

**India's Central Asia Policy since 2001:
A case study of India-Kazakhstan Relations**

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By

Sulagna Biswas

Department of International Relations

Jadavpur University

Kolkata

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Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union came as a shock as India had lost a major economic partner and its closest strategical ally. The intimate Moscow-New Delhi relationship that had developed over more than three decades came to an end. The Yelstin administration was not particularly interested in maintaining a privileged relationship with India and Indian diplomacy failed to support the reforms during the attempted coup of August 1991. India was also more exposed to international pressures on vital interests like disarmament, non-proliferation and the Kashmir issue. India, the leader and champion of Non-Alignment policy became obsolete with the end of the bi-polar world. India had no other option but to restructure the basic parameters of its foreign policy. The subsequent domestic liberalization policy of 1991 helped India to launch its "Look East Policy". India also reemphasized its neighborhood policy from a broader context. New Delhi started to look beyond its economic and security arrangements with Russia. The newly emerged Central Asian states (CAS), namely, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan from the former Soviet Union became attractive partners for India in economic and security arrangements, and formed the extended neighbor of India and out of the many central Asian countries Kazakhstan gained the maximum importance in the context of India- central Asia relations because Kazakhstan has the largest stable economy in the region with rich natural resources.

Initially India could not venture into the region like China did mainly because it considered the region as Russia's sphere of influence. Further there were no direct border linkages with the central Asian nations that China has. The nations also had poor economic and disrupted political setup and for India which was newly introduced to the liberalization policy was finding it difficult to launch a clear "Central Asia Policy" in such disturbed Central Asian environment. However, India did have successful bilateral relations with all the Central Asian republics since their inception.

It was since September 2001 that India participated actively with the global war-on-terror and reset its foreign policies towards the CASs. India, which was at the periphery of the New Great Game became a principal actor because of instability of Afghanistan (Hub of Taliban). The game which started with fighting back terrorism was not confined to the security factor alone since the region is one of the richest sources of petroleum energy and natural gas and India being the fourth largest consumers of energy which may increase doubly s to supply and the domestic production is not sufficient to meet the domestic consumption and the total energy demand is expected to be double by 2025. Moreover with the recent hike in price of petroleum it becomes essential for India to find a viable alternative partner for importing petroleum with a cheaper rate. Thus the gap would be balanced if India

imports cost effective energy products and CARs which is the best alternative for India given the distance between India and the CARs which is minimal as compared to the Gulf countries with the reduction in the transportation cost. India and Central Asia have convergence of interests especially India and Kazakhstan in the areas of non-traditional security threats like drug trafficking, terrorism and domestic turmoil as their economies are hampered the most with the trade disturbance resulted out of these non-traditional security threats. Despite of an investment treaty between India and Kazakhstan (Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement), yet cross border investment between the two is weak. From the problem of direct land connectivity to India's inability to take the route through Pakistan and Afghanistan on account of unstable security and political situation in these countries to the huge "information gap" that exist between the two nations on the potential and prospect of collaborating with each other that hinders the two from realizing the full potential of their relationship.

A close cooperation between them is required to stop these menaces. India and Kazakhstan have historical, cultural and social links. In this respect the trade relationship between the two has its own significance. India-Kazakh trade is the most dynamic segment of India's foreign trade in Central Asian region. While there are comparing areas of comparative advantage, there is acute shortage of institutional and logistic infrastructure to cater it which has lifted a huge gulf between actual trades between the two countries which needs to be bridged. Furthermore India the largest democracy and a growing power house of South Asia, and Kazakhstan the oil rich state and the most successful state in having a stable relation with other central Asian states which skillfully maneuvers Russia and the West in Central Asia, the relation between these two economically promising nations definitely is an interesting area to be experimented with, in order to venture India's Central Asia policy, since both the nations seek to develop an extensive commercial and strategic partnership.

India-Kazakhstan relations

Central Asia has great strategic potential for South Asia especially India. India on the other hand having interest in Central Asia has always followed a cooperative approach towards Central Asian Republics. India's presence in the region although was not liked by China and Russia but was supported by US since India is viewed as a rising powerhouse of South Asia. Further its own economic and strategic interest in the region, India has to counter its rivals like Pakistan and China in the region. India defines Central Asia as an extended neighbor despite sharing border with Central Asia. India is geographically close to Central Asia and has long standing historical and cultural ties with central Asia, these bring them even closer together. India's launching of Central Asia Policy in 2012 harps on her interest in the region.

