

## **INDIA AND CENTRAL ASIA ECONOMIC RELATIONS: PAST AND PRESENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Geographically, the Central Asian region is centred on a pocket of relatively flat land bordered by mountain ranges on east and south; and the Caspian Sea on the west. The borders of the region are loosely defined. In this paper, the focus would be on the five former Soviet and now independent states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and the term "Central Asia" will be attributed to these states.

Owing to its geographical proximity with Central Asia. India, in the pre partition era had vast cross-regional linkages with this region in terms of trade, culture, etc. These linkages broke during the British occupation of India and revived with Indian independence and the formation of USSR. Later ,with the collapse of USSR and the formation of the Central Asian states, relationship between India and Central Asia took a backseat till recently when India realized that security, stability and prosperity of Central Asia is imperative for peace and economic development of India and is now making efforts to revive ties with the region.

**Keywords:** Central Asia, international trade, INSTC

**JEL:** F1, N7

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

India has had economic and cultural relations with Central Asia<sup>1</sup> since ancient times .This region has been of immense interest to India owing to its vast mineral wealth. It is endowed with

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<sup>1</sup>UNESCO defines this region based on weather patterns which includes the five "stans," but also extends into Siberia, covers all of Mongolia, half of China, and parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Another concept of Central Asia is that of Inner Asia which draws most of Central Asia stretching from Mongolia to Nepal. Another definition for Central Asia is that of the Greater Middle East.(Wilson 2017) Another definition extends Central Asia to Caucasus region across the Caspian Sea as these Caucasian countries also have Soviet, Turkic and Persian influences.

enormous fossil fuel reserves and abundant supplies of other minerals and metals such as uranium, copper, iron, zinc. More than 1,200 types of minerals are reportedly available in the region. Certain estimates puts Kazakhstan as the second largest source of uranium, chromium, lead, and zinc reserves and among the top ten sources of coal, manganese, copper, iron, and gold reserves(CUTS International)<sup>2</sup>. Since these republics are relatively newly formed in 1991 after the disintegration of USSR, they have huge opportunities of investment in this region .Also the economic development process of this region especially Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan will lead to development of sectors like IT, pharmaceuticals and tourism. Since India has expertise in these sectors, it can benefit from deeper cooperation in these areas with Central Asia.

Owing to the potential benefits that India can reap from an extended and deeper relations with this region, India is looking at this region with a fresh outlook .This work attempts to find potential areas of cooperation between the two regions and ways which can help promote relations between them. Rest of the paper is structured into the following sections. Section 2 presents review of literature. The methodological details are given in Section 3 while Section 4 explains the data and compilation. This is followed by results and discussions in Section 5. The paper concludes in Section 6.

## **2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

There has been intense theoretical exposition by trade theorists on the factors prompting trade between countries. The foremost theory put forward states that nations ought to accumulate money wealth, typically within the style of gold, by encouraging exports and discouraging imports, termed as mercantilism. Another development in international trade was the theory given by Adam Smith. He described trade taking place as a result of countries having absolute advantage in production of particular goods, relative to each other. Subsequently David Ricardo suggested the theory of Comparative advantage where he focussed on comparative advantage arising due to differences in technology or natural resources. In the early 1900s, another theory of international trade was developed by two Swedish economists, Eli Heckscher and Bertil Ohlin. It stated that the pattern of international trade is determined by differences in factor endowments. It predicted that countries will export those goods that make intensive use of locally abundant factors and will import goods that make intensive use of factors that are locally scarce. Several other alternative trade models have later developed which focussed on an

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<sup>2</sup>The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the Department of Commerce, Government of India have jointly commissioned CUTS to do a study to explore the possibility of a comprehensive The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the Department of Commerce, Government of India have jointly commissioned CUTS to do a study to explore the possibility of a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement between India and the BelarusKazakhstan-Russia customs union. This note is a part of this ongoing work

attribute of production in an industry or group of industries that makes them unlike the simple models assumed by the Ricardian and Heckscher Ohlin models. One such theory was The Product Cycle model developed by Raymond Vernon. He pointed out that many manufactured products, such as automobiles go through a product cycle in which the inputs change over time. Initially, when these goods are brand new, there is a great deal of experimentation in both the characteristics of the final product and its manufacturing process and are produced and exported by developed countries. As manufacturing processes become standardized, they can be performed by relatively unskilled labour. Consequently, the opportunity cost of production in developing countries becomes lower than the cost in high-income countries and production starts taking place in developing countries as well. Advances in transportation and communication have played an important part in the development of a product cycle. (Salvatore 2004)

Another significant contribution was by Paul Krugman (1979) who propounded the New Trade Theory (NTT), for which he received a Nobel Prize. The new model showed that trade between countries with similar but not identical capital/labour endowment ratios would involve export of manufactures by the relatively capital-abundant nation and of the agricultural product by the more labour-abundant one. As long as factor endowments are not too diverse, and in the absence of transport costs, everyone benefits from trade.

### **Regional Trade Agreements**

Another development in the field of international trade is the proliferation of regional trade agreements between countries/regions. The early 1990s especially experienced a dramatic growth in the number of regional trade agreements that were established under negotiation (WTO, 2007). Regional trade agreements not only involve free trade progress in commodity trade, but also have other aims, including free flow of inputs factors, free trade in services, facilitation of foreign direct investment, common currency policy and even some particular economic or political policies in their freedom to set their national policies independently of RTAs. Efforts are being made by India to form free trade agreement with the Central Asian region to obtain benefits from concessions in tariffs and investments.

### **3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY OF STUDY**

For the purpose of the study, both published and unpublished secondary data has been utilized. The data of India-Central Asia relations were analysed and the data has been collected from International Security, Centre for Policy Research, Indian Institute of Defence and Analysis etc and from various books, newspapers and also from Internet. Some quantitative data, in the form of trade figures, has been added to shed light on the state of trade between India and Central Asian countries. Data has been extracted from Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India website, WITS and World Bank ECA update.

## **4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Pre-Historical and Historical Connections**

The evidences of cultural and traditional links were seen even from Paleolithic age. Excavation of Tak-Mak region of Kyrgyzstan, Amu Darya Valley in Southern Uzbekistan, North-East of Samarkand in Uzbekistan, many places in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, provide evidence of Indo -Central Asian links from ancient times. In India also, Harappan excavations have found direct evidence of mutual fellowship. It is further confirmed by ruins of Afrasian of South Uzbekistan and Nakhichevan in Azerbaijan. Ancient cultural diffusion between both the regions goes from Paleolithic age to Bronze Age. People of India and the Central Asian region have been in close contact with each other since the third millennium B.C and archaeological evidences suggest that the Bronze Age people of Central Asia had trade contacts with people of the Indus Valley Civilisation (Singh,2015).

