

WHY NATIONS FAIL?

1- Introduction

- (i) Manifestation of a failed nation.
- (ii) Thesis statement

2. Causes Of A Nation's Failure.

- (i) Role of Political institutions in shaping the nation.
 - a. Extractive political institutions leading to lack of opportunities. (Case study: Egypt under Hosni Mubarak)
 - b. Lack of Transparency promoting corruption. (→ Venezuela placed 15th on the 'Transparency International's 'Corruption: Perception Index' 2023)
 - c. Ineffective leadership forming a weak Central government unable to ensure its writ. (Case study of Columbia's Weak Central Government: Foreign Policy Magazine)
- (ii) Economic Factors Posing Hurdles in the way of Progression.
 - a. Dependence on International Financial Institutions signaling the lack of self-sufficiency. (→ Dependency Theory by Raul Prebisch) (→ Case Study: Argentina)

b. Lack of Innovation of New Technologies and Brain Drain. (→ Guinea as per the Global Innovation Index)

c. Mercantilist Policies discouraging the local Market as well as the Investors.
(North Korea's 60% poverty rate - according to World Bank)

(iii) Weak Social Fabric of the Society.

a. Lack of Quality Education Making Population, a liability. (→ Afghanistan's Struggling Education System and Low HDI rating)

b. Dearth of Rule of Law followed by Surge in Criminal Activities.
(→ 2.2m Pending Cases in Pakistani Courts
→ 3rd Worst Country in terms of Law and Order: World Justice Project)

c. Controlled Norms and Freedom of Expression disconnecting the citizens from Reality.
(→ Case Study: North Korea
→ Theory: Post Modernism)

(iv) External Factors Playing a Role in a Nation's Regression.

a. Climate Change Accentuating the vulnerabilities.
(→ Floods in Pakistan, 2022
→ 5th most vulnerable country to Climate Change by Global Catastrophic Risk Institute)

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b. Foreign Interventions halting Progress.
(Case Study: US Intervention in Iraq and its crumbling System).

c. Role of Geographical Factors in Determining a nation's future. (→ Prisoners of Geography by Tim Marshall
→ Central Asian Republics' access to Sea).

3. WAY FORWARD TO PROGRESSIVENESS

(i) Ensuring Transparent Political Institutions.

(Case Study of Asian Tigers: Indonesia during ^{the} 1990s)

(ii) Promoting Robust Economic Growth for a Prosperous Nation. (Japan as 4th Largest Economy: World Bank)

(iii) Nurturing a Strong Social Culture.

(Case Study: Scandinavian Countries)
→ World Happiness Index Report

(iv) Effective Policy Making against External threats.
(Pakistan during Covid-19)

4. CONCLUSION

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"The future does not belong to those who are indifferent." — a statement given by the infamous Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy of the United States, still echoes in the hallways of ancient and extravagant Mughal castles in the heart of India and Pakistan.

However, being indifferent is not the only indicator leading to a nation's doom's fall. A failed state is typically unable to perform basic functions of governance and maintain order, leading to a breakdown in political, social, and economic stability. Therefore, there is a variety of factors that play a key role in halting a country's progress. Those factors include political institutions, economic setbacks, a weak social makeover, lack of a stable justice system, and some external factors, eventually curtailing progress.

Politics has always been the backbone of an ~~evolving~~ evolving society; which, if done with ill intent, leads to adverse effects. When politics becomes the tool for the elite to concentrate power, lacks transparency and an effective leadership, it becomes a baggage of failure.

Thus, the role of political institutions in shaping the country's failure cannot be negated.

There are certain political institutions that the book "Why nations fail" defines as extractive. Such institutions concentrate power among the few elites and discourage the distribution of opportunities, leading to a pathway to corruption and scrap the right people from the right job.

Egypt under Hosni Mubarak is a classic example of how extractive institutions become a hurdle in the way of a country's progression. During Hosni Mubarak's rule, the government and the military owned large swaths of economy — by some estimates, as much as forty percent. Their stranglehold on major institutions created profits for the regime, but blocked opportunities for the Egyptians to move out of poverty. Consequently, the nation regressed.

