



## Mains Marathon

**Day 34:** Explain why the newly independent states in Africa suffered so many problems and assess to what extent the problems were of their own making? (250 Words)

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### Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Introduce Africa's colonial past in brief.
- Discuss the common problems of African states that are due to its indigenous nature and mention the problems that are emerging due to its colonial past.
- Conclude suitably.

### Answer:

African nations continue to feel the effects of the colonial presence more than 100 years later. African states were the colonies of various colonial powers like Portugal, Belgium, British, Spain and France. All these colonial powers were exploiting African states only in their selfish interest and for this they were involved themselves in ethnic cleansing and system like Apartheid.

There are several common problems of most of the African states and most of them are of Africa's itself. The majority of these problems are inherited from their colonial past. The colonial powers were not only exaggerating the problem of African states but also giving new problems. Because of colonial problems, African states are yet to become stable.

### Common problem of African States that are of indigenous nature:

#### Tribal differences

- They each contained a number of different tribes which had been held together by the force of colonial rulers and not by persuasion. Colonial power also used a policy of divide and rule and also highlighted differences among them. After independence these tribes were fighting for their tribes (due to more allegiance to tribes than nation) rather than nation and brought civil wars in several nations.
  - Ex.: In Nigeria, the Congo (Zaire), Burundi and Rwanda, tribal differences became so intense that they led to civil war.

#### Economically underdeveloped

- Most African states had very little industry due to the tribalistic nature of civilizations.

- Shortage of capital and skills of all kinds and growing population at explosive rate (2% a year).
- Mostly relied on supply/export of raw material. Ex. Nigeria, for example, relied heavily on its oil exports, which produced about 80 per cent of its annual income.

### **Political problems**

- African politicians lacked experience of how to work the systems of democracy and were following tribal rules. Most African leaders who had taken part in guerrilla campaigns before independence and had been influenced by Marxist ideas, which often led them to set up one-party states as the only way to achieve progress.
- Military coups to remove unpopular rulers became common. Ex. President Nkrumah of Ghana was removed by the army in 1966.

### **Economic and natural disasters**

- Cyclic natural disasters and acute poverty seem the destiny of Africa, since its inception on the global stage.
- Debt and IMF's forced therapy proved a disaster for its people due to reducing spending in the social sectors along with increased unemployment and high raised prices.

## **Let's consider problem gifted by colonial powers to several African states:**

### **Political problems:**

- **Political Interference:**
  - In Ghana (a British colony), USA backed rebels seized power in 1966, when president Nkrumah was on a state visit to China, because USA's dislike president Nkrumah's link with communist states like the USSR and China.
- **Neo-colonialism:**
  - In Congo (Zaire), the revolt for independence in the province of Katanga was backed by the USA and Belgium due to the copper rich nature of the Katanga plateau which had suited their industrial needs.
  - Neocolonialism was prevalent in colonies like Congo, Egypt (Aswan Dam) and Rwanda by USA, USSR and France respectively.
- **Provoked civil war:**
  - In Angola, three forces were fighting each other backed by the foreign players.
  - Marxist were supported by Cuba in influence of the USSR, and other two players backed by the USA.

### **Economic problems:**

- The Portuguese destroyed machinery and installations deliberately in revenge when they were leaving Mozambique.
- Black population of South Africa is struggling to poverty due to decades colonisation and apartheid system.
- Colonial powers preferred colonies for supplying raw materials and eventually the western world became the only market for the raw material of colonised states. Ex.
  - Ex. Cocoa and gold were Ghana's two main recourses for export.
  - Nigeria depends on its only oil resources.

### **Educational and low Human development:**

- In Portugal Colonised Angola the entire black population were illiterate.
- Apartheid system in South Africa were alienated entire black population from all human development opportunities even after independence.
- British ruled Malawi had only 3 secondary schools in the country for a population of 3 million and not even a single industry was present.

### **Internal struggle and Border skirmish:**

- Artificial division of the borders of African states as per the Berlin conference of 1885.
- The artificial border of Africa created many land and waterbody disputes in Africa like:
  - Ethnic conflict between the Tigrayans and Oromo and the Amhara tribes in Ethiopia led to civil war in tigray region of Ethiopia.
  - Migingo island in Lake Victoria is the center of territorial dispute between Kenya and Uganda.

### **Diseases and Famine:**

- Many died due to new diseases like smallpox.
- Famine led to mass deaths.

Although most African states are struggling with a number of socio-political and economic problems. But with the immense natural resources and young growing population depict the bright future of African people. After Asia, the next century will be governed by the African people' growth story.

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