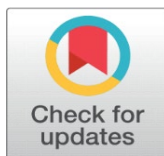
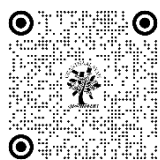


ETHNIC CONFLICT: AN OVERVIEW OF POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

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ABSTRACT

After the de-centralisation and collapse of the Soviet Union, the aftermath brought chaos, and the major challenge was the manifestation of serious conflict on ethnic lines. The emergence of the Russian Federation was not peaceful, and violence remained a core character in the making of the Russian Federation in the aftermath of Post Soviet Russia. The series of issues brought major ramifications of newly formed states carved out from the large Society federation as an independent entity. The collapse of the Soviet federation created fifteen independent states amidst ethnic tension across the federation. The outcome was chaos, political disintegration and struggle for autonomy in the making of power transition.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Groups, Titular Nationality, Federalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethnicity as a Concept

The concept of ethnicity has been a much-debated topic. Several scholarly has been made on understanding the concept and its significance. Ethnicity as a concept can be understood as certain attributes shared by a group of people who identify themselves as belonging to some common sets of shared tradition, history, language, society, religion, culture or residence, which makes them distinct from others. While there have been varying definitions of 'ethnicity', the origin of the ethnicity can be traced back to Greece, in which 'ethos' referred to a "band, tribe, race, a people, or a swarm." (Baumann 2004:12).

According to Gerald Berreman ethnicity is defined as a form of social classification or manifestation of **social** inequalities, which involves factors like "race, class, kinship, age, estate, caste, and gender". Ethnicity as a concept has also been interchangeably used with the concept of race or class. However, Berreman emphasizes the distinction between ethnicity, race and caste. He further explains that while racial identity refers to ascribed status at the time of birth based on physical and cultural features defined by external entities, ethnicity is similarly attached to the individual at birth;

however ethnicity is defined by the ethnic group based on its cultural values (Berreman 1972, 1981; Baumann 2004). Further, he makes the distinction between ethnicity and class as “social class membership and ranking . . . is based on attributes regarded as extrinsic to the people who comprise the class Such as the amount of income, occupation, education, consumption patterns, and ‘life-style’” (Berreman 1981:15).

Several studies have identified various approaches towards understanding the concept of ethnicity. According to Ronald Cohen, ethnicity is “a series of nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness” (Cohen 1978: 383-84). Ethnicism can be explained as a “movement of protest and resistance on behalf of (ethnics) against oppressive and exploitative outsiders” (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:5).

According to Charles Tilly,

Ethnicity is a characteristic of group having same origin and kinship but differs from others. (Tilly 1991: 574).

There can be multiple types of ethnic identities which can often be overlapping. Some of the ethnic group identity includes Ethno-linguistic; Ethno-national; Ethno-racial; Ethno-regional; Ethno-religious or Ethno-cultural. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith identify six major characteristics of any ethnic group, first, the use of ‘proper name’ to identify the significance of the community; second shares a ‘common ancestry’ which refers to a common origin, a place providing a sense of kinship; third feature include commonly shared ‘historical memories’, of the past events or development; fourth, is ‘element of common culture’ which includes customs, languages or religion; the fifth characteristic include a common link to ‘homeland’ referring to the symbolic attachment to their place of birth or ancestral land or residence; sixth, is a sense of solidarity at least to some section of the ethnic population (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:6-7).

2. ETHNICITY IN RUSSIA

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought in an era of national development commonly followed throughout Eurasia, characterized by support for own sovereign states. The disintegration of the former multinational Soviet state, in an unparalleled manner, eventually became one of the major contributing factors for the ethnic tension in the region. At the same time, ethnic tension was also added to several economic and political crises. Eventually, such a situation with ethnic tension, political and economic turmoil was peaked up by the decline in the living standards of the people. Such a situation eventually made way for establishing authoritarian-nationalist regimes in most of the former Soviet republics. This, in a way, sparked the rise in nationalist sentiments. (Emil Pain, 1996).

