**Global Geographical Assets, their Problems and Limitations: Sub-Saharan Africa, South and East Asia**

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Month, Day, Year

**Global Geographical Assets and their Problems and Limitations: South of Sahara in Africa, South and East Asia**

**Geographical Assets of Sub-Saharan Africa and Problems and Limitations faced in this region**

Africa South of the Sahara, also commonly known as Sub-Saharan Africa, is a large continent with several valuable physical resources. The geographical structure of the region, ranging from vast Savannahs to the thick tropical rainforests has blessed the area with great Diversity that plays a major role in the Region’s growth and development. All these physical structures have been central to the lives and economy of the region's inhabitants.

First, Sub-Saharan Africa has diverse climatic zones ranging from desert, semi-desert, Savannah, tropical regions, and rainy forests. Each of these zones is characterized by different prospects for agricultural, tourism, and industrial development. Some of the world’s wealthiest countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are located in this region, and the much-required water nutrient magnificently promotes the growth of imperative produce like cocoa, coffee, and rubber (Sono et al., 2021). On the other hand, the countries that are found in the plateau or continental regions, such as; Kenya as well as Ethiopia, harbor crops such as tea and flowers due to the mild climatic conditions.

Additionally, Sub-Saharan Africa is endowed with natural resources and minerals. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to some of the most potential mineral deposits. For instance, South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia are held to be very rich in Gold, Diamond, and platinum. It is as favorably endowed as it is in the production of oil especially in Nigeria, Angola, and Gabon. Minerals and hydrocarbons are some of the most important natural resources that if harnessed can act as the driving force towards the realization of economic growth and development in the country but this wealth goes unexploited due to a politically unstable environment and poor physical infrastructure (Nwani et al., 2023).

Moreover, Sub-Saharan Africa has fairly distributed water resources. Sub-Saharan Africa has some large river systems that contribute to agriculture, transportation, and millions of people getting water. The Nile River being a natural resource of water in northeastern Africa very crucial to Egypt and Sudan. The Congo River in the region of Central Africa is one of the biggest rivers on the globe by discharge offering significant hydropower resources in the region. However, underground aquifers in Namibia and Botswana, which are believed to be holding huge water reserves, are still untapped which can help control water shortage (Nyika & Dinka, 2023).

Additionally, Sub-Saharan Africa has favorable biodiversity supporting wildlife diversity. The region is characterized by significant levels of bio-diversity embracing virtually all biomes from savanna to Rainforest. It is home to several wildlife and some of the big species include elephants, lions, and rhinoceros. National parks and reserves in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa are important to the economy filling tourism revenues from millions of people visiting parks and reserves every year. In addition, the Congo Basin forests are important carbon reserves, which have useful potential in the fight against global climate change.

In Addition, Sub-Saharan Africa holds other types of resources in its bosom that make it a hub of economic and cultural endowment which are human resources. They include,

Firstly, the region has one of the most youthful populations in the global population bank due to high population densities in the demographic pyramid. The demographic dividend in sub-Saharan Africa has been occasioned by the fact that this region has one of the youngest populations of any region in the world.. Remaining with the demographic factor, the median age in the region is under twenty which means that the region has a youthful talent population. If realized to the optimum this could also enhance economic development, enhance general productivity, and contribute to development in agriculture, technology, and services industries (United Nations, nd).

Furthermore, the region also boasts a good cultural diversity with over three thousand ethnic groups speaking more than five hundred languages. Such a rich diversity can be seen in such aspects of human activity as arts, literature, music, and cooking – in other words, in the cultures that make up the world. Nevertheless, the volatility manifesting in such diversity could be beneficial for doing business and for unity at large since it generates creativity alongside significant tenacity.

Lastly, the region is undergoing rapid growth in urbanization. Especially over the most recent decades, there has been a dynamic growth of the urban population in Sub-Saharan Africa. Lagos, Nairobi, and Johannesburg are developing at a very fast rate, thus serving as focal points of commerce, creativity, and ideas in several modern societies. There is potential that when implemented cautiously, this urban growth can be viewed as a strength in the creation of economic development, healthcare services, education, and infrastructure.

However, several main problems weaken the capacities of Sub-Saharan Africa and its potential for full-fledged development. They include,

To start with, political instability and conflict are an important and recurrent issue for the region. Several African countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region have undergone coup d’états, civil wars, and authoritarian dictatorships some of which have made it almost impossible to achieve development milestones and at the same time forced millions of people to flee their homes. This has produced an uncertain climate for commerce, investment, and law in many countries.

