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# THE JOURNAL OF CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

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# Multiculturalism and Inter-Ethnic Relation in Kazakhstan

*Dr. Amit Kumar\**

## **Abstract**

*The disintegration of the U.S.S.R (United Soviet Socialist Republic) paved the way for the formation of smaller states in the Eurasian region. Kazakhstan has diverse ethnic composition and its Titular nationality i.e., 'Kazakh' was in minority at the time of independence. The diverse ethnic diversity of Kazakhstan posed a great challenge for maintaining cordial relations among various ethnic groups. However, the declaration of independence is followed by the State and Nation Building processes in the region and Kazakhstan was no exception to this process. Brubaker argued that the newly independent states moved towards the Ethno-nationalism. These states placed the 'ethnic core' in the state nomenclature. The language of the ethnic core became the official language of state. These decision by the state were inimical towards the development of equality of minority cultures in the public and political sphere. Many political scientists argued that these steps were important for the nation and state building in an assertive manner (Brubaker, 1996).*

*Kazakhstan is a home for more than 130 ethnic groups. After a few years of independence many ethnic and national minorities started migrating from the region. However, Kazakhstan transition was smooth. ethnic conflicts and civil wars situation did not arise in Kazakhstan which happened after independence in neighbouring states of central Asian region. Kazakhstan was the most peaceful country in the region in the early 1990's. Though the minorities were under the constant fear of facing the state sponsored assimilative tendencies from the state. Kazakhstan's major task was to build a strong state from the ashes of U.S.S.R and to maintain a favourable conditions for minorities to check migration and separatist tendencies. This paper has tried to delve into the institutional provisions made by the Kazakhstan state to maintain cordial relations among various ethnic groups in the newly independent country.*

**Keywords:** *Ethnicity, Minorities, Nation-Building, Assimilation, Multiculturalism, Language Politics.*

## **Introduction**

Kazakhstan before becoming the part of Russia, the region has ethnic Kazakh population in majority. The demography of the region changed due to the

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policies of collectivization, displacement, industrialisation etc. The decrease of the Kazakh population in the Soviet- Period was also attributed to the settling of the Russian population as a part of the *Khrushchev's* virgin land initiative. The influx of large number of people deported to Kazakhstan during *Stalin's* regime. This large influx also includes 1 million Germans and over a half a million People from the north *Caucasus* region. In the Post- Soviet Kazakhstan, the number of the population of Kazakh ethnic group have drastically increased due to the large number of ethnic German and large number of Russian migrated to Russia and Germany. However, the Ethnic Kazakhs after the independence came back to Kazakhstan as a result of the '*Kazakh*' ethnic friendly government policy.

Kazakhstan is the most ethnically diverse country with around 138 ethnic groups and population of more than 15 million. Despite having more than 138 ethnic groups it is considered as the most stable country in the Central Asia region. In the very beginning, Kazakhstan has realised that it has its own multi-ethnic character different from all over the world so it has to develop its own path. The newly formed State played an instrumental role in the promotion of inter- ethnic relation and dissociated itself from framing any laws which discriminates any person based on the basis of his ethnic identity. The people of Kazakhstan have supported the initiatives for the preservation of the diversity model. The people of Kazakhstan have also realised that they have to live together in harmony and peace with each other.

Moreover, an active effort has been made by Nursultan Nazarbayev to develop multicultural ethos through various institutional designs and mechanism. Through these mechanisms Kazakhstan wants to establish equality in the public domain for minority groups to ensure multicultural ethos in society. It is important to understand the challenges posed by language question, Inter-ethnic conflict and Kazakhstan state response to these questions.

### **Language Politics of Kazakhstan**

The issue of language in the Central Asian countries is highly politicised. The minorities saw the official language in the post-Soviet state as an imposition and enforcement by the dominant identity. The official language of the state is decided by the political elites of the country. The central Asian countries, while framing language policies were in a paradoxical situation. As far as language is concerned, the Russian language was the language of the majority population. Russian culture was deeply entrenched in all central Asian countries under the Soviet regime. Language issue has attracted so much attention because it is not only a means of communication but also a medium of empowerment in country. The state language becomes a necessity and the population has to learn the

language of the state because it is the medium of communication in administration, education etc.