- Security Interest figure most prominently in India's Central Asia Policy. The security situation in Central Asia directly affects India's own security through Pakistan cross border terrorism which results in striving captive power by coercive means resulting in civil strife and turbulence and having spillover effect on Kashmir Issue. The compatibility of security interests between India and Kazakhstan was evident when the two countries signed a Declaration of Strategic Partnership in 2009. India's policy towards Central Asia is becoming energized and proactive, unlike in the past, when it was reactive.
- Another area of interest for India is Energy. Therefore security and stability of central Asia is of utmost importance to India because of accessing and transporting of energy resources. For India, a greater challenge than that of exploiting central Asian energy resources is how to transport them to India, as there are few choices available to it, building oil or gas pipelines through Afghanistan and Pakistan would clearly be extremely difficult, even if it were possible to construct, they could not be relied upon. India therefore proposed for hydrocarbon pipeline from Kazakhstan which is 1500 km, longer than that of TAPI heading from former Silk Road. The ancient silk road has been revived by the CARs (landlocked countries) to build connectivity with the global markets.
- The driving force behind India's objective of enhanced engagement with Central Asia is economics. CARs is the epicenter of investment market and want to diversify their economy and want new partners. And India has the ability to help build Central Asians' capacities in areas such as information technology, science and technology, knowledge industries and soft power as she has done with Kazakhstan. Areas such as energy, non conventional sources of energy and agro-based industries are promising spheres for trilateral cooperation. Joint ventures in cotton and agriculture can be established which could benefit the entire region. However, lack of direct connectivity and difficult market conditions in some parts of the region hamper interaction. Still, increasing linkages between India and Kazakhstan, Afghanistan's membership to the SAARC, and its emergence as a potentially important player in facilitating regional economic cooperation is shaping India's "Look North Policy". At this juncture, the concept of a "Greater Central Asia" offers opportunities to connect India with Central Asia, particularly in the transport and trade sectors. In a sense, it recreates the past history of the region when

robust trading activity was a dominating feature. Afghanistan was the fulcrum on which such activities were carried out in various directions. Further if the transport and trade activities as envisaged by the Greater Central Asia concept are operationalized, the proposed Turkmenistan- Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline project could also see the light of the day. Indeed, transport and natural gas pipelines could run parallel to one another. Therefore India's relation with this region needs an in-depth examination.

Literature Review

A wide range of literature is available on India's engagement with the Central Asian States bilaterally with each of Central Asian Republics but no book is available analyzing India's Connect Central Asia Policy especially considering the case study with that of Kazakhstan. The existing literatures deal with various dimensions of India's engagement with Central Asian states mainly Kazakhstan, geo-economic and geo-strategic importance of the region, problems of nontraditional security threats. Some of these literatures have been reviewed for the present purpose of the study.

- Olcott (2005) discusses that the path taken by central asian states was wrong because of the faulty economic and political system. Leaders excused political failures because of security risks and terrorism in Afghanistan but no one tried to mend it by taking a new approach.
- Zaffarno (2013) argues of who would control the region next as the region's strategic location and landlocked position invites international powers for a zero-sum game. For India, it has continuing interest as the region is close to the areas of Jihadist and anti-Indian terrorist group and also proximity to territory where Pakistan and China are engaged in massive military cooperation.
- Parakhonsky (2012) narrates the situation of Central Asia and compares the conflict situation of Balkans and Caucuses. Since 1991 Russia's fall of interest in the region due to Russia's own economic problem led the Central Asian states find for new partners in US and China to help them overcome economic burden and security concerns. Since India shares the same problems as that of CARs thus became a new partner to the CARs. India concentrates in strengthening bilateral cooperation with adjacent countries providing technical assistance and initiating economic programme.

- Asopa (2003) has given a detailed picture of growth from Pre to Post Soviet era. In spite of having strong historical linkage India is late comer in the region because of no direct border, unstable region and less feasibility of the realization of Central Asian gas and energy resources. To promote stability in the region by curbing terrorism problem is the primary reason for India's engagement in the region.
- Sahgal and Anand (2010) discusses many reasons for India being the late comer in the region. While India could not give much attention to this region soon after independence because of various pre-occupations, India also considered the region as soft underbelly of Russia which prevented India from having direct linkages with these countries. Furthermore unstable factors like Pakistan and Afghanistan, and no direct territorial linkages were also there. They also argue that certain democratic values of India hold tremendous importance for these countries.
- Dash(2012) narrates that contemporary and common problems like narcotic trafficking, money laundering, terrorism and others are the major reasons for bringing India-Central Asia closer.
- Bal(2008)says that India's Look North Policy is primarily based on the concerns of India's security . He gives a deep insight of intra-regional and inter-regional tensions and politics. He also analyzed the energy potential of the region. The author critically analyses the political, social, demographic, economic and security status of each of these states and gives pointers about where the synergies exist between India's future and these emerging nations.
- Gangal (2011) points out the significance of the region in India's objective to attain the strategic depth in its wider neighborhood. Closer defense cooperation has supplemented economic and historic ties in elevating the profile of bilateral exchange between India and regional partners especially Kazakhstan. The CARs are also valuable partners in India's counter terrorism effort. Further India is not only a trade partner but also potential strategic ally.
- Santham and Dwivedi (2004) discusses about the cooperation of India-Central Asian Countries in politico-economic-security issues faced in the region especially International Terrorism and how to curb them. They also say that though India is engaged with these nations in various ways but India needs to find out the Connectivity linkage for smooth

trade and economic relations. To maintain as well as to increase its economic relations, India needs to work with these countries on the security arrangements particularly on nontraditional security issues.

