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PAKISTAN

Preventing Violent Extremism

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A community meeting to form Men's Community Organizations in D.I. Khan.

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Development Advocate Pakistan provides a platform for the exchange of ideas on key development issues and challenges in Pakistan. Focusing on a specific development theme in each edition, this quarterly publication fosters public discourse and presents varying perspectives from civil society, academia, government and development partners. The publication makes an explicit effort to include the voices of women and youth in the ongoing discourse. A combination of analysis and public opinion articles promote and inform debate on development ideas while presenting up-to-date information.

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Preventing Violent Extremism in Pakistan:
From Security to Human Development Approaches

The world continues to confront significant threats from extremist groups resorting to violent means to advance their agenda–be it ideological, religious or political. The kidnapping of school girls, the brutal murder of innocent civilians or the bombing of cultural and religious places are used by extremists to terrorize, expand their grip on territory, control resources and illegal trade or compel states in adopting some of their agendas. As recognized repeatedly by the UN Security Council, violent extremism poses a significant threat to global peace and stability, with tremendous impact on social cohesion, eroding development progress and hindering future gains. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2015, the total number of deaths from terrorism increased by 80 percent compared to the previous year. This is the largest annual increase in 15 years. Since the beginning of the century, there has been a nine-fold increase in the number of deaths from terrorism, rising from 3,329 in 2000 to 32,685 in 2014. Pakistan endures one of the heaviest tolls in the world with over 21 thousand civilian fatalities between 2003 and 2016 according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal. Sustainable human development today requires human security which can only be advanced by preventing and countering violent extremism.

It is notable that despite extensive studies on the causes and drivers of violent extremism and the popularity of the subject on the conference circuit, convincing evidence on what specifically drives extremism remains thin and contested. More definitive answers are complex, intertwined with an ample set of human deprivations and context specific. For example, in Pakistan, the forms and causes of violent extremism vary widely between FATA, Southern Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Karachi, the Baloch insurgency or the sectarian violence against Shias belonging to the Hazara Community in Quetta. Overall, violent extremism in Pakistan is a heritage of geopolitical realities as the country joined the fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, and then Pakistan's choices in Afghanistan and Kashmir, the weakness of rule of law and governance, as well as a lack of preventive actions from the Pakistani state and society. State institutions and leaders have also at times supported extremist groups and invested in extremist faith and identity based narratives ostensibly in pursuit of strategic objectives. Reversing this trend will require unprecedented action based on a national consensus not only against all forms of violence but also against all forms of extremist narratives and a greater recognition of the values of pluralism, diversity and tolerance as one of the critical founding principles of the country, articulated compellingly by Quaid-e-Azam.

Responses to violent extremism in Pakistan have mostly taken the shape of counter terrorism operations. Since 2001, the army has conducted twelve such operations to counter extremists from various areas of the country. As a result, violence has sharply declined particularly during 2015 following operation Zarb-e-Azab and the Rangers continuing engagement in Karachi. According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal database again, terrorism casualties in Pakistan decreased 31.5 percent from 2013 to 2015. Sectarian violence has also dropped from 558 deaths in 2013, to 276 in 2015. After the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, in 2015, where more than 150 students lost their lives, the government led the adoption of the National Action Plan to deal with terror. The plan, based on a broad political consensus, included among others, establishing special courts headed by army officers, crackdown on hate speeches, madrassah reforms, control on print and electronic media to curtail propagation of extremist ideology, clampdown on financiers of terrorist networks in Pakistan, the revival of the National Counter Terrorism Authority and other measures to improve rule of law. Some measures have moved ahead including the set-up of military courts, the registration of madrassahs and closing of some suspected in spreading violent extremism. This said however, it is widely understood that overall implementation remains quite limited. While reduction in violence is an important achievement, incidences such as the attacks on Bacha Khan University in Charsadda, in a children's park in Lahore and too many others show the limits of the present strategy focused on security approaches.

A long lasting solution to violent extremism requires moving beyond a short term security dominated approach towards addressing multiple root causes: factors that breed extremism in the first place. Human rights violations, weak rule of law, shrinking political space especially for young people and for marginalized segments of society, and lack of prospects for earning a decent livelihood all play in the hands of violent groups. Since violent extremism is caused by multiple factors, policies to counter violent extremism must also be diverse and holistic. Pluralism, religious tolerance, protection of minorities and freedom of expression and improving governance should be engrained in the national counter terrorism strategies. Military operations can only reduce or contain terrorist incidents; good governance, rule of law and capable civilian institutions are needed to sustain progress. The media also has a significant role to play in promoting diversity and tolerance for the public good. Besides education and employment, the state should promote youth engagement in civic activities, culture and sports especially in geographical areas where they are more vulnerable to the influence of extremist groups. Moreover, there is a need for a broad consensus recognizing that short term political, security or geopolitical objectives cannot justify support for violent extremism, particularly given its devastating consequences on institutions and society.

The world community has also realized the need for a collective and holistic approach to preventing violent extremism by addressing root causes rather than mere counter terrorism operations. At the United Nations General Assembly, Secretary General Ban Ki Moon presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. This included good governance, ensuring rule of law, promoting political participation, providing quality education and decent jobs and respecting human rights. It calls for building inclusive institutions that are truly accountable to people, and to address alienation by promoting inclusiveness and participation. In these lies some guidance for Pakistan's counter terrorism and violent extremism policies.

Analysis

Preventing Violent Extremism[1]

In the last two decades, many parts of the world have convulsed at the hands of seemingly ever-expanding paroxysms of violence- often couched in religious and political-ideological vocabulary. These waves of violence, terrorism and militancy have resulted in large-scale mobilization of resources for inter and intra-state wars that have left hundreds of thousands dead across the world, and millions more wounded and traumatized-physically and psychologically. Since the turn of the century, there has been a nine-fold increase in the number of deaths from violent extremism, rising from 3,329 in the year 2000, to 32,685 in 2014. Five countries- Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria, and Iraq-accounted for 78 percent of lives lost in 2014 alone.[2]

The damages and costs of violent extremism continue to spread and generate new iterations of crisis for states and societies. Purveyors and perpetrators of violence, terrorism and militancy around the world kill and maim indiscriminately: children in Pakistan, girls in Nigeria, and unsuspecting, innocent civilians in Paris and Brussels. From the newly emergent security challenges and vicious barbarity perpetrated by the Islamic State forces in Iraq and Syria, to the millions of displaced refugees from Syria, Africa and Afghanistan seeking homes and refuge in an economically and politically challenged Europe, terrorism and militancy, driven by violent extremism, are the foremost existential challenges of our times.

While violent extremism has crippled the ability of several states to govern effectively and maintain sovereign legitimacy, it has proven to be an equally complex construct to study and deconstruct. Several significant attempts have been made to capture and explain the dynamics of violent extremism. Through careful observation, research and experiential knowledge, we can begin to draw the conceptual features of violent extremism, and identify workable solutions to address this developmental menace.

What is Violent Extremism?

While a precise definition has eluded many experts, research and evidence from around the world, as well as experiential observations on the nature of violent extremism has contributed to the development of the following formulation:

Violent extremism refers to advocating, engaging, preparing or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic, political and religious objectives that are rigid, uncompromising and intolerant.[3,4]

Peaceful change and reform find no room for existence in an extremist belief system. Extremism is diametrically opposed to diversity. It is an essentializing force that is culturally, politically, economically, socially, and spiritually predatory. It seeks to eliminate diverse identities, practices and institutions of thought, knowledge and behaviour in a society. And this goal is sought through the imposition of violence. While violence is a pervasive feature of human behaviour and psychology, violent extremist groups perpetrate violence through organized terrorism, insurgencies and militancy, that are legitimized within the in-group through carefully engineered destructive and inhumane ideological narratives.