Lack of transparency in political institutions is yet another textbook indicator of failure.

It fuels corruption and promotes incompetency in the culture of bribery. Such institutions become a hallmark of a nation's regression adding to the struggling economy. One such example is of Venezuela, where according

it poses a threat to a country's existence, if not strong. Dependence on International Financial institutions, lack of innovation and an adequate research & development network, and a protectionist way of controlling the economy are all such economic factors that lead to the slow death of a nation.

The dependency on International Financial institutions like IMF and the World bank, showcases a country's turmoil and inability to come out of the debt trap. According to the dependency theory proposed by Raul Prebisch and Hans Singer,

the core countries—developed countries—suck the resources out of the peripheral countries—developing and underdeveloped countries—only to add value to those resources and in turn selling to the developing countries under high rates, drawing a chain of resources as well as money to these developed countries from the Peripheries. In the same way, the International financial institutions, were created to push these countries into a debt trap. Currently, Argentina is the largest debtor to the IMF—owing ~~to~~ almost 5.3% of its GDP—according to the International Monetary Fund.

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Additionally, the strings that pull back the economic growth of a country are the lack of innovation of new technologies, and an adequate research mechanism in place for such innovations. James A. Robinson terms this factor as one of the most significant reason for a nation's downfall, in his book 'Why nations fail'. As per the Global Innovation Index's 2022 report, Guinea scored the lowest rate of 1.6 and standing 151st out of 132 countries. Thus, contributing as such to Guinea's low GDP rate and significantly lower economic growth.

Moreover, Protectionist policies of a state meddling in its economic market, discourage investors' confidence, and contribute to the regression of economy. Countries with authoritarian regimes and mercantilist policies suffer inadvertently in their economic outcomes, in turn bringing the country's progress to a halt. North Korea offers a clear picture in this regard. There are limited to no land owning or property rights in Korea, as well as all the market trends controlled by the state. As a result, almost sixty percent of the population lives in poverty—

according to the World Factbook of CIA.

A strong and functioning social fabric of the society ensures a prosperous nation. Therefore, the countries lacking the gist of a strong social fabric with regards to the quality of education, enforcement of law and order, and freedom of expression, often set themselves to the path of backwardness. As a result, such weak social fabric hinders a nation's intellectual growth and gives rise to criminal tendencies with no conviction.

The provision of a creative and quality education nurtures the future of many generations of a nation. However, the lack thereof, makes the generations a liability for the government, further spreading unethical and criminal tendencies. Consequently, the country will lack in intellectual minds and the brain drain phenomenon will further squeeze the country's few intellectuals, if produced. This will further cause the lack of innovation and research for the country's growth. Afghanistan's struggling education system and the government's reluctance to invest in this sector, are the prime examples

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of how a nation is thrown in the pits of darkness if it does not value quality education. The Human Development Index rated Afghanistan 193 out of 204 countries in 2022 in terms of human development, thus, reiterating the importance of quality education.

If a country lacks a strong justice system, and the implementation of law and order, it creates the probabilities of a regressive future. The lack of implementation of law and order in a society gives rise to crimes with impunity, breeding an anarchic nation. Currently, Pakistan has 2.2 million pending cases in front of its judiciary and is ranked the third worst country in terms of law and order by the World Justice Project. Thus, an unstable justice system and dearth of rule of law, creates an improbable situation for a nation to advance itself.

Another factor posing a hurdle in the way of a nation's advancement is the controlled democracy and freedom of expression. The post-modernism theory of International Relations explains how different discourses shape

narratives. Conversely, some regimes control such print and media discourses to build favourable narratives for their governments. Such nations seldom realise the authoritative nature of their governments and do not experience awakening. In the Freedom House's rating, North Korea secured three out of hundred in 'Freedom at a Glance' report, subsequently, pushing the country into ^{the} pits of poverty and the citizens still singing the dictator's praise every morning.

