Online Education: A Boon or Bane for Pakistan.

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C Thesis Statement

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3 How Online Education is a Boon?

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Essay

"There are decades when nothing happens and there are weeks where decades happen". Says Vladimir Lenin.

In 2019, when the epidemic of Covid erupted, it effected every sector of life across the globe. In the same way it effected Pakistan as well in each aspect but above all, the education sector was effected. Repeated lockdowns and social distancing led to the closure of educational institutes across

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the country. It was the time when the country switched to online education. Even after that, there occurred some more such events that led to the suspension of educational activities. For instance, the ongoing smog in various parts of country and tribal clashes in some provinces of Pakistan. But the online education, has so far proved to be a bane for Pakistan for myriads of reasons.

First of all, digital education is not helpful due to digital divide, among the rural and urban areas. Secondly the lack of inadequate digital infrastructure and novelty. of students and teachers is another factor. Moreover costly digital gadgets and expensive

internet packages making it a bane for Pakistan. Lastly, the lack of e-learning environment and pactical work at home is also another factor. Neverthless, some people consider it a boon for Pakistan. They are of the view that online education is expanding the scope of education and the use of digital infrastructure is also increasing which is a good sign for Pakistan. Furthermore, the widening use of IT is also a factor making online education a boon for Pakistan. But contrary to these arguments, the ground realities appear to be different. In summation, the online education is a bane for Pakistan but due to some ramifications but some folks

Consider it to be the boon for Pakistan. ~~The~~

The first factor that is responsible for making education a bane is the digital gap. Digital divide is the difference of presence of digital facilities among the people. Many people do not have access to the internet. According to UNDP, 86% of global population does not have access to reliable internet. Even in Pakistan a whopping gap exists between the urban and rural areas in terms of internet availability. Only 35% of the population has internet access. Moreover this digital gap is also present among the different gender. The girls, especially in the rural areas

do not have digital devices. So online education is not a boon for the rural areas and for the girls of rural areas

Inadequate digital infrastructure is another obstecle standing in the way of online education becoming a boon. Due to some reasons, the country is devoid of some digital skills and infrastructure that are sine quo none for the efficient digital education. Pakistan has been grappling with some economic challenges, due to which, a very little part of the budget is devoted for education. According to economic survey of Pakistan

2023 - 2024 the allocated budget for education is 2.5% of GDP, while the UN requirement is 4%. So under these circumstances, the country is not able to invest much in digital infrastructure and it has been the major reason behind online education being a bane- for Pakistan.

Moreover, the digital education is an uncommon phenomenon for both the students and teachers. Both are used to with the traditional education system. Neither students, nor teachers are capable to make a good use of online school. For instance, amidst the corona pandemic when universities were
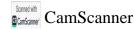
closed, the universities conducted online classes. The teachers failed to get the complete attention of the students. Teachers were not able to make the lectures interesting for the students. So, a rapid transition towards the online education was not a good option for a country like Pakistan

In addition to all these factors, the online examinations are also a hurdle in the way of online education becoming a boon. Online examinations are not reliable. During Corona pandemic there were many instances when the students used some unfair tactics during the exam. Even there were many whatsapp

groups in which the question paper was being shared before the start of every paper. Also many students attempted the paper by sitting in a group. Apart from cheating, the online evaluation of the papers is also not helpful, as it does not help the students. So online examination is also another factor in this regard.

Besides, the digital gadgets are costly and not everyone can afford them. The cost of these gadgets is so high and the unnecessary taxes on these items add fuel to the fire. Moreover, the expensive internet packages are also a factors. So the costly digital tools and

the internet packages are out of reach for some poor students. The underpriviledged families cannot bear the cost of ~~some~~ these tools. As a result the digital education is a bane for the students belonging to poor families, instead of a boon.

Additionally, the environment at home does not support e-learning. ~~at~~ The students cannot pay their full attention towards the lecture. There are many factors in household that ~~can~~ distract the students. In the times of Corona, there were some instances when the students were repeatedly interrupted during online classes and this makes a clear difference between the performance

of the students. As the student living in ~~this~~ such environment cannot keep pace with the rest of the class. Eventually for such students, the online education is a bane, not a boon. Rapid and sudden transition to the online education is an arduous task for the country like pakistan. As the country does not have enough resources for digital education Although things have been changed a little ~~bit~~ since Corona pandemic. As the government of Pakistan has build up some data centres in different areas of Pakistan. These centres not only help the students to get online education but also they

help the students to learn some digital skills. But the country confronts many economic challenges, so it does not have much to invest in educational sector. So it would be difficult to to change the mode of education. Also we do not have enough know-how about the digital education which is required. So the country is not ready yet to for such a rapid transition.

Lastly, for science students the online education is un-productive. The science students have to perform the practical work. Practical and laboratory work is Sine qua none for the science students in Pakistan there are many such institutions which do not have practical laboratories

So how it's possible to for household to have such laboratories. So the science students do not get any benefits from the online classes. So it's obvious that the science students consider online education a bane for them.

Above mentioned arguments support the stance that online education is a bane for Pakistan. But the proponents of online education consider this a boon and they have their own reasons. The first argument that the proponents of digital education is that, the scope of education is expanding through online educational. They are of the view that there are many plateforms for the

students, from where they get quality study material. It and enhances their knowledge. But this can be refuted as many people in Pakistan do not have access to such plateform. According to Mobile Gender Gap report 2022, 81% of Pakistani males use the internet, while the female ratio is even worse, which is 50%. Likewise, 37% of Pakistani males use the internet and the ratio of females is lesser than boys which is only 19%. So online education does not cater to many students who cannot access the content. Definitely the online education is a bane for those.

Secondly, they argue

that the digital education is helping the country to expand the digital infrastructure. For instance, many educational institutes and even the government is taking some initiatives to help the country to adopt to the online education. But the country needs enough resources to perform this task and it does not have Another option that the country has, is foreign investment. But the circumstances, through which country is passing, there is very little possibility to get foreign investment in this sector. To put it briefly, the country is not in a position to expand the digital infrastructure that

is required to improve the online education system. Lastly they have another reason to call the online education a boon. They consider it a boon because according it makes the student to learn the use of IT and can helps them to enhance their use of IT tools. But there are such instances that prove their stance a false. Such as many such cases were reported where the students harrassed the female teachers or female class fellows during online lectures. ~~Many Student don't even take the online classes~~. So, instead of using IT tools for positive outcomes, the negative outcomes are prevailing among the students.

In a nutshell, the online education has so far proved to be a bane for Pakistan for multiple reasons but at the same time, there are some proponents of online education who call it a boon for Pakistan. The proponents of online education are of the view that it help the people of the country to expand the digital infrastructure and to enhance the use of information technology. But the ground realities presents a different picture altogether. The country has been failed so far to make online education a boon. First of all the digital divide between the rural and urban areas, and the lack of digital infrastructure are

the hurdles that are not allowing this educational method to become a boon. Moreover the people of the country are not well aware of the use of digital education. The online examinations are also making the situation even more worse. The digital education is an unknown phenomenon for both the teachers and students. Furthermore, the most effected are the science students. As they are not able to perform any practical work and have to rely only on the lectures. So, all these factors collectively contribute in making online education a bane for Pakistan. But as the quote says; If you want to get

rid of mosquitoes, drain the swamp that breeds them; we need to exterminate the ~~causes~~ factors that are making the online education a bane. The country should remove these hurdles step by step. More importantly, the country should increase the education budget. It should enhance the foreign investment in this sector. The government should also work to expand the internet channels for the people.