Violent extremism is operationally amorphous, and disparate and diverse in its objectives. Violent extremist groups pursue a variety of social, political, economic and religious goals; and as in the case of ubiquitous violent extremism in our times, across countries and regions. Individuals and groups can adopt extreme ideological positions through different interpretive channels. Some disagree with state structures and distribution of political or economic power, and build their movements and challenges to the system on narrow and impervious ideological grounds. Others find trans-historical, spiritual and religious grounds to challenge cultures and societies that are labeled as enemies that must be eliminated.

Contemporary violent extremism has two distinct features. First, it is an amalgam of intolerant religious and political beliefs. Violent extremist groups in many countries have acquired and adopted perverse interpretations of religious teachings and fused them with political objectives to impose indiscriminate violence. By branding everyone not part of the in-group as enemies that must be killed, these groups have unleashed terrorism and militancy that seeks to realize apocalyptic wars and universal violence. Second, violent extremist groups are truly global. From actively exploiting social media and targeting youth across different countries, to financing and resource transfer, violent extremism operates through transnational networks, and poses challenges that require unprecedented global inter-state policy coordination.

Evidence from dealing with violent extremism around the world indicates two necessary conditions that facilitate the growth and spread of terrorism and militancy. First, conflict and instability incubate the emergence of violent extremism. Conflicts within and across states reverse developmental gains, spread socio-political and economic impoverishment, and normalize violence through the spread and availability of the tools and methods to wage conflicts. In these conditions, violent extremist groups often find ready-made channels to espouse extremist ideologies, find recruits, and access the tools that conversely, further fuel, exacerbate and perpetuate root conflicts.

Second, state failures and weaknesses often create optimal conditions for violent extremism to erupt. States are tasked with the responsibility to establish the institutional infrastructure for governance, inclusive, collective deliberation, and service-delivery for all citizens. When critical flaws emerge in these structures, equal access to opportunities and resources diminishes, which creates power imbalances, and thereby, winners and losers. The losers contending with

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1. The analysis has been undertaken by Harald Thorud (Programme Adviser, UNDP Pakistan) and Murad Javed (Research Analyst, UNDP Pakistan).

2. UNDP, "Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development and Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity: A development response to addressing radicalization and violent extremism"

3. Ibid

4. USAID Policy, "The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency."

governance malfeasance and institutional failures then nurse grievances against the state. Different forms of state malfunction can contribute immensely to the emergence of violent extremism in societies.

In this discussion on the nature and dynamics of violent extremism, it is important to accentuate and disentangle the link between violent extremism and radicalization. Radicalization is an important precursor to violent extremism. However, radicalization as a process and social experience is not always negative. Many positive transformations emerged around the world through radical ideas and groups pursuing reforms. For example, women's rights and suffragist movements, civil rights movement in the United States, and non-violent civil disobedience movements in India and South Africa were all once considered radical. These movements and groups pushed for and achieved momentous progressive reforms in national laws and institutions. Alternatively, radicalization is necessary but not sufficient for the emergence of violent extremism.

Violent extremism is preceded by a process of radicalization that is immersed in grievance projection, negative associations, and a psychosocial identity transformation that seeks revenge through violence. Violent extremist groups manufacture narratives that exacerbate sense of loss, grievance and anger at the state of affairs. The dissemination of these narratives, and their absorption by an individual is the core component of radicalization. In the context of violent extremism, radicalization is the antecedent psychosocial event and process that makes individuals willing to participate in the activities of violent extremist groups.

A Brief History of Violent Extremism

The history of violent extremism is long and unconstrained by spatial, temporal or ideological borders. The emergence of Fascist groups in Europe in the interwar period was a major instantiation of an extreme ideology that overtook state structures and imposed genocidal war and violence. Anarchist groups in the 19th century attempted to deploy violence as a strategy to deal with political changes and upheavals of the era. Racist and ethno-nationalist groups waged violence against minority racial and cultural groups in the United States for nearly two centuries. Similarly, rebel religious groups and spiritual cults throughout history have waged wars and violence to intimidate, spread fear, and force abandonment of beliefs and religious conversion.

In our era, various manifestations of violent extremism still thrive across the world. However, religious-inspired violent extremism has emerged as a major threat to peace and stability for many societies. Violent extremist groups operating around the world, from Da'esh, to Boko Haram, Pakistani Taliban and Al-Qaeda have posed a direct threat to international and domestic security, targeted children and adults, civilians and military personnel indiscriminately and mercilessly, and undermined peace, stability, diversity, and human rights across the world. Similarly, right-wing, ultra-orthodox religious groups in Europe and North America have targeted Muslim citizens through hate speech and violent attacks.

Violent extremist groups have also become adept at maintaining transnational support networks and linkages. The operations and structures of these groups have attained complexity through the spread and penetration of modern communicative technologies, such as decentralized social media platforms. These communication channels allow groups to evade state scrutiny and security apparatuses to maintain recruitment channels and nodes around the world. The complex operational nature and threat magnitude of these groups is manifested in the recent tragic terrorist incidents in Pakistan, Turkey, France and Belgium.
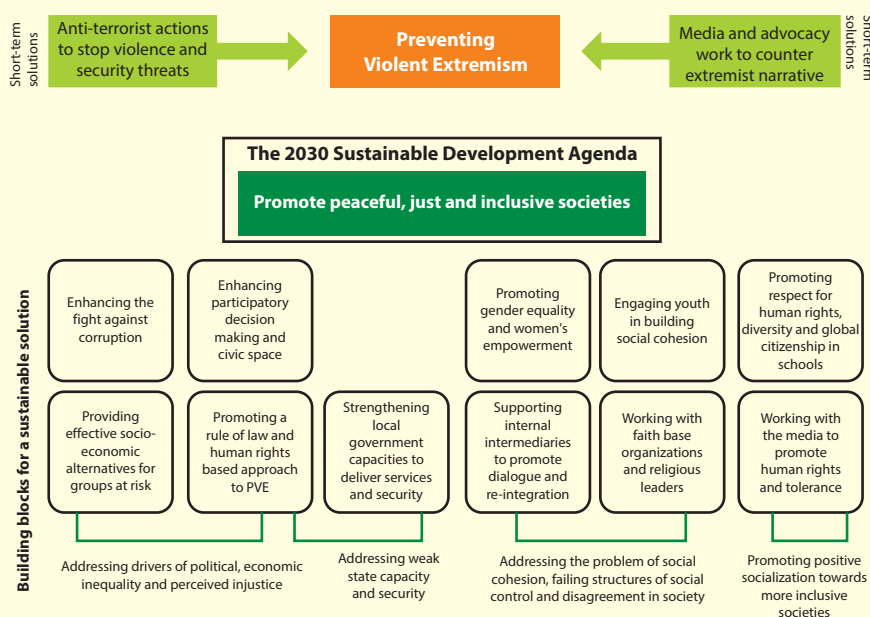
For global peace and security, violent extremism has emerged as a major challenge. Violent extremist groups are often fluid and can metastasize rapidly into new places and with different identities. Recent evidence indicates that the flow of foreign fighters and members to violent extremist groups has expanded to more than 100 countries and has registered an increase of 70 percent.[5] This illustrates the truly global threat posed by violent extremist groups in our times.