To add, inadequate infrastructure has continued to be another hindering factor in the region in the past. In many cases, it is a shortcoming in basic facilities including road networks and railway, power, and telecommunication infrastructure that acts as a resource constraint or inhibits growth across the Sub-Saharan Africa region. This is because; firstly, the large geographical area of the region and secondly, the typically weak developed transport infrastructure which constrains connecting markets, inciting trade and improving the people’s ability to access public and private service delivery in areas like health and education. They argue that for the region to realize its optimum levels of resource and human capital productivity, more has to be invested in infrastructure.

Additionally, poverty and inequality among the population are high. Although the region is rich in natural resources, poverty affects the region substantially. According to Kates and Dasgupta (2007), in many countries of SSA, poverty is inherent, and about 41% of the population lives below the extreme poverty line of less than $1 per day. This problem of economic marginalization fuels social conflict, undermines political stability, and slows the desired uplift of the living standards for mankind. Besides, there is restricted access to the most fundamental needs such as; health care, and education in many areas in the region.

In Addition, environmental degradation and climate change is a rising and threatening problem in the region. The area suffers from depleting sources of energy, water pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, and desertification. These are being compounded by the effects of climate change, sky temperatures, and increased inter-seasonal rainfall disorganizing agriculture, water sources, and food security (Serdeczny et al., 2017; Sono et al., 2021)). For instance, recent events such as severe droughts in countries like Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya influenced terrible food shortages.

**Geographical Assets of South Asia and Problems and Limitations faced in this regio**n

South Asia as a region that consists of eight countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, the Maldives, and Afghanistan has been always a culturally concentrated and strategically sensitive region. These geographical resources of the South Asian region in both physical and human form have valorized the South Asian economy and validated the place that has been in the historic trade map of the world. Nevertheless, some disaggregate disadvantages go against the long-run developmental and welfare prospects of South Asia. The region has many different and important physical features that underlie its economy and culture such as large river valleys, big and powerful mountains, access to an extensive sea-line, and other resources.

Firstly, the Himalayan Mountain ranges, high plateaus, and fertile river valleys are one of the most vital and peculiar physical geographical assets of the region. The Himalayas, which stretch through five geographical regions of India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, and Pakistan, represent the highest mountain system of the entire world, and Mount Everest, the highest summit in the world. Besides, these super glamorous mountains along with adding natural beauty to this region are also continuously contributing their part in the water resources of the Himalayas through their Glacier feeding, most of the rivers including the Indus, Ganges, & Brahmaputra, originate from here. These rivers are Himalayan rivers and play a great role in supporting millions and billions of livelihoods and also in enhancing the crop productivity of South Asia which is rich in river valley crops including those from the Ganges, Indus, and Brahmaputra Basin. These are valley tracts containing alluvial soil, which provides very suitable soils for arable farming especially food crops such as rice, wheat, and cotton, and the annual season of monsoon adds to the productivity of these crops. Furthermore, it has identified the rivers as important water resources for both, water supply for agriculture and waterways that the area depends on economically and naturally (Manish & Pandit, 2018; Chakraborty et al., 2021).

Additionally, the region has large coastal margins and offers access to oceans. South Asian region boasts of a very long coastline of over 7,000 Km along the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. This coastline affords international access to some of the trade channels and hence states like Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Karachi, and Colombo are strategic ports. Their seaport also enables them to export more agricultural produce, textiles, and minerals in those regions. Furthermore, it offers the prospects of the coast and its coastal states’ tourism and fishing sectors primarily in Sri Lankan and Maldives (South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme, 2019).

Moreover, the region has a variety of climatic regions and agricultural possibilities. South Asia has a range of climate zones ranging from hot and dry as in the areas of Pakistan and western India down to tropical monsoon climate as in Bangladesh and the coastal regions of India. They are diverse hence supporting a variety of agricultural activities. Largely due to the fertile plains of the Ganges and Indus valleys, rice and wheat found their way into the agricultural-dependent region, whereas in southern India, where the climate is tropical, spices, tea, and coffee were locally grown. Likewise, the high-altitude regions of Sri Lanka and Nepal are ideal for farming things like tea, and vegetables (Aryal et al., 2020; Falak et al., 2022).

Furthermore, South Asia has abundant mineral deposits that can support its developmental needs and its extensive industries. India is particularly endowed with mineral resources including coal, iron ore, bauxite, and mica. Coal resources bring India into the top seven countries in the world in terms of the production of coal, and a large iron ore endowment has supported the country’s steel industry. Natural resources of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh include natural gas, limestone graphite, etc. These are areas that present mining and industrial prospects of a very big magnitude (Zhou et al., 2021).

