

Causes effects and solutions to famine



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Famine can be caused for many different reasons, some, like floods, droughts are natural, and others, like lack of food and shortage in food distribution to specific parts of a region. Parts of the world that are difficult to reach.

Famine has managed to spread around many parts of the world, from Ireland to Sudan to Afghanistan and Ethiopia, and at different times. For every time famine strikes a region it would be as a result of many causes, and these causes differ from a period of time to another, and from a place to another. The main causes of famine as we see it are government policies, natural disasters, and malnutrition.

Political issues, Government policies, and Civil Wars

Specific governments around the world have put policies that unintentionally caused famine to spread in those regions. Bad government policies have once led China to one of the greatest famines in history, when Mao Zedong has planned to improve China's industry and agriculture.

In order for this to happen, China was reformed into communes. Chinese citizens have worked for the commune and everything they had was owned by their commune. Workers were assigned to do work they were not capable of doing. A year later, machinery broke down, workers were injured, and buildings fell down because the steel produced and used in the buildings was weak. Soon enough hunger was spread all over China, around 9 million died from starvation in 1960, and other millions of Chinese workers suffered illness for the lack of food. This plan which led China to famine was called the Great Leap Forward.

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Similarly, unwise government policies has led North Korea to experience famine in the mid-1990s, and Zimbabwe in the early-2000s. in the early 1970s and 1980s, both Ethiopia and Sudan has suffered from famine due to their dictatorship governments, as food was shipped from Wollo in Ethiopia to its capital city in order to be sold with higher prices, Which led famine to strike Wollo.

In the 1950s, china's resources depended greatly on government actions, as it was the governments responsibility to distribute food among provinces equally. As well as it is their responsibility to provide education and proper health care during the famine, with more education people the healthier their choices might be, as that might have decreased the resultant death rates in the Chinese famine. P24

Due to unequal distribution of food, as governments usually prefer suppling urban resadants over rural residants. The food accessibility was more devastating in the rural areas, which also led the severity of famine to vary from a region to another, as what happened to china in the 1950s.

Natural disasters

The reason why natural disasters cause famine is that they temporarily reduce the carrying capacity of the land. (also 2)

Many natural disasters tend to hit countries and reduce the carrying capacity of the region sharply but temporarily. The most common natural disasters that encouraged famine to arise are droughts, earthquakes, and floods.

In 1845 to 1850, plague of fungi caused the large population of Ireland to drop down sharply, resulting in 500, 000 deaths.

In east India, 1742 to 1747, drought had hit the land causing a famine with an unknown and huge numbers of deaths to occur.

In 1915, famine took place in Tambora, Sumbawa due to volcano eruptions, causing 82 thousand people to die. Bangladesh, 1991, 250 thousand deaths due to famine resulted by cyclone and floods. 50 thousand people died out of famine in 1991, Sudan when Epidemic of Meningitis has spread. The chart below shows the deaths occurring in each of those countries as a result of natural-disaster caused famine.

Malnutrition

The great famine in 1845, Ireland was mainly caused by potato blight, about a million people died, and one more million people left Ireland(1)

In China for example in 1958's winter specifically, an intense famine has spread as a result of bad weather conditions, excessive procurement by the government, delayed response to the food shortage, the weakened production incentive due to sweeping collectivization, consumption irrationality, and resource diversion as a result of massive industrialization strategy. Which led to 30 million deaths at the time, and population continued to decrease until around 1961.

Effects of famine (illness effects)

In many developing countries, parents treat boys and girls differently, especially when exogenous shocks come. During famine, when food is scarce,

parent might choose to satisfy boys' need first. The consequence is girls surviving the famine might suffer more than boys.

Unobserved distribution of health deteriorated and the infant death threshold increases. Lead to mortality

lower fertility ♀ 🗄️

Famine is also accompanied by lower fertility. The reason Why Famine results in decreasing fertility rates is that poor families during famine delay having children, concerned that they wouldn't have enough food and all the required and basic needs for a child to grow healthily, Which eventually drops the fertility rate magnificently during famine years. Although This does not apply for the children born in the beginning of the famine, because their mothers were pregnant before the famine stroke. That explains why at the beginning of the famine some women continue to give birth. As what happened in Chinese famine.

According to Peng 1987, China, total fertility up to age 39 is about 5.6 births per woman in pre-famine years, but it drops to its lowest level, 3.06, in 1961. (3)

However after famine is over the birth rates increase sharply to opposite Thomas Malthus predictions which suggests that famine decreases the population size. The mortality in China in 1958 to 1961, and Ethiopia in 1983 to 1985, Bengal in 1943 was all restored again by a growing population after several years after the famine ended.

anemia

According to (There are some other papers studying long term effects of China' 1959-1961 famine. For example, Chen and Zhou (2004), they use China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS) data and find cohorts exposed to the 1959-61 famine have lower height, less income, and less labor supply. In another paper done by Luo, Mu and Zhang) Famine has lead to a decrease in one's height, weight, essential work supplies, head circumference, and educational skills and achievements.

It is assumed that famine alters health distribution among new borns, there is no doubt that famine influences infant's health state on a negative scale, as this new born isn't provided with enough nutrition after the famine occurs.