- Attri(2010) argues that India's response and policies towards Central Asian countries have always been positive even though the situations were hostile. The present level of mutual understanding and efforts towards strengthening of existing links in economic strategic and political spheres between both has unfolded significant potential of co-operation between them.
- Joshi(2010) defends the argument that India is the extended neighbor of Central Asia. With India's engagement in Central Asian countries, India can build capacities in areas such as agriculture, information, technology, service industries science and media for the central asian nations as well as satisfy her energy need thereby boosting to continental trade across the region benefitting the involved nations. This would also integrate South and Central Asia and result in vast economic benefits to all the stakeholders involved leading to a positive outcome for stability and security in the region.
- Carras(2013) argues that the rich resources of Central Asia especially that of Kazakhstan would help in Indian energy industry. The rich hydrocarbon and uranium resources could serve the needs of rapidly industrializing Indian economy and nuclear programmes. But the biggest geostrategic hindrance of Afghanistan and Pakistan needs to be solved for India to benefit in her energy trade.
- Sharma(2009) argues that the natural resource rich CARs especially Kazakhstan provide India with reliable alternate source of Oil, Gas and Hydrocarbons. Hydroelectric project with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the two rich in water resources can help India to meet the dire energy consumption requirement and energy cooperation between India and Kazakhstan can reduce India's dependency on other international markets and expand other areas for mutual benefit.
- Wariko(2011) argues for increasing energy cooperation and transport linkages between Central Asia and South Asia thereby eventually between Kazakhstan and India. The new quest is for an alternative and shortest transportation route to export oil/gas from this region to other countries mainly of south Asia. For India's demand of energy Wariko talks about establishment of Pan-Asian gas supplies system passing through Asia

connecting the source country and the consumer countries. This indeed would be beneficial for the region. He also deals with the problems and prospects of India-pakistan-iran(IPI) and TAPI pipelines dealing with the subject of transport linkages with the challenges of connectivity faced by the landlocked countries. Also harps on Silk route and Trans Siberian railway, North-South corridor and the newly built Gwadar Port in Pakistan.

- Peyrouse(2010) argues Chinese and Indian growing interests in the region replace the traditional power rivalry between Russia and US. Though India is unable to equally compete against Chinese presence in the region but New Delhi is well established in Afghanistan and has begun to cast her eyes towards the North to the shores of the Caspian Sea arguing that both the Asian powers are looking to redeploy their rivalry on the Central Asian and Afghan theaters not only on geopolitical but also political and economic levels.
- Campbell(2013)opines the reason for India to engage with CARs being primarily to secure and sustain India's energy suppliers to sustain economic growth , to check the rise of Radical Islamist group posing threat to India's security and to tap the commercial potential of Central Asian region.
- P.Stobdan (2009)opines that India and Kazakhstan should share a complimentary relationship and should work out a framework that suits their common objectives. Since Kazakhstan has offered many stakes for India in strategic sectors, the country also has large scale space technology research centre with military hardware production complexes which can be easily exploited by India for mutual benefit. India through Kazakhstan can establish new diplomatic phase in Central Asia-a region vital for geo strategic reasons.
- I.Malik and M. Afzal Mir(2013)analyzes the dynamics and potential of trade between India and Kazakhstan. Also analyses the states of the trade and commercial policies in the two countries and the extent of trade takes place as a result of official efforts and the consequent trade agreements. The authors opine the potential of trade with special reference to energy and information technology sector and describe a bright future for trade and the present difficult challenges in terms of institutional and infrastructural bottlenecks.

