>
<td>27,313,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics available at www.stat.uz)
However, the diverse ethnic composition of Uzbekistan makes it most vulnerable to ethnic clashes among all cultural Asian countries. Uzbekistan comprises of more than 129 ethnic groups and 15 confessions. Among these, the Uzbeks having 80% of the total population of the country, followed by the national minorities such as Russians (5.5%), Tajiks (5%), Kazakhs (3%), Karakalpaks (2.5%) and Tatars (1.5%) along with many other smaller groups (2.5%) (Kumar, 2005:332); like Crimean Tatars, Meshkhetian Turks, Koreans, Afghans, Germans, Cherkess, Kylmyks, Uyghurs, Gypsies/Maghat, Kipchaks, Karamas etc. This long list of ethnic minorities residing

(www.geology.com).
within Uzbekistan helps in visualizing a colourful ethnic map of the region with both bold and mild contours (Bhattachraya, 2008:169).

Population of Uzbekistan comprises of the following:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uzbeks</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajiks</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhs</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karakalpaks</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatars</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other smaller groups</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure No. 1

All these ethnic groups have their own distinct languages ancestral territories and strong kin and cultural ties across the borders. Thus, such extreme and diverse ethnic atmosphere with past colonial resentments is definitely most vulnerable ground for ethnic conflicts and nation building processes. (Kumar, 2005:332). The presence of such ethnic minorities spanning contested borders constituted a potentially explosive
combination in the heart of Central Asia. The case of Uzbeks in Uzbekistan and Uzbeks abroad appears of particular interest because unlike the many other examples where kin states support their co-ethnics living in other countries, nothing of sort occurred in Uzbekistan. They are mainly concerned to Uzbeks living in Uzbekistan only. The reason may be the large population of Uzbeks in Uzbekistan constitutes the 80% Uzbek population of Uzbekistan and also having privilege to be a dominant and largest ethnic group in Central Asia. (Fumagalli, 2007:108). Central and South Asia are homes of about twenty five million Uzbeks. Besides the two million living in Northern Afghanistan, most Uzbeks are settled in one of one five post soviet Central Asian Republics. In Kyrgyzstan Uzbeks represent about 14% of the overall population which is about 700,000 and they are mainly concentrated in the Southern Ferghana valley provinces, namely Osh, Jalalabad and Batken. Tajikistan is the home to the largest Uzbek population in the region other than Uzbekistan. The latest census figures that the Uzbeks are about 15% of the total population of Tajikistan, but, this figure is disputed by members of one local sector of Uzbek population, who insist on the validity of data from previous censuses, according to which Uzbeks represented about a quarter of Tajikistan population. They are mainly concentrated in the north-western province of Leninabad. In Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan Uzbeks are less than half a million each. Turkmenistan’s Uzbeks are concentrated in the Tashauz and lebap provinces in the eastern part of one country and in Kazakhstan; Uzbeks are mostly found in the southern Kazakhstan province especially around Shymkent (ibid.). According to one survey, in Kyrgyzstan, the Uzbek community rejected the idea of categorization as a national minority with an argument that this label applies to very small groups. They contend “We are not a Diaspora, nobody should refer to Uzbeks as Diaspora, and we did not arrive from any other place, we are not like Germans or Koreans” (Fumagalli, 2007:581).

It clearly indicates the strong hold and commitment of the Uzbek community to whole Central Asians region. Even though, Uzbeks represent a most homogenous group than other Central Asian nationalities. However, its assimilating tendency has not so far been able to completely eliminate intra-group heterogeneity. There exist strong sub-national identities that still influence self-identification of many members
of the Uzbek nationality. For instance, the Qipchaks, who generally avoid marriage outside the tribe, regard other Uzbeks as ‘Sarts’. Likewise, the Khojas identify themselves primarily in terms of descent from important historical religious figures. Practicing strict endogamy, the Khojas have persisted as a salient category. Then, there are officially codified Uzbeks in certain parts of the republic like Samarkand and Bukhara, who are Tajik speaking. Thus, there are multi layered identities existing in the region (Patnaik, 2003:159).

**Russians vs. Uzbeks**

Russians, who are the second largest ethnic group in Uzbekistan constituting about 5.5% after Uzbeks, held a dominant position in Uzbekistan during Soviet time due to the support from Moscow. Being a culturally distinct group, they were not in danger of being assimilated by the titular group. Instead, the non-European minority groups were more vulnerable to assimilation due to inter-group marriage and linguistic cultural similarity with the titular groups. Russians were absorbed mostly in industry, transport, construction and communications, where, they had a much larger share than the titular population. Among the intelligentsia, they comprised the majority of the specialists in technical fields and exact sciences and Russians also played pivotal role in white collar officials. (Patnaik, 2003: 92). But, the collapse of the Soviet Union ended Russian dominance in Uzbekistan. Non Russians sought to remove Russians from their leadership positions. They made every possible effort to depose Russians. Therefore, under constraint, Russians started migrating from Uzbekistan and with Russian economy in complete disarray, their prospects for finding jobs or even housing back in Russia became extremely bleak (Deshpande, 1999; 142). Between, 1992 to 96, Central Asia accounted for 59 percent of all net migrations to Russia from former Soviet Republics, of which 25% was from Uzbekistan alone. From 1989-96 of all the migration from Central Asia to Russia, ethnic Russians constituted 70 percent and remaining being Tatars, Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Jews. The net population transfer of ethnic Russians from Central Asia to Russia during this period was 1.3 million (Patnaik, 2003: 95). The Uzbek leadership did not favor granting dual citizenship status to the Russians. They argued
that if they granted dual citizenship to the Russians, it will put them in advantageous position and will create divided loyalty and hinder the unity and integrity of the new state. This factor was also to some extent responsible for large scale exodus of Russians from Uzbekistan (Mohapatra, 2006: 253). The titular elites chased out urbanized minorities in order to seize their jobs and property. But, the most probable cause of this mass migration was the ethnic discomfort, as they had the feeling of living in alien culture and traditions with communication difficulties; thus, they desired to live among the people of their own nationality (Radnitz, 2006: 655).

From 1989 major industries began to suffer. This resulted in very high levels of unemployment and residents found them without work. The population remaining after the mass exodus of the 1990s is mostly middle aged and retired, and majority of them are pensioners who do not get their pension regularly and the amount of pension is meager too (ibid. 661). Moreover, it has become very difficult to find a job for non-Uzbeks because, ethnicity has become a major criterion for receiving and retaining employment, where speaking or being Uzbek may be more important than being qualified (ibid, 666). According to Prof. Scott Radnitz the following factors are responsible for migration: (1) fear of state driven or community driven ethnic violence; (2) overt discrimination by members of the titular nationality; (3) state policies that overtly discriminate against minorities; (4) community insularity that makes life uncomfortable for minorities; and (5) state policies that subtly discriminate against minorities or set conditions for everyday discrimination (ibid, 656). As a result of this mass migration of ethnic Russians from Uzbekistan, the country faced so many problems. The major setback was to the industrial, agricultural and educational growth, which led to the decline in Uzbek economy, because, the Russians were persistently playing leading role in the growth of Uzbek economy. (Mohapatra, 2006: 252).

**Tajiks vs. Uzbeks**

The Tajik population is around 5 percent in Uzbekistan. This official census figures are disputed by the Tajiks who insist that the figure is much higher than the official data; putting at about 25-30 per cent of the population of Uzbekistan. They
claim that Tajiks constitute 70 per cent of the population of Samarkand, which is the second largest city and former capital of the country, and 90 per cent in Bukhara. The mountainous area of the north east of Tashkent past the Chorvok reservoir are predominantly Tajik, as are parts of the Ferghana Valley, Jizzakh province, Surkhan Darya and Kashka Darya. According to another source the total Tajik population of Uzbekistan is at six to seven million, more than the Tajik population of the Republic of Tajikistan (Foltz 1996: 213). The official statistics seek to suppress this because their intention is to build Uzbek identity for the nation and ensure Uzbek domination (Health, 2003:191). This had been continuing in the past as for example in delimitation of boundaries of Turkestan by Soviets in 1924, Tajiks, had not been mentioned among the main nationalities of Turkestan, which were seen to be ‘Uzbek’, ‘Turkmen’ and Kazakh. This provoked a reaction, but typically there was nobody to represent the Tajik claims at that time (Haugen, 2003:150-51).