A strange fact about anemia and famine is that lack of food and poor quality of water that cause people to have anemia tend to effect men more than women. It is observes that in all famine records most people that die as a result of anemia or contaminated water and food are males, even in regions that normal males have higher life expectancies, as in Pakistan or India.

Reasons might be that females are uaually more flexible than males, and are more capable at finding and processing raw food.

areas famine is spread in

Features and characteristics of areas famine is spread in



Usually famine spreads among developing countries, where they lack good governmental decision. Regions with inhabitants that still use hunting and gathering techniques, regions thal lack pure or processed water, and regions

that continuously suffer from bad weather conditions, floods, droughts, and heavy rainfall.

Most famines are spread in areas where one or more of these factors apply to. Ethiopia for example,, in places like these, inhabitants rely on themselves to support each other. And still to use old and primitive machinery in agriculture.

Why do some countries like have been living in famine for along time and other cities has managed to successfully survive and overcome famine just fine?

When bad conditions strike those countries, rich countries like Arizona that were experiencing floods and droghts , these countries import all their main needs and food from other countries. Even with their lack of agriculture, they manage to import goods since they" The total lack of agriculture in an economically strong area does not cause famine; Arizona and other wealthy regions import the vast majority of their food, since such regions produce sufficient economic goods for trade." (2 again)

Famine in Africa ï ¢ ¢

Many parts of the 3rd world are suffering from famine and diseases accompanied by lack of food and contaminated water. Swaziland, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zmbia, Angola, Ethiopia, and many other countries examining famine are all located in Africa alone.

A common case for famine in Africa is Ethiopia, for it suffers from famine through many repeated periods of time. The world food programme and <https://assignbuster.com/causes-effects-and-solutions-to-famine/>

government policies have distributed food aids to millions of people in Ethiopia. As their situation is about to get worse with the continues warning of droughts and starvation consequents. The dry and hot weather barely supports plants and crops. In addition to that animals have also starved for the lack of Grazing land.

Haile Salassie, who was Ethiopia's regent since 1916, The northern states of Ethiopia never supported him and were demanding to be independent, therefore, they were against the government. Selassie had no problems keeping his country suffering from famine, as he thought that disabling his country to reach food was a good weapon for him to win this war. Which again confirms that bad governmental policies and civil wars increases the threat of famine or at least worsening the severity of current famines.

Moritania is another country facing famine in Africa, in the west of the continent. They were depending on sorghum and maize crops for their food. But the lack of rain prohibited the use of land and harvesting. Moritania continuesly suffers from droughts. The country has many feeding centers that are reporting severe malnutrition. World Vision, which runs feeding centers in the country, is reporting severe malnutrition in many areas.

Famine in south Africa

South Africa is the most region in Africa that has many countries stacked next to each other and suffer from famine. Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe are located in the far south and experience from harsh famine. Swaziland usually imports crops from southern countries in Africa. This year they need to import more than 100, 000 tonnes of cereal to survive famine.

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Almost two thirds of Swaziland's population lives on below the poverty line. The prices of crops and wheat have been rising in all of these south African countries and the wealthy landowners in the south-eastern provinces benefited by the drought..

Solutions to reduce the effects of famine

How to prevent famine

Famine can be avoided by following simple procedures, however political and governmental policy are the main aspects that would determine us of having famine or not, as unwise decision might repeat the incidence of the great leap forward and Korea in 19..

The main skills inhabitants of the land should know are how to hunt for food if they're living in regions where they depend mainly on animals. In addition to that growing, trapping, and storing food are basic skills residents should consider knowing in order for them to survive and prevent famine from spreading.

If living in the wild or an undeveloped region, residents should own guns, bows, baits and traps. Closer solutions to our reality might be storing food

Reducing famine

Many actions should be taken in order for famine to reduce to reach its lowest. The steps are simple, yet people still have problems reducing famine's effects.

Many Aid groups have taken charge of providing famine suffering countries with the needed vitamins and minerals within micronutrients. They've also offered giving money to residents to fill their needs with and paying local farmers rather than importing foods and supplies from foreign countries.

Procedures to reduce-beat famine involves the use of modern technologies since 70% of 3rd world famine countries rely on agriculture, the use of fertilizers, irrigation, financially supporting farmers, developing institutions, democracy, those procedures allowed india and developed countries to beat famine, as Agricultural experts from Denmark and India gathering in Copenhagen at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University concedered long term solutions.

Using modern science, genetic engineering in order to stop pest attacks and kill insects and destroy animal diseases, and fix low yealds were also some solutions recommended by by Prof Pinstруп-Andersen, he also adds that developing countries should invest in infrastructure, education, improvements of health care and domestic markets, and these things can easily be done with the help of developed countries and cooperation between coutries in science in order to help the poor countries.

“ As Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen concluded, India's democracy and free media have provided a feedback mechanism which forced politicians to adopt pro-technology policies in response to the needs of India's people.

“ India adopted the first generation of Green Revolution technologies in the late 1960s, directly after its last famine (of 1965-66) which killed one-half

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million people. This is best contrasted with China, whose policies induced the largest man-made famine in history during the same time period, killing tens of millions of people. Other countries, including the famine-ravaged states in Africa, would do well to follow India's example," concluded Mitra.