CHAPTER – III

ETHNICITY IN POST SOVIET KAZAKHSTAN

There is continuing salience of the ethnic question in recent discussions on the nation-state. To a certain extent this pre-occupation with ethnic issues is inevitable in view of the logic of the nation-state towards assimilation of a variety of social groups and a significant amount of "homogenization of the population."\(^1\) The existence of minority ethnic groups is considered often an obstacle to this integrative tendency. With each stage of nation-state formation, as states resort to definition of collective identity in majoritarian terms and around the titular ethnic group, the question of ethnic discord and disharmony comes to the fore. While much of the literature of the recent past has worked on the assumption that the "spurt" in nation-state formation in the post-War era has finally resolved the ethnic problem, recent events seem to prove otherwise.\(^2\) Nationalism remains central to the new states and it is becoming increasingly evident that instead of solving the ethnic/national tangle, variant ideas of nationalism have only reconfigured it.

All the post-Soviet states including Kazakhstan, are multi-ethnic states and, therefore, they are faced with the problem of integration of diverse ethnic groups. After acquiring their independence, with little preparation, they are in search for new formulae and socio-political foundations of national development and for their own niche in the new geopolitical space.\(^3\) In as much as the disintegration of the USSR took place

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2. Ibid., p.269.
under the slogan of "ethnic nationalism", it is only natural that the proclamation of so-called "national states" within the borders of the former Union Republics should be made on behalf of the titular ethno-nations.\(^4\)

Today post-Soviet Kazakhstan, though ethnically heterogeneous, is being conceived as nation-state and there is a project to promote the language, culture, demographic position, economic development and political hegemony of the Kazakh ethnic group after which the state is named. This programme of “nationalization” of political space in the region has meant that a large number of people are now left outside their own national territory or do not have one at all.\(^5\)

The nationalities policy which the Soviet leadership pursued during the past decades was fraught with potential conflicts. It was based on the assumption that ethnic differences were relics of the past and eventually doomed to dissolve under socially engineered programmes of modernization.\(^6\) Its goal was homogeneity and unification of country’s ethnic groups on the basis of Soviet Russian culture.\(^7\) However, by making an ethnic affiliation ascriptive, directly connecting ethnicity with language and territory and linking ethnic states with the degree of ethno-territorial divisions, it ensured the continuance of linkage between ethnicity and nation. At the same time, it facilitated an emergence of new intelligensia in the non-Russian parts of the country whose competitive advantages depended on their privileged positions there.\(^8\)

The presence of large number of non-titular ethnic groups in all Central Asian Republics is a result of ill conceived Soviet nationality policy and subsequent demarcation of borders. Instead of allowing the already

\(^4\) Ibid., p.137.
\(^5\) Sengupta, Anita., op. cit., p.270.
\(^6\) Ibid., p.270
\(^8\) Ibid., p.244.
evolving nation-forming processes to fructify, the Soviets artificially divided Central Asia on ethnic basis. Since the borders of the Republics were determined by the numerical preponderance of a particular ethnic group, minorities were bound to exist in each. Till Central Asia was under the centralized Soviet Political System, ethno-national problems remained dormant. But once these Republics became independent states, ethno-religious issues has been resurfacing. Central to this problem is the status and fate of titular and non-titular population in the new post-Soviet political set up.

In Kazakhstan, the search for national identity has taken place against a distinctive but complex demographic and cultural background. At the beginning of the Soviet era, they lacked any sense of national identity. Distinctive Kazakh identity however coalesced around the National Republic during the Soviet era. The compulsions of new state formation in the post-Soviet era have meant an increased emphasis on national identity. The assertion of “ethnic” identity which has accompanied the current stage of state formation, has meant the compelling political need to identify Kazakhs distinct from the Russians so as to distance themselves from the imperial Soviet past. One of the most dramatic transformation of these developments has been the change in the status of ethnic Russians from a majority group into minority with disputed identities and uncertain future. The designation of non-Russians as minorities in the former Soviet Union has undergone a dramatic reversal with the Russians becoming the “new” minorities in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

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10 Ibid., p.193.
12 Ibid., p.272.
13 Ibid., p.272.
By its ethno-demographic structure Kazakhstan is a bi-ethnic state with the Kazakhs and the Russians as the two main ethnic groups. In the Soviet period, their relations had been shaped as of ethnic competitors which have been deepened and sharpened in the post-Soviet time under the politics of Kazakh ethno-nationalism.¹⁴ In order to maintain or attain political and economic supremacy, both the natives as well as the Russians have been using ethnicity as means of mobilization and support as it is well known that in countries with bi-ethnic population there emerge relations of ‘ethnic competition’ between the main ethnic groups.¹⁵

Kazakhstan’s political stability, therefore, will depend much on the existence of harmonious ethnic relations chiefly between the natives and Slavs. The question “How long will ethno-nationalism spread among the Kazakhs?” is crucial for nation-building in Kazakhstan. Will there be open ethnic confrontation in Kazakhstan? Some Western scholars paint a dark picture predicting that the territorial issue in northern Kazakhstan will inevitably¹⁶ trigger an ethnic backlash which will rapidly spread to other parts of the country. Others attribute the current stable situation to President Nazarbayev’s personal political maneuvering and thus argue that the post-Nazarbayev era may witness political turmoil.¹⁷ Still others believe that the republican demographic pattern-Kazakhs versus Russians-plays a key part in maintaining Kazakhstan’s political balance.¹⁸ In a way, ethnic identity holds a key for the survival of modern civic Kazakh state. Until it cleared, the prospects of nation-building in Kazakhstan will be uncertain.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.192.
¹⁷ Ibid., p.6.
¹⁸ Ibid., p.6.
In post-Soviet Kazakhstan, ethnic nation is challenging the very notion of civic nationhood and much depends on the sustenance of harmonious relations between titular Kazakhs and the non-titular Russians. As re-configurations have created new “minorities” and constructed new definitions of majority identity in Kazakhstan, this chapter broadly discusses the ethnic and demographic composition and peculiarities of the new Republic. It makes an attempt to examine the development of relations between native Kazakhs and the Russians, tries to ascertain the conditions of new “national minorities” and seek to examine the element of “ethnic” in the policies, documents, formulations and intentions of the “nationalizing state” of Kazakhstan. An attempt is also made to analyze as to what extent the leadership of the new Kazakh Republic has been able to maintain a balance between the rising hegemonizing aspirations of the titular Kazakh majority and the aspirations of the new Russian “national minorities.”

Kazakhstan’s Ethnic Composition

Despite its vast territory, the population of Kazakhstan is not considerable numerically. According to 1999 census data, 14,953 million people live in Kazakhstan. However, there are more than a hundred nationalities and ethnic groups. Kazakhs, Russians, Germans, Ukrainians, Tatars, Uzbeks, and Uighurs comprise the majority of the population. The current population of Kazakhstan proves that the largest ethnic groups in Kazakhstan are the Kazakhs (53.4% of the total population) and the Russians (30.0%). The next are the Ukrainians (3.6%), Uzbeks (2.5%), Germans (2.3%), Tatars (1.6%) and Uighurs (1.4%). The share of the Byelorussians, Koreans, Azerbaijanians and Turks varies from 0.7 to 0.5%

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19 Sengupta., op cit., p.272
21 Ibid., p.45.
of Kazakhstan’s total population.\textsuperscript{22} Over the decade from 1989 to 1999, the percentage of Germans has decreased by 2.6, the Russians by 1.3, the Ukrainians by 1.6, the Tatars by 1.3, the Byelorussians by 1.5. The number of Azerbaijanis and Koreans are still the same. The Kazakh, Uzbek, Uighur, Turk populations are increasing. The Turk population has increased by 53.3\% and the Uzbek population has increased by 39.7\%.\textsuperscript{23}

Kazakhstan’s multi-ethnic community has not been created on the basis of the existing ethnic groups but as a result of voluntary and sometimes forced settlement of diverse nationalities to the country.\textsuperscript{24} This highly diverse ethnic composition of Kazakhstan has a long and sometimes tragic history and is connected with the Russian migrations to the country at the expense of the indigenous population.