The Tajik nationalism emerged due to the constant struggle of Tajik leaders like Mukhitdinov against Uzbek hero Fayzullah Khojaev. In 1929, the CEC of the USSR decided that the Tajik ASSR would be separated from the Uzbek republic and organized as a separate Union Republic. This decision was taken due to the influence of the spiraling tension between Uzbek-Tajik relations (ibid. 162). On the other hand, followers of the theory of “Greater Uzbekistan” which even call for a reunification of the now Tajik lands to Uzbekistan are trying to put the total eclipse on foreign linkages. This is being used to show that the forefathers of the modern Uzbeks were among the ‘world’s oldest civilized people’ (Sengupta, 1999:279-80). There are many examples of the prevalence of anti-Tajik prejudices. The National Cultural Centre (NCC) of Tajiks and Tajik-speaking people based in Samarkand has complained for a number of years about official discrimination carried out against Tajiks in Uzbekistan. A number of prominent members of the NCC have been removed from their jobs and all have been prohibited from attending the annual World Congress of Tajiks since 1992 (Health, 2003:191). The tension between Tajiks and Uzbeks reached crisis proportions in August September 1992, when reportedly tens of thousands of Uzbek refugees left Tajikistan as a result of what they described as ‘Pogroms’ in Uzbek speaking villages (Patnaik, 2003:59). This incidence enhanced the rift between the
two groups. Each group endeavored to dominate in their respective countries. In June 1986 several thousand Tajiks in Dushanbe attached everyone, who looked like non-Tajiks. Countless people were wounded in the incident (Kolsto, 2008:159). Both Tajiks in Uzbekistan and Uzbeks in Tajikistan got themselves registered as members of the titular in order to gain access to educational establishments or obtain a decent job (Kagarlitsky, 1990:62). However, the number of Tajiks had been sharply reduced and that of Uzbeks has risen dramatically in the same time. This was the offshoot of repression and the use of force (Haugen, 2003:155). Due to fear, many Tajiks, when speaking to a stranger Russian or Uzbek, will first identify themselves as Uzbeks, then on having the same question repeated in Tajik reverse themselves and say they are Tajik, even while apologetically pointing out the classification ‘Uzbek’ in their identity cards (Foltz, 1996:214).

**Kazakhs vs. Uzbeks**

Kazakhs constitute 3 percent population of Uzbekistan. There are more than 4 million Kazakhs living outside Kazakhstan among them 790,000 Kazakhs are living in Uzbekistan (Mendikulova, 1999:345) But, according to some estimates there are still 1.5 million ethnic Kazakhs in Uzbekistan. The tension between the two neighbors have manifested in numerous border skirmishes in recent past. Both sides tried to hush up the past incidents, though tacitly admitting that they are more rivals than friends in Central Asia. The current rift over the border problems originate largely from arbitrary decisions of the Soviet rulers. In 1956, on the decision of the Central Party Committee under Khrushchev, a large area of 10,000 sq. km. in South Kazakhstan was allotted to Uzbekistan. Three districts in the southern parts of Kazakhstan became Uzbek territory in 1963 (Yermukanov, 2001: available at cacianalyst.org). The areas of Bagys and Turkestanets remain disputed. The strange situation has been created as the local populations in these areas uses Kazakh passports, but is governed by Uzbek laws. The tolerance of the Kazakh government can partly be explained by the fact that the southern regions of Kazakhstan entirely depend on Uzbek gas. Locals use relatively cheap Uzbek workforce. Thus, the
authorities have to close their eyes to what some analysis described as creeping Uzbek expansion (Yermukanov, 2001: www.cacianalyst.org).

The Kazakh Government has encouraged Kazakh Diaspora to return home. Each year it fixes quota for the return of eligible people. Those who immigrate under the quota are provided housing, a grant of roughly $ 60 per family member, and assistance in acquiring a residence permit and Kazakh passport. However, the number arrivals far exceed the quota. For instance, in 2001, the quota allowed 600 families to return, but more than 10,000 families arrived. (www.eurasianet.org) The lack of economic progress in Uzbekistan is prompting Kazakhs to opt for emigration. About 260,000 people have moved to Kazakhstan half of them from Uzbekistan alone. The Uzbek emigration is likely to continue. According to Toghzan Imangaliyeva of the Kazakh Red Crescent Society “you will see more migrants, because the gap between the Uzbek and Kazakh economies is growing” and “year by year you can see that the Kazakh economy is getting better” (ibid.,).

With a view to settle the dispute of Bagys and Turkestanets regions and for easing ethnic tension the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed the border treaty on September 9, 2002. These settlements are located just 20 km north of Tashkent. Thus to avoid public outcry, Bagys returned to Kazakhstan, while Turkestanets remains a part of Uzbekistan. Kazakh government financed repatriation of 110 Kazakh families from Turkestanets to Kazakhstan. Currently, there are few Kazakhs left in Turkestanets, but Uzbek government is still cautious about this rebellious settlement that is now surrounded by troops. Even Uzbek citizens are required to obtain special permission from border control authorities to enter Turkestanets (Yegorov, 2004: 7).

**Karakalpaks vs. Uzbeks**

Karakalpaks comprise 2.5% population of Uzbekistan. The term karakalpak consists of two words ‘kara’ meaning black and ‘kalpak’ meaning hat. Karakalpaks live primarily in north western Uzbekistan. Karakalpaks emerged as a confederation of tribes at some time in the 15th or 16th centuries. They are genetically highly
heterogeneous. In 1500’s they became virtually independent. But their independent was short lived. For the next 200 years, they became subjects of Dzungarians, the Bukharans and the Kazakhs. Before the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Karakalpaks were a loose alliance of semi-nomadic tribes. However, in the 1920’s the Karakalpak Republic was established in Uzbekistan (www.joshuaproject.net)

The world population of Karakalpaks is less than 600,000, making them one of the smallest Turkic groups in Central Asia. About 80% live in the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, the remainder being mainly located in other parts of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia. Karakalpaks are not the dominant population of Karkalpakstan- they comprise around one third of the population almost equal to Uzbeks (www.karakalpakstan.com)

Major ethnic groups in Karakalpakstan are following:

(www.revistas.ucm.es)

The Karakalpaks are an ethnically diverse Turkic speaking people who mainly inhabit the isolated delta region of the lower Amu Darya, situated to the south of the Aral Sea. Despite its Autonomous Republic status, Karakalpakstan is effectively little more than just another province within the independent Republic of Uzbekistan. It accounts for over one third of Uzbekistan’s land area (www.karakalpak.com).
Karakalpaks are one of the poorest ethnic groups within Uzbekistan. According to Sergey Myagkov, “The living standards and income level of the Karakalpakstan holds one of the lowest place is Uzbekistan. The growth in the cost of living and in prices is ahead of the population’s income growth. The inflationary processes are leading to a drop in population’s living standard; a gap is observed between the average salary in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan. A drop in the living standards of population is a regular process of the transition period, but it become aggravated as a result of the deteriorating environment in the Area sea crisis epicenter” (www.sidym2006.org). Karakalpakstan has no factories left and no jobs as there has been no industry building at all. The economy is in disaster. It surely is the worst place in Uzbekistan, possibly the whole of Central Asia. The people in Karakalpakstan complain that Taskhent does not care for them (www.msf.org). Such, a critical situation and constant neglect of this region by Uzbek government has led to the disloyalty towards titular group and as a result Karakalpak nationalism has accentuated. The observers in Uzbekistan view Karakalpak nationalism as a legitimate threat to political stability and the issue cannot be ignored particularly in light of Uzbekistan’s key position in the region (Hank, 2000:940)
Before the Soviet collapse, the Karakalpaks were viewed by some western scholars as lacking a unified national identity, to the point that some writers questioned the validity of the group being granted an Autonomous Republic. Yet nationalist sentiments and identity clearly were stronger than most commentators believed, as evidenced by the formation of a Karakalpak national movement in the wake of Uzbekistan’s independence. The group named Khalk Mapi has been suppressed and driven underground by the Karimov regime, and little is known concerning the number of its members or its platform and goals. However, the Uzbek government moved swiftly and forcefully to crush the Khalk Mapi indicates that the risk of a centrifugal tendency in Karakalpakstan is viewed quite seriously by the Uzbek administration, and that earlier assessments of Karakalpak nationalism underestimated its strength and potential (Ibid). Despite this, it is most likely to emerge a strong desire of Karkalpakstan separatism. Indeed, an Uzbek Karakalpak rift has been widened due to several factors. According to Revel R. Hanks”, There appear to be four factors which may contribute to Karakalpak nationalism, these are (i) A separate cultural identity; (2) A history of territorial identity and autonomy; (3) Economic under development, particularly in eastern Uzbekistan (4) Severe environmental damage leading to a drastic decline in health a living standard. Each of these factors will be examined in turn (Hanks, 2000: 942)

