



PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

The Feast Framework For Behavior Change

**Webinar Brief
15:2021**

Speaker
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Moderator
Dr. Nadeem ul Haque

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PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

JOIN US FOR A TALK ON

The FEAST Framework For Behavior Change

LIVE
WEBINAR ON
JAN 11, 2021
07:00 PM PST

MODERATOR

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque
VC, PIDE

Cass R. Sunstein is currently the Robert Walmsley University Professor at Harvard. He is the founder and director of the Program on Behavioral Economics and Public Policy at Harvard Law School. In 2018, he received the Holberg Prize from the government of

Norway, sometimes described as the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for law and the humanities. In 2020, the World Health Organization appointed him as Chair of its technical advisory group on Behavioural Insights and Sciences for Health. He serves as an adviser to the Behavioural Insights Team in the United Kingdom.



Mr. Sunstein is author of hundreds of articles and dozens of books, including Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness with Richard H. Thaler, (2008), Simpler: The Future of Government (2013), The Ethics of Influence (2015), #Republic (2017), Impeachment: A Citizen's Guide (2017), The Cost-Benefit Revolution (2018), On Freedom (2019), Conformity (2019), How Change Happens (2019), and Too Much Information (2020). His areas of interest are Administrative Law, Constitutional Law, Environmental Law and Policy, Employment Law, Law and Economics: Behavioral Law and Economics and Labor Law.



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In the webinar, Prof. Cass Sunstein talked about three important concepts: Nudge, FEAST framework for behavior change, and Sludge.

- ◆ Nudge focuses on the interventions which function as an impetus for individual behavioral change, in particular, the acts and actions which bring about normative change in the society. The idea of nudge comes from the ideas of humanity and species, based on the fact that human beings being part of an imperfect world are imperfect choosers. People can be imperfect choosers because of behavioral biases. For purposes of public policy concerns, it is imperative to study five biases. Nudge functions as an interventionist framework for controlling these biases which are detailed in the following text:
 - ▶ The first is present bias; meaning that we focus on today and tomorrow hence can solve today's problems but are less able to resolve next week's or year's or decade's problems.
 - ▶ Inertia and procrastination are two further issues that cause delays in much-needed actions and obstruct individuals in meeting their targets. These two factors have been empirically tested in situations of eating habits, tobacco consumption, and cases of health and healthcare concerns.
 - ▶ The third challenge for purposes of policy and practice is unrealistic optimism. If included in the public policies related to road safety and pandemic, unrealistic optimism helps counter roadside safety issues, and in case of pandemic signifies observance of SoPs compliance.
 - ▶ Human beings are also subjective in assessing risks. People tend to develop a greater propensity of being at risk when they have seen or experienced their closer ones facing any mishap, otherwise, they think that it cannot happen to them.
 - ▶ Loss aversion is the fifth bias which signifies that human beings hate losses and love to gain. The loss from the status quo is painful and people certainly try to avoid that.
 - ▶ These biases have been empirically tested and results have shown that: (i) people have present biases (ii) people don't care for the future much (iii) inertia and procrastination are very powerful forces (iv) people also tend to be unrealistically optimistic (v) their perception of risk is often biased, and (vi) people are loss averse.
- ◆ FEAST framework is based on five theoretical concepts that have been successfully operationalized across different countries to meet targets of development and social policy. The framework provides an organization of these ideas for behavioral change. The range of issues where this framework has been a

success includes COVID-19, healthcare management systems, human safety & security, and economic livelihoods.

- ◆ FEAST stands for five things: fun, easy, attractive, social and timely; these concepts capture decades of research on behavior change.
 - ▶ 'E' in the framework stands for Easy. The basic idea is that if you want a behavior change, make it very easy for people to engage in the desired behavior. For most important programs, whether the issue involves poverty, food, or health, the take-up rate is between 40 percent and 60 percent which is a tragedy. It means that many people who could get help and change their lives just don't, the reason being that the procedure is not easy. They have to fill out forms, have to figure out, and have to learn something that is not easy to learn. The E says to make the procedures automatic and if not automatic then make it simpler for people to follow.
 - ▶ 'A' in the framework is Attractive. The idea is that if you want behavior change, make the desired & relevant action pleasing & attractive. New Zealand has shown success in controlling the pandemic and one reason is that the route the healthcare systems adopted for pandemic control was attractive; colorful masks, vibrant signs for SoPs observance, etc. have convinced people to comply with SoPs observance.
 - ▶ 'S' refers to Social. Here, the idea is to indicate the existing social norms to engage in the relevant behaviors; for instance, stopping smoking, driving safely, acting certain ways in domestic spheres. Recent research also corroborates that people not only are willing to include existing social norms into their behaviors for their safety & security (per se) but are also willing to engage in new social norms.
 - ▶ 'T' stands for Timely, which means that if we are trying to engage people in certain behaviors or if the aim is to bring about a social change, then it has to be at the right time, neither too soon nor too delayed. Empirical tests have shown that providing in-time information makes all the difference.
 - ▶ 'F' stands for Fun. Existing research indicates that neglected tools for behavior change across the world are to make the intervention fun for behavior change. Amazon's marketing strategy to sell razors with the tagline 'Frustration-Free Packaging' is fun, as stated by Prof. Sunstein. In many nations, designing interventions or packaging commodities as fun is smart. Behavior change is usually perceived as scary & challenging but if you give people a sense of enjoyment and fun associated with it, it can be very effective. One country which has adopted the F feature of the FEAST framework in COVID-19 to cater to the issue of misinformation is 'Humor Not Rumor'.
- ◆ Prof. Sunstein also elaborated the concept 'Sludge' which has been used in the World Health Organization and United Nations as a way of explaining a problem which citizens all over the world face. Sludge consists of frictions, pa-

paperwork burdens, or administrative obstacles that hinder meeting the targets for the individuals in the organizations.

- ▶ All over the world, there are administrative burdens and paperwork requirements that stand as walls between human beings and something which can make their lives better. In the US, approximately 9 billion annual hours of paperwork are required which are imposed on the American people. Recently, the number has increased to 11 billion hours. Allocating so many hours on paperwork requirements by students, teachers, medical professionals, official staff members, etc. goes against the E & F features of the FEAST framework.
- ▶ If a person is elderly, disadvantaged, uneducated, poor, or depressed then sludge is a serious problem. In the wake of this argument, governments in different countries are adopting ways to minimize sludge by removing requirements of filling forms, going for interviews, and attesting documents. A sludge audit is also an effective way to minimize such unnecessary documentation, attestation, and interview requirements. Such audits can be formal or informal and must be institutionalized in public and private sector organizations.
- ▶ Prof. Sunstein also talked about the importance of conducting a cost-benefit analysis of different interventions designed for behavior change. The decisions can be taken to the longevity of the intervention, actual economic costs, inflationary threats, and social costs, to name a few.



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