CHAPTER-V

Challenges to Uzbekistan’s Democracy
The stability of political system in any country is always determined by the attitude, orientation, value, belief of the people towards political system of the country. So, democracy as a value and belief system and also a form of government attracted most of the Third World countries of Afro-Asian regions after the Second World War and during 1950s and 1960s. But experience of democracy in these countries during last 40 to 50 years shows that it has failed miserably and same traditional political forces, who occupied political power before colonial period, continue to rule these countries. A close look at the functioning of these democracies shows that the system looks like an intermittent political system, as defined by Gabriel Almond and C. B. Powell. It has no set of rules, no structures which is specialized for political purposes. The intermittent political system closely resembles the Eskimos political system as defined by Almond and Powell. Most of the Third World countries of Asia and Africa which have adopted democratic political system closely resemble this type of intermittent political system, where no special political structure developed to perform specific political function and sometime one structure performs all political functions. Almond and Verba have classified democratic political system into three subclasses on the basis of their nature and function. They are, democratic political system having high subsystem autonomy, those having limited subsystem autonomy, and those having low subsystem autonomy. The first of these categories has high subsystem autonomy. This is a

type of political system, such as the British or the American, in which political parties, interest groups or the media of mass communication are relatively differentiated from the other, in which there is a well developed and widely distributed participant political culture. The second subclass is characterized by limited subsystem autonomy. This might include France of the Third and Fourth republics, Italy after World War II, and Weimer Germany. These are systems in which political parties, interest groups and the media of mass communication tend to be dependent on one other. The Catholic political party and trade unions in these countries don’t simply function as interest groups but also as political parties. These systems are also characterized by fragmentation of political culture. The third class of democratic political system is made up of those with low subsystem autonomy. These have been referred to as one-party-dominant systems or hegemonic party systems, where political process is dominated by one party or one group.  

Most of the Third World countries come under limited subsystem autonomy and low subsystem autonomy as classified by Almond and Powel. Due to this they face numerous problems in developing an effective democratic political system, which can fulfil the needs and aspirations of the people while at the same time maintain social harmony. As most of these states are multi-ethnic, and multi-religious in character, the authorities have to maintain a close balance between interests of various social groups. Failure to meet the demand of one group leads to discontent and sometime these groups resort to violence to achieve the

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1 Ibid, pp. 260-266.
objective of their groups. With the government being too weak to maintain a balance in the society, the legitimacy of the government comes into question.

In certain Third World countries clashes between diverse interest groups having affiliation to different religious and ethnic groups have led to the undermining of the authority of government. It should be noted that, the simmering discontents among various ethnic and religious groups can be traced back to the pre-independence phase. If the dominant group or groups try to assert their dominance in the post-independence phase, then evolution of a pluralistic state is endangered, jeopardising the interests of minority ethnic and religious groups. The problem is compounded by collapsing economic system, which further accentuates the cleavages within the society as each group tries to attain maximum benefits from scarce resources. This factor mentioned above adds fuel to the fire and leads to the growth of separatisms among the ethnic minority groups. Growth of majoritarian nationalism sponsored by the ruling regime, in order to legitimize itself also exacerbates the situation.

Uzbekistan like other Central Asian Republics is also facing the problem of establishing a democratic political system. The main challenge Uzbekistan is facing in its quest for democratisation is the emergence of Uzbek cultural nationalism partly sponsored by state authorities which threatens the growth of pluralistic culture as well as the revival of political Islam. These problems have been further compounded by the transitional nature of Uzbek economy as it moves from a command economy of Soviet period to a market-oriented
economy, in a new set-up. This chapter will assess to what extent growth of Uzbek cultural nationalism and revival of a political Islam hinders the development of a multi-cultural society through democratisation process. However, before analyzing Uzbek ethno-nationalism, it is necessary to analyse the theoretical framework of ethno-nationalism and the role it plays in the post Cold War era. The chapter will also try to focus in a macro-framework, the nature of Uzbekistan economy which to some extent contributes to the growth of Uzbek ethno-nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism.

**Ethno-Nationalism in a Broader Outline**

No other political ideology has been as misunderstood as the concept of ethno-nationalism. Myriad number of wars, conflicts and revolts have took place in the world due to the passion for ethnicity and nationalism. In fact, nationalistic sentiments partly aided and fuelled by religion, individual and group interests pose one of the greatest challenges to democracy and democratisation process in the post-Cold War era. The very concept of nation-state is in danger in many of the nascent states which attained their independence after the collapse of Soviet Union.

The sudden emergence of many states and their formation on the basis of ethnicity and nationalism has led to growing concern. Nationalism may be defined as the doctrine in which the most important line of cleavage for

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establishing membership in a conflict group is nationality.\textsuperscript{5} When we analyse this definition in a macro-framework, the ideology of nationalism is build on people's awareness of a nation (national self-consciousness) to a set of attitude and a programme of action. These may be cultural, economic or political. Since nation can be defined in ethnic, social or official senses, hence nationalism can take these forms. In fact, nationalism seeks to defend and promote the interests of the nation.\textsuperscript{6} As a form of political behaviour, nationalism is closely linked to ethnocentrism and patriotism. Nationalistic behaviour is based on the feeling of belonging to a community which is the nation. Those who do not belong to the nation are seen as different, foreigners or aliens with loyalties to their own nations.\textsuperscript{7}

It has also been pointed out that, nationalism is the desire to preserve or enhance people's national or cultural identity when the identity is threatened or the desire to transform or even create it where it is felt inadequate or lacking. It has also been noted that, what distinguishes a people from other peoples in their own eyes consist of way of thinking, feeling and behaving, which are or which they believe are peculiar to them. Thus nationalism is primarily a cultural phenomenon, though it can and often does take a political form. It is related to but is different from both patriotism and national consciousness.\textsuperscript{8}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5} Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State", \textit{Survival}, Vol. 35, No.1, spring, 1993, p.7.
\item \textsuperscript{6} James G. Kellas, op.cit, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{7} Ibid, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{8} John Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism", In March Williams (ed.) \textit{International Relations in the Twentieth Century, a Reader}, McMillan, p. 45.
\end{itemize}
Patriotism can be a devotion to the community which one identifies with himself. It gives a sense of cultural identity and distinguishes one people from others. But nationalism, as distinct from mere national consciousness, arises when people are aware not only of cultural diversity, but of cultural change and share some ideas of progress which move them to compare their own achievements and capacities with others.  

Origin and Historical Development of the Concept of Nationalism

As a coherent doctrine and as a political ideology, the concept of nationalism can be traced back to the development in the late 18th century and as a form of national consciousness it can be traced back to the ancient times. As Anthony D. Smith opines, ethnic communities may be defined as named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity. From the above definition it can be outlined that there are number of elements involved in the concept of ethnic nationalism. They are as follow:

a) Names are important not only for the self and other identification, but also as express emblems of the collective personality until a collective cultural identity receives a proper name, it lacks, in an important sense, a recognisable sense of community.

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9 Ibid.
b) What is important is the belief or myth of common ancestry and not some genetic heritage. Ethnicity is not about blood or about genes as such, but myths and beliefs in common origins.

c) One must note the importance of historical memories. Of course such memories are not the relics of historians, the careful inference that may have been drawn from tested documentary sources by supposedly dispassionate historians.

d) A shared culture is more variable. These cultural components include dress, food, music, crafts, and architecture as well as laws, customs, and institutions. By far the most common shared cultural elements are language and religion. In Europe and parts of Asia, language has been the most frequent differentiator of ethnicity.  

**Politics of Nationalism in the Post-Cold War Era**

With the disintegration of Soviet Union and subsequent end of Cold War, it was hoped that peace would prevail in the world, but these expectation have been belied. A new form of danger emerged which threaten the very survival of nation-states. The new forces, which were dormant during the Cold War period, due to superpower ideological rivalries, came to play an important role in shaping world politics. The forces of nationalism are not confined to one country, or one continent, but are sweeping across the globe. Many of the African countries like, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Burundi are facing the problem of

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ethnic nationalism which threatens the very notion of nation-state system. In Europe a number of states collapsed and led to the emergence of many new states. The break-up of Yugoslavia and subsequent emergence of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia on ethnic line proves the fact that how aggressive nationalism can pose danger to multi-ethnic nation state system. The ongoing ethnic conflict in Cyprus between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, divided on religious lines, shows that ethnic factor is likely to play a major role in shaping the international relations in 21 Century. After the disintegration of Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, 22 new states have been established.\textsuperscript{12}

In Asia, ethnic conflicts are going on in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and China etc. In Indonesia after a prolonged struggle East Timor finally got its independence. Another important thing that should be noted while analysing nationalistic conflict in post-Cold War era is that, although new nations emerged on ethnic basis, they are not homogenous and are also facing the challenges to their nation-building process from various sub-ethnic and nationalistic groups as each try to dominate the power structure. Sometimes transfer of power from previously minority political elites to present majority political elites has led to reprisal on minority communities and subsequently to violent ethnic conflicts.