In the past, the country was the exclusive domain of pastoral Kazakh nomads. Russia gradually subdued and annexed Kazakhstan during the long period which lasted from the second half of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century to mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{25} Soon after, the Russian government began to take away the Kazakh’s summer pastures and winter quarters and replaced them first with Cossack and then with peasant settlers from the European part of the empire. The “resettlement policy” of Russian Minister Peter Stylypin led to this migration.\textsuperscript{26} The policy was to develop the new areas and to provide lands to the peasants in order to solve the worsening economic, social and demographic problems of Russia.

By 1913, about 150,000 hectares of the most fertile lands in Kazakhstan were appropriated by the settlers, whose numbers increased from 539,915 (12.8\% of the total population in Kazakhstan) in 1897 to about

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p.45.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Abhishev Adel E., \textit{op cit.}, p.45.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p.43.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Khazanov, Anatoly M., \textit{op cit.}, p.244.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Abhishev Adel E., \textit{op cit.}, p.43.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
1.5 million (30% of the total population in 1917). Many Kazakh pastoral nomads were gradually ousted to the arid areas of Central and Southern Kazakhstan. Many had to migrate to other regions, settle on the land and cultivate crops or even work for the new colonists. The experts report that around one million and 150 thousand people had migrated to Kazakhstan from Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia as a result of peasant colonization processes in pre-revolution period.

During the whole of 19th century, the Kazakh population grew very slowly and between 1902 and 1913 it diminished by 9%. Then followed the uprising of 1916, the turmoil years of the revolution and civil war, during which the Kazakhs suffered much from both sides, the Whites and Reds, and the starvation of 1921-22. All these events cost the Kazakhs hundreds of thousands of lives and resulted in a sharp decrease in the country’s Kazakh population. Their population felt from 91.4% in 1850 to 57.1% in 1926.

During the 1920s the Kazakh pastoralist economy partly recovered as some of the pastures were taken away from the Russian settlers and returned to nomads and semi-nomads. Then, in the early 1930s came the traumatic events of forced collectivization and the bloody settlement of Kazakh nomads on fixed lands. In a few years, about 550,000 nomadic and semi-nomadic households were forced to settle, many in waterless arid regions where not only agriculture but even pastoralism was impossible. About 250 thousand peasants were exiled to Kazakhstan from the USSR central region during the collectivization campaign. In the pre-war years, 1 million

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27 Khazanov, Anatoly M., *op cit.*, pp.244-45.
28 Abhishev Adel E., *op cit.*, p.44.
30 Ibid., p.246.
31 Ibid., p.246.
250 thousand people had been resettled in Kazakhstan mainly from the European part of the country in order to construct industrial facilities.\textsuperscript{32}

The forced collectivization and de-nomadization of the Kazakhs met with widespread resistance. Many slaughtered their livestock or tried to drive them into China. Those Kazakhs who resisted were killed or deported if they did not manage to migrate abroad. All these events and the subsequent famine cost the Kazakhs between 1.5 to 2 million souls; another half a million people had to flee from the country.\textsuperscript{33} As a result of the rural collectivization process carried out by Stalin, the traditional nomadic way of life ceased to exist, the Kazakhs were domesticated. They became a minority in their own country and their population decreased down to 2 million 493 thousand by 1933.\textsuperscript{34}

Meanwhile, the Russian and Slavic migrations to Kazakhstan continued. In the 1930s and 1940s, the industrialization of the republic stimulated these movements and in 1950s – the ‘Virgin Land Campaign’ aimed at sowing wheat on huge tracts of land in the Northern Kazakhstan brought about 1.5 to 2 million Russians to Kazakhstan.\textsuperscript{35} By 1939, the number of Russians in Kazakhstan had doubled compared with 1926. By 1979 this number had doubled again.

In addition, in the 1930s and 1940s, Kazakhstan became one of the Gulag areas – one of the main territories where various groups and people like Poles, Koreans, Germans, Chechens, Ingush, Turks, Greeks and many others were deported. By 1949, there were 820,165 exiles in Kazakhstan including 393,537 Germans, 302,526 Chechens and Ingush, 33,083 Karachai, 29,497 Meskhetian Turks, 28,130 poles and 17,512 Balkans.\textsuperscript{36} 350 thousand

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  \item \textsuperscript{32} Abhishev Adel E., \textit{op cit.}, p.45.
  \item \textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p.247.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Abhishev Adel E., \textit{op cit.}, p.47.
  \item \textsuperscript{35} Khazanov, Anatoly M., \textit{op cit.}, p.246-47.
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.247.
\end{itemize}
people were evacuated to Kazakhstan during World War II.\textsuperscript{37} Many of them found their second home here. The secret military facilities received another 150 thousand people.\textsuperscript{38} At that time, there were more Russians then ethnic Kazakhs. In all, by 1962 the number of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan dropped to 29%.\textsuperscript{39} However, during the last 30 years, their overall proportion in the Republic began to increase because of their high birth-rate and a decline in the influx of non-indigenous groups, above all of Russians.

In 1961-70, the balance of in-and-out migrations in Kazakhstan was +431 thousands people. However, in 1979-88, it was already – 789 thousand people. By 1991, the share of Kazakhs in the total population of Kazakhstan had reached 42.0\% and by 1993 it was 43.2\%, while the Russian share decreased to 36.4\%.\textsuperscript{40} By 1999, the proportion of Kazakhs in the total population reached 53.4\% and that of Russians decreased to 30.0\%.\textsuperscript{41} And there appears to be a fair chance for Kazakhs holding a fair majority in their own country after a long duration.

This confidence in the ethnic future of the Kazakhs has contributed to a growth in their nationalism. The ethnic, situation in the country is characterized by the dynamic growth rates of ethnic awareness, an interest in the ethnic roots: language, traditions and customs.\textsuperscript{42} On the one hand, the unique multi-ethnic composition of the country has great advantages. On the other, it is fraught with the specific potential threats of rising ethnic tension and growing socio-economic competition between members of different ethnic groups. Maintaining inter-ethnic harmony is one of the fundamental conditions for development and success of reforms in a multi-ethnic state of Kazakhstan. As Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that “our

\begin{itemize}
\item Abhishev Adel E., \textit{op cit.}, p.46.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p.46
\item Khazanov, Anatoly M., \textit{op cit.}, p.247.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, pp.247-48.
\item Abhishev Adel E., \textit{op cit.}, p.45.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p.45.
\end{itemize}
principle policy is based on development of all ethnic groups through compromises and strengthening of the combined sources.”


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<td>0.6</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.11</td>
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The Kazakh Population in Kazakhstan

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1,502</td>
<td>91.1</td>
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<td>1860</td>
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<td>1897</td>
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Sources: Bekmakhanova 1980, Table 28; Aziatskaia, Rossilia, 1914; 82; Census of 1926, 39, 59, 70, 89 and 99 and Europa – 1999).

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43 Ibid., p.45.
Social Structure

Kazakh social structure remains in many respect pre-modern. It consists of the upper class that includes people involved in government and administration and the large lower class, the peasantry. The majority of the working class and middle class are from the indigenous population and the upper class comes from other ethnic groups – Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars, Germans etc. During the Soviet period the modernization process in Kazakhstan involved minimal participation by the native Kazakh population and its economy became specialized in extractive and primary products to supply the core area. The limited industrialization of Kazakhstan conducted by Moscow involved the attraction of a work force from the European part of the USSR. People of European origin have been the main backbone of the skilled workforce and scientific-technical personnel. In 1979, the Kazakhs constituted only 20.8% of the urban population of the Republic; 69.1% of them continued to live in the rural areas. Of Kazakhstan’s 71 districts, those with a predominantly Kazakh population are economically the most backward and have the highest percentage of unemployed. This developmental lag and the ethnic division of labour hindered Kazakh participation in modern sectors of economy and contributed to a growth in ethnic competition after independence.