The Party named ‘Free Karakalpakstan National Revival Party, talks about the separate Karakalpakstan. They accuse Uzbekistan of genocide against ‘Karakalpaks as an ethnicity: supporters of one group claim that the devastation, chaos, poverty and environmental disasters have gripped Karkalpakstan. They demand for a referendum on the Autonomous Republic’s independence from Tashkent. According to Solijon Abdurahmanov, a human rights activist in Karakalpakstan many young ethnic Karakalpaks are likely to support separatist sentiments. However, the locals say that “This organization called the ‘National Revival Party’ is the work of the scum of our society’, Karakalpaks do not suffer from being a part of Uzbekistan, Karakalpaks live freely everywhere in Uzbekistan, this is nothing but a movement aimed at dividing Uzbekistan (www.rferl.org) Even though, Karakalpaks at present may not actively seek a ‘separate space from that of their Uzbek
cousins, the political situation and geography of this region is likely to remain mutable and fragile for some more time (Hanks, 2000: 951.)

**Tatars vs. Uzbeks**

Tatars constitute 1.5% of the population of Uzbekistan. The terms Tatar or Tartar (meaning archer) conjure images of marauding Mongol hordes with all manner of barbaric customs wreaking violent disruption on civilized European communities. Tatar is especially synonymous with terror because it is a term that applies to the legendary people of Tartarus, who rose up from the depths of the earth. One of the most confusing of ethnonyms, Tatar is a name given to variety of both Turkic and non Turkic speaking people. After the arrival of Islam, all Tatars were called Muslim Tatars (Kuyas, 2005: 741). Today, the name is used to describe several related, but spatially disparate people. Most of the modern Tatars cannot be regarded as direct scions of the Tatar Mongols of Manchuria who overran much of Eurasia in the thirteenth century. Instead, the overwhelming majority of Tatars are distant scions of the Turkic speaking Volga Bulgars, who first adopted the name as their own in the sixteenth century (Ibid).

In Uzbekistan Tatar population is approximately 900,000. There are four sub groups of Tatars living in Uzbekista Siberian, Astrakhan, Crimean and Volga (Drobizheva, Gottlemoeller and Kelleher, Walker, 1996: 294). Among these four categories of Tatars the presence of Crimean Tatars is controversial in Uzbekistan. From 1941 to 1944, the Soviet government accused the Crimean Tatars and ten other small ethnic groups like Meshketian Turks, Volga Germans, and Koreans with the Nazis and relocated all of these ethnic groups-a total of more than five million people in Central Asia and Siberia (Liu, 1988: 75). Prior to this mass deportation of Crimean Tatars to Central Asia, they had their own autonomous structure within the Soviet Union, the Crimean ASSR: presently, this Crimean region is situated in Ukraine (Drofizheva, Gottemoeller and Kelleher, 1996, 294) According to N.F. Bugai a specialist on the deportations, a maximum of 191,088 Crimean Tatars were deported from the Crimean Autonomous Republic in May 1944. According to some sources from 1944 only 187,859 Crimean Tatars were deported from the Crimea. Of these
151,604 were sent to the Uzbek SSR and 8597 to the Udmurt and Mari Autonomous Provinces. (Williams, 2002: 334)

Some scholars speculate that this mass deportation of Crimeans by Stalin was desired in view of his geopolitical strategy rather than the real or putative behaviour of the groups he deported. According to Greta Lynn Uehling, The Crimean Tatars were put in labour camps and collective farms, where they lived under penal conditions and were required to check in with a commander on a monthly basis. Around 46 percent of the population perished because of hunger, disease and exposure in the first years of exile alone (Uehlig, 2001: 395).

By 1948 between 40,000 and 44,000 Crimean Tatars died in Uzbekistan. So, in socio-political terms the Crimean Tatar Nation had been all but destroyed by the deportation and was in danger of complete social disintegration as a distinct ethane. Their national literature had been destroyed they had no prerogatives based on nationality and they, no longer recognized as a distinct people. No titular group of Central Asia helps them to maintain their separate identity (Williams, 2002:341-42). It was only is 1989, during the era of glasnost, that a decree was published in the Soviet paper Izvestiia, allowing the Crimean Tatars to return to their homeland. Since that date, roughly 250,000 of the former Soviet Union’s 500,000 Crimean Tatars have returned to a homeland (ibid, 345). The fear of ethnic cleansing after the massacre of the Meshketian Turks in the Ferghana Valley in 1989 sparked many Crimean Tatars to want to leave. They witnessed grave violence at a time when the Uzbeks were admonishing the Tatars to ‘go home; and had a rhyme to convey this message to each of the non titular groups citing Leninist nationality principles that Uzbekistan was for the Uzbeks. Moreover, the ethnic tensions coupled with policies of Uzbekification served as reminders to the Tatars that they would always be ‘guests’ not ‘hosts’ (Uehling, 2001:396).

The natural environment of Uzbekistan is also a biggest challenge to Crimean Tatars in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan’s blistering dry summers, droughts and desert oasis conditions (except in the high Ferghana Valley) differed markedly from that of the coastal Black sea home of the Crimean Tatars. The majority of Crimean Tatars had,
previously lived in the Valley and foot hills of the peninsula’s Yaila mountains or on the Crimean coast and were unaccustomed to the conditions, they found in the arid lands of Uzbekistan, their lack of immunity to local diseases, such as malaria, dysentery, dystrophy, yellow fever and other intestinal illnesses, which were not found in the Crimean peninsula where water was pure. Women and children died in greatest numbers (Williams, 2002:338). Advancement in academics and employment of Crimean Tatars is limited by Uzbek majority. Anti Tatar discrimination is pervasive. Access to authority, whether on the local Mahala, or state level, by Crimean Tatars is limited. In addition, the Uzbek government has not supported the development of institutions of Crimean culture (www.unhcr.org). From 1989 to 1994, a quarter of a million Crimean Tatars migrated from Central Asia, predominantly from Uzbekistan to the Crimean Peninsula.

Other Ethnic Groups

There are many smaller ethnic groups like Kyrgyz, Afghans, Koreans, Armenians, Greeks, Bashkirs, Chagtais, Uyghurs, Turks, Lyulli, Dungan, Kharduri and Gagauz people who comprise 2.5% of the population of Uzbekistan (www.wikipedia.org) Though, their group numbers are small but still they strive to survive their distinct identity and culture in Uzbekistan, where the titular group is busy in legitimizing its rule and most of the time override the group rights of other ethnic groups.

