

Government Surveillance - Good or Bad

Outline:

1. Introduction:

1.1 Hook

1.2 Background information

1.3 Thesis statement: Government surveillance in the realm of social media, IT sector and digital media is good. Due to the current challenges faced by the government in the disguise of national disunity and digital terrorism, it is necessary to monitor these sectors.

2. Government Surveillance as a Check on Media:

3. Government Surveillance is Bad:

3.1 Obstructs the freedom of speech and freedom of expression

3.2 Obstructs the voice of marginalized communities

3.3 Hinders the fostering of business based on IT

3.4 Threat to the breach of personal information

3.5 Increase in the bribe towards the government

3.6 Increase in the threats of cyber crime.

1. Rebuttal to the claim that Government surveillance is bad:

- 4.1 Promotes freedom of speech according to the law
- 4.2 Marginalised communities can be saved from attacks of majority communities.
- 4.3 Business communities can be protected from the attack of cyber security
- 4.4 Personal information can be used effectively in terms of tracing terrorist's activities
- 4.5 Government surveillance can promote nationalism and unity
- 4.6 Cyber attacks from the foreign countries can be prevented
- 4.7 Government surveillance can prevent the threats of digital terrorism

5. Conclusion:

The Essay:

As it has been rightly said by Oliver De Tille that, Today we are at the crossroads. The technology is available for two great options. The massive surveillance state or the renewed freedom of a deeply-involved citizenry thinking independently and holding the government to the highest standards. These two options have being utilized worldwide for a long time ago. However, the government of Pakistan has decided to surveil the digital media. This government surveillance may be considered good or bad. Some sectors of Pakistan people consider it a bad decision because it abstracts the freedom of speech, the voice of marginalized communities, hinders the fostering of IT business, poses threat to the breach of personal information, increases harshness towards the government and the cyber crimes also increases. However, a majority of Pakistan's population consider it a good decision because it promotes freedom of speech according to the law, fosters business, promotes nationalism and prevents the threat of digital terrorism.

Government surveillance means a check and balance on the use of digital social media platforms

by the government. It is done by making certain laws or amending the existing laws related to the cyber security. Moreover in Pakistan, there are reports of installing firewalls and limiting the use of virtual network to create a check on the use of media and to prevent the spread of sensitive information. In addition to this, government also announced that by undergoing surveillance, it can also prevent the danger of digital terrorism which is being carried out from the foreign shores. Therefore, government has decided to do this.

First, we discuss, how the government surveillance is bad. Its foremost negative impact will be on the freedom of speech and the freedom of expression. This freedom of speech is ensured in the article 19 of the constitution of Pakistan. However when government will undergo surveillance this article can be violated. In addition to this, the social media is being used by more than half of the population of Pakistan. When people face some difficulty in any of their way of living, they express their thoughts on the social media. By doing so, they are protesting against the policies of government which is being inspected and

The third negative impact of government surveillance is that it hinders the fostering of IT business. IT business includes the working on the firm and offering services to others on demand in reward of money. According to reports, there is a loss of \$1 billion for these online businesses if the internet is obstructed for a day to undergo surveillance. In addition to these small businesses, some big giants like Forbes, Felenor is raising their voices to not hinder the internet, in the name of surveillance. If the government is ready to do so then these business tycons would leave the country. Moreover, transport business like Uber, in Drive are dependent on the internet for their operations. Their operations and delivery is obstructed by the surveillance. Therefore this surveillance affects the IT sector from every corner ranging from a small business to large ones.

The fourth bad impact of the government surveillance is the breach of personal information. Most of the people use social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook to do personal chats. Personal chats vary from person to person and their sole right of companies and the government

to protect this information. However, in the name of surveillance government is breaching their right. The recent example to highlight this fact is that government is leaking the audio voices of the high officials so that these leaked voices could be used to malign their character. In addition to this, there are allegations on the security establishment of leaking the voice notes of the dissent. Moreover, this leaked personal information can be sold to the foreign powers to attack or come to know about a specific person. This is evident in the death of Ismael Haniyeh who was chatting with his son on WhatsApp. The surveillance was done by Israeli officials resulting the death of Hamas leader following the attack. Therefore, from above if the incidents it is obvious that the personal information is breached in the surveillance.

The fifth negative impact of the government surveillance is that the biasness towards the government will be increased. The government will allow information to spread which is according to its will. Thus, hindering the voice of the dissent. Government will use effectively different social media platforms to propagate what they wish to do. The most prominent example of

this biasness will be observed in the North Korea under the leadership of Kim. North Koreans are not allowed to even share a single bit of information against the government. In Pakistan this is evident when the bureaucrats of Rawalpindi revealed the mishandling of the elections which was held on February 8 on social media. From that day to today the platform of X is censored and banned. Therefore, by undergoing surveillance government increases biasness towards itself by suppressing the voice of dissent.