The sudden emergence of newly independent countries, in the Eurasian region after the disintegration of Soviet Union, has created a number of problems for

these newly independent countries. Some of these problems are new to them, like creating a new political system, developing and sustaining a economy in transition i.e. from command economic structure to a market oriented economy, and various other problems they inherited from the past. The most important problem they face after attaining independence is how to define their identity in the post-Soviet phase i.e. who they are, what sort of history they have? This crisis is not new since all the newly independent countries face this sort of problems. Before the formation of Soviet Union, the Central Asian states had never experienced any sense of nationhood in the true western sense. Before the Tsarist Russia’s annexation, Khanates existed in Central Asia i.e. Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand and people’s loyalties were divided to one or another Khan, not to a well defined territory. However, in cultural sense all of the Central Asia, as Graham E. Fuller notes, was divisible into two primary cultural types: nomadic culture, particularly the Turkmen, Kazaks, Kyrgyzs and an urban culture based on twin pillars of Turkic governmental, administrative, military institutions and Persian literary and artistic culture.

The whole region was informally known as ‘Turkestan’ to both the region’s inhabitants and to the Russians. After the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin applied his principle of nationality, created new republics in Central Asian region from the remnants of three khanates. This led to the formation of five republics of Kazaks, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyzs and Kara Kalpak Autonomous republic which had been previously

classified as nations by the Soviets and incorporated in 1924 into the Union.\textsuperscript{14} After the territorial delimitation the communist party of Soviet Union tried to create strong states in Central Asia - that is, states with a high degree of [1] administrative competence [2] centralised policy-making authority and [3] societal penetration.\textsuperscript{15} Apart from the above factors rapid economic growth and increase in the percentage of literacy levels in almost all the republics and a supra-national Soviet identity gave these Central Asian states a new sort of identity. However, after the disintegration of Soviet Union, the leaders of these states, reaffirmed their common historical ties in a cohesive manner renaming the region as Central Asia (Tsentralanay Aziia) thereby refusing to recognize the Soviet imposed separation of Kazakhstan from the other four states which were grouped together and known collectively as middle Asia (Srednyaya Aziia).\textsuperscript{16}

It should be noted that, despite best Soviet efforts in maintaining social harmony among various nationalities, the problems among various nationalities remained even before the introduction of Perestroika and Glasnost in Soviet Union. This was evident from Andropov’s speech during 60\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the establishment of the USSR in 1982. Andropov stated “the achievements in the sphere of national relations by no means signify that all the problems generated by the fact of life and work of numerous nations and nationalities in a single state have vanished”. He attributed the difficulties to not just the survivals of the


\textsuperscript{16}For details see Martha Brill Olcott, “The Myth of Tsentral Aziia”, \textit{Orbis}, 38/ 4, Fall, 1994.
past but to mistakes made in daily work. “Everything counts, our attitude to language, monument of the past, interpretation of historical events and the way we transform rural and urban areas”.

The 19th All Union Party Conference which was held in June 1988 put great stress on removing existing anomaly which existed among various nationalities. It emphasised “creating conditions for the free development of ethnic languages and cultures and asserting mutual respect for historical traditions and national identity in inter-ethnic relation, due consideration for the economic and cultural interest of each people”. Following the 19th All Union Party Conference all the republics of Central Asia adopted new language laws which established Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Tajik as their respective state language. Article 24 of the Draft Law on Tajik Language stated that the Tajik SSR shall promote the study of Tajik writings using the Arabic script and the publication of literature using the script. In the post-independent phase the republican political elites in order to garner legitimacy to their rule and gain popular support adopted vigorously the language laws. However, the new language laws of various Central Asian states also provide for necessary and inevitable lengthy work to help the Russians master the local languages.

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Apart from the language issue the other aspect which the new political elites of
Central Asians are giving importance is on emphasizing country’s past heritage.
For example, the new state flags of the Central Asian states are carefully chosen
to specify the titular nation’s culture. The Turkmenistan flag depicts five carpet
guls, each of which is associated with a different tribe. The Kazakhstan flag is
perhaps the least nationalistic, containing only a fairly neutral ‘national
ornamentation’ on the hoist side.20

To give an added impetus to the reassertion of their national identity, the Central
Asian political elites also put great emphasis on national customs and traditions.
The image of Manas, the legendary warrior and the laws of Kyrgyz epic poem,
became quite popular in Kyrgyzstan. In Turkmenistan, President Niyazov
declared himself, as Turkmenbashy. In Turkmenistan a new political
organisation, which reflects national tradition Hala Maslakhaty (People’s
Council), was formed. Similarly, in Kazakhstan, historiographers tried to trace
the origin of Kazakhstan into antiquity. The Kazakh government in June 1995
spelled out the importance of conception of the development of a historical
consciousness in the republics of Kazakhstan. It stressed the antiquity of the
nation. It traced the ‘genealogical chain of kinship the commonality of origin of
the peoples continuously from the modern Kazaks to the Sacce, the Usuns, and
the Kangli and further to the tribes of the Andronov culture.21 The

20 Graham Smith, Vivian Law, Andrew Wilson, Annette Bohr and Edward Allworth, (eds.),
Nation Building in the Post Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities, Cambridge,
21 Ibid, p. 146.
reinterpretation in Tajikistan has been marred by inter-group rivalries that hinder the development of a national culture and heritage.

Another important ethno-nationalistic trend that is going on in the Central Asian region is the increasing exodus of Slavic and other ethnic minorities which hinders development of effective, democratic and plural societies in Central Asia. For example, in 1989, there were nearly 12 million Russian speaking people in Central Asia, with 9.5 million ethnic Russians and of those around two-thirds had been born in the region. They made up a much larger proportion, 21.5 percent and 37.8 percent respectively in Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.\textsuperscript{22} In Tajikistan, Russians constituted 8.4 percent of total population and 9.5 percent in Turkmenistan.\textsuperscript{23}

After independence large number of ethnic minorities, particularly Russians left Central Asian countries due to rise of local hostility which consequently led to feeling of insecurity among the Russians and other ethnic minorities. Ethnic riots took place in 1989-90, before the break-up of Soviet Union. Certain state policies exacerbated the situation, e.g. the Constitution of Kazakhstan declares Kazakhstan first and foremost as the homeland of the Kazakh people. Similarly, the 1992 declaration of languages made Kazakh the state language. It was announced that people would not only be allowed to do away with their Russian style suffixes, but even to choose new names from Turkic personalities, ancestors, heroes of epic literature and like. In Kyrgyzstan, the pressure on land

\textsuperscript{22} John Anderson, \textit{The International Politics of Central Asia}, op.cit, p. 146.
has resulted in adoption of a land code which declared that the land in the republic belongs to Kirgyz alone. President Akaev, however, vetoed this provision approved by the parliament of the republic.\textsuperscript{24}

Another important ethno-nationalistic trend that is going on in Central Asia is the emergence of various ethno-nationalistic organisations like Alash and Union of Siberian Cossacks, for promoting their own ethno-nationalistic aspirations. It has further complicated the ethno-nationalistic situations in Central Asian republics hampering the growth of democratic culture.

In a study conducted by CIS Statistical Committee in 1995 regarding motivation for migration to Russia, 17.16 percent in Kazakhstan, 41.17 percent in Kyrgyzstan, 64.43 percent in Tajikistan and 22.86 percent cited deteriorating ethnic relations as a major determinant factor in out-migration of Russians from Central Asia.\textsuperscript{25} The ethno-nationalistic resurgence which is currently taking place in Central Asian countries has also been felt in the democratisation process. In fact, in Uzbekistan, which is also facing the ethno-nationalistic resurgences, democratisation process has been negatively affected.

Like other Central Asian republics Uzbekistan being in the midst of a transition is also currently facing the danger to its democratisation process from growing ethno-nationalism, which threatens the development of a pluralistic society. The nature of inter-ethnic relations that is currently going on in Uzbekistan like the


attempts to rewrite history, in which the achievement of past is being reemphasized and other aspects of minorities and state policy has to be analysed. One of the most important issues that need to be analysed is, how languages as a mechanism is used to suppress minority identity. All these issues need to be analysed in depth.

**Creating New Uzbek National Identity**

One of the first steps that the Central Asian state of Uzbekistan under the leadership of Karimov undertook was to rewrite Uzbek national history in order to create a new national identity, which can mark a break from the Soviet period. An attempt is being made to retrace Uzbek history of the pre-Soviet era. As John Schoeberlein-Engel notes, ‘in the age of nationalism which we are still enduring, the most common way of establishing a state’s identity is through asserting that the identity of the state represents the identity of its population and this is usually defined in terms of national culture, on the world scene, and before their domestic audience, new states are also keen promote themselves as having a deep history and an important presence in the world’. The Uzbek political elite realised that if it fails to build a national identity in the post-Soviet phase, the nation-state system which they want to develop in a European form of nation state system model would not be realised.

In the process of nation-building in newly independent countries, one invariable consequence that comes out is the dominance of one particular group, which

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leads to the suppression of identity of other minority groups. When that happens, the minority groups will resent and it could lead to fresh turmoil within the country. Something like this is happening in Uzbekistan also.