### **4.2 The Vedic Period**

During the second millennium BC, there was a large scale migration of Aryans from Central Asia to India. Some Scholars maintain that climate of original homeland of Aryans ought to be where principal animals of Aryans- cow & horse were found. This was only in Central Asia. Max Muller supported this argument of migration of Aryans from Central Asia (Thapar 1996), while Edward Mayer has expressed that the original home of Aryans was plateau of Pamir. Research by Prof. Schrader, have tried to prove that the original home of Aryans was in south Russia. The majority view is that the great steppe land - from Poland and south Russia to Central Asia was inhabited by Aryans and those in Central Asia and Iran marched further eastward and entered India through Afghanistan near about 2000 B.C, called Indo-Aryans.<sup>3</sup>

### **4.3 Relations before Christ**

The Silk Route, which was developed during this period, connected India to Central Asia, which helped in the spread of Buddhism in the region and in the expansion of trade between India and Central Asia during this period. Exports to India included horses, sheep, gold, silver and precious stones. Exports from India included cotton cloth, woollen carpets, shawls and dyes. There also emerged a large Indian diaspora in the Central Asian spread of Buddhism from 2nd century BC to 2nd century CE. The twelve-meter-long Buddha statue in Tajikistan, Kandahar inscriptions

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.historydiscussion.net/history-of-india/indus-valley-civilisation/vedic-culture-and-the-indus-civilization-indian-history/6490>

and the massive statues of Buddha at Bamiyan in Afghanistan are strong proof of spread of Buddhism through the silk route.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4.4 Relations in Christ Era**

There were intense relations between India and Central Asian region during the Kushana period (from early 1st century - 3rd Century A.D.) Kanishka I (c. 127 – c. 140) administered territory from two capitals: Purushapura (now Peshawar in Pakistan) and Mathura. The Silk Route, which connected China, Europe and India, passed through Central Asia and was very active during this period. Many cities were established along the Silk Route. In those cities, Indians settled and lived their own life practised their own religion. Indians also had their own social and political organizations, language, scripts, literature, art, architecture and religion. The remains of hundreds of Buddhist shrines, stupas & monasteries of designs inspired by India; and the numerous Buddhist texts have been discovered from Central Asian sites.(Kablukov, 2004)

#### **4.5 Decline of the Kushan Empire**

After the decline of Kushan dynasty, Huns and Turks occupied their place. Before the Arabs, the entire Central Asia was cradle of Buddhist civilization. The coming to power of Gupta dynasty in India (4-5 C.E.) led to state of disconnect between India and Central Asia. During the period, direct contact of Central Asia with the Indian culture was impeded. By late 7th Century C.E., Central Asia had become a hub of the Islamic civilization. Arabic and Persian became languages of people in Central Asia. Cities and trade centres were established during this period, specially on the silk route. (Puri,1966).

#### **4.6 Changis Khan and the Mongol Invasions**

During Chengiz Khan's rule Central Asia gained importance culturally. In 1221, Chenghis Khan invaded Punjab (towns on periphery such as Multan & Lahore) during rule of Iltutmish. For the next century, Mongol troops strongly repulsed and defeated in more than 6 battles by Delhi Sultanates, mainly under Allauddin Khilji who ruled as Sultan of Delhi from 1296 CE – 1316 CE. Fragmentation of Mongol empire loosened political, cultural & economic unity of Silk Road. Turkmeni lords seized land around western part of Silk Road from decaying Byzantine Empire. After fall of Mongol Empire, great political powers along the Silk Road became economically and culturally separated.

In Medieval age, the Central Asian influence in India was very much perceptible especially in ruling dynasties. It became much stronger in the Sultanate period, the Sultan of Tughlaq Dynasty, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq's fifty percent appointments was from the Amirs of

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<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk\\_Road](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk_Road)

Khorasan, Turks, Mongolia and Persia, coins of Delhi Sultanate were found in Central Asia and Iran.(Singh,2015)

#### **4.7 Temur and The Turco-Mongol Invasions**

The medieval period saw invasions of parts of India, commencing from the time of Timur. (1336 – 1405). He was also the founder of Timurid Empire in Persia and Central Asia. He attacked Delhi in 1398, capturing & looting all towns on the way. He took away artisans, stonemasons etc from India , who later took part in construction of glorious monuments in Samarkand & other Central Asian cities.

#### **4.8 The Mughal Empire – Strong ties with Central Asia**

In 1528, Babar invaded India and established the Mughal empire after defeating Ibrahim Lodi, the last ruler of Delhi Sultanate, in the First Battle of Panipat. The Mughal emperors had roots in Turco-Mongol Timurid dynasty of Central Asia and considered people from Central Asia, a part of their extended family. There was increased trade and cultural exchange during the Mughal period. During the Mughal period, a large number of Central Asians lived and settled in India. Many Uzbeks of Central Asia came to seek their fortunes in Mughal India. Trade and commerce had started from the ancient period but at the time of Mughal emperor Akbar, Central Asian markets witnessed many Indian traders like skilful jewellers, book binders, weavers, farmers etc. and some of them acquired monopoly over some trading items like tea trade of Bukhara and opened tea packing enterprises in Samarkand. Traders of indigo, muslin, silk, copper, cotton, dyes, iron-steel pots etc. were mainly Indians. The Indian traders were also the medium of fusion of Indian and Central Asian cultures (Singh, 2015).

#### **4.9 Capture of Sea trading ports by European**

A significant event taking place during the Mughal rule was the capture of big ports by foreign powers. From 2nd half of 15 CE, Portugal seized big trade ports as Goa, Diu, Daman etc, due to which the Mongol empire lost its sea trade routes. Under these conditions, role of ancient caravan routes through Afghanistan to Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Russia increased. Capture of Kazan (1552) & Astrakhan (1556) by Russia also had a positive effect on development of Indian-Central Asian trade. The role of Central Asian merchants, as mediators of Indo-Russian trade significantly increased during this period. (Roy & Kumara,2004)

#### **4.10 Relations during British Rule**

The Mughal Empire started crumbling in the eighteenth century. Soon India saw the establishment of British rule and the Central Asian region saw the extension of Russian Tsarist rule. The Silk route lost its importance. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the

emergence of the "Great Game"\* and rivalry between the colonial powers of Britain and Russia. Trade and cultural exchange with the central Asia was greatly reduced during this period.