Finally, the bad impact of government surveillance is the increase in the attacks of cyber crime. There are reports that some government officials were linked with the foreign agencies and the data is being sold to these criminals. The recent example is the operation of sleeper cells by India from the UAE to undergo the kidnapping of some notables on Pakistani soil. In addition to this, the websites of some important government institutions is breached and hacked. Due to this hindrance the people's data not only at the risk but also there are difficulties in operating these websites to get the desired information from these websites. Therefore, surveillance increases the threats of cyber crime.

Let's discuss the rebuttal to the claim that government surveillance is bad. First comes the point that in surveillance government promotes freedom of speech according to the law. Because in the name of freedom of speech people are not only threatening the religious identity but also of national cohesion. In the end there is still a debate in the freedom of speech that whether it maligns the religion or not. Same is the case with Pakistan people not only maligning the state institutions but also of the heads of prominent institutions in the name of freedom of speech. However, maligning the state institutions and the heads of these institutions is harming the unity in the state. Thus, maligning is also being done for the the hostile neighborhood. In the end, so, in order to prevent all that, threats which is being named as digital terrorism surveillance is essential.

The second good impact of the government surveillance is that the marginalized communities can be saved from the attacks of the majority populations. In Pakistan there are non-Muslim communities which are living as minorities. These minorities are suspect to violence in terms of religious persecution and sexual.

by the majority population. The recent examples are the forced marriages which according to reports range from 130 - 135 incidents this year. All these atrocities are being prevented when the government will introduce some apps in this regard. This step not only increases the response from the government but also the marginalized communities are protected. In addition to this service delivery to these marginalized communities can be increased. This incident is most widely noticed in the recent floods of 2022, in which the marginalized communities were more subjected to the violence in terms of receiving service from the government. So it becomes necessary for the government to undergo surveillance.

The third most prominent good impact of government surveillance is that the business communities can be prevented from the attack of cyber security. If the government will ensure them that their data will be free from any breach then they will feel safe. In order to protect these rights of the business communities and to address the concern of the business community surveillance is important. If we look on the other side, the surveillance is necessary of foreign

businesses operating in Pakistan. This step is important so that they cannot breach any cyber laws or pose threat to the sovereignty of the country. So to protect them and to protect state from their surveillance is necessary.

The fourth good aspect of the government surveillance that it can use the personal information to trace the terrorists. Terrorists affil like TTP and ISKP are increasing their capabilities in the field of digital. They hire a person from using the identity of others, paying them to attack officials and then removing the account. So, the government face a huge in tracing these digital terrorists. In order to overcome this menace of terrorism government surveillance is essential in tracing the activity of the terrorists. The most recent example is the terrorists captured from Baluchistan through digital media because they were operating and listening to the Indian spy agency. Later on, they claimed the responsibility of the attacks. Pakistan can also take example from the recent terrorist attack on the Russian coast carried out by

using digital test platforms.

The fifth most prominent impact of the government surveillance is that it can promote nationalism and unity among the people. Different ideologies and hostile outfits in the country use the digital platform to build a narrative against the state. The recent example is the narrative build against the military establishment that they are corrupt and interfere in the politics of the country. This narrative cause divisions between the state institutions and the people. In addition to this there are reports that the BLA is operating on the funding of the Indian spy agency RAW and carrying out a sense of hostility between the people of Balochistan and the state. Therefore, in order to cope with this menace and to build a strong nationalism respect and unity between the centre and provinces then it is essential to undergo surveillance.

The sixth good impact is that by the government surveillance the cyber attacks by the foreign agencies can be prevented. Government will install certain instruments like firewall to monitor not only the spread

of false information but also to monitor the cyber attacks. In addition to this, virtual private networks are being monitored so that their use could not expose the user to the cyber attacks. This has been announced by the IT minister that the virtual private networks will come in the surveillance of government. This is being done to monitor their use. By ensuring these steps the cyber attacks can be prevented. And the people will feel safe. Therefore, it is a good step to undergo surveillance.

Finally, the most important impact is that the threats of digital terrorism can be prevented. Recently, the term "digital terrorism" was used by the military officials. Digital terrorism includes spreading propaganda, maligning state institutions and some notables by using digital media platforms. According to the press briefings issued by military officials that digital terrorism is causing a rift between the state institutions and the people. Therefore, to maintain national unity it is necessary to survive the terrorism. Moreover, this menace is not limited to the state institutions but also maligning the character of supreme court judges.

The campaigns on the social media also describes the ongoing court proceedings. This steps creates a mistrust between the people and the judiciary. Therefore, it is the need of time to mend these gaps by undergoing surveillance on the social media platforms.

To conclude, these steps becomes a problem of national unity and coherence. So in order to cope with them it is essential to undergo surveillance. In this regard certain installations is being done. So that by doing surveillance, promotes freedom of speech according to the law, voices of marginalized communities can be heard, promotes business environment in the country and it protects the breach of personal information. However, the most important good impact is that the menace of digital terrorism can be prevented. We hope for the best, that in near future, government will overcome all these challenges and the people will witness that it is a good step initiative to undergo surveillance.