- Z.Hussain(2009) harps on India and Kazakhstan is moving ahead in their relationship and India finds Kazakhstan significant for mainly three reasons-its strategic location, vast energy and mineral resources and its secular and composite social culture. He also opines that it is through Kazakhstan that India can venture into a cooperative economic and trade relations with the central Asian region

Rationale of the Study

Despite the existence of vast literatures on India-Central Asia relations, no previous work has been seriously attempted in listing out the prospects and problems in India's Central Asia Policy with special reference to India-Kazakhstan relations. India as a rising powers, needs strategic partners especially to counter China's String of Pearls through the Maritime Silk route. India's growing economy needs more energy consumption and needs new partner for its liberalized economy. Terrorism originating from Afghanistan and Pakistan is a continuous threat to India. India needs strategic, secured and economic partners to deal with all these problems. The land locked Central Asian states look for sea access especially the warm waters, consumer goods, pharmaceutical goods, humanitarian assistance, training for military personnel and up-gradation of air bases. The Central Asian states also needs economic power house to explore its natural resources. India is gradually emerging as a natural partner for these countries in general and with Kazakhstan in particular. In India's Connect Central Asia policy, Kazakhstan features prominently. For India, in order to make any inroad with the region, India-Kazakhstan relation needs to go beyond from present working partners to natural partners which might be successful if Chahbahar Port could be made accessed to reach out to the Central Asian Republics as Chahbahar is already showing success story when on June 28 2020, it shipped cargos of wheat as a humanitarian aid from Government of India to Afghanistan.

There is going to be huge security vacuum in the region with the withdrawal of the US led forces from Afghanistan as 2500 soldiers have already been removed from Afghanistan in 2020. For India, closer relations with the Central Asian states and particularly with Kazakhstan are required to contain the terrorist problem in the region. The present work looked into India's engagement in the region especially with Kazakhstan and studied the complementary nature of economic and security interests of India in the region.

Research Question

- Why is Central Asian region an important area for South Asian region as a whole and India in particular?
- Has the threat of religious extremism, Islamic fundamentalism and rise of terrorism over the years had an impact on the relationship of India and Central Asian region?
- Has Kazakhstan been any importance to help India fight back terrorism and vice-versa?
- Has India been able to set up a vibrant and dynamic economic and trade relation with Kazakhstan? Can India Kazakhstan relation help India to have a strong and vibrant “Connect Central Asia Policy”?

Hypothesis

- The common problem of non-traditional security issues is the driving force for India Central Asia’s relation.
- Kazakhstan being the most stable country in the central Asian region is strategically important to India to have an easy access to central Asian region.
- Energy and Trade relations are the determining factors in India and Kazakhstan relations.
- Both India and Kazakhstan share common perceptions about the need to have friendship and mutually advantageous bilateral relationship.
- A dynamic and vibrant India Kazakhstan relation will lead to a successful connect central Asia policy.

Methodology

A comparative, analytical and descriptive methodology has been employed for the present study. The study has been based on both qualitative and quantitative data as the study involves security energy and economic arrangements between India and Central Asia as a whole and India and Kazakhstan in particular. For the purpose of the study, both primary and secondary data has been collected. Mainly secondary data has been used as many of the bureaucrats have ceased to share any information or sit for interview pertaining to ministerial/departmental norms. In order to look into India’s Central Asia Policy, a case study of India Kazakhstan relation has been dealt with in details principally harping on the economic trade and energy relations along with the non-traditional security issues.

Secondary Data: The study has been mainly based on the secondary data. Secondary data has been collected from books, journals after visiting libraries of Jadavpur University Jawaharlal Nehru University library, Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, American Library, British Council and JNU (2015) ,newspaper clippings and online journals and e.books.

Primary Data

Along with secondary data, primary data has also been collected for the purpose of the present study. Primary source included government documents, documents of various bilateral and multilateral treaties available in websites which are accessible. Besides, the present study proposed for conducting a survey among the different stakeholders of the proposed research work. To supplement the secondary study findings, a primary survey along with a detailed questionnaire and a trip to Almaty, Shyamkent, Astana for interviewing the locals , the young research scholars in order to elicit their perception towards India's increasing engagement in the region was planned to be conducted which could not be materialized due to the Pandemic situation. However online interview was arranged through social media sites like instagram and Facebook where the delegations from cultural fields agreed for a casual discussion but not for a formal interview so I have not provided their names but their discussions helped me a lot to have an idea about the people of Kazakhstan. For analysis of qualitative data, statistical data have been presented through diagrams, tables, charts and maps followed by an analysis

Chapterisation

1. **Introduction:** The Introductory chapter mainly gives an overview of what the following chapters shall deal with to establish the importance of India's Look North Policy surrounding around Central Asian Republics. After a brief historical introduction of India and Central Asian relationship which dates back to the Harappan Civilization , trading through silk route, cultural diplomatic exchange to the time of Czarist Russia and post 1917 with the rise of Soviet to fall of the same in 1991 with the formation of Central Asian Republics after its disintegration. Thus showing India always had interest in Central Asia and vice versa. Although borders have changed, earlier while south asia exclusively meant India but now South Asia comprises of many countries where Pakistan plays the pivotal role to counter the India's Central Asia policy. The chapter gives brief

overview of all the following chapters establishing the importance of having a strong Connect Central Asia Policy. The chapter also incorporates the methodology which has been undertaken to proceed with the research work. The chapter also deals with a comparative study of India Kazakhstan to that of India Central Asian Relations mainly in the area of trade, Security and Energy.

