

Topic: Why Nations Fail?

Topic

Outline:

1. Introduction

A nation needs protection against both external and internal threats. However, the internal threats have the potential to devour from within. Nations face various external threats but minimizing the internal ones is essential to overcome the national level risks.

2. How nations are destroyed by external threats and internal rifts

3. Why internal factors are responsible for the failure of a nation

a. political polarisation shakes the basis of government machinery of a state

b. Economic instability can make life of citizens pathetic

c. Debt quagmire prevents the governments from designing independent economic and foreign policies

d. Gender inequality divides the "men" and "women" into

- "us" versus "them" in a country
- e. Low investment in human capital hinders the development of a nation
 - f. poor education system deprives a country of a skilled and learned workforce
 - g. Unequal distribution of resources results in social divide
 - h. Religious extremism and sectarianism tarnish the image of a country in front of world

4. How external factors lead to the failure of a nation

- a. Foreign interference in political matters weaken the political system of a country
- b. Sanctions on part of big powers act as obstacle in path of economic development of a state
- c. Social media owners can play with the privacy of any country
- d. Environmental deterioration on part of developed countries' big industries affect all irrespective of border

5. Wayforwards to overcome the factors that lead to the

failure of a nation

- a. Strengthening the democratic process to reduce political polarisation
- b. Introducing structural reforms to strengthen economic growth
- c. Investment in human capital should be prioritised
- d. Grievances of less privileged groups in society should be addressed
- e. Religious extremism and sectarianism should be minimized for peaceful coexistence

6. Conclusion.

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The proverbial farmer's sons tried their best to disintegrate and break down the fagot but failed in their efforts because the wooden sticks were collectively too strong to break. But, once the fagot was split, the individual wooden sticks were broken down rather easily. In the same manner, the nations that are internally strong and united cannot be disintegrated or disturbed by external forces and vice versa.

overcome the national level
The nations that are internally weak
are more likely to end up in

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smoke. The future of the nations where there is political instability, economic deterioration, debt crisis, gender discrimination, pathetic educational system, religious extremism and moral decline, is at stake.

Even though some external factors like foreign intervention in politics and economy, control of social media by big powers, exploitation and

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control of environment and its deterioration on part of big powers badly damage a nation. But, a nation can protect itself from the aforementioned threats, both internal and external, via adopting effective measures. Steps like ensuring the uphold of democratic values, strengthening the economy through reforms, investing in human capital, treating all citizens equally and combating the menace of religious extremism and sectarianism. A nation needs protection against both external and internal threats. However, the internal threats have the potential to devour from within. Nations face various external threats but minimizing the internal ones is essential to overcome the national level risks.

Both external threats and internal weaknesses play a significant role in the destruction of a nation. On one hand, the external threats can destroy a nation by undermining its

its economy, political stability. The military interventions, economic sanctions and political subversion can result in the collapse of government, social unrest and loss of sovereignty. On the other hand, the internal rifts in a state in the form of incompetent government, lack of cooperation among state institutions, economic disparities and lack of education and awareness is manifested in such ways that destroy the very foundations of a society and such societies cannot sustain such unfavourable circumstances for a long time and they eventually collapse.

One of the internal factors responsible for the failure of a nation is political polarisation that shakens the basis of government machinery. When political polarisation prevails in a society, the masses get divided into "us" versus "them" and in certain (extreme) cases, different political groups become at daggers drawn with one another. Also, the political polarisation weakens the democratic system of a state and as such a state becomes more authoritarian and less democratic under such circumstances. This is evident in case of Pakistan. According to Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report of Democracy Index 2024, Pakistan has made a transition from a hybrid regime to an authoritarian one. One of the underlying reasons for this transition is, of course, political polarisation's prevalence in society. In this way, the political polarisation weakens a state from within.

The longstanding ~~ec~~political

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polarisation leads to economic stability that makes the life of citizens pathetic. High inflation and cost of living crisis make people lose interest in the government and poverty prevails under such harsh condition. Furthermore, when state fails to provide basic needs of life to citizens at affordable prices, the smuggling and corruption become common practice; informal economy flourishes. In a recent report by the Research and Development Department of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the financial leakage from smuggling is causing Pakistan an annual loss of over US \$2.6 billion. This accounts for almost three percent of Pakistan's GDP. Hence, the economic instability has the potential to paralyze the life of citizens.