Pakistan has emerged as a frontline battleground for global and domestic violent extremist groups. In particular, over

SDG's and Violent Extremism

In September last year, the United Nations passed a momentous new agenda for global development, called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Approved by all nations as the new global development priorities till 2030, the SDGs provide an expanded framework for targeting global development, and have established measurable benchmarks for countries to track and assess their progress. Recognizing that one of the most important developmental and security challenges facing several countries is the rising menace of violent extremism, SDG 16-"Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies"- was passed as a sustainable solution to effectively address this challenge through improving societal structures of governance and social cohesion.

Building blocks for preventing violent extremism

Short-term solutions: **Anti-terrorist actions to stop violence and security threats** → **Preventing Violent Extremism** ← **Media and advocacy work to counter extremist narrative** : Short-term solutions

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies

Building blocks for a sustainable solution:

- Enhancing the fight against corruption
- Enhancing participatory decision making and civic space
- Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment
- Engaging youth in building social cohesion
- Promoting respect for human rights, diversity and global citizenship in schools
- Providing effective socio-economic alternatives for groups at risk
- Promoting a rule of law and human rights based approach to PVE
- Strengthening local government capacities to deliver services and security
- Supporting internal intermediaries to promote dialogue and re-integration
- Working with faith base organizations and religious leaders
- Working with the media to promote human rights and tolerance

Addressing drivers of political, economic inequality and perceived injustice — Addressing weak state capacity and security — Addressing the problem of social cohesion, failing structures of social control and disagreement in society — Promoting positive socialization towards more inclusive societies

(Source: UNDP, "Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development and Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity: A development response to addressing radicalization and violent extremism")

5.   UN Secretary General's Remarks at Leaders' Summit Countering Violent Extremism, New York, September 29th 2015

the last two decades, the country has been drawn into a vortex of global and regional, religious-inspired violent extremism that has brought immense damage to domestic peace, security and stability in the country. Since the invasion of Afghanistan by NATO forces in 2001, the presence and threat profiles of violent extremist groups and their operations in Pakistan has increased manifold.

The state in Pakistan has been under attack by home-grown violent extremist groups e.g. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), that mimic religious-inspired violent extremists operating around the world. Critically, domestic violent extremist groups in Pakistan have rebelled against the state and seek the complete overthrow of state structures and laws. In pursuit of their goals, and in line with their contemporary violent extremist lineage, these groups have targeted state and private infrastructure, security forces, government officials, and innocent civilians alike. A brutal manifestation of the threat of violent extremism in Pakistan is the barbaric and inhumane killing of more than 130 innocent children of a public school in Peshawar in December 2014.[6]

Numbers tell their own grim story of violence and terrorism in Pakistan. Over the last thirteen years, more than 60,000 have lost their lives in the country, including terrorists and insurgents.[7] Many more have been wounded and traumatized in the relentless cycles of violence and terrorism in the country. Many groups have been targeted through concerted deployment of violence. For example, non-Muslim minority groups, and minority sects such as Shias have been targeted for indiscriminate killing by extremist groups. Equally pernicious is the spread and penetration of extremist narratives and values defined by hatred, intolerance and discrimination. Violent extremism has emerged as the primary existential challenge for the Pakistani state.

What makes Pakistan's experience with violent extremism and terrorism particularly difficult and dangerous is the ongoing demographic transition in the country. Pakistan is currently experiencing a substantial youth bulge, with nearly 60 percent of the population below the age of thirty. This expanding youth bulge offers both unique opportunities and challenges. The country can offer its young polity with pathways of constructive citizenship and access to development and socio-economic and political mobility. However, and conversely, absence of developmental and socio-political and economic

participation opportunities is rendering young Pakistanis vulnerable to involvement in violence, extremism, and ongoing conflicts in the country.

Further compounding this challenging scenario is Pakistan's continual struggle with developing stable, just and effective state institutions, and achieving sustained socioeconomic and political development in the country. Violent extremism intrudes directly in this process, and limits the possibilities of progress, peace and prosperity in the country. Violent extremist groups operating within and outside the country intend to attack state structures, damage institutions, spread fear, and undermine the state's capacity to establish peace and prosperity. And while the last few months have seen the state make a concerted and serious effort to deal with this threat through military and security operations, much more needs to be done to effectively deal with the drivers of violent extremism in the country.

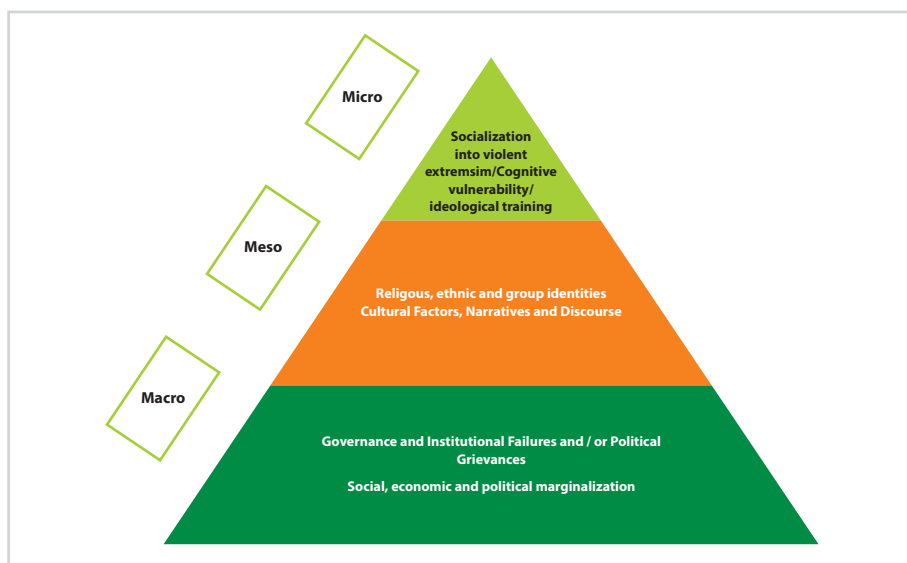**The Drivers of Violent Extremism**
The root causes of violent extremism are multifaceted, complex and are derived from structural, as well as micro-level conditions. Similarly, some drivers are proximate in time and space, and operate at the individual level to spread radicalizations. Others still are intermediate and long-term, and can create macro-level conditions and forces required for generating and sustaining violent extremism. Several international and national actors have made the efforts to uncover the factors and conditions that trigger and facilitate the rise of violent extremism. Various organizations operating in violent extremist environments around the world have

gathered evidence, experience and analysis that contributes to identifying the various drivers of violence.