An ethnic division of labour exists also in agriculture. Kazakhs supply most of the unskilled labour for pastoral production in cotton cultivation. Ethnic minorities such as Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Tatars etc. prefer to be occupied in other, more mechanized and better paid branches of agriculture demanding more skilled labour. The amalgamation of collective farms into large state owned farms during the Brezhnev period,

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46 Ibid., p.249.
47 Ibid., p.249.
affected Kazakh population negatively and many Kazakhs were dispossessed from their small settlements.  

The overpopulated Kazakh rural regions of the Republic also suffer from erosion, salination and desertification, the results of erroneous agro-technology, over-grazing and a trend from multiple crops towards monoculture.  

Even though early marriages and traditionally large families exert a negative influence on Kazakh mobility, during the last 20 or 30 years many of them began to move from over populated and under-employed rural areas to cities. In the 1970s Kazakhs became one of the most mobile ethnic groups in the Soviet Union. This put the Kazakhs in an underprivileged position in comparison to Russian-speaking urbanites and intensified ethnic competition. Often they are particularly hostile towards the Russians and prove to be particularly prone to extremism and violence. In the summer of 1990, when some of these desperate people lost any hope for government assistance, they unwarrantedly seized plots of land near Alma-Ata which created an explosive situation in the capital. The movement of rural indigenous groups into urban sectors dominated by Slavic linguistic and cultural ethnic groups has precipitated ethnic dissensions and ultra nationalism.

The situation of ethnic Kazakh in the political sphere was no better than the social one. During the purges of the 1920s and 1930s the Soviets physically destroyed the political elites in Kazakhstan. The Soviets purged not only the traditional aristocracy, the populist and enlighteners of the pre-revolutionary period and the national-Bolsheviks of the revolution but also those who had been promoted to the positions of leadership in the 1920s. According to recently published data, from 1930 to 1953, the state sentenced

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49 Khazanov, Anatoly M., op cit., p.251.  
50 Ibid., p.251.  
51 Ibid., p.251.  
52 Ibid., p.252.
35,000 of these people to various punishment and shot more than 5,000 of them. The Soviets created in Kazakhstan completely new political and cultural elites. The Kazakh political elite's privileged positions in the local power structures depended on their compliance with all of Moscow's demands and goals and with their capabilities to implement policies dictated by the centre. In addition, they had to embrace the Russian language and – at least in public – some of Russian culture and life style.

At almost all social levels in Kazakhstan, ethnic Kazakhs remained under-represented during the Soviet days. The social and professional advancement of the Russians and uneven ethnic division of labour is now being considered as oppressive and discriminatory. As a result, the tense situation has emerged in which some social differences take on ethnic colours and social mobility strikes against ethnic boundaries. This contributes to a general deterioration of inter-ethnic relations in the Republic.

**Tribes vs. Nation**

One of the historical riddles in the history of Kazakhstan is occurrence of three large territorial formations on the territory of Kazakhstan named Juzes or 'Hordes'. After 74 years of communist rule, the Kazakhs still live cohesively in accordance with their kinship ties. In the past, the Kazakh society represented nomadic and semi-nomadic farming, where old patrimonial orders remained for a long time in new public structures as kindred relations. As a result of this natural integration, there were such large confederations as the Juzes being an important step of a social system. Even today the Big Horde (Ule juz) remains in Southern Kazakhstan stretching from Toldeqorqan oblast in the east to Chimkent oblast in the South and the descendants of Middle Horde (Orta Juz) chiefly adhere to

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Northern and Eastern Kazakhstan while the offsprings of the Small Horde (Kishi juz) have claimed Western Kazakhstan. 55

Even the rigid Soviet administrative system did little to break the Kazakh tribes who have lived in compact areas. Even now, the knowledge of the own clan, tribe, the ancestors in seven generations has been an obligatory condition of comprehension of the patrimonial identity for each Kazakh. 56

The historical analysis demonstrates that patrimonial structures, rather than the Juzes, influenced much of the political processes. 57 Probably, it is connected to the fact that the clan had served as a major institution of preserving traditions and the transference. But under the influence of external and internal factors, they were transformed.

Though, this phenomenon was grossly neglected during the Soviet days, yet this clan-tribalism relations in the Republic reemerged in 1980s, with the rise of national consciousness and the short-term renaissance of traditional culture. The following factor is dominating the state machinery functioning as well as in the structure of the Kazakhstan’s elite representatives of the native nation. 58

Thus, when high ranking Kazakhs rush to the scene from the capital to reaffirm their affiliations, a strengthened tribal identity silently hammers into the unity of elite Kazakhs in whose hands are concentrated the nation’s political and economic power. In 1991, U.M. Soltanqazin (from Middle Horde), the then President of the Kazakh Science Academy, delivered the keynote speech before an audience of some 3,000 guests, where he used most of his time to praise former Qan’s outstanding role in bringing the three Hordes together against the Kazkah’s formidable enemy Russia and

55 Ibid., p.15.
56 Ibid., p.15.
Following this event, numerous streets in Kazakhstan assumed Ablay Qan’s name.

Similarly, to justify the political hierarchical position of Big Hordes in the Republic, President Nazarbayev invited Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan and Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan in a function to honour Toly Bii, a sage from the Big Horde in 1993.

Clan and tribal differentiation of the Kazakh society is a distinctive feature of this, ethnus its basic grain and the crystallization centre, creating in turn the Kazakh society. It is not an abnormal phenomenon; it only corresponds to the social and economic development and political culture and plays a special role. It is this tribalism which is gaining strength among all Kazakh communities in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. They are of the firm belief that the Russian counterparts during their past were the ardent opponent of their Juz System and strived their level best to dismantle this kinship system. In their own Kazakhstan after 1991, they are in no mood to share new political elites and hierarchy with the Russians. This revived sentiment of tribalism could turn out to be a major obstacle in building a stable, plural and democratic civil society in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

In gathering of Kazakh Nation

Ethno-demographically, Kazakhstan is not only the least harmonious of the five Central Asian Republics, but also least cohesive in terms of ethnic inheritance. After independence, ethno-nationalist feelings like ‘Kazakhstan for Kazakhs’ are running high among the ethnic Kazakhs yet lack of numerical strength has made it difficult to realize. Even the most nationalistic Kazakhs know that they are no match for the formidable Slavs.
in numerical terms. Population increase and decrease among ethnic groups in this still Slav dominated Republic weighs so heavily that a handful of Kazakh demographers are constantly asked by the Kazakh media and government for their precious advice to increase the native population before an open battle erupts with the Russian-speaking nationalities. 63

This has led to the ‘incoming’ of Kazakh diaspora across the world to their native nation which is greatly altering the ethno-demographic composition of the Republic in favour of Kazakhs. Nazarbayev’s government has actively pursued a carefully designed national policy aimed at significantly boosting Kazakh share of the Republic's population. It is being justified with the argument that the ethnic Kazakh have become a minority in the land of their ancestors through no fault of their own and hence should be accorded a special status within ‘their’ modern day state. 64 Through migration, government plans to change the demographic balance in favour of the Kazakhs as well as to consolidate state power to ensure the territorial integrity of the Kazakh nation-state.

The global Kazakh population in 1996-97 was 12 million, with some 8 million in Kazakhstan, another, 1.9 million in China, nearly 1 million in Russia, 7,90,00 in Uzbekistan, 70 thousand in Mongolia and the remaining number in other countries. 65 There are more than 4,0000,00 Kazakhs who live outside their motherland. In the process of creation of the Kazakh diaspora, there are two distinct periods: first, Kazakh emigration from Kazakhstan to neighbouring countries and the rest of the world in 18-20th centuries and secondly Kazakh exodus from Sinkiang in 1940-50. 66

63 Ibid., p.7.
The first Kazakh exodus from Kazakhstan took place in 1723 A.D. when the Oirats surprised the peaceful Kazakh auls (villages), attacked and massacred many people. Within one year many Kazakh clans and tribes were forced to leave their homes and flee to Bukhara and Khiva. Under the rule of Tsars, the Kazakhs had much of their good lands taken away from them by Russians and thus majority of them emigrated to China, Iran and Afghanistan. Civil war during Bolshevik revolution and collectivization during Soviet period cost Kazakhstan heavily and escalated migration to Xinjiang and China.