After 1922, all Koreans were invited by USSR to take citizenship of the Union with Soviet values on the lines of Lenin’s script. From 1923 and throughout the early Stalin years, the Koreans engaged in some political participation, many became members of the communist party. In September 1931 when Japan invaded Manchuria, virtually all Koreans in the Union allied with the Soviet regime. This was also shown by non-opposition to Stalin’s decree of 1932 ordering all Koreans to become citizens of the Soviet Union. There appeared a golden era in relationship between Moscow and the Korean minority. This, however, did not survive long. With the agreement between Japan and the Soviet Union in early 1935, Moscow complied with Japanese requests to curb all Korean activities in the province. This coincided with the
nationwide purges. Koreans were accused of espionage and other charges and that they had been infiltrated by Japanese agents. Stalin ordered the mass deportation of Koreans to Central Asia to join a large number of Koreans who had voluntarily migrated there in the early years of Soviet regime. They suffered enormously during the deportation era and a large number of Koreans died because of cold, disease or huger. By 1937 exiled Koreans arrived in Uzbekistan where they were placed in certain rural areas, with their movement being restricted. During 1937-39 about 75,000 Koreans arrived in the Republic. In 1937 during the purges, 70 percent of Korean intellectuals were allegedly removed and killed (Yalcin, 1999:5-6). In 1979 the population of Koreans in Uzbekistan was 163,100, while, in 1989 all Union population census recorded 183,000 Koreans in Uzbekistan. By 1997, there were 200,000 Koreans in Uzbekistan of which 50,000 lived in Tashkent, the remainder residing in other centers such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khorezm and Karakalpakstan (ibid. 3).

According to the UNHCR Report the ethnic Koreans have the reputation of being hard workers and they are generally a better off financially than the average Uzbek. Although many ethnic are uncomfortable with the language policy of Uzbekistan, but there is not much reports of ill-treatment against ethnic Koreans. However, the all non-Uzbek always feel threatened, but there are 28 Koreans cultural centers in Uzbekistan and Uzbek President Islam Karimov in his statement once said that “ethnic Koreans have the possibility to develop their culture here.” (www.unhcr.org) Further, on August 22, 2007 Korean Diaspora marked 70 years of its stay in Uzbekistan. Representatives of national culture centers, state, non-governmental and international organizations participated in that solemn event, held in Tashkent. Among the guests of the ceremony there were the state advisor to President B. Abdukhalimov, deputing Prime Minister Rustam Azimov and Chairperson of the women’s committee S. Inamova and Ambassador of South Korea to Uzbekistan Kyong Je-Mia (www.japan.mfa.uz) In short, Koreans have substituted their short lived Soviet citizenship with the new Uzbek citizenship. Though, the old generation wants to go back to South Korea, but the younger generation considers Uzbekistan their mother land (Yalcin, 1999:7).
All the ethnic minorities do not have the similar fate as Koreans. Of the 600,000 ethnic Germans living in Uzbekistan in 1990, now almost 95 percent of them have left the country. There were 260,000 Jews living in Uzbekistan and now 80 percent of them have left the country (www.everyculture.com). According to UNHCR there are 8,000-8800 Afghan people in Uzbekistan, most of them live in the capital city of Tashkent. In addition, a small group of Afghans, approximately 250 located in Termez, in Surkhendarya province in southern Uzbekistan. There are almost all major Afghan ethnic groups like Pashtuns, Hazara and Tajiks who consider themselves as one Afghan nation in Uzbekistan. They speak their own language, often they married to same ethnicity (Khan, 2005 143-144). The majority of Afghans reported running small businesses or being occasionally employed. In most cases, Afghans are employed by other Afghans and very few are employed by Uzbek companies. In addition, no Afghans are currently employed by Uzbek government organizations, institutes, or enterprises, though in the past some of them worked within the public sector, such as at the Uzbek Radio foreign services or hospitals (ibid. 145).

Uyghurs are living in the country from centuries. There is no official statistics regarding their exact number in the Uzbekistan. However, the available Soviet statistics indicate that there were 37000 Uyghurs in Uzbekistan before 1991 but many Uyghurs activists say that the real number is much higher. (Uyghurs Human Rights Project, 2004:www.uhrp.org). They claim that approximately 200,000 Uyghurs are living in Uzbekistan. However, according to a Uyghur professor of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, there are approximately 500,000 Uyghurs currently living in Uzbekistan (Tarimi, 2004:www.atimes.com). While the situation with regard to Uyghurs in other Central Asia states is more liberal, where they can establish political, human rights organizations and different foundations, but ethnic Uyghurs of Uzbekistan are deprived of these rights. The issue of the Uyghur Diaspora is very sensitive due to close relations between Tashkent and Beijing. The emergence of five newly independent states in Central Asia following the Soviet Union stimulated a separatist movement among the Uyghur minority in neighboring China’s Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region. (Uyghurs Human Rights Project, 2004:www.uhrp.org). On June 15, 2004 Chinese President Hu Juntio visited Uzbekistan to take part in the
summit meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. During his visit, Hu Jintao and his Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov signed a Joint statement to end the terrorism, separatism and for establishing regional security and stability (Tarimi, 2004:www.atimes.com).

Following the intensification of economic and political relations between Uzbekistan and China and the entry of Uzbekistan into the SCO the Uyghur problem increasingly has been spot-lighted and scrutinized. The Uzbek government has prohibited pro-Uyghur and anti Chinese messages in the state and any other media outlets. According to some Uyghurs in Uzbekistan, the Uyghur press in Uzbekistan has been severely restricted. The Uyghur media refuses to publish papers which mention the political problems of the Uyghur. Furthermore, the importing of books and newspapers and any other publications concerning Xinjiang is prohibited. There is no publishing house is Uzbekistan that publishes literature in the Uyghur language (ibid.).

The relations between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks have always remained a center of attraction, ever since boundaries delimitation policy of Turkestan of Soviet regime. The ill demarcation of boundaries by Stalin made these two ethnic groups, arch rivals. Both titular groups frequently stood accused for pressuring minorities to change their nationality. There are around 150,000 ethnic Kyrgyz in Uzbekistan. There have been charges and counter charges about harassment of co-ethnics in each other’s territories. While the Uzbeks have been complaining about denial of official state guarantees to their language, and culture, ethnic Kyrgyz in Uzbekistan complain that they were always discouraged to mention Kyrgyz ethnic identity in their internal passport and lack of permission for Kyrgyz language schools (Patnaik, 2003:125). This spiraling tension between both groups led to the migration of ethnic Kyrgyz from Uzbekistan. Situation is worse in disputed area of Andizan district of Uzbekistan and Osh region of Kyrgyzstan. In 1906, the number of ethnic Kyrgyz was 107,000 in the Andizan district and the number decreased to 72,900 in 1989 (ibid.).

The migration process gained momentum after 1990 following inter-ethnic riots in Osh and Uzgen region of Kyrgyzstan in 1990. The Osh ethnic conflict of
summer 1990 was one of the longest and most violent on the territory of former
Soviet Union. Osh oblast is characterized by a multi ethnic population of 1.3 million
with ethnic Kyrgyz comprising 60%, Uzbeks 26% and Russians 6% with some other
smaller minority groups like Tajiks, Tatars, Ukrainians, Volga, Germans and Turks.
The patterns of settlement of the main groups reflect differences in the traditional
economic orientations of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks existing since earlier times: the former
dwell mostly in the mountains and foothills, the latter in the plains. The concentration
of Uzbeks in the cities is higher than that of Kyrgyz; Uzbeks numbering 46%, Kyrgyz
24% in the administrative centre of Osh. In addition, Uzbeks are a majority in the
regional center, the city of Uzgen: among 34,167 citizens 27,545 are Uzbeks 42.44
Kyrgyz and 1440 Russians and Ukrainians (Tishkov, 1995; 134.). Under conditions of
low living standards socio economic crisis and political destabilization, inter ethnic
tension erupted due to inter alia inter group competition over resources, a struggle to
gain control over power structures, social differentiation along ‘city village’ lives,
unemployment and lack of housing (ibid.).