The Russian Society is characterised by cultural diversity rooted in its ethnic and cultural structure. More recently added to that has been the issue of migration. The territory of the Russian Empire was inherited by the USSR. The 1897 census estimates only 44 % of the Russian Empire’s population was composed of Russians. Furthermore, the 1989 census during the decline of the Soviet rule estimated 50.7 % of the population as Russians.

The Russians had lived in a multinational state for several centuries without being a part of the majority population; modern Russia emerged with the fall of the USSR in 1991, inheriting the territory of “the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic” (RSFSR). While it became one of the 15 Union Republics having the majority population as Russians, there were also ethnic territories in which the total population was composed of all ethnic groups of the former Empire. According to the 2010 census, Russians in the Russian Federation compose 80 % of the population, while more than 180 nationalities make up the other 20 % of the population. A major characteristic of the Russian state has been the process of mixing diverse ethnic groups.

Studies on Russian ethnicity and migration suggest that while the ethnic character of the Russian Empire was heterogenous, the same was not applicable for modern Russia (Alesina, 2003; Alesina, Harnoss, Rapoport 2013). Though there has been a historical process of ethnic assimilation, however, several ethnic groups maintained their distinct ethnic identity and culture. The application of state laws on the minorities and several indigenous groups in compliance with the international norms has given rise to sets of problems and complexities. Such difficulties vary between groups in a vulnerable position to those being more concerned about upholding their distinct ethnic identity than human right violations, not affected by any form of discrimination and enjoying some degree of autonomy. The migrants are more

vulnerable to such situations, especially the 'non-Slavic, who face several problems and prejudice, including ill-treatment, exploitation by employers in instances of law enforcement, struggle in securing documents etc. (Prina 2014).

The concept of ethnicity refers to socially defined groups belonging to different races, cultures, languages, regions or religions. The demands of the ethnic groups often tend to give rise to tension and dispute between these groups for regional autonomy, culture, sovereignty or territorial powers. In such a situation concept of federalism and the federal structure of administration plays a significant role in securing stability and preventing conflicts. The federal form of Government can respond to the diverse claims from multiple ethnic groups through its legal and cultural mechanism. Further, through autonomy, federal administration can help to secure the interest of the people.

3. ETHNIC POPULATION IN RUSSIA

The Grand Duchy of Moscow, which was previously composed of Orthodox Slavs, started a fast rate of territorial expansion by the 15th century. Eventually, with the Russian state becoming an Empire by the 18th century, it gained extensive areas of the Volga River basin, the Urals, Ukraine, and Siberia, which had a population of indigenous ethnic groups (Riasanovsky 2000; Bessudnov and Shcherbak 2020). Following the First World War and the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Empire was characterized by a mix of multi-ethnic groups in which the ethnic Russian population contributed to less than half of the Empire's total population (Mironov 2017). However, with the formation of the Soviet Union in 1922, several debates on the 'nationalities question' found a place in Soviet Russia. As Bessudnov and Shcherbak write that the Bolsheviks did not support the orthodox Marxist approach, which was against the important role of ethnic identities. Rather they adopted the 'great danger' concept, which focussed Russian chauvinism as comparatively a greater threat to Russia than the idea of "local ethnic nationalisms" (Bessudnov and Shcherbak 2020:107).

Such approach facilitated in promoting local ethnic groups and enhanced the social, cultural as well as economic development of the backward ethnic groups. The state initiated several quotas for the ethnic population in universities and government organizations, printed language books, and also supported intellectuals from the ethnic population (Slezkine 1994). However, such a positive attitude of the state was not in action during the 1930s, eventually leading to several forms of state repression and actions. The 1936 Constitution classified the administrative units in the hierarchy. The highest state constituted the 11 soviet Socialist Republics which later became 15, including the Russian Federation. Further in, territories composed of the most significant ethnic minorities became the autonomous Soviet republics.

