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Batch #053

Is Pakistan ready for digital revolution.

Outline

1. Introduction

   Thesis statement

2. Crunch paragraph

3. Pakistan is ready for digital revolution (Thesis)

   a). Digital Pakistan vision the government step towards digitalization

   b). Pakistan the first country in south Asia that enable online banking system in 2008.

   c). CPEC investments in Pakistan IT sector paved a way to digitalization

   d). Pakistan's e-commerce business is the fastest ranking in world

   e). Youth has keen interest in digitization but the potential is untapped.

4. Pakistan is not ready to benefit from digitalization and is caught by many complex multifaceted problem (Antithesis)

   a). Government initiatives are limited and not implemented throughout the country

   b). Cyber security and data privacy is

· unregulated and unchecked

c). Governance crisis restrict the country towards digitalization

d). Large chunk of population is illeterate.

e). Low ranking in WEFs Global competetive index.

5. Digitization will no doubt cure the existing ills of Pakistan

a). Progress of implementing policies is slow, but has more beneficial impacts

b). Country has cyber security laws and strict control mechanism for smooth functioning

c). Digital governance is used to can overcome the governance crisis

d). Usage of internet increased manifold

e). Virtual education system is a way forward to educate they youth and making them skillful.

Essay :-

Government initiatives and recent development indicate Pakistan readiness for greater digital revolution. No doubt, digitization is the cure of existing ills. However, there is some challanges that needs to be addressed to ensure success digitization in the country.

The major progress towards digitization is the government initiatives of Digital Pakistan vision that encompassing various initiatives aimed to harness the digital technology for economic growth and social uplift. The main aim is to focus on the improving coordination, still digital skills and promoting the enterpreneurship by ensuring the effective e-governance. In Pakistan digital policy continue to facilitate the IT sector through digitization projects research, innovation, software technology parks subsidies, internation certifications, internship and training programms. In this way, the country is ready to go for industrial

digitization.

Along with the government initiatives, Pakistan is the first country in south Asia that enable the branchless online banking system in Pakistan in 2008. The progress towards digitization ultimally improve the economic and social stability. In 2019, 27 bank offering internet Banking services that with 3.1 million internet user are registered. Digitization has enormous opportunities. Online transaction lessen the travelling cost and it the system more convenient. Online billing systems is the best way to improve the working environment in banking sector and there is a less chances of corruption or robbery in online transaction. So, the rising of Pakistan in internet users is the sign that shows that Pakistan is ready for digitization.

The digital power of China's BRI is unfolding a new ero era of opportunities in coupled with local efforts. Pakistan is the part of BRI the game changer CPEC. Pakistan China Fiber cable creates

the land based link between Pakistan and China. The 820 km fibre optic cable is expected to extend to Gawadar. Ant Financial service that is the china's bigghest online payment bought 45 percent share in telenor subsidiary Microfinance Bank to bring mobile payments to individuals for promotion of microbusiness in Pakistan. Last year, in 2022. National telecommuncation center inaugurated first ever national data center in Pakistan. Withe the cooperation of China the CPEC center of excellence was inaugurated in Islamabad. The rapid advancement in digitisation ensure bhe success of Pakistan digital vision. Due to ease in access to technology through international projects and growing digitisation makes the Pakistan e-commerce business is the fast ranking in the world. People adopted freelancing as a profession furthermore the Darazpk. Food panda. Creem and Uber companies accelerate the process of digitisation. It not only improve the economy but also change

the life styles. According to industry experts, Pakistan e-commerce marke is currently valued over 120 million dollars and it is growing every year.

As per Pakistan telecommunication Authority (PTA) Pakistan e-commerce reached $1 million in 2020. The facts supported the argument that Pakistan is not only ready for but also moving towards digital revolution.

Last but no least the youth has keen interest in digitization. Pakistan has large chunk of youth population of about 60%. Many young student used digital media and accepting careers as freelancers. According to women intech.pk digitization has created 45 percent jobs for young women. This mean that the young population is already engaged in online business and or online jobs.

The desire of Pakistan's youth to swim in the tide of digitization are the factor that validate the stance how pakistan is ready for digital revolution.

However, many believe that Pakistan is not ready for ~~globalisati~~ digitization. They questioned the Pakistan readiness for ~~cha~~ digital change. They opine that the government initiatives taken towards digitization is not fully implemented throughout the country. Although, ~~i~~ these initiative are taken ~~but~~ they are limited to certain elite class. There is a gap in rural and ~~urb~~ urban areas in internet access. Most of people living in remote areas and they donot have internet facility and even they donot have technological devices to get benefit from digitization. According to PTA, only 28.14 percent of population use internet in villages, where more than 55% of population live the internet usage likely to be less than 8%. So the gap in urban and rural infrastructure clear that Pakistan is unprepared for digitization.

Another factor is that the online banking system leads to cyber attacks and data privacy is not secured. Pakistan has

regulated and unchecked internet access that increase the vulnerability of sensitive institution to cyber attacks. Recent incident of Pakistan National Bank that are under threat of some pr. data privacy issues. Without stricts policies hackers can easily access to banking sector that increase the crime risks linked with digitization. It is also observed that, people have been frauded by online companies. Hence, it shows that Pakistan is not ready for digital revolution.

