**How democracies backslide into authoritarianism**

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Modernity and enlightenment are fundamental ideas conceived by human beings in the last millennium. A capitalist economy, a liberal democratic political system and technological advancements are the basic features of affluent modern human societies. Democracy is the system to sustain the identity, recognition, and equal approachability of human beings in modern societies. Erich Fromm, in his book “Escape from Freedom” asserted that freedom is the dialectical process in which individuals decouple their emotions with freedom when this freedom becomes the cause of anxiousness. In the neoliberal economic order of the Post-Cold War era, economic meltdown, environmental catastrophes and crumbling identities of nation-states amid global integration cause the cultural necrophobia in recent decades from Western to Eastern regions of the world.
Why do human beings reject freedom and turn to the arms of dictatorships, populist regimes and authoritarian rulers? A majority of people are not aware of embracing positive freedom like legal rights because of narrower academic exposures being designed by the division of labor. In neoliberal literature, the specialised knowledge and unawareness of parallel perspectives are core to excelling in academics. People can easily be manipulated by dictators. Psychologically speaking, human beings are more compatible and concerned about their local identities and collective interests as a nation, as religious identities, and as sacred groups. In the neoliberal order and prevalent liberal democracies of Francis Fukuyama, technologies and economic forces have globally integrated nations into “one world” while the identities of people in nation-states pull them back to their local and cultural representations. This instinct to be a part of the global community or to be part of traditional culture attracted authoritarian rulers to manipulate people so that their collective interests are threatened by foreign conspiracies and foreign invaders. This illusion easily persuades them to be part of populist narratives and rhetoric. For instance; Weimar Germany after WWI was a democratic Republic but Hitler in 1923, in the form of Nazism made the people believe that German is unstable and threatened by the foreign occupation of Britain and France; this popular narrative appealed to the local identities of the people and they democratically elected a leader who paved the way for the Holocaust and WWII.
The internet is an ominous threat to democracies when it is used without any check on the reachability of authoritarian rulers like Putin and Donald Trump. There are more than 5 billion active users of the internet in the world, a majority of people on the internet use the internet to endorse their existing world-views and biases, and exchange information and evidence in the echo chamber with like-minded people. Politics in the modern arena becomes the Politics of show business in which appeal to sentiments rather than facts and logic is the core ideology of rulers. Alternative facts matter more than the real facts.
The other perspective is the moral alienation phenomenon. Fear of morality alone persuades people to be automatically conformist. When people perceive that the majority is biased, they ultimately agree with biases because alienation can cut them from the tiers of social security. Elite dissatisfaction in society is also a cause of turning democracies into dictatorships. The classic example of Franklin Roosevelt after the New Deal is visible in this case: The mutilation of the capitalist corporate mindset by FDR dissatisfied the elites of American democracy and America was on the verge of turning into a dictatorship because this faction of elites went to the Naval Chief for aid to topple down the government of FDR. It was good to see the forces chief denied toppling the democratic setup. Likewise, in Chile during the era of Allende’s presidency, the elite were disappointed and with the help of General Augusto Pinochet, they ejected Allende from power and elected Augusto Pinochet to rule.
Democracies are in recession for the last twenty years due to the rising alienation of voters into the political process. The voters in the average political process don’t reflect their democratic interests and political choices. This phenomenon makes them apathetic and they wilfully escape from freedom and backslide from democracies into authoritarian support. According to Steven Levitsky, a renowned political scientist and author of “How Democracies Die”, democracies die at the polls and in the electoral process in modern contemporary societies. The demagogues come into power by strongman political representation and vowing to act vigorously against those who are sapping the nation’s strength so they come with the rhetoric to rescue the lost dignity and glory of nations like Stalin and Hitler.
With the rise of Donald Trump in the US, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, and Modi in India it is clear that illiberalism in democracies is paving its way day by day. The approach to appeal to emotion will slide our global norms into the dark ages of the sixteenth century. Coming to the way forward of protecting the struggle of millions to prevail in the democratic culture from the French Revolution to the Cold War; we need to be committed to our democratic culture and rational choices before the loss of millions to fight against the potential monarchs and dictators. We need to redesign and redirect our preferences by reconsidering our preferences in educational policies and the health sector. Good education is the only way forward to abdicate all ills. The neoliberal order should introduce the “social man” dichotomy rather than the “economic man” of utilitarianism in educational policy to equip individuals with social lineages rather than just focusing on economic and short-term appeals. The change in education will lead to a change in political perspectives which will provoke the instincts and consciousness for more democracy and peace.