The ethnic heartland provinces (oblasts) in Russia and territories (krays) in the colonized territories were characterized by a mixed population of multiple ethnic groups. This ethnic federal structure, coupled with minute modification, continued until Soviet Union's collapse and the establishment of modern Russia (Bessudnov and Shcherbak 2020). The 2010 census estimates ethnic Russians comprising 80% of population in Russia (Rosstat, 2012). The rest 20%, population of about 26 million, identify themselves not as ethnic Russians but belonging to over 100 other ethnic groups. This heterogeneous ethnography is a reflection of Russian state history and a consequence of conquest and colonization by ethnic Russians and ethnic minorities' immigration to heartlands of Russia. According to 2010 census, there were more than 190 groups in Russia. Russia comprises almost more than three-fourths population of Russian Federation and has been very dominant in the region apart from North Caucasus along with some areas of middle Volga region.

Russia's population on an ethnic basis is composed of 77.7 % Russian and 3.7% as Tatar. While 1.4% of the population includes Ukrainian, 1.1% as Bashkir, with Chuvash make up 1% and Chechen 1%, others constitute 10.2%, with unspecified as 3.9 % of its population. (CIA World Factbook). According to the 2010 census, Russia's population is composed of diverse linguistic groups, including 96.3 % as Russian, 5.3% Dolgang, 1.5 % German, 1 %Chechen and 3 %Tatar. Others constitute 10.3 % of the population. However, the composition estimates lead to more than 100 % as several respondents replied with more than a single answer. Further, there are more than 100 different languages used in Russia. The 2010 official reports 277 languages were in use in Russia, with 39 of those languages were used for instructions in schools, and 50 languages were taught as subjects. Most of the population speaks the Russian language making it 99.49 % of the population (Prina 2014).

The Russian population based on religion is characterized by a population of believers who do not practice their faith and also a population who do not believe in any religion. Practising worshipers in Russia constitute 15-20 % of its

population as Russian Orthodox, with 10- 15 % as Muslim and Christian composing 2 %. The 2010 census findings on the religion of the population, suggests that most Russian ethnics adhere to the Russian Orthodox faith. The Muslims in Russia number more than 16.4 million. Further, people are identified as belonging to several other faiths. (Prina 2014). The 1989 census of Russia population estimates 81.5 % of its population as Russian, with 3.8 % as Tatars, and 3 % Ukrainians, 1.2 % by Chuvash, 0.9 % composed of Bashkir, with 0.8 % as Belorussian and 0.7 % as Mordovian while others constitute 8.1 %. The 2002 census estimates that 80 % are composed of "Russians and Tatars, Ukrainians, Bashkirs, Chuvash, Chechens, and Armenians, each of which accounted for at least 1 million residents" (Source: Library of Congress).

4. THE ETHNIC CHARACTER OF RUSSIAN SOCIETY

Modern Russia is composed of diverse ethnic and cultural spaces, which is not only a consequence of its historical evolution but also due to the recent developments in the migration process. The heterogeneous population in cities and the region are determined by the migration at two levels, both international and also by interregional (Limonov and Nesena 2015).

Russian society is characterized by a diverse range of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identities. The 2010 census estimates 80.9 % of the total population as ethnic Russians, followed by Tatars composing 3.87, Ukrainians with 1.40 %, the Bashkirs composing 1.15 %, the Chuvashes making up 1.05 %, the Chechens 1.04 %, the Armenians constitute 0.86 %, the Avars 0.66 % and Mordovians 0.54 %. While the other 8.5 % of the population is composed of several others smaller ethnic groups (Prina 2014).

According to the census, there are 193 major ethnic groups other than the Russian ethnic groups. There has been a considerable difference in the living condition of the minority groups and the indigenous population in Russia (Prina 2014; Rohr 2014).

The ethnic groups in Russia have also been categorized into the titular and the non-titular nationalities. The major distinctions between the two identities are the Titular nationalities to those have territory assigned to them during the Soviet era, eventually leading to the territorial unit's post-Soviet era. For example, "Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic" developed into the "Republic of Tatarstan". There is considerable variation in the condition of the republic, more so in the context of representation with the difference in ratio between the titular nationalities and those ethnic Russians within their borders. For example, in the Republic of Tatarstan, the Tatars constitute 53.2 % of its population, while the ethnic Russians make 39.7 % of its population. (Prina 2014; Minority Rights Group International 2018). There are several benefits enjoyed by the titular nationalities, these include their right to pass a constitution for safeguarding the rights of the titular languages and cultures, further provision to provide titular languages as a medium of instruction and teaching in schools.