Why is Central Asian region is an important area for South Asian region as a whole and India in particular?

Both South and Central Asian Region has long history which dates back their linkage through the Silk Road (a flourishing trading hub in history). Further the answer becomes incomplete without referring to Mackinder's Heartland theory which invariably shows the Central Asian Region being the heartland of the Great Game of territorial annexation travelling to the new great game of controlling the untapped and virgin energy resources of Central Asian region thereby incorporating South Asian nations in the new great game considering their enormous need of energy and natural resources since the newly independent nation states find confidence in India mainly because of her historical linkage as well as selfless support and recognition to the newly independent Central Asian republics in the world forum. India definitely has her own interest in the region other than energy interest as this region is equally unstable due to nontraditional security threats such as terrorism, illicit arms trade, human trafficking , drug trafficking.

1. India's Economic Relations with Post Soviet Central Asia: After the introductory chapter the next chapter have tried to establish various arenas of India's Economic Relationship with the Central Asian Republics which proves that India always had bilateral partnership with each of the central Asian republic and the lacuna laid on the part of India to not have been able to establish a robust Look North Policy unlike she established the Look East Policy. CARs is the epicenter of investment market and want to diversify their economy and want new partners. And India has the ability to help build Central Asians' capacities in areas such as information technology, science and technology, knowledge industries and soft power. Areas such as energy, non conventional sources of energy and agro-based industries are promising spheres for trilateral cooperation. Joint ventures in cotton and agriculture can be established which could benefit the entire region. However, lack of

direct connectivity and difficult market conditions in some parts of the region hamper interaction. Still, increasing linkages between India and Kazakhstan, Afghanistan's membership to the SAARC, and its emergence as a potentially important player in facilitating regional economic cooperation is shaping India's "Look North Policy". At this juncture, the concept of a "Greater Central Asia" offers opportunities to connect India with Central Asia, particularly in the transport and trade sectors. In a sense, it recreates the past history of the region when robust trading activity was a dominating feature. Afghanistan was the fulcrum on which such activities were carried out in various directions. Further if the transport and trade activities as envisaged by the Greater Central Asia concept are operationalized, the proposed Turkmenistan- Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline project could also see the light of the day. Indeed, transport and natural gas pipelines could run parallel to one another. Therefore India's relation with this region needs an in-depth examination and this chapter and the following chapters have been showing all the aspects in details.

2. India-Kazakhstan Economic Relations : India and Kazakhstan have historical, cultural and social links. In this respect the trade relationship between the two has its own significance. India-Kazakh trade is the most dynamic segment of India's foreign trade in Central Asian region. While there are comparing areas of comparative advantage, there is acute shortage of institutional and logistic infrastructure to cater it which has lifted a huge gulf between actual trades between the two countries which needs to be bridged. The driving force behind India's objective of enhanced engagement with Central Asia is economics. Kazakhstan has pursued "Multivector foreign policy" seeking good relations with its two large neighbors, Russia and China as well as with USA and rest of the Western world. Further it has the strongest and the largest performing economy in central Asia, supported by rising oil outputs and prices. If India can gain the confidence of Kazakhstan then it shall not be difficult for India to have a greater central Asia policy which India has started achieving as The recent achievements in 2015, with their earlier deal having expired, India and Kazakhstan signed a new agreement for the purchase of 5000 tonnes of Kazakh Uranium until the end of 2019. In 2009 with President's Nazarbayev's visit to India a civil nuclear pact had also been made signed where Kazakhstan will supply fuel to atomic plants of India. Kazakhstan has also sought to

negotiate a multilateral trade agreement with Iran and Turkmenistan to create a transport corridor to India to ensure a reliable trade route and provide Kazakhstan commercial and shipping access to the warm water ports of India. To bolster commerce, both nations have established Indo-Kazakh joint Business council. Bilateral economic and trade relation with the 5 central asian republics have been focused to justify the successful trade relation with Kazakhstan and to work on the model of India Kazakhstan economic relationship to thrive as a successful third vector after Russia and China in the region.

Apart from the bilateral cooperation, India has also focused on multilateral engagement with the region at two levels. The first is through regional connectivity, with a renewed push for long delayed projects starting with Prime Minister Modi's visit to Iran, India's gateway to Central Asia, in 2016. During this visit, both sides signed an agreement to develop Chabahar Port, which has now become commercially operational. To facilitate transport of goods between India and Central Asia via Iran, India acceded to the Customs Convention on International Transport of Goods under cover of TIR Carnets in 2017 and joined the Ashgabat Agreement – which includes Iran, Oman, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – in 2018. While these steps have given a new lease of life to India's vision for Eurasian connectivity, New Delhi must combine skillful diplomacy with action on the ground to ensure the continued viability of these projects in the face of US-Iran tensions.