One analytically handy approach to understanding the drivers of violence is to disaggregate them into two main categories. The first of these root categories can be termed structural push factors. These set of drivers are complex, multifaceted and intertwined, and are a product of 'historic, political, economic and social circumstances, including the operation and impact of regional and global power politics'.[8] The following drivers of violent extremism belong to this family of root causes:

State and governance Failures: Legitimate states exercise functional sovereignty in their domestic polity, and establish the institutional architecture required to: provide durable platforms for collective deliberation and participation in political processes; ensure access to and distribution of social, economic and political resources; and establish overarching conditions for peace and stability. However, when states begin defaulting on performing these basic functions, inequalities in resource ownership and distribution take root, which then create power disparities. As a result, when states weaken and fail, effective governance is the first victim. Two forms of governance failures are particularly conducive to the spread of violent extremism: failure to deliver basic public services; and a breakdown in law, order and justice. Failure to deliver basic public services creates a vacuum that is occupied by violent extremist groups that begin offering and providing public goods, welfare services, and alternatives-

Theoretical Model of the Drivers of Violent Extremism

6.   Zahir Shah Shirazi, Mateen Haider, Hassan Jahangiri, abdul Hakim, "Militant siege of Peshawar school ends, 141 killed," DAWN 16 December 2014. Available at http://www.dawn.com/news/1151203

7.   South Asia Terrorism Portal: http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm

8.   UNDP, "Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development and Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity: A development response to addressing radicalization and violent extremism"

especially for the most marginalized segments of a polity. Failures or inefficiencies in the justice dispensation mechanisms erodes trust in the state, and allows violent extremist groups to setup alternative options for dispensing justice; often through violence and miscarriages of justice principles. Similarly, the inability of a state to provide security and establish law and order creates the physical space for violent extremist groups to operate freely, impose their own order, and incentivize individuals to join such groups as the most effective and powerful actor, with a competing monopoly over violence.

State failures can also manifest themselves in the complicit actions and policies adopted by states that facilitate the embedding of widespread violent extremism. In particular, if states facilitate, condone, or tolerate the existence of religious, political and militant actors and groups that espouse violence to achieve political aims, it is highly likely that violent extremism can quickly become a cancerous challenge. Where states use groups with violent extremism as proxies against domestic and foreign adversaries, security and development challenges from violent extremism can quickly become uncontrollable.

State Repression and Human Rights Violations: Direct or indirect violation of human rights and basic human dignity by the state, or non-state actors mimicking this behavior, creates victims with legitimate grievances. This grievance can quickly morph into a desire for revenge, which is provided real and meaningful outlets by violent extremist groups.

Endemic Conflict and Insecurity: Conflicts destabilize states and lead to all symptoms of classic state failures. Moreover prevalent insecurity and violence allows for easy access to violence and the resources required to inflict damage to life and property. In such contexts, violent extremist groups find substantial space to participate in, complicate and perpetuate conflicts.

Entrenched Corruption and Elite Impunity: Entrenched patterns of individual and institutional corruption, coupled with impunity and absent accountability, can provide violent extremist groups with two opportunities to find a foothold. First, widespread corruption and lack of accountability and

transparency allows violent extremists to spin narratives against the state and its institutions, and frame themselves and their objectives as the legitimate alternatives to the "immorality" of the state and elites. Second, systemic corruption allows opportunities for violent extremist groups to build alliances and linkages with criminal and illegal networks and gangs to find operational space and resources.

Social Marginalization and Fragmentation: Dislocation and exclusion in the form of social marginalization and fragmented identities can become powerful structural forces for driving and sustaining violent extremist narratives and groups. When state and cultural institutions fail to build inclusive opportunities for participation and a sense of belonging to a polity, they render individuals susceptible to manipulation, radicalization and recruitment into violent extremist groups.

Cultural Threat Narratives-Local and Global: This driver of violent extremism is particularly prominent in the public posturing, messaging and recruitment narratives disseminated by extremist groups. For example, narratives of existential threats of domination can create a sense of impending crisis, injustices and oppression. Violent extremist groups utilize this driver at the local and global levels. For example, locally, minorities, secular groups, media etc. can be painted as seeking to dominate, monopolize and transform religious identities and freedoms. Globally, international actors and foreign countries can be presented as oppressive enemies that need to be confronted through violence and conflict. These narratives combine to provide violent extremist groups with legitimacy.

Low Literacy Levels: Can low levels of educational attainment lead to the proliferation of violent extremist groups? Current evidence for this hypothesized factor is weak. However, when the global spread of violent extremist groups is taken into account, countries with low literacy levels are often the main theaters of recruitment and operations for such groups and networks. Violent extremism thrives on framing and disseminating favorable narratives. Without knowledge and information, and particularly in the absence of quality education, it is highly likely that individuals become susceptible

to becoming foot soldiers in these groups. Conversely, the emergence of home-grown terrorism and extremism in Europe shows that operatives often have basic to advanced levels of educational attainment. This development militates against identifying educational deficiency as a driver of violent extremism.

However, and critically, evidence from Pakistan on this hypothesized driver is mixed. Groups like the TTP are often led and manned by individuals with negligible to absent educational qualifications and no formal education credentials. Conversely, recent evidence shows that leaders and recruits into new violent extremist groups, especially in urban Pakistan are often university-educated, and are recruited at their universities and colleges.[9,10,11,12] Expert insights on the impact of education on violent extremism in Pakistan focuses on the quality and content of curriculum in the education system. Educational and socio-psychological theories suggests that when educational curriculum becomes narrow, intolerant, and inimical to out-groups (minorities or external actors), a general consciousness of aggression, hatred and rejection beds roots. This driver of violent extremism needs to be carefully deconstructed to reform the structure and content of curriculum taught in Pakistan.

Poverty and Unemployment: Overarching, cross-country data indicates that violent extremist groups thrive, operate and inflict the greatest damage in countries with high levels of poverty, low incomes, and widespread unemployment.[13] Evidence from around the world on the role of poverty as a contributing factor in the rise of violent extremism is mixed at best.[14] However, and critically, evidence from Pakistan seems to militate against this hypothesized link. Evidence from the country suggests that poor Pakistanis, especially the urban poor, exhibit negative attitudes towards violent militant and extremist groups operating in the country; particularly in comparison with middle-class citizens that report comparatively lower levels of antipathy towards such groups.[15]

Poor and economically weak states are vulnerable to violent extremism, terrorism and militancy. Poverty, unemployment and wide income and wealth differentials point to systemic deficiencies and inequalities in a state's economic structure. These factors create and are symptomatic of wider

9.   Alizrh Kohari and Laila Hussain (2015), "Revisiting a confessional jigsaw." Available at http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153213

10.   Naziha Syed Ali and Fahim Zaman (2015), "Anatomy of a murder." Available at http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153209

11.   Asma Ghani (2016), "Penetration of extremist elements growing in QAU." Available at http://nation.com.pk/newspaper-picks/20-Mar-2016/penetration-of-extremist-elements-growing-in-qau

12.   Salman Rafi (2016), "Pakistan's unfinished war on terror." Available at http://atimes.com/2016/03/pakistans-unfinished-war-on-terror/

13.   Corinne Graff, "Poverty, Development, and Violent Extremism in Weak States", The Brookings Institutions

14.   Harriet Allan, Andrew Glazzard, Sasha Jesperson, Sneha Reddy-Tumu, Emily Winterbotham, "Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review", Royal United Services Institute

15.   Christine Fair, Graeme Blair, Neil Malhotra, Jacob Shapiro, "Poverty and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from Pakistan", http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~neilmal/poverty.pdf

economic disenfranchisement and marginalization, citizens' inability to be upwardly mobile, and economic inequities in resource allocation and distributions. Such economic conditions create economic grievances and sustained exclusion over the long run, which can then hypothetically generate the circumstances required for sympathizing with violent extremist groups and their narratives, and supporting militant groups. Furthermore, poverty and unemployment are economic failures that create the space for violent extremist groups to step in and offer individuals and groups promise of stable income, resources and material wealth. In an environment of economic deprivation, such alternatives can find rich breeding grounds.

