Humans are expected to start settling on Mars within the next 20 years. How will you go about colonizing Mars? What are the important considerations and how will you prioritize them to ensure sustainable human presence on the planet?

Ninad Walde
2021A4PS3082H
f20213082@hyderabad.bits-pilani.ac.in
7720040455

- How will you raise funds for this colonization? Additionally, how will you strategize your budget, and what trade-offs will you make?
- What are the problems you foresee during your colonization on Mars?
- Give innovative ideas or solutions to solve these problems
- How would you measure the success of your colonization? What potential risks do you foresee with your solution, and how would you mitigate them?

Understanding the Problem

Who am I?

It is the year 2044, and I am an UN-elected administrator tasked with leading a team to Mars to make necessary arrangements to ensure that humans can start settling on Mars.

Climatic Condition of Mars in the next 20 years

Thin Atmosphere: Composed mostly of carbon dioxide, with atmospheric pressure at about 0.6% of Earth's, making it difficult for liquid water to exist on the surface

Extreme Temperatures: Average temperatures hover around -63°C (-81°F), which poses challenges for sustaining life

Radiation Exposure: The lack of a magnetic field exposes the surface to high levels of cosmic radiation, making it lethal for most known life forms

Gravity: The gravity on the moon is 38% of that on Earth

Sunlight: Planet receives sunlight, but the intensity is half as that on Earth

Defining our objective on Mars

Colonization of Mars: long term land occupation and the exploitation of resources on Mars for human benefit. We will define a colony as a group of 50 people living as part of a community

Sustainable human Presence: Ensuring that the environment Mars can support human life without depleting resources or causing irreversible harm to the ecosystem.

Important Assumptions for 2044

Space travel: Due to major advancements in aerospace technology, we can safely reach Mars in 6-8 months time

Advanced Spacesuits: Light weight space suits about the weight of a bag pack which holds compressed air which enable us to move around on the surface of mars easily

Construction Robots: All manual labor can be done by robots, which can work 24/7 with the help of solar energy.

Daylight: At the equator, mars gets 12 hours of sunlight, and it decreases as we go to the poles. For ease of calculation, we will assume entire planet get 9 hours of sunlight per day. Duration of one day is same as that on Earth.

Resources: It has been confirmed that there are ice glacier and minerals present under the surface of mars

Challanges to be faced during colonization

Understanding human needs

The bedrock of any thriving civilization is the satisfaction of basic human requirements.

Habitat: A secure environment that maintains air pressure, composition, and temperature is essential. This habitat must protect inhabitants from radiation and other environmental hazards, particularly in extraterrestrial settings like Mars

Water Supply: Water is crucial not only for drinking but also for food production and sanitation. Colonies will need systems for recycling water and possibly extracting it from local sources

Food Production: Establishing a sustainable food supply is vital, we can't depend on packaged food from Earth forever

Energy Production: Reliable energy sources are necessary to power habitats, life-support systems, and food production facilities.

Oxygen Generation: Maintaining breathable air is essential. This may involve systems for producing oxygen from local resources or recycling carbon dioxide produced by inhabitants

Resource Extraction: Equipment will be needed to extract and process local minerals and materials for construction and manufacturing purposes. This includes tools for mining and processing ores

Waste Management: Effective waste disposal and recycling systems are crucial to prevent contamination of the habitat and to recycle materials for reuse

Psychological Support: The psychological impact of colonization should not be overlooked. Creating environments that allow for personal expression and interaction with nature and other humans

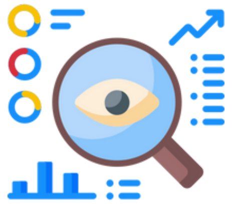
How do we actually go about colonizing a new planet?