On 4 June 1989 ethnic conflict erupted between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in
the southern city of Osh in Kyrgyzstan. More than 200 people died and nearly 5000
crimes were committed including murder, rape, assault and pillage. According to
Kolsto, “The local Uzbeks and Kyrgyz came to blows as a result of the tensions
engendered in part by the Uzbeks perception that they were under represented in the
local government and the Kyrgyz view was that the Uzbek took all the best jobs in the
retail and consumer sector” (Kolsto, 2008:159-160). Thus, after this event 18,900
people migrated to Uzbekistan from Kyrgyz Republic between 1991-94. Since then,
the Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations have soured in last two decades. Recently, the worse
incident of ethnic violence occurred between Kyrgyzs and Uzbeks in southern cities
of Osh and Jalalabad, the violence started on 10 June 2010 and escalated later.
According to witnesses crowds of Kyrgyzs were roaming while carrying automatic
rifles, iron bars and machetes, they set the houses of Uzbeks on fire and shot the
fleeing residents. They were shouting slogan of Kyrgyzstan for Kyrgyz (The Tribune,
2010:15). This incident caused a massive humanitarian crisis in Uzbekistan by killing
more than 180 people (The Hindus, 2010:10). Disputes over land and water resources

55
were common causes of violent conflict after 1990 when the Kyrgyz demanded land, to settle their families, which was dominated by Uzbeks. Kyrgyz political parties demanded the use of their language which after independence became the official language. This demand provoked Uzbeks to demand an autonomous Uzbek homeland in the Osh region. But this demand was rejected by Kyrgyz government, which provoked ethnic Uzbeks of Kyrgyzstan to seek unification with the neighboring Uzbekistan. It further heightened ethnic tensions (The Tribune: 2010:8).

The immediate cause of violence was the sharp increase in the prices of energy and economic hardship. Though, according to the head of the interim government of Kyrgyzstan, Roza Otunbayeva the President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was responsible for orchestrating the riots. The anti-Uzbek riots had taken place in the southern region, where Bakiyev retained a large number of supporters (The Hindu, 2010:10). In April Kyrgyz president Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted and former foreign minister Roza Otunbayeva formed an interim government in the country on April 8, 2010 (The Tribune, 2010:16). Miss Otunbayeva told the Russian daily Kommersant that up to 2,000 people might have died in this ethnic violence (The Hindu, 2010:12). According to the UN Report approximately 275,000 people have fled from the country due to bloody clashes of Kyrgyzstan (The Hindu, 2010:18). Though, according to one estimate more than 150,000 Uzbeks have lost their homes (The Tribune, 2010:8). According to the UN nearly 100,000 refugees had crossed on the border side of Uzbekistan (Tribune 2010:17). In return, the Uzbek authorities made arrangements for tens of thousands of Kyrgyzstan’s ethnic Uzbeks in camps in Pahtaabad, which is 40 km away from Andijan (www.uznews.net). The Uzbek government provided them the necessary assistance to the tune of more than 1.5 billion Soums (about 1 million US dollars). UN appreciated the quick and decisive actions taken by the Uzbek government to assist the people crossing the border of the country and securing their humanitarian needs (www.jahonnews.uz). In the camps, almost, all wounded said that as soon as their wounds heal, they will return to Kyrgyzstan and would take revenge. (www.uznews.net).
These ethnic riots have definitely sabotaged the relations between Kyrgyzs and Uzbeks. In future, there is likely of more aggravated ethnic clashes in this region. Even, it can create a more problematic situation for Kyrgyz living in Uzbekistan as Uzbeks are determined to take avenge of their massacre in Osh.

Emergence of Uzbek Nationalism

According to Eric Hobsbawn, “Nationalism comes before nations”. But, Uzbekistan by contrast, had almost no nationalist movement prior to independence in 1991. Unlike most decolonized nations of the twentieth century Uzbekistan was granted independence at Moscow’s command, not through any nationalism movement. As a result, nationalism in Uzbekistan and the other former Soviet Republics of Central Asia presents an interesting contrast to the usual pattern of nationalism in decolonized nations, in two ways. First, nationalism is being developed by the state, not against the state. Rather than emerging among elites in civil society and directed against the colonial regime, nationalism in Uzbekistan is emerging within a state structure created by the colonial regime, and indeed is directed by the very personnel who were appointed by and served in the colonial regime. However, this has not prevented the state from engaging in nationalist themes analogous to those in decolonized nations with a greater history of anti-colonial nationalist mobilization. Uzbekistan actively suppresses the memory of the small nationalist movements that existed in the early 1920s and the late 1980s prior to the creation of Uzbekistan in 1924 and its independence in 1991. In this regard nationalism in Uzbekistan more resembles the ‘official nationalism than the anti-colonial nationalisms of other newly independent relations (Kurzman, 1999:78-79).

The ruling elite expressed a strong desire for nation building in order to gain the viability and legitimacy for their political regime and borders inherited from the Soviet Union. To achieve, such viability and legitimacy for as a political unit, along with the creation of a balance among conflicting ethnic interests, the construction of a common civic culture out of diverse signs, symbols, histories and institutions of different ethnic communities was also required (Kumar, 2005:333). Thus, in Uzbekistan getting to know one-self began in the last days of the Soviet Union
through carefully worded writings that departed from the usual practice of writing historical pieces in the form of fiction. The current rediscovery of the past is represented as a major change from the historio-graphical practices of the Soviet past when the possibility of studying the past independently was curtailed (Sengupta, 2003:225).

According to Uzbek President Islam Karimov the Soviets deliberatedly prevented people from developing their own national self consciousness. They made hostile accusations against ‘nationalism’ and repressed people with progressive views, as well as those loyal to their Republics and regions. The ‘center’ was pursuing forced internationalization, quashing national particularities, trying to speed up the creation of a multi-national Soviet society and acting on its own imperial interests. This artificial process of rapprochement of people and nations inevitably aroused the covert and overt resistance that Soviet ideologues derisively labeled ‘nationalism’ (Karimov, 1998:43).

However, in this national project of writing of history, Uzbeks presented themselves as an ancient civilization at par with the Silk Route trading partners like China, Persia, India and Greece. The written texts and monuments of material culture of the ancient Khorezm and those located in the lands between Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers were said to be produced by the Uzbek genius despite the fact that Uzbeks started conquering these territories only in the end of the fifteenth century. No political entity with the current borders of Uzbekistan existed before the Soviet period. But the new history, implicitly, projected the present internal and external borders historical and natural and thereby giving them a timeless legitimacy (Kumar, 2005:335).

Karimov has resorted to the project of rewriting history as a means to strengthen his position within the country. Karimov showed keenness in rehabilitating historical figures and men of letters of whom Karimov thought of having contributed significantly to enriching the history and culture of Uzbekistan. Uzbek government also made efforts to popularize the writings and teachings of various Jadidists figures in school text books. President Karimov has since
independence invoked the name of several Jadidist figures like Abdullah Qadiris and Abdulruf Firat. Similarly a department of national awakening, Milli Uyganish, has been established by the Uzbek government to study these historical figures and their writings that have made significant contribution to the development of national cultural heritage. Another historical figure who has got considerable attention in Karimov’s scheme of rehabilitation is Amir Timur. Karimov while dedicating a monument of Timur in September 1993 explained:

For many years the name of Amir Timur was degraded and blacked out from the pages of our history in order to remove self awareness from the…Uzbek people, in order to destroy the people’s sense of national pride and increase its dependence and subordination. But the Uzbeks have not forgotten their ancestors and heroes, there is no doubt that this image of our ancestors erected in the very heart of our beautiful capital and beloved ancient Tashkent will forever evoke a feeling of immense pride in our people (Mohapatra, 2006:254-55).

