CONCLUSION

This study on "Regional Cooperation in Central Asia" highlights that how independence as well as instability have brought the Central Asian States for the cooperation platform. The collapse of Soviet Union conglomerate created new dimension of Regionalism in Central Asia. The central dominant power could no longer provide adequate security requirements to the Central Asian republics due to its own instability. The central planning along with the bureaucratic set up were no longer there to provide effective measures for the preservation of economic, social and political stability. Economic hardship in turn has aggravated social problems which have been reflected in a steep rise in the crime and worsening ethnic relations. In this context, the unstable economic fragile politics and social conditions paved the way for regional consciousness.

Though the matter of regional cooperation are not same in all the Central Asian Republics, nevertheless, they are integrated in many fields for their betterment. The Central Asian states looked towards their ethnic, religious and pre-Soviet past in an effort to establish a national identity, the largely Sunni and Turkic-speaking, yet ethnically distinct people of Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan trace their antecedents to their common heritage, while the largely Farsi-speaking Tajikistan is linked to Iran. This gave room to the belief that commonalities in religion, language and culture would attract the people of this region. Central
Asia was a part of Muslim World, during Soviet occupation the religious practices manifested in terms of kinships, local customs, like marriage, burial and residential group. Besides that Islamic revival was a cultural and religious phenomenon for regional cooperation.

Currently the Central Asia countries still have much in common which greatly facilitates comprehensive co-operative efforts for the Regional Cooperation.

From an economic perspective, despite significant individual differences, the Central Asian republics are inter-dependent on each other. No one country possesses a definite competitive edge over the other economies of the region. Therefore, there is no other reasons to perceive, that the cooperation process would lead to a significant unbalanced growth, which is detrimental to some and beneficial to others.

Apart from certain amount of industrial production, the Central Asian economies are very much dependent on primary goods and their exports, the building of the capacity to process the raw materials, at least in an initial production stage, would greatly facilitate the transformation process within the individual countries.

Trade being an important instrument for promoting regional cooperation. Likewise, in other areas of ECO and CIS activities ranging from agriculture to energy, plans and projects are being conceived to promote regional cooperation. From a political point of view, the heads of stats not only issued non-binding declarations of intent but also took concrete action by
forming an interstate council consisting of the presidents and primers of the member states.

Of particular relevance is the simultaneous decision to form an executive committee headquarters in Almaty, another indication of the strong commitment to regional cooperation. The scope of the committees mandate and primary functions also creates the impression that it was into simply formed to make a joint political statement, but as an important aspect for promoting long term cooperation in the region.

The attempt at integrating Central Asia are also based on the countries common heritage. The most important concept, around which these republics have aligned themselves in the recent years is around ethnic integration in which different historical tribes have integrated themselves and hence within the last seventy years Central Asian Republics, have come into being with individual linguistic cultural unification such ethnic unity identified with different republics, is certainly a myth but so far that has worked very well and it is around this concept that all political awareness has grown in Central Asia in recent years.

Following their independence, all the republics of Central Asia are struggling with particular problems of their own. The republics face both nation-building and state-building problems. In addition to this, regional imbalances or disparity among the countries of Central Asia in terms of natural resources, and defence potentials make the regional cooperation complex in nature.
Inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflict seriously affect the prospect of peace and stability in this region. First the presence of a strong Russian minority in nearly all Central Asian state, particularly in Kazakhstan, and their exodus on large-scale creates problems with Russia. Second, ethnic tension among Central Asian groups, like conflict between the Uzbek minority in Tajikistan and Tajik minority in Uzbekistan, is endangering cooperation in this region.

The countries of Central Asia have been greatly affected by fundamental political and economic transformation process and the unstable situation in Central Asia represents a great threat to peace in the region, which are arising from various problems. These are, the boundaries of the national stats that were arbitrarily created during the Soviet Union period and have no historical background. Resolution of border issues would have a positive impact on regional security, economic cooperation, ethnic relations and effort to combat drug trafficking and religious extremism. But in reality progress has been slow, and no immediate breakthrough (resolution) can be seen in near future.

The settlement of territorial disputes is obviously an emotional issue and emanates directly from each country’s definition of national interests. No nation wants to make territorial concessions. The failure to resolve territorial issues is a serious hurdle for the regional integration. The titular nations frequently represent the ethnic majority of their populaces, the boundaries of the respective states also contain larger minorities of other ethnic groups of
this region as well as sizeable Russian population. The contemporary 
economic situation which in all Central Asian states, with the exception of 
Uzbekistan, is a cause for great concern and has been showing few signs of 
destabilization.

The environment degradation of several region, the area around the Aral 
Sea, has taken on dramatic proportions resulting in the rapid deterioration of 
living conditions, including a noticeable reduction in life expectancy. These 
developments may promote destabilizing tendencies. Finally, with the 
independence of the Central Asian states, serious conflicts have arisen over the 
usage of natural resources especially of water. Whereas some countries 
possess sufficient of stocks of water, others particularly, Uzbekistan are 
dependent of water supplied by neighbouring states. These factors are 
negative in nature for regional cooperation in the region.

A lucrative drug and small arms trade in Central Asia also pose a major 
threat to the stability and integrity of Central Asian states. With the opening 
of borders between the Central Asian states, the Central Asian countries are 
used as market for shipment of drugs and small arms. The emergence of crime 
and terrorism in Central Asia shows that powerful criminal organizations are 
working together to destabilise areas where most of the contraband trafficking 
is concentrated. Economic instability and poverty in the region make it more 
vulnerable to this problem of regional integration. Besides, environmental, 
territorial and water conflicts add to the problems in the path of Regional 
Cooperation.
The disintegration of the USSR brought a drastic geo-strategic shift thereby creating new challenges to the Eurasian states. In this dynamic situation where political, strategic and security vacuum exist, several players have stepped into gain control in the region. The geopolitical continuity of Central Asia with the Middle East and Southwest Asian region has automatically enhanced the geopolitical significance and sensitivity of the region for both regional players like Iran, Turkey, Russia, China and extra regional players US, Pakistan and India. As the potential partners of the Central Asian countries, each of these states has both advantages and liabilities. Some of them deep-rooted in geopolitical, ethno-cultural and historical factors, others by contrast are derived from the character of regional and international politics. The contradictory global interest of all powers will ultimately have their impact on the process of regional cooperation in Central Asia.