These are some external factors that contribute to a nation's baggage of failure. Those external factors add to the already crumbling nation and drive it to multiple added setbacks. Those factors include the vulnerability to climate change, foreign interventions, and certain geographical jinxes contributing to the ill fate. Ultimately, various external factors also play a role in determining a nation's future.

Climate change is one of the most catastrophic elements introduced by this century. Certain nations are more prone to the adverse and often disastrous effects

of Climate Change than the others, due to their geographical location and inadequate infrastructure. Consequently, if an already struggling country is struck with climate change catastrophe, it drives the nation onto the path of the stone ages. The catastrophic floods of 2022 in Pakistan, are one such example. These floods caused the loss of \$30 billion to Pakistan's economy and displaced 33 million people. Currently, Pakistan is the 5th most vulnerable country to climate change, according to the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute. Such disasters put the already strained countries further ^{under} threat.

Similarly, Foreign interventions in the affairs of a particular state also degrade its outlook. The U.S. intervention in Iraq is one such example where Iraq, even after two decades, is still struggling with the aftershocks of the war posed by the United States.

According to the United Nations' Development Programme, Iraq stood at 134 out of 204 countries in the Human Development Index, in 2022. Thus, this example underscores the effects of foreign interventions on human development.

Moreover, a country's geographical position can also limit or enhance its options. In the book 'Prisoners of Geography', Tim Marshall discusses how elements like mountains, rivers, climate, and natural resources influence the development of nations and their geographical strategies. For example, the Central Asian Republics are landlocked and have to use other countries' passages to access the sea, this phenomenon limits their potential sea power. ~~In the same~~ In contrast, Saudi Arabia's geographical position has gained a positive sum, with ^{the} country using its potential oil reserves to boost its economy.

However, the countries with the key political, economic, and social faultlines have the potential to improve if they work on their lackings and invest on the needed sectors. The progression does not come in a day, but consistent efforts over the years with effective leadership will pave the way for a brighter future.

A transparent political system ensures a inclusive approach among its institutions. Each ~~any~~ citizen gets the desired opportunities

and works for the betterment of the system.

An example of Indonesia can be used in transforming the political system and working towards progress. It shunned off dictatorship during the 1990s and moved ahead with effective leadership bringing it among the 'Asian Tigers' of the region.

Similarly, promoting a stable and functioning economic growth will enable a robust economic system. A robust economic system will create greater work opportunities for citizen's nationally and will ensure a country's progress on the World economic map internationally. This will further lead to innovation and development. Japan's example as the leading developed country in the field of innovation of technology, proves how nations can build themselves, even after a nuclear attack. Japan is currently the fourth largest economy in the world - according to World Bank.

A country's social framework, if strong, can grow a resilient and strong nation in the form of a country's most valuable asset. Thus, the struggling countries can use the

example of Scandinavian countries such as Finland, Denmark, Sweden etc. Finland education system is one of the best according to some reports.

In another report by World's Happiness Index 2021-2023, Finland tops as the world's happiest country. Thus, it reiterates the importance of a robust and functioning social system.

Another step towards progressiveness can be; an effective policymaking against external threats. A visionary policymaking with an infrastructural development can aid significantly against external threats such as climate change. A good policy effort by the Pakistani authorities during the Covid-19 spread in the country, can be used as an example. Pakistan imposed smart lockdown and tackled with the virus effectively, earning the praise of many international organisations.

In essence, a country's deteriorating political institutions, economic woes, weak social system, lack of justice and rule of law, and foreign factors meddling in the national affairs, play a significant role in determining its dark future. These factors in

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turn shape a nation's setbacks and limitations. However, there are certain states—the likes of Japan, Indonesia and Turkey—which have successfully emerged out triumphed, after facing initial setbacks. These countries can be used as a torch bearer to improve a jailed state's conditions; nevertheless, political will and determination comes first. Thus, there is certainly light at the end of the tunnel, if a country is willing to travel through the darkness with determination, instead of getting stuck.