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Child Soldiers, IHL and Video Games

Child Soldiers as per the International Law

Children receive special protection under international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law during armed conflict. During both international and non-international armed conflicts, children benefit from the general protection provided for civilians not taking part in hostilities.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) prohibits the recruitment and use of children in hostilities.¹

It is prohibited to recruit child soldiers in both international and non-international armed conflicts. The ban on recruitment of children below the age of 15 enshrined in Article 77 of Additional Protocol I, and in Article 4 of Additional Protocol II. Voluntary recruitment is also prohibited under International Humanitarian Law.

This prohibition is also found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.²

The recruitment of children is also prohibited in several military manuals, for example the military manuals of Cameroon, France, Germany, Kenya, Netherlands, Nigeria, Spain, and United States.³

Including in those military manuals which are applicable in non-international armed conflicts. For example, the military manuals of Argentina, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, France, Germany, Kenya, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Spain.⁴

The recruitment of child soldiers is also prohibited under the legislation of many States. For example, the legislation of Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Canada, Norway, USA, UK, Malaysia, Jordan, Philippines, Spain, and many more.⁵

Additional Protocols I and II, the Statute of the International Criminal Court and of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, put the minimum age for recruitment in armed forces or armed groups at 15.⁶ Many countries showed their disagreement with the age limit for recruiting children and wanted it to be increased to 18 years.⁷ At the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1999 many countries pledged support to raise the age-limit for recruitment to 18 years.

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Although there is not yet any uniform practice regarding the minimum age for recruitment, however, there is an agreement that it should not be below 15 years of age. In addition, Additional

Protocol I and the Convention on the Rights of the Child require that, in recruiting persons between 15 and 18, priority be given to the older ones.⁹

Child Soldiers and their Participation in the Conflict

Thousands of children are serving as child-soldiers across the globe, recruited by the government forces or by opposition rebel groups. They may fight on the front lines, participate in suicide missions, and act as spies, messengers, clear out landmines and explosives, or lookouts. Girls may be forced into sexual slavery. Many are abducted or recruited by force, while others join out of desperation, believing that armed groups offer their best chance for survival.¹⁰

Practices of recruiting children have generally been condemned by States and international organizations, for example, in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Myanmar, and Uganda.

Why Children Become Involved in Armed Conflict

Children are especially vulnerable to military recruitment because they may be easily manipulated and can be drawn into violence when they are too young to resist or understand what is happening.

Despite the protection provided by law, they continue to be recruited by armed forces and armed groups. They are often separated from their families, driven from their homes, killed, maimed, sexually abused or exploited in other ways.

They are most likely to become child soldiers if they are poor, separated from their families, displaced from their homes, living in a combat zone or have limited access to education.¹¹

For this reason, orphans and refugees are particularly vulnerable to recruitment. Many children join armed groups because of economic or social pressure, or because they believe that the group they are joining will offer food or security. Others are forcibly recruited or abducted by armed groups.

Impact on Children

Eighteen million children are being raised in the chaos of war. In the past ten years, as a result of armed conflict, over 2 million children have been killed, 6 million have been disabled, 20 million are homeless, and more than 1 million have become separated from their caregivers.¹²

According to UNICEF, over 400 million children live in countries affected by violent conflict. Children are the first victim of wars.

"When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers" – An African saying

Children living in violent, terrorized environments experience such horrors as destruction of their homes, and the death of parents, siblings, neighbours, and friends. Many live in circumstances where they make critical survival decisions to hide under deceased remains of others, to kill or be

killed, and often live through situations where they believe they will die.¹³

Modern warfare does not take place in isolated or remote battlefields, and is not fought between opposing countries. The vast majority of contemporary conflicts take place within a specific country, not between countries. In this new form of warfare, civilians are often caught in the midst of the fighting and routinely targeted. Presently, civilians make up to 90% of the casualties. (War Child)

Apart from all this, child soldiers suffer from additional traumas. Following are the experiences of two children who took part in armed conflicts as child soldiers:¹⁴

“I’ve seen people get their hands cut off, a 10-year-old girl raped and then die, and so many men and women burned alive. So many times I just cried inside my heart because I didn’t dare cry out loud.” - A 14-year-old girl abducted in January 1999 by a rebel group in Sierra Leone.

“I still dream about the boy from my village who I killed. I see him in my dreams, and he is talking to me and saying I killed him for nothing.” - A 16-year-old girl after demobilization from an armed group in Central Africa.

Principles of IHL in Popular Video Games, Novels, and Movies

Not everyone is an expert in International Humanitarian Law, but there are more people in the world who play action video games, read novels, watch action and war movies.

Having subtle hints of principles of International Humanitarian Laws in video games, novels, and movies, more people can learn about Humanitarian law and principles.

If we talk about video games, there is an action game called Metal Gear Solid.¹⁵ In that game, you play as a special forces soldier. In one of the missions in that game, you (the character) is deployed in Central Africa. During the mission briefing, the commanding officer told us about the presence of child soldiers and that we are not allowed to engage and kill them.

While playing the game, if you shoot or kill a child soldier, you will fail the mission and the game will end because you violated the laws of war.

Now, this is such a great way of teaching about child soldiers, their situations, and the laws regarding child soldiers.

There is another great game called Call of Duty.¹⁶ In that game, if you shoot your team, you will fail the mission as friendly fire is not allowed.

In my opinion, more humanitarian law principles can be added in the game. For example, in a mission we play as a CIA operative and along with US Marines we raid a hospital in Urzikstan¹⁷, where Wolf (the head of a terrorist organization) was hiding.

In that mission few hospital staff members died as they came between the crossfire, there is a moment when we are surrounded by enemy wounded fighters lying on hospital beds, and one of the wounded fighter takes a gun and tries to shoot at us.

The Call of Duty franchise makes very realistic games with a lot of real life and film references.

There is a mission, after the capture of the Wolf, his supporters demonstrated a protest outside the US Embassy in Urzikstan¹⁸ and then broke into the Embassy and killed many innocent US civilians, this particular instances resembled the film *Argo*¹⁹ which was based on true events. Later on in the same mission, there is a scene when the US Marines and the UK SAS soldiers are firing at the enemy fighters from the rooftop of the US Ambassador's residence. This particular scene resembles the film *13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi*²⁰, again, which is based on true events.

It will only make more sense if these game companies will start adding principles of IHL into their games. That being said, the mission should fail if you shoot a civilian, doctors, wounded enemy soldiers, or disrespect the dead by keep firing at a dead body.

The same should apply to novels and action — war movies. Generally, movies do represent laws of wars, as they are based on real life events.

In my opinion, video games will do the most impact and teach people playing them about International Humanitarian Laws because in video games, people directly take part, the game character is directly in the control of the person playing the game.

Children of today playing video games are the soldiers of tomorrow. If we teach them the right thing now, it will prevent war crimes in the future.

Endnotes

¹ Additional Protocol I, Article 77(2) (adopted by consensus) (cited in Vol. II, Ch. 39, § 379); Additional Protocol II, Article 4(3)(c) (adopted by consensus) (*ibid.*, § 380).

² Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 38(3) (*ibid.*, § 381); African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 22(2) (*ibid.*, § 386); Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, Articles 1 and 3 (*ibid.*, § 388).

³ ICRC, Customary IHL Database, Footnote Number 7, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_cha_chapter39_rule136, Last Accessed on 17 June 2021.