Send a team of specialists with a large number of construction drones to Mars →

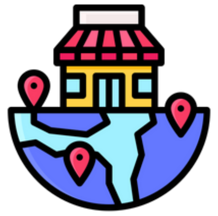
Using their expertise, available data of Mars, and resources present on Mars to establish a colony for humans →

Send the first set of humans who want to shift to Mars to occupy the new colony →

Observe and analyze the long term effects of them shifting to Mars and make necessary adjustments to make their living more comfortable →



Expand and find more locations where we can build new colonies for more people who want to shift to Mars



Challanges to be faced during colonization

Segmentation: How to decide who gets to go to Mars

The first set of humans go to mars to establish the colonies, will need to have a few common characteristics which will increase the chances of our mission to be successful. The identified traits are as followed

Emotional Intelligence: The ability to manage interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically is vital, especially in a confined environment

Adaptability and Problem-Solving Skills: Members must be capable of critical thinking and adapting to unforeseen challenges that may arise on Mars

Physical Preparedness: The conditions on Mars are harsh, we need abled-people who can keep up with the physical requirements of the journey

Communication: To facilitate easy and effective communication between the entire team, it will be mandatory for the entire crew to learn English language. (English as it is the most spoken language in the world)

Detailed Demographic of the crew is as follows

Number of crew members- 10

Gender Ratio of the Crew- 5 females and 5 males

Ethnicity- As diverse as possible, at least one member from each continent

Administrator- Leader of the crew, preferably from aerospace background. Will coordinate with the crew and UN to establish colonies

Medical Officers- Health management expert, will ensure the entire crew is healthy and will treat them in case of any injuries

Agronomists- Will be incharge of all aspects with respect to food productions

Robotics Specialists- Will be incharge of maintenance of all the hardware and construction robots

Geologists- To study martian soil and lead the effort for resource utilization

Why have we chosen the following demographic?

- We want to ensure a diverse crew for optimal performance and well-being during long-term missions. Research suggests that **gender-diverse teams are better equipped to handle stress and conflict**, essential for survival in confined spaces.
- Inclusion of all different ethnicities as we are **representing the planet earth as a whole.** This will create a feeling of unity and is important for the social relations between crew members now and for the future generation of people when they settle on mars
- Each crew must be a **specialist in the all given areas**. This is essential as we don't want to depend on only one person for a certain job, but rather the entire team to be responsible for the development of a fully self-sufficient colony
- We are limiting the number of members to 10, as initially there will be a **limited amount of resources** available for us on the planet. There is also a **factor of safety** involved. It would be harder to ensure the safety, if more people were at the same time.

Solutions and Prioritization

Based on the importance for the long term survival on mars, the following is the prioritization order of the problems we need to solve to successfully colonize Mars

1

Basic Survival Requirements

Humans cannot survive without oxygen to breathe, nutrients from food and water to drink. The first step to colonize mars would be to find effective long term solution to these problems

2

Energy Production

To develop and expand the colony on mars, we would need a viable, environment friendly method to generate energy

3

Infrastructure

We need to create stable structures so that people are comfortable to live in martian environment

4

Social and Psychological Considerations

Impact of such a huge change and long isolation periods could be significant for mental health of a person, which could lead to problems like depression

Solutions

Oxygen and Water Production: Mechanical System to extract and purify water from Martian ice. Machines which work on the principle Sabatier reaction which can convert Martian CO2 into oxygen. Water extraction will be crucial for both drinking and agricultural needs

Food Production: Develop sustainable food sources through hydroponics (growing crops using water with added minerals without soil) in controlled environments to ensure a reliable food supply

Energy Production: Solar energy will be the primary power source initially, supplemented by nuclear power as technology advances.

Waste Recycling: Body suit which will recycle water and nutrients as they perspirate from their body

Building Materials: Utilize in-situ resources (ISRU). Structures could be made from Martian materials, using techniques like 3D printing

Location Selection: Identify optimal locations for settlements, such as near the poles for easy access to water ice or in caves for natural protection against radiation

Radiation Protection: Create a huge strong transparent shields around housing structures, which will reflect back the harmful radiations, and protect housing structures from external harm

Mental Health: Community centers where people where different types of recreational activities are set up to help cope with the difficulties of change

Raising Capital and Budgeting

Different Ways to raise capital

Government Partnerships
Collaborating with national space agencies like NASA and ISRO could provide significant funding and resources. Along with funding they could also help with technology aspects