The economic instability in a country gives rise to debt crisis that prevents the government from designing independent economic and foreign policies. When a country has to turn to international monetary forums and other influential players for

loans time and again, it indirectly empowers those institutions to intervene in the economic as well as foreign policy of the state. Moreover, such loans come with tough conditionalities and high interest rates. As a result, a country has to require more debt in order to pay back its existing loans. In this way, the debt quagmire makes a nation compromise on its independent policies.

This debt crisis compromising the independent policy mechanism of a nation manifests itself in the form of social chaos which is evident in gender inequality dividing the masses into "men" versus "women" mindset. Both men and women are the forces of the production of a country and their cooperation is crucial for economic well being as well as social cohesion of states. Owing to the gender discrimination in a country, the women become less privileged segment of society. Moreover, in the era of digitisation and technology, the inaccessibility of

tech facilities to women results in the rise of poverty in a country. Women are at high risk of reduced access to online opportunities; tech-facilitated gendered discrimination in a country worsens gendered poverty. (Digital Gender Gap, Huma Yusuf, August 2024). In this way, gender inequality internally weakens a state.

The countries where gender inequality prevails are generally bad at investing in human capital and this low investment in human capital hinders the development of a nation. Human capital is the real force of a country that contributes to the progress of a nation. However, when human resource is not properly utilized and people remain deprived of opportunities, the same resource becomes a burden rather than an asset. The countries, like Pakistan, which fail to provide adequate education, healthcare, sanitation and employment opportunities to citizens are facing the accelerating phenomenon of brain drain. On yearly basis, the skilled or

manipulate the policies of the government in the weaker states to ~~set~~ get served their security and strategic interests. Thus, the lifespan of the government in such weaker states depend upon the will of the great powers. Under such circumstances, the democratic values are pushed to the wall. The United states tries to influence and sometimes manipulate the government policies in Pakistan by established diplomatic messaging or via exploiting the vulnerability of a regime, and uses it for his own strategic purposes. (Foreign Interference, Touqir Hussain, April 2022). Therefore, the external interference in political matters undermines the government machinery of a state.

Besides weakening the political system of ~~weaker~~ ^{other} states, the stronger countries also try to suppress them through sanctions.

The economic sector of a country is badly damaged when sanctions are applied on it. It cannot export its products, as a result the economic growth of the country is ~~is~~ hindered.

which, as a ripple effect, affects all other sectors of the society. Furthermore, the influential players also get the targetted state trapped in debt crisis by providing them loans. These band-aid solutions weaken a country's structure in the long run. Since its independence, Pakistan has turned to International Monetary Fund 24 times. The policies attached with the fund has failed so far to ensure long lasting economic recovery. (Reforms and IMF, Rashid Ahmed, Sept 2024). Thus, the external influence in economic sector blur the chances of growth of a nation.

In addition to controlling the economy of other states, the next damage done by the external threats is the control of the privacy of a state's citizens in the hands of social media platform owners, comprising of (usually) belonging to powerful states. In contemporary times, the social media users are found in every corner of the world. When the users agree to the terms of service of any such platform, its owners

get access to the user's personal data and manipulate and even (ab)use it for their own interests.

In ancient times, "land" and "machines" or "factories" used to be center of attention and the whole political struggle revolved around it. In recent times, however, data has taken their place and struggles are already underway, on part of stronger powers to maximize their efficiency in this domain and exploit and control those states which are not much advanced in technology.

Yuvraj Noah in his book, "21 Lessons for the 21st century" states that the race to obtain data is already on, headed by data giants. Their real target is not to sell advertisements but their real target is to accumulate immense amount of data about users, which is worth more than any advertising revenue. For this reason, the privacy and even the sensitive data of a state becomes at stake.

After governing and controlling the weaker states through digital

dictatorship and surveillance, the environmental deterioration on part of developed countries' big industries affect all irrespective of borders. The under developed countries and developed countries though lag behind in the race of industrial advancement but a few of them are facing the dire consequences - of the efforts put by the developed countries to flourish their economies - in the form of environmental degradation.

Such countries, already grappling with the issue of cost of living crisis cannot fully implement the adaptation and mitigation policies. Pakistan and Bangladesh are among those states that are most vulnerable to climate change despite their minimum contribution in exacerbating the phenomenon of climate change. These two countries contribute around 0.8% and 0.4% respectively of global greenhouse gas emissions, but the two states are highly susceptible to flooding, extreme heat, drought and water scarcity which demands billions of dollars for mitigation. In this way, environmental degradation,

on part of industrialization in developed countries weaken the roots of a state.