- 4 ICRC, Customary IHL Database, Footnote Number 8, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_cha_chapter39_rule136, Last Accessed on 17 June 2021.
- 5 ICRC, Customary IHL Database, Footnote Number 8, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_cha_chapter39_rule136, Last Accessed on 17 June 2021.
- 6 Additional Protocol I, Article 77(2) (adopted by consensus) (*ibid.*, § 502); Additional Protocol II, Article 4(3)(c) (adopted by consensus) (*ibid.*, § 503); ICC Statute, Article 8(2)(b)(xxvi) and (e)(vii) (*ibid.*, § 513); Statute of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Article 4 (*ibid.*, § 515).
- 7 Declarations and reservations made upon ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by Colombia (*ibid.*, § 382), Netherlands (*ibid.*, § 383), Spain (*ibid.*, § 384) and Uruguay (*ibid.*, § 385).
- 8 Pledges made at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent by Canada (*ibid.*, § 435), Denmark (*ibid.*, § 437), Finland (*ibid.*, § 438), Guinea (*ibid.*, § 439), Iceland (*ibid.*, § 440), Mexico (*ibid.*, § 442), Mozambique (*ibid.*, § 443), Norway (*ibid.*, § 444), South Africa (*ibid.*, § 446), Sweden (*ibid.*, § 447), Switzerland (*ibid.*, § 448), Thailand (*ibid.*, § 450) and Uruguay (*ibid.*, § 453).
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15 Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metal_Gear_Solid_V:_The_Phantom_Pain. Last visited on 18 June 2021.

16 Call of Duty: Modern Warfare. <https://www.callofduty.com/modernwarfare>. Last visited on 18 June 2021.

17 Urzikstan is a fictional country featured in Call of Duty: Modern Warfare.

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18 Urzikstan is a fictional country featured in Call of Duty: Modern Warfare.

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19 Argo (2012 film), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argo_\(2012_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argo_(2012_film)). Last visited on 18 June 2021

20 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi.

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Role Of State Practices In The Evolution Of Customary International Law

Here I will throw some light on the evolution of customary international law through different state practices and how it different it is from the evolution of humankind. But first, we need to understand what amounts to international law, that is, what are the sources of international law.

Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice directs to the court as to where to look for the law.

ARTICLE 38

The Court, whose function is to decide in accordance with international law such disputes as are submitted to it, shall apply:

- a. international conventions, whether general or particular, establishing rules expressly recognized by the contesting states;
- b. international custom, as evidence of a general practice accepted as law;
- c. the general principles of law recognized by civilized nations;
- d. subject to the provisions of Article 59, judicial decisions and the teachings of the most highly qualified publicists of the various nations, as subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law.

This provision shall not prejudice the power of the Court to decide a case *ex aequo et bono*, if the parties agree thereto.

Thus, broadly speaking the following are the sources of international law;

- Customs
- Treaties
- The General Principle of Law Recognized by Civilized Nation

- Judicial Decision
- Juristic Work on International law
- General Assembly Resolution and Declaration

The most historic and most important source of international law is customs. Though its importance has lessened in modern times due to the increasing use of treaties and conventions as a law creating method, it still remains a vital source of international law. Customs has played a significant part in building the present fabric of the international legal system.

A custom is an accepted way of behaving or of doing things in a society or a community.

In international law, customary rules are evolved after a long historic process culminating in their recognition by the community.

A customary rule of international law may be defined as a rule which the community of States has since long recognized as the right rule of conduct and which has the force of law.

Custom is a constant and uniform usage accepted as law. Following are the requirements for usage to be custom:

(I) Material fact: Similar circumstances States act similarly, usage has been constantly and uniformly practiced by States are considered as material facts.

(II) Psychological fact: The feeling States think that they are acting to fulfilling a legal duty, is a psychological fact.

It is the material fact which is significant in the establishment of customs.

Not only in international law, but customs have also played the most important role in the evolution of human societies. Every great social achievement is an outcome of our collective imagination.

Social customs are a product of our collective imagination. Everything which is not present in nature and is built by humans is only possible with the humans' ability to cooperate.

Evolution of customary international law co-evolved with the evolution of the humankind.

In the field of international law, State practices play a fundamental role in the formation of customs.

But what are State practices?

Broadly speaking State practices includes treaties, diplomatic correspondence and relations, opinions of national legal advisers, national legislation policy statements, press releases, official manual on legal questions, executive decisions and practices, decisions on international and national courts and the practice of international organizations.

In general, a custom can be created by a practice done by few States, for a continuous period with an intention that the act is binding, it is necessary to do that act. Here, both the material fact and the psychological fact is present.

If you compare this with the evolution of ordinary customs by human interaction, for example praying to god. This particular practice also contains both the material fact as well as the psychological fact.

We must pray to god, is a psychological fact, people think that they have to pray otherwise the god will punish them, a fear of sanction. The continuous practice by god-fearing people is a material fact.

Material fact and the psychological fact are always in the formation of custom.

Opinio Juris Sive Necessitatis

What is Opinio Juris? Opinio Juris is the psychological element necessary for the formation of customary international law.

The state practice, even though general and consistent is not customary law unless an Opinio Juris or psychological element present in it. That is, the practice is recognized as obligatory and there is the conviction that its repetition is the result of a compulsory rule.

“Not only must the acts concerned amount to a settled practice, but they must also be such, or be carried out in such a way, as to be evidence of a belief that this practice is rendered obligatory by the existence of a rule of law requiring it. The need for such a belief, that is, the existence of a subjective element, is implicit in the very notion of the Opinio Juris Sive Necessitatis. The State concerned must, therefore, feel that they are conforming to what amounts to a

legal obligation. The frequency or even habitual character of the ACT is not in itself enough.”

The following paragraph is from the North Sea Continental Shelf case.

Let us look into two examples to understand what this case is all about.

Example 1.1: Two countries A and B are doing a practice for the last 100 years, let us suppose that practice is to let other country's citizen enter into their border.

Now country A has sealed their borders for the citizens of country B.

Country B objects to this new rule because the majority of its citizens' workplace is in country A. This new rule will significantly increase the amount of joblessness in country B.

Country B takes this matter to the ICJ, country B claims that country A has violated 100 years old customary international law.

The court says that the acts of country A is not a violation of customary international law, because there was no customary international law existed between country A and country B.

This is because there was no *Opinio Juris* present in this case. The 100 years old practice of visa-free entry was not a result of a belief that this is obligatory.

Example 1.2: Two countries A and B, are doing a practice since last 100 years, let us suppose that practice is to let other country's citizen enter into their boarder, because both the countries think “free movement” is a human right and consider it legally binding on them.

Now country A has sealed their borders for the citizens of country B.

Country B objects to this new rule because the majority of its citizens' workplace is in country A. This new rule will significantly increase the amount of joblessness in country B.

Country B takes this matter to the ICJ, country B claims that country A has violated 100 years old customary international law.

The court says that the acts of country A are a violation of customary international law existing between country A and country B.

Opinio Juris also exists in the formation of customs between humans. Here are another two examples to explain the importance of *Opinio Juris* in human life.

Example 2.1: Two human friends help each other to find food. They are helping each other for the last 10 years.

The practice of helping others in finding food is not a custom, *Opinio Juris* is missing.

