**Digitalized judiciary**

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Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa has a great opportunity to rejuvenate our ailing judicial system and propel it into a dynamic force. This pivotal role can infuse new life and potential into our legal framework, ultimately reshaping the nation’s economy, politics, and society.

By harnessing the power of digital technologies and simultaneously enforcing the right-to-information law that relate to the proactive disclosure and wide dissemination of information held by public bodies, the chief justice can usher in a revolutionary transformation. It is crucial to acknowledge that these two facets of transformation are intricately linked and interdependent for tangible progress.

The chief justice can initiate this transformative process, commencing with the Supreme Court of Pakistan and extending it to the entire judicial system. By proactively embracing digitalization and advocating for transparency, accountability, and efficiency, the chief justice can effectively curtail resource wastage and reduce corruption. This proactive stance not only empowers the people with access to vital information but also lays the foundation for a more just and accountable society.

We can draw valuable lessons from leading examples in the realm of digitalization. Estonia, for instance, stands out as a noteworthy success story in digital transformation. China, too, offers insights, as it has implemented blockchain technologies even at the district level.

Additionally, various pilot projects around the world have illustrated the advantages and effectiveness of digital technologies within the legal profession. Notable initiatives include: intersection of artificial intelligence, internet courts for alternate dispute resolution, and blockchain-based judicial systems in China. Singapore’s Chrysalis e-judiciary system. The UK’s integrated electronic litigation system (eLitigation) Advancements in the digitalization of judicial systems in Estonia and Latvia, and the Indian e-courts project.

These initiatives have not only demonstrated their benefits but have also inspired broader adoption, serving as exemplary models for other jurisdictions seeking to modernize their judicial systems.

The fundamental principle underlying this modernization and digitalization effort should be to provide justice to citizens at their doorstep, ensuring complete transparency and instilling a sense of hope, belief, and certainty in the legal system.

Digitalization plays a pivotal role in enhancing transparency within the judicial system. Through electronic case management, records become easily accessible, ensuring a higher level of accountability. Moreover, digital platforms can facilitate live streaming of court proceedings, enabling the public to observe judicial activities and guaranteeing transparency in the administration of justice.

Digital platforms provide the means to collect, analyze, and harness extensive judicial data effectively. By utilizing data analytics, the chief justice can gain valuable insights into case patterns, identify systemic issues, and make well-informed decisions. This data-driven approach can lead to the development of more effective policies, ultimately resulting in improved judicial outcomes.

The digitalization of the judicial system can also have a positive impact on the economy. Efficient online dispute resolution mechanisms can be established, allowing businesses to swiftly resolve commercial disputes and minimizing disruptions to their operations. Additionally, a digitalized judicial system instills confidence in both domestic and international investors, thereby promoting economic growth and attracting foreign direct investment.

Digitalization serves as a powerful tool in combating corruption. Implementation of electronic records and online payment systems simplifies the tracking of financial transactions and reduces opportunities for bribery and embezzlement. a digitalized judiciary can enforce fair competition, as digital platforms are more effective in monitoring practices such as price fixing, cartelization, and anti-competitive behavior.

The chief justice’s commitment to digitalization can have profound effects on the political landscape. By enforcing the law that requires proactive disclosure, government expenditures and activities become transparent. This fosters good governance, enabling citizens to hold public officials accountable and make informed decisions during elections. It also acts as a deterrent against corruption and the misuse of public funds.

Digitalization empowers citizens by providing easy access to government information. Open data initiatives allow citizens to scrutinize government spending, monitor progress on development projects, and engage in evidence-based policy discussions. This inclusive approach strengthens democracy by promoting citizen participation, encouraging public feedback, and fostering collaboration between citizens and policymakers.

Digitalization of the judicial system can bridge the urban-rural divide, ensuring that justice is accessible to all citizens, regardless of their geographic location. Virtual courts and e-filing systems can be established, allowing individuals in remote areas to participate in legal proceedings without the need for extensive travel. This reduces costs, saves time, and promotes inclusivity within the justice system.

A digitalized judiciary that embraces proactive information disclosure fosters trust in institutions. When citizens have access to accurate and timely information, they develop confidence in the judicial system’s ability to uphold justice. Trust in institutions is essential for societal cohesion, stability, and progress.

It is only natural that if the judicial system undergoes transformation through digitization and digitalization, coupled with the enforcement of Section 5 of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017 – which was enacted to establish a legal framework giving effect to the fundamental right of access to information as guaranteed under Article 19A of the constitution and international law – the entire government system and society at large will not only be compelled to follow suit but will also be incentivized to embrace the advantages of transparency, accountability, efficiency, and the reduction of corruption and resource wastage.

In such a scenario, one can anticipate the enforcement of Article 4 and Article 5 of the constitution, as well as the enforcement of fundamental rights, particularly Article 9, Article 10-A, Article 14, Article 19, Article 19-A, Article 25, and Article 25-A of the constitution.

This comprehensive approach will instill hope not only in the future of the country but also in the belief in a society governed by rule of law and in the prospects of individual lives.

This will promote inclusiveness and foster a spirit of shared prosperity, leading to the development of an egalitarian system that offers equal opportunities and justice to all citizens. Thus, the chief justice can become a true agent of transformation.

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