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Batch # 316

WHY NATIONS FAIL?

Outline

A. Introduction:

Thesis statement

Nations fail due to their reluctance towards adaptability and their resistance towards change.

B. Conceptualizing the Topic

Nations: The group of people united in the name of a single factor.

Failure of Nations: When the factor uniting the nations becomes irrelevant, nations fail.

C. Nations Fail When They Stop Adapting

1. Conservative national character that halts adaptation of nation leads towards the failure of nation.

Case in study: Afghanistan

2. When nations fail to adapt with the dynamics of time they remain stuck in history and fail the test of present.

Case in study: "Of Mimicry and Men" by Homi Bhabha

3. When nations lose the trust of masses on the governing apparatus, they fail.

Case in study: Ouster of Sheikh Hasina from Bangladesh.

4. When nations fail to adapt economically with the reality of the world, they fail.

Case in study: Comparative analysis of USSR and China.

5. When nations fail to adapt with development of demographic

demands of development, they fail

Case in study: "Why Minorities Rebel" by Ted Robert Gurr

6. In the rapidly evolving world, lack of adaptation with technology can lead towards failure of nations

Case in study: Tech-war and chip industry

7. When the military might of any nation does not adapt with demand of time, nation fails.

Case in study: Ottomans in the Russo-Turkish wars

8. When nations fail to adopt socially, they fail in essence

Case in study: Social Darwinism by Herbert Spencer

9. When nations become too dogmatic towards religious nationalism and fail to adopt with pluralism, they fail

Case in study: Barbarity of Hindutva; failure of secular India

10. When nations do not allow their culture to evolve, they fail

Case in study: Demise of Mughal Empire

11. When nations fail to develop adaptive institutions they fail the test of time

Case in study: "Why Nations Fail?"

12. When nations fail to adapt with the environmental shifts of the world, they fail

Case in study: Conflict in Sudan.

13. When the nations fail to adapt with the shift in global order or polarity, they fail

Case in study: Isolationist approach of US and demise of liberal order nationalism

D. Conclusion

WHY NATIONS FAIL?

Nations usually follow a course of 120 years, with the phases of success and failure, as determined by Ibn-e-Khaldun in his famous "Muqaddimah". However, history and the historians have an inclination towards identifying the causes of the rise or fall, the success or failure of the nations. In this context, one major cause of the failure of nations can be their lack of adaptability with the dynamics of time. Conservative national character, social fabric, and cultural dormancy often demand nations to remain confined to certain slot of history and they fail to maintain their presence in the contemporary realm. In addition to this, when the governing bodies of any nation fail to adapt with the demands of demography or public sentiments, they sow the seeds of their own failure. Blinded by the gilded authority, power holders in many nations often overlook the economic, military or political dynamics of the world they survive in. As a result, lack of adaptive approach becomes a cause of failure of nations.

A nation, by definition, is a group of people united in the name of a single factor that provides them with a sense of belongingness. This

common factor can be ideological, religious, political, ethnic, or historical. Failure of any nation results from compromise on the element of nationhood. In some cases, it looks like complete collapse of any entity, while in others it hints ineluctance of the nation.

National character determines the fate of nation, and a conservative national character can cause the failure of nations due to lack of adaptability. National character refers to the characteristics of the people that make up a nation. If the national character of any nation is conservative, people of that nation are reluctant towards adaptation and growth. It compromises the level of acceptance and sense of nationalism among the masses. For example, it is in the **national character of Afghanistan** that they are divisive among themselves and united against enemies. The national character of the nation did not adapt despite numerous wars in history and thus the masses are still scattered. Such conservative national character causes failure of nations.

Similarly, when nations confine themselves to the history and fail to adapt politically, they fail. History has known to have lasting

impact on the fate of nations too. states that remain too obsessed with history, either to blame it or glorify it, often fail in the present. power holders in the failed nations usually broker power deals on the basis of history, halting the adaptation of any nation, as proposed by Homi Bhabha in "of mimicry and Men" the comprador elite of the post-colonial states mimic their colonial masters, instead of evolving out of the history to render the shadows of colonialism in place. such inclination towards the history becomes a major cause of the failure of any nation; to forge an organic sense of nationhood.

Similarly, when the governing apparatus of any nation fails to catch-up with altering demands of the masses, it fails the trust that binds it together. nations in the modern world are categorised as nationstates, forged through the social-contract. However, when the governing bodies of these nations fail to fulfill the demand of social-contract, they damage the foundation of nation. Masses not only get distrustful towards the power but also the legitimate bond of nationalism that binds them together. A recent

manifestation of the case was witnessed in **Bangladesh** where the masses revolted against the nation established by Sheikh Hasina. The revolt indicated the failure of the rigid nationhood established by ex-government of Bangladesh. Resultantly the lack of adaptation with demands of masses causes failure of nations.

