

## HUMANITY: BECOMING INHUMANE?

Author: Chhavi

B.A.(Hons.) English graduate, Miranda House, Delhi, India

### ABSTRACT

This article, titled ‘Humanity: becoming inhumane?’, tries to outline the impending commination hovering over humanity, in real-time. The current crisis of boiling war situation between Ukraine and Russia, is a supporting corroboration that humankind has not taken required lessons from the 40 million casualties of the First World War, it has lost the dreadful nasty memories of the Holocaust and how the United States of America ‘justified its military intervention in Vietnam by the domino theory’. In an exchange of letters between Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud, Einstein asked Freud: “That the pattern of violence could not be mitigated, even in the face of the most meaningful pleas?”<sup>i</sup>. To which Freud reverted back, saying: “...in his [Freud’s] opinion there was not much likelihood of anyone being able to suppress humanity’s most aggressive tendencies...It is easy to infect mankind with war fever, and humanity has an active instinct for hatred and destruction.”<sup>ii</sup> To make the argument more stern, this article conceptualizes to encompass the multifaceted atrocities that humanity is suffering in not just one or two countries but upon varied soils of different landmasses, separated by oceans.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method, hence, employed to base the research around the article, circumferences along the rims of various primary and secondary sources which have been duly recognized and acknowledged throughout the article, in an appropriate manner. The sources include newspaper dailies, profuse number of political as well as apolitical books by authors stemming from diverse fields and statistics are being supported by the mentioning of the news channels which released the data, henceforth.

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There was no possibility to create a participatory method of findings that might have used subjective opinions of the people, or simply the unfortunate incapability of harnessing in-field research due to the COVID-19 guidelines in effect and, thereby, the stringent expectations of adhering to the same.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This article is investigative in nature which aims at opening the floor for substantial critiquing, constructive debating and exploratory to invigorate more awareness about the novel issues at hand. Therefore, this article doesn't advocate any concrete conclusions at the behest of their applicability rather, it looks forward to set peripheries that could be swelled and pushed forward, further, with more considerable arguments.

## ARTICLE

Ece Temelkuran, in her recent title, ended her deliberation with a prominent note on humanity saying: "A human lifetime is tragically disproportionate to humanity's ambition. We live shorter than sea urchins or tortoises, which do not apparently share our desire to create a better world or our capacity to be disappointed when our dreams fall apart...Our generation and the next generation will have to answer the question, perhaps for the last time..., of how humanity

should conduct itself”<sup>iii</sup>. “Maybe they'll [women] have to abandon their houses, or maybe they[women] will be simply murdered.”<sup>iv</sup>, was the devastated answer given by Pashtana Zalmay Khan Durrani about the possibilities of torturous spectrum of realities awaiting for a specific gender under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, in the coming future; “*The fact that a journalistic investigation could become a punishable offence highlights the extent of the recent decline in press freedom in Hong Kong*”<sup>v</sup>, commented Cedric Alviani, RSF East Asia Bureau head with reference to the deteriorating condition of press freedom in erstwhile free Hong Kong or “I demonstrated from February 6, the day anti-coup protests began in Yangon,...when the junta added my name to its arrest warrant list for “sedition” and raided my house and office. My family and I narrowly escaped. Knowing that our lives were in danger...”<sup>vi</sup>, remarked Thet Swe Win (Human Rights Activist) while making a choice through the commotions of dilemma whether she should continue her protest or not against the bellicose of military muscle striving on hard driven efforts to achieve democracy. Across the intersecting lengths and breadths of the globe, in times when embracing multiculturalism is making echoes on official white-collar diplomacy tables, it stands like a sharp contrasting narrative that the world is facing extremely nefarious whips on feeble humanity in recent times. This article, in particular, tries to set forth the complex fissures running in the contemporary world where humanity, in general, has fallen to suffer the assault at the hands of fellow human perpetrators.

The preamble of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, begins with the first invocation: “Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world...”. However, with the unfolding of the novel events, all seems to be a bashed farce mockery in the face of humanity. The previous year witnessed some prominent upheavals in the geo-global fabric of the human civilization even when there was a collective and simultaneous struggle against a bigger fatal pandemic at hand, taking toll on the lives already. One issue that has ringed constantly, without discriminating the continent where it rung, was an excruciating thwacking suffered by, both, established and newly flourishing democracy. It isn't written down anywhere that democracy, be it participatory like in Switzerland or representative like in India, is the most accommodative form of polity that a country should aim for. Nonetheless, as mentioned by Mahatma Gandhi, democracy “...comes naturally to him who is habituated normally to yield willing obedience to all laws, human or divine”<sup>vii</sup>. The year 2021 began with

a massive attack on The Capitol Building of the United States of America, the oldest democracy of the world. Five people died and many were left injured but it was more of a massive blow on the mandate of the common conscious reached by the people of a country, desiring change in leadership. The reason could have been the monstrous murdering of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 and many more like him over the four years or the mishandling of the COVID-19 virus leading to innumerable deaths. It came as a sharp blow that fellow Americans attacked the edifice of a belief that time and again issued the reiteration of democracy as: "...for the people, of the people, by the people..."<sup>viii</sup>

