



Thoughts of the Masses

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Abstract— For our survey, we need to look into the background and the pretext of why and how the war started. All the events that happen before and/or during the war greatly affect the people's opinion. Therefore, to understand and analyze the people's opinions we need to closely look into the events that took place during the war. Here we discussed the background of the war based on 3 aspects namely, why did the war broke out in the first place, the major events that took place during the war, and the situation in which India was put during the war all the while also discussing the decision that the government of India took during the war.

For our survey, we have relied on google forms. As google forms is are a widely used platform that collects the data in an analytical form i.e., providing results in form of pie charts and graphs making it easier for the surveyor to analyze the data. According to the latest condition of the war, Ukrainian forces retook large areas around Kyiv in early April after Russia abandoned its push towards Kyiv, But the situation and the decisions made by each side have certainly affected people's opinion in the month of April and May. Therefore, we have decided to collect the people's opinions on the war and its implication at regular intervals of times by circulating a google forms carrying a variety of questions related to this issue.

Based on the survey we conducted on the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine it is found that people in the age group 15-19 are most aware of the situation. We found that the late teenagers (specially college students) are most informed and well versed on this issue. Now the point comes, do they support someone or stay neutral?

The survey was to analyze the thoughts of Indian citizens related to the Ukraine -Russian war. The survey results indicated that, the majority of the Indians support Ukraine and the idea of the Indian government staying neutral. Many Indian citizens believe that this war will affect the Indian economy and there will be a hike in the prices of edible oil. The paper gives a detailed overview of the Indian population's thinking about the Russian and Ukraine war by the questions



answered given by us to have complete regard and understanding of their opinion and which gives us our overall result.

In this research work, we have collected thoughts and views of people with some very basic questions to conclude what is their perception regarding the whole war. With time it is possible that people to change their views on certain topics. Thus, doing a phase-wise survey to reflect mindsets is what this survey provides. It gave us an insight into the mindset of people and reach a final conclusion to wind up this whole survey.

Keywords: War, Ukraine, Russia, Survey

I. Background

To understand any conflict in history we need to analyze the situations leading to it.

A. *Why the war happened?*

The war started on 24th February 2022 but the conflict had already started in 2014 when Russia invaded and annexed Crimea (a neighboring country of Ukraine). The fear of abruptly invading Ukraine in near future led Ukraine to seek refuge in the United States of America and the European Union. Thus, this increasing closeness of Ukraine with the USA and EU led to tensions between Russia and Ukraine. The list of events mentioned below is helpful in understanding the events that took place before the invasion.

10th November 2021: - Russia started deploying its military soldiers to the Ukraine border.

28th November 2021: - More than 1 lakh Russian troops were present near the Ukrainian border.

8th December 2021: - US intelligence agencies warn Russia that if there would be an invasion of Ukraine the US and its European allies would respond with strong economic measures. [1]

21st February 2022: - Putin addresses the entire world that 2 separatist areas in eastern Ukraine (Donetsk and Luhansk) are now recognized as independent countries.[2]

22nd February 2022: - US, Canada, UK, and many other of their allies announce 1st round of economic sanctions on Russia.[3]

24th February 2022: - Vladimir Putin announced the move to invade Ukraine in an unscheduled TV address. He said that Russia would bring in troops. He told the Ukrainian troops to, “lay down arms and go home”. Talking to the US and its allies he said, “Any attempt to interfere with this Russian action would lead to consequences you have never seen”.[4]

24th February 2022: - Russia sends soldiers and tanks to separatist areas of eastern Ukraine in the name of peacekeeping and liberation. [5]

24th February 2022: - Russia starts its attack on the capital city of Kyiv. The attack started off as missile attacks on the city’s major monuments. [6]



B. Initial days of the war.



28th February 2022: - Ukraine claims 352 killed including 14 children.