In addition, the large and growing population in the region is a major human geographical asset of the region. South Asia has the largest and fastest-growing population of any region in the world, with over 2 billion people (Dokuru et al., 2023). This vast population provides a significant labor force, which is essential for agricultural production, manufacturing, and services. India’s young workforce is particularly important, as the country has one of the world’s largest populations of working-age individuals (Rasul et al 2021. The region’s demographic profile, with a large number of people in their prime working years, presents opportunities for economic growth and innovation, particularly in sectors such as technology and services.

Additionally, South Asia has an educated workforce and educational resource solutions. South Asia has an improving stock of human capital especially in information technology, engineering, medicine, and science talent pool. For instance, India has been in the vanguard of information technology and business process outsourcing businesses thus playing an appreciable role in the world economy (Hingorani, 2008). The systems of education that exist in the region, particularly in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have been preparing the Human resource caliber to make impacts domestically as well as globally. Also, the area consists of mobile and major universities and institutes among which are the Indian Institutes of Technology or IITs which provide first-rate graduates in the spectra of engineering and technology (Hingorani, 2008).

Moreover, the region is undergoing rapid urbanization and economic growth, presumably due to the highly populated and educated workforce, contributing to the overall economic growth in the region. For the last few decades, the region has experienced rapid urbanization so some of the largest economies in the world such as Mumbai, Delhi, Karachi, Dhaka, and Colombo exist in the region. They are all important commercial, financial, and industrial areas. These cities are thus assuming even greater strategic significance as new drivers of growth of the national economies and the growth of the expanded middle class, and domestic consumption.

Nevertheless, there are several disadvantages and obstacles for South Asia based on its geographical endowment and human resources which slow down its development. Such limitations include,

One of the major problems facing the development of South Asia is environmental degradation and climate change. Environmental degradation includes deforestation, pollution, and over-exploitation of natural resources in particular. Various social consequences have also been earmarked such as deforestation of the Himalayan region has enhanced soil erosion for agriculture and landslides during the monsoon period. Air pollution strongly affects human health and for these reasons, people living in urban areas, particularly in India, breathe polluted air. Another damage concern is water and its availability, which is a big problem in both India and Pakistan because of drilling and pollution of rivers Ganges and Indus respectively. There is further increased standard risk with the climatic change affecting sea levels thus posing a threat of flooding the coastline and the glaciers pose a threat to water supply (Aryal et al., 2020; Falak et al., 2022).

Additionally, political instability and conflict are a limitation to the economic growth of South Asia. The region remains that of political instability as well as intra and inter-state conflict. The major cause of tension is still the territorial dispute regarding the area of Kashmir between both India and Pakistan, and conflict in Afghanistan is persisting. In Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, political instabilities have delayed the process since internal conflicts and governance problems create a poorly governed commonwealth. Also, the challenges, such as corruption and inefficient governance in several South Asian countries arising from poverty, do not allow the execution of essential reforms and policies (Aryal & Pulami, 2024).

Lastly, natural disasters have been recognized as an imminent problem to the economic growth of the region. Floods, cyclones, earthquakes, and droughts are extremely common and recurrent in South Asia. Every year the region is hit by disastrous floods especially in South Asia including Bangladesh and India where monsoon rains flood the rivers rendering millions of farming lands and people affected. Countries such as India and Bangladesh are affected by cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Nepal and other parts of the Himalayan region have very high risks of earthquakes. These disasters are destructive to infrastructures, agriculture, and the lives of people and greatly impede economic growth and development, thereby increasing poverty among the populace (Kafle, 2019; Azeem et al., 2023).

**Geographical Assets of East Asia, Problems and Limitations faced in this region**

As a subregion including China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Taiwan, and Mongolia, East Asia is one of the most vibrant economically endowed regions in the world in terms of physical and human capital. The geographical characteristics of East Asia are characterized by a large area of natural resources, non-homogeneous climate, and highly fertile agricultural land, labor resources that are rapidly developing and highly qualified. But there are several problems in the concerned area which entail environmental issues, political instability, and scarcity of resources.

To start with, East Asia has several major mountain ranges and plateaus. Terrestrial features of major interest include the Himalayas, which stretches from South Asia and into some parts of China, the Tian Shan, and the Kunlun Mountains. There are several significant uses of these mountain ranges in that they; help with the prevention of various weathers implying that they cause variations of climatic conditions within the region, like China’s western area having a dry climate and the east having a monsoon climate. The other major physical geographical feature is the Tibetan Plateau referred to as the ‘third pole of the earth’ which is an enormous water reserve centre and affects regional hydrology. These mountain formations are also extremely useful as barriers to communication and transport – and while they help prevent more of the region from becoming desert – or, in other areas, battered by large storms – they can also be a nuisance (Du et., 2022; He et al., 2023).