The second is through platforms for multilateral cooperation with both the Central Asian states and other external powers. On the economic front, India and the Eurasian Economic Union, which includes the Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, set up a Joint Study Group to explore the possibility of a Free Trade Agreement in 2015 but formal negotiations are yet to begin though the feasibility report have been submitted by the group in 2017.

Within the region, India has observed the strengthening of mutual understanding, dialogue and cooperation among the Central Asian states. Recognizing this as a positive step, India has explored opportunities to engage with the region as a whole rather than bilaterally or as part of mechanisms that include other external powers. The first ever India-Central Asia Dialogue, at the Foreign Ministers' level, was held in Samarkand on 13 January 2019. The second iteration of the dialogue is expected to be held in New

Delhi in 2020. Through regular institutional dialogue and exchanges, this platform can help bring India and the region closer together.

Geography has placed Central Asia at the nexus of crucial political and economic transformations for centuries. With the actualization of the BRI, India's Connect Central Asia policy, and the EU's new Central Asia strategy, the 21st century could possibly be the most decisive period for the region. Stemming from its historic cultural and economic bonds, India is now well placed to take a more active role in the development of the region. India's growing global visibility and key contributions to multilateral forums – like the SCO – have catapulted India from an observer into a critical stakeholder in the region. As India looks beyond its borders, Central Asia provides India with the right platform to leverage its political, economic and cultural connections to play a leading role in Eurasia.

3. India-Kazakhstan Energy Cooperation: India is fourth largest consumers of energy according to EIA 2013 and domestic production is not sufficient to meet the domestic consumption and the total energy demand is expected to be double by 2025. To balance this gap India has to import cost effective energy products and CARs which is the best alternative for India given the distance between India and the CARs which is minimal as compared to the Gulf countries thereby its transportation cost would decrease. Therefore security and stability of central Asia is of utmost importance to India because of accessing and transporting of energy resources. For India, a greater challenge than of exploiting central Asian energy resources is how to transport them to India, as there are few choices available to it, building oil or gas pipelines through Afghanistan and Pakistan would clearly be extremely difficult, even if it were possible to construct, they could not be relied upon. India therefore proposed for hydrocarbon pipeline from Kazakhstan which is 1500 km, longer than that of TAPI heading from former Silk Road. The ancient silk road has been revived by the CARs (landlocked countries) to build connectivity with the global markets. Furthermore to maintain its growth, India needs to assure its energy supplying and external routes to drain its production. As Sachdeva (2007) puts in: “New energy resources from Greater Central Asia will play an important role in Indian energy strategy in the coming years”. This conscience is clear when India takes part in TAPI Pipeline project. The country is also a partner of the North South International Trade

Corridor and plays a key role in the SAARC. Thus India needs to show itself as an alternative partner and investor to develop infrastructure and local economies in Central Asia and use its relationship with Kazakhstan to place itself as the third weight on the balance.

- Has India been able to set up a vibrant and dynamic energy economic and trade relation with Kazakhstan? Can India Kazakhstan relation help India to have a strong and vibrant “Connect Central Asia Policy”? How would Russia and China factor work here?

Four different chapters have been thoroughly explained to deal with this question. To secure its energy interests, India has expanded civil nuclear cooperation with the region. Again Kazakhstan personally shares a good relation with India. It gained the confidence of India when it condemned the 13th December 2001 attack on Indian Parliament saying terrorism is unjustifiable and that terrorism should be fought back globally thereby completely eliminating it and promised to be by side of India. Further India and Kazakhstan has also developed close collaboration in fighting religious terrorism an extremism as well as promoting regional security. A joint memorandum signed in 2002 enabled joint projects such as training military officers, developing joint military industrial projects and establishing partnership between the defence industries of India and Kazakhstan. India also extended support to Kazakhstan in building a naval fleet in Caspian Sea despite Russia’s opposition. In 2015, with their earlier deal having expired, India and Kazakhstan signed a new agreement for the purchase of 5000 tonnes of Kazakh Uranium until the end of 2019. Currently, both sides are negotiating a third agreement, as part of which Kazakhstan is planning to increase its supplies to India to 7500-10000 tonnes. India also signed a uranium supply agreement with Uzbekistan.