The next month of February was waiting with more chaos to offer. The military coup conducted by the *Junta* in Myanmar (February 1, 2021), throbbed the efforts of almost twenty-five years when the people across generations fought and many died to attain democracy as their medium to voice their concerns. Today, the Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Ki- the flagbearer of what honest conventions can bring to a country even if they were of a girl who took the dream of her father a step ahead when he died as she was just two years old- sits on the possibility of life imprisonment as a deposed leader for some fabricated accusations and covert hearings while her brothers and sisters in the country are being tortuously mummed to death for a single innocent crime, i.e., peaceful protests against draconian regime. And, interestingly, when China advocated for the participation of Myanmar's *Junta* rulers in the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) 2021 summit, it reflected that for the other countries: "...national interests in Myanmar are more important than standing up for democracy there...in the process we had lost a little bit of our soul."<sup>ix</sup> But what was the most horrific of all the events, was seeing people in desperate attempts of fleeing Afghanistan on the morning of August 16, 2021 by clinging to the US Air-Force jets<sup>x</sup>. The infamous Taliban regime is known for its mockery of the human rights not from today but from the times when it was growing as a bulbous tumorous bud onto the ramified branch of its parent Pakistani militant group called the Mujahedeen, during the late 1970s as a resistance movement against the Soviet troops.<sup>xi</sup> When it officially, or more correct choice of words would be, when it forced its way to power in instable Afghanistan through colossal killing of innocent civilians, suicide bombing became endemic to almost every street of Afghanistan and crime against women does not even require a separate mention be it forced marriages, multiple marriages, abduction or rape<sup>xii</sup>- all in the name of safeguarding the teachings of the Sharia law. It's immature to comment on what the Taliban

2.0 regime is set to offer to the ailing Afghanistan with constant international pressure to behave in a legal manner if it desires global recognition but the ways and means with which it returned and the reverberation from its past makes it hard for anyone to have any better expectations out of them. These are the three prominent instances because these involved bigger powers in them, directly or indirectly. Countries which go unnoticed on the bigger map of bureaucratic diplomacy such as Sudan<sup>xiii</sup>, Kazakhstan<sup>xiv</sup>, Thailand<sup>xv</sup>, Ethiopia<sup>xvi</sup> or Havana<sup>xvii</sup> are fighting their own battles where mature democracy is either under attack or is tried to be suffocated to death in its fetal form where the people of a particular country wants to establish it. Humanity always wanted to be governed the way they desired and found most appropriate, since time immemorial. People living in the Indus Valley Civilization of the Indian subcontinent are nowhere to be compared with how the indigenous natives called the Red Indians lived, in now what we know as the United States of America. The way of living and the way of being governed are subjective to the human capital of a particular land, determined by yet another set of factors like the history, economy, geography, cultural beliefs and even the taboos associated with the particular acreage of their territory. Being treated like moths to the flame by the powerful State and the Non-State actors for their personal gains, humanity in particular cries every now and then for its simplest of cravings of being given a governing system that falls in alignment with peaceful living: "...democracy (abused by financial institutions and stripped of social justice) was undergoing the biggest crisis since the Second World War."<sup>xviii</sup>

Another important factor of concern has been the migration issue and the rights of the refugee. A country like the Republic of India, known for the most flamboyant of the constitutions and celebrating elaborate civil rights, is not a signatory to the UN Convention on refugees<sup>xix</sup> is quite an evidence of how deprecating it is for the blameless citizens of a country who suffer the wretchedness of the world for their skin color, belonging to a religious or ethnic minority or simply because they can't tolerate the unilateral sanctions on their State of dubious legality laws. A couple of days back there was a lot hustle on the Poland- Belarus borders<sup>xx</sup>. It was believed that the super 'Eurasian' power Russia- guilty of poisoning the opposition leader<sup>xxi</sup> Alexie Navalny and putting him behind bars for framed crimes- backed the authoritarian Alexander Lukashenko (already under global scrutiny of doping and rigging his way through the unfair elections) to create unrest in the Eastern European flank so that it could contain Ukraine from joining the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and gaining more

military assistance from the ‘global North’. In row, there are the Bangladeshi refugees on the *Seelampur* border of Delhi who are still living on the fringes to make ends meet and face the discrimination on daily basis for being the ‘illegal migrants’ who do have identity cards to cast their votes as they present a potential vote-bank to politicians but no ration cards to avail subsidized food grains for their families or the mothers being separated from their infants at the U.S.-Mexico border and still fighting in the courts to have their child’s custody back or be it the Rohingyas fleeing from the violence casted upon them by their own countrymen to live a life of transgression in India and Bangladesh because of the liminal position assigned to them for being ‘outsiders’.