After the demise of the U.S.S.R the process of nation and state formation began in the central Asian countries. Attempt has been made to deconstruct the Soviet identity and build a new identity and Kazakhstan was no exception to this process. But situation in Kazakhstan was full of contradiction as the titular language speaking people were in minority. Language is an important sphere where the Kazakhs felt they needed to assert themselves as it was an important part of their cultural and social identity. Initially, there was a strong opposition for the authoritative language imposition. This move was perceived by the minority community as an attempt to homogenise. The discontentment was also felt in the ethnic core as some of them believed that the Russian language is a highly developed language and it will boost the modernisation process and it will also help the Kazakhs to keep the progress of with rest of the World. On the contrary the nationalists complained the leniency of the Kazakhstan government towards the Russian government (Kellner, B et. al. 2012).

Pelinka contended that the 'Language is not merely a matter of personal communication, but an important socio- political phenomenon of considerable symbolic meaning as well as a powerful social instrument subject to political considerations and crucial to dominance; it closely influences and is influenced by politics (Pelinka, 2007)'. Language is a source of identity for the people. Language is vital for nation – building particularly in a multilingual state like Kazakhstan. Language has played a vital role in the nation making process throughout the world. He added that the, 'Language is not simply an instrument of communication but contains the explicit and implicit rules of communication shared by the members of a group, and the social groups sharing the same language are considered those of the same cultural sphere' (Pelinka, 2007).

However, multiplicity of languages cannot be seen as a hurdle for the development of nationalism because there are many states which are multilingual and have chosen the path of more than one official language. Switzerland has chosen the formula of three languages- Italian, German and French, case of Canada- French and English. Britain also has three language formula English, Scottish Gaelic and Welsh. There are many countries who have opted for the one language formula.

While making the language policy for diversity entrenched India, there were many challenges before the Indian union. Hindi language is a combination of different languages and these languages have their own independent literature. The contiguity of the political elites with Hindi also raised the question of the autonomy of these languages. On the contrary, English was considered as the language of

domination, colonialism etc. However, the Urdu and Hindi language also raised a debate in the political arena and communities were divided on the communal basis. Whereas the resistance to Hindi language arose on the grounds of imposition of Aryan culture on the South Indian people, also Sanskrit language has represented the Brahmanical domination (Rao, 1978).

Post-soviet states have challenges in the process of nation making. Newly independent states have two important options either to form Nation-Statist or the Civic- Statist republic. The former were in favour of hegemonic role of the titular nation i.e., Kazakh and the latter were in favour of equality to all the groups. If the language of the titular nation had become the language of the state, then it would have become difficult task to include other linguistic groups. In a multilingual country there are quite a few problems the state can face in recognising the language of the minorities.

Due to its proximity with Russia, linguistically Kazakhstan is the most Russified region Central Asian states (Dave, 2003). During the soviet era Russian was the language which was popular among the Kazakhs. Russian language had inter-mingled with the local languages of the region. There was little space left for the Kazakh language. History of Kazakhstan was rewritten in a way which allowed the Kazakh people to claim to be the indigenous people of Kazakhstan.

The demands for cultural and ethnic rights were being raised even before the disintegration. To make Kazakh as the language of the state was on the nationalistic agenda. Kazakh language was not fully developed as it lacked vocabulary and standard books for professional teaching. Even professional teachers were not available to teach the Kazakh language. Kazakhstan was facing a lot of trouble to accommodate to non- Kazakh population. Any move from the Kazakh state was alleged as a policy to assimilate the non- Kazakh identity through coercive means. Kazakhstan had two main challenges firstly, they had to consolidate the Kazakh identity and secondly, they had to prevent a civil war like situation which emerged in the Tajikistan in transitory phase. The Kazakh language move was not only opposed by the Russians but also by the 'Russophone' Kazakhs. After some years of independence, the non- Kazakh population started migrating from the country. In contrast, people belonging to Kazakh ethnicity started arriving which led to a sharp decline in the Russians population. As a result, people of Kazakh ethnicity started increasing and the Russians felt that they are being discriminated.