While structural push factors operate at the systemic level to generate general conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, individual pull factors are equally important and influential in providing the fertile channels for recruitment and participation in violent extremist groups. These drivers operate at the micro-level in local and individual contexts, socialization pathways and experiences, relational networks, and patterns of behaviour. A combination of myriad drivers from within these categories, operating together, create the necessary and sufficient conditions required for fueling violent extremism.

These pull factors operate in conjunction with push factors, and provide the individual-level conditions and incentives for individuals to join violent extremist groups. Much of the literature and current knowledge on pull factors focuses on social exclusion, and personal and group identities that create a favorable environment for pulling individuals and groups towards violent extremism. Radicalization is a social and psychological experience that is an important component of pull factors. Some of the major individual pull factors include:

Dislocation and Identity Crisis: Across the world, in different cultural contexts, ruptures in identities, and weakening of a sense of belonging act together to create feelings of disconnection, disenchantment, and dislocation for individuals. In such circumstances, social and cultural institutions fail to provide adequate and healthy socialization experiences to individuals. This then translates into disjuncture between individuals, their communities and the collective cultural experiences and identities. Migrants and immigrant communities offer particularly vivid illustrations of instances where states and

their institutions fail to provide smooth socialization and integration experiences. When such conditions combine, they render alienated individuals highly susceptible and vulnerable to becoming radicalized, and joining violent extremist groups.

Sense of Belonging, Risk-taking, Adventure, and Personal Empowerment: An associated outcome of the aforementioned social exclusion, uprootedness, and identity crisis is that such individuals, and particularly youth, seek out peer networks that allow them to cultivate a sense of belonging, and provide a convenient narrative decrying the prevailing social, cultural, economic and political systems. Note also, that politically and economically disengaged young men and women are particularly receptive to the competing alternatives offered by violent extremist groups. When these conditions combine, individuals tend to join violent extremist groups to integrate themselves into groups and activities that seemingly allow risk-taking adventures by challenging and undermining security and development in a society. In the same manner, joining militant groups offers marginalized and alienated individuals with a sense of personal empowerment by temporarily boosting their self-esteem and giving them access to tools that appear to orchestrate change in their communities.

Access to Material Resources: In many instances, joining militant networks and extremist groups offer direct and ready access to material resources that are otherwise absent in the recruit's life. Money and material comforts are one facet of this incentive. Access to weapons, vehicles and freedom of mobility fulfills the individual's need to access material resources that offer cultural and social status.

Opportunity to Earn Social Capital, Personal Glory and Fame: Joining violent extremist groups, especially in societies where such groups have freedom of mobility and operations, provides members with social status; and the mobility that is otherwise unavailable and inaccessible for them. Moreover, for many individuals with severe identity crisis and psychological distress, joining and participating in violent extremist groups offers personal glory and fame.

Social Networks: Violent extremist groups sustain their recruitment channels through personalized interactions and individual influences. Consider individuals, particularly youth with identity crisis, experiences of sustained discrimination and marginalization, and a perceived sense of injustice, are exposed to relatives, friends, and neighbors who are already

sympathizers of members of violent extremist groups. In this frequently recurring and recorded situation, disgruntled and dissatisfied individuals are manipulated by members (often charismatic leaders or other members who are a part of the radicalized individual's social network) of violent extremist groups. Readily tailored narratives are offered to nurse perceived grievances and material, spiritual and sociocultural rewards are offered as incentives to join the group.

Narratives, Literature and Discourse: Violent extremist groups manufacture and offer convenient narratives that challenge and identify an existential enemy, manufacture perceived grievances and a sense of oppression and injustice, and seek to use violence as a revenge tactic. Conspiracy theories regarding domestic and foreign actors, seen as enemies, soften the public opinion and sympathy for violent extremist groups. Complicating this landscape is the communicative strategy of contemporary violent groups like Daesh. These groups have actively embraced new media technologies, and reach out to individuals with the aforementioned challenges across cultural and national boundaries.

The Impact of Violent Extremism
Violent extremism and terrorism are increasingly viewed as combined security and development challenges by world leaders, development practitioners, and academics. This consensus is beginning to recognize that violent extremism creates short and long-term security and development challenges that simultaneously and negatively affects peace, stability, social cohesion and socioeconomic development.

Peace and Security
The most readily identified and immediate impact of violent extremism around the world is the grave threat posed to international and domestic peace and security. Violent extremist groups, such as Daesh, Al'Qaeda and Boko Haram, mercilessly and indiscriminately target and kill innocent children and adults, thereby directly undermining universal values of peace, justice and human dignity.[16] At this point in time, many violent extremist groups have attained transnational presence through networks that span across national boundaries, and survive and operate by mercilessly imposing violence on target communities, and creating illegal economies, wealth and sources of income.

State reaction to this challenge is the most potent reminder of the negative and deleterious impact of violent extremism on security, peace and stability. States are

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16.   UN Secretary General's Remarks at Leaders' Summit Countering Violent Extremism, New York, 29th September, 2015. Available at http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=9058

responding to violent extremist groups by securitizing domestic politics and policies, and launching national and internationally-coordinated military, intelligence and security operations to obliterate violent extremist groups and their members. Ongoing military operations against TTP in Pakistan, Da'esh in Syria and Iraq, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and Al-Shabaab in Somalia are illustrations of the state's military response to the security threats and violence perpetrated by violent and extremist militant groups. Violent extremism thrives in conflict, and perpetuates cycles of violence, warfare, bloodshed and conflict. Hundreds and thousands of innocent civilians have died at the hands of violent extremist groups, and during military operations responding to these threats. More than 60,000 civilians, military personnel, and insurgents have died in the violence unleashed by extremist groups in Pakistan.

Development Reversals

The growth of violent extremism has led to dramatic reversals in development gains, and is threatening to stunt and erode prospects for developments in the next few decades for many societies around the world.[17] In states like Iraq and Syria, violent extremism has triggered devastating civil wars, while Nigeria and Pakistan suffer from continuing threats to domestic peace, stability, and economic prospects. While violent extremism palpably generates immediate security risks, it generates serious developmental impacts on the socioeconomic profiles of affected communities and societies.

Developing and low-income countries, with significant poverty and unemployment levels are particularly targeted by violent extremist groups, and therefore suffer serious developmental reversals: since 2000, only seven percent of all incidents of terrorism have occurred in countries belonging to the OECD.[18] Violent extremism's pernicious developmental impacts are experienced in the following ways:

Human Security: Human security includes environmental, economic, health and freedom from threats of physical violence. Violent extremism threatens and undermines human security by reversing and damaging each of the component variables of the construct. As evidence shows, violent militant groups inflict economic damage on countries, thereby eroding incomes and exacerbating poverty, inflicting violence and physical insecurity, and reducing opportunities for good health and educational outcomes.

Human Development: Human development entails a capability approach to development that views development as having deep, meaningful, and frequently non-economic, and non-income based dynamics (although these are important components of development). Extremism-based terrorism and militancy restricts and removes freedoms, diversity, material and social resources, and quality of life in the targeted/affected community. By imposing indiscriminate violence, violent extremist groups reverse and erode human development.