The sudden disappearance of famous tennis female player Peng Shuai<sup>xxii</sup>, forced sterilization of and horrendous genocide of Uyghur Muslims<sup>xxiii</sup> in the Xinxiang area, cutting on all the freedom and liberty that Hong Kong enjoyed before it was coerced to accept the laws of the mainland China first time after 1997, unhealthy expansionist policy and exploiting the weaker nations under the garb of the economic corridors and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)- China, with its middle kingdom ideology, stands as the living example of how even a rising nation has got its roots rotten on which it stands. Frequently, it has been called upon by the international community for its aggressive policies and unipolar idea of rising in terms of economy, military and global power. The neighboring land of another rising country, i.e., India is nowhere behind it “The U.S. State Department’s Country Report on Human Rights Practices itself last March recorded ‘significant human rights issues’ in India, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, violence against minorities, unjustified harassment of journalists, and censorship and blocking of websites. India is rated poorly by the U.S. based Freedom House which called it ‘partly free.’”<sup>xxiv</sup> With all such instances and many more that go unrecorded, it is high time that we look into this matter as of grave concern. The environment with the climate crisis and the pandemic have already taken away a lot from us and, unfortunately but without doubt, are going to take a lot more. If not now, then when? We all need to adhere together and fight against the common to mankind, before it’s too late: “Not just those people who look like us. Not just those who need what we need. Not just those who have gained an audience with us. Our duty is to improve the human condition- in every way we can, for everyone who needs it.”<sup>xxv</sup>

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>i</sup> *Apeirogon*, Colum McCann (2020, Bloomsbury Publishing)
- <sup>ii</sup> *Apeirogon*, Colum McCann (2020, Bloomsbury Publishing).
- <sup>iii</sup> ‘How To Lose A Country: The 7 Steps from Democracy to Dictatorship’, Ece Temelkuran (2019)
- <sup>iv</sup> Source: ‘No bright future’: Afghan women share their concerns for a future under Taliban rule - ABC News
- <sup>v</sup> Source: Hong Kong: investigative journalist Bao Choy convicted of “false statements” | RSF
- <sup>vi</sup> Source: The coup united the people of Myanmar against oppression | Opinions | Al Jazeera
- <sup>vii</sup> Source: Essence of Democracy | Mind of Mahatma Gandhi (mkgandhi.org)
- <sup>viii</sup> Said by Abraham Lincoln, the first president of the United States of America.
- <sup>ix</sup> ‘Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’, Shashi Tharoor (2012)
- <sup>x</sup> Source: Afghans cling to moving US Air Force jet in desperate bid to flee | Conflict News | Al Jazeera
- <sup>xi</sup> Source: History of the Taliban (naz.edu)
- <sup>xii</sup> Source: I. The Taliban's War Against Women (state.gov)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Source: October–November 2021 Sudanese coup d'état - Wikipedia
- <sup>xiv</sup> Source: Kazakhstan president claims coup attempt | Eurasianet
- <sup>xv</sup> Source: The Fight for Democracy in Thailand - Dissent Magazine
- <sup>xvi</sup> Source: Ethiopia Declares State of Emergency as Rebels Advance Toward Capital - The New York Times (nytimes.com)
- <sup>xvii</sup> Source: ‘Cuban-American Mafia’ Plotting ‘Soft Coup’ in Havana, Says President Díaz-Canel (sputniknews.com)
- <sup>xviii</sup> ‘How To Lose A Country: The 7 Steps from Democracy to Dictatorship’, Ece Temelkuran (2019)
- <sup>xix</sup> Source: India "Not Signatory" To 1951 UN Convention: Centre On Myanmar Refugees (ndtv.com)
- <sup>xx</sup> Source: Poland-Belarus border crisis: what is going on and who is to blame? | Migration | The Guardian
- <sup>xxi</sup> Source: Alexei Navalny: ‘Poisoned’ Russian opposition leader in a coma - BBC News
- <sup>xxii</sup> Source: The Disappearance of Peng Shuai: What We Know (thecut.com)
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Source: USCIRF Warns that Forced Sterilization of Uyghur Muslims is Evidence of Genocide | USCIRF
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Reference: ‘The Hindu’, January 11, 2022
- <sup>xxv</sup> ‘The Truths We Hold: An American Journey’, Kamala Harris (2019)