### **Russian Language Question**

Russian was the language of the majority at the time of independence. Russian was the language which had become criterion for urban life and for

entrance into higher echelon of the society (Shorish, 1984). Russian language was the medium of instruction in educational institutions and in administration. Russian was the language of public discourse (Ziegler, 2006). Russian language was considered as a bond and a common thread between the soviet people. The relations among the Russians and the Kazakhs were very cordial and pleasant. Russian language was the medium of communication between diverse ethnic groups but not Kazakh. There was very little space left for the development of Kazakh language during the Soviet regime. Russian language was considered symbol of status and reputation. The Kazakh language was not even known to most of the ethnic Kazakhs so it became an important issue for the consolidation of Kazakh nationality within Kazakhstan. The non-Kazakh speakers who were in a majority were the Russians and it was feared that they might not fully integrated into the newly formed Kazakhstan. According to the nationalists Kazakhs were in majority in the southern and Russian were in majority in the northern region. Russians felt the process of Kazakhisation will marginalise them.

The Russians received support from Russian organizations outside Kazakhstan because these organisations felt that Kazakhstan was increasingly becoming hostile towards Russia. The change of capital from ‘Almaty’ to ‘Astana’ was also done to outnumber the Russians in the capital city. The Kazakhs also accorded higher position in administration to the people of their own ethnicity in politics to dismantle the Russian hegemony. It was argued from Russian side that they considered Kazakhstan as their homeland and that they did not feel the need to master the Kazakh language. There was a lot of friction and the Russians felt that a line was being created between them and the Kazakhs due to the language policies which gave rise to the feeling of ‘Us’ vs. ‘Them’ within society.

Russian speaking majority experienced a sense of denial, exclusion which ultimately led to their migration to Russia in large numbers. Most of the Central Asian countries have failed to stop the outflow of the ‘Slav’ population. Instead, Kazakhstan made favourable policies which led to the immigration of ethnic Kazakhs to Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan was also sceptical whether the Kazakh migrants would integrate in Kazakhstan, hence they were not allowed of double citizenship. Russian lost its status of the dominant language and now Kazakh language is used in universities as medium of instruction. Russian is now studied as an optional language and not as a compulsory language. During the Soviet regime Russian was the medium of instruction at schools. It has been found that after special treatment was given to the Kazakh language it led to the degradation of Russian language which became less popular in rural areas and among the younger population. In the 20<sup>th</sup> session of Assembly of people of Kazakhstan, the then President of Kazakhstan Nursultan stressed that Kazakh language has played a

unifying role in Kazakhstan. He stressed that language has been an important factor.

### **Constitutional Status to Languages**

The constitution has made several provisions for the official language and defined the status of Kazakh language. Article 7 of the constitution of Kazakhstan made Kazakh as the sole state language. Russian can be used for official purposes in state institutions and local administration on an equal basis with Kazakh. Article 7 also states that the state should also make provisions for the development of other languages as well. It is the duty of every citizen to study Kazakh language. The proficiency in Kazakh language is a very important requirement for many important official posts like President of the country and Vice- President. It further elevates the status of Kazakh language and distinguishes it from other languages.

Granting official status to the Kazakh language was simply, we can say, a move to promote the Kazakh language. They wanted to give a privileged position to the Kazakh language to replace the Russian language. This was simply a shift towards politics of symbolism to represent the 'titular'.

### **Language Challenges**

The language law of 1989, was a watershed moment in language legislation during the Soviet period. The law recognized Kazakh as the state language (Commercio, 2004), guaranteed the right of education in Kazakh at all educational levels, and made Kazakh a mandatory subject in schools. Russian was designated as a language of inter-ethnic communication functioning alongside the state language. The demands for ethnic and cultural rights were being raised during the Soviet times as well. After liberation these demands were intensified and opened an opportunity to develop their own culture. Newly independent Kazakhstan, while according official status to Kazakh language did not wish to put other languages of minorities under the threat of marginalisation. Russian was the language of the majority at the time independence. But for carving out a nation and making of the nation state, language is of utmost importance. Language issues were generated from the cultural recognition which formed the basis of nation formation. The nationalists were in favour of declaring Kazakh language as the language of the state and the medium of communication in administration and education. The problem with the Kazakh language along with other languages of minorities was that the Kazakh language was not fully developed during the Soviet regime, owing to illiteracy of ethnic Kazakh people and other reasons.