#### **4.11 Indian Independence and the Cold War**

The division of the subcontinent and the creation of Pakistan in 1947, resulted in India losing its land route to Central Asia.

However, there were cordial relationship between India and USSR that began in 1950s. The relationship began with a visit by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the Soviet Union in June 1955 and Khrushchev's return trip to India in the fall of 1955. Soviet Union supported Indian sovereignty over the disputed territory of the Kashmir region and over Portuguese coastal enclaves such as Goa. (Mir,2017)

The Soviet Union gave India substantial economic and military assistance during the Khrushchev period. Soviet Union agreed to transfer technology to co-produce the Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21 jet fighter in India. In 1965, Soviet Union served successfully as peace broker between India and Pakistan after India-Pakistan war.

In 1971 war, a guarantee against possible Chinese entrance into the conflict on the side of West Pakistan, India signed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.

During the 1980s, India maintained a close relationship with the Soviet Union indicating the high priority of relations with the Soviet Union in Indian foreign policy.

#### **4.12 Disintegration of USSR & beyond...**

The end of the Cold War saw the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the emergence of five central independent states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in early 1990s. India was among the first countries to recognize the five Central Asian states and established diplomatic relations with them. These five Central Asian Republics along the Silk Route are relatively small economies that lack an agglomeration effect because of their low population density, and thus they are inevitably dependent on imports for consumption. They have very large amounts of natural resources, primarily oil and gas, and also coal and mineral resources. However, these resources are not equally distributed among the five republics, leading to inequalities in development and wealth. More than two-thirds of the economic output in production in Central Asia-is concentrated in Kazakhstan, which is the largest country in size, has the highest concentration of natural resources, and is— measured per capita—the best-off country in the region. The structure of the economies is greatly biased toward heavy industries and extractive activities. The share of agriculture is high in the smaller economies (the -Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan).

The five central Asian 'stan' countries that emerged are:

### **Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is the world's ninth largest country by area. Kazakhstan is the largest economy in Central Asia and the second largest (after the Russian Federation) amongst the Commonwealth of Independent States. The country is endowed with enormous fossil fuel reserves and abundant supplies of other minerals and metals such as uranium, copper, Iron, zinc, etc. An India-Kazakh Joint Venture, KazStroyService was one of the main EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) contactors for the Paradip refinery project. It provided a range of services such as production facilities, tank forms, pipeline construction, mechanical and electrical works as well as instrumentation, insulation and refractory fabrication works for the refinery.

### **Kyrgyzstan**

The country is mountainous and scenic. It counts among the world's top 20 richest countries in water resources, with many rivers and lakes. Its Issyk-Kul Lake is known as the "Pearl of Central Asia".

### **Tajikistan**

Most of Tajikistan is mountainous with 947 rivers, constitute 60% of the hydro resources in Central Asia. Bilateral trade of India with Tajikistan is not at any significant level and is much below the potential. Trade is hampered by the circuitous route for transportation of goods (India to Bandar Abbas by sea route, from Bandar Abbas via Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan by land). The major items of India's export are pharmaceuticals, tea, coffee, chemicals, textiles & clothing and machinery and the major imports from Tajikistan are aluminium, cotton, dry fruits, vegetables, organic chemicals and essential oils. Indian private investments in Tajikistan include a 5 star hotel "Sheraton" in Dushanbe. An Indian company KEC/RPG completed the construction of 116 km long power transmission line from Sangtuda-1 hydropower plant to the Afghan border in October 2010. On a commercial contract, BHEL supplied a 7 MW generator to Tajik company "Pamir Energy" in 2011. In 2014, an Indian Company, M/s Kalpataru bagged a contract worth approx. \$22 million for construction of electric transmission lines under Asian Development Bank financing.

**Turkmenistan 80% of the Karakum Desert.** Trade between India and Turkmenistan is not very significant presently. TAPI (Turkmenistan—Afghanistan—Pakistan— India) gas pipeline passes through this area.

### **Uzbekistan**



Uzbekistan is located at the very heart of Central Asia. it is a landlocked country. Its significant rivers are the Amu Darya, Syr Darya and Zarafshon. Trade is very minimal between India and Uzbekistan.

However, after the disintegration of U.S.S.R and the formation of CIS, there was a general drift in India's relations with this region. After 40 years of close alignment with USSR, India is on its own in international system and India no longer had the backing of erstwhile superpower- USSR. Russia was also facing a deep economic crisis in the early 1990s and Central Asian states featured low in priority list, in first decade of their independence. During this period, India was deeply engaged with its neighbourhood, especially Pakistan, over the Kashmir insurgency and thereby there was a general state of neglect in the state of the relationship.

#### **4.13 Re-connecting with the region...**

National leaders from the five Central Asian Republics have visited India, and Indian leaders from Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to Dr. Manmohan Singh have visited those countries and inked several wide ranging bilateral agreements and MOUs. The policy objectives of India in Central Asia are maintaining peace and stability, preventing terrorism and ensuring energy security. India's trade with the region has shown marked variations country-wise. The highest trade has been with Kazakhstan. India has been importing uranium from Kazakhstan, under an agreement for the peaceful use of nuclear energy which was signed in 2011. India has also been exploring the import of uranium from Uzbekistan. India's has enjoyed trade surplus with Central Asian Republics (Kyrgyz, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan) barring Kazakhstan in 2015-16.

#### **CONNECT CENTRAL ASIA POLICY**

To expedite relations with this region, India has adopted which was formally declared at Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) in June 2012. It is a broad-based Foreign Policy approach, including political, security, economic, and cultural connections with the region with the objectives to tap the natural resources of Central Asia and to counter the hegemony of China in this region.

The policy outlined the following important points:

- India will continue to build strong political relations through exchange of high level visits.
- India will strengthen its strategic and security cooperation.
- India will step up multilateral engagement with Central Asian partners using the synergy of joint efforts through existing for a like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) and the Custom Union.
- India looks to Central Asia as a long term partner in energy and natural resources.