Such privileges for the titular nationality are also linked to their local conditions, including numeric strength and also territories concentration of its people. For that instance, the privilege by Karelia as titular nationality is very limited as their population is comparatively small in the republic. Further, a considerable number of people from several ethnic groups live outside their republics. For example, among the Tatars population of 5.3 million in Russia, merely 2 million are inhabitants of the Republic of Tatarstan. Other minorities enjoy limited autonomy and do not enjoy any privilege from its territorial unit in Russia. Some minorities have been categorised as kin-state, which were previously part of the Soviet Republic, including Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, and persons from Central Asian states. However, the indigenous people of North, Siberia and the Far East who are identified as small in number, are categorised distinctly from this.

According to Russian Federal law, indigenous population categorised as law, small-in-number refers to those specific groups whose population is less than 50,000. The law provides special privileges to them in the context of land and also their right to preserve their traditions. However, the practice of such rights by the indigenous population and the safeguarding of such rights by the law creates several problems and limitations. Moreover, their standard of living tends to be comparatively much lower than the remaining population. Significant distinctions were made between the minorities with Slavic and non-Slavic identities leading to their vulnerable conditions, more so for dark-skinned people

from the Caucasus and Central Asia and Roma. Stateless populations with non-Slavic appearances are more prone to mistreatments and other vulnerabilities in the country.

The state policy and its law enforcement official with high prejudices against specific ethnic groups have often resulted in the mistreatment of these groups leading to their vulnerable living standards. People who are Migrant workers, especially from the Caucasus, are severely affected through several forms of mistreatment. Another major contributing factor to such conditions has been the Chechen wars instances of Islamic fundamentalism that escalated the suspicion towards people of North Caucasus origin. The 2010 census estimates 205,000 Roma in Russia characterized by sub-standard of living, challenges of social integration and segregation as well. The migrant workers, as well as the Roma settlement, have been prejudiced by Federal law enforcement.

5. ETHNIC GROUPS IN RUSSIA

Russian society is composed of several ethnic and cultural groups. Such stratification and the number of groups have increased with the decline of the Soviet Union. About 80 % of the Russian population is composed of ethnic Russians with 75% population are composed of Russian orthodox. Most of the minority groups follow their distinct language and traditions and also demand economic and political autonomy (Library of Congress 1996).

While there are 21 ethnic republics, only eight republics have a population of the titular group, comparatively bigger than the Russian population. Further, more than half the population are composed of Russians in nine republics. The Khanty-Mansi Region constitutes more than 1 million populations, with Russian Settlers constituting the two-third population of the autonomous region. Further, the Khanty and Mansi tribes contribute to less than two % of the population. In the 1990s, both Islam and the Russian Orthodox Church expanded rapidly its membership among many other ethnic groups. Russia is a state composed of multiple nationalities inherited with several nationality problems that existed in the Soviet Union. According to the 1989 census, the Soviet Union consisted of more than 100 nationalities. Several groups which were previously part of the Soviet republics now inhabits independent nations. Russian Federation, which emerged from SU is homeland for over 100 national minorities, with a predominantly Russian population. (Library of Congress 1996).

The Slavic population, which includes the Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, constitute 85 % population of Russia. There are three major ethnic groups with several other considerably minor ethnic groups. The Altaic group consist of Turkish speaking population and has their presence in the middle Volga, the southern Ural Mountains, the North Caucasus, and above the Arctic Circle. In Russia, the main Altaic peoples refer to Balkars, Bashkirs, Buryats, Chuvash, Dolgans, Evenks, Kalmyks, Karachay, Kumyks, Nogay, and Yakuts.

The Uralic group refers to Finnic peoples who reside in the upper Volga, the far northwest, and the Urals, including the Karelians, Komi, Mari, Mordovians, and Udmurts. The Caucasus group is present along the northern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains. Their subgroups include Adyghs, Chechens, Cherkess, Ingush, and Kabardins. Further, thirty Caucasus peoples were collectively classified as Dagestani (Library of Congress 1996).

Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic is composed of thirty-one autonomous administrative units which are based on their ethnic identity. With the decline of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russian Federation established itself as a sovereign state along with that several of those autonomous units also declared themselves as sovereign. Among the thirty-one units, 16 were autonomous republics; ten were autonomous regions, and five were autonomous oblasts or provinces as part of larger subnational jurisdictions. The autonomy under the Soviet Union has officially used titles; however, in practicality, it did not manifest such jurisdiction as the real administrative power laid with the central authorities or, in certain instances, by industrial enterprises. However, with the emergence of modern Russia, in several autonomous regions with a predominantly Russian population has dominated Moscow. Further several areas with a Russian majority in the name of indigenous ethnic identity have claimed more autonomy and sovereignty.

Paul Friedrich and Norma Diamond suggest four major classifications for the ethnic groups of Russia and the former Soviet Union (Johannes Rohr 2014).

1. Slavs-dominated European groups, including Tatar and Uralic minorities.

2. Turkic-Muslim-dominated Central Asian groups, like Uzbeks and Kazakhs.
3. Siberian groups comprising of Slavic immigrants and various indigenous groups.
4. Caucasus groups, one of world's most diverse compositions

6. MINORITY PEOPLES AND THEIR TERRITORIES

In the post-world war period, the autonomous republics, autonomous provinces, and autonomous regions of the RSFSR with minute changes in status continued to be categorised according to its 1920s and 1930s classifications. In 1992 the government in Russia changed the official term 'autonomous republic' to 'republic'. The 1989 census states that out of the thirty-one ethnic republics and autonomous regions, only fifteen were composed of the largest group of the indigenous population. During the mid-1990s, nine out of the twenty-one republics were under the same category. Further, a very less percentage of Russians lived in Dagestan, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia, with each region being home to the majority of Russia's population of the group (Library of Congress, 1996).

The drawing of borders during the tsarist era, along with the first decade of the Soviet rule, eventually gave rise to more divisions among ethnic groups than integrating them. For example, the Buryats of southern Siberia were divided among the Buryat Autonomous Republic and Chita and Irkutsk oblasts. Such division in the population continued to impact even after the emergence of modern Russia. Contrary to that, until 1992, the Chechens and Ingush were merged into a single republic. Similarly, some smaller groups, like the Khanty and the Mansi, were merged in a single autonomous region. One of the 16 autonomous republics that remained during the period of Soviet Union's collapse bifurcated into two, in 1992, with the self-declaration of Chechnya as a fully independent Republic and Ingushetia as separate Russian Federation Republic. The Federation Treaty of 1992 further granted republic status to three autonomous provinces of Gorno-Altay, Adygea, and Karachayevo-Cherkessia, eventually establishing their powers. However, Chechnya and Tatarstan did not become party to the agreement at that time. Major provisions of the treaty were modified through the 1993 Constitutional provisions and the following agreements between the republics and the Central Authority. The 1993 constitution identified 21 republics based on nationality. These include Gorno-Altay, Chechnya, Karelia, Dagestan, Adygea, Mari El, Buryatia, North Ossetia, Bashkortostan, Kalmykia, Chuvashia, Mordovia, Tatarstan, Ingushetia, Sakha (Yakutia), Karachayevo-Cherkessia, Tyva (Tuva), Komi, Khakassia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Udmurtia. The constitution, along with the recognition of the republic, also recognized ten autonomous regions determined by the presence of one or two ethnic groups, having very less populations with rich resources and tending to seek independence from the larger units. Similarly, Russia's jurisdictions are based not on an ethnic basis but geographical and political factors. Ten identified autonomous region includes Aga Buryat, Chukchi, Evenk, Khanty-Mansi, Koryak, Nenets, Permyak, Taymyr, Ust'-Orda Buryat, and Yamalo-Nenets.