The second exodus of Kazakhs was from Eastern Tukestan (now Xinjiang) where some half a million Kazakhs used to live. Under Shen Shin Tsai, China pursued the policy of settling Chinese Han peasants in this area and it became more intense after the Chinese revolution of 1949. This dispossessed many Kazakhs from their home and led to their arrival at the frontiers of India and Pakistan. By 1940s, they were temporarily settled into refugee camps near Srinagar and Rawalpindi. Later, because of their cultural, racial and linguistic links with the Turkish people, the Turkish government was approached and it ultimately gave its permission to settle Kazakhs in Turkey. The 1960s-1970s are characterized by a new trend in the development of the Kazakh diaspora. Kazakhs, as component of the Turkish labour immigration movement, came to the west and at the beginning they were mainly manual workers. Now the Kazakh diaspora in the West consist of office employees in big corporations, hotels and services. About 30 percent of them have manufacturing business in the West European countries.

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67 Ibid., p.346.
68 Ibid., p. 347
69 Ibid., pp. 349-50.
70 Ibid., pp. 349-50.
71 Ibid., pp. 349-50.
After the independence of Kazakhstan ‘home coming’ syndrome has been largely visible among the Kazakh diaspora and the new Republic is also making attempts to create necessary conditions for the repatriation and reunification of the Kazakh people. By permitting dual citizenship for ethnic Kazakhs living in other states the Kazakh leadership has encouraged their migration to their newly independent ‘historic homeland’. Since 1992, Almaty has actively pursued the resettlement in Kazakhstan of nearly three million ethnic Kazakhs who lived abroad, primarily in China (1,20,000), Mongolia (150,000) Russia (600,000), Uzbekistan (830,000) and Turkmenistan (90,000). Over 60,000 Kazakhs returned to Kazakhstan from Mongolia during the first three years of independence.

Graph:
Kazakh Population in Kazakhstan (in '000)


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Number of the Kazakhs in the World 1996-97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>More than 8,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>790,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS Countries</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>more 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark, Switzerland, Holland</td>
<td>less than 100 in each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway, Belgium, Taiwan</td>
<td>less than 100 in each.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a means to achieve 'in-gathering of the nation,' the Kazakh government convened a *Qazaq Qurultay* in Almaty in September 1992, to which members of Kazakh diaspora from all over the world were invited. The Qurultay adopted a resolution which appealed to all Kazakhs to unite on the territory of their historic homeland and also declared that any ethnic Kazakh who had left Kazakhstan for any reason, would be granted automatic refugee status and its concomitant privileges like finding a home and a job in the Republic. On President Nazarbayev’s initiative, a standing committee was set up to accelerate the pace of Kazakhs’ migration from abroad to Kazakhstan. Headed by the President himself, the committee has addressed many practical issues that were hampering the resettlement of the Kazakhs on the vast land of Kazakhstan. The Qurultay Resolution was implemented by a series of immigration laws. According to President Nazarbayev, more than 200,000 Kazakhs have resettled in Kazakhstan in

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75 Janabel Jiger., *op cit.*, pp.7-8.
last several years. However, the government programme to resettle ethnic Kazakhs in Kazakhstan has been encountering serious obstacles largely as a result of state’s inability to provide many immigrants with employment and adequate housing.

Furthermore, an immigration law has been passed according to which every Kazakh immigrant was granted refugee status. The government of Kazakhstan has established Migration Department within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. According to this Department and The World Association of Kazakhs, more than 150,000 ethnic Kazakhs arrived in Kazakhstan between 1991 and 1997. They have settled mostly in Atyrau, Southern Kazakhstan, Jambul and Jeskazgan oblasts. The Migration Department currently seeks to solve many problems of housing, education and employment of the Kazakh repatriates. The World Association of Kazakhs helps the repatriates by issuing a certificate of Kazakh identity and by offering them financial support. There is the Liaison office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Almaty, which tries to help refugees and resolve some of their problems. For example, the High Commissioner has funded the building of 65 units of housing and water pipe system in the village “Dostyk” near the town of Turkestan in Southern Kazakhstan, especially for Kazakh refugees from Iran and Afghanistan. On 13 August 1997, a new mosque in village Raimbek near Almaty was opened with the donations of Arystan Tosun representative of the Kazakh diaspora in Germany, now repatriated in Kazakhstan. The Kazakh diaspora is fastly integrating into the mainstream of Kazakhstan’s Society.

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76 Ibid., pp.7-8.
78 Ibid., p.352.
79 Ibid., p.352.
80 Ibid., pp.352-53.
81 Ibid., p.352-53.
Proponents of this measure have argued that it was needed to facilitate the process of rehabilitation, since Kazakhs were forced to leave their native land and resettle elsewhere in the aftermath of the 1917 revolution and during the years of Stalinist repression and forced collectivization. Sceptics have countered that the measure is part of a larger government scheme to raise the share of ethnic Kazakhs in the country’s overall population and squeeze out the non-Kazaks, particularly in light of the fact that most Kazakh immigrants have been resettled in eastern and northern Kazakhstan where the Russian population predominates.\textsuperscript{82}

This more than friendly attitude has stirred enthusiastic response from the Kazakhs abroad and on the other had has put negative thrust on the Slavs of Republic. Many Russians either do not feel secure or have serious doubts about their future life. Many are leaving for Russia which in turn accelerates the process of ethno-political polarization. The people have been leaving the country since the early 1990s. 200 to 300 thousand people have been leaving the country every year.\textsuperscript{83} In 1993-97, more than 3 million people mostly Russian’s left the country and over 1.5 million entering the country.\textsuperscript{84} Due to this migration flow, Kazakhstan has lost over 1.5 million people.

The migration process has directly affected the ethnic structure of the Republic, shifting the overall demographic balance in favour of the native Kazakhs. The change in Kazakhstan’s ethnic balance favouring the values would definitely pose questions about the stability of the Republic should one’s hopes for Kazakhstan’s future stability be based on a demographic factor.

The recent demographic reconfiguration whether compulsive or voluntary in the new Republic illustrate a very substantive fact that it is heading towards "politicization of ethnicity." A changed psychological

\textsuperscript{82} Smith Graham, \textit{op cit.}, p.157

\textsuperscript{83} Abhishev, Adel E., \textit{op cit.}, p.48.

\textsuperscript{84} \textit{Ibid.}, p.48.
orientation is being witnessed among the native Kazakhs who blame the Russians and their Soviet past for all hardships. There is an increasing tendency towards rejection of all Soviet era associations, policies and projects.\textsuperscript{85} The main explanation of politicization of ethnicity stresses the importance of inequality in the distribution of available resources, social benefits and opportunities between distinct ethnic groups. The argument contends that ethnic resurgence arises in response to objective exploitation of an indigenous group by an alien group.

The leadership of the new Republic although devoid of any history of sovereign existence is sponsoring the recovery of a neglected “nationalist” heritage including history, culture, language and political identity. They are today faced not only with constructing their present, but also redefining their pasts. Rogers Brubaker refers to these states as “nationalizing states” which seeks to assert the hegemony of their respective titular nation.\textsuperscript{86} To Brubaker; “the characteristic of this stance or set of stances is the tendency to see the state as an unrealized nation-state’, as state destined to be a nation-state, the state of and for a particular nation, but not yet in fact a nation-state; and the concomitant disposition to remedy this perceived defect, to make the state what is properly and legitimately destined to be by promoting the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing or political hegemony of the nominally state bearing nation.”\textsuperscript{87}

Therefore, Kazakhsation has come up as an idea of creating the dominance of ethnic Kazakhs in the economic, cultural, educational and political spheres of independent Kazakhstan.\textsuperscript{88} This ethno-nationalist idea is bound to remain just an aspiration as long as there is no active support by

\textsuperscript{86} Sengupta, Anita, \textit{op cit.}, p.286.
\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.286-287.
the state. However, the new regime is promoting the polities of and for particular core nation as a plausible and useful model for Kazakhstan and thus almost every state policies and legislations are consisting of an essential "ethnic" element. 89

Russians Exodus from Kazakhstan

Apart from the 'in-gathering' of Kazakh populace in their new motherland, one more ethno-demographic phenomenon is discernable. Despite the efforts of new regime, the process of ethno-political polarization is going on. Many Russians are insecure of their future in the republic and are leaving for Russia. According to the available data 58.8% of the Russians and 7.4% of the Germans have left the country. 90 The number of persons who have left Kazakhstan has increased from 23,600 in 1988 to 306,000 in 1991 and over 400,000 in 1994. 91 According to the opinion poll conducted by the Hiller Institute, 447% of non-Kazakhs prefer to migrate. 92 It can be expected that in a few years Kazakhs will constitute an absolute majority of the population and the trend of ethnic homogenization is likely to grow.