Apart from policies, the Pakistan governance crisis restrict toward digitization Currently, currentro country is facing many issues in governance sector like corruption, nepotism. It effect the performance of local government and distort the allocation of resources. In governance sector, the influence of politics detriorate the the efficient functioning of baurocracy. Moreover, Political involvement leads to failure in continuity of policies. that makes the

So, there is need to prioritise the solutions of governance crisis and then moved to digitization. Furthermore there is no transparency mechanism and counter check the performance of government employs. All these crisis clear shows that Pakistan cannot get benefits from digitization.

Another argument is that although e-commerce is growing but this online businesses are limited as the large chunck of population is illeterate. They donot have access to education and are not developed technically to adapt the digitized change. Digitization without digital skill is meaningless. In Pakistan around 42% population is illetrate. Pakistan's youth literacy is 71%. which means that 29% of youth is illeterate. For such peoples communication and information technology would be daunting challange. And it is a common observation that people belongs to old age are unwilling to accept the innovation. According to

World Bank report 24% of Pakistan's population is under poverty line they are unable to pay feeses to expensive training institution and donot ho even have budget to buy the technological devices. Thus, even if the technology is made available to them, they would not be receptive to it.

Some opine that Pakistan is low ranking in Global competitive index. According to GCI report Pakistan's index stand at 110 out 140 countries. Currently, Pakistan is in factor driven stage which mean that economically Pakistan is in early stage. Report implies that most of workforce is unskilled, and economy derives most of its exports from natural resources. The low productivity is reflected in low wages and competitiveness rely on well-functioning public and private institutions and stable macro-economic framwork. But Pakistan is facing unstable economy, ~~with more~~ The government allocate only 2.3% of GDP to education sector. Furthermore, the Pakistan

is burdenized with foreign debt and unable to provide funds for the development of technical institutions. Therefore such economic constrains and being indebted to funding organisations, Pakistan might be unable to organize the widespread digital programmes for the public.

All the argument given by opponents donot hold water due to one reason or the other. For example, critics says that policy implementation is limited but the argument is not valid. Although the implementation of digital is slow but its not limited. Government has taken intiative of training programmms that are easily accessible and also free of cost. They are not limited to elite class infect these policy benefit the middle class by training them to get a good job. The National digital skill program equip the youth with in-demand skills. It provide training and certifications, software development and Graphic designing. These

initiatives address the digital gap and enhance employment opportunities in the digit economy. There is a need of continuity in government policies. So it depict that although the progress is slow but equally beneficial to all the social classes in Pakistani society.

As far as the cyber security and control mechanism is concerned, the opponent piont of view of cyber attacks is not th. can't validate that Pakistan is not ready for digitization. In Digital vision 2025, the policy framwork is promulgate that enable the sustainable IT environment including the data protection. Ministry of commerce formulate the e-commerce framwork and policy guidelines with relevant stake holders. In this vision.. the rules related to e-Governance such as "Rule of business" to accomodate the electronic flow and process. Furthermore, Pakistan has Prevention of Electron Crime Act 2016 that deal with cyber crimes in Pakistan. So we can say that mere weakness in

cyber laws and data protection is not hindering the Pakistan towards digitization.

A number of critics opine that apart from policy issues governance crisis also hindered the digitization but thats not true. Infect governance crisis can are overcome by digitization. E-governance can strengthen the transparency mechanisms and its a better way to elli ellevate the corruption in governance seetor. Digital governance enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of public institutions. and services. It foster the participation. inclusion and empowerment in decision making processes. Pakistan developed smart management tools tools to help some government departments improve the staff performance and overall user experiences. Combined with users' feedback, this data helped to identify low performing areas and take remedial measures. There are many enample and models of successfull e governance in the world like

Singapore's smart nation initiative represent one of the most comprehensive and successful digital governance strategy. Another example is the digital front in Malaysia from smart city projects to traffic control systems. Pakistan should learn lessons and replicate the reforms. for Hence, it shows that governance crisis can overcome by digitization more effectively and efficiently.

As far as the illetracy is concerned, admittedly the large chunk of population is illeterate and don on but there is rising trend of cellular users as the telecom sector is one of the fastest growing part of Pakistan's economy in term of mobile availability and affordibility. The number of cellular users in the country is expected to reach over 170 million in 2024. According to statistics released by the PTA the number of mobile phone subscribers is steadily increasing. So apart from illetracy, most of people especially young generation use atleast social media platform like youtube, tiktok

for earning purposes.

If we move forward to global competitive index, although Pakistan ranking is low there is a need of some improvement that's why government has taken steps to virtual education. The Pakistan's virtual universities offer online programms and training sessions for those in remote areas who cannot access the institution. Furthermore the programme "structural gap analysis" has bee started to overcome the gap between the industry and academia. For Another important programme is e-Rozgar launched by Government of Punjab to assist the youth in earning sustainable income. The main objective is to provide training opportunities to youth for self employment using intern based freelancing. This program is not just a training program but a revolution that prepare Pakistan to run in the race of digitization throughout the world.