4. Non-Traditional security issues in India-Kazakhstan Relations: India and Central Asia have convergence of interests especially India and Kazakhstan in the areas of non-traditional security threats like drug trafficking, terrorism and domestic turmoil as their economies are hampered the most with the trade disturbance resulted out of non-traditional security threats. Despite of an investment treaty between India and Kazakhstan (Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement), yet cross border investment

between the two is weak. From the problem of direct land connectivity and India's inability to take the route through Pakistan and Afghanistan on account of the unstable security and political situation in these countries to the huge "information gap" that exist between the two nations on the potential and prospect of collaborating with each other that hinders the two from realizing the full potential of their relationship has been dealt with precision. Religious extremism and fundamentalism pose serious challenge to regional stability. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001 foreign powers took much greater interest in preventing the spread of radical Islamic terrorist organizations such as IRP and IMU. The central Asian Nations offered their territory and airspace for use by US and its allies in operations against Taliban in Afghanistan. Powers such as US-Russia-China were not only interested in fighting terrorism; they used war on terror in order to advance their political and economic agendas in the region, particularly over the exploitation of central Asian energy resources. Thus the new game is centered on regional oil and gas politics. Now, instead of competing for actual control over a geographic area, pipeline, tanker routes, petroleum consortiums, and contracts are the prizes of the new Great Game which could be established only if there is stability in the region. Security Interest figure most prominently in India's Central Asia Policy. The security situation in Central Asia directly affects India's own security through Pakistan cross border terrorism which results in striving captive power by coercive means resulting in civil strife and turbulence and having spillover effect on Kashmir Issue. The compatibility of security interests between India and Kazakhstan was evident when the two countries signed a Declaration of Strategic Partnership in 2009. India's policy towards Central Asia is becoming energized and proactive, unlike in the past, when it was reactive. India also held its first joint army exercise with Kazakhstan, Prabal Dostyk, in 2016. Held annually thereafter, this was renamed as the KAZIND in 2018. This exercise focuses on joint counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in urban and rural environments, mountainous terrains, and those conducted under the mandate of the United Nations. In addition, the Kazakh Armed Forces Unit also underwent training on peacekeeping operations in India in April-May 2018 and was then deployed under the command of an Indian Battalion at UNIFIL Lebanon.

- How did the threat of religious extremism, Islamic fundamentalism and rise of terrorism over the years had an impact on the relationship of India and Central Asian region? And Has Kazakhstan been any importance to help India fight back terrorism and vice-versa?

The regional security challenges in Central Asia have the potential of spilling over into India. The increasing Islamic radicalization has become a major security concern for the governments of the region. Given its experience in successfully tracking down and limiting the influence of the IS domestically, India's agenda in Central Asia includes cooperation to tackle terrorism and radicalization. At the bilateral level, India has enhanced the institutional basis for its defence cooperation with the region. Notably, during Prime Minister Modi's visits in 2015, India signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and agreements related to defence and military technical cooperation with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. Reflecting the growing engagement, India and Kyrgyzstan agreed to hold their bilateral military exercise, Khanjar, annually. The following year, they agreed to construct a Mountain Training Centre to provide instruction, train personnel of the Kyrgyz Armed Forces and to host joint mountain training exercises. Most recently, during Uzbek President Mirziyoyev's visit to India last year, both sides agreed to expand cooperation in the areas of counterterrorism, with joint military training exercises, military education and military medicine. They also agreed to institutionalize this cooperation by setting up a Joint Working Group on defence related activities.

5. Russia and China factor in India-Kazakhstan Relations : The two most influential nation states in Central Asian Region. While Russia has its importance because all the Central Asian republics are formed with the disintegration of Soviet Union or Soviet Russia but China has its control over Central Asian Republics mainly because of direct connectivity that it has with the all the Central Asian Republics especially Kazakhstan. Russia traditionally has been Central Asia's main trading partner. But commercial ties between Russia and the region have atrophied over the past decade with the increased trade figures being 30 billion dollars with China in 2016 while that of Russia being just 18.6 billion. Now with India's presence in the region which was not liked by China and Russia but with Russia's strong support the SCO expanded to include both India and Pakistan, when the membership of the former was obstructed by China. India defines Central Asia as an

extended neighbor despite sharing border with Central Asia because of its historical linkages. This Chapter has been divided into segments principally showing influence of Russia on Central Asian States especially Kazakhstan and its Impact, Influence of China on Central Asian States especially Kazakhstan and its Impact and readjustment of its policies towards the region from exploitative to constructive following the influence of India over the Central Asian Republics. Further it was also very interesting to notice that the policy of China in the region towards India has always been to counter. The best example being giving permanent status to Pakistan when India was given the permanent status in SCO from the observer status. China's further attempt is to develop Gwadar Port in Pakistan which is again a counter on India's Central Asia policy for developing the Chabahar Port at Iran to have unhindered connectivity with Central Asian Region. To add fuel into the fire China and Iran are on the verge of signing 400 billion dollar project which India fears of a willful hindrance of China on the Chabahar Project which has remained halted due to diplomatic sanctions imposed by USA over Iran. Thus India has been utilizing its full time membership in SCO to gain grounds in the region and establish a strong Central Asia policy through its projects like North South Transport Corridor to gain access to the resource rich central asian countries.