Private Investment
Much of the funding could come from private investors and commercial contracts, similar to how spaceX has been raising money through this method
Crowdfunding models have been proposed where individuals pledge money contingent on successful milestones in colonization efforts

International Collaboration
A global effort involving multiple countries could distribute costs and risks while pooling resources and expertise, similar to how the International Space Station was funded

Revenue Generation
Developing commercial opportunities such as space tourism or resource extraction could provide ongoing funding once initial missions are successful
Media rights for broadcasting live events from Mars could also generate substantial revenue as public interest grows

To ensure **sustainable continuous funding** over the entire duration of the mission and maintain **autonomy in decision-making**, we should prioritize international partnerships and revenue-generating initiatives.

Budgeting

Annual Budget to go to Mars is **25 Billion Dollars.** Excluding the cost to reach Mars here is the breakdown of the budget for various important functions

1. In-Situ Resource Utilization **25% - $6.25 Billion**
   - Focus on technologies to extract and utilize Martian resources, such as water ice and regolith, to produce oxygen, fuel, and construction materials.
   - This investment reduces reliance on Earth supplies, making the colony more sustainable.

2. Habitat Construction **30% - $7.5 Billion**
   - Allocate funds for building initial habitats that can support human life, including living quarters, laboratories, and agricultural facilities.
   - Emphasize using local materials to minimize costs and enhance the colony's resilience.

3. Energy Infrastructure **20% - $5 Billion**
   - Develop renewable energy sources, primarily solar power, to ensure a stable energy supply for all colony operations.
   - Invest in backup systems, such as nuclear power, for long-term sustainability.

4. Life Support Systems **15% - $3.75 Billion**
   - Create systems for recycling air, water, and waste to support human life over extended periods.
   - Ensure these systems are robust and capable of operating autonomously.

5. Transportation and Mobility **10% - $2.5 Billion**
   - Develop local transportation systems to facilitate movement within the colony.
   - Plan for emergency evacuation protocols and transportation infrastructure.

Success Metrics & Future Risks

Success Metrics

Primary Success Metric

Increase Demand: Higher demand from people living on earth indicates that we have done a good job, and they trust have we have built

Secondary Success Metrics

Completion Rate of Critical Infrastructure: Target 100% completion of essential facilities (oxygen purifiers, power systems, water recycling)

Food Production Capacity: Agricultural systems capable of producing at least 70% of the food needs for the initial population

Health Monitoring Outcomes: Aim for less than 10% incidence of serious health issues (physical or psychological) among colonists during the first year.

Tertiary Success Metrics

Energy Production Metrics: Generate a minimum of 50 kWh per colonist per day through solar or nuclear energy sources

Ecosystem Preservation Index: Monitor and limit any detectable negative impacts on Martian geology or potential microbial life, aiming for less than 5% alteration in local environments.

Waste Management Efficiency: Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 80% for all organic and inorganic materials produced by the colony.

Future Risks and Mitigation

1.) Physical Health Issues: The lower gravity on Mars (38% of Earth) can lead to muscle atrophy, bone density loss, and fluid redistribution, affecting overall health.

Solution: Implement regular exercise regimens using resistance training equipment to maintain muscle and bone health. Monitor health closely through regular medical check-ups

2.) Communication Delays: The average distance of 225 million kms means communication with Earth can have delays of up to 20 minutes one way

Solution: Establish autonomous procedures that allow colonists to make decisions without immediate input from Earth. Train crew members to handle emergencies independently

3.) Planetary Protection: There is a risk of contaminating Mars with Earth microbes, which could compromise scientific research and potential Martian ecosystems.

Solution: Adhere to strict sterilization protocols for all equipment sent to Mars. Develop containment strategies for human activities that could introduce Earth organisms

4.) Loss of Cultural Identity: Long-term isolation from Earth may lead to cultural shifts or loss of identity among colonists.

Solution: Encourage cultural exchange programs with Earth, allowing for virtual interactions with people back home. Promote the celebration of Earth traditions while fostering a unique Martian culture.