- The medical field is another area that offers huge potential for cooperation. India is ready to extend cooperation by setting up civil hospitals/clinics in Central Asia.
- India would like to assist in the setting up of a Central Asian University in Bishkek. India is working on setting up a Central Asian e-network with its hub in India, to deliver, tele-education and tele-medicine connectivity.
- As for land connectivity, India has reactivated the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)
- [I NSTC Dry run report,2014].
- India will jointly work to improve air connectivity.

The policy identifies many areas of cooperation. Energy security is a prominent area.

As the countries of Central Asia are endowed with significant hydrocarbon and mineral resources. Kazakhstan is the largest producer of uranium and has huge gas and oil reserves as well. Uzbekistan is also rich in gas, and is an important regional producer of gold along with Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan has vast hydropower potential besides oil, deposits, and Turkmenistan has the fourth largest gas reserves of the world. Also this region is strategically located on the world map. As India is losing its “immediate neighbourhood” to China, which has developed very good political and economic relations with nearly all of India’s neighbours, thereby strategically encircling India. It has become all the more important for India to improve its relation with Central Asian countries (Mandal theory – your neighbour is your natural enemy and neighbour’s neighbour is your friend)The economic development of Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, leads to development of sectors like IT, pharmaceuticals and tourism. India has expertise in these sectors and can benefit from investment and trade in these areas. Since Central Asian countries and India share long cultural links, they can work together to reduce the threat of radicalisation and also can cooperating with each other to tackle the challenge of terrorism, narcotics trafficking and arms smuggling. Indian and Kazakh armies engaged in a joint exercise to strengthen bilateral army-army ties and exchange information and skills.

In spite of the efforts made, there are certain challenges faced by India in reviving ties with this region. The challenges faced by India in reviving ties with Central Asia are:

- Lack of direct access to Central Asia: India to reach Central Asia, the shortest route goes via Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan’s hostility with India remains problematic for India to connect Central Asia and also the unstable situation in Afghanistan .
- Chinese presence: China has already made its presence significant in this region. Central Asia is part of Silk Road Economic Belt (BRI) initiative. India’s role in Central Asia is restricted by the involvement of major powers in the region. The Turkmenistan-

Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) and Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipelines projects are not moving smoothly due to Pakistan and Afghanistan.



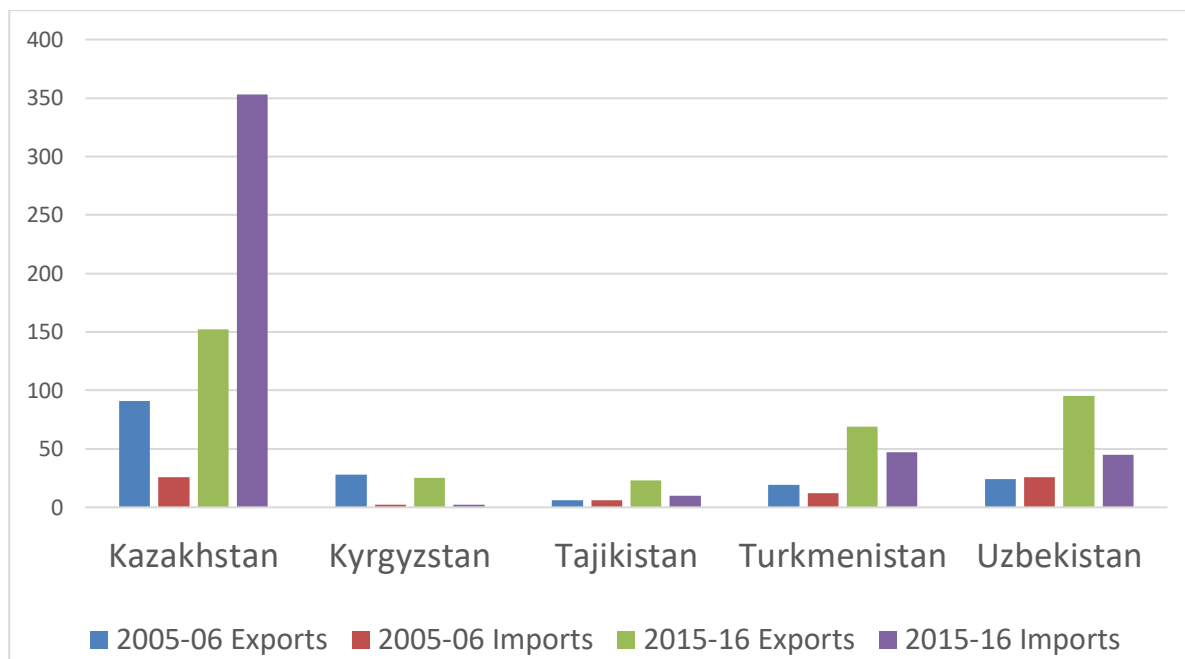
- India does not have institutional mechanisms to connect with Central Asia like the India-Africa forum.

**4.14** India has taken various initiatives to revive its ties with the region. One such step is to renovate the Chabahar port in Iran which will help in connecting to Eurasia. Also the development of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) which is a multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe [INSTC dry run report, 2014]. India has also become a member of Ashgabat Agreement. The Ashgabat agreement is a multimodal transport agreement between India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Oman, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for creating an international transport and transit corridor facilitating transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf. The agreement came into force in April, 2016. (GOI, Ministry of External Affairs, 2018) Another initiative in this direction is India attaining membership of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). SCO is a Eurasian political, economic, and security organization, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. India has also become member of Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). EEU is a political and economic union of states located primarily in northern Eurasia. Apart from above, India regularly arranges cultural events in these countries. Central Asia is one of the largest beneficiaries of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program. India provides

higher education at marginal cost to Central Asian students when compared to European and American universities. Prime Minister’s recently concluded visit to the five central Asian countries is significant in re energising Indian diplomacy in a strategically important region lying in the Indian background.