There has been a great debate that is going on in Uzbekistan regarding the origin of Uzbekistan. Barthold in his book, *A Short History of Turkestan* refers to the fact that in the seventh century, 'politically, Turkestan was divided into a number of small states. The most powerful among them was the Prince of Samarkand, who like the Prince of Fergana had the title *Ikhsid*. He goes on to point out that even the *Ikhsid* were only among the landowning noblemen and like them were called *Dihgars*. The *Dihgars* lived in fortified castles and from there completely dominated the country side.27 For the first time this form of state system was developed in Uzbekistan after the emergence of Chenghiz Khan. He took control over Uzbekistan (which was then known as *Mavernnahr*) in 1219, leading 600 thousand troops.28 During Chenghiz Khan period, an attempt was made for the first time to bring all nomadic tribal groups into one political structure under the authority of Khan. A. M. Khazanov, points out that the military political system created by Chenghiz Khan was an innovation for it broke up the upper segments of the traditional social and political organization of Mongol nomads and partially reshuffled their sub-divisions, thus eliminating the threat of separatism.29

However, the name 'Uzbek' first time entered Central Asian lexicon with the Shaybanids conquest in the 16th century. The name was thus associated with the Shaybanid, which ruled the khanates until they lost their independence to Russia. This concept of 'Uzbek' was not what we think now a day as a nationality. It applied to the ruling elites, and by extension, to their subjects. In addition to the ruling elites, there were also many ordinary people who reckoned their descent from member of the Uzbek tribal confederation, those who had been common soldiers in the conquering army that inhabited Central Asia following the conquest. 30

Following the disintegration of Soviet Union and emergence of Uzbekistan as an independent state, the political leadership in Uzbekistan made significant endeavours to resurrect the pre-Soviet Uzbek history and to rehabilitate Uzbek men of letters who in the past had made significant contributions to the culture and politics of Uzbekistan. The first such thing that the Uzbek government did was to acquaint the people of Uzbekistan regarding the ideologies, activities and works of Jadid movement. The works of Jadid movement appeared in various forms like poems, dramas, and prose works etc. Even school text books, were rewritten to give prominence to the Jadid movement so that the ideas of Jadid movement can be inculcated in the mind of school children who can also act as an agency for the promotion of culture.

30 John Schoebelein-Engel, op.cit, p. 13.
The efforts of Uzbek government to rehabilitate the *Jadid* ideologies and their leaders were manifest during a public address on 30 December 1991, where President Islam Karimov even invoked the names of several of the *Jadid* leaders. He remarked that men like Abdullah Qadiris and Abdulruf Fitrat had died for independence in which the people of Uzbekistan now live and that it is the duty of every citizen to live up to the example set by them. Government has sanctioned funding for various projects for rehabilitating past Uzbek literary figures. In Ulugh Beg University, a Department of ‘National Awakening’ (*Milli Uyganish*) has been established to foster efforts of those who are trying to revive repressed events and figures from Uzbek history.\(^{31}\)

Another important historical figure whose name receives particular attention is Timur. The importance of Timur in the Nationalistic policy of Uzbekistan can be grouped into three categories. First, Timur is a symbol of national pride. Although his rule received negative treatment the Soviets, he is now a perennial source of inspiration for the Uzbeks. Second, Timur as the ideal ‘Just Ruler’ was a talented state builder. His methods and policies offer legitimisation for those of the current Uzbek government. Finally, Timur as a fountainhead of the Uzbek ‘National Ideology’ stands as an emblem of Uzbekistan’s re-emergence as an independent regional power. President Karimov’s speech dedicating a new monument to Timur in September 1993 invoked all three themes and presented

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the guidelines for revival of Timur. He further pointed out “for many years the name of Amir Timur was degraded and blacked out from the pages of our history in order to remove the self-awareness from the soul of Uzbek people, in order to destroy the people’s sense of national pride and increase its dependence and subordination. But the Uzbeks have not forgotten their ancestors and heroes...There is no doubt that this image of our great ancestor erected in the very heart of our beautiful capital beloved ancient Tashkent will forever evoke a feeling of immense pride in our people.”

President Karimov declared the year 1996 marking the 660th anniversary of the birth of the former ruler as ‘The Year of Amir Timur’. This shows the nature of importance attached to historiography. This new form of awareness of past historical figures was developed during late Soviet period in Uzbekistan when some sections of intelligentsia began to extol the achievement of Timur and Babar. In 1975, copies of a journal published from Moscow, which carried an article (incidentally by an Uzbek scholar) critical of the chauvinistically inclined works of Academician Muminov and Azimzanova for their one sided assessment of Timur and Babar, disappeared from the kiosks in Tashkent. In fact, Muminov was the President the Uzbek SSR’s Academy of Science.

Unrelenting efforts were made not only to revive rich cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, but also to revive pan-Turkic cultural heritage of the country. For example, an Independence Day Brochure of the Writer's Union of Uzbekistan in 1992 was distributed filled with patriotic Uzbek verses stressing the common heritage of Central Asia.

The symbolism used by the poet Nusrat Kazim in this regard is clear:

"Wake up and unite, you generation of Turan, you, man born between two rivers, people of Turan, the motherland calls you. Uzbek, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Turkmen, give your hands to each other as five fingers." 34

This type of writing and utterances by nationalists created fear psychosis among the minorities, particularly Tajik-speaking populations of Uzbekistan, who are inheritors of Persian heritage. This type of change in historiography and greater emphasis on past led to development of 'Uzbek Chauvinism' which threatens the development of pluralistic democratic culture of Uzbekistan and impinges on the development of a stable democratic polity in Uzbekistan.

**Language Law and its Impact on Inter-Ethnic Relations**

Another important aspect that needs to be analysed is the impact of language issue on inter-ethnic relations. As Donald Horowitz has pointed out the new language policy is related to more issues of power and status rather than that of

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The same thing is happening in Uzbekistan also. The Soviet policy in order to foster greater integration and for rapid advancement of all regions adopted Russian language as a means of communication among various nationalities. The achievement of Russian language as a means of communication has been remarkable. It created a new group of elites; rapid strides were made through the use of Russian languages as a means of communication among various ethnic groups. However, during the period of Gorbachev and due to his policy of Perestroika and Glasnost, numerous changes took place in Soviet social and political system.

A growing number of nationalists taking advantage of Perestroika and Glasnost demanded primacy to local languages. Numbers of public associations were also formed to protect indigenous language and culture. One such association formed during this period was 'Birlik'. The main aim of Birlik was to protect the culture, language and heritage of Uzbeks. It demanded certain modification of the language law. The republican political elite in order to co-opt popular public sentiment adopted certain measures. The First Secretary of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov adopted Uzbekistan's Law on the State Language in 1989. The ostensible objective of language law was to utilise the state language as a potential means of cultivating national consciousness and developing national culture. It aimed at 'de-Russify' those Uzbek elites with a weak knowledge of

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their native language and to promote the state language as a prominent symbol of national sovereignty.36

After attaining independence, some changes were introduced in the state of Uzbek language law. Karimov government took some symbolic measures to change the language law, but did not make any concrete effort to uplift the Uzbek language. The main objective of Islam Karimov in bringing some cosmetic changes in language law is to gain popularity among the masses and to strengthen his hold over political power. The cosmetic changes were evident from the change in the name of streets. For example, in February 1991 names of 171 streets were changed. By September 1992, the name change had affected over 500 streets in the capital city.37 In the Fergana valley town of Namagan over fifty street names were changed in the first ten weeks of 1993.38

Karimov government’s efforts to bring about some cosmetic changes led to the adoption of second edition the law of state language in December 1995. Under the revised law, Russian language was put on par with all other language. Prominence was given to Uzbek, despite the fact that Russian remains the language of convenience for the majority of country’s non-titular population as well as significant proportion of ethnic Uzbek elite.39

36 Ibid, p. 199
39 Graham Smith et al., op.cit, p. 200.
Further more, the second edition of the law of the state language eliminated Russian language as a medium of ethnic communication among various ethnic group. The first edition of the law had devoted six articles to language-related issues within the educational system (e.g. the language as medium of instruction at various levels, Uzbek and Russian as compulsory subjects, the presentation and distribution etc). Unlike the first edition, the second edition made no provision for the study of Arabic based script, which was in use throughout the region until the late 1920s and is still regarded as a potent symbol of Islam. The removal of the article was particularly logical in light of the decision taken by Uzbek authorities in September 1993, to replace the Soviet era Cyrillic script by Latin. In 1928-29, the Arabic script was replaced by the Latin script, which was in turn replaced by Cyrillic script in 1939-40.  

Although the government introduced the new version of language law in 1995, several constraints are there for effective and full implementation of law. The new language law incorporates a new provision which was absent in the old language law of 1989. The first edition of language law of 1989 made it obligatory for state-sector employees to know Uzbek. Similarly, certain provisions of the revised language law will come into effect only form September 2005. If the government implements all the provisions of language law, they have to publish books in Uzbek language. But the shortage of papers and equipment in Uzbekistan limits the size of publishing. Similarly, lack of

experienced teachers proficient in Uzbek language is also hampering the implementation of Uzbek language.