The naming of various public places in the name of national heroes is also central to Karimov’s scheme of rewriting history. For instance, in Tashkent alone over 500 streets names were changed and the Soviet names largely disappeared. In Ferghana town of Namangan in the first ten weeks of 1993 over 50 streets name were changed (ibid.). The extent of rewriting of history is evident from the fact that in an address to the Oliy Majlis in August 2000 President Karimov urged that the new history written in the post Soviet phase has three main objectives and ideological directions. First, total disapproval of more than 70 or more years of history: second, pointing out that independence, which Uzbekistan attained after 1991, took place due to lengthy struggle of Uzbek people and not due to the disbanding of the Soviet Union: thirdly, a search for new heroes from the history which turned into symbols of an independent Uzbekistan (Mohapatra, 2006:256). Even, the role of the Basmachi movement is being reexamined. Uzbek scholars now refer to them as the Kurbashis and Mujahids. They are now designated as having been leaders of national movements; though they followed different political aspirations and had the aspiration
to liberate their land from the Kyzylaskers and restore the Emir to power. Their sacrifice has today been vindicated in the establishment of independent statehood. (Sengupta, 2003:230).

Uzbek government is using multi-pronged agenda for strengthening national agenda. The government is using music to popularize the sense of nationalism in Uzbek people, especially among the youth of Uzbekistan. The new youth TV channel was created and the rapid proliferation of pop songs about Uzbekistan has become one of the staples of Uzbek TV. Uzbek popular music is probably more developed than anywhere in Central Asia. Artists like Larisa Moskalyera, Setora, Shouhzad, Ruslan Sharipov and Yulduz Usamanova have managed well to synthesize traditional Uzbek melodies and instruments with the rhythms and electronic wizardry of western pop music to produce type of world beat music that is quite popular with number of songs celebrating the glories of the motherland. The ‘Vatan’ songs that have resulted from the patriotic fervor of writers of Uzbekistan such as: ‘I have a country’, ‘My heaven’, ‘Fatherland’, ‘My Uzbekistan’ and I won’t give you up to anyone Uzbekistan’. Interestingly, one video song showed the Tashkent spice girls in tight khaki, looking soldiers, which is indicative of encouraging girls to the national passion (Martin, 2001:www.asiaquarterly.com) Moreover, political slogans are appearing at train stations, bus stations, universities, colleges and all types of government buildings. The ubiquitous presence ensures that the citizens of Uzbekistan are being constantly bombarded with the message that love of the motherland is of utmost importance. Large number of slogans like “Blossom and flourish,” Free Uzbekistan, ‘May your fortune be bright Motherland’, ‘you must live with the burning sense that this is your country’ have led to slogans attributed to Karimov (ibid..).

Language of Nationalism

The language is the powerful symbol of unity and identity. The Uzbek government has also used the Uzbek language as a powerful tool in the Uzbek nation building project. Russians encouraged the Russian language during Soviet period to unify the people of Soviet Union, which resulted in the neglect of other languages in
the then Soviet Union. Similarly, the languages of Turkestan were also affected. Therefore, the linguistic nationalism emerged in this region. For the Uzbeks in pre-Russians times, language was not accorded any particular significance, but was merely a method of communication. Prior to this, bilingualism or even multilingualism had been the rule. Gradually, language came to be understood as a marker of identity (Segar, 2003:94). According to the existing linguistic classification, the Uzbek language belongs to the Karluk group of Turkic languages. This formation finished in the 15th century and is connected with the name of the great poet, the founder of classical Uzbek literature Alishar Navoi. Before the revolt of 1917, the Uzbek language was broadly used in two state formations on the territory of the contemporary Republic of Uzbekistan, in the Bukharan emirate and in the Khiva Khanate. It was also widespread in the Turkestan general governship that had been included into the gigantic Russian empire in 1865(Mesamed, 1997:145). In 1924 the Uzbek SSR was constituted. This delimitation along ethno linguistic lines is being upheld on the fact that the language between the two great rivers was the old Uzbek language, and it was on the basis of this unity of language that the delimitation affirmed Uzbekistan (Sengupta, 2003:229). It was in 1988 that students at Tashkent University urged CPSU leaders to declare Uzbek as official language of the Republic. (Rather, 2004:124). Thus, in 1988, one year before the adoption of the law on state languages 2379 books and brochures were published in Uzbekistan, they were predominantly in the Uzbek language (Mesamed, 1997:146). In October 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek SSR passed the law on the state language. It had been preceded by a lively discussion on the law projects. Originally the law project on the languages of the Uzbek SSR had been planned to proclaim two languages as state languages-Russians as the language of international communication in the whole USSR and Uzbek as the state language on the level of the Republic (ibid.149).

The growing discontent and strong forces of resentment against the Russian language domination inspired a kind of reform in the sphere of regional language. Such measures could be possible in the wake of glasnost and perestroika. Glasnost led to the opening up of discussion on languages in different fora which brought out different views on the status of regional languages and the readjustment between
Russian and local languages of different communities (Bhattacharya, 2008:151-152). So being aware of the power of language and after having the experience of linguistic upheavals during Soviets, the Uzbek government projected an agenda of linguistic nationalism, right after the independence. Thus, since, independence, the government communications were switched from Russian to Uzbek, as also street signs and other official notices. The bylaws of the Uzbekistan Advocates Association, the country’s first independent bar association, founded in 1997, were written in Uzbek. It indicated the break with the Russian language and the government of Uzbekistan abandoned the Cyrillic alphabet for the Latin (Kurzman, 1999:26).

Article 4 of the Uzbek constitution clearly declares that the state language of the Republic of Uzbekistan will be the Uzbek (Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan: 1992). However, this language policy confronted several problems. With the installment of local language as the national language in place of Russian, it was to function as language for all fields. The Uzbek language was to take care of every sphere including science and technology virtually replacing Russian language. Another problem was to substitute terminology. This needed a lot of debate over usage of approximate Turkish or Arab terms. Another problem is with regard to translation of government documents into local language. Here the problem was about the format, whether to the Soviet or Turkish (Rather, 2004:126).

Therefore, many scholars responded in favour of bilingualism. They gave priority to their mother tongue, but preferred Russian as the language for wider communication. Kyrgyz scholar Chingis Aitmatov in his article on the issue of bilingualism and autonomy of national languages stressed the need for compulsive acquisition of the respective territorial languages for the nationals of that territory. But at the same time, he urged the people to accept that Russian was already the de facto official language of the Soviet Union and whether it was given the Constitution designation or not, hardly affected its position in reality (Bhattacharya, 2008:157).
Religious Nationalism

Religion always plays a vital role in unifying the people belonging to any community, race, tribe or region. It has a close relationship with nationalism and ethnicity. As, professor Anthony D. Smith has observed that religion is defining feature of a nation and when the feeling of nationalism penetrates into the masses, it becomes more and more religious in tenor (Kaur, 2008:42). Therefore, Islam was a good choice for the unification and revivalism of diverse segregated and multi-ethnic society of Uzbekistan. Islam was evolving and flourishing in the region with nice pace, but when Soviets entered the region, the down fall of Islam started. Actually, the Soviet policy towards Muslims was not static, but changed from one phase to another. When Soviets needed Muslims support they granted concessions to Muslims, otherwise, the anti-religious propaganda and repression against the Islam continued (Rather, 1999:238).