**5. INDIA AND CENTRAL ASIA: TRADE RELATIONS**

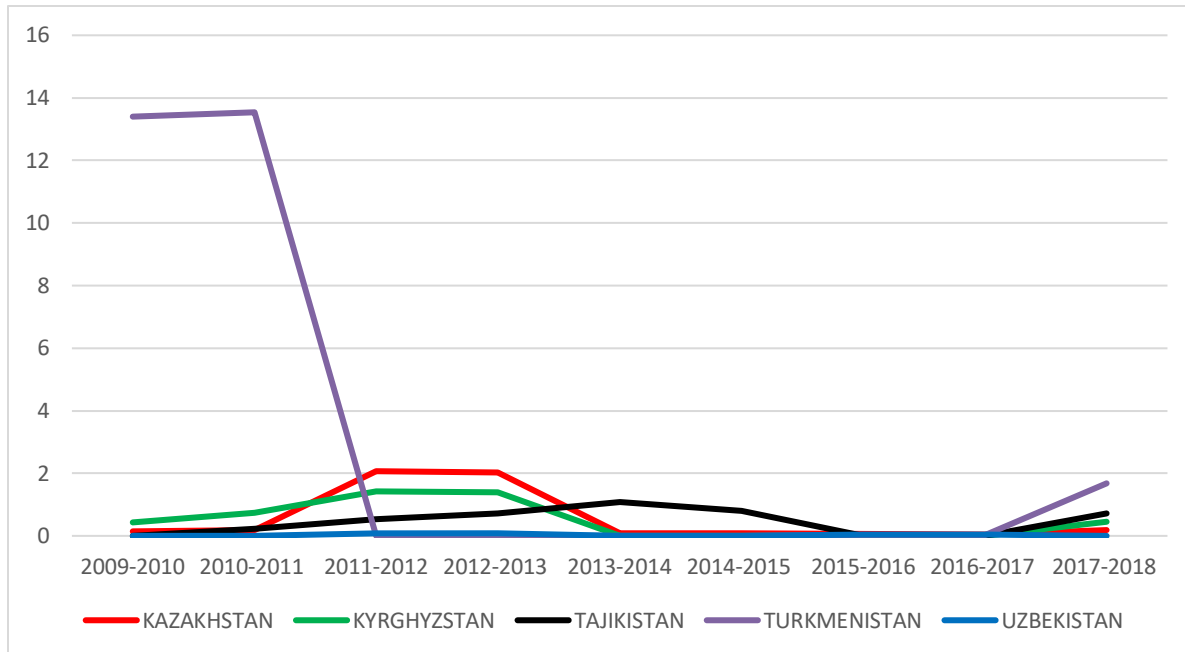
**Fig 1: Trade of Central Asian Countries with India- 2005-06 & 2015-16 (in Million USD)**



Source: Department of Commerce, Government of India

As depicted in the Fig. 2, Exports of Central Asian countries to India as percentage of its world exports has been low except for Turkmenistan which was nearing 14% during 2009 -10-11. During 2011-12 and 2012-13. the exports of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was around 2% of its world exports. Henceforth, it has also declined

Fig 2: % Share of Export of Central Asian Countries to India



Export of Central Asian Countries to India ( in million USD)

Country	KAZAKHSTAN	KYRGHYZSTAN	TAJIKISTAN	TURKMENISTAN	UZBEKISTAN
2009-2010	245.620. (1374)	782.45 (0.4377)	1.22 (0.0007)	23,970.40 (13.4099)	4.21 (0.0024)
2010-2011	485.36 (0.1943)	1,856.01 (0.743)	546.08 (0.2186)	33,822.39 (13.5389)	1.33 (0.0005)
2011-2012	6,328.54 (2.0684)	4,352.35 (1.4225)	1,614.69 (0.5277)	0.17 (0.0001)	249.72 (0.0816)
2012-2013	6,100.06 (2.0306)	4,202.25 (1.3989)	2,152.25 (0.7165)	0.32 (0.0001)	234.14 (0.0779)
2013-2014	261.51 (0.0832)	34.54 (0.011)	3,400.76 (1.0816)	0.41 (0.0001)	2.78 (0.0009)
2014-2015	250.68 (0.0808)	37.76 (0.0122)	2,484.61 (0.8006)	0.15 (0)	1.86 (0.0006)
2015-2016	151.91 (0.0579)	25.11 (0.0096)	22.26 (0.0085)	68.53 (0.0261)	94.64 (0.0361)

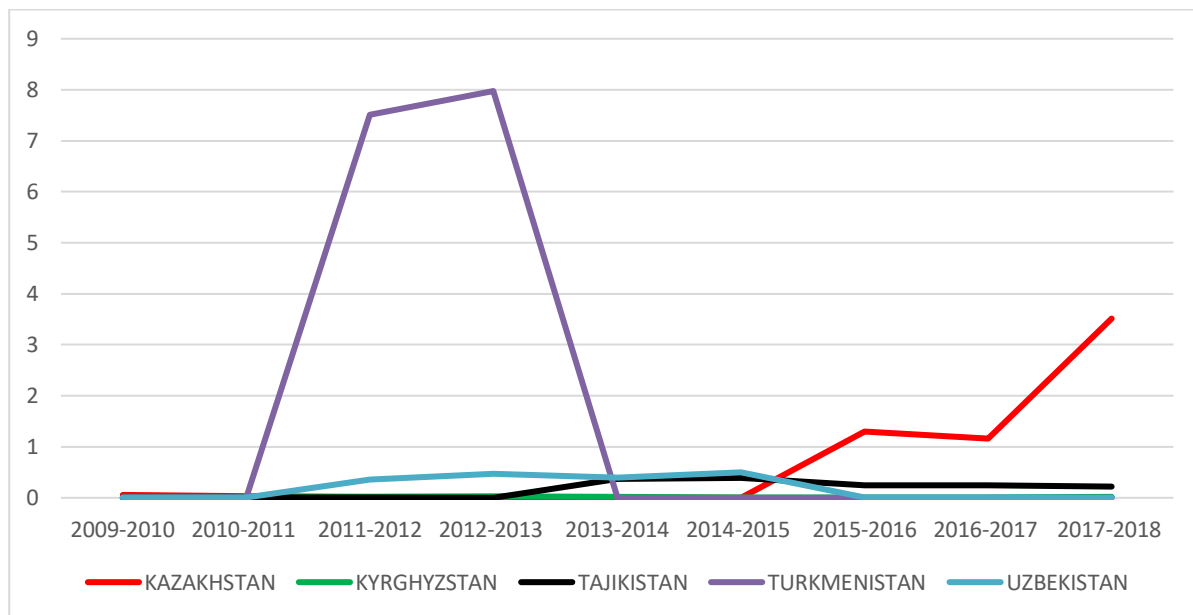
<b>2016-2017</b>	120.88 (0.0438)	30.44 (0.011)	20.44 (0.0074)	57.6 (0.0209)	108.97 (0.0395)
<b>2017-2018</b>	540.82 (0.1783)	1,365.66 (0.4502)	2,156.69 (0.7109)	5,090.70 (1.678)	0.52 (0.0002)

Note: Values in parenthesis indicate the percentages

Source: Department of Commerce, Government of India

Similarly, the share of imports of central Asian countries from India has also been insignificant except for the years between 2010-11 and 2013-14 when it was around 8% with Turkmenistan. With recent policy initiatives like Connect Central Asia policy, India's exports to Kazakhstan as a percentage of its world exports has increased.

