Preface

Time has great healing power. Mongolia once branded as a barbaric country in the world, is today, peace-loving, democratic country. Regular elections, plurality of society, market-oriented economy, revival of Buddhism written Constitution, embodiment of human rights, individual freedoms, made it, all together different from the old Communist Mongolia. Mongolia, once the conqueror of two thirds of the world, is struggling to identify itself with the world community. Her unique geographical location, became a major hurdle in domestic and foreign affairs. Though, attained independence in 1921, and proclaimed as republic in 1924, it became a pawn in the hands of great powers. Till 1989, she was branded as the satellite of the Soviet Union. Alongwith the sweeping changes that swept Eastern Europe and the USSR, Mongolia has also under gone substantial changes. Unlike the other former socialist countries, it witnessed peaceful transformation.

Historical experiences forced her to maintain amicable relations with other than her immediate neighbours. She tried hard but failed to establish relations with Japan. Till 1972, their relations remained informal and limited to cultural aspects only. On 24 February 1972, diplomatic relations between the two countries were established.

But the relations could not make any progress due to two reasons. Strong influence of former Soviet Union over Mongolia and totalitarian nature of Mongolian society. Despite this, Mongol-Japanese relations grew. M Onuki, a famous scholar from Japan, D.Dashpurev, tried very hard for normalising relations between the two countries. Both, were treated with humiliation and often put behind bars. This policy
continued till 1989. After this, things changed dramatically. The Soviet Union collapsed, making Mongolia free from foreign domination which lasted about seven decades. The Soviet troops were withdrawn, all nuclear installations, from its soil were removed. She became a nuclear free zone. Things could not halt there. Mongols revolted against the old Communist leaders. The Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party which ruled the country over seven decades with iron hand was forced to adopt a democratic path. A series of public rallies, protests, appeals, appeared spontaneously. Free but not fair elections were held in 1992. The old but reformed Communists elected to the office, by bagging 71 out of 76 seats in the State People’s Hural (Parliament).

On the other hand, Japan saw an amicably friend in Mongolia, in Central and Inner Asia. Japan assisted Mongolia in several ways. Mongol-Japanese Gobi Expedition project was started. Cashmere Wool project was completed, a mini-steel project, which was proposed to be constructed by the former USSR, was finally got concretised with Japanese technical assistance at Darkhan. So far all the 'Donors Club Meetings' were held either in Tokyo or in Ulaan Baatar. Though there are over a dozen films on Chinghis Khan, the thirteenth Century hero of Mongols, most of them, distorted their hero’s image. Mongols, for the first time, produced a film on their hero with Japanese technical economic cooperation to highlight its own culture.

Mongolia, which has, half the size of India with only 2.2 million population possessed many rare mineral resources. Abundant resources of coal, gold, copper, uranium, 26 million live-stock, naturally attract any foreign country to utilise the resources properly. Japan being a country of high technical know-how, but with limited natural resources is looking forward. The World picture has been changing and the boundaries of former Communist countries were redrawn. There are no permanent
friends or foes in international relations. Only national interests are guiding beacons. Japan has found reliable friend in Mongolia. She has dispute with Russia over territorial claims. North Korea, is still remained a Communist country. China, is being viewed by world community, as an expansionist power. Japan has limited areas to expand in Southn-East Asia, which is already competing with Japan in trade and commerce. Mongolia is also searching for a 'third neighbour'. She cannot rely on her two immediate neighbours. Her historical past shows that it is dangerous to put all her eggs in one basket. A democratic Mongolia is psychologically, ideologically, more nearer to like minded countries than her immediate neighbours. Every nation, irrespective of its size and resources, has the right to exist.

Mongolia is different from the other countries. Her glorious historical past did fetch anything except picturising her as devil genocider. Distortion of history by the communists, further deteriorated her position. Her unique geographical situation, the direct transformation from feudalism to socialism by passing capitalist phase etc., ruined her. Today, there are more Mongols living outside, than in Mongolia. She is in precarious condition today. Her survival depends much on the relations she maintains with her immediate neighbours, with Japan and the West. The natural boundaries should not become a hurdle in protecting her democratic republican sovereignty. At this crucial juncture Mongol-Japanese relations attained importance. In the present research, several minute problems cropped-up, which may be conspicuous with their presence. The paucity of data restricted the scope of research with severe hardship. Further inconsistency might also appear where the translation problems are involved inadvertently. For example Mongols capital city Ulaan Baatar has been spelt differently by different authors.
In the first chapter, a brief historical background of both the countries was given. In the second chapter, efforts were put to trace, diplomatic, cultural and economic relations. At the end of the chapter, recent trends in their relations were projected. Since democratisation of Mongolian polity and economy become symbols for attracting foreign investment, especially, from Japan, brief description was given tried to focus on Mongolia’s transition to plural polity and market economy in the third chapter. In the ensuing chapter, a detailed project report was focused on the mini steel plant, which was constructed with Japanese assistance at Darkhan. In the fifth chapter the dimensions of security of Mongolia in the flux of international environment was depicted in the context of Mongol-Japanese relations.

In the last chapter, conclusion, specific findings of the research study has been summarised and the prospects for Mongol-Japanese relations have been thoroughly investigated.

This dissertation is one of the first attempts if not the first attempt, to study Mongol-Japan relations, focussing especially on the post-Soviet period. Since this is a fairly recent period and almost uncharted, information and data on the subject are most scarce. I have tried my best to pool all available sources together Mongolian, Japanese, Indian and Western. Such are the difficulties of any pioneering study.