In 1934 an autonomous Jewish province was established, Yevreyskaya avtonomnaya, which was eventually known as Birobidzhan. Russians constitute the majority population except in two autonomous regions, including Aga Buryat Autonomous Region, in which 55 % of the population are Buryats and the Permyak Autonomous Region, in which 60 of the population includes people of the Komi-Permyak group. The Evenks are nomadic clan-based groups who are indigenous groups and endangered groups. The collectivization process of the Soviets in the 1930s had severe impacts on the group. The Russians have outnumbered the Evenks in the Evenk Autonomous Region in Siberia west of the Republic of Sakha, with a Russian population of 17,000 to merely 3,000 population of Evenk's group. The Russian Federation has recognized forty ethnic groups as "small- numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation". Around Two-third of the Russian Federation's land has been composed of the traditional land of the indigenous groups. However, in most of the areas, the indigenous people are a minority population with a very minute percentage of the population. According to the 2010 consensus, Nenets form the highest indigenous population of 44,000 and the Evanks constitute the population of 38,000, and the smallest group is the Kerekes, with four members. Among the forty ethnic groups, ten groups are composed of more than 10,000 populations. Similarly, ten other ethnic groups have less than 1,000 populations.

Johannes Rohr (2014) categorises these indigenous Ethnic groups into four categories based on their region of residence. First, Extreme North (Kraini Sever), including regions like Yamal, the Kola Peninsula, Taymyr and Chukotka. This is mainly a tundra region characterized by an extreme rough Arctic climate. Indigenous peoples like Nenets, Saami, Dolgan

and the Yukagir station their reindeer herds. This population resides on the Arctic coast during summers and moves to tundra forest during winters. Another group includes the Izvatas people. (Rohr 2014:10).

Second, Tundra and Taiga forest region have some indigenous populations of Khanty, the Mansi, and the Evenk. Lifestyle in this region is less active; reindeer herding is not a common activity. The population in this region depends on fishing, hunting, including fur animals, for their food and living. (Rohr 2014:10).

Third, the South Siberian region also includes the Altai Mountains and the Kuzbass coal mining region. This region has been characterized by traditional settlements of the Turkic-speaking population, which includes the Shors, the Teleuts, the Telengits, the Tozhu, the Tofa and the Kumandins. The population density of this region is comparatively higher than the population in the northern region. Historically the population has been part of Mongolian influence, which is evident in the cultural heritage of the population. The climate favour farming of crops, cattle and horses and also beekeeping as their livings. (Rohr 2014:10).

Fourth, Coastal region the Pacific which stretches from the Arctic Chukotka peninsula to Vladivostok in the south. The north of the region is composed of an indigenous population, including the Chukchi, the Yupiq, and the Chuvan on Chukotka. The Kamchatka peninsula comprises of Kerek, the Koryak, the Aleut, the Even, the Itelmen and the Kamchadal. The Khabarovsk and Primorski region with Sakhalin Island constitute the Ulchi, the Nanai, and the Udege, the Nivkh, the Oroch and the Oroch groups. In this region, the population have Sea mammal hunting as a major traditional activity for a living (Rohr 2014:10).

6. THE EMERGENCE OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN RUSSIA

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, and thereby the formation of modern Russia, it has faced several challenges from the former states, which intended to break away and not be part of the Russian Federation. Such development alarmed the state. However, in the case of the titular nationalities, the leaders often attempted to enhance their ethnic revival, uphold their traditions and also reduce their tension concerning the possibility of their exclusion from the centre. Several misinterpretations between the centre and the periphery have often led to tension and a large degree of human rights violation, for example, in Chechnya, the Volga- Ural's Region and Eastern Siberia.

In fact, after the Chechen Conflict of 1994, the rebels intensified their fight demanding their independence. Several scholars and human rights reports suggest that several military tactics of Russia, like extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detention, and several other forms of torture, violate the Geneva Convention. The Volga-Urals region has also been prone to several conflicts like Chechnya; however, physical violence is comparatively lesser in Volga-Urals. This is because of the regions, high economic independence and also their nationalizing policies. Police brutality and several forms of torture against minorities contribute to several instances of human rights violations.