Sustainable Collective Development: By inflicting long-term conditions and perceptions of insecurity, violent extremism compromises the ability of states, communities and individuals to achieve sustained economic development. It also renders states unable to pursue and implement sustainable and inclusive growth policies that distribute development opportunities and capabilities equally for all citizens. Experience from Pakistan in the last ten years or so shows that the prevalence of violent extremism can diminish economic investments and resources by creating an unfavourable business and growth climate, and thereby stunt the potential for economic growth for all citizens.

Furthermore, violent extremist groups spread insecurities and threats to domestic and international development actors and partners, thereby restricting the space and resources available for undertaking sustainable development objectives. In the short-term, this cuts off access to humanitarian assistance and resources to communities caught in the middle of conflict and violence unleased by terrorist and militant groups. In the long run, the continued exclusion of development and humanitarian actors from theatres of conflict and violence pushes communities deeper into vicious cycles of underdevelopment and humanitarian crisis. By undermining and reversing developmental capabilities, opportunities, resources and choices today, violent extremist groups also undermine the ability of future generations to pursue and achieve inclusive growth.

Poverty, Unemployment and Growth: An environment of violence and insecurity is anathema to economic growth. Data on violent extremist groups and terrorism indicates that the major brunt of the impact (violence) is felt by developing and under-developed countries. While poverty and unemployment might not trigger violent extremism per se, they are definite outcomes of the vicious cycles unleashed by terrorist and militant groups. As investments and business declines in an economy grappling with insecurities, this results in higher unemployment, greater poverty, and precipitous decline in economic growth.

Human Rights and the Rule of Law: Violent extremist groups use violence as an intimidating tactic used to spread fear. However, a critical impact of violent extremist groups is the egregious threat posed by these groups to the availability and enjoyment of human rights that range from the right to life, liberty and security of person, to freedom of expression, mobility, association, thought, conscience and religion.[19] Similarly, violent extremist groups are motivated by and deploy violence to challenge, violate and erase existing domestic and international laws.

Diversity, Civic Space, Culture and Tolerance: An important feature of stable and peaceful societies is their appreciation of diversity. Violent extremist groups are inherently opposed to diversity in general, and the space allowed for minorities in particular. These groups espouse violent ideologies that are ideologically, culturally, and ritually intolerant, and seek to obliterate minority identities. Tolerance, diversity, peaceful coexistence and social cohesion are primary victims of the spread of violent extremist ideologies.

Displacement: Violent extremism shrinks social, economic and political space for its victims. Consequently, the spread of insecurity, instability and violence exacerbates living conditions across communities. Millions of people around the world are victims of violent extremism by being displaced from their homes. Da'esh in Iraq and Syria has pushed millions of migrants towards Turkey and Europe, and has created a severe political, security and humanitarian crisis in recent global politics. Pakistan itself has been a victim of displacement of citizens in recent years: up to 1.5 million residents of FATA have been displaced from their homes as a result of the past and ongoing fighting and military operations against violent extremist groups and their safe havens.[20,21]

Responding to Violent Extremism

While violent extremism has a long history, the emergence of global violent extremist

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17.   UNDP, Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa, Situation Analysis
18.   Eelco Kessels and Christina Nemr, "Countering Violent Extremism and Development Assistance: Identifying Synergies, Obstacles and Opportunities"
19.   Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, Report of the Secretary General
20.   http://www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-south-east-asia/pakistan/figures-analysis
21.   https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/february_2016-idp_fact_sheet_29-02-2016.pdf

groups in recent years has pushed it up the agenda of governments, donor agencies, international organizations, and civil society organizations. The diversity of programs launched to prevent and mitigate the impact of violent extremism illustrates the multifaceted nature of the challenge, as well as the range of different factors that are understood as drivers, or determinants of violent extremism.

Much of the current work directed towards preventing violent extremism is emerging in real-time, responding to the evolving nature of the threat; as well as reacting to improvements in knowledge and understanding of the determinants of violent extremism. It is critical that states, donors, and non-state stakeholders understand that violent extremism, owing to its complex nature, must be recognized and dealt with as an amalgam of related and intertwined security and development challenges. Programming and responses to violent extremism must tackle the drivers of radicalization and terrorism as stabilization and development challenges. Crucially, it is important to view violent extremism as a collection of micro, meso and macro-level factors.

Table 1 depicts the landscape of ongoing interventions aiming to prevent the spread of violent extremism.
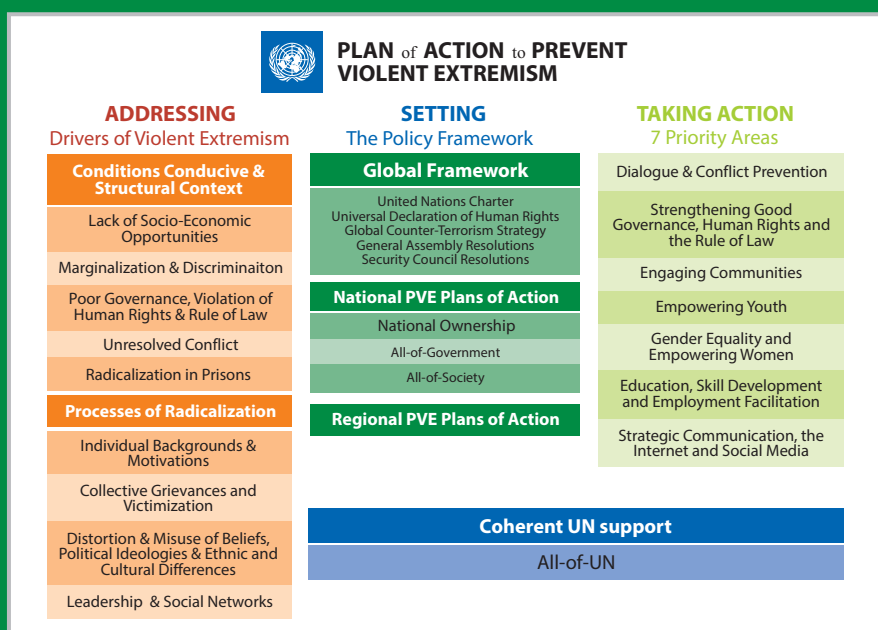
Table:1: Responding to Violent Extremism