Similarly, when nations fail to adapt economically with the reality of the world, they fail. Economy is the back bone of any nation and a pragmatic reality of the world. When nations fail to develop foresight in estimating the trends in economy they fail. Lag in economic development causes a collapse internally and an irrelevance external. For instance, during the last two decades of the Twentieth-century,

failure of economic adaptation of USSR compared to the economic openness of China result in the collapse of one nation while the rise of the other. Thus, lack of economic adaptation can cause the failure of nations

In addition to this, when nations fail to spend their economic resource in a manner adaptive to the shifts in demographic patterns

and sentiments, they fail. Economy and demography are both dynamic in nature. Survival requires an efficient management of available resources among the population. If a nation fails to do so, it fails the basic principle of survival and the legitimacy of its nationhood too. In his famous research "Why Minorities Rebel?" Ted Robert Gurr has stated that the cause of insurgency or rebellion in any state includes the failure of the nation to address the grievances of its populace. Thus, the failure of any nation can result from its inability to adapt with demographic demands.

Moreover, in the age of technological growth, nations that do not catch up with it, fail. Mankind has evolved with development of wheel to the development of the Artificial Intelligence (AI). However, only those nations have survived through the history that have adapted with technology. In the given era, it is equally crucial for nations to catch up with the technological development or else their failure is inevitable. For example, the ongoing technological warfare has indicated that

that middle eastern states despite holding natural resources, are not relevant in tech-realm. In this manner, lack of adaptation of the nations with technology, renders them irrelevant, and leads towards failure.

Furthermore, one more factor, maintained by history is that military adaptation is also crucial for ~~adaptation~~ prevention of state failure. Military has remained relevant throughout the history. Despite evolution of human civilization, it still remains relevant. With time, development in other fields also demand evolution of the military, for active defense of nations. The case of **defeat of out-dated Ottoman navy** in the Russo-Turkish war not only caused a blow to their presence on battle field but also as a nation. Ottoman empire lost its hold on the Balkan states as a result. Thus, military adaptation is crucial for survival of nations, it can prevent states from failure.

Additionally, when nations fail to make necessary functional adjustments with the demand of time, they fail. Society is made up of numerous units that work together

to make the society functions. However, change is the constant that keeps shifting equilibrium among these constituents of the society. If a society fails to address the change and adjust itself, it fails the test of time. According to **Herbert Spencer's** theory of social darwinism only those societies survive that are the best with adaptation. Therefore, lack of social adaptation can cause ultimate failure of nations.

Moreover, nations often become dogmatic in the name of religious nationalism and cause their own failure by refusing adaptation with plural realities. Religious nationalism often exploits the identity cause to sow split among masses. It does not allow nations to adopt with the heterogenous fabric of society. This not only instills intolerance but also causes the fracture in sense of nationalism. The most horrific example of this is the **India under the shadow of Hindutva** is a clear picture of failure of the secular nation of India. In this way, denial of nations to adapt with the reality, results in its failure.

Another factor responsible for the failure of

the nations, is their lack of cultural adaptability. Cultural is a dynamic entity. It transforms with time. If nations make it too sacred to be evolved, they confine themselves to a static reality. History denotes that among many other cases, one major cause of **demise of the Mughal Empire** was their lack of adaptability with respect to their extravagant culture, despite economic necessities. Their culture remained dormant to the changes that were taking place around them. Thus, failure of nations is inevitable if they resist cultural adaptation.

Similarly, when the institutions of any nation are not reformed, they result in the failure of that nation. Institutions are a part of the governing machinery of the state that remain in place even if governing authorities keep shifting. If the institutions do not reform they become inefficient and often irrelevant. Not only do they fail to perform their duty but also the trust of masses. In the book **Why Nations Fail?** author determines that extractive institutions are the cause of the failure of nations. These extractive institutions only

benefit one segment of nation, failing to adapt with the need of the rest - consequently, lack of adaptation in institutions results in failure of nations.

To add more to it, nature has its own laws and the nations that fail to adapt with evolving climate, face failure. Climate change is a major reality of today's world. The nations that do not pay heed to it and do not adapt are bound to suffer. The case of **Conflict in Sudan** due to drastic shift in climate and lack of its ability to adapt is a clear evidence. Thus, it is crucial for the nations to adapt with the evolving climate to guard against failure.

Finally, when nations become too obsessed with their own version of reality and neglect adaptation with the ongoing shift in global order they fail to maintain their relevance. Global order has remained dynamic throughout the history. Power keeps on shifting and last with the ones that keep adapting. If states do not adapt with the changing power dynamics of the world, they become irrelevant and fail to

maintain their space in the global level. Contemporary example of this is the **isolationist policies of US adopted by former president Donald Trump** in the form of withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) or the Paris Peace Conference, paved way for China or Russia to take up the space. It can be considered as a failure of the U.S to maintain its status and status quo. In this manner, states that do not evolve with evolving realities of the global order become failed nations.

To conclude, nations sow the seed of their own failure when they fail to adapt with the dynamics of time. The only constant through the history is change, and the nations that fail to adjust with it fail to be a part of history. Contemporary challenges of religious extremism, climate change or technological advancement, all require adaptation on behalf of nations. This adaptation can only be ascertained with an all encompassing evolution in social, economic, cultural and, military sectors. Failure in adaptation on the part of masses, rulers or institutions, can lead towards the ultimate failure of nations.

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Referring to Ibn-e-Kuldun's cycle of nation's rise and fall, the factors that can become a cause of the fall of a nation, if prevented, can ensure its rise too. Therefore, in causes of the failure of nation, also lie the causes of its success.