

REPERCUSSIONS OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR ON INDIAN STUDENTS

Anjali Bisht*

The war has destructed and disrupted so much more than what has been seen by the naked eye. Property and infrastructure are not the only things that have faced a fall but it has also resulted in a violation of human rights, their lives, and their basic fundamental right. It has resulted in atrocities, rapes, and killings. The war has left thousands of Indian students neglected and unable to decide their future. It has led to the loss of numerous lives of Ukrainians and civilians. It has also affected the global market as well as it has left a grave impact on other countries. It has become a matter of national interest and has led to a division among the nations. The main issue that war has attracted is that it has deprived the students from their fundamental right to education. The main reason behind this article is to provide a purview as to how it has affected the students. And why is it important to take a stand?

Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, Ukraine returned Indian students, war, conflict.

INTRODUCTION

‘Dying like trash, never-ending hatred, pain that never heals, this is war, this is what we must face.’ The modern nations of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus all claimed their cultural ancestry to Kievan Rus – a medieval principality that was located in the Kievan Rus region. Ukraine was a member of the Soviet Union until 1991 when it disintegrated, and Russia has tried to capture it since then. Both Russia and Ukraine fought in nearly all armies based on political personal beliefs. Ukraine became independent in 1991 after the dissolution of the USSR.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After the disintegration of the USSR, Ukraine was overthrown by Moscow which resulted in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Russia began massing its troops towards Ukraine which it claimed were for training exercises. “In November 2021, satellite images taken by Maxar technologies show an ongoing buildup of Russian forces near Ukraine with estimates soon surpassing 10,000 troops deployed.” Ukraine-Russian war broke out due to the ongoing discussions between NATO and the EU which made Russia insecure about its position and

*BA LLB, THIRD YEAR, GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, PUNJAB.

demanded security and withdrawal from joining forces with NATO. Under the [Budapest Memorandum](#), Ukraine gives up its nuclear arsenal in exchange for a commitment from Moscow “to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine.”¹ In December 2021, Russia demanded security which included that NATO shall withdraw its troops and weapons from European Union and bar Ukraine from ever joining forces with them. NATO reinforced European Union and sent more ships and fighter jets. The conflict has resulted in 7.7 million displacements and 6.8 million have fled the country. Two children are killed every day. 243 have been killed and 446 have been injured by the war. In total tally, 4,149 civilians have been killed and 4,945 have been injured so far.

TIMELINE

The following events led to the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian war:

After the dissolution of the USSR, Ukraine declared itself independent from Moscow in 1991.

Pro- Russian candidate Viktor Yanukovich was elected as the president but there was a spread of the orange revolution which demanded a re-vote which resulted in the election of Viktor Yushchenko as the president. (2004)

Yushchenko led the beginning of moving Ukraine toward the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU) in 2005.

NATO promised Ukraine it will join the alliance.

Yanukovich wins the presidential elections in 2010.

Yanukovich’s government suspends all ties and trade with the EU in 2013 and opts economic ties with Moscow which results in massive protests all over Kyiv for several months.

In February 2014, parliament voted out Yanukovich after the bloodshed in the protests. Within days, armed men seize the parliament of Crimea and raises the Russian flag. Moscow, later on, annexes the territory.

¹ Budapest Memorandum

An association agreement is signed between Ukraine and the EU which states that there will be open markets for free trade of goods and services, and visa-free travel to the EU for Ukrainians.

Volodymyr Zelensky was elected president in 2019. In January 2021, Zelensky appeals to U.S president Joe Biden to let Ukraine be a member of NATO. In February, his government freezes the assets of opposition leader Viktor Medvedchuk, the Kremlin's most prominent ally in Ukraine claiming NATO's acceptance of Ukraine as its member. Russia moved its troops toward Ukraine in 2021.

IMPACT OF UKRAINE RUSSIA WAR ON THE WORLD ECONOMY

The ongoing Russia Ukraine conflict has affected the world economy grievously. It has left the world in an unprotective shell that was already in the progress of recovering from the coronavirus pandemic. Ukraine and Russia both are major producers in the world economy, and the conflict between both countries has led to an imbalance in the global market which has also been pointed out by the 'international monetary fund' (IMF). It has disrupted the rates of commodities, especially oil prices and natural gases. There has been a wide increase in inflation among the countries. There has been a spike in inflation as well as in the import and export of commodities. IMF has warned that global growth will slow down from 6.1% in 2021 to 3.6% in 2022 and 2023. Russia is facing severe problems such as a shortage of commodities with the lack of import of semiconductors and electrical equipment. 20% of Ukrainian territory has been acquired by Russia. The US, UK, Canada, Europe, and Australia have imposed widespread sanctions on Russia. European Union has decided to ban 90% of oil imports. Russian major banks have been cut down. The war has resulted in a rise in the prices of oil and other commodities. For example, crude oil is being sold at the price of \$100/ barrel. Almost 300 companies have pulled out or suspended operations in Russia. Infrastructure worth 100 billion dollars has been destroyed and 5 million jobs have been lost since then. Ukraine has been rigorously affected by the invasion of Russia. The population is 33% below poverty and there is a risk of 62% poverty by the end of this war. This war has led to the fastest displacement since the second world war (1939-1945). 90% of the refugees are women and children.

IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON THE INDIAN ECONOMY

While an event or factor disrupts the balance of the country, it often takes years to recover from it. Such is the conflict between Russia and Ukraine which has affected India's GDP rigorously.

even when India has had limited dependence on imports (2.1%) and exports (1%). GDP has been lowered to 7.9% for 2023. Higher crude oil prices are likely to lead to higher domestic inflation for the Indian economy. According to RBI, inflation is expected to be 45%. Rising commodity prices for metal, fuel, edible oil and other various products are early indications of this trend. RBI will revise the interest rate and because of the same unsecured and secured interests like home loans and car loans will be more expensive.

GOVERNMENT'S TAKE ON THE SITUATION OF THE INDIAN STUDENTS

The Indian government has maintained its firm stand on its decision according to which the government is denying that it cannot accommodate Ukraine returned Indian students to be admitted to Indian universities. They believe that this would lead to a high rate of court cases against the government by the students who secured their seats in Indian colleges. They claim that this would be unfair to those students who scored well in NEET and got admission to their desired colleges. The government is asserting that these students went voluntarily to other countries as they did not score up to the required marks. It also claimed that they were not able to afford the degree in India which led to their decision of moving to another country. The government is completely against their admission and is yet to give its final decision. The court proceeding related to the same matter is still going on in the supreme court and all the students are still waiting for the hearing. The next date for the proceeding given by the supreme court is 23rd September 2022. The government has left the decision to the national medical council (NMC) to come up with the solution and has maintained that the same would be final and binding. Earlier, NMC announced that the students need to complete their degree from the universities where they are registered as its students, it was not allowing transfers to any other universities. But now NMC has said that the students can go to other universities and complete their degrees, however, the degree shall be received from the parent university, this decision came out on 6th September 2022. Several PILs have been filed related to the matter and all have been heard in the court hearing on 16th September 2022. In the court hearing of 16th September, the senior advocate stated that the first thing that should have been done was to declare the students as 'war victims' under article 51² of the Geneva convention which would have allowed them to claim any rights under international law. Another advocate stated that if other countries

² Geneva Convention, 12 August 1949.

can accommodate the students, then why cannot we do the same? There has been a total of 22 PILs filed by the students.

INDIAN STUDENT'S POINT OF VIEW

The students have been patiently waiting for 6 months. Having left everything behind, the hope for a better tomorrow is what kept these students going. The beginning of the fall semester in all Ukrainian universities on 1st September 2022 added to the anxiety of these students as they still don't have a decision. On one side the universities are asking for payment of fees and on the other hand, there is hope that the government will come with a plan. The universities have started classes online as of 1st September but NMC hasn't allowed that either. So, students are hanging by a thin thread with no options available. As the court argues to make a learned decision for these students, the semester is slipping by, which may create additional numerous problems for them. This was a matter of urgency. Even though repeatedly mentioned that we put forward a mercy plea, the government chose to neglect this matter. Being a time-bound case, the continuous delay in the matter has left the students disappointed and depressed. Not to forget the continuous humiliation of questioning the financial and academic levels of students. The country welcomed its children back from an active war zone only to remind them that they are not important to the country.

16TH SEPTEMBER COURT HEARING

This hearing was held based on a public notice released on 15th September by NMC in which it revealed a list of countries where the mobility program will take place. Another proposition that was discussed in the hearing was that an online portal is to be created to help the students take the right decision and choose the right university. The Supreme Court stated that the portal shall be a transparent medium run by a team of professionals. The above proposition is to be discussed and the decision on the same will be held on 23rd September 2022.

PRESENT SCENARIO

Russia has formally annexed four regions of Ukraine representing 15% of Russia. Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson have been proclaimed by Russia. Russia's annexation of the Russian-occupied areas following a referendum has been widely condemned in the west. The developments spilled over to the United Nations Security Council on Friday, where India along with China and Brazil abstained on a draft resolution condemning the annexation. As of

now, there has been no decision related to the situation of the Indian students, the court has given yet another date stating to give the lawyers some time to look into the matter and explore some options. When asked about the portal which was to be provided to the Indian students, the solicitor General stated that we are still working on it, and then it will be provided as discussed in the last session. The lawyers representing the Indian students requested a private medical college to which the judge said we will not do that, if anything is found, we will let you know, just give the government some time to weigh out the options. They also requested to contact the state governments as they are ready to help foreign medical graduates (FMGs). Another lawyer pointed out that when three medical colleges were closed in Telangana, its Government established a supernumerary post to accommodate the students. Why the same cannot happen to the Indian students to which the judge gave no response as such. There was also a discussion related to mobility, the lawyers stated that it is a non-starter as there has been no initiation of the mobility process. Students are helpless and unable to decide what to do as the session has begun on the 1st of September. Students have no option but to move back to Ukraine. Students have returned to the western regions of Ukraine where tensions have increased recently putting all the students in danger again. Ukraine is offering online classes to Indian students but it is not validated by NMC. The next date for the court hearing has not been finalized yet, it will be decided after the Dusshera holidays. According to live law, the 15th of September is the next date for the court hearing.