At present, the Russians living in the region are concerned about restrictions to their social and professional opportunities, the chance to advance their national culture and the problem of security in the event of inter-ethnic conflicts. The Russians organized action in defence of their civil rights and security is negligible. They are getting politically passive because they have lost all hope of becoming rooted in the region, have in fact accepted their "non-indigenous" inferior status and are afraid to come up

89 Smith Graham, Law Vivien., op cit., p.139.
91 Ibid., p.65.
92 Ibid., p.65.
against uncontrollable pressure from the local majority. It is owing to this, the Russians are set upon leaving Kazakhstan. Yet their total emigration is as unlikely as their rapid assimilation in Kazakhstan.

According to the 1989 census, the Russian population in Kazakhstan was 37.8 percent of the overall population. Kazakhstan had been subjected to intensive Russian settlement from the nineteenth century which stopped growing in the 1970s. A Soviet specialist in inter-Republic migration, Viktov Perevendentsev noted this sudden break in migration patterns. Now the balance of migration is negative in Kazakhstan as it was +431 thousand during 1961-70 and now is −789 thousands in 1979-89. Yurii Arutyunyan of the Institute of Ethnography in Moscow believes that this dramatic outmigration from the periphery was because the “socio-professional” status of Russians in Kazakhstan was steadily declining. Since 1989, the number of Russians leaving Kazakhstan has sharply increased, with nearly as many emigrating from the states between 1989 and 1991 as had left during the preceding decade. This division between the European and Kazakh community also has a clear geopolitical expression. While the Slavs constitute large majorities in the northern oblasts, the Kazaks dominate the southern parts of the country. The north-south divide is further complicated by a town-country dimension with many Kazaks living in the countryside in the north and many Russians residing in southern Kazakh towns. Occupationally, the Russians are employed mainly in industry, trade and services whereas Kazaks are predominantly employed in agriculture. According to the 1989 data, 22.4 percent of the Kazakh population and 52.6 percent of the Russian population of Kazakhstan were engaged in industry.

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94 Ibid., p.116.
95 Ibid., p.118.
96 Sengupta, Anita, op cit., p.276.
With the independence of Kazakhstan in 1991, the spirit of 'Kazakhstan for Kazakhs' is gaining momentum. In a new situation, the Kazakhs want to do away with the predominance of Russian values, language and culture over their polity, economy and education. In Kazakhstan, the non-indigenous population is being systematically forced out of government, industries, education and the higher echelons of the army. The Russians have been faced with the serious problem of finding a new niche in the changing economic and socio-cultural situation. Insufficient knowledge of the language of the titular nationality is a formidable obstacle for Russians working in public health, education and administrative work and principal argument in favour of their dismissal.\textsuperscript{98}

In the former USSR, Russians enjoyed for decades the comfortable status of a people dominating all the major socio-cultural areas. The Russian language and culture were reference points for all cultures that was transmitted, from the centre to the periphery via educational system, the mass media, party and government structures.\textsuperscript{99} Under new circumstances, Russians residing in the Union Republics have no overwhelming motivation to learn the languages of the titular nationalities and integrate into the Kazakh ethno-cultural environment. It is advantageous today to look upon Russians increasingly as colonizers particularly because of their unwillingness to learn the language and traditions of ethnic Kazakhs. The percentage of local Russians, with a working knowledge of Kazakh language is less than 1 percent in the Republic.\textsuperscript{100} Such “lack of desire” and “cultural distancing” of the Russians from the titular population has resulted in the emergence of “Russians-as aliens” concept in Kazakhstan. The Russian language is being consistently forced out. It is also worth

\textsuperscript{98} Tishkov, Valery A.. \textit{op cit.}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., p.125.
\textsuperscript{100} Sengupta, Anita, \textit{op cit.}, p.274.
mentioning that teachers teaching in Kazakh receive an extra 15-20% to their salary.\textsuperscript{101}

Much of the resentment is also focused on Russians’ domination of managerial and technical jobs. Scholars like Nancy Lubin feel that Slavs constituted a privileged position and the indigenous population was reduced to second class position in their own Republic.\textsuperscript{102} Over the years, trends in education indicate that a growing number of young Kazakhs aspire to compete for higher status occupations currently held by Russians and participate in the modernized sectors of society. According to Robert Lewis, this rapid increase in expectations among young indigenous Kazakhs can only be satisfied by restructuring the economy towards job creation, since many of these positions are now held by Russians or by the replacement of Russians by Kazakhs.\textsuperscript{103}

The fact that a large number of Kazakhs had either perished or had been forced into exile during the Soviet period, leads to a sense of historic injustice today. Information propaganda in Almaty increasingly portrays Russians as aggressors.\textsuperscript{104} Even after independence, the worsening economic situation and political instability are often blamed on the Kremlin’s pernicious legacy which serves to keep anti-Russian sentiments alive. The enactment of the laws on language and citizenship, shrinking job opportunities and anti-Russian nationalistic rhetoric have evoked a painful psychological reaction among the Russians. One of the concrete manifestations of the negative turn in inter-ethnic relations is that people feel that their national pride is being affronted.

\textsuperscript{102} Sengupta, Anita., \textit{op cit.}, pp.274-275.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.}, p.276.
\textsuperscript{104} Sengupta, Anita, \textit{op cit.}, p.282.
Even the more moderate sections are being increasingly alienated by such moves as the renaming of Russian towns and streets, the denigration of Russian culture by the Kazakh names etc. Rallies have also been organized in Petro Pavlovsk in support of a free economic zone with Russia and introduction of Russian as the second state language.\footnote{Ibid, p.284.} There were also threats of the creation of a Trans-Irtysh Republic modelled on the lines of the Trans Dniestr Republic in Moldova, if their demands were not acceded to.\footnote{Ibid., p. 284.}

The process of privatization in Central Asia also has a distinctly ethnic feature, when the authorities through various manipulations have made sure that the local population get hold of assets and properties. Here, factory workers are practically forbidden to privatize their factories, as the majority of factory workers are Slavs.\footnote{Zhang, Yongjin, Azinian Rouben., \textit{op cit.}, p.96.} At the same time, the rural population, which is mainly Kazakh receives larger share than urban population.
Similarly, in Kazakhstan, all taxes are paid to the central Government with the major part of the taxes coming from Russian speaking North. But when distributed, most allocations go to the South.\textsuperscript{108} The 105,000 Kazakhss who returned from Mongolia were settled in the North and the government provided full financial backing for the settlement.\textsuperscript{109} The overwhelmingly majority of the Russians living in Kazakhstan are unprepared and unwilling to accept the status of an ethnic minority.

While ethnic divisions could well become a potential source of conflict, both sides have reasons for restraint. The Russians very well understand that demography is not on their side. Russians in Kazakhstan feel different from Russians on the other side of the Urals. The government realizes fully well that the exodus of Russians will lead to tangible decline in their manufacturing and extraction industries. In Moscow too, there is pragmatic commitment to Kazakh-Russian relations since hostility with Kazakhstan could well act as catalyst for deterioration of relations with

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p.96.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p.96.
\end{footnotesize}
Turkic Central Asians, many of whom live within the borders of the Russian federation.