Additionally, major river systems are sources of water for both domestic and commercial use. Several big river systems in East Asia supply the people with water that is used in agriculture, industries, and residential areas. The Yangtze and Yellow Rivers of China are the largest and most important water resources in the world, where the Yangtze River has been an important transportation channel and is home to more than 400 million people, who rely on the freshwater. The Mekong, which runs through southern China down to southeast Asia is an essential water source for crop and fish farming. The two rivers bordering northern China and Mongolia include the Liao River and the Amur River which are fundamental to the farmland and ecological system. These river systems bring in nutritious alluvial soil which makes the river valley some of the most productive farming land on the earth. In addition, (He et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the region has a diversified climatic zone supporting diversified agricultural practices. Different agro-climatic regions exist in East Asia ranging from temperate through sub-tropical to arid regions, hence different produce. The region in the northern part of China, Japan, and South Korea is suitable for growing wheat, soybeans, corn, and rice while the southern part of China and Taiwan is good for growing tea, fruits, and vegetables. Specifically, the conducive agricultural weather in Japan has seen the country place a premium on rice cultivation while China boasts of some of the largest areas of different agricultural belts in the globe, making it a leading producer of staple food crops (World Regional Geography, nd). These agricultural resources feed several large populations in the region and are strategically essential to the region’s food security.

In addition, East Asia has excelled in technological innovation. Currently, East Asia is a technological hub, especially in the electronics industry, automobiles, and communication technology industry. Japan has consistently been in the category of automobile production companies, robots, and consumer durable products manufacturers including Toyota, Sony, and Honda among others. South Korea is also famous for electronics and semiconductor products and Samsung and LG are prominent electronics companies across the world. The technological industry has continued to grow, and China has greatly developed this sector most especially by companies such as Huawei in technology and Alibaba in e-commerce. Substantial investments have been made toward research and development, and therefore currently, there has been a very high technological growth, making areas in East Asia as technological hubs.

Lastly, East Asia has many economic cities and trading networks. The principal cities in East Asia are Shanghai, Tokyo Seoul, and Hong Kong among others. These cities can be described as having a sound economy and functioning as major commercial and financial cities hence there is so much potential for financing commerce, trade, and industry. Geographical location, in this case, plays a vital role in the growth of East Asia, in that the region is located close to some of the world’s busiest markets. For instance, China is the largest exporting country in the globe, and its market is engrossed in international networks of production. Then, South Korea and Japan have also attained advanced industrialized nations, and these advanced industries such as technology and manufacturing industries have a high producing ability in this region. These cities also underscore them as important centers for Research, Innovation, and Development with the attraction of global Investors.

However, there are several problems and limitations facing East Asia based on its geographical endowment and human resources which slow down its development. Such limitations include,

Firstly, the major prevailing problem in East Asia is environmental degradation. East Asia has an array of environmental concerns due to the enhanced industrialization and urbanization processes. Especially China; the following consequences have been realized in this region courtesy of air pollution by burning of coal and industrial emissions: Health concerns and quality of life. Two important rivers of the region, the Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers contribute millions to agricultural production and are polluted and over-exploited (Yang et al., 2021). In China its northern areas deforestation is a problem that has led to desertification and the issue of loss of bio-diversity is another area of concern. The Mekong River is also currently threatened by hydroelectricity dam construction, mainly in upstream countries such as China.

Additionally, the region experiences imminent natural disasters. Typhoons, floods, and drought are well known in this region as other natural calamities such as earthquakes also affect them. Japan, the country situated in the quake-prone Pacific Ring of Fire, is constantly under threat of earthquakes and tsunamis while seasonal typhoons and flooding pose a threat to Chinese and Taiwan operations (Lassa, 2011). It is also important to note that northern and western parts of China are also facing conditions of droughts. Such disasters result in a considerable number of deaths, property damages, and interruption of unreliable business within the region that is continually at risk of further disasters.

In conclusion, it is my argument that Africa south of the Sahara, South Asia, and East Asia have special geographic endowments that are still crucial to their current economic and social advancement. The Sub-Saharan Africa area comprises favorable resources like mineral endowment, agricultural land, and water resources. However, its growth is restricted by issues such as political vulnerability, environmental decline, and poor facilities. South Asia has advantageous geographic features with huge river networks, abundant minerals, and a young worker population; however, the question mark remains with poverty, environmental issues, and internal conflicts. East Asia stands for the dynamic nature of the region which is equipped with a great variety of terrains, provides high technology advancements, and strong regions that are engaged with business at a global level. Nonetheless, it has problems connected with environmental questions and natural disasters. Yet, each of these regions can have unlimited potential if the stated limitations are tackled by sustainable development, political stability, and successful management of the resources in the areas mentioned above.

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