Type of Strategy/ Intervention	Description	Example of intervention/project	Strengths/Weakness of Strategy
Counter-Narrative Messaging	Violent extremist groups manufacture narratives that combine grievances with perverse religious and ideological interpretations to perpetrate violence. Counter-narrative messaging involves supporting the generation and dissemination of messages, stories, images, and narratives that can effectively prevent and reject violent extremist discourse and structures.	Hedayah – a UAE-based international center dedicated to sharing expertise and experience, and enhancing international cooperation on preventing violent extremism. One of the organization's program facilitates discussions amongst national and local actors, civil society, researchers and community leaders involved in PVE.	Given the complexities of recruitment and personalized messaging and influencing strategies used by these groups, this form of intervention needs to graduate to the next generation of tools and platforms. Countering the slew of complex narrative strategies adopted and deployed by violent extremists would require the development of powerful, effective, and influential counter-narratives.
De-Radicalization Programs	In this format of interventions, individuals are put through intensive re-education (including religious education), re-socialization, exposure trips, and skills development experiences. The application of a range of these services is believed to counteract psychologically internalized radical and extreme tendencies in individuals and rehabilitate them as peaceful citizens.	De-radicalization programs run by the state in Pakistan e.g. Sabaoon Center for Rehabilitation, where detainees are educated in mainstream educational curricula, corrective religious education, vocational training, and counseling and therapy.	The range and scope of these programs is limited, as their operational deployment is dependent on the identification and availability of radicalized individuals with violent extremist inclinations.
Employment and Skills Training	To counteract and reverse the impact of economic deprivation, grievances and lack of human capital, many programs have been implemented to improve the skills profile of vulnerable segments of the population. With skills in their repertoire, beneficiaries can then integrate successfully within economic structures, or alternatively, begin their own businesses.	USAID's Education, Economic Growth and Prosperity Programs in the Middle East and North Africa. The program provides jobs training and skills development for the region's young people for environment.	Both outcomes are seen as successful and valuable economic integration and engagement experiences that diminish and erase economic exclusion and material inadequacy-a condition frequently exploited by violent extremist groups to manipulate and recruit susceptible individuals.
Education	Violent extremist groups often prioritize the destruction of educational infrastructure and target educational activists and resources available to a society. To counter this predatory, anti-education agenda of violent extremist groups, multiple actors have attempted to restore and add to the physical infrastructure and human resource available to deepen and expand educational opportunities in a country; as well as improve the quality and content of education opportunities available e.g. curriculum, teacher training etc.	The Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) that brings together government representatives, practitioners and academics to develop reform agendas and policy tools for national educational programs.	This long-term programmatic strategy is seen as a key to providing constructive socialization experiences to children and future generations, as well as access to quality education and knowledge on tolerance, peace and diversity.
Cultural Rejuvenation	Violent extremism is corrosive to cultural diversity and tolerance. In response to this, some programs have sought to intervene directly in supporting individuals and groups that continue cultural production and dialogue, despite the insecurity and fear imposed by violent extremist groups.	PAT-MALI (Program to Support the Transition in Mali) supported secondary schools and teachers in Mali to establish book clubs after Al-Qaeda destroyed public libraries in 2012-13.	This form of programming seeks to build and support a critical mass of cultural capital, and relevant exponents, such that sociocultural diversity in communities is preserved against extremist threats.

Type of Strategy/ Intervention	Description	Example of intervention/project	Strengths/Weakness of Strategy
Peacebuilding	Violent extremism thrives by perpetuating conflicts, violence, bloodshed and wars. This state of affairs necessitates the implantation of resources and networks for peacebuilding in local communities. The objective of peacebuilding interventions is two-fold. First, the overarching objective is to retain stability and peace in societies, and thwart attempts by violent extremist groups to spread fears, insecurities and instability. Second, such interventions also seek to build the capacity of local communities and activists to maintain peace at the grassroots level.	Seeds of Peace Network in Pakistan that provides training and knowledge support to youth and women activists to work with their local community members to build durable peace.	By providing training and resources to peacebuilders, these programs establish networks to function as bulwarks against the malicious operations of violent extremist, terrorist and militant groups.
Inter and intra-faith Dialogues	Violent extremist groups espouse narrowly-focused, intolerant and pernicious religious interpretations. To confront this source of extremism, many actors have attempted to support and facilitate intra and inter-faith dialogues within and across cultural boundaries in an effort to build consensus for peaceful coexistence and religious tolerance across religious and sectarian groups.	Finn Church Aid sponsored community-level inter-faith dialogues and interactions in the Horn of Africa.	

Preventing Violent Extremism: The Way Forward

- **Youth-centric policy and programmatic focus:** With the right support and national and local focus and investments, Pakistan's youth can be the critical variables that enables the state and society to overcome violent extremism. However, to achieve this objective, it is important that youth-centric policy focus is adopted by the Government, and that youth are actively engaged in the social, political and economic arenas to strengthen and nourish their engagement and participation with state structures and institutions.

- **Research and Evidence-based interventions:** Preventing violent extremism in Pakistan requires an overall improvement in the state of knowledge on the subject. What are the local determinants of violent extremism in Pakistan? How do violent extremist groups operate in the country? What individual-level pull factors affect recruitment into these groups? These are questions that can only be answered through increased and better research on the subject in the country. Stakeholders including the state and civil society, need to work in bringing together the resources and expertise required to collect data and generate evidence that can guide the policy on preventing violent extremism in the country.

- **Effective stakeholder engagement and management:** The landscape of preventing violent extremism is populated by state and non-state actors-a reality that is borne out in Pakistan. In particular, the state has responded via securitization of domestic policies and politics. Similarly, civil society organizations, local communities, political actors, religious leaders, and the media all play contributing roles in generating institutional structures and social narratives in the country. Mechanisms and platforms that can allow state authorities to work in close coordination with all the relevant actors, need to be developed.

- **Encouraging tolerance, pluralism and diversity:** Violent extremist groups in the country are heavily focused and invested in eliminating diversity, targeting minorities, and erasing progressive forces, actors and resources in the country. Again, coordination between state and non-state actors in ensuring that the values, principles, and institutions are preserved and promoted to deter violent extremist agenda and narratives in the country.

- **Building peacebuilding Networks:** Pakistan requires increased efforts in building horizontal and vertical linkages between different actors and groups in the country. Specifically, and once such networks are established, it is critical that resources are invested in building local capacities for dispute resolution, conflict mitigation, and increased social cohesion. The primary vehicle for achieving these outcomes is through imbuing and empowering local actors at the grassroots level with the knowledge and capacity to build and promote peace in their social circles and networks.

- **Expanding the National Action Plan:** Pakistan's National Action Plan against terrorism is currently focused on the immediate military, intelligence and security operations against these forces. However, it is critical that the Plan is expanded to incorporate the long-term, non-security programmes and policies that are equally vital in preventing violent extremism in the country.

PLAN of ACTION to PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

ADDRESSING Drivers of Violent Extremism	**SETTING** The Policy Framework	**TAKING ACTION** 7 Priority Areas
Conditions Conducive & Structural Context	**Global Framework**	Dialogue & Conflict Prevention
Lack of Socio-Economic Opportunities	United Nations Charter / Universal Declaration of Human Rights / Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy / General Assembly Resolutions / Security Council Resolutions	Strengthening Good Governance, Human Rights and the Rule of Law
Marginalization & Discriminaiton		Engaging Communities
Poor Governance, Violation of Human Rights & Rule of Law	**National PVE Plans of Action**	Empowering Youth
Unresolved Conflict	National Ownership	Gender Equality and Empowering Women
Radicalization in Prisons	All-of-Government	
	All-of-Society	Education, Skill Development and Employment Facilitation
Processes of Radicalization	**Regional PVE Plans of Action**	Strategic Communication, the Internet and Social Media
Individual Backgrounds & Motivations		
Collective Grievances and Victimization		
Distortion & Misuse of Beliefs, Political Ideologies & Ethnic and Cultural Differences	**Coherent UN support**	
Leadership & Social Networks	All-of-UN	

The UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism
(Source: https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/plan-action-prevent-violent-extremism)

Women Radicalization in Pakistan[1]

Dr. Shahida Aman

Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Peshawar

In Pakistan, women radicalization and its various manifestations remain under-researched, at a time, when women in conflict zones and outside are shedding the cultural and traditional constraints to move centre stage in terrorist network operations. From Russia to Israel, and Iraq to Turkey and Nigeria, the male suicide bomber stereotype is now fast challenged by a new breed of women suicide attackers, whose aggressive disposition is transforming the conservative thinking about women abstention from active combat roles. Such violent behaviour patterns are a product of complex and myriad social, psychological, ideological and economic motivations. Women and radicalization is no less manifested in the non-violent role playing of financing, lobbying, propagating, spying and sympathizing.