A major cause of ethnic tension in Russia could be the quest for a 'Great Tatarsan', which would challenge the ethnic claims in Bashkortostan, Chuvashia, Mari El and the Ulyanovsk oblast. While these regions constitute a significant number of Tatars, however, they reside outside the federal borders. The further presence of Islam has also been a major challenge to these ethnic claims with severe political implications. More important has been the issue of the revival of Islam in Dagestan. Increased instability has several implications for the economic significance of the province.

Tuva is a very distinct republic in Eastern Siberia that has been pursuing independence since 1989. The Tuvan population is composed of practising Buddhist and Turkish-speaking people. The situation in Tuva is almost similar to the Northern Caucas, characterized by a growing rate of crimes as well as unemployment. However, very little has been reported about the crimes committed, probably due to its relative size. Perhaps since the incident of 9/11, America and other sovereign states have become reluctant to Russia's attitude towards its ethnic conflicts. Several levels of violence were allowed by America, which would have been otherwise been unacceptable unless violation concerning Al-Qaeda came to exist. Ethnic groups have often found this torture not similar to those of the Russian Government.

But the political scenario of Russia changed with Putin's coming to power in 2000, and so the process of centralization started with limiting the roles of regional executives and consequently exacerbating the tensions between the centre and

regions respectively, thereby fostering increased efforts for the federal institution in Russian Federation to work out. The immediate crisis of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea (2014) pose questions on how to solve the issue in the coming future with regards to the federal structure of the Russian Federation.

Uskorenie (acceleration) and Khozraschet (cost-accounting) worked for rejuvenation of the federation, autonomy, human right, political rights, culture, restructuring of electoral/legislative/judicial process and for the division of power in a rule of law for states (Obydenkovav 2005).

An analysis of the Russian regions shows the greater asymmetry and the roots for the ethnic-territorial conflicts in the regions and state as a whole. Bashkortostan, which has greater control over its resources and regions through Federation Treaty 1992, exemplify the asymmetrical aspect and the impact of the economic potential of the state on the federal bargaining power. The same is the condition with Tatarstan, as Barker (2011) points out, in terms of federal bargaining on oil, education & petroleum and federal autonomy of the regions in terms of culture & history. The situation in Stravropol'ski krai is acute in terms of ethnic tension due to the incidence 2003 bombing, ethnic riots of 2007 & 2010 to redraw the boundaries of the North Caucasus to remove this krai and include it in the southern district (Foxwall 2011, 2012). Similar is the case with Chechnya during the Chechnya crisis or the Dudhayev regime, which shows the aspirations of the Chechens for greater autonomy and independence (Malansheko & Trenin 2002).

Since the late 1980s, there has been an increase in ethno-territorial political conflict in the former Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia. It is within a social structure that every social conflict origin. The former Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia have a widespread ethnic composition, more than 150 estimated (although precise estimate vary), most claiming Soviet territory as their homeland. Non-Russia ethnicities comprised more than half of USSR's population. The census data as of 1989 estimated 60 million population approximately, or about 20% of total USSR population, to be belonging to groups or members of without/outside home ethnic administrations. Following the USSR's disintegration, the Russian Federation engaged in ethnic territorial "sovereignization" that repeated existing conflict patterns.

(1) Russian Federation's federal centre and Russian republics conflicts

(2) conflicts between republics that are ethnically defined and/or between non-ethnically defined regions and ethnically defined republics (krajs and oblasts, between ethnic minorities within a republic and republics, among others. There are 32 ethnically defined territorial units among 89 Russian Federation subjects, which includes 21 Russian republics, ten autonomous okrugs (areas) and one autonomous oblast (region). Various studies deal with nationalism and self-determination linkage and post-Soviet nationalism's peculiarity as "political ideologies" and "social movements". According to Guseinov (1993), the concept of self-determination has been understood as "the moral right of any mature communal group. The aggravation of interethnic tensions is explained to a considerable extent by the deformations of the principle of national self-determination in Russia and by the policies of ethnic unification and Russification. The right of many ethnicities in Russia to possess their ethnic territorial units can be regarded as an attempt to make up for this historical injustice" (Aklaev 2003:268).