1st March 2022: - Russian paratroopers landed in Kharkiv (2nd largest city in Ukraine) starting an all-out war.[7]

1st March 2022: - Kharkiv bombed killing 8 civilians.[7]

1st March 2022: - 5 people were killed in the capital city of Kyiv after bombs dropped on a TV tower and the Holocaust memorial. [7]

4th March 2022: - The US claims that more than 500 missiles have been fired by Russia on the Ukrainian territory from the 24th.[8]

15th March 2022: - Ukrainian president Zelenskyy announces that Ukraine will not become a part of NATO anytime soon.[9]

19th March 2022: - Russian missiles targeted an art school located in the city of Mariupol where nearly 400 people were taking shelter.[10]

C. Current situation of the war

Although the initial estimates of the experts were that the war would end within a short time span but the countermeasures deployed by the Ukrainian army have extended the war to almost 3 months now. A lot has happened during this time, many companies have shut down their business in Russia including companies like Nike and Apple. The bloodshed continues as the two nations are confronting each other many innocent people are losing their life.



The Russian Officials had confirmed that the forces are fighting for “complete liberation” of the Donbas (broadly refers to Ukraine's eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk).

That’s the place where Russian-backed separatists held significant territory before the invasion.

Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February, but its forces withdrew from around the capital Kyiv and surrounding regions to Belarus and western Russia in early April.

Russia has since refocused its efforts on taking control of the east and south of Ukraine.

The casualties had also taken a hit, taking the casualties (as of **09 May**) up to **3459** people were killed, among which **238** are children. **3713** people were injured, among which **347** are children.

D. Consequences faced by India

As our survey is focused on how the masses of India react to the ongoing war we also need to understand the background and the events that affected India.

According to the records around 20,000 Indian citizens were living in Ukraine out of which 18,000 were students.

15th February 2022: -Indian embassy in Ukraine issues an advisory for the Indian citizens in Ukraine that it might not be safe to stay in certain areas of the country so all the non-essential people are advised to leave the country.[12]

20th February 2022: - Indian embassy issues another advisory to leave Ukraine in view of the escalating situation between Russia and Ukraine.[13]

26th February 2022: - India launches operation Ganga to bring back all the Indian citizens stuck in Ukraine.[14]

1st March 2022: - an Indian 4th-year medical student dies in Kharkiv. He was shot by the Russian troops who fired on the civilians standing in a queue outside a grocery store.[15]

2nd March 2022: - India abstain from the vote in the UN general assembly to condemn Russian acts of war against Ukraine.[16]

2nd March 2022: - Indian embassy issues advisory to leave Kharkiv immediately.[17]

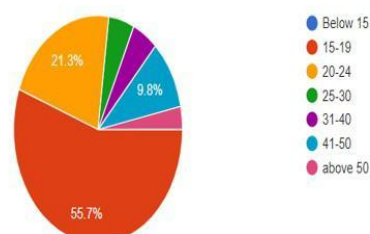
6th March 2022: - Up till 6th March 16,000 Indian citizens were safely evacuated out of Ukraine.[18]

The war is still active as we speak and the causality can be seen on both sides (Ukraine suffering relatively more). Ukraine officials claim the Ukrainian death toll to be at 15,000 as per the latest reports. According to Ukraine’s military, the death toll on the Russian side is estimated at 21,000 soldiers from the start of the war.

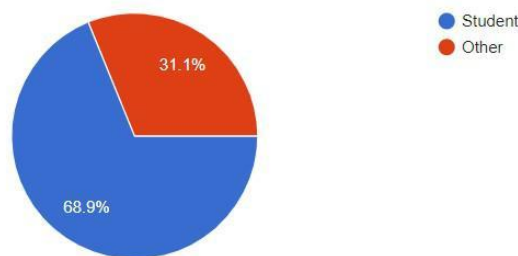
II. Findings

A. Phase-I

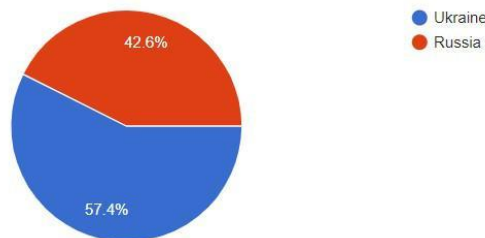
Based on the survey we conducted on ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine it is found that people of age group 15-19 had most actively participated in the survey. Mostly college students are there who came forward to give their opinion as can be seen in the pie chart below.