'Korenizatsiya', or the 'Nativisation' policy which was started after 1920, proposed that work would be carried out in the native language and non- locals

would have to learn the native language. There was resistance to this policy so the plan was not implemented owing to the lack of a standard language of the locals (Verschik, 2010). The Russians resisted this policy. But its impact was felt in Kazakhstan and after making Kazakh language as the official language work has been done to improve and develop it furthermore.

### **Constitutional Provision for Minorities**

In order to see the multicultural character of Kazakhstan it is required to see its constitutional provisions that were created for minorities for their successful inclusion in the mainstream. The preamble which is the preface of the constitution of Kazakhstan written in 1995 says, “We, the people of Kazakhstan, united by a common historic fate, creating a state on the indigenous Kazakh land”, clearly enshrined and gave a special place to the Kazakh ethnic population. It clearly shows the intention of the government to consolidate the Kazakh population.

The ‘Assembly of people of Kazakhstan’ is a constitutional body which was formed under the leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbaev on 1 March 1995. The idea for its formation was first envisioned in 1992 at the people’s forum of Republic of Kazakhstan which commemorated the first anniversary of independence of Kazakhstan. The main purpose for which this institution was created was to promote inter-ethnic relations. Its main aim was consolidation of the demands of minorities and build cooperation between the government and the civil society. It is headed by the President. This is a very powerful body as its recommendations are obligatory for consideration on government bodies and institutions. The creation of Assembly of people of Kazakhstan was the result of the commitment of government and the President that the country was not a home of Kazakhs only but of more than 130 ethnic groups, and that the government was ready to not let any minority experience the fear of alienation. The former U.N General Secretary during his visit to Kazakhstan and appreciated the Assembly of People and considered it a model of inter-ethnic relations. The assembly of people of Kazakhstan was appreciated by Pope John Paul Second. It was criticised on the grounds that practically it was used by the President to legitimize his power (Dave, 2007).

Article 5 of the constitution clearly allows ideological and political differences. Article 7 binds the state to create conditions for the development of other languages along with Russian and Kazakh. Apart from above some instances, we came to know that the alignment of the Kazakhstan with the Kazakh identity, there are many other provisions which shows its multi-cultural character. Kazakhstan government very consciously keeps watch on the rights of people so as to ensure no discrimination is done against any citizen regardless of ethnic,

linguistic and religious affiliation. There are many provisions at every level to check discrimination. Constitutional provisions are very important in this regard. Article 14 states that:

1. Everyone shall be equal before the law and court.
2. No one shall be subject to any discrimination for reasons of origin, social, property status, occupation, sex, race, nationality, language, attitude towards religion, convictions, place of residence or any other circumstances.'

Along with that article 19: "Everyone has the right to his native language and culture, to freely choose the language of communication, education, instruction and creative activities." Those principles are aligned with the international law and the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

According to information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kazakhstan had on 1st February 2007 become a signatory of 160 international agreements including the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

International law and the Constitution of Kazakhstan state that everyone has rights and freedoms regardless of race, colour, and ethnic or social origin. These principles are enshrined in Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in Article 5 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Citizenship Law in Kazakhstan is based on a right zero- option, which inescapably fixed the citizenship of all the lawful residents of the Republic on the day the law was passed. The Constitution also ensured equality before law for all its citizens. Kazakhstan rejected the double citizenship demand which was raised by the Russians in the northern region, but provided double citizenship to Kazakh origin. Later on, an exception was added – the members of the returning Kazakh diaspora could hold a dual citizenship. (Matuszkiewicz, 2010) That act treated members of a titular ethnic group in a slightly better manner which was perceived as an insult to Russian nationalists in the Republic.

The Citizenship Law of Kazakhstan provided a legal support to the state building and nation building process. The other fundamentals that helped the task of defining new ethnic relations, were the three Constitutions (1993, 1995 and 1998), the new Language Law in 1997, and two Presidential documents: the 1996 Concept of Language Policy, and the 1998 Presidential Decree on Functioning and Development of Languages.