Ethnic Minorities, Inter-Ethnic Relations and Its Impact on Democratization of Polity

Another important aspect of inter-ethnic relations in Uzbekistan is the existence of large number of ethnic minorities in Uzbekistan. A question naturally arises, whether existence of ethnic minorities will facilitate or hinder the democratic development of Uzbekistan. It is relevant to study certain major ethnic-minority groups in Uzbekistan and the nature of inter-ethnic relations among various minorities.

Russians in Uzbekistan

Tsarist Russia's annexation of Central Asia in the 19th century, of which Uzbekistan was a part, changed the entire socio-economic condition of Central Asia. Since this region was full of natural resources, Tsarist Russia needed these resources for its industrialisation. For this reason, it sent large number of Slavic workforce to this region as the local population lacked these skills. Development of railway, heavy industries, etc required large number of technical professionals providing the opportunity to the Slavs to settle there. For example, between 1897 and 1911, the Russian population in the region grew from 109 to 407 thousand people.41

The major factors which facilitated migration of Slavic population from Russia to Uzbekistan, apart from job opportunity, was the good climatic conditions in Uzbekistan as compared to Russia, the privileged conditions they used to enjoy due to the colonialist nature of rule. The socio-economic benefits that followed also facilitated large scale migrations of Russians to Uzbekistan. A new type of social-structure emerged in Tsarist Uzbekistan. A more urbanised, educated, skilled population of Russian origin co-existed with a rural, unskilled Uzbek population. This type of structural imbalance in ethnic composition had profound impact on inter-ethnic relations. As an Uzbek researcher pointed out, “it was honourable and beneficial to be a Russian and Russian citizen in Turkestan during the empire”. 42

After the formation of Soviet Socialistic Republic of Uzbekistan the ethnic composition of Soviet Uzbekistan underwent a change. After 1917 the issue of titular nationality came into sharp focus. By the time of revolution the Uzbek population was 3.5 million. 43 However despite higher birth rate the relative density of the titular nationality also decreased steadily and during the period between the 1926 and 1939 it decreased by 9 percent. 44

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By the 1959 census the portion of Uzbeks decreased by 3.1 percent.\(^{45}\) At the same time the absolute and relative strength of Russian-speaking population grew rapidly. Between the 1926 and 1959 censuses it grew from 6 percent to 18 percent. According to the 1959 census data there were 5026 thousand Uzbeks (comprising 60 percent of the total population), 1101 thousand Russians (13.6 percent of the population), 445 thousand Tatars (5.5 percent of the population), 88 thousand Ukrainians (1.17 percent of the population) and 94 thousand Jews.\(^{46}\)

The radical changes in the demographic situation in Soviet Uzbekistan were due to the following reasons:

As Soviet government adopted massive plan for industrialisation, they also at the same time, required qualified personnel. But, since the local Uzbek population was not well-qualified, this resulted in massive employment of Slavic people in Uzbekistan. They contributed a lot to the development of industrialisation in Uzbekistan. During the World War II, 1941-45, a great number of factories complete with personnel were evacuated to Uzbekistan from other parts of Russia. Ninety large factories and about 1,000,000 people were evacuated and resettled in Uzbekistan alone.

During the war, due to German occupation most of Russia, many of its Slavic population were evacuated from the war-ravaged area. This led to settlement of these people in Uzbekistan. Similarly, Stalin suspecting the Meshketian Turks as

\(^{45}\) Vladimir Mesamed, op.cit, p. 22.
\(^{46}\) Ibid.
traitors forced them to migrate to Uzbekistan. This also changed the ethnic composition of Uzbekistan. The structural imbalances which were there before the revolution remained intact. Worse, it was reinforced after the World War II, as the qualified Russian industrial workers stayed back in Uzbekistan. Thus there came into existence a dual social structure in Uzbekistan. An urbanised strata that was dominated by ethnic Russians co-existing with a rural strata dominated by the Uzbeks. After the Tashkent earthquake in 1966 which devastated the local economy, Russian immigration to Uzbekistan received a boost.

In order to rebuild the devastated economy Uzbekistan required huge skilled manpower with technical expertise. As the local populace was not so proficient in the required task, it necessitated the presence of outside experts. This led to the migration of skilled Russian personnel to Uzbekistan. To settle these Russians, Moscow decided to give twenty percent of new apartments in Tashkent to the Russians. However, this decision of Moscow, led to large scale resentment among the local people. And this culminated in the violent ethnic conflict which took place during a football match in May 1969, what was later labelled as 'Pakhtakor incident', Pakhtakor being the name of the leading sports stadium in Tashkent. Following a football match, fighting erupted between the Uzbek and Russian youth. Thousands of young Uzbeks went on rampage, shouting 'Russian, get out of Uzbekistan'. Riots and demonstrations subsided only after the deployment of Soviet troops in the streets. This incident was
followed by public demonstration against Russians. But this incident subsided only after massive troop deployment.\(^{47}\) It should be noted that though the ostensible reason for riot was due to football match, but the allotment of houses to Russians apart from other opportunities were the real reason for the violent ethnic conflict. This incident also reflected that despite best Soviet efforts to bring harmony among various ethnic communities, the inherent internecine conflict among various communities was still there. It should be noted that after 1970s, the member of ethnic Russians decreased in comparison to earlier period. The change in the population patterns was largely due to the large scale migration of Russians and growth of titular population after 1970s. Arutinyan, a leading expert in the Institute of Ethnography of Academy of Sciences of the former USSR confirmed that many settlers were interested in leaving the Uzbek republic. Based on field research he estimated that 60 percent of the Russians were eager to move out of the Kara Kalpak ASSR, 38 percent were willing to leave the Andizhan region, and at least 24 percent were ready to abandon the most desirable Tashkent region.\(^{48}\) As a result, between 1970 and 1979, the number of villages in the Tashkent region with a majority Russians population dropped by 37.7 percent and that of mixed villages by 50 percent. In the Kara Kalpak Autonomous Region, villages with a Russian majority totally disappeared, with mixed ones dropping by 54.2 percent. This sharp drop in the percentage of mixed villages in both regions excludes the possibility that the

\(^{47}\) Dillip Hiro, op.cit, pp. 154-155.

data has been affected by high Muslim birth rates. On the contrary, the number of Uzbek villages in the Tashkent region and Kara Kalpak villages in the Kara Kalpak ASSR rose respectively by 7.9 percent and 18.9 percent reflecting the traditional dislike for city life, among Muslim rural dwellers.\footnote{Emil, Abramovich Pain, “Et nosotsial’nye Us’loviia razvitiiaset’skogo ruzselenila (na materialkh Uzbekiskoi SSR)”, Moscow, Avtore ferat, 1983, p. 1, cited in ibid.} In terms of the occupational pattern, Uzbeks (not counting other Muslim groups living in their republic) accounted for 36.2 percent of the overall industrial labour force and were in fact less in many essential fields; 18.3 percent in machine-building, 20 percent in chemical and petrochemical industries and 22.4 percent in oil refining.\footnote{Ubaidullah N. A, “Trudovye resury I efektivnost ikh ispolzovania”, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1979, p. 77, cited in ibid, p. 187.} 1973 data showed a slight improvement. Uzbeks constituted around 39.9 percent of the total labour force, of these 20.7 percent were in machine-building, 29.5 percent in oil refining, 26.4 percent in chemicals and petrochemicals. It shows that there was virtually no progress in the number of skilled native Uzbek labour force since 1967, as at that time Uzbeks accounted for 38.1 percent of all industrial workers, with 19.7 percent in machine building (barely up from 16.4 percent in 1945), 34.3 percent in oil refining and 27.7 percent in chemicals and petrochemicals respectively.\footnote{Cited in ibid.}

This type of structural imbalances in employment opportunity and negligible participation of titular nationality created frustration among local elites, which ultimately led to resentment of masses against Russians. It should be noted that, even before the introduction of Perestroika, the inter-ethnic relations was marred
by mutual suspicion and hostility among the Russians and Uzbeks. Ethnic Russians dominated the heavy industries while the medium sized industries were dominated by the local Uzbeks. This type of isolation further aggravated the inter-ethnic animosity between the Russians and the Uzbeks. The ethnic Russian population of Uzbekistan maintains restricted contact with the indigenous population, stayed in closed Russian speaking communities and does not feel itself an integral part of Uzbek society.