The attitude of ethnic Russians in Central Asia is "complex and tense" because of their gradual drift in their political or economic positions in the Republic.\(^{110}\) The ethnic identity of Russians and their attitudes to ethnic relations have changed significantly. To Leokadia Drobizheva, three factors played a role in this: (a) the shock of losing their status as the ruling nation (b) the political struggle in which leading groups want to rely on ethnic patriotism and (c) the sharp rise in ethnic competition in the social and working sphere.\(^{111}\) The abrupt end of Russian dominance means that they are now having to think hard about their Russian identity, something they always took for granted. Emigration sentiments are preponderant everywhere and the political inertia of the Russians in Kazakhstan is largely a result of their loss of hope regarding the prospects of their continued presence in the region.\(^{112}\)

The national discord and ethnic tussles in present day Kazakhstan have brought into question Soviet claims of a unique homogenous entity called the "Soviet Man" living in a single nationhood. As new "majorities" and "minorities" have emerged, the leadership of the new Republic shall have to maintain balance between their respective aspirations. By now, President Nazarbayev has been able to capitalize on this underlying spirit of inter-ethnic moderation to pursue policies which generally satisfy both the Kazakh and Russian-speaking communities.\(^{113}\) These are evident from various provisions of the constitution adopted in 1993 and 1995. The estimate for the 1990s is one million people, most of whom will move to Russia.\(^{114}\) Much in this respect will depend on the policies of the new

\(^{110}\) Sengupta, Anita., *op cit.*, p.292.
\(^{111}\) Ibid., p.291.
\(^{113}\) Sengupta, Anita, *op cit.*, p.284.
\(^{114}\) Tishkov, Valery, A., *op cit.*, pp.133-34.
Republic and their utmost sincerity in evolving Kazakhstan as a multicultural plural society.

**Language Reform**

Replete with symbolic meaning, the adoption of language laws granting the state status to the titular Kazakh language definitely reflects ethnic bias in the legislation. The fight for a wider use of the Kazakh language in education, culture and administrative practice relates not only to the growth of ethnic consciousness and the desire to prevent acculturation but also to the mundane motivation to place the Kazakhs in more advantageous positions with respect to other ethnic groups. The language law of September 1989 declared Kazakh to be the state language of Kazakhstan and required its eventual widespread use in public life, while the Russian language was granted the ambiguous status of being the language of inter-ethnic discourse. The Slavs in the Republic were opposed to the policy of ‘Kazakhization’ and they considered it as an ‘infringement on other people’s rights’. The new constitution of Kazakhstan (1995) elevated the status of Russian from the “language of inter-ethnic communication” to an “official” language of the state. Kazakh, however, remains the sole state language.

The new-found equilibrium was, however, disturbed soon after when in November 1996 the lower house of the Kazakhstani parliament passed a draft revision of the language law requiring the executive branch to draw up a list of state sector posts for which a working knowledge of Kazakh would be obligatory. The draft further stipulated that this provision would go into effect in the year 2006 for non-Kazakhs while Kazakhs would have only

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116 Ibid., p.255-56.
until the year 2001 to acquire a facility in the state language. The Senate, however rejected the bill sending it back to the lower house for revision. The final version of the law adopted by both houses of parliament in July 1997 set no deadline for the full switch to Kazakh in public administration. In live with the Kazakhstan constitution, the new language law states that Russian is used on a par with the Kazakh language in state organization of organs of local self-government.

There are widespread activities of the Qazaqtili organization, a grand language planner, based on the combination of political will, government financing and favourable demography. "If a language like Hebrew could be revived and transformed into a modern and scientific language... why cannot the Kazakh language do the same? Thus, the certification of translation standards, language reform, the replacement of Russian words with Turkic / Arabic analogues and the like have become the daily work of this busy organization.

The newly-acquired freedom for national assertion in the Republic could lead us to assume the existence of a native constituency that is overwhelmingly in favour of linguistic revival. The national folklorists or the 'lonely philologists and half-forgotten poets” often assume cultural leadership in national revival that take place after prolonged cultural repression. Since the proclamation of sovereignty. Kazakh folklorists have launched a fervent campaign to counter the hegemony of Russian in public sphere. They warned that Kazakh was rapidly headed towards extinction unless immediate corrective measures were taken to restore its prestige. The

120 Sarsembayev, Azamat., *op cit.*, p.334.
123 Dave, Bhavna., *op cit.*, p.53.
nationalist slogan *nyet yazyka, nyet natsii* (a nation cannot be without its language) struck an intuitive chord among the euphoric national strata of the new Republic. Cultural entrepreneurs were eloquent in conveying the tragedy befalling their small nation, whose ‘elders’ could not even sing lullabies or speak words of endearment in Kazakh to their ‘urban grandchildren. Throughout 1992 and 1993, the metaphor of ‘death’ and ‘extinction’ of Kazakh as a result of the Soviet-endorsed genocide became household themes.

Due to this, when Kazakhstan’s first Constitution declared Kazakh to be the sole state language, it was justified in ethno-national terms: “if the indigenous language is not recognized on its own historical homeland, where else does it have a chance to survive.” However, the language planners in Kazakhstan had no answers for those 40 percent of the Kazakhs who did not know their own language. Abduali Qaidarov, President of the state-supported Kazakh Language Revival Society, *Qazaqtili*, called for compassion and understanding towards the unfortunate 40% of his own brethren who had been deprived of the knowledge of their language, genealogy and culture due to the assimilationist machinations of Soviet nationalities policies. “It is not their fault, only their misfortune” stated Qaidarov.

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127 Dave, Bhavna. *op cit.*, p.54.
The noted Kazakh demographer, Makash Tatimov, also addressed the issue arguing that objective changes in demography will determine the course of national revival and language shift.\textsuperscript{129} When the Stalin era excesses and Khrushchev’s misguided Virgin Lands campaign reduced the Kazakhs to barely one-third of the total population on their own land, they had little choice but to speak the language of the majority. But now, the tables have turned, the continuing exodus of Russians promises a comfortable urban niche for the native language-speakers. He is optimistic that the Kazakhs will fully restore their genetic pool by year 2010, becoming a majority in their own state and numbering about 12 million.\textsuperscript{130} He also disputed the “40 percent syndrome” mentioned by Qaidarov, arguing that the native language proficiency of Kazakhs should be determined not by the extent of public usage, but by the extent to which the language is spoken in family settings. He estimated the number of Kazakhs who do not know their

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p.54.  
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p.54-55.
own language to be only 28 percent. The unambiguous message of Tatimov is that the prospects for national revival are indeed bright and that a language shift will logically follow a demographic shift.

A shift away from Russian to one’s native Kazakh can hardly take place on short order, it typically requires a generational change. Efforts to introduce legislation have met squarely with such obstacles as lack of standardized native terminology, suitable Kazakh textbooks and dictionaries, shortage of qualified teachers and a methodology for teaching Kazakh in schools. There has emerged enormous pressure on the Kazakh language teachers to substitute non-Russian vocabulary for political and scientific terminology and to translate from Russian all government documents and forms into local language. For these practical reasons, by putting Russian as ‘official’ language, bilingualism has been pursued to function for the transitional stage during which Kazakh will gradually come to be adopted in everyday life.

Yet, despite the existence of such facilitating conditions as political will and government support, a serious language revival plan still remains to be implemented broadly. However, the climate of national sovereignty has offered national citizens opportunities for the first time to engage in a public dialogue that they are living in their ‘own’ state in which they can and should speak their native language without fear or embarrassment. The declining influence of Russian has brought the realization that Russian is neither a full-fledged international language nor a substitute for one’s native tongue.