6. Conclusion (A future prospect of Research) :Therefore in view of the areas that have been discussed in the chapters addressing the research questions it may be concluded that a robust connect Central Asia Policy could only be reached out if India works proactively on some of the projects related to connectivity as in the very first stage lack of physical connectivity has been the number one barrier to India's engagement in the region. Bringing to fruition the existing projects on establishing physical connectivity with the Central Asian region is absolutely essential for India to become a critical actor in the region. The TAPI pipeline which was supposed to be functional by 2019 did not even start its construction works in India although it is expected to commence in 2021. Furthermore the trade through Chabahar port located at Iran would help India directly connect with Central Asian Nations and will also cut transport costs & time for Indian goods by one third. Chabahar may also provide link to the planned International North-South Transport Corridor as it has already started showing success story with the recent being transporting of Cargos of Wheat as an aid to Afghanistan on June 28, 2020. With

the improve in the transport connectivity the trade between India and Kazakhstan may also increase to a large extent. Further with the accessibility of Chahbahar Port the landlocked Central Asian Republics would also get access not only to the warm waters of Indo-Pacific region but also would be self reliant and have a hassle free access through Arabian Sea to the emerging Indo-Pacific Market where India would play the pivotal role to help Central Asian Republics to build their own economy devoid of Russian and Chinese interference. Moreover Central Asian Republics would have a greater bargaining capability with both Russia and China, which has already started with Uzbekistan's approach towards joining Chahbahar project and demonstrating of having its independent Foreign Policy free from Chinese and Russian influences and boosting its economy by exporting energy through Chahbahar to India.

India and Kazakhstan have cooperated in a wide range of areas like IT, oil and gas, banking, military technical cooperation. Thus boosting trade and commercial ties with the region has to be India's priority as these linkages are vital for projecting Soft Power especially when there is a competitor like China and a natural dominator like Russia. Various small scale projects by Indian companies dotted throughout Central Asia needs to be given a policy and strategic context and possible official support in implementation and timely completion of the projects. Further the objective could be better achieved by increasing developmental and humanitarian aid to the region and promoting closer "people to people ties" through educational assistance, knowledge transfer, providing medical and health assistance and encouraging tourism which are the basics of soft power. India further needs to display leadership in forging greater coordination and cooperation with Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the efforts at stabilising Afghanistan. Further considering the present scenario when US is withdrawing troops which has been 2500 in 2020 from Afghanistan India should consider itself a viable alternative of US in the region considering its historical relations with the region. Also to contain China and Pakistan, India has to deploy both soft and hard power to gain access to Afghanistan through Tajikistan by increasing humanitarian and developmental assistance to the Tajiks and by reaching a quid pro quo with Russia on the common cause of combating extremism and terrorism.

The TAPI Project which would provide around 14 bcm of the Gas produced to India and Pakistan which amounts to 42% of the total gas produced has been under process since 2015. The construction of which has started in Afghanistan in 2018 is supposed to be completed and is

suppose to be functional from 2021 needs sustained diplomatic efforts for advancing the construction of TAPI by engaging in negotiations with all parties to ensure long-term security of energy supply. Here membership of SCO may offer a useful multilateral platform to engage in dialogue with Pakistan on this and other issues which will enable India to strike a workable relationship with Pakistan.

Thus India also needs to develop new initiatives and vision to work closely with China and Russia in shaping multilateral regional structures and incorporating Afghanistan in the broader framework. India's engagement with SCO and AIIB is definitely a positive start. Although Russia's try to rope Central Asian Countries through European Economic Union as a part of a new endeavour of a "Greater Eurasian Partnership" couldn't attract all the Central Asian Republics due to Russia's economic weakness with the fall in the Oil Prices at the international market and the sanctions Russia is facing from EU countries . So it is needed to engage in dialogue with EEU and identify the areas of Partnership with Central Asian Republics which are mainly organisational, value oriented ,social which mainly take into account the interest and the well being of Central Asian member states. Indian industries and entrepreneurs will benefit from economic liberalization and market opening of the CARs.

Further, with China's continuous interferences in the domestic affairs of Central Asian Republics by capturing Central Asian Market and dumping it with Chinese products including Chinese army's infiltration through Indian borders may be a possible reason for the CARs as well as India to contain China which would be again possible only if a hassle free connectivity between Central Asian Region and India could be established through water ways and Chahbahar is definitely a viable option to have a strong and robust Connect Central Asia Policy for India. Future research prospect between the region and India could be made through analyzing the Strategic Position of Indo-Pacific Region. Further the Concept of " Necklace of Diamonds" as a counter to the Chinese "String of Pearls" may also be analyzed for strengthening India's Position in the Indo Pacific Region making a viable route for establishing a self reliance of the Land Locked Central Asian Republics.