However the native resentment against the Russians did not take an ugly turn as against the Meshkatian Turks. The riot against Meshkatian Turks took place in a small village named Kuvasai. It later spread to the smaller towns of Margilan, Fergana, Kokand, and Namangan as well as to two more rural districts resulting in some 100 deaths (mostly of Meshkhetian Turks). At the outset, the disturbances constituted an expression of a nationalistic mood among local population. Uzbek writer and publicist, Timur Pulatov had warned about embryonic inter-ethnic frictions and called on the local authorities to analyse them carefully and take measures to prevent them from developing into bloody conflict. In summer 1989, he insisted that tensions between Uzbeks and Meshkatian Turks had been felt for some time and were fanned by stories of Meshkatian getting best posts in the cooperatives and the best plots for housing. 52

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Similarly, Uzbek party First Secretary, Rafik Nishanov, while explaining the events that had shaken the republic said that “deformation” uncovered under conditions of Glasnost and democratisation had produced serious breaches of social balance and stability. Moreover, people were dissatisfied with the tempo of socio and economic change and this was being taken advantage of by ‘forces’ seeking to distract attention from the struggle to improve the situation and to overcome corruption and organised crime.53

The inter-ethnic relations among various ethnic groups were in a volatile stage during the Perestroika period. The inter-ethnic relations between Uzbeks and ethnic Russians could not be resolved even after the disintegration of Soviet Union and attainment of independence by Uzbekistan. In fact, the attainment of independence marked a new phase in Russia-Uzbek relationship. After the Soviet disintegration, the somewhat dominant position of Russians changed and they have to adjust to the new reality, i.e. to adjust themselves with the Uzbeks. So, a new form of inter-ethnic relationship is likely to emerge in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. While acquiring the common citizenship, Russian-speaking residents will have to face the significant civilisational and religious distinctions between indigenous (basically Muslim) Uzbek and ethnic Russian (basically Christians) populations. Being accustomed to a higher status will prevent the Russian-speaking population in Uzbekistan from readily accepting a new and in their mind a less favoured, ethno-national status.54

53 Ibid, p. 31.
54 Vladimir Mesamed, op.cit, p. 24.
The change of language law, rewriting of history etc. created not so conducive an atmosphere for ethnic Russians in post-Soviet phase. Various governmental actions are also responsible for the creation of hostile environment in Uzbekistan which is not conducive for the growth of a pluralistic culture. For example, since 1991, TV broadcasting from Moscow has been gradually reduced and at present it lasts for six hours a day. Since 1995, broadcasting of Russian Central TV Company has been stopped, and the Russian-speaking population can only watch the programme of the Moscow TV company ‘Ostankino’. The Uzbek TV company, for its part, has excluded all programmes in Russian from its official first channel, except for night news.55

Similarly, the percentage of Russians in representative bodies declined to a considerable extent. For example, in the 1971 elections to the Supreme Soviet in Uzbekistan, ethnic Russian residents who constituted 14 percent of the population, received 19 percent of the deputy seats, while in December 1994 election, ethnic Russians who constituted 11 percent of the population, got only 6 percent of the seat in the Uzbek parliament, the Oilly Majlis.56

Apart from the language law, re-emphasis on traditional Uzbek history and decreasing representation of ethnic Russians in legislative bodies, another factor which has increased the fear of ethnic Russians is the existing law on citizenship. In an interview in 1999 in the Uzbek press, Col. Badriddin Shoriskhiyev, Director of the Uzbek Ministry of Internal Affairs’ citizenship and

55 Ibid.
entry and exit administration, said that republic citizens who do not exchange passports of the former USSR by 1 January 2000 or do not express a desire to do so “will be provided with documentation by Internal Affair agencies in the form of residence permits in the prescribed manner and will automatically lose their Uzbek citizenship”. By this move Karimov tries to limit the CIS citizens’ freedom of movement in order to gain an effective means of putting pressure on neighbours, chiefly Russia. President Karimov also supported Turkmen President Niyazov’s decision to withdraw from the Bishkek Convention on a visa-free space within the CIS and called for an end to visa-free arrangements within the Commonwealth.57

The Uzbek leadership does not favour giving dual citizenship status to the Russians. They argue that, if they allow dual citizenship, then it will put the Russians in an advantageous position and will create divided loyalty, which will harm unity and integrity of the nascent state. All this reasons compelled the ethnic Russians to migrate to Russia. Between 1989 and 1996, more than half a million (5, 67,400) people left Uzbekistan for Russia, of whom 67 percent were ethnic Russians (Tatars, Jews, Ukrainians and Byelorussians accounted for most of the reminders).58

58 Total losses of ethnic Russians are in fact larger since about 20 percent of Russian migrants form the Central Asian Region has chosen Ukrainian and Belarus as their country of destination rather than Russia. See, Zhanna Zaioncehkovskaiia, “I storicheskie korni migrationsnoi situatuisi u srednei azii”, in vitkovskaia (ed.), Migratsiis Russkoiazychanogo Naselenia, p. 46, cited in Annette Bohr, op.cit, p. 35.
Table-III


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202
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<td>1.71%</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.34%</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>1.71%</td>
<td>2.86%</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>2727</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>1971</td>
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</table>

Sample as a Percent of all Migrants to Russia

| Russia                            | 2.12% | 2.31% | 2.94% | 3.20% | 2.85% |

Note: respondents were allowed to cite up to three motivations for migrating.


From the above data it can be found that, from Uzbekistan around 11.01 percent of migrants went to Russia to get better educational opportunities. This is due to the fact that in the post-Soviet phase number of institutions teaching in Russian has declined considerably and the Russians hoping for good and qualitative education in Russia are migrating. Similarly, 13.34 percent of population were...
migrating to Russia, due to shrinking good job opportunity and difficult job conditions. However, 51.29 percent migrant to Russia mentioned fear psychosis as a factor. They attributed the fear psychosis to emergence of ethno-nationalist movement within the titular nationalities and other governmental measure. Similarly, 31.9 percent migrated to Russia due to old family linkages, and the Russians are trying to reunite with their family. Apart from this, health concerns, ecological instability, absence of entrepreneurial opportunities, and dissatisfaction with urban and rural residence, as some of the major reason for migration to Russia. In 1989, ethnic Russians constituted around 8.3 percent of total population, but in 2001, their share declined to 7.4 percent, a decline of 1.1 percent.

The Tajik Minorities in Uzbekistan

Another important ethnic minority group that has a substantial presence in Uzbekistan is Tajiks. As has been the experience in many Third world countries, the creation of national identity invariably leads to an exclusivist character, leaving out the minorities in the process. Also this exclusivist character of national identity construct is seen as a threat by the minorities to their identity. This breeds alienation and resentment among the minorities. The minorities respond by asserting their identity aggressively. The aggressive assertion of identity by minority often leads to conflict, affecting the political stability of newly independent countries. Similar thing is happening in recent years in

60 Uzbekistan: 10 Years of Independence, 2001, Embassy of Uzbekistan, New Delhi, p. 12.
Uzbekistan. As Annette Bohr notes, 'while the influence of the Russian minority in Uzbekistan has historically been out of proportion to its numbers, relations between Tajiks (an Iranian Ethnic group speaking a language similar to the Persian language of Iran) and Uzbeks have greater potential to affect the long-term ethno-political stability in the country, if not the region, given the large Tajik and Uzbek populations on both side of Uzbekistan- Tajikistan border.\(^\text{61}\)

To analyse ethnic relationship between Tajiks and Uzbeks in the post-Soviet Uzbekistan, it is necessary to analyse the history of Tajiks in Uzbekistan. After the Russian conquest in 19th century, the Russian censuses tried to apply to the European notion of nationality to the new subject population. Prior to Russian conquest, the concept of ‘identity’ vaguely existed among the Central Asian masses. After the Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin by applying his policy of nationality tried to redraw the map of Central Asia. It created separate republics on the basis of new identity like Uzbeks, Kazaks, and Turkmens, which previously didn’t exist. As a result of this republics were created within Soviet Central Asia. Later two important cities dominated by Tajiks, Samarqand and Bukhara, were incorporated in Uzbek republic. However, this type of territorial de-limitation was primarily made for administrative convenience. But it led to significant change in the ethnic composition of these cities. In Samarqand, for example, the population in 1915 had 59,901 Tajiks and only 819 Uzbeks, while in 1926, following the establishment of an ‘Uzbek’ national state the figures was

\(^{61}\) Annette Bohr, op.cit, pp.37-38.
10,716 Tajiks and 43,304 Uzbeks.\textsuperscript{62} This above data shows how population share of Uzbeks has changed following the establishment of Soviet Uzbekistan and territorial de-limitation. Even in 1924, before the boundaries of the proposed Uzbek state had been decided Soviet figures showed Tajik presence to be much more against 45 percent classified as Uzbeks.\textsuperscript{63}

The relationship between Uzbeks and Tajiks were somewhat smooth till 1980 but, after that, relations between the two groups began to deteriorate sharply, especially due to the emergence of nationalistic minded elites of both groups. As some Uzbek intellectuals tried to trace their roots to Turkish world, this offended the sentiment of Tajik elites who are proud of their rich Persian history, tradition and culture. Even, some Uzbek intellectuals argued that Tajiks are simply Turks who have forgotten their original language while Tajik elite argued that Uzbeks are Turkicised Iranians.\textsuperscript{64}

In order to protect their identity, and under the impact of Perestroika and Glasnost in 1989, the Tajik intellectuals formed Tajik Cultural Society in Samarkand. They sought to improve the status of Tajik culture in Uzbekistan by demanding (1) the right to choose one’s nationality, (2) official status for Tajik as second language of the republic (3) legal status for Tajik cultural and educational activities. Since 1991, the efforts of the society have been met with

\textsuperscript{62} Richard Folz, "Uzbekistan Tajiks; A Case of Repressed Identity", \textit{Central Asia Monitor}, No. 6, 1996, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.