Students constitute 68.9% of the active audience while the remaining ones having other profession is 31.1%. However, youth of India is most familiar with the ongoing situation as per the data.

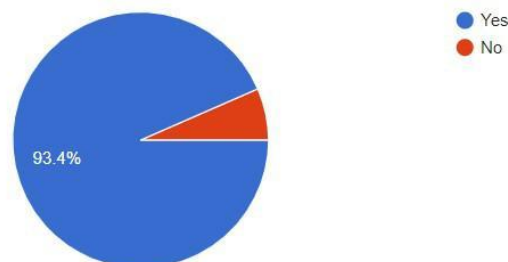


Now the point comes, do they support someone or stay neutral? According to the data we collected it is observed that the majority supports Ukraine. It can be clearly seen in the below pie chart that 57.4% of people support Ukraine while 42.6% of them are with Russia.



Support on India staying neutral

It shows that the majority supports India on staying neutral that is 93.4% of people agree on India being neutral in this terrible war where the innocents are suffering for no reason.



Views on consequences

No matter what the situation is, a war is never justified. It lead to horrible consequences where the innocent people are caught in, be it Indian, Russian or Ukrainian. The views of public on how the war can affect India and what will be its impact can be seen below in a graph. As per the data collected, most of them(65.6%) think that it will affect Indian economy badly and 54.1% think it will bring a hike in prices of edible oil while some of them that is 31.1%,27.9%and 24.6% are saying that it will lead to enmity with the concerned authorities, will reduce the stature of the country internationally and force India to look into its education system.

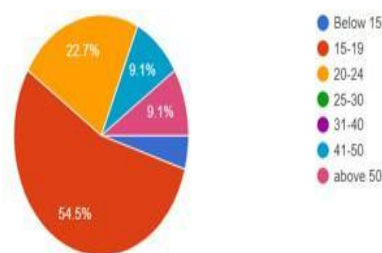


B. Phase 2

Now moving forward with the second phase of our survey, we circulated another google form including some previous questions and a variety of new questions based on the recent developments. In the second phase, we tried to present the correlation between the responses of the people and the actual events happening during the war. As this is our second phase, so for moving forward we asked more questions for a better understanding of the opinions and perceptions of Indian citizens. In this phase, we tried to get citizens' perceptions that relate to not only India but also can affect the world.

So, we got to know that citizens of almost every age group are aware and mentally involved in this war. As we can see from below pie chart citizens ranging from 10 to 60 are getting involved and trying to opionate this war according to their fresh understanding of the facts and events.

Based on the phase II of the survey, we observed that more and more people are getting aware about the situation with the time. We noticed that the adults are also coming forward to give their opinion on the ongoing situation of war with the students.



As it can be seen in the above pie chart the percentage of age group of adults has been increased by 1.2% of the youth.

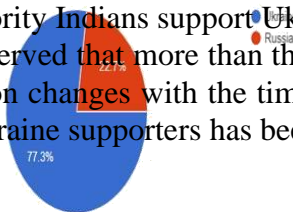
We observed that with time more and more people became aware of the situation and took interest in the affairs of this war. However, we got mixed responses this time.

Most of the responses we got are from the age group 15-19, who are mostly students.