Soviets particularly targeted Islam because they considered Islam as reactionary and backward. They depicted Islam as a Mullah-led force supported by British imperialists that was trying to undermine the revolution and prevent progress and education (Rashid, 2002:36). The Soviets aim was to wean the Central Asia from reactionary Islam and convent them into urbanized proletarians. The February 1918 Basmachi revolt indicated that Islam is a mobilizing force and has capability to unify the people of Central Asia against Soviet rule, but that could not survive for more than a decade and got defeated by Soviets in 1929 (Johnson, 2007:63). The Soviets reduced Islam to the legal status of a cult. The policy of ‘Official Islam’ was developed by Soviet government in which Mullahs were trained in both Islamic and Soviet studies. But parallel, the ‘Unofficial Islam’ was working clandestinely in the region (Sankrityayan, 1948:39).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was an Islamic resurgence in Uzbekistan and political Islam began to assume an important factor in Uzbek social and cultural life (Dwivedi, 2005:125). The, country came to acquire a religious identity, precisely that religious identity which had been so battered by alien power. Since, 1991, the process of re-Islamization has grown by leaps and bounds. The
magnitude of changes included the authorization of mosques, the opening of various religious establishments, the development of religious literature, the implementation of public call to prayer (Azan) in Arabic, the wearing of beards for men and hijab for women, the appearance of the traditional veil (Parandaya) and the revival of Islamic co-operative engagements etc. (Rather, 2004:133). Ahmed Rashid makes the point that Islam has become a convenient symbol which allows local nationalists to distance themselves from Slavic culture and aspirations (Khan, 2005:206). However, there is one another version of Islamic resurgence in Uzbekistan that seeks to establish an Islamic Republic based on Islamic law, or Sharia. Such elements called fundamentalists are led by the previously non-registered Mullahs and the Islamic Renaissance Party (ibid. 207). However, the major concern of the Uzbek government is to promote moderate Islam and to banish ‘bad Islam’ which represents a threat to stability. The dividing line has been drawn between the ‘acceptable’ and unacceptable Islam. President Karimov has taken the lead in defining Islam. Those who grow beard are seen with suspicion (ibid. 211).

Thus, in practice, the ruling elite in Uzbekistan has unofficially, pursed an ethnically biased and assimilatory agenda to complete the project of nation building in the country. First and foremost, the ruling elite have placed the Uzbek community at the center of their nation state project. Measures have been taken to promote the Uzbek traditions, culture, signs, symbols, festivals and other ceremonies with a view to make them an integral part of the state culture. (Kumar, 2005:334). The ruling elite have appeased the Uzbek people whole heartedly by nationalizing their socio-cultural traditions and promoting ethnic language and institutions at the national level. In this process, ethnic minorities living in Uzbekistan have been ignored. In fact, national policy has been to liquidate non-Uzbek cultural identities and fusing them with the dominant Uzbek community. The government has followed various assimilatory and suppressive measures to dissolve the non-Uzbek ethnic minorities and also to degenerate their ethnic symbols and institutions. Many non-Uzbek literary and scientific figures such as Beruni, Navoi and Ibn Sina have been proclaimed as exclusively Uzbek, brazenly ignoring the fact of their Tajik ethnic identity (Kumar, 2005:33637). However, according to Karimov certain differences in the interests of
diverse ethnic groups and nationalities are inevitable in inter-ethnic relations during the consolidation period of the newly independent states. But these divergent interests can be compatible with the needs and interests of democratic civil society (Karimov, 1998:44).

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted on December 8, 1992. Uzbek Constitution has almost all basic principles of any democratic and welfare state and in the preamble of the Uzbek Constitution the Uzbek statehood affirms their commitment to the ideals of democracy and social justice. According to Article 8 of the Uzbek Constitution “All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, regardless of their nationality, constitute the people of Uzbekistan” and Article 7 states that “The people are the sole source of state power. State power in the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be exercised in the interests of the people and solely by the bodies empowered by the laws passed on its basis. Any seizure of powers belonging to state authority, suspension or termination of activity of the bodies of state authority contrary to the procedure prescribed by the Constitution, as well as the formation of any new or parallel bodies of state authority shall be regarded as unconstitutional and punishable by law”. Similarly, Article 18 states “All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have equal rights and freedoms, and shall be equal before law, without distinction by sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, convictions, individual and social status” (Constitution of Republic of Uzbekistan: 1992).

Such provisions of the Uzbek Constitution give elevated place to the common people of Uzbekistan by declaring them a sole source of power and also ensure the principle of equality. But, the ethnically biased and discriminatory policies of ruling elite defeat the above provisions of Articles 7, 8 and 18. It led to a sense of insecurity, marginalization and powerlessness among the ethnic minorities. As a result negative perceptions among the members of these communities have emerged and have left them with the option of either assimilating into the majority culture or affirming their identities more stridently. Several ethnic minorities, which are indigenous to the Central Asian region, for instance, Tajiks in Bukhara and Samarkand have made a
demand for autonomous areas. Similarly the voices of secessionism in the Karakalpak region of Uzbekistan against the excessive centralization have also emerged (Kumar, 2005:339).

An article 12 ascribes “In the Republic of Uzbekistan, public life shall develop on the basis of a diversity of political institutions, ideologies and opinions. No ideology shall be granted the status of state ideology” and Article 14 says, “The state shall function on the principles of social justice and legality in the interests of the people and society” (Constitutions of republic of Uzbekistan: 1992). On the other hand for the procurement of the provisions of Article 4 of the Uzbek Constitution, the ruling elite violates above provisions as well as many other provisions of the Uzbek Constitution. Article 4 says “The state language of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be Uzbek. The Republic of Uzbekistan shall be Uzbek. The republic of Uzbekistan shall ensure a respectful attitude toward the languages, customs and traditions of all nationalities and ethnic groups living on its territory and create the conditions necessary for their development” (ibid.,). The language policy of Uzbek government almost ruined the other languages and literature existing in the country, most obvious target was Russian language.

The Russian language practically disappeared from walls and posters in the country. The new Bank notes are all bearing only Uzbek language, moreover, the Uzbek visas are in Uzbek language and nowadays the most usable second language in the country is English, which is also imprinting in Uzbek passports in spite of Russian. The Russian speakers are also facing problems and discrimination in day to day lives. For example, the Russian professor of University of Tashkent was replaced by ethnic Uzbek in 1993 (Roy, 2000:169).

Further, numerous educational institutions, teaching in minority languages such as of Tajiks and Uyghurs, have been closed down and the members of these communities have been deprived of reading books in their native languages. In July 1992, the Samarkhand Tajik University was closed. As per the instructions issued in 2000 by the education Ministry of Uzbekistan, books, literature and school text books
in Tajik language were destroyed in the towns of Samarkand and Bukhara, predominantly populated by Tajiks. (Kumar, 2005:337).

In 1999, the faculty of Uyghurology was closed without any explanation. The Dean of faculty was beaten and orchestrated by the Uzbek authorities on his criticism of authorities in their stance on the Xinjiang issue. The manuscripts institute of Uzbekistan of the oriental studies institute housing rare Uyghur manuscripts was also shut down in 2000. The department of Uyghur writers of Uzbekistan at Uzbekistan writers union was also closed down and its direction was also an acting chairman of Uyghur cultural center of Uzbekistan was killed during the interrogations by Uzbekistan state authorities in March 2001.

Though, there are provisions for the Uzbek citizens to protest against the government in infringement of their rights under Articles 34 and 33. Article 34 states, “All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have right to form trade unions, political parties, any other public associations, and to participate in mass movements. No one may infringe on the rights, freedoms and dignity of the individuals constituting the minority opposition in political parties, public associations and mass movements, as well as in representative bodies of authority” and Article 33 says, “All citizens shall have the right to engage in public life by holding rallies, meetings and demonstrations in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The bodies of authority shall have the right to suspend or ban such undertakings activities exclusively on the grounds of security. (Constitution of Republic of Uzbekistan: 1992) But, all these provisions proved facade. No one can forget the bloody massacre of Andijan district in May 2005. Nobody could know truth about what happened in Andijan in March 2005. Media coverage of the West mentioned hundreds of casualties as result to government repression of a peaceful demonstration (Spechler, 2007:194). According to one report thousands of people come out to the streets against the iron-fisted rule of Karimov. Mostly, they were younger West ward looking who were very ambitious to stop the menace of poverty, sham democracy and corruption. But Karimov troops mercilessly fired on the crowd of protestors. In this
clash between soldiers and protestors 745 people were reportedly killed (Times of India, 2005) and 2000 wounded (Times of India, 2005:16 May).