official repression, including the beating and jailing of Tajik activists.65 Similarly, an internal Tajik political organisation in its 18 March, 1991, unofficial newsletter Sogdiana-Ovozi Tajik (Sogdiana-Voice of the Tajiks) reprinted an open letter backed by 10,000 signatures, to president Karimov from the ‘socio-cultural organisation’ and the national cultural centre of Tajiks and Tajik-speaking peoples. The group includes Tajiks, Bukharan Jews, gypsies and some Iranian and Arabs living in Uzbekistan. The letter demanded inalienable sovereign right of all citizens of the republic to determine their own national identity (prinadlezhnost) and called for the needs to ‘renew and strengthen the juridically century old historic legitimate and mutually enriching the Turkic-Uzbek and Farsi-Tajik dual language character of the region’, there by giving Tajik equal rights as state language of Uzbekistan.66

In the post-independence phase, an organisation called national Cultural centre of Tajiks and Tajik speaking people, based in Samarkand, has been continuously struggling to protect the identity and cultural heritage of Tajik people. Despite the Tajik television channel being terminated several years ago, Ovozi Samarqand runs regular column in Persian Tajik language, culture and history.67

In order to protect the Tajiks interest, an organisation called National Cultural Centre for Tajiks was formed. In a letter to Boutros Boutros Ghali, then UN General Secretary in 1993, it argued that today the Tajiks, the largest ethnic minority of Uzbekistan are still discriminated which threaten the stability of the

65 Ibid.
whole area. Secretary of the Samarkand Tajik Cultural Association Uktam Bekmuhammedev was convicted on false evidence in June 1991.

It argued that UN should examine and verify the observation of civil rights and freedom by the state and the presence of necessary conditions for the national cultural development of the ancient ethnic groups on the territory of the contemporary sovereign republic of Uzbekistan.\textsuperscript{68} Conflict among the Tajiks and Uzbeks on the sharing of ancient historical heritage has taken place. In October 1997, when the Tajikistan government requested support from UNESCO to celebrate in 1999, the 1100\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Samanid line of rulers, which Tajiks regard as "their" dynasty. As the Samanid capital was in Bukhara, Karimov is reported to have protested against the plan in a letter to UNESCO's Director on the ground that the festivities could incite "Tajik nationalist feeling".\textsuperscript{69}

The problem associated with determining who is an Uzbek and who is a Tajik is an important factor in Tajik-Uzbek ethnic relations. During Soviet period, most of the Tajik residents of Bukhara and Samarkand, in order to facilitate their professional career, they identified themselves as Uzbek rather than Tajiks. Similarly, the inter-marriage between Tajiks and Uzbeks also makes it difficult in determining their identity as Tajiks or Uzbeks. According to the latest figure Tajiks constitute around 5 percent of the total population of Uzbekistan.\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Central Asia Monitor}, op.cit, p. 19.
Although officially Tajiks constitute 5 percent of total population, their actual number might be much more. It is difficult to estimate their true number due to the above mentioned reasons. Similarly, many Tajik intellectuals have responded to the new language law with relative equanimity. Several factors appear to have underpinned this reaction. First, although the Uzbekistani Tajiks overwhelmingly regard Tajik as their native language, a far greater number of them have acquired greater proficiency in Uzbek language in comparison to Uzbekistani Russians. Secondly, already accustomed to minority states, the Tajiks do not regard the law as a language legislation has been primarily concerned with reducing the spheres of use of Russian while expanding the use of Uzbek, most Tajiks have not been inclined to view the policy as an exclusionary one.\footnote{For details, Graham Smith, Vivian Law, Andrew Wilson, Annette Bohr and Edward Allworth, op.cit, p. 211.}

Similarly, after the introduction of new language law, which declared Uzbek as state language, many Tajik residents are also sending their children to Uzbek school, because they know that by learning Tajiks they will not get any benefit in business and other professional areas. This type of lesser use of Tajik language provides ideal locomotive for the Tajik nationalists to demand secession from Uzbekistan. In recent years, instances of prosecution of Tajiks have also increased. 73 ethnic Tajik residents of Sariasiya district of Surkhan Darya province were given prison sentences of three to eighteen years in June 2001 trials in Tashkent for alleged collaboration with fighters of Islamic...
Movement of Uzbekistan who had attacked the southern Uzbek border in 2000.\(^{72}\) Similarly, in March 2001, about 50 ethnic Uzbeks holding Tajik citizenship and living in Uzbekistan were forcefully deported to the Tajik border, where Tajik authorities refused to accept them.\(^{73}\)

This type of forced deportation, attempt to develop an exclusivist Turkic identity, which is likely to alienate the Farsi speaking Tajik people, will create mutual hostilities among the Tajiks and Uzbeks. This policy may prove to be counter productive and may threaten the very establishment of a pluralistic democratic structure in the country. As one Tajik resident in ‘Bukhara Tola’ significantly remarked, “we have kept our language in our homes and in our hearts, but we have lost the battle at the government level”.\(^{74}\)

**Jews**

The other important minority group in Uzbekistan is the Jews. Like other Central Asian minorities, they lived in co-existence with other ethnic groups in Uzbekistan. However, during 1970s after certain changes in immigration rules were made many of the Jews migrated to Israel. The ethnic conflicts which took place in Dushanbe and Andijan, during 1990s, increased fear among the Jews; this led to massive migration of Jews from Uzbekistan during 1990s. Speaking to a *Jerusalem Post* Reporter a Jewish leader in Samarkand articulated the


\(^{73}\) ICG, Report, no. 21, 2001, op.cit, p. 20.

community fear and said, "after the collapse of Nabiyev's government, there is great concern among our people that Karimov could also be vulnerable. Islamic fundamentalism is already very strong in such areas of Uzbekistan as the Fergana valley. If violence breaks out between Tajiks and Uzbeks in Samarqand, the Jews will get caught in the middle, we are very frightened about what might happen." 75

In 1989, approximately 95,000 Jews resided in Uzbekistan. Among them roughly 50,000 were Askenazi Jews and 45,000 Bukharan Jews. By 1998, seven years after Uzbekistan gained independence, an estimated 80,000 Jews had left the country, leaving behind around 10,000 to 15,000 Jews. The Ashkenazi Jews who number about 10,000 reside primarily in Tashkent. The Bukharan Jews are concentrated in Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara. 76 In 1990, there were 15,755 Jewish emigrants from Uzbekistan to Israel. By 1996, the number had dropped to 6060 and by 1997; it had dropped even further to 3419. 77 The government also knew that it should take steps to decrease the immigration of the Jews because, Jews are quite influential all over the world and keeping them in good humour can benefit Uzbekistan by Jewish investment in various sectors. This to some extent influences the Uzbek government to take some stern measures to protect Jewish identity.

75 A Lana Copper, "The Jews of Uzbekistan: A Brief Overview of their History and Contemporary Situation", Central Asia Monitor, No. 6, p. 11.
76 Ibid, p. 10.
77 Ibid, p. 11.
Process of Identity Formation, Democratization and Kara Kalpak Nationalism: It's Impact

Apart from the problem posed to Uzbek democratization process from the emergence of chauvinistic movement among the majority and minority groups, Uzbekistan also faces danger from the emergence of centrifugal tendencies, challenging its territorial unity and integrity. This is evident from the emergence of Kara Kalpak nationalism and its demand for the creation of a separate statehood.

Factors Responsible for Growth of Kara Kalpak Nationalism

The most important factor responsible for the growth of Kara Kalpak nationalism is the low level of economic developments, which resulted in unemployment and low standard of living. As Kara Kalpak’s climatic condition is suitable for cotton cultivation, excessive emphasis was laid on cultivation of cotton during Soviet period. It resulted in cotton monoculture and lack of diversification to other agricultural products, in the process leading to increasing environment degradation. Similarly, lack of industrial development during soviet period, contributed in keeping this region in an economically backward area. The pattern of industrial production has not changed in the post independence phase. For example, while industrial production during first 6 months of 1997, in the Andizan and Navoi region was 33.4 percent and 29.8 percent respectively, in Kara Kalpak region it was only 7.2 percent. This data rightly shows the industrial backwardness of this region in comparison to other regions of the country.

Apart from separate cultural identity and industrial backwardness, Kara Kalpakstan is also a victim of worst environmental degradation. Worsening environmental degradation in turn has given rise to various health problems. In a study conducted in Muynak, a former sea port in northern Kara Kalpakstan rates of cancer was assessed among a number of ethnic groups. The Kara Kalpaks had one of the highest rates, although Kazakh living in Muynak region actually showed the highest rates of incidence.\textsuperscript{79} All this took place due to the degradation of Aral Sea and environmental pollution. These above factors are responsible for growth of separatist tendencies in Uzbekistan. Despite there being separate constitutional provisions for Kara Kalpak region, which aims at protecting the identity of Kara Kalpakstan, the people of Kara Kalpakstan are not able to maintain their separate identity in the face of growing dominance of Uzbek state power.