**Fig. 3: % Share of Imports of Central Asian Countries from India**



**Fig. 3: % Share of Imports of Central Asian Countries from India**

<b>Imports of Central Asian Countries from India ( in Million USD)</b>					
Country	KAZAKHSTAN	KYRGHYZSTAN	TAJIKISTAN	TURKMENISTAN	UZBEKISTAN
<b>2009-2010</b>	154.91 (0.0537)	0.64 (0.0002)	16.85 (0.0058)	10 (0.0035)	29.97 (0.0104)

<b>2010-2011</b>	138.42 (0.0374)	1.2 (0.0003)	23.02 (0.0062)	9.73 (0.0026)	20.63 (0.0056)
<b>2011-2012</b>	113.39 (0.0232)	89.26 (0.0182)	22.17 (0.0045)	36,756.32 (7.5117)	1,722.87 (0.3521)
<b>2012-2013</b>	105.95 (0.0216)	138.64 (0.0283)	0.05 (0)	39,138.36 (7.9754)	2,314.78 (0.4717)
<b>2013-2014</b>	0 (0)	103.89 (0.0231)	1,679.42 (0.373)	0.02 (0)	1,804.75 (0.4009)
<b>2014-2015</b>	0.01 (0)	36.22 (0.0081)	1,748.40 (0.3902)	0.01 (0)	2,238.99 (0.4997)
<b>2015-2016</b>	4,969.69 (1.3044)	32.2 (0.0085)	924.79 (0.2427)	0.02 (0)	45.26 (0.0119)
<b>2016-2017</b>	4,462.28 (1.161)	7.65 (0.002)	948.49 (0.2468)	0.03 (0)	46.54 (0.0121)
<b>2017-2018</b>	16,361.76 (3.5143)	89.56 (0.0192)	1,029.71 (0.2212)	0.02 (0)	0 (0)

Note: Values in parenthesis indicate the percentages

Source: Department of Commerce, Government of India

### COMMODITY WISE EXPORTS FROM INDIA TO CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

India's exports to Kazakhstan (Values in US\$ Million)

India's exports to Kazakhstan largely consists of pharmaceuticals, coffee, tea and spices. other than these engineering goods are exported.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
1	30	PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS	38.35
2	9	COFFEE, TEA, MATE AND SPICES.	27.58
3	84	NUCLEAR REACTORS, BOILERS, MACHINERY AND MECHANICAL APPLIANCES; PARTS THEREOF.	13.26
4	85	ELECTRICAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT AND PARTS THEREOF; SOUND RECORDERS AND REPRODUCERS, TELEVISION IMAGE AND SOUND RECORDERS AND REPRODUCERS,AND PARTS.	6.7

5	87	VEHICLES OTHER THAN RAILWAY OR TRAMWAY ROLLING STOCK, AND PARTS AND ACCESSORIES THEREOF.	4.72
6	61	ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES, KNITTED OR CROCHETED.	4.69
7	90	OPTICAL, PHOTOGRAPHIC CINEMATOGRAPHIC MEASURING, CHECKING PRECISION, MEDICAL OR SURGICAL INST. AND APPARATUS PARTS AND ACCESSORIES THEREOF;	3.3
8	62	ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES, NOT KNITTED OR CROCHETED.	3.15
9	38	MISCELLANEOUS CHEMICAL PRODUCTS.	2.98
10	69	CERAMIC PRODUCTS.	2.68
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>3,03,376.2</b>
			<b>2</b>
<b>%Share of world's exports</b>			<b>0.0413</b>
<b>Source:</b> (Author's own calculation)			

### **India's exports to Kyrgyzstan-(Values in US\$ Million)**

India's exports to Kyrgyzstan largely consists of pharmaceuticals, apparels and clothing accessories. Also on the list is leather products.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
1	30	PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS	8.02
2	62	ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES, NOT KNITTED OR CROCHETED.	7.87
3	61	ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES, KNITTED OR CROCHETED.	6.32
4	42	ARTICLES OF LEATHER,SADDLERY AND HARNESS;TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR CONT.ARTICLES OF ANIMAL GUT(OTHR THN SILK-WRM)GUT.	1.41
5	90	OPTICAL, PHOTOGRAPHIC CINEMATOGRAPHIC MEASURING, CHECKING PRECISION, MEDICAL OR SURGICAL INST. AND APPARATUS PARTS AND ACCESSORIES THEREOF;	1.32



6	10	CEREALS	0.48
7	84	NUCLEAR REACTORS, BOILERS, MACHINERY AND MECHANICAL APPLIANCES; PARTS THEREOF.	0.46
8	85	ELECTRICAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT AND PARTS THEREOF; SOUND RECORDERS AND REPRODUCERS, TELEVISION IMAGE AND SOUND RECORDERS AND REPRODUCERS,AND PARTS.	0.43
9	33	ESSENTIAL OILS AND RESINOIDS; PERFUMERY, COSMETIC OR TOILET PREPARATIONS.	0.34
10	38	MISCELLANEOUS CHEMICAL PRODUCTS.	0.24
		<b>Total</b>	<b>28.59</b>
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>3,03,376.22</b>
<b>%Share of world exports</b>			<b>0.0094</b>
<b>Source:</b> (Author's own calculation)			

### India's exports to Tajikistan- (Values in US\$ Million)

Again pharmaceuticals top the list of exports to Tajikistan followed by meat, coffee, tea, apparels and clothing accessories.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
1	30	PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS	18.43
2	2	MEAT AND EDIBLE MEAT OFFAL.	1.69
3	9	COFFEE, TEA, MATE AND SPICES.	1.22
4	84	NUCLEAR REACTORS, BOILERS, MACHINERY AND MECHANICAL APPLIANCES; PARTS THEREOF.	0.36
5	61	ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES, KNITTED OR CORCHETED.	0.33
6	90	OPTICAL, PHOTOGRAPHIC CINEMATOGRAPHIC MEASURING, CHECKING PRECISION, MEDICAL OR SURGICAL INST. AND APPARATUS PARTS AND ACCESSORIES THEREOF;	0.32
7	85	ELECTRICAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT AND PARTS THEREOF; SOUND RECORDERS AND REPRODUCERS, TELEVISION IMAGE AND SOUND RECORDERS AND REPRODUCERS,AND PARTS.	0.29
8	54	MAN-MADE FILAMENTS.	0.28