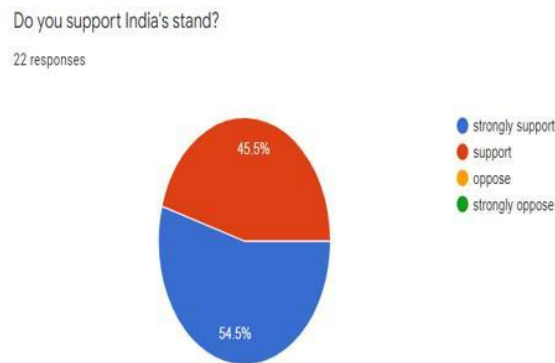
Now, the question arises “Whom do they support?”

Following the previous trend majority Indians support Ukraine over Russia.

As per the data collected, it is observed that more than the majority that is 77.3% of them are supporting Ukraine. Opinion of the population changes with the time and the situation, So as can be seen from the above pie chart it is found that Ukraine supporters has been increased by 19.9 %.



People also gave a positive response to India’s stand and measures during this war.

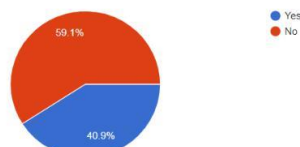


As we all know Russia wholly damaged the Ukraine cities but in spite of that Russia cannot win over Ukraine. And also Ukraine was getting massive support from many devastating countries such that America, Britain, etc. So for winning over Ukraine Russia has also started using nuclear weapons for threatening the Ukrainian army. So as observed Indian citizens strongly oppose Russia’s nuclear mindset.

Thoughts of the masses on the World war III

No matter what the situation is ,a war is never justified. It lead to horrible consequences where the innocent people are caught in, be it Indian, Russian or Ukrainian. According to the data collected we observed that India’s stance is that Ukraine should not surrender for preventing further destruction and for the country’s sake. And also the majority of the Indians have a mindset that this could not lead to world war 3 by any means.

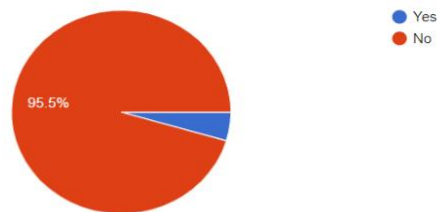
Do you feel this war could lead to World War III?
22 responses



We tried to know about their point of views and opinions by adding general questions related to the current situation. The responses gathered were as follows:

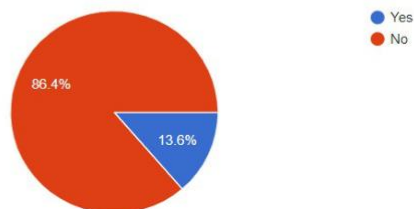
Do you support Russia's threat of using nuclear weapons?

22 responses



Should India stop trading with Russia following the NATO'S example?

22 responses

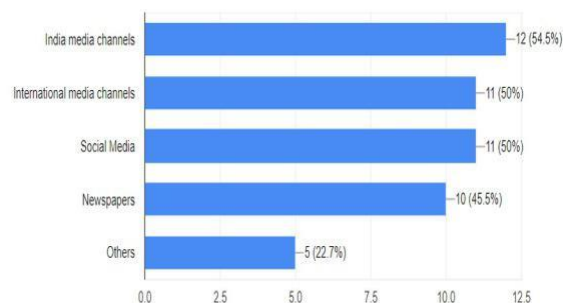


Now it comes to India:- that should India follow the steps of NATO by resisting the trade with Russia. According to the past years observations Russia has supported India in many ways and also played an important role in increasing India’s economy. So, by resisting trade with Russia, it could a massive impact on economy as well as country’s relationship terms. Therefore, accordingly responses are in support of that.

India being a large population also has a good and also massive media which connects almost the whole country. Therefore, a large population can be get aware related to worldwide affairs by much and also different kinds of ways as we observed in the following chart.

Where do you get your news from(you can choose. More than one option)

22 responses





III. Results

After following the events and people's response to these events for almost 3 months, we have some solid fact-based results regarding the questions that we sought to answer. The survey concluded on 9th May, 2022.