Despite Islam Karimov’s pronouncement that “our model of statehood building is based on the idea to preserve and consolidate the multinational structure of the society, historically formed on our territory and use the said factor for achieving the final objectives concerning the creation of a democratic law governed state and civil society”\textsuperscript{80} Despite the constitutional provision as mentioned in Article 4, also inter-alia provides for “the republic of Uzbekistan to ensure a respectful

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
attitude towards languages, customs and traditions of the nationalities and peoples living on its territory and ensures conditions for their development”.$^{81}$

While state policies have favoured sponsoring cultural centres for ethnic minorities and existence of various provisions which aim at protecting the rights of minorities, policies on rewriting history, language policies, etc., on the other hand, will only serve the purpose of mobilising masses, rather than serving the interests of masses, as well as creates fear psychosis among minorities. Similarly, uneven development of the country has led to growth of separatist tendencies and emergence of nationalistic groups. All this pose a challenge to democratisation in the nascent republic of Uzbekistan.

**Religious Resurgence in Uzbekistan and Its Impact on Democratisation Process**

Apart from the ethno-nationalistic factor which hinders the democratisation process in Uzbekistan, another factor which pose a grave challenge to the democratic development and growth of pluralistic political culture in Uzbekistan is the growth of religious movements and their determination to establish a theocratic political system, which will be guided by conservative religious principle and which oppose to all forms progressive ideas like liberty, equality and democracy. The Islamic forces, dormant over a long period of time in Uzbekistan, are now manifesting themselves and striving to find a space for the establishment of a theocratic state in post-Soviet phase.

$^{81}$ Islam Karimov, op.cit, p. 69.

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The radicalised Islamic movement in Uzbekistan first manifested when in December 1991 some radical Islamic groups under the banner of Tawber and Adolat took control over the building of the former Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and demanded that the future President of the Uzbek republic listen to their request. The radical Islamist groups demanded that, recognition of Islam as state religion, the priority of the ‘Shariah’ in the republic, and the introduction of separate education for both boys and girls. They also demanded that the turning over the former house of political education to religious groups. Under pressure, from religious groups Karimov accepted the petitions for further consideration and promised to discuss them in the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan. However, the promise which he gave to the Islamist groups never materialised, since this he had done to nullify the volatile situation. 82

It should be noted that, even before the first public demonstration by the Adolat in December 1991, its branches were formed in many parts of the Namangan region as well as in some other areas of the Ferghana Valley. They undertook number of functions including patrolling the streets, punishing those people who

performed the function which are un-islamic in nature and it should be noted that their running of parallel Islam compelled Islam Karimov to visit Namangan where he faced an unruly mob. In late 1991, a split took place among the radical Islamic Wahabbi group.

In Namangan, some radical youths gradually supported government policies regarding socio-economic and political problems the country was facing, but others led by Tahir Yoldosh opposed this idea. This led to division among both the groups.

After attaining independence, Uzbekistan under the leadership of Karimov was confronted with the task of following a secular policy, where there should be strict separation of religion from politics or mixing religion with politics. At the same time Karimov was not averse to use religion as a means to legitimise himself. In fact, he combined both the element in his religious policy. The Uzbek political authority under the leadership of Karimov also tried to develop official Islam. The major reasons for this are as follows. Firstly, Karimov wishes to use religion for the consolidation of the indigenous Moslem ethnol. For example, President Karimov of Uzbekistan pointed out in a 1991 interview to the gravest crisis that has be fallen in Central Asia which is not economic but moral. President Karimov further said, that the “destruction of age-old moral principles for ideological reasons will be far more difficult to overcome than the chaos in the economy." In order to prove his Islamic credential, he performed Haj to Mecca and sworn his presidential oath of office by touching Koran.

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Second, the ruling elite wants to use Islam to silence their opponents who criticise the authorities from religious positions. Finally, the authorities turn to Islam in order to bolster their position and prestige in the Islamic world. The state constantly tries to project its rich Islamic cultural heritage. By this way it hoped that it will get large scale foreign aid from rich Islamic countries.

Despite governmental measures to improve its Islamic credential, the state authorities failed to control the growth of radical Islamic activities in Uzbekistan. This got further boost due to the emergence of radical Islamic forces in neighbouring Tajikistan and bloody civil war that took place there.

The Islamic Renaissance Party, which was formed on 9 June 1990 in the southern Russian city of Astrakhan, expanded its sphere of influence to Uzbekistan. It tried to challenge Uzbek political authority spreading radical ideas among the masses. This type of activity compelled the Karimov government to launch repressive measures against Islamic militant groups. In March, 1992, Karimov launched a crackdown on Adolat in which over 100 of its leading activists were arrested. In 1993 alone, 53 Islamic emissaries were banished from the territory of Uzbekistan, for the propaganda of fundamentalist ideas among the population and clergy. Several groups belonging to the banned Islamic Renaissance Party and the Adolat (justice) religious movements have been arrested. One of the groups went on trial and its five members were sentenced to five to ten years of imprisonment. It has also been noted that while

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84 Annette Bohr, op.cit, p. 27.
in 1989 the republic of Soviet Uzbekistan had 300 mosques, in 1993 their number exceeded 5000. The mosques have been built with financial assistance from Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, Libya, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{85}

The government in order to curb the rise of religious fundamentalism in Uzbekistan that put serious strain on nascent political system of Uzbekistan also changed the head of Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM), Mufti Muhammed Yusuf, as he spoke in favour of Tajik radical opposition groups and was replaced by Mukhtorjon Khoja Abdullaev, who supported government’s programmes and policies and toed the line adopted by Karimov.

In order to curb illegal religious activities of Islamic fundamentalist groups the Uzbek government also passed special laws. It set up a Committee for Religious Affair at the republic’s Council of Ministers and endowed it with broad controlling powers. Assisted by the security services, the Committee established a tight control over the substance of the sermons in mosques and the sources of financing of religious institutions and clergyman.

But despite these measures an attempt was made on the life of President on 18 July 1994. His car, travelling at high speed was shelled by large calibre weapons. Among the Islamic radical groups that are active in Central Asian

republics is the Hizbat-Tahir-al-Islami (Islamic Party of Liberation) which became active in Uzbekistan in the 1990s.

The Uzbek government initiated action against HTI members and arrested its members when some pamphlets appeared in Tashkent in 1995-96. In Uzbekistan, despite government propaganda and crackdown against HTI, the latter adopted some unique techniques to spread its influence among the masses. It also tried to adjust its ideology to suit new situation and circumstances, so that it can get mass support.

The government of Uzbekistan initiated massive crackdown against the HTI in 1998 due to their illegal activities and on the charge of the threatening the security and stability of socio-political structure of the country. Of some 6000 prisoners in Uzbek jails by the spring of 2001, at least half of them are considered to be adherents of the HTI.\textsuperscript{86}

In recent years, its supporters have increased at a faster rate. A high level officer of the Andijan police department admitted that they were powerless to prevent the movement from attracting growing numbers due to economic hardship, increasing disenchantment with government controls and an absence of unifying state ideology.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{87} ICG Report, No. 21, 21 August 2001, p. 14.
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

Apart from Hizb-al-Tahrir-al-Islami, the other Islamic militant group that is currently active in Uzbekistan is Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). IMU rose to prominence when the young, unemployed men seized the Communist Party headquarters in December 1991. The IMU’s Islamic ideology drew its inspirations from Deobandi-Wahabi teaching. The members of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan are from all over the world like countries from Kyrgyzstan, Chechens and Uighurs from Xinjiang province of China. Due to constant government pressure and after coming to power by the Taliban, the IMU shifted its base to Afghanistan. It got an ideal atmosphere to conduct its activities with the support of Taliban there.

Islam and Politics in the post-1995 Phase

After the presidential elections of 1995, Karimov strengthened his position in political sphere and successfully crushed the opposition. The first target in this regard was Islamic fundamentalist groups who were quite active in Uzbekistan, especially due to the regional development in Central Asia and Afghanistan. But, Uzbek government undertook some harsh measures to contain radical elements in Uzbekistan. For example, the popular Tashkent Imam Obdikhan Nazazov was forcibly removed from his position in 1996 despite the protests of believers.\textsuperscript{88} Not only prosecutions were carried out against Imams who disobey state authority, but many illegal mosques were also closed down, when it

\textsuperscript{88} John Anderson, \textit{International Politics of Central Asia}, op.cit, p. 159.
became clear to state authority that they are indulging in subversive activities that threaten the secular credentials of the country. By 1995, the Islamic “religious boom” almost come to a halt and many mosques were left incomplete. The enrolment of students in the Mir-Arab Madrasa in Bukhara fell sharply.89

The development which took place in Uzbekistan during 1995, with regard to de-politicisation of Islam, could not last long and regional developments, like takeover of power by Taliban in Afghanistan and Chechen crisis in Russia, provided impetus to growth of radical Islam in Uzbekistan. Among the radical Islamic leaders, the two most important of them are Tahir Yoldash and Juma Namangani, who got direct support from Taliban regime both in terms of training the militants and providing arms and ammunitions to the insurgent groups. Similarly, the Chechen war provided opportunity to the radical Islamic groups to fight for a common cause. This had a direct bearing on the activities of Uzbekistan’s radical Islamist groups. Not only political leadership under Karimov took stern measures against the radical Islamic groups but he also charged certain officials who did not follow the order of the government properly. In June 1997, Mufti Abdullaev was replaced by Abdurashid Qasi Bakhromov as head of Uzbek Islamic Spiritual Authority and he got replaced by Abdurashid Qasi Bakhromov, a moderate. The first thing that Abdurashid Qasi Bakhromov, did was to remove loudspeaker systems from some mosques in Tashkent. The confrontation with religious extremist groups took a grave turn

when some religious groups in the Namangan district of the Fergana region in December 1997 and early 1998 killed the Police chief and several members of the police force. 90