However, according to British researcher Dr. Shirin Akiner, the death toll in Andijan episode was under 200, though the figure reported in the media was 500-1500. Akiner reported that the economic situation in Andijan was probably better than elsewhere in Uzbekistan, but people complained about corrupt local officials, who have to bribe for many services (Spechler, 2007:195). The Uzbek government contended that the uprising began when armed crowd stormed the local prison and freed some 2000 prisons including 23 popular local businessmen accused of religious extremism. After Andijan, large number of people allegedly involved in the organization of the prison break in Andijan were rounded up and put on trial, secretly. The government also turned on outspoken campaigners for social reform, accusing them of treason (Jones and Hill, 2006:117).

Article 67 ascribes, “The mass media shall be free and act in accordance with law, and it shall bear responsibility for trustworthiness of information in the prescribed manner. Censorship is impermissible (Constitution of Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992) In spite of having such a strong provision for media’s freedom; media is strictly controlled by Karimov. Rather media is directed to appreciate the government and its policies. Moreover, the Uzbek press and media depict Karimov as a real prophet of Uzbek nationalism and use phrases like ‘our prophet’ (meaning Mohammed) for Karimov, which indicates the impression and influence of Karimov on Uzbek media (Martin, 2001: www.asiaquartly.com) Even, religion is not free from the state control. Albeit, Article 31 states “Freedom of conscience is guaranteed to all, everyone shall have the right to profess or not to profess any religion. Any compulsory imposition of religion shall be impermissible and Article 61 states “Religious organizations and associations shall be separated from the state and equal before the law. The state shall not interfere with the activity of religious associations” (Constitution of Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992) But, the policy of the Uzbek government is to promote only one religion i.e., Islam. Though mainly Islam is prevalent in Uzbekistan, but there are many other religions like Christianity, Jews,
Buddhists and Bahais. Initially Islam was welcomed by Uzbek authorities as a useful means to pursue the goal of nation building. Islam’s role was to fill the ideological vacuum after Marxism-Leninism had vanished. Its positive role as a guardian of spiritual wealth of the whole nation was embodied in the concept of ‘national heritage’ that had hitherto been forbidden. Moreover, Karimov swore his presidential oath on both, the country’s Constitution and the Koran, and made reference to Islam (Botoiarova, 2005:125).

But later on due to fear of Islamic extremism Karimov imbibed the policy of suppressing the Islamic growth that was taken as hostile to state. The government has led a campaign against independent Islamic and Islamist groups, while providing support for loyal Islamic structures. The government strictly controls the Muslims board, which represents the official Muslim hierarchy, and has disbanded all other Islamic groups. A number of independent Islamist movements have emerged, advocating the introduction of an Islamic state including the imposition of sharia. The groups were crushed as a part of campaign against independent Islamic groups, particularly those with political aims since 1992. Many members of such groups fled the country and formed radical groups in exile such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (Lewis, 2003:192).

Article 71 of the Uzbek Constitution states that “The Republic of Karakalpakstan shall have its own Constitution” and Article 73 states ‘The territory and boundaries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan may not be altered without the consent of Karakalpakstan. The Republic of Karakalpakstan shall be independent in determining the administrative and territorial structure’. But, on the other hand Article 72 says ‘The law of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be binding in the territory of the Republic of Karakalpakstan’ (Constitution of Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992) Thus, the provision of Article 72 itself defeat the provisions of Articles 71 and 73. There is huge difference of development and prosperity among Karakalpakstan and other regions of Uzbekistan. According to World Bank Report, there is considerable disparity in these rural and urban areas of the country. The households in Karakalpakstan have significantly lower standards of living than those in Syrdarya and Bukhara oblasts and
in Tashkent city. Moreover, health outcomes are also often worse in Karakalpakstan. There has been a sharp rise in tuberculous incidences, in this region (The World Bank Report, 2002:10).

CONCLUSION

Thus, the Republic of Uzbekistan is going through a crucial phase. There are several factors responsible for such a critical stage. Foremost is the struggle of identity formation among distinct ethnic groups and their persistence for their unique societies and cultures. The dilemma of Islamic resurgence is another major problem in the country, which seems difficult to resolve. The Islam has been used to attain several interests by the different groups, even, the political elite of the country has also taken the help of Islam for agenda of Uzbek nationalism. But, such a politicization of religion produced disastrous results. Foreign powers are also taking undue advantage of this delicate situation; with their assistance, numbers of Muslim fundamentalist groups have been emerged in the country, which are sabotaging the whole region. Further, the ethnic and nationalistic approach of the Uzbek government only favors the ethnic Uzbeks which enhanced the disparity and cleavages among different ethnic groups and virtually lead to ethnic conflicts and ideology of separatism. The ethnic groups other than Uzbeks have been so marginalized which endangered their existence in the country. In surveys conducted across Uzbekistan by the World Bank with the United Nations Development Programme and the Brookings Institution in the fall of 2004, the Uzbek citizens cited their primary concerns as unemployment, poverty and political instability. They wanted a more responsive government that could deliver on critical issues such as jobs, higher wages and improved living standards (Jones and Hill, 2006:119). Though, survey did not touch an ethnic issue but, impliedly depicted the dissatisfaction towards Uzbek government.

Professor P.L. Dash suggests three methods to resolve these ethnic conflicts and nationalism issues. Use of force is the first method since most ethno-national movements incorporate violence into their agendas, and tend to be violent at the slightest provocation, authorities dealing with such movements do not treat than peacefully. The normal resource to contain such movements is violence for violence
or tit for tat. Use of force, according to him remains a primary means of conflict resolution. Force is used mainly at two levels: at the local level by the police to handle minor frictions, and at wider level by the intervention of the army, when the situation goes out of hand. Negotiations are the second method; the imperatives of negotiations arise at this point to assuage the collateral damage of an ethnic conflict involving two or more states. It is opposite to violence, negotiations begin when violence ceases and violence starts when negotiations fail. It is the paramount instrument of conflict resolution. The involved parties wrestle within their available social and political space to ventilate their national emotions, a cultural space to air their heritage and finally, obtain a solution to clashing national interests. Thirdly emigration is the solution to get rid from ethnic conflicts. (Dash, 2005: 61-62). The methods of ethnic conflicts resolution suggested by Prof. P.L. Dash do not seem complete. While using the first method, the use of force, it is most likely of a violation of human rights and other basic rights of the common people and emigration is also not a good idea to solve this issue, rather negotiations can be held effective in dealing with such matters.

However, Uzbek president Islam Karimov has himself suggested solutions to the problem of ethno-nationalism. According to him: In dealing with ethnic and inter ethnic issues, among the most important considerations are these: 1. Recognizing the inviolability of state boundaries should be central principle of the external policy of every state, since it is the main condition for securing sovereignty and strengthening political and economic independence ; 2. The development of the national self-consciousness of people in the region since 1991 has become irreversible, resulting to date in the creation of several full fledged nation states that have become significant participants in International relations; 3. The geographical, ethno-cultural and social religious proximity of the diverse people inhabiting the region should contribute positively to the inter-ethnic dialogue, providing opportunities for interstate political and economic relations; 4. Ethno-politics, implemented in Uzbekistan within the framework of the movement “Turkestan is our common home” is in essence and aims a humane and constructive policy because it promotes inter-ethnic accord in the region. This policy clearly aspires to serve the strategic and national interests of all Central Asia. Turkestan historically included not only the people of Turkic origin but
the population of the whole region; 5. Policies to increase the integration of the region should serve on optimal combination of state and national interests, together with the interests of the entire multi-national population. (Karimov, 1998:46).

The proposed ethnic policy of Karimov seems well balanced. Unfortunately, being aware of such a thoughtful vision and wise temperament the Uzbek government failed to adopt and implement such a reformatory and welfare policies. Actually, the root cause of this problem is the self interest of the political elite of Uzbekistan and fear of power loss is another cause. However, the cause might be anything, but it is the fact that the Uzbekistan should come out from these problems of ethnic conflicts and nationalism. Otherwise, the day is not far when the regions like Karakalpakstan, Samarkand and Andijan could carve out different space from the country and the episodes like Osh could happen more frequently.
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78


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