Example 2.2: Two human friends help each other to find food because they think God wants them to help each other, and if they do not help each other, then they will be punished. They are helping each other for the last 10 years. This can become a valid custom, as the *Opinio Juris* is present.

From the North Sea Continental Shelf case, it is clear that for a practice to be a valid custom, it is necessary to have *Opinio Juris*. The frequency or even habitual character of the practice is not in itself enough to label it as a custom. There has to be a belief that the acts are binding on them, even if originally the act is not binding on them.

Two friends think the act of helping each other is binding on them by the god. In reality, there is no God. Only the belief in god is enough for the friends to help each other in good faith.

Again the belief in isolation is incomplete for a practice to become a custom. Both the material fact and the psychological fact is required.

The Belief System

In the field of customary international law *Opinio Juris* is an important topic. To understand this completely, let us explore a few more cases.

SS Lotus Case

In SS Lotus case a strict requirement was laid down by the court for a customary rule to evolve.

In this case a French ship 'SS Lotus' collided with a Turkish vessel 'Boz Kourt' on the high sea killing 8 Turkish nationals. When the SS Lotus arrived in the Turkish Water, criminal proceedings were instituted in the Turkish courts against the captain of SS Lotus along and the captain of Boz Kourt for manslaughter and sentenced.

The French government protested against the Turkish action and by an agreement between the parties the dispute was submitted to the Permanent Court of International Justice.

The French government argued that under the customer international law criminal jurisdiction pertains to the flag state of the vessel in which the crime is committed. The flag state was entitled to exclusive jurisdiction the court rejected the French contention.

The French lost the case because the court failed to find any psychological element in the case.

The court rejected the French contention and observed;

“The circumstances alleged by the French government merely show that states had often, in practice, abstained from instituting criminal proceedings, and not have that they recognize themselves as being obliged to do so; for only if such abstention were based on their being conscious of having a duty to abstain would it be possible to speak of an international custom. The alleged fact does not allow one of infer that states have been conscious or having such a duty”

North Sea Continental Shelf Case

This line of reasoning of the SS Lotus case was adopted by the International Court of Justice in the North Sea Continental Shelf case.

Where Denmark and Netherlands in their case against the Federal Republic of Germany for the delimitation of the continental shelf between them. The court found the absence of psychological element required for the creation of such a new rule. The court further said,

“there is no evidence that they acted because they felt legally compelled to draw them in this way because of a rule of customary law obliging them to do so - especially considering that they might have been motivated by other obvious factors”

Anglo Norwegian Fisheries Case

A rule will not be binding on states which have maintained its descent throughout the rules formative period. And in the Anglo Norwegian Fishery Case, the United Kingdom argued unsuccessfully that the ten-mile rule in the case of bay was an established principle of customary international law. The court, while rejecting this contention stated that even if it has required and authorities of general international law, "it would appear to be inapplicable as against Norway in as much as she has always opposed any attempt to apply it to the Norwegian Coast."

Jurisprudence And International Law

Let us now see the evolution of customary international law from the point of view of different jurists of law.

Austin

Austin overlooked customs in his theory. He gave no place to the judge-made law and treated international law as mere morality.

Reality Check

In reality law, society, morals and behavior are linked with each other. Considering only a sovereign making law backed by sanction limits the scope of the law, made by humans, for humans.

International law is a law made by nations, for nations, and for their proper functioning.

Many countries, who follow the theory of dualism, do not take international law very seriously, for them the international law is secondary to their constitution.

On the other hand, countries, who follow the theories of monism, treat international law and their constitution equally.

Bentham

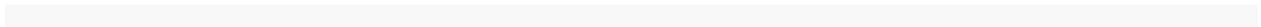
According to Bentham's theory of utilitarianism, a good law is a law which makes the maximum number of people happy and the minimum number of people unhappy.

If international law is making the maximum number of people happy that a country's constitution, which is only making its citizens happy, why should there be a conflict between the two? According to this theory, the international must be supreme in all cases.

Reality Check

The difference between the theories of monism and dualism boils down to morality.

But apart from morality, diversity makes everything beautiful. Just look at your self (a complex creature) and (a single cell organism).



“Beware of simple ideas and Simple Solutions. History is full of visionaries who used simple Utopian visions to justify terrible actions. Welcome complexity. Combine ideas. Compromise. Solve problems on a case by case basis.” – Hand Rosling

F K Von Savigny

Only a few points of Savigny, here I want to highlight.

One, Law develops like a language.

The term law in the above sentence refers to state law, what about international law? The evolution of international is not exactly like a language.

Customary international law might have been evolved as a language, local to particular places. However, international law made by sources other customs and treaties might not have been evolved as a language.

Two, Early development of law is spontaneous.

Law, which ever it is, evolves spontaneously in the beginning. International law is no exception.

Imagine, you and I meet in a jungle. We need to survive and fight wild animals and the cold climate. We will instantly make a few laws to suit our needs. Slowly, as time passes, the rate of development of the rules we made will slow down. I strongly recommend trying this experiment.

Three, Law is a continuous and unbreakable process.

After the rate of development of the rules might slow down in our Republic Of Jungle, but it will never stop. We will continue to make new rules according to our needs.

Hence, the theory of Savigny fits properly in the evolution of international law. Apart from his some criticism.

The evolution of customary international law was like the evolution of humankind, by natural selection. Now it is slowly starting to evolve by the evolution of intelligent design.

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Call For Educational Reforms In 2020

India needs drastic educational reforms. In the days of Hindu-Muslim, Cow cures cancer, etc. We need to promote logic and reasoning. This can only be done through schools. This can only be done with the help of a revolutionary educational policy by the State. The fundamental duties require us to have a scientific outlook towards life, unfortunately, the majority of us fails to do so. It is the time for the State to step in. This will be a brave new step, but it can not be overlooked because it is also the duty of the state to promote reason and logic.

Education must be without religion. Today you can find poems about God, entire stories of Mahabharata and Ramayana in school textbooks. Whether to be religious or not, should be our choice. Religion should not be imposed. Sadly religion is always imposed on us. There is no harm in being religious or believing in God. But there is a lot to lose if that belief is without reason and logic. There is a lot too loose if that turns into hatred towards other religions and beliefs.

From the early age, we need to teach our children different religious philosophies, not to make them a believer but to teach them that every religion teaches us the same basic principle, to be a good human. At the same time, Rationality should be a mandatory subject in our schools teaching our kids to think logically and to apply their own brain. There are a lot of better theories than "God created us". Our world could be a simulation, who knows. Let the students decide what they want to believe. Let the students realize themselves that the existence or the non-existence of God has little to no effect on our lives.

In 2020 and in the next decade religion needs to die. Otherwise, there won't be any sociological development of our race. Religion is a creation of our collective imagination. God exists but in our imagination. As of now, we have no evidence to know whether if there is any God outside our imagination.

What do we need? A better, peaceful, scientific future. And how we can achieve it? Through a good educational policy.

First, there has to be a strict separation between education and religion. If you teach religion in schools, make sure to teach all the religions and the similarities between them not their differences.

Second, a mandatory subject for everyone to learn rationality and logic.

Third, the history of human evolution must be taught to everyone, we need to learn who we are and how we got here. And why it is important to know who we are.

