

Resource curse

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Abstract- Afghanistan is blessed with vast natural resources worth of trillions, but it's among poorest countries in the world with fragile economy, highly depended on outside donors and supporters. It never have been able to manage and use its resources and boost up the economy through it.

No doubt, natural resources have a double-edge effect on economic growth, in that the intensity of its use raises output. While countries like; China, Canada, and the United States are blessed with rich natural resources. On the other hand, there are countries like; South Korea and Singapore which have the lowest natural resources. All the above countries are developed either by relying on natural resources or effective leadership and good policymaking. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. Despite having the biggest natural resources, more than 55 percent of its total populations live below the poverty line.

Afghanistan has over 1,400 mineral fields, containing barite, chromite, coal, copper, gold, iron ore, lead, natural gas, petroleum, precious and semi-precious stones, salt, sulfur, talc, and zinc, among many other minerals. Gemstones include high-quality emerald, lapis lazuli, red garnet, and ruby. According to a joint study by The Pentagon and the United States Geological Survey, Afghanistan has an estimated value at Int\$3 trillion. of untapped minerals. However, Afghanistan's impressive average annual growth of nine percent from 2002-2013 has declined rapidly since 2014. According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators, annual GDP growth fell from 14.4 percent in 2012 to 2 percent in 2013, and 1.3 and 1.5 percent in 2014 and 2015 respectively. This sudden economic reversal has considerable political, security, and social implications. Rising unemployment and widespread poverty is already widening the legitimacy gap between the National Unity Government (NUG) and the Afghan public, and expanding the reservoir of grievances that insurgents, as well as hardline ethnic and regional players, could further exploit. Unfortunately, it is not the NUG's only pressing problem. Furthermore, according to the World Bank, Afghanistan has 57 billion cubic meters of surface water flowing from its three large river basins; the Amu Darya Basin in the north, the Kabul River Basin in the east, and the Helmand River Basin in the south. Of the existing resources, 10 BCM is currently used. 80 percent of water flows to Iran and Pakistan for free till now. While, out of, 7.8 million hectares of agriculture lands, more than 3 million hectares are facing severe water shortage. Moreover, According to the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), only 27 percent of the Afghan population has access to safe drinking water and 37 percent use sanitation facilities.

In a nutshell, Afghanistan seems to be like a person pockets full of money but can't even cater himself and the money remains idle and the natural blessings turn to be a resource curse only. The future might change and Afghans have hopes to see light in the darkness but, considering the ongoing situation, it's quite Unimaginable.

economy, 1

GDP, 1

mineral fields, 1

natural, 1

poverty, 1

resource, 1

surface water, 1

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