Regarding the question, "Whom does the Indians support?". We found that although the national and international media has been heavily criticizing Russia's actions but the initial response of the masses was almost equally divided between Russia and Ukraine (the approx. ratio being 60:40 in favor of Ukraine.). But as the war progressed and entered into its 3rd month the people's support toward Ukraine has increased rapidly (the approx. ratio being 80:20 in favor of Ukraine). This change in the opinion can be justified when we take a look at how the media has covered the whole war and how Russia has shifted its assault from the military to common citizens.

The next question that the survey asked was, "Do you support India's stand of being neutral?" We can conclude from the findings that the majority of the masses strongly supported India's stand in this whole war in both phases of the survey. To the question, "How will the war affect India?" we observed a segregated response from the masses, highest percentage of people feeling that the war would affect the Indian economy as a whole and around 30% feared that the war would bring hike in edible oil prices.

Now moving on to the questions asked specifically in the second phase of the survey. To the question, "Do you support Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons?" we observed that an overwhelming percentage of people (95%) did not support Russia's threats to the rest of the world regarding the use of nuclear weapons.

To the question, "Should India stop trade with Russia?", again we observed that a considerable percentage (86%) of people believe that India should stop its trade with Russia.

In response to the last question, "Where do you receive your updates regarding the war?" people opted for all the options equally. This led us to conclude that the general masses are not polarized by any one set of mass-media platform, but rather imbibe all the news stream and formulate a judicious opinion.

IV. Conclusions

Wars inflict tremendous damage on societies. While there is a large body of literature dedicated to investigating the impact of war. Our survey is based on expressing thoughts related to the effects of the Ukraine-Russia war.

The survey brought us a point of view regarding how people's thoughts flow around the situation going on. In this research work, we have collected thoughts and views of people with some very basic questions to conclude what is their perception regarding the whole war. With time it is possible to have people change their views on certain topics. Thus, doing a phase-wise survey to reflect mindsets is what this survey provides.



A Solution or a way out?

There is little sign of any negotiated end to this war in the immediate future.

A few weeks into the war, Russia said it was considering a Ukrainian proposal of neutrality, but there have been no negotiations since the end of March.

President Putin told the UN Secretary-General at the end of April "we are negotiating, we do not reject [talks]"[19], but he earlier declared negotiations at a dead end. After a meeting with the Russian leader, Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer gave a very downbeat assessment of a man who had entered into a "logic of war".[20]

Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky had already accepted that Ukraine would not join NATO: "It's a truth and it must be recognized." But after apparent Russian atrocities came to light in Bucha, Mariupol, and elsewhere, he made it clear there would be no more talks until Russia withdrew from all territories seized on 24 February.

In its offer of neutrality proposed at the end of March, Kyiv said:

Ukraine would become a non-aligned and "non-nuclear" state, with no foreign military bases or contingents on its territory

Strict, legally binding guarantees would require other countries to protect a neutral Ukraine in the event of an attack Within three days guarantor states would have to hold consultations and come to Ukraine's defense

Ukraine would be allowed to join the European Union, but would not enter military-political alliances and any international exercises would require the consent of guarantor states

The future status of Russian-annexed Crimea would be negotiated over the next 15 years.

But neutrality for Vladimir Putin was never likely to be enough. "Ultimately [Putin] wanted to divide the country and I think it's becoming more evident that's what he wants," says Barbara Zanchetta of King's College London's Department of War Studies.

[20]

While the Kremlin wants to annex some areas of Ukraine, Tatiana Stanovaya believes "much more important is the fate of Ukraine: Putin wants to end Ukraine as a current state"[20]

V. References

In writing this research paper we have taken references from various news outlets and most importantly people's opinion through the forums.

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- [7]. Zachary Basu, DaveLawler “Russian forces land in Kharkiv as bombardment of Ukraine cities intensifies”, (Axios, 2 March, 2022).
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