In the days of Hindu-Muslim and Cow cures cancer, we need to have more scientific and logical people. Because we need more scientific and logical people in Parliament, we need more scientific and logical people everywhere.

Citizenship Amendment Act, Threat To India's Secularism

What is the Citizenship Amendment Act, and why there is a nationwide protest against it?

The Citizenship Amendment Act gives Indian citizenship; to six non-Muslim religious refugees (Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Buddhist and Janis), from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who fled to India before December 31, 2014, to avoid religious persecution.

In simpler words, religious minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who fled to India because of religious persecution before a cut off date will be given Indian citizenship.

There are many questions which can be asked, for example, why only these three countries? Why only these six religions? And why a cut-off date? But the most important question, "Is Citizenship Amendment Act constitutionally valid?"

The opinion is mixed, many will say that the Citizenship Amendment Act is legally correct and many say that the Citizenship Amendment Act violates the principles of our constitution.

Let us start with the preamble of the Constitution. It declares that the Republic of India is a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. This means India as an ideology is supposed to be sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic and a republic country.

Now, does the Citizenship Amendment Act violates the principles mentioned in the preamble?

But first, let's understand what CAA aims to achieve and what's being left out.

An Act, for granting Indian citizenship to non-Muslims from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India before December 31, 2014, because of religious persecution or if they fear religious persecution.

Muslims are not included in this act. What about those who don't have any religion? The Act is silent. Maybe in the eyes of the Indian government, every human has a religion, if not two religions or no religion.

This act is clearly against the Constitutional fabric of India. It is clearly against the basic principles of the Indian ideology.

Article 11. Parliament to regulate the right of citizenship by law. Nothing in the foregoing provisions of this Part (Part 2 which deals with citizenship) shall derogate from the power of Parliament to

make any provision concerning the acquisition and termination of citizenship and all other matters relating to citizenship.

This provision allows the parliament to make any law for taking or granting Indian citizenship. Citizenship Amendment Act is because of Article 11.

Article 13. Laws inconsistent with fundamental rights.

This makes everything more interesting. According to this any law in force which is inconsistent with the fundamental rights are void. It also imposes a duty on the state that it should not make any law which is inconsistent with the fundamental rights.

If the Citizenship Amendment Act is inconsistent with any of the fundamental rights, as per Article 13 it is void.

Does the Citizenship Amendment Act violate any fundamental rights?

Article 14 talks about equality, equality before the law and equal protection of the law.

Article 14. Equality before law.

The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

If you read this you might think CAA is against Article 14, because it does not provide for equal treatment of the refugees. Some of them are more equal than others.

Article 14 is for everyone, even non-citizens. Every human being inside the Indian territory is entitled to equal protection of the law and equality before the law.

Equality before the law and equal protection of the law does not mean equal treatment to all. It guarantees similar treatment but not equal treatment. Article 14 is based on the principle of Reasonable Classification, equals must be treated equally and unequal must be treated differently.

Citizenship Amendment Act discriminates on the bases of religion by excluding Muslims.

Are Muslim illegal immigrants equal to non-Muslim illegal immigrants? Are Muslim refugees equal to non-Muslim refugees? Are immigrants equal to locals?

Everyone is entitled to equal treatment as humans, as all humans are equal as humans.

Muslim immigrant, legal or not, is equal to non-Muslim immigrant, legal or not. Allowing some communities the right to citizenship and excluding others is discriminatory and a violation of Article 14.

Even if the government tries to cover this up by claiming that the CAA is to give citizenship rights to religious minorities facing religious persecution.

Why not protect all the refugees coming from all the neighbouring countries facing religious persecution?

Restricting the CAA to just three countries is arbitrary when there is evidence of religious persecution in several neighbouring countries. Tamils in Sri Lanka and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, for example, face religious persecution and have taken refuge in India.

Apart from fundamental rights, CAA violates Human Rights and other international customary laws.

“To protect the human rights of refugees, in 1951, under the aegis of the United Nations, countries adopted a convention relating to the status of refugees (Refugee Convention), which was later amended by the 1967 Protocol. These two global legal instruments, now ratified by 145 countries, constitute the major international legal framework on the treatment of refugees globally. India is not a party to either the Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol.” – Prabhash Ranjan (Senior Assistant Professor, South Asian University’s Faculty of Legal Studies)

Citizenship should never be given on the bases of religion. All religions are equal, religious people are equal to non-religious people.

By explicitly not including Muslims, the state has reinforced the Hindutva's belief that India is the sacred land of Hindus, not of Muslims.

Religious discrimination hurts economic development. In July 2018, researchers from the Universities of Bristol (UK) and Tennessee (US) published a study, 'Religious change preceded economic change in the 20th century', clearly establishing the causal relationship between secularism and economic growth.

This is CAA in isolation. If we see CAA with NRC (National Register of Citizens) the situation becomes a nightmare for Muslims and poor of the country.

As of today, 60 petitions have filed in the Supreme Court of India challenging the Act, and the court has not yet put a stay on the law. The next hearing is on January 22, 2020.

As of today, we need more scientific and logical people in Parliament.

The views expressed are personal

The Case Against Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019

Do you know the terms “religion”, “minority”, “persecuted” are not used in the CAA? Then why do the government says that the CAA is to give Indian citizenship to the religious minority from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, facing persecution?

But first, we need to understand who is a migrant?

According to section 2 (1) (b) of the Citizenship Act, 1955 an illegal migrant means a foreigner who has entered into India-

(i) without a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf; or

(ii) with a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf, but remains therein beyond the permitted period;

With the enactment of Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 the following proviso has been added.

“Provided that any person belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian community from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, who entered into India on or before the 31st day of December 2014 and who has been exempted by the Central Government by or under clause © of sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 or from the application of the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 or any rule or order made thereunder, shall not be treated as illegal migrant for this Act;”

Here in this new definition, you will be struggling to find the terms “religion”, “minority”, or “persecuted” in it.

Saying that this is an Act for providing Indian citizenship to religious minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who fled to India to avoid religious persecution before a cut off date, is an interpretation.

The actual text does not say this, we imagine it. Law is not what is written, it is what we perceive it to be.

For example, Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. After 2018 the interpretation changed and now consensual sex between adults of the same gender is not a crime. But if you read the Section 377 before 2018 and after 2018, you will notice that there is no change it. The language is the same, the interpretation changed and that changed the law.

Is the Citizenship (Amendment) Act valid? If not, can we interpret in a way to make it valid?

The legality of Citizenship (Amendment) Act depends on how you interpret it. Let us see what happens when we do a strict interpretation of it?

In strict interpretation, we are not using our imagination, we say whatever is written, is the law. In that case, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is illegal. It violates Article 14 of the Constitution, by not treating every one of that same class equally. It is excluding Muslims and people with no faith.

But what if we do a liberal (imaginary) interpretation?

Let us assume the law is what the government is saying.

That means religious minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who fled to India because of religious persecution before a cut off date will be given Indian citizenship.

Which religious minorities? The Act says, six communities which will be considered as religious minorities, that is Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Buddhist and Janis. Again we do not see the people with no faith. Non-religious people are also considered as a religious minority and especially in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Therefore, it is violating Article 14 of the Constitution.

Why only Islamic countries, when we have ample evidence of religious persecution in other neighboring countries?