## **Political Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Kazakhstan**

The issue of representation of the minority group is very crucial in a multi-ethnic country like Kazakhstan. In such situation there is always a probability of underrepresentation and over representation of certain communities. According to the official United Nations Report by a researcher working on the Kazakhstan issue, some ethnic groups are so small they don't feel that they will be represented. Uighur is also an ethnic group which in some areas is in majority but at the level of representation they are negligible. According to Article 51 of the Constitution, the *Majilis* (lower Chamber of Parliament) shall consist of 107 deputies, 98 of which shall be elected by "the universal, equal and direct right under secret ballot". However, the rest 9 deputies shall be appointed by the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan the representation of minorities is carried by the people of assembly of Kazakhstan.

At the same time, the election of the deputies of the Kazakhstani Senate "shall be carried out on the basis of indirect right under secret ballot" (Article 51 sub-section 2 of the Constitution).

## **Inter- Ethnic Relations in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is a multi-ethnic, plural society. There is a thin line of difference between pluralism and multiculturalism. Equality in the public domain makes it different from pluralism. Respect and accommodation of other cultures is the cornerstone of a multicultural society. Kazakhstan is one of the few countries that was successful in dealing with inter- ethnic conflict which erupted after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R in post- soviet states. It is also the least disturbed country in the region. Russian is the language of Inter- ethnic communication. *Plural character of Kazakh society has been its important feature.* The confluence of various ethnicities is not a recent phenomenon, rather it has remained like this throughout history. Because of the presence of multi- ethnic groups, it is also regarded as the settler colony.

The multi- ethnic character of Kazakhstan is the result of various Czarist and soviet policies. The enforced settlement of nomads in 1920 and 1930s, the famine and emigration that followed, caused a loss of 40% of Kazakh population (Dave, 2004). Stalinist policies and more population was further added during the 2<sup>nd</sup> world War. The Virgin Land drive which brought the Slav population in central Asia changed the demographic profile of Kazakhstan (Schatz, 2000). Kazakhstan's location and its richness in natural resources is one of the major reasons behind such large influx of population.

After independence there was a sharp increase in the population of Kazakhstan, especially in the number of Turkic origin people. Kazakh language is

also derived from the Turkic origin. It is also said that Kazakh has become more Turkic than Slavic and European. Though the constitution of Kazakhstan prohibits the formation of political parties on the basis of racial and ethnic basis. The constitution is against any kind of activity which is against the integrity and unity of the country.

It is evident that there was cordial relationship between the Russians the Kazakhs before independence. The Russians were perceived with respect as they had brought industrialization and technological development to the region. They were treated as elder brothers by the central Asian countries. In Caucasian and Baltic countries, the Russians were treated as invaders. The Russians were more in number than the Kazakhs. They were more in number in the urban centers and areas. The Russian schools were very popular among the Kazakhs. The Kazakhs were not acquainted by their traditional language and Russian language became the language of upward mobility.

After independence the situation changed as more than half of the population was not Kazakh. Before independence the non- Kazakh Russian population was in a privileged position, but after independence Kazakhstan promoted the process of ethno- nationalism which specifically built the provisions to favor the Kazakhs. Many Kazakhs believe that this process basically intended to compensate them for their lost years under the Soviet rule. But efforts were still being made to strike a balance between Kazakh revival and ethnic issues.

### **State's Efforts in Maintaining Inter- Ethnic Relation**

Kazakhstan has always been on the forefront of promoting Inter- cultural and inter- religious dialogues. Kazakhstan is a multi- cultural and multi- religious country, so it has become the urgent need of the country to maintain peace. It has been rightly observed by Kazakhstan that Inter- religious dialogue is necessary for the promotion of equal rights and space for all religions and cultural groups. In the words of President of Kazakhstan, "The Republic of Kazakhstan will become a worthy and equal member of the world community only if the Constitution shows the world that Kazakhstan places human values above all else and is entering the global community only with good intentions of good-neighbourliness and cooperation.