All of the above mentioned threats that can lead to a nation's failure are looming threats but curable through adopting effective policies and one such way to counter the aforementioned menaces is the strengthening of democratic process to reduce political polarisation. The democratic process - designed to ~~make~~ let the public live with liberty under the head of laws that are public friendly - should not lose its spirit in the aftermath of the prevalence of negative trends like political polarisation. In addition to this, the three pillars of the government: Legislature, executive and judiciary should be granted and ensured independence for smooth functioning of a democracy. The case of United States of America is the pet example of how the independence of state institutions helps in upholding the democratic values and acts as a

shield against authoritarianism. In this fashion, the political system of a nation can be strengthened. After dealing with political issues, the next daunting task that demands immediate attention, since politics and economy go hand in hand, is introducing the structural reforms to strengthen economic growth. Instead of continuously focusing on foreign aid and loans, a fragile state should first start from within. It must look for the weaknesses in its economic system and such solution should be carved out that ensure long term economic stability. The bailout packages and rollover of foreign aid helped Pakistan to avert a breakdown of economy but an IMF package cannot be a be all and end all of economic policy. An IMF package is necessary but not sufficient to achieve durable stabilisation and resilient economic growth. The country's weak macroeconomic fundamentals need to be addressed head on. (Beyond the Economic Crisis, Maleeha Lodhi, April 2024).

Therefore, to ensure the real

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economic growth, structural reforms are pre-requisite.

The next step after promoting and ensuring the structural reforms to ensure economic growth is the investment in human capital. The real asset of a nation is not its infrastructure or progress in digit but its human resource. By investing in human resource, a country maximizes the chances of its prosperity because it is the humans that handle and manage all sectors from politics to economy, and from If the population is given better opportunities, facilities and chances of growth, it largely contributes to the country's overall development. Of all the sectors that demand investment for betterment of humans, education lies in the front row. A country like Pakistan facing with the issue of low literacy rate can empower the education sector by spending almost four percent of GDP - as recommended by UNESCO - for better performance of this sector. In this way, investment

In human capital should be prioritised to foster the development of a nation.

Besides addressing the grievance Besides investing in human capital, the grievances of less privileged groups in a society should be addressed. When the masses in a society are divided, the social fabric of the state is destroyed. The certain groups that feel left over in the state become a spawn in the hands of extremist elements both inside and outside the state. Instead of dealing with the issues of such groups with iron hands, state should prefer negotiation and dialogue policy to address their challenges.

Through use of force for silencing their voices, they can be suppressed for time being but this is not the panacea to their long-standing grievances. The solution lies in adopting the pacific means to resolve such sensitive natured issues. Hence, the grievances of the suffering groups should be addressed to prevent a nation from becoming

weak.

In addition to addressing the grievances of less-privileged groups, another threat to a nation's existence i.e. religious extremism and sectarianism needs to be minimised for peaceful co-existence. Religious extremism and sectarianism provoked by a majoritarian mind-set let the hateful sentiments rise in the hearts of the majority against minority groups. The extrajudicial killings of suspects of religious blasphemy has threatened the survival of the minorities in a country like Pakistan. The social media is a powerful tool for extremists to spread their message, but it can also be used to counter these narratives - developing effective counter narratives is essential in essential in combating online radicalisation. (Countering online radicalisation in the USA and Europe: The challenges of interdicting extremist content, Maura Conway). Therefore, the menace of religious extremism and sectarianism should be countered to strengthen the

foundations of a nation.

To sum it up, the whole discussion shows that the internal rifts are more dangerous for a nation than external threats. Though the external threats have the potential to hamper the progress of a country and country becomes unable to compete in the global market. External danger like foreign intervention in political matters, sanctions, threat to privacy and wide-spread looming threat of global warming definitely threaten a state's existence. But the real and greater danger that shakes the very foundations of a nation ~~are~~^{is} the internal threat. Factors like political polarisations, economic instability, debt quagmire, gender inequality, low investment in human capital makes a nation more prone to destruction. However, as mathematics suggests, every problem has a solution! By adopting and implementing such effective policy framework that can avert the negative implications of the above mentioned

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menaces, a nation can be prevented from failing!