In order to curb the religious extremist groups, law on religious organisations in its amended form was adopted in May 1998, in order to govern the religious affairs of the country. This law guarantees freedom of religion subject to reasonable restrictions in the interests of public health, morality and order. A religious organisation must have hundred adult followers among citizens residing on the territory of the republic. A registered religious organisation can own land and other property. Registered religious organisations can have their central organs but their leaders can only be citizens of Uzbekistan and non-citizens can be leaders only with the permission of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Article 5 of the law on the Religious organisations prohibits proselytisation. This law aims at perfecting traditional religions. Article 14 which is opposed to by the fundamentalists prohibit religious followers wearing in public of dress or sporting beard identified with a religious sect. This article prohibits imparting of military training to followers of any religious organisations. Import and export of religious literatures and objects is also to be in accordance with the procedures established by law. 91

90 Devendra Kaushik, ibid, p. 11.
91 See for details SWB/SU/ 3230/ G/3/ 19 May 1998 and also ibid, P. 12.
Despite governmental measures to control the growth of religious fundamentalist groups, the government is not able to contain them. This can be evident from the fact that, Karimov told parliament in a speech broadcast on Uzbek Radio in May 1998 that, “Islamist guerrillas” must be shot in the head or Tajikistan will come to Uzbekistan tomorrow. “If necessary I will shoot them myself, if you seek the resolve”, he added.\(^92\)

On 16 February 1999, two explosions took place inside the building of the Interior Ministry, one near the Uzbekistan National Bank and one on the Independence Square where government headquarters are located. President Islam Karimov himself escaped narrowly as one of the bombs exploded just 150 meters away from his car. President Karimov stated that not only the Wahabis but members of Hezbollah were also involved in planning explosions in Tashkent. On 1 March 1999, the Uzbek Television named the President of the banned opposition party Erk, Mohammad Salih as a suspect in the explosions. The Interior Minister of Uzbekistan Zakir Almatov pointed accusing finger at “Uzbek citizens with their mentors from elsewhere” and put the responsibility on Wahabis, Hezb-e-Tahrir Islamiya and Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan for this crime.\(^93\)

On 23 February 1999, addressing diplomats and journalists in Tashkent, Karimov said that not only Wahabis, but members of Hezbollah were involved


\(^93\) Central Asia Monitor, No. 2, 1999, p. 20.
in planning the attack. Karimov also told that attacks were planned in a foreign country.\textsuperscript{94}

Uzbekistan government under Karimov, in order to undermine the ideological base of radical extremist groups, through a presidential decree established Tashkent Islamic University on 3 September 1999. Karimov said that university will teach the history and philosophy of Islam, Islamic economy and natural sciences, noting that instruction will be based on "original sources handed down from (our) ancestors." Karimov stated, "inadequate knowledge of Islam results in delusions among young people and tragic consequences".\textsuperscript{95}

In 2000 also, the increasing activities of Islamic militant groups never came to an end. In August 2000, clashes took place between Uzbek militant groups and government forces in the southern districts of Surkhan-Darya region. Most of the militants communicated in foreign languages, which showed that most of them were foreign terrorists. Their main purpose was to establish a drug and arms transit. But they raised various political slogans in order to cover up their operation.\textsuperscript{96}

The 11 September 2001 crisis changed totally the security situation in the whole of Central Asian region. After the 11 September incident, US launched a massive offensive against the Islamic militants, particularly, Osama bin Laden who took sanctuary in Afghanistan. The Islamic militants of Uzbekistan got

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid. p. 21.
\textsuperscript{95} Central Asia Monitor, No. 5, 1999, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{96} SWB/SU/3916/G/3. 11 August 2000.
scared following the US attack. Uzbekistan joined the US in its fight against Islamic militants. Uzbekistan also offered its airfields, troop stationing facilities in the hope that it can eliminate the scourge i.e. Islamic militants, who operated from Afghanistan and threaten the unity and stability of Uzbekistan. The first such Islamic militant group which is facing the onslaught is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. It has been reported that Juma Namangani, known as Juma Hakim in Afghanistan fought along with 3000 fighters with the Taliban against the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. This help had made Namangani’s group very important for the Taliban. The IMU broadened its activities and changed its name to Islamic Movement of Turkestan (IMT). The IMT was just as the IMU, launched in Afghanistan. Despite changing its name, it has not abandoned its core objective to topple Karimov, in addition to its core ideology to liberate the whole of Turkestan- from Xinjiang to the Caspian Sea. It hopes that the overthrow of Karimov regime will have a domino effect and make other Central Asian countries weaker.97

The Islamic Movement of Turkestan (formerly Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) got a serious blow, when Juman Namangani, the head of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, is said to have been killed in Kunduz on 18 or 19 November 2001. It should be noted that IMU came to existence due to the specific socio-economic problems in Central Asia, so long as these problems remain groups such as IMU will continue to exist. It is also believed that

Yuldashev the other leader of I.T.U. (formerly IMU) is currently hiding in Iran or Pakistan, waiting for the moment when he can regroup his followers to launch offensive against the Uzbek authority. As Ahmed Rashid writes in *New Yorker*, “in this landscape of repression, which appears to be sanctioned and rewarded by the United States, the IPT (formerly IMU) and other radical Islamic parties seeking to end the status quo cannot help but find supporters”.98

Unlike in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where the radical extremist parties like Hizb-Ul-Tahrir al-Islami, were motivating the people to fight against US forces and join hand with Taliban, in Uzbekistan such things did not happen. The government’s anti-terrorist programme against Islamic militants got a boost when Tashkent’s chief Imam, Anvar Hajji Tursonov, welcomed Washington’s campaign in Afghanistan.99 The Uzbek authorities also arrested around 150 Muslims since September 2001 incidents.100

Whatever may be the role of Islamic militant parties, in future it will certainly pose a threat to democratisation process of Uzbekistan. As these radical groups try to impose a form of government governed by Shariat provisions.

However, in Uzbekistan, the problem of resurgence of ethno-nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism are also closely related to the decline in standard of living of the people, growing unemployment, which provide opportunity to anti-social elements to recruit young persons to carryout acts which threatens the

100 Tamara Makarenko, op.cit, p. 37.
social fabrics of the society. The fight against radical forces also call for improved economic performance of the country.

Historically, Uzbek economy was dominated by agriculture and handicraft. But, under Soviet power rapid changes were made in the direction of agriculture and economy. Due to adoption of scientific methods a rapid growth of agricultural production took place, especially in cotton production. Similarly, many industrial enterprises were established in Uzbekistan to process the raw-materials. However, after the disintegration of Soviet Union, chaos and uncertain situation followed, which aggravated the economic problem of the country. Transition from a command administrative oriented economy to a market oriented economy has so far yielded no results. Rather difficulties mounted.

Soon, after independence, Uzbekistan faced serious hyperinflation. In 1992, the annual rate of inflation reached to around 2,700 per cent. During the year the increase in consumer prices was 818.7 percent, rising to 1, 114.5 percent in 1993, and 1515.9 percent in 1994. In order to bring the monetary policy under control and to check hyperinflation, Uzbekistan left the Russian dominated ‘rouble-zone’ in November 1993 and introduced its own transitional national currency, the sum.  

As Islam Karimov in his book points out, implementation of deep structural transformation in economy serves the important condition to strategically preserve stability, to achieve economic growth, and welfare of the population.102

Throughout 1998 and 1999, the economic situation steadily deteriorated the decline in world prices for Uzbekistan’s two main exports, cotton and gold, deprived the country of export revenue and put severe demand on country’s liquidity. At the same time there has been severe unemployment problem in the country. In 1999, around, 45,200 were registered as unemployed, although the actual figures were believed to be far higher as a result of hidden unemployment in the region.103

It is this type of economic conditions which provide fertile space for emergence of ultra-nationalistic movement among Uzbek youth. As jobs became scarce, towards late Soviet period and as Russians due to higher technical qualifications dominated the white collar and other important jobs, which curtailed the chances of Uzbek youths, resentment among local youths ultimately took the form of anti-Russian movements and conflicts with other ethnic minorities. Similarly, poverty is one of the main causes for joining of youths in radical Islamic groups. For example, in IMU, the late Juma Namangani used to pay his militant groups between $100-500 per month. This naturally attracts youths to join the militant groups.104

103 Neil Melvin, op.cit, pp. 493-494.
104 Tamara Makarenko, op.cit, p. 38.
From the above analysis it can be noted that the growth of ethno-religious resurgence put a great strain on the nascent political system of Uzbekistan. In fact, these above factors coupled with declining economic system due to transitional nature of the economy hinder the development of a composite political culture and democratisation in Uzbekistan.