7. FACTORS AFFECTING ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

The heterogeneous character of Russian society has been a major source of conflict among the ethnic groups in Russia. Several factors influence the ethnic tension in Russia.

Modern Russia consists of 85 federation subjects with 22 ethnic republics and 4 ethnic autonomous districts. Most of the republics are titular nationalities enjoying institutionalized rights and privileges. The composition of the titular groups varies throughout the republic. While 95 % of Chechnya's population is composed of Chechens, the Karels compose only 7 % of the northern republic of Karelia's total population.

Another factor that affects the heterogeneous ethnic character of the state is the issue of Migration. Migration has taken place due to the expansion of land through the conquest of territories. Apart from this, there has also been voluntary or sometimes forced migration of ethnic groups who are not Russians. The initial date of massive-scale migration in the region can be traced to the eighteenth century when colonist was invited from Germany by Catherine the Great. In which almost 40,000 people came to Russia, most of them settled along the Volga River region and Eastern Ukraine. However,

migration has taken place since the middle ages with some outside communities, including the population of craftsmen or merchants who started residing in the Capital of Russia (Mironov 2014).

While more than 1 million ethnic Germans settled in Russia by 1914, the following years and the 1917 revolution eventually restricted the process of settlement in Russia. Russia issued a law prohibiting the Jews settlements outside the western parts hence several Jews shifted to central Russia. According to the 1926 census, 6 % population of Moscow and 5 % population of Leningrad were composed of Jews, which made them the second largest ethnic groups, the first being Ethnic Russians, in the two cities (Perepis 1928). Internal migration was facilitated also because of the urbanization and industrialization process in Soviet Russia. Further, the colonization of Urals and Siberia by the Soviets added more ethnic groups, eventually leading urban centres of Siberia to a heterogeneous ethnic population.

The decline of the USSR in 1991 eventually added to the flow of population. The ethnic Russian population from the Soviet Republics started moving towards independent states. In the 1990s many, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and Georgians dispersed to Russia because of the ethnic tension in the Caucasus added with the decline in the economic conditions. While specific data are not available on the migration, however according to the estimate of the 1989 and 2002 census Armenian population grew from 0.5 million to 1.1 million in Russia. In the early 2000s, Russia's economy started to recover, which attracted migration to Ukraine, Moldova, and Central Asia (Agadjanian, Menjívar and Zotova, 2017). According to 2012 data for immigration, Russia had more than 2 million Uzbek and over 1 million Tajik nationals with jobs in low-skilled occupations in the metropolitan areas. According to 2012 data, Russia had million populations identified as Ukrainian passport holders residing in Russia (Bessudnov 2016).

The anti-immigrant attitude in Russia has played a significant role as a cause of ethnic conflict in modern Russia. Several studies suggest that compared to other European countries, anti-immigrant attitudes are more strongly present in Russia. (Gorodzeisky, Glikman and Maskileyson, 2015; Bessudnov, 2016). Further, the ethnic Russians are more hostile towards the immigrants compared to other ethnic minorities in Russia, often influenced by racial prejudices (Gorodzeisky and Glikman, 2017; Gorodzeisky, 2019). However, studies or surveys do not suggest any evidence between 1996 and 2012 for any growth or fall in any tendency of xenophobic attitudes towards the immigrants in Russia (Chapman et al., 2018).

8. CONCLUSION

The Emergence of Modern Russia is still going through major challenges, and the historical backdrop of the ethnic and other challenges still shapes modern Russia, its society, politics and everyday life. Being a multi-ethnic society and considering the historical differences, sometimes violent still unveils itself as a major source of conflict. Thus, the history of the ethnic challenges in post-soviet Russia is the first major source of any inquiry in an attempt to understand the historical making of modern Russia. Besides history and its political conditionality's, escalated tensions manifest major challenges on traditional means of livelihood, economic backwardness, discrimination, racism. Also, the issue of constant human rights violations remained a major challenge. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, these backdrops have compelling factors in shaping and making modern Russia and how it arrived at the junction in allying ethnic lines Russia and insufficient policies of the state.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest between them.

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