9	17	SUGARS AND SUGAR CONFECTIONERY.	0.17
10	38	MISCELLANEOUS CHEMICAL PRODUCTS.	0.09
		<b>Total</b>	<b>23.94</b>
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>3,03,376.22</b>
<b>%Share of exports</b>			<b>0.0079</b>
<b>Source:</b> (Author's own calculation)			

### India's exports to Turkmenistan- (Values in US\$ Million)

Most important items of exports from India to Turkmenistan are Pharmaceuticals and meat.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
1	2	MEAT AND EDIBLE MEAT OFFAL.	27.85
2	30	PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS	15.2
3	84	NUCLEAR REACTORS, BOILERS, MACHINERY AND MECHANICAL APPLIANCES; PARTS THEREOF.	3.48
4	85	ELECTRICAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT AND PARTS THEREOF; SOUND RECORDERS AND REPRODUCERS, TELEVISION IMAGE AND SOUND RECORDERS AND REPRODUCERS,AND PARTS.	1.61
5	40	RUBBER AND ARTICLES THEREOF.	0.99
6	21	MISCELLANEOUS EDIBLE PREPARATIONS.	0.82
7	10	CEREALS.	0.73
8	90	OPTICAL, PHOTOGRAPHIC CINEMATOGRAPHIC MEASURING, CHECKING PRECISION, MEDICAL OR SURGICAL INST. AND APPARATUS PARTS AND ACCESSORIES THEREOF;	0.64
9	9	COFFEE, TEA, MATE AND SPICES.	0.52
10	72	IRON AND STEEL	0.46
		<b>Total</b>	<b>54.31</b>
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>3,03,376.22</b>
<b>%Share of world exports.</b>			<b>0.0179</b>
<b>Source:</b> (Author's own calculation)			

**India’s exports to Uzbekistan- (Values in US\$ Million)**

Three most important items of exports from India to Uzbekistan are Pharmaceuticals, vehicles and nuclear reactors, machinery.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
1	30	PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS	52.77
2	84	NUCLEAR REACTORS, BOILERS, MACHINERY AND MECHANICAL APPLIANCES; PARTS THEREOF.	35.17
3	87	VEHICLES OTHER THAN RAILWAY OR TRAMWAY ROLLING STOCK, AND PARTS AND ACCESSORIES THEREOF.	14.01
4	9	COFFEE, TEA, MATE AND SPICES.	3.83
5	32	TANNING OR DYEING EXTRACTS; TANNINS AND THEIR DERI. DYES, PIGMENTS AND OTHER COLOURING MATTER; PAINTS AND VER; PUTTY AND OTHER MASTICS; INKS.	3.1
6	29	ORGANIC CHEMICALS	3.04
7	39	PLASTIC AND ARTICLES THEREOF.	2.53
8	21	MISCELLANEOUS EDIBLE PREPARATIONS.	2.01
9	90	OPTICAL, PHOTOGRAPHIC CINEMATOGRAPHIC MEASURING, CHECKING PRECISION, MEDICAL OR SURGICAL INST. AND APPARATUS PARTS AND ACCESSORIES THEREOF;	2.01
10	12	OIL SEEDS AND OLEA. FRUITS; MISC. GRAINS, SEEDS AND FRUIT; INDUSTRIAL OR MEDICINAL PLANTS; STRAW AND FODDER.	1.64
		<b>Total</b>	<b>132.72</b>
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>3,03,376.22</b>
<b>%Share of world exports</b>			<b>0.0437</b>
Source:(Author’s own calculation)			

**COMMODITY WISE IMPORTS TO INDIA FROM CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES**

**India’s Imports from Kazakhstan- (Values in US\$ Million)**

India is importing large amounts of mineral fuels and mineral oils, that constitutes the most important import item from Kazakhstan. India is also importing ores and other items in smaller quantity.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
1	27	MINERAL FUELS, MINERAL OILS AND PRODUCTS OF THEIR DISTILLATION; BITUMINOUS SUBSTANCES; MINERAL WAXES.	738.1
2	26	ORES, SLAG AND ASH.	79.59
3	25	SALT; SULPHUR; EARTHS AND STONE; PLASTERING MATERIALS, LIME AND CEMENT.	26.08
4	71	NATURAL OR CULTURED PEARLS,PRECIOUS OR SEMIPRECIOUS STONES,PRE.METALS,CLAD WITH PRE.METAL AND ARTCLS THEREOF;IMIT.JEWELRY;COIN.	22.18
5	28	INORGANIC CHEMICALS; ORGANIC OR INORGANIC COMPOUNDS OF PRECIOUS METALS, OF RARE-EARTH METALS, OR RADI. ELEM. OR OF ISOTOPES.	14.27
6	72	IRON AND STEEL	13.28
7	79	ZINC AND ARTICLES THEREOF.	9.41
8	41	RAW HIDES AND SKINS (OTHER THAN FURSKINS) AND LEATHER	1.63
9	81	OTHER BASE METALS; CERMETS; ARTICLES THEREOF.	1.59
10	52	COTTON.	0.49
		<b>Total</b>	<b>907.43</b>
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>4,65,578.27</b>
<b>%Share of world Imports</b>			<b>0.1949</b>
<b>Source:</b> (Author's own calculation)			

### India's Imports from Kyrgyzstan- (Values in US\$ Million)

The single most important item of import are mineral fuels and mineral oils. much is not imported other than this.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
1	27	MINERAL FUELS, MINERAL OILS AND PRODUCTS OF THEIR DISTILLATION; BITUMINOUS SUBSTANCES; MINERAL WAXES.	29.95
2	7	EDIBLE VEGETABLES AND CERTAIN ROOTS AND TUBERS.	0.6
3	28	INORGANIC CHEMICALS; ORGANIC OR INORGANIC COMPOUNDS OF PRECIOUS METALS, OF RARE-EARTH METALS, OR RADI. ELEM. OR OF ISOTOPES.	0.23
4	8	EDIBLE FRUIT AND NUTS; PEEL OR CITRUS FRUIT OR MELONS.	0.06