Kazakhstan had organized the 5<sup>th</sup> 'Congress of leaders of world and traditional religion' on 10- 11 June 2016 with the aim to bring peace and harmony. Nursultan Nazarbaev condemned any kind of extremism in religion and said that this cannot be justified at any cost. This can be seen as an initiative from the government to bring the people of minority religions into confidence. For the first

time the Congress was held in the year of 2003 in which the representatives of all major religions like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism etc. were invited.

Although it is a Muslim majority state, Kazakhstan has chosen the path of a secular state which firmly believes in the idea of 'Unity in diversity'. As it lies in the centre of 'Eurasia', it has always been the meeting point of various cultures and Civilizations. Kazakhstan was located on the silk route; people of different cultures shared its history and provided a rich cultural heritage and experience which added new colours to the culture of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is known for its Sufi orientation towards Islam. Its nomadic culture has openness and acceptance towards people of all cultures. The reassertion or revival of Islam in Kazakhstan is a post-Soviet phenomenon. After getting independence it provided spaces for religion to develop and practice their tenets.

In a multi- ethnic nation, the Inter- ethnic accord became the prime motto of the State for peace and stability in the country. Kazakhstan has been very successful in maintaining peace through social and institutional mechanisms. Kazakhstan has shown great confidence in governmental institutions in maintaining this mechanism. Civil society is also playing an active part in this regard. Kazakhstan ensures that the Socio- economic difference among people does not lead to any kind of discord in Inter- Ethnic relations. The State is strongly against any kind of discrimination based on religious identity.

The consensus of interests of different ethnic groups should be taken into consideration while making framework of public policy. The active involvement of governmental machinery allows various other cultures to grow in Kazakhstan. Many other languages of ethnic minorities are taught in schools etc. Kazakhstan also promotes newspapers and media in other languages so that people should have access to news in the language of their own choice. The government not only designates official holidays according to the dominant religion but also according to the festivals of the minority culture. The festivals of minority cultures are also celebrated with full fervour. The state is strongly against the politicization of religion and ethnicity. These cannot be the basis of party formation.

Kazakhstan, from the very beginning, is committed to promote peace, equality and fraternity among all its citizens. Both at the social level and the institutional level Kazakhstan is committed to this aim. The model that Kazakhstan has adopted does not fit in the watertight compartmentalisation of the western theory of multiculturalism because it has developed its own ethos of multiculturalism with its own understanding and demands.

Multiculturalism is very new to the Post-Soviet countries and the concept of multiculturalism is constructed to suits the Western democratic states. Taras Kuzio argued that it is very difficult to apply western multicultural theory in Post-soviet

countries. Regional separatism, Russian designs on C.I.S (Commonwealth of Independent States) states, inherited ethnic inequalities, difficulties in defining who are 'national minorities', 'colonists' or 'immigrants', weak national identities. (Kuzio, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

Kazakhstan's multi-ethnic character in terms of population puts pressure on the Kazakh government to frame policies taking into account the demands of minority groups to ensure equality in private and public spheres. Language politics haunted the politics of Kazakhstan in the first few years after independence. Kazakh was not the language of the majority of the population, the majority of the population spoke the Russian language. There was a strong discontentment among other minorities. There emerged a wide difference between people who wanted to retain Russian as the official language and the nationalists who were of the opinion that Kazakh should be imposed in a strong manner. The Russians perceived their culture as superior to other cultures. The change in the language policy of Kazakhstan can be seen from two perspectives- the first would be the search for a new identity and the other can be a backlash against the Russian identity. The language movement after independence can also be seen as a move against the Russianisation which took place during the Pre- soviet and Soviet times, the reparation of loss which occurred to their culture and to their native language.

The issue from the minorities' side of was of recognition and representation. The Kazakh government has very affectively tried to find out the solution of the problem. Assembly of the people of Kazakhstan was an institution which was aimed at representation to the minority groups. It was formed on the advice and active involvement of Nursultan Nazarbaev. The Inter-ethnic relations are very important in order to understand multiculturalism as the interaction among various ethnic groups which leads them to learn from each other's culture and to live peacefully. The Kazakhstan initiative to conduct the Congress of world traditional religions was a great initiative in this regard where the representative voices of all religions were invited at one stage. Kazakhstan has made an active effort to find a balance between building new identity for the nation while keeping the diversity model intact through social and political institutions.

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