For Pakistan, women involvement in terrorist attacks have been sporadic as compared to their male counterpart; only eight out of around 400 suicide attacks in the post 2001 period are known to have been participated in by women bombers.[2] Such attacks remained concentrated in cities of Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan and in the tribal agencies of Mohmand and Bajaur.[3] Some other such planned women suicide attacks have been averted by security forces culminating with the arrest of potential women suicide bombers in Swat and Dir districts in June 2005 and January 2010 respectively. These 2010 arrests led to revelations about the presence of a women suicide cell inside the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).[4] There are media reports of traumatized women suffering personal losses of loved ones to drone attacks and conflicts in FATA, aspiring to become next generation Jihadists; however, such reports are far between. More recently (2007), female students from Jamia Hafsa madrassah adjacent to Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) Islamabad, were involved in kidnapping of police personnel, massage parlour employees and forcible occupation of a government building (children library), threatening fidai (suicide) attacks for compelling the government to concede to demands of Shariah enforcement in the country. The military action against the seminary and mosque acted as a precursor for the subsequent exponential rise in suicide attacks inside Pakistan by other militant groups.
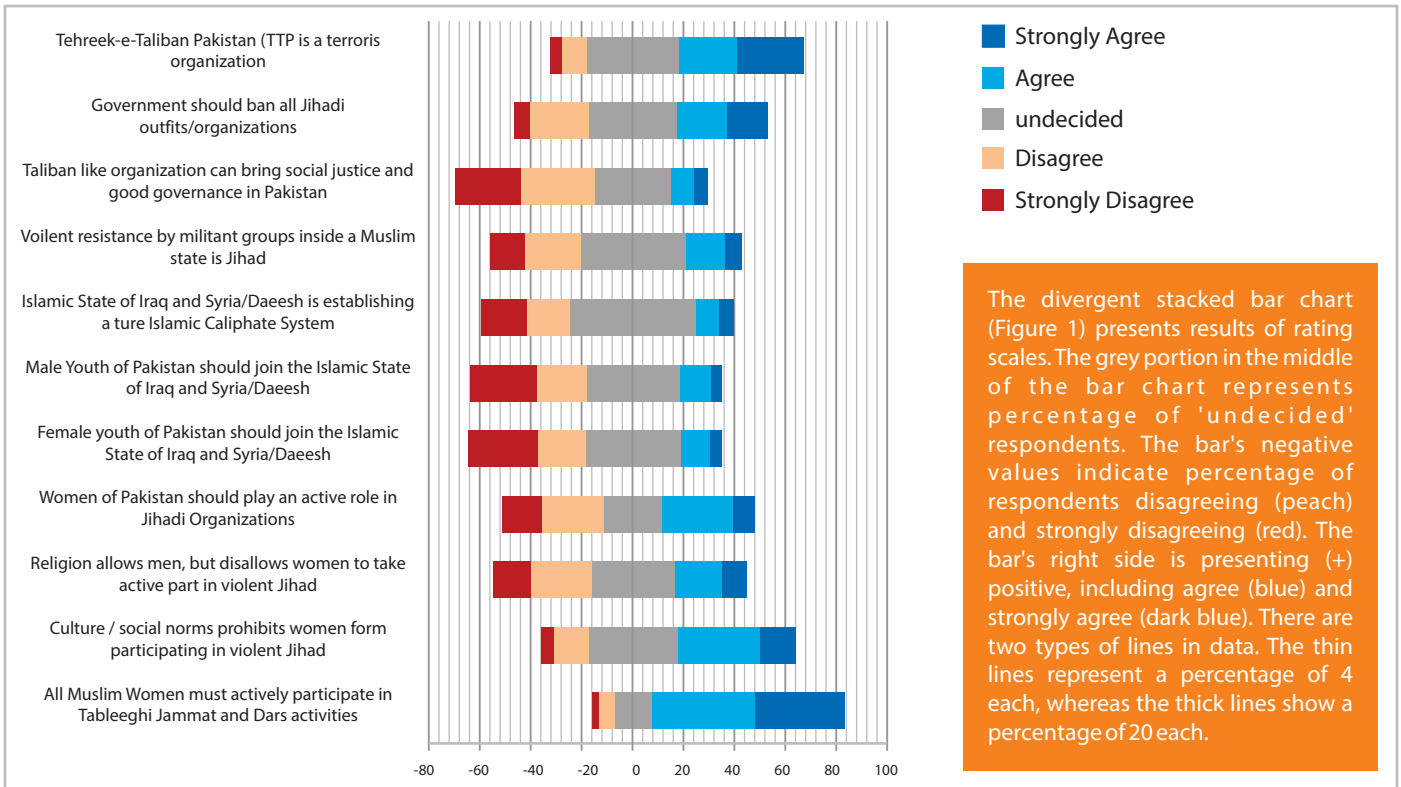
Such episodes of women radicalism underlie the importance of understanding academically, the reasons for women detachment from traditional roles to embrace non-conventional violent positions. In Pakistan, systematic studies into women involvement in radicalism and its extreme form, terrorism, have been scantily attempted. This is despite the fact that women constitute over a half of Pakistan's total population (52 percent).

Lately, a further disturbing development on Pakistan's militancy scene has been the rise of the so called 'educated Jihadists.' Some recent spates of extremist violence have been attributed to graduates from Pakistan's mainstream educational institutions, especially universities, who belong to the more affluent middle and upper middle classes.[5] A very conservative thought pattern and radical tendencies in a more 'latent' and 'passive' form are said to be prevalent among graduates of some of Pakistan's elitist institutions.[6]

The survey conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Universities (undertaken by UoP and UNDP) reveal interesting insights on female student's perception on Jihad, banning of Jihadi outfits, female role in Jihadi organizations, cultural and religious constraints and popularity of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)/Daeesh among them. The analysis of the data on rating scales is presented through diverging stacked bar charts followed by a brief discussion.

1. This opinion piece is primarily derived from the results of a UNDP Project survey undertaken in 2015/16 in collaboration with Political Science Department, University of Peshawar (UoP). The study explored the perceptions of female students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's ten leading Public and Private Sector Universities on the causes and drivers of radicalization in the country. The sample size for Quantitative survey data was 1000; around 100 female students from each university. Questions and statements in the survey focused on the role of militant Jihadi groups and gender participation in it, reform of madrassahs and mainstream educational syllabus, pluralism and status of minorities, gender rights, Pakistan's status as an Islamic state and West's engagement with Islam. This was complemented by data on internet usage, religiousity, age, schooling, ethnicity and income levels, etc. Qualitative data analysis is derived from primary interviews and secondary published literature.
2. The South Asia Terrorism Portal attributes 6 out of a total of 371 suicide attacks in Pakistan to female suicide bombers in the period May 2002 to August 2013. Our research puts the number at 8. See South Asia Terrorism Portal, as quoted in Benazir Shah, Nazar-ul Islam and Shehrbano Taseer, 'Lady Parts,' Newsweek (September 15, 2013), 1, http://newsweekpakistan.com/lady-parts/, accessed November 3, 2015.
3. Only the last known of such incidents happened in June 2013 in Quetta where a burqa (traditional cloak) clad women targeted the bus of Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University killing 14 female students.
4. Though the details of such cells are very sketchy and not at all clear or identifiