

# Essay

Genocide begins with the killing of one man - not for what he has done, but because of who he is.

## Outline:

### 1. Introduction

- i. Thesis Statement: The heinous crime like genocide is deeply rooted in the prejudice and abhorrence towards a particular nation, group or ethnicity, indicating the bigotry and racial mindset of the perpetrators. Its beginning is very small but culminates into mass slaughter and persecution of individuals.

### 2. Deciphering the underlying meaning of statement

### 3. Psychological basis of a genocide

- i. o "US" vs "Them" Narrative

ii ○ The perceived divide between the West and the rest

Case in point: "Orientalism" by Edward Saïed

#### 4. Cultural and Civilizational clash as a basis of genocide

Case in point: "Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order" by Samuel P. Huntington

#### 5. Islamophobia and genocide

Case in point: Mass slaughter of Rohingya Muslims and Ughur Muslims

#### 6. Historical instances pointing towards the statement

Case in point: The Holocaust

Case in point: The Genocide in Rwanda

Case in point: The Genocide in Darfur

#### 7. Possible remedial mea-

## Measures to tackle the ominous trend

i Strengthening the International bodies like UNGA, ICJ and UNSC

ii Awareness and tolerance through media and literature.

## 8. Conclusion

"Fact of genocide is as old as humanity" Jean Paul Sartre. Genocide has a long history, infact it was started by son of Adam against other son of Adam. Genocide is intended to signify a coordinated plan of actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of a national group with the aim of annihilating that group. As man is by nature selfish, nasty and brutish described by famous contractual philosopher Thomas Hobbes, he only pertains to achieve the selfish ends. Genocide is a widespread phenomenon and almost every nation is prone to this unwelcome occurrence. "Genocide begins with the killing of one man - not because what he has done, but because of who he is" is a

intricately interwoven statement by Nobel Laureate Kofi Annan. It is multifaceted, all encompassing and diverse but fathomable statement in which the cosmopolitan nature and the causes of genocide are exquisitely portrayed. Genocide is the result of ethnic, racial, religious and ideological conflict. Many questionable acts have been exercised by powerful nations against less powerful and subservient groups or nations only because they belong to different race, ethnicity, creed or religion. The heinous crime like genocide is deeply rooted in the prejudice and abhorrence towards a particular nation, group or ethnicity, indicating the bigotry and racial mindset of the perpetrators. Its beginning is very small but culminates rapidly into mass slaughter and persecution of individuals as happened in <sup>the</sup> past i.e., The Holocaust, The Rwandan Genocide, The Genocide of Darfur etc. As international community is making effort to contain this looming threat i.e., The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, there is still need to nip the evil in the bud that requires global cooperation.

Genocide is actually an umbrella term that have strong roots in hatred, despise and contempt for all those who belong to other race, ethnicity or culture. Genocide has various basis, but it always stems from cultural, racial, religious or ethnic differences. Whatever may be the actual reason behind it, genocide ultimately converges on the same foundation. There is also a psychological basis of a genocide. Mainly the atrocities are committed due to perceived superiority complex. Historically, more violence is carried out by the white people who are considered the advocates of peace and decency, than the so called uncivilized Eastern people. They always consider Eastern people as illiterate, unethical and uncultured. "Us" vs "Them" narrative is often used by them. They consider only the white people to be regarded and treated as human beings while others to be dealt with iron hands. It is the reason that immigration laws are made stringent by those coming under the domain of "Us" against those unlucky people who come under the ambit of "Them". Their superior mindset is vividly presented through

their chanted phrase **White man's burden**. They consider that <sup>the</sup> people who belong to "Them" category are uneducated and it's the duty of <sup>the</sup> white people to educate them, hence the onus comes on the white people. They have made a perceived distinction between the West and the rest. This superiority complex or sense of being distinguished and distinctive people is what propels them to commit unpardonable crimes. This narrative has been powerfully described by Edward Said in his book "Orientalism" in which he has compellingly built the opinion that <sup>the</sup> Eastern people are considered "uncivilized, unethical and exotic" by the Western people. He also laid a great emphasis on the image of the Eastern people in the minds of the Western people. He was of the view that this negative, exasperated and fanatic image of the Eastern people is what ignites more despicable reactions from the Westerners. It is the reason that immigrants in the Western countries are often seen through sceptical lens and are subjected to suspicion. It is also the reason that all the economic flaws are considered as the

fault of immigrants in the Western countries. Furthermore, genocide is not only carried out on the basis of psychological superiority but also exercised on the basis of cultural and civilizational clash. Many people in the modern world, impulsive and restless, are becoming intolerant towards the cultures and civilization of others. Modern era of globalization and technology owe much to ideas, and it is the reason that emerging clashes would be the clashes of ideas and beliefs rather than traditional ones i.e., economic or political. This concept has been explained by Samuel P. Huntington in his book "Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order." He said that it is the trend of yore that nations or groups used to fight over political and economical causes, modern clashes would be the clashes of ideas. As people have developed different cognitive abilities, owing to <sup>the</sup> acquisition of knowledge and leaps made in the field of science and technology, there exists a myriad of unique and distinguished ideas. Everyone considers his/her idea to be irrefutable, and it is the reason that Huntington considered that the

modern clashes would be of ideas. Another reason that has and is the potent source of genocide is Islamophobia. It is the deep and ingrained hatred against the Muslims that give the carte blanche to the Westerners to carry out massive killings of different sects of Muslims. As they have made an aggressive and negative image of Muslims in their minds, they consider it appropriate to kill them even if they are helpless and innocent. This trend has become vogue, particularly after 9/11 incident. Genocide has been carried out against Muslims and the numbers are still counting in the places like China and Myanmar. In China, millions of people have been killed only because they are Muslims. Similarly, in Myanmar, these types of crimes are committed against empty handed and hapless Muslims only and solely on the basis of their religion. Rohingya Muslims as well as Ughur Muslims are the victims of the perpetual violence only on the basis of "who they are."

Moreover, there are many historical instances that portray a bleak picture



of humanity in which people are seen brutally murdered, dehumanizingly exterminated and ruthlessly targeted. One of the many incidents that are the evidences of the cruel nature of human beings is the notorious Holocaust. Holocaust is deeply and unremittingly based on the essence of every genocide i.e., anti-racial and anti-cultural hatred. It is the most vicious incident in the history of mankind. Atrocities of unimaginable kind were executed on the large scale when about six million Jews were slaughtered, killed and exterminated by Nazis. This most abominable act was carried out by Hitler. It was the same anti-racial basis that became the reason of genocide. Many people were sent to ghettos and extermination camps. Another genocide carried out in the history was the Rwandan Genocide in which approximately 8 lac people were killed. It started with the clashes between Hutu militias, named Interhamwe, and the Tutsis groups. Hutu militias killed 8 lac people of Tutsis group. State radio further encouraged the killings by broadcasting non-stop

hate, propaganda and even pinpointed the locations of Tulsis, in hiding. No less brutalities were employed during genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There were three main groups living in Bosnia - The Serbs, Croats and Muslims. In the 1980's a Serbian named Slobadan Milasevic came to power. In 1992, acts of ethnic cleansing started in Bosnia. Muslims were murdered relentlessly in the cold blood. In this wake, over 2lac Muslims were murdered and 20lac became refugees. Similar kinds of crimes were committed in Darfur. Since Feb 2003, government sponsored militias called Janjaweed did massive crackdown against minorities. Approximately 2lac people fled across border to Chad and 4lac people died. These militias were in majority.. that's why they started the campaign of ethnic cleansing. As similar thing happened in the Cambodian Genocide, from (1975-1979) Pol Pot led the Khmer Rouge political party in a reign of violence, fear and brutality in Cambodia. An attempt to form a Communist peasant farming society resulted in deaths of 25% of the population from starvation, overwork and executions. By 1975, the US had withdrawn its troops from

Vietnam, and Cambodia lost its American military support. Pol Pot's party seized control of Cambodia. Inspired by Mao's cultural revolution in Communist China, Pol Pot attempted to purify Cambodia of Western culture, city life and religion. The common slogan of his party was "What is rotten must be removed"

Genocide aims at complete destruction of victims. It even destroys the culture of rival groups. As hatred and immense abhorrence sprouts from difference, they try to eradicate that difference. In this way, cultures are lost. As famous Polish legal jurist Laskin said:

"The world represents only so much culture and intellectual vigor as are created by its component national groups." and "The destruction of a nation, therefore, results in the loss of its future contributions in the world." It not only causes human destruction but deprives the world of genuine art, literature and intellect that would have been created and contributed by those unfortunate people. These hostilities and brutalities could be addressed by strengthening the international bodies like UNSC, UNGA and ICJ. International

law should be fortified and made to be followed in the true sense. It exists to maintain peace and order in the world, but it is far behind in its scope. This scourge of genocide could only be controlled by a resilient international system. Furthermore, awareness and tolerance for different and diverse cultures should be inculcated in the minds of people. People should be tolerant against other races, ethnicities and cultures. In this domain, media and literature can play their part. Only that type of literature and media should be propagated that can ingrain mutual love and affection rather than spreading misinformation and hate-speech.

As no country is immune from genocide, it is the duty of everyone to prevent the nations from it. As it is deeply rooted in the hostility and hatred for other nations, groups or ethnicities, this hatred and abhorrence should be eliminated at the earliest stages. It also stems from "Us" vs "Them" narrative, and the perceived divide between the West and the rest. The colonial mindset of western nations is also playing its part. Cultural and civiliz.

ational clashes are rampant in the modern era. Where previous were fought due to economic and political skirmishes, new wars would be probably fought due to clash of ideas. As it is elicited by Samuel P. Huntington. Another reason is Islamophobia. It is contributing to the deprivation of muslims living in the muslim minority countries. as in case of Rohingya muslims and Ughur Muslims. Historical instances are also pointing towards the Nobel Laureate's statement that genocide is exercised on the basis of identities rather than their misdeeds. Many innocents lives are lost and had last in the past due to this inhumane behavior. As happened in Holocaust in which anti-Semitism was a trigger and similarly in the Rwanda. This could be prevented by strengthening international bodies like UN General Assembly, UN Security Council and International court of Justice. Awareness and tolerance through media and literature should also be employed as a method to end this crime of crimes. International community is making leaps in this regard indicating that this problem could be addressed.