5	41	RAW HIDES AND SKINS (OTHER THAN FURSKINS) AND LEATHER	0.06
6	13	LAC; GUMS, RESINS AND OTHER VEGETABLE SAPS AND EXTRACTS.	0.04
7	4	DAIRY PRODUCE; BIRDS' EGGS; NATURAL HONEY; EDIBLE PROD. OF ANIMAL ORIGIN, NOT ELSEWHERE SPEC. OR INCLUDED.	0.01
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30.94</b>
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>4,65,578.27</b>
<b>%Share of world Imports</b>			<b>0.0066</b>
Source:(Author's own calculation)			

### India's Imports from Tajikistan- (Values in US\$ Million)

India mainly imports Aluminium and ores from Tajikistan.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
8	76	ALUMINIUM AND ARTICLES THEREOF.	37.98
3	26	ORES, SLAG AND ASH.	10.97
5	52	COTTON.	0.95
4	28	INORGANIC CHEMICALS; ORGANIC OR INORGANIC COMPOUNDS OF PRECIOUS METALS, OF RARE-EARTH METALS, OR RAD. ELEM. OR OF ISOTOPES.	0.32
1	7	EDIBLE VEGETABLES AND CERTAIN ROOTS AND TUBERS.	0.07
		<b>Total</b>	<b>50.29</b>
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>4,65,578.27</b>
<b>%Share of world Imports</b>			<b>0.0108</b>
Source: (Author's own calculation)			

### India's Imports from Turkmenistan- (Values in US\$ Million)

India mainly imports chemicals, some amount of cotton and salt and sulphur.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
1	28	INORGANIC CHEMICALS; ORGANIC OR INORGANIC COMPOUNDS OF PRECIOUS METALS, OF RARE-EARTH METALS, OR RAD. ELEM. OR OF ISOTOPES.	12.25
2	52	COTTON.	5.94

3	25	SALT; SULPHUR; EARTHS AND STONE; PLASTERING MATERIALS, LIME AND CEMENT.	4.13
4	27	MINERAL FUELS, MINERAL OILS AND PRODUCTS OF THEIR DISTILLATION; BITUMINOUS SUBSTANCES; MINERAL WAXES.	2.9
5	51	WOOL, FINE OR COARSE ANIMAL HAIR, HORSEHAIR YARN AND WOVEN FABRIC.	0.39
6	12	OIL SEEDS AND OLEA. FRUITS; MISC. GRAINS, SEEDS AND FRUIT; INDUSTRIAL OR MEDICINAL PLANTS; STRAW AND FODDER.	0.27
7	31	FERTILISERS.	0.21
8	32	TANNING OR DYEING EXTRACTS; TANNINS AND THEIR DERI. DYES, PIGMENTS AND OTHER COLOURING MATTER; PAINTS AND VER; PUTTY AND OTHER MASTICS; INKS.	0.02
9	41	RAW HIDES AND SKINS (OTHER THAN FURSKINS) AND LEATHER	0.02
10	38	MISCELLANEOUS CHEMICAL PRODUCTS.	0.01
11	84	NUCLEAR REACTORS, BOILERS, MACHINERY AND MECHANICAL APPLIANCES; PARTS THEREOF.	0.01
		<b>Total</b>	<b>26.15</b>
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>4,65,578.27</b>
<b>%Share of world Imports</b>			<b>0.0056</b>
Source: (Author's own calculation)			

### India's Imports from Uzbekistan- (Values in US\$ Million)

India mainly imports pearls, precious and semi-precious stones. Some amount of fertilisers and Zinc.

S.No.	HSCode	Commodity	2017-2018
1	71	NATURAL OR CULTURED PEARLS,PRECIOUS OR SEMIPRECIOUS STONES,PRE.METALS,CLAD WITH PRE.METAL AND ARTCLS THEREOF;IMIT.JEWELRY;COIN.	65.24
2	7	EDIBLE VEGETABLES AND CERTAIN ROOTS AND TUBERS.	11.83
3	31	FERTILISERS.	8.93
4	79	ZINC AND ARTICLES THEREOF.	6.45
5	13	LAC; GUMS, RESINS AND OTHER VEGETABLE SAPS AND EXTRACTS.	3.25

6	50	SILK	2.11
7	12	OIL SEEDS AND OLEA. FRUITS; MISC. GRAINS, SEEDS AND FRUIT; INDUSTRIAL OR MEDICINAL PLANTS; STRAW AND FODDER.	0.77
8	25	SALT; SULPHUR; EARTHS AND STONE; PLASTERING MATERIALS, LIME AND CEMENT.	0.74
9	81	OTHER BASE METALS; CERMETS; ARTICLES THEREOF.	0.45
10	34	SOAP, ORGANIC SURFACE-ACTIVE AGENTS, WASHING PREPARATIONS, LUBRICATING PREPARATIONS, ARTIFICIAL WAXES, PREPARED WAXES, POLISHING OR SCOURING PREP.	0.43
		<b>Total</b>	<b>101.67</b>
<b>India's Total</b>			<b>4,65,578.27</b>
<b>%Share of world Imports</b>			<b>0.0218</b>
<b>Source:</b> (Author's own calculation)			

The percentage share of trade of India with these countries is not much as India does not have a common border with the Central Asian countries and also because this region has become the scene of a "New Great Game". Russia, the United States and more recently China are keen to exploit the natural resources of the region. (Nishthan 2013).

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Thus, there has been significant relations between India and Central Asia since ancient times which discontinued for some centuries. Efforts are being made by India to revive those ties. One such effort is the 'Connect Central Asia Policy' of Indian government which is considering Central Asia to be part of India's 'extended neighbourhood'. Analysing the geo-political situation in central asia and global environment, certain suggestions can be made to accelerate the pace of mutual cooperation between India and Central Asia:

- The government needs to implement its policies towards the area with speedy high level visits, strategic partnerships, comprehensive economic engagement, partnership in the development of energy and natural resources to ensure India's strategic interests.
- India could use its soft power to increase its acceptability in Central Asia.
- India could regularly and frequently arrange cultural events in these countries and also provides scholarships for study in India of different disciplines by young men and women of these countries.
- India has large scope of enhancing cooperation by relaxing visa regime, Cooperation in I.T sector, medical service, etc.

With a positive approach, one looks forward to improved bilateral relations with major powers of the region, to strengthen efforts to revive India-Central Asia relations.

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