By only limiting the scope of this amendment to Islamic countries, when we have evidence of prosecution of minorities based on religion in other Non-Islamic countries is not against the Constitution. Of course, it is ethically wrong to do so. It is sending a very negative message to the world. But this issue can be solved by making another law for providing Indian citizenship to people from other countries too.

Why provide citizenship to only religious minorities facing religious prosecution?

The prosecution can be of many types, by only providing citizenship to people facing religious persecution is arbitrary. Moreover, a non-religious person can also face persecution, a Muslim in an Islamic country can face persecution.

What if we provide citizenship to only religious minorities? Again Article 14 will be violated because the Act is excluding non-religious people.

What if we provide citizenship to only prosecuted refugees? Again Article 14 will be violated because the Act is excluding non-religious people and Muslims.

No matter what is your religion, you can still be a victim of persecution because persecution can be of many types.

Is the Citizenship (Amendment) Act legal?

If you think that Citizenship (Amendment) Act is wise legislation and none of the objections raised on it is valid, because it is correcting a historical wrong by providing citizenship to religious minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who have fled and sought shelter in India on the accounts of religious prosecution.

Then you deny the existence of 16% of the world's population who consider themselves as non-religious.

Then you are deliberating limiting the scope of the Act to enforce the RSS's hardcore Hindutva belief and sending a strong message to the world that we do not want Muslims in our country.

Is the Citizenship (Amendment) Act legal? You decide.

Relationship Between Society And Law

A society consists of laws to govern itself. Every society has few internal laws to govern itself, but why? What happened in the history that our ancestors decided to have had laws in society?

Here I will explain how law and society are interlinked with the help of other sciences. I have established a link between law and society through morals and human behaviour. Now I will explain each link to establish a complete link between law and society.

Link 1: Society – Morals

To understand the relationship between society and morals, we need to understand what are morals and where do morals come from? After that, we will be able to understand how morals and linked with society.

What is morality? Morality is the best attempt of our brain to decide what is right and what is wrong. It is our terms and conditions, which helps us to survive in this social jungle.

Where does morality come from? There are three most common answers to this question.

Answer 1: Morality is innate, it is by birth and has been developed through the evolution of natural selection.

If morality is innate, then why it varies around the globe and through different periods?

Answer 2: Morality is a learned behaviour, kids learn what is wrong and what is right through harm.

If a child is harmed, they feel bad. From this, they learn that harming others is bad because the other person will feel bad.

Here are few examples, you have to decide whether the given situation is moral or immoral?

- “A family's dog was killed by a car in front of their house. They had heard that dog meat was delicious. So they cut up the dog's body and cooked it and ate it for dinner. Nobody saw them do this.”
- “A man goes to the supermarket once a week and buys a chicken. But before cooking the chicken he has sexual intercourse with it. Then he cooks it and eats it.”

What do you think? Was it right for the family to eat their own dog? Is having sexual intercourse with a dead chicken moral?

These situations contain no harm, but still, people will find this immoral. This shows that morality extends beyond harm.

Answer 3: Morality is a learned behaviour that goes beyond the understanding of harm.

This theory comes from Shweder, a psychological anthropologist who conducted a study, in which he interviewed a variety of people from USA and India. Shweder came up with thirty-nine short stories in which someone does something that would violate a rule either in the United States or India but with no direct harm to someone.

From this experiment, Shweder stated that morality extends beyond harm. And when morality goes beyond harm society plays a huge role.

This argument is further supported by Jonathan Haidt, a social and cultural psychologist. Haidt conducted a similar experiment in several different parts of the world, subjects ranging from different social backgrounds to different educational and economic levels.

Result? The moral domain varied across nations and social classes. Lower class groups moralized less than upper-class people. Children moralized more than adults.

Individualistic and educated cultures have a narrow moral domain. Sociocentric and less educated cultures have broader moral domains.

Your morals are a combination of natural selection, your childhood experiences of harm and fairness and your socialization. Morals and society are like two sides of a coin.

Morality depends upon society, morality controls our behaviour.

Link 2: Morals – Behavior

People behave differently. Differences in their behaviour correlate to different moral values they hold.

We can understand this by observing society. You will find cultures where children call their parents by their names. There are cultures in which children call their parents by other, respectful adjectives. In Indian cities, wife calls her husband by his name. In Indian villages, the wife does not call her husband by his name.

Link 3: Morals – Law

Morals are a major source of laws. This is an undisputed fact. Different nations have many laws based on the morals of their society.

Indian laws of marriage are based on customs. Customs is repeated behaviour. Behaviours are guided by morals (see link 2).

In my opinion, in the next million years, there will be no laws, everything will be governed by our morals.

Take Delhi Metro, for example, the announcements within the train vary from what the next station is to-dos and don't in the train, do not spit in the train, do not sit on the floor of the train, etc. On the other hand, in Montreal Metro, the announcements are limited to the name of the next station.

There are no announcements in Montreal Metro deterring the commuters, not to spit in the train or to face punishment.

The reason for this, no Canadian spit in the train or sit on the floor of the train, but Indians do. Canadian society is more sociologically advance than Indian society.

As a society get sociologically advance with time, their reliance on laws will reduce. The daily actions of sociologically advanced people will be governed by their sociologically advanced morals. The current example is the difference announcements in Delhi Metro and Montreal Metro. An example in the next million years could be, a nation with no laws to deter murder, because their killing of another human by a human is not permitted by their morals. And there could be a less sociologically advanced nation with a law to deter murder.

However, there is a flaw in this hypothesis. In link 1 I mentioned that in individualistic and educated societies moral domain is narrower. And here in this hypothesis, I say that sociologically advance society, that means more educated one, will have a wide moral domain, so wide that entire legal system will be covered my morals.

Link 4: Behavior – Law

Till now I have established links between society and morals, morals and behaviour and between morals and law. Now the fourth link is between behaviour and law.

To understand the application of the law to a greater degree and to find flaws in its application, we need to have a better understanding of our psychology, and human nature.

Any shortcoming in our understanding of human behaviour and human psychology can have a huge negative impact on our legal system.

And yes, there are many shortcomings in our understanding of human nature and human psychology, and due to which there are many flaws in our legal system.

Our legal system is based on some flaws.

In the case Ginnah Muhammad vs Enterprise Rent-A-Car (2006)

On October 11, 2006, forty-year-old Ginnah Muhammad brought suit against Enterprise Rent-A-Car seeking relief for \$2,750 in assessed damages to a rental car, damages she claimed were caused by thieves. Rather than discussing her claims, however, the court focused on her outfit. She was wearing a niqab, worn by some devout Muslim women, covering the head and face except the eyes.

Ginnah Muhammad was asked by the judge to remove her veil. Ginnah Muhammad refused to uncover her face as her faith does not allow to uncover her face in front of a male member. She said that she has no issues to uncover her face if there was a female judge and requested a female judge. The judge dismissed the case.

Presiding Judge Paul Paruk dismissed her case and gave the following reasoning:

“I can't see your face and I can't tell whether you're telling me the truth or not and I can't see certain things about your demeanour and temperament that I need to see in a court of law.”

The judge thought that he could not fairly adjudicate a disagreement between two parties when he could not see one of them.

Our legal system is based on this myth. Our daily interactions with each other are based on this myth.

We think if someone is not making eye contact while talking, they may be lying. They may be lying, but this is not always true. Some people will not make eye contact and tell the truth, some will make eye contact and lie. Mismatched personalities are wrongfully convicted due to this myth in our legal system.