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131 Ibid., p.55.
132 Smith Graham, op cit., p.150.
134 Dave, Bhavna., op cit., p.70.
135 Ibid., p.71.
**Ethnic Factor in Legislations**

There are several other examples of policies and documents which reveal the predominance of the element 'ethnic' in governance. The Kazakh government has used all legislative instruments to suppress Russian nationalist organizations such as Lad, the Cossacks, Congress of Russian communities and others, on the basis that they tend to pursue secessionist, irredentist and even militant agendas. The city Soviet of Ust-kamenogorsk has become the main centre of resistance to the nation-building strategies of the regime. In 1990, it demanded amendments of Languages Act and changes in the Declaration of Sovereignty of Kazakhstan, proclaiming that if these demands were rejected, the region would insist on territorial autonomy on the basis of the existing law of the USSR. At present, it is the Cossack Movement which is regarded by the government as potentially the most dangerous force threatening the unity of the Kazakhstan. The joint meeting of the Cossacks of Siberia and Kazakhstan held in Omsk in early 1994, proclaimed the merger of the two Cossack unions into Siberian Cossack Force. The Cossack organizations are not recognized officially and their leaders have been arrested on numerous occasions, especially after Cossack demonstrations in several northern cities and Almaty in 1994, when they demanded that Kazakhstan should join Russia.

Relations between Russia-based organizations and government officials in Kazakhstan have visibly deteriorated in recent years. The activities of Edinstvo, the Society for Slavic Culture and the Russian community of North Kazakhstan have been banned; high profile Russian activists like Boris Suprunyuk of the Russian Community of Kazakhstan

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137 Zhang Yougjin, Azizian Rouben., *op cit.*, p.64.
have been arrested on charges of inciting inter-ethnic discord. Cossack organizations have been singled out for particularly harsh treatment.\footnote{Smith Graham., \textit{op cit.}, p.158}

The economic sector is undergoing a major privatization process with the crucial participation of foreign capital. Although, the government is bound to pursue a policy of equal opportunities for all ethnic groups as well as foreign investors within the context of the globalizing world economy, there is a recent development unveiling the nature of Kazakhisation. The Kazakh leadership is determined to preserve the state’s control over the most promising and strategic oil and gas industry.\footnote{Sarsembayev, Azmat., \textit{op cit.}, p.336.} The Kazakh elite has assumed full control of this vital industry since it would serve as an economic basis of Kazakh political dominance in the longer term.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp.336-37.} In addition, in April 1998 President Nazarbyev announced his plan to curb the privatization process of oil and gas industries in order to preserve some national assets for future generations and so as to preserve the ethnocentric power of the native Kazakhs.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp.336-37.} Similarly, it is now widely held belief that the Kazakhstan authorities have deliberately driven certain Slavic enterprises and collective farms to the verge of bankruptcy in order to enable Kazakh-controlled investment groups to privatize them at low prices.\footnote{Smith Graham., \textit{op cit.}, pp.49-50.}

State planning and social engineering are used to ensure the domination of the Kazakhs in the long term. The state recruitment policy is utilized to ensure Kazakh loyal cadres in governmental, administrative and elected jobs. Thus in 1994, ethnic Kazakhs were almost 75 percent in both the Cabinet of Ministers and Presidential Administration.\footnote{Sarsembayev, Azmat., \textit{op cit.}, p.333-34.} The representation of the native Kazakhs in the police, the army, the National Security Committee and the newly created intelligence agency is also

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At the parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan in 1994, the Kazakhs won 63 percent of seats. Presently eighty percent of the staff of the Kazakh President’s office are ethnic Kazakhs. There are several such implications which tend to reflect the presence of “ethnic” element in the governance of new nationalizing Republic of Kazakhstan.

**Fragile Ethnic Peace**

Although inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan have not blown into a full fledged war, yet they continue to remain tense and fragile. During the disturbances in Alma Ata in December 1986, occurred due to replacement of ethnic Kazakh Secretary Kunayev by an ethnic Chuvash from Russia, Gennady Kolbin, almost 10,000 people took to the streets in Alma Ata. Some two hundred people were injured in the firing and several people were killed. Within two days, the riots spread to twelve other cities in the republic. Troops were hurriedly brought into control other towns, where martial law was declared until the demonstrations subsided. By that time at least 17 people had been killed, including three members of the security forces. Chimkent and Jambul, two of the worst hit towns were to remain under martial law until the end of 1987. During the disturbances, the blue collar Russian civil population participated in putting down Kazakh demonstrations.

After these events, Kazakhstan’s stability and ethnic peace remained fragile. In October 1990, when President Nazarbayev persuaded or rather forced, some leaders of the Kazakh major opposition groups in Alma Ata to declare a two-year moratorium on demonstrations in the capital, others promptly staged a demonstration against the moratorium. In June 1992, the

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146 Ibid., p.334.
147 Zhang Yougjin, Azizian Rouben., *op cit.*, p.94.
opposition resumed demonstration, which this time took an anti-government character.\(^{149}\)

The ethnic peace in Kazakhstan is very relative and exists mainly because of the quantitative parity of the two major ethnic groups. However, the worsening economic situation and growing unemployment has clearly strengthened Kazakh malevolence towards other ethnic groups in the Republic.\(^{150}\) In July and August 1990, Kazakhs clashed with Chechans in the Dzhambul raion.\(^{151}\) In the beginning of 1992, activists of Kazakh organizations *Azat* forced Chechens and Ingush living in the Novyi Mir settlement in the Taldy-Kyrgan oblast to sell their houses for a mere trifle and to leave Kazakhstan immediately. Meskhetian Turks living in the Enbekshikazakhskii raion received the ultimatum from the local Kazakhs to leave the raion in three months.\(^{152}\)

Solzhenitsyn’s proposal to annex Northern Kazakhstan published in “How We Should Build Russia” led to the protests from a wide spectrum of Kazakh intelligentsia and youth and to the demonstrations in Alma Ata on September 21-23 1990.\(^{153}\) The Kazakhs reminded the Russians that the Omsk Oblast in the Russian Federation was once Kazakh territory. A new momentum amongst Russians in the North is gaining ground. In December 1992, some 15,000 Russians demonstrated in Ust Kamenogorsk demanding that Russian be recognized along with Kazakh as a state language and that dual citizenship with Russia be given to Russians.\(^{154}\) The Cossack movement among Russians are quite formidable presently, who seek to protect Russian’s interest in the Republic. Many of the workers demonstrations in mines and extraction industry which is essentially economic in character

\(^{149}\) Ibid., p.253.
\(^{150}\) Ibid., p.253-54.
\(^{151}\) Ibid., p.253-54.
\(^{152}\) Ibid., p.254.
\(^{153}\) Ibid., p.254.
\(^{154}\) Rashid, Ahmad., *op cit.*, p. 131.
often take ethnic colour and the Kazakhs often blame Russians for their misfortunes.

Despite the evidence of Kazakhisation actions presented above, Nazarbayev has tried to balance the overall situation by satisfying the demands of Kazakh nationalists and by soothing the Russians and has been able to preserve the inter-ethnic peace in such a volatile country. It could well be observed that the actual pursuit of the Kazakhisation policy by the political elites is moving ahead, while the official documents claim the project of a supra-ethnic nation-state with only few special rights for the titular nation.155

**Kazakhstan as a Multi-ethnic Society**

It is quite manifest that there has been an ethnic component to virtually every major sphere of state activity in Kazakhstan. However, real or likely the threat to the country's territorial integrity, the spectre of secession and possible annexation of Northern Kazakhstan to Russia, pre-eminence of Russians in the core economic sectors, their competing numerical strength, to disengage the new Republic from possible inter-ethnic strifes and finally to establish the new Republic as plural, democratic and poly-cultural society among the comity of nations remain ever present factor shaping Kazakhstan’s state policy and its nationalizing practices in particular. Realization of negative consequences of ethno-nationalism has forced the state to move away from it and turn to the politics of formation of the united nation in Kazakhstan.156

The new constitution of Kazakhstan is dedicated to “We... the people of Kazakhstan”. The republic is made a democratic, secular, law-based unitary state with a presidential system of rule.157 The rights and liberties of

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155 Sarsembayev, Azmat., *op cit.*, p.337.
156 Shams-Ud-din., *op cit.*, p.245.
the individual are recognized and guaranteed in the Constitution. No one may be subjected to discrimination on grounds of origin, sex, race, language, religion or place of residence. Freedom of speech and creativity are guaranteed. All are entitled to use their native language and culture. Censorship is prohibited. Any action capable of disrupting inter-ethnic accord is deemed unconstitutional. Restrictions of civil rights and liberties on political grounds is not permitted in any form. Human and civil rights and liberties may be restricted only by law and only to the extent that is necessary to defend that constitutional system and to safeguard public order. Civil and political solidarity of all citizens is assumed as a basis of the state. Legal basis for providing equity of rights and freedom of all citizens regardless of their ethnic or religious identity has been created.

Officially, national policy of Kazakhstan is based on the clear and distinct principles like: search for inter-ethnic interaction, social stability as a basis for fair solution to the question of nationality, supremacy of law and strengthening of national independence and active policy of integration.

Nowadays, there are 3,474 Kazakh high schools, 2,514 Russian high schools, 2,017 mixed Kazakh and Russian high schools, 78 Uzbek high schools, 13 Uighur high schools, 3 Tajik and 1 Ukrainian high school in Kazakhstan. In addition there are a number of Sunday schools where children can learn their mother-tongue at the request of their parents. During the year 2000, there were over 200 Sunday schools teaching 25 languages of the nations living in Kazakhstan.

Some cities have the so-called schools of national revival. For instance, children in a school in North Kazakhstan can study ten languages.

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158 Ibid., pp.131-38.
159 Ibid., pp.131-38.
160 Ibid., pp.131-38.
162 Ibid., pp.45-46.
163 Ibid., p. 46.
like Armenian, Polish, German, Hebrew, Tatar, Bashkir, Chechen, Ingushian, Ukrainian and Azerbaijani. In those schools, along with their mother tongues children can study literature, folklore, history of their nations and the world religions.

A sufficient number of textbooks for national schools as well as various books are published in Uighur, Uzbek, Russian and other languages. Upto 30 books in the languages of the ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan are published by the state every year. Since 1995, 10 percent quota was given to ethnic minorities to enter the institutes and universities in Kazakhstan. As a result, the number of representatives of ethnic minorities among students has come upto 17.7%. For the four years of this quota practice, over 7,800 young people of different nations have entered the universities and institutes in Kazakhstan.

The Kazakh mass media has very close contacts with the various diaspora. At present magazines and newspapers in 11 national languages are issued. The major editions are the Korean, the German, the Ukrainian, the Russian and the Uighur newspapers. There are 44 TV studios broadcasting in 12 languages and 18 radio stations broadcasting in 7 languages. The Kazakhstan national TV channel produces programmes in Russian, Uighur, Korean and German languages. Kazakh Republican Television produces an education program called “Our Home is Kazakhstan” which is devoted to history and culture of the various ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan.

The Assembly of Nations of Kazakhstan, which was established in 1995 under the initiative of President Nazarbayev plays an important role in the maintenance of inter-ethnic harmony in the country. The Assembly is

164 Ibid., p.46
165 Ibid., p.46-47.
166 Ibid., p.47
167 Ibid., p.47.
168 Ibid., p.47.
169 Ibid., p.47.
comprised of all the national and cultural centres and all the representatives of the ethnic minorities living in the country. It has a status of consulting and advisory body to the President of the Republic. The Assembly has the following objectives: assistance in maintenance of the inter-ethnic harmony, development of proposals on state policy promoting development of friendly relations in Kazakhstan, assistance in their religious and cultural revival and concern for the diverse national interests in the national policy.

Today over 300 Republican, regional, district and city national and cultural centres are running across the Republic. In principle, the centres are designed as the basic units of ethno-cultural self-government. According to Nazarbayev, “they constitute the hearts of preserving national self-consciousness, the organizational mechanism for supporting and developing national traditions, cultures and the original spirituality of the nations and national groups. These national-cultural centres must take initiative in achieving harmony among people not only of different nationalities but also religious confessions.”

It is often been maintained that inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan have been stable. For instance in 1992-94, the inter-ethnic relations ranked the fifth among the most important problems in Kazakhstan. At present, people in Kazakhstan believe that the issues takes the 13th position. 88.7% of Russian students and 88.8% of Kazakh students have friends of other nationalities. As for the mixed marriages, 29.1% are positive, 55.8% are tolerant and 12.7% are negative. All the ethnic groups seem to be tolerant and willing to work in the multi-ethnic teams and are ready to cooperate and interact with other ethnic groups.

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170 Ibid., p.47.
171 Ibid., p.47.
173 Abhishev Adel E., op cit., p.49-51.
174 Ibid., p.51.
Nevertheless despite the positive factors in multi-ethnic relations, one should keep in mind that the balance that reached in the multi-ethnic relations is not constant. The relations change all the time. In late 1999 many questions remained about the viability of state institutions, but the view that Kazakhstan would experience ethnic strife has withered even as the state-led coercion of cultural minorities are weakly employed.175

Rather, the new Republic of Kazakhstan has chosen the graduate incremental process of Kazakhisation. They have crafted strategies to adopt the formal legal requirements of a civil society while simultaneously pursuing extra-legal measures that run counter to the intentions of well meaning institutional crafters.176 The institutional protections are genuinely minimum as the real politics of ethnic divisions lies beyond the scope of the legally ‘civic’ designations. The political elites offer minimal forms of institutional accommodation for its ethnic minorities. Preferential treatment of ethnic Kazakhs in practical quest for building a Kazakh identity for the Republic by reinterpreting history and popularizing the call “Kazakhstan for Kazakhs’ etc. have definitely contributed to a large scale out-migration of ethnic Russians in 1990s. Likewise, the politics of language preference was eventually settled with a compromise in which Russian was upgraded to the level of ‘official’ language, yet coercive elements of Kazakh language promotion (such as the requirements that all state officials pass proficiency exams in Kazakh by 2005) are still continuing. Despite formulations in the constitution and other legislative acts guaranteeing the equality of all citizens, nationalizing policies and practices are manifest in the iconography of the new regimes, the privileged status according to local languages, newly revised histories and the exclusion of non-eponymous groups from the echelons of power.177 There has been an ethnic component to virtually

175 Schatz, Edward A.D., op cit., p.72.
176 Ibid., pp.72-74.
177 Smith Graham., op cit., p.139.
every major sphere of state activity. The state as a whole is being perceived as nationalizing by representative of the national minority and, therefore, exercises a real effect on relations between titular and non-titular groups.

The establishment is looking for different ways to ensure both the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan and the success of its strategies of building a nationalizing regime, i.e., they are trying to combine discursive policies that in practice are difficult to reconcile. Apparently, the multi-ethnic composition of Kazakhstan is one of the reasons why President Nazarbayev argue for civil accord and inter-ethnic accommodation in the Republic. He constantly emphasizes that no one ethnic group should have privileges in the Republic.

So far, Nazarbayev has proved to be a very skilful politician who is capable, if not to defuse inter-ethnic tension, then to keep it under control. His authoritarian regime remains the only effective instrument to prevent ethno-political polarization and instability in the region. However, it is unlikely to be durable guarantor of social stability. The question of power-sharing between different ethnic groups in Kazakhstan still remains unresolved. A virtual absence of consociational structures makes developing a bargaining political culture a particularly difficult task. Indeed, the central challenge of cultural pluralism has not disappeared in Kazakhstan. Under such conditions, the ethnic Russian northern regions could be the site of autonomy or separatist movements that could provoke tensions.

The competition for political participation, economic opportunities and cultural status virtually ensures that ethnicity will remain an important criterion for political organization and that ethnically based claims will maintain a prominent place on the agenda of the state. Devoid of plural democratic traditions, institutions and intensions in the new Republic, the authoritarian type of regime in Kazakhstan could only ensure stability in the

178 Zhang Yougjin, Azizian Rouben., op cit., p.65.
179 Schatz, Edward A.D., op cit., p.90.
region and exercise sufficient control over the ethno-political situation to avoid inter-ethnic clashes while the new nation-state is in the making.