In a study conducted by economists, computer scientists and bail experts in New York City, they gathered 5,54,689 records of defendants brought before the court of law for granting bail. Out of which human judges released around 4,00,000 when compared it with an artificial intelligence software created by the researchers, the people were on the AI's list were 25% less likely to commit any a crime when on bail.

The machine flagged only 1% of defendants as “high risk” individuals to commit a crime when out on bail.

25% is a huge number. Why did human judges under-performed the AI judge? Human judges were able to see both the parties, their expressions, their demeanour but still, they were not able to beat a machine who only rely on the information entered in it.

Is this gap of 25% due to our myths in our legal system? Accordind to Sendhil Mullainathan (the economist from the above mentioned study) it is.

To mitigate these problems, we need to first mitigate these myths from the legal system. To achieve this the judges must have a basic understanding of human behaviour.

Studying law in isolation will only lead to grave issues in our legal system. We need to study law with other subjects like sociology, psychology, morals, history, etc. And this is how law and society are interlinked. They are two sides of the same coin.

In sum

To establish a link between law and society I started by explaining how morals are based on our society. Our socialization affects our morals principles. [link 1] Then I explained how morals influence our behaviour in society. [link 2] Further, I discussed issues arising in our legal system due to our behaviour. [link 4]

Morality is a learned behaviour, we learn moral principles from our society. Those moral principles control our behaviour in society. That behaviour can sometimes fool us into believing a few myths, which create problems in our legal system.

Law and society are two sides on a single coin. One without another is incomplete and a recipe for disaster.

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The Future Of Lawmaking And Governance

Probably the craziest ideas ever:

This all started with the idea to make my own laws. Elon Musk has created his own school for his children because he did not like the traditional way of teaching. Similarly, if you don't appreciate your current laws, why not make your own laws just like Elon made his own school?

You might think that it is impossible to make our own laws. You may be right, but I came up with three different ways by which we can achieve this.

In India, we have different personal laws for different groups of people based on their religions. A Muslim is governed by Muslim personal law, a Hindu is governed by Hindu personal law, etc. There is no uniform civil law in India. Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is an ongoing debate within Indian mandate to replace personal laws based on the scriptures and customs of each major religious community in India with a common set of rules governing every citizen. UCC has been a proposal even before the independence of the Republic of India.

I support the Uniform Civil Code, I want every single Indian citizen to be governed with a common set of rules which are secular in nature and treat everyone with equal dignity and freedom.

But in 2015 the Supreme Court of India said that the UCC cannot be accepted, otherwise, every religion will say it has a right to decide various issues as a matter of its personal laws. In 2018 The Law Commission of India said, "the UCC is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage."

Also, an average Indian is not comfortable with the idea to have laws which are non-religious in nature. But at the same time, there are many people in India who want laws which are based on pure logic and reasoning rather laws which are based on outdated religious scriptures and customs.

The first way to make your own laws.

Here in India we already have different personal laws, why not have another set of laws for those who want to be governed by the laws which are not based on their old customs and traditions?

Why not create a community and demand for our own laws? Personal laws in India are divided by religion. My idea is to make a community for everyone who chooses to be governed by a common set of rules which doesn't discriminate anyone by their religion.

The main idea is to remove old customs from our laws. But unfortunately, we can't do that in India very easily. But what we can do is to make our own laws void of old customs and traditions.

If we manage to unite people with similar views, we can demand separate laws from the government.

If we can't have a uniform law why not let the people decide what they want?

And in this digital age internet will play a major role.

The second way to make your own laws

If all the humans with similar views are able to unite and demand change, but the government chooses not to acknowledge our demands, why not make our own government? Why not make our own country?

At this point, you will be thinking that this is indeed the craziest idea ever. But hold it right there, the craziest part is yet to come.

I agree, demanding our own nation is utterly stupid and no reasonable human will think it is possible. I also know that this isn't a reasonable demand and the Indian government won't even reply to my email if I email them with this demand.

What if a drunk politician accidentally grants us permission to make our own nation. Beside some political outrage and public revolt, nobody is going to move into our newly formed nation (and move outside if they want to). But we all know that this isn't possible, so let's remove this possibility.

The idea to create a nation is indeed a stupid idea, but the idea to create an online nation isn't.

You surely can't create your physical nation with actual land. But you can create your own nation, online. With no physical land, no borders, no army, no police, no infrastructure, without a welfare state, etc.

An online nation might seem to be an extremely stupid idea, more stupid than demanding your own physical country. But who knows this might be the next political ideology of the future.

An online nation is like creating an online community of like-minded people, aliens, animals and computer AI's. But this is more than an online community. An online nation will give immense freedom to its citizens. A citizen of an online nation can reside anywhere on the planet. The world will be a border-less society.

If this happens in the future there will be many nations on our servers made by like-minded humans or aliens or your dog. Every nation might have different laws according to their needs and belief, some might still be governing their citizens by their old customs and traditions.

As per 2019, this sounds like science fiction. But this might be the next political revolution. Why not start by creating a website for our online nation, let the users buy our citizenship. We can add a draft constitution and a draft of our civil laws on our website for future citizens to know what we stand for.

We want to create a nation for those who chose to be governed by a common set of rules made with pure logic and void of outdated customs.

Who knows we might start issuing our passport to our citizens. (Literally not possible in the next 50 years)

The number one problem we will face if this becomes a reality is going to determine how to make a uniform criminal law? And that too online?

The third way to make your own laws

This again seems impossible in 2019 but will be the future soon in the next 10 to 20 years.

With the advancement in artificial intelligence and machine learning, it is hard to ignore the fact that automation will soon take over our jobs and it will be able to perform those functions much better than humans.

Lawmakers, judges, lawyers and everyone else in the legal field will soon be unemployed. AI will soon be in our courtrooms providing justice. You might hire a robotic lawyer to represent yourself in the court of law.

AI taking over the judiciary will be one of the greatest things achieved in the 21st century. A lot of people will lose their jobs but all those cases pending in our courts will be dealt away as soon as possible. Justice will be served with no delay. And if you are worried about those who will lose their jobs then don't worry, they will soon find new jobs, created due to automation.

Automation of judiciary seems an amazing business opportunity for a hardcore capitalist.

All we want to do is to make an infrastructure which can support automation of judiciary.

Start by building courts all around the country and install the machines to replace the lawyers and the judges. Or do it all online. Pitch this idea to the government and ask them to privatize the judiciary. Let the private companies take over the role of the judiciary. Or if they don't privatize it, provide the government with your infrastructure and help everyone access affordable and fast justice.

Sounds impossible but this can be achieved if done properly.

If you manage to create a system like this, if you control the judiciary it won't take much longer to start making your own laws.

But this too comes with difficulties to overcome. Why would any government privatize its judiciary? And what could happen if a private company controls the judiciary functions of the state? What would happen if a company has a monopoly over the judiciary?

Does this sound like a future in which justice will be served without any discrimination and without any delay or does this sounds like a future in which only the rich and the powerful will control the whole world?

All the above-mentioned three ways to make your own laws are interlinked. One can lead to another.

This could end up being the next big thing of the 21st century, a new political ideology with online state and private owned judiciary and legal system.

It is very much likely to have this kind of governance in the future, which not only exists in our imaginations but in our computer servers too.

Archive

Archived Blogs.

Why does anything exist at all?

At the moment of the Big Bang, the incredibly hot, impossibly dense mass known as the universe exploded to create every particle of matter that now surrounds us.

Here's the problem: The way physicists understand it, the processes that formed those first particles should have produced an equal number of antiparticles, thereby annihilating all matter and effectively cancelling everything out.

So according to physics, the universe shouldn't exist. But the universe does exist and this has left physicists scratching their heads for decades trying to answer this most basic question: Why does anything exist at all?

The Big Bang should have created equal amounts of matter and antimatter in the early universe. But today, everything we see from the smallest life forms on Earth to the largest stellar objects is made almost entirely of matter. Comparatively, there is not much antimatter to be found. Something must have happened to tip the balance. Why do we see an asymmetry between matter and antimatter?

Antimatter particles share the same mass as their matter counterparts, but qualities such as electric charge are opposite. The positively charged positron, for example, is the antiparticle to the negatively charged electron.

It is a mathematical theorem that every type of particle has a corresponding anti-particle, with exactly the same mass. Actually, it's not just a theorem: for all known particles the antiparticle has been observed experimentally, so we don't need to have a debate about it. Matter and antimatter particles are always produced as a pair and, if they come in contact, annihilate one another, leaving behind pure energy.

During the first fractions of a second of the Big Bang, the hot and dense universe was buzzing with particle-antiparticle pairs popping in and out of existence. If matter and antimatter are created and destroyed together, it seems the universe should contain nothing but leftover energy.

CERN explains this using a coin analogy: Consider a coin spinning on a table. It can land on its heads or its tails, but it cannot be defined as "heads" or "tails" until it stops spinning and falls to one side. A coin has a 50-50 chance of landing

on its head or its tail, so if enough coins are spun in exactly the same way, half should land on heads and the other half on tails. In the same way, half of the oscillating particles in the early universe should have decayed as matter and the other half as antimatter.

However, if a special kind of marble rolled across a table of spinning coins and caused every coin it hit to land on its head, it would disrupt the whole system. There would be more heads than tails. In the same way, some unknown mechanism could have interfered with the oscillating particles to cause a slight majority of them to decay as matter.

But not always, try to spin a coin a hundred times. Count the outcome. Having 50 Heads and 50 Tails are very less likely to happen. Therefore, the mysterious force which disrupted the whole system and created more matter than anti-matter doesn't have to exist. As having more matter than anti-matter is completely natural.

What if it isn't natural and the universe is nothing else just some leftover pure energy? What if the universe we know doesn't exist at all?

Think of this as your noise-cancelling headphone. To cancel out the noise, the headphone creates an equal and opposite noise. And we as an observer doesn't hear that noise anymore. But that noise and that anti-noise still exist, as an observer, we fail to hear that as the noise and the anti-noise cancel out each other. Maybe the universe doesn't exist at all for an observer who is not a part of this universe.

We can interact with this universe as we are a part of this universe. For us, the universe exists but for someone who is not a part of this universe, there is no universe, just some leftover pure energy.

These are just my thoughts, who knows what's real and what's not. I may be wrong!

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Virtual Immortality

There is a chance that we are living in a simulated universe. If that is true, what if that simulation is an extremely advanced video game? And we are a character in that game with predefined actions? We act in a way in which are coded by the creator of this game of life.

And if this is a game, there must be some number of lives we have to live. What if we have an unlimited number of lives? What if we never die, until we complete the mission?

This is only possible if we are in a simulated universe, if this is a real universe, we may never be immortal without the help of medical science. But we don't know this yet whether we are in a simulated universe or not, because we cannot differentiate between the two. This may be a simulated universe, but it seems real to us.

“There is a one in a billion chance that this is base reality” -Elon Musk

Coming back to the game analogy, if we are in an extremely advance video game, with unlimited lives.

Am I the only one who is immortal? Or we are all immortals? If we all are immortals, why do people die? I never died before, perhaps I am immortal. But the idea that only one or few of us are immortal seems rather bizarre. How is this possible? Or it isn't? We don't know that yet.

But what if this is an extremely advanced video game, and I am the only conscious character in it, or I am the only main character being controlled by someone, possibly the gamer.

Does this sound possible? Nobody knows that. Because your attempt to disprove this might be due to the algorithm governing our actions.

You say, “I am real and a conscious being” because you are programmed to say that.

You say, “I am real, and you are not, you are acting in a particular way because you are programmed to do so” because you are programmed to say that.

This assumption may be wrong or incomplete, but what if it isn't? What if I am actually the main character or an only conscious character in this extremely advance video game with unlimited lives?

Now does that make me immortal? Does this mean I can never be killed? Or does this means if I die, I can respawn to the last saved checkpoint?

If I die and respawn at the last saved checkpoint, will I remember I died? Will I know that I respawned?

For this to be proved I need to kill myself and wait to be respawned again. But I won't be able to prove this if I don't remember that I died and respawned. What if this isn't a video game? What if there are no unlimited lives in this game? What if I am not immortal? And what if this is the base reality?

This again leaves us in a situation will never be proved or disproved.

Killing yourself to prove this is not a good idea because we are not sure, or I should say that I am not sure, that whether this is a simulated video game or not.

Considering all the possible outcomes and probabilities, from the best of my knowledge, I came up with a number. I calculated that there is a 4.1666666667% chance we are immortals or at least I am immortal.

As I doubt my mathematical skills, I have reasons to believe that this number is inaccurate. As we consider more and more factors, this number will change, most probably it will further decrease our chances (or my chances) of being immortal(s).

Here how I came up with is number:

Philosopher Nick Bostrom in his research paper "Are You Living In A Computer Simulation?", said that there is a 20% chance that we are in a simulation.

On the other hand, Elon Musk says that the chances that we are in a computer simulation are much higher.

Nick Bostrom in this paper argues that one of the following propositions is true:

1. The human species is very likely to go extinct before reaching a post human stage.
2. Any post human civilization is extremely likely to run a significant number of simulations.
3. We are most certainly living in a computer simulation.

From this, I have given all the three possibilities an equal chance to be true. That is $1/3$. Therefore, there is a 33.33% chance that we are living in a computer simulation.

Further, the idea that we are in an extremely advanced video game is only possible if we are in a computer simulation.

- We are in an advanced video game.
- We are not in an advanced video game.

That is, there is a 50% chance that we are in a video game if this is a simulation.

Now I further divided the idea of being in a video game into two possible outcomes.

- We have one life.
- We have more than one lives.

If we have more than one life, there are again two possibilities.

- We have unlimited lives.
- We don't have unlimited lives.

If we have unlimited lives, then we are virtually immortal.

From the above assumptions, I made few calculations, $(1/3)(1/2)(1/2)(1/2)(100) = (1/24)*(100) = 4.16666666667\%$

Hence, there is a 4.16666666667% chance that we are virtually immortals or at least I am virtually immortal.

To Infinity And Beyond: A Thought Experiment

Disclaimer: This article is based on pseudoscience. LOL

Infinity is a concept describing something without any bound, like natural numbers which are never-ending.

But, is it even possible to have something which never ends?

In reality, there isn't anything which is infinite. We say that the universe is infinite, but we aren't sure about it. In our collective imaginations, we tend to believe that natural numbers are infinite. Add +1, and you will get a new number never seen before.

Anything which traps itself into an infinite loop of repetition destroys itself.

An audio system with a microphone and a speaker crashes if it is trapped inside an infinite loop of energy, going through the microphone in a form of sound and coming out, amplified, from the speaker in a form of sound. The cycle continuous till the system has collapsed.

Infinite loops are not stable and thus cannot exist.

Counting to infinity: An infinite loop

If you try to count till infinity, though we know we will never reach the end, all we need is a +1. If we try this we will end in an infinite loop of addition, which will be unstable to exist. But, how human imagination can be unstable? As numbers and concept of addition is a result of our collective imagination?

The laziness syndrome

If it doesn't exist on the first page of the Google it doesn't exist at all. Similarly, if we aren't able to count until the end of the number line then it doesn't have an end.

The reason why we say that the universe is infinite is that we aren't able to reach till the end.

It is an assumption, similarly the never-ending numbers are an assumption too.

Some infinities are bigger than other infinities

Natural numbers are infinite. 1,2,3,4..... There are infinite numbers between 1 and 2, between 1.1 and 1.2, between 1.11 and 1.12, etc. Infinity is finite wrt time The passage of time proves that there is no such thing as infinity. Again this is a thought experiment. Time exists because the world is finite. Imagine a clock. Ticking.

For every hour to complete, a smaller unit than an hour has to complete its cycle. A minute. For every minute to complete, a smaller unit than a minute has to complete its cycle. A second. Similarly, second has a smaller unit and its smaller unit has a further smaller unit. If this same trend continues till the infinity, then the time will never move forward. If the seconds' cycle won't complete the minutes' cycle will not be able to complete and hence the hours won't increase and it will result in the stagnation of time.

In reality, time is moving forward. Hence, this might prove according to the above thought experiment that there is no such thing as infinity. For time to move forward, it is necessary to exist a last smallest unit of time, which will complete its cycle independently.

Scepticism:

Natural numbers and the concept of addition are our collective imagination and anything is possible in our imagination.

The concept of time is also a part of our collective imagination.

Time and concept of infinity are not related and hence doesn't make any sense to relate them.

It is not logical as it is just a collection of vague statements. Infinity is not a number.

Appreciate Your Existence

What's the purpose of my life?

Do I matter?

Is my existence making any difference? What would happen if I was never born?

If you have asked yourself these questions then you are no different. We all do.

Sometimes in self-doubt. Sometimes when we are at our all-time low. And sometimes just to imagine a world without oneself.

The idea behind the importance of one's presence is quite unsettling. Think about it; You, a human or an alien (if on earth), you are 1 in 7+ billion. That's a huge number.

It is normal to think that you are just wasting earth's resources and doing nothing.

You know what, you are right, you don't matter. You don't matter at all.

Removing you from that 7+ billion people won't make any difference.

But if this true, this also means the most famous, respected, successful person in this world doesn't matter too. And that's right also.

Nobody matter in this world, your existence doesn't make any difference.

Now you might ask what's the meaning of this life and end up reading articles which say;

"Birth is God's way of saying that you matter"

And that's absolute nonsense. Don't involve God because we are humans (or aliens), we can solve our own problems.

All we have to do is to change the way we see our lives.

We don't matter if you see the whole picture, the whole universe. Nobody can see us not even God in this vast universe.

But if you see yourself on a smaller scale, only you and those who you love and care. You will start to realize that you matter, not to those sitting in the different corner of the universe, but to those who you love and care and to those who love you unconditionally.

You will know your worth when you imagine removing yourself from the lives of your family and friends.

The pain they suffer without you tells your worth.

Nobody matters until you see the world differently.

Challenge Yourself

You probably wake up in the morning, do your breakfast, go to work, have lunch, come back home, spend some time with your family and friends and in the end go back to sleep.

If you're able to relate to that then you're probably living your life on autopilot. That means you don't control your life, your life is just passing in front of your eyes, and you are not interested in changing that because it might be challenging to step out of your comfort zone and into the unknown world. You are happy living inside your comfort zone because it is, indeed, comfortable. There are no challenges, and you don't have to fear anything.

Think again, are you really happy living that kind of life. We all have a role model in our life who does all sorts of amazing and crazy stuff, and you feel like they are living their best life. You want to be like them, but you can't because you are scared to challenge yourself.

Comfort is your biggest enemy, do something different, every day. Do something which makes you uncomfortable.

Grab a pen, create a list of things which makes you uncomfortable, things you are scared to do. Do it now!

Are you scared of public embarrassment? Then embarrass yourself in public.

Are you scared to talk to strangers? Go out and talk.

You need to step out of your comfort zone and face your fear.

"The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek" -Joseph Campbell

We fear what is unknown, and we assume that unknown is dangerous, it is but not always. Mostly it isn't. All we have to do is to explore that unknown.

I know that is not easy. I have been in similar situations too and its freaking spine-chilling.

But that feeling, that lies on the other side of your fear is the best feeling you can ever experience in your life.

If you are still confused, you don't know what to do and how to overcome your fear, just remember the challenge is to challenge yourself.

You can do it by simply putting yourself in an uncomfortable position. For starters, you don't need to dance in the public when you can make yourself uncomfortable by just changing your computer's operating system and exploring something new.

All you need to do is to do something challenging every day and slowly making a departure into the unknown side and experience the adventure it holds for you.

How driving made me a better person

How driving changed me learning to drive was an amazing experience for me. Not only I learned how to drive and go from point A to point B, but I also became a responsible citizen.

When I started driving I learned what other drivers would feel when I jaywalk. Jaywalking in India is quite common, everybody does it, and they don't have any other choice. (Observe the Indian roads to know why)

I stopped jaywalking, and also I started to drive slowly near potential jaywalking zones. I do sometimes jaywalk, otherwise, you won't be able to cross the road. Driving taught me to respect others. You are not alone on the roads, roads are common property, and we need to share it with other vehicles as well as with other pedestrians. Following the rules. If you follow the traffic rules, you probably a responsible citizen, or you might be just scared of the law or the cops giving you a ticket.

Who are you when no one is watching? You are at your best self when no one is watching.

The more I drive, the more my driving improves and the more I became a responsible person.

Driving fast is fun. I do it many times, don't tell my mum. Driving within the speed limit is even more fun. When you drive slow, within the speed limit, you appreciate your surroundings, some alone time if you drive alone, listen to the radio more carefully and understand that song playing more better. When you drive fast your brain is concentrating only on driving. And it won't cost your life or someone else's life if you daydream while driving, but please don't daydream while driving.

Driving taught me to be more patient, to stay calm, to be punctual.

When you drive slow; you leave early and eventually develop a habit of being on the time.

Also, I realized that no one is perfect, I'm not perfect and the other person behind you in a big SUV isn't perfect either. Humans are stupid beings, so don't worry when your car accidentally stops in between and don't panic when that guy in a big car behind you starts honking because you stopped.

Just remember, "That person is stupid, they will honk at your stupidity". After understanding this you will also understand not to honk at the person ahead of you whose car accidentally stopped due to their stupidity. Just stay calm, be patient and enjoy the fact that you are not being stupid

anymore.

Whether you follow the traffic rules or not tells a lot about your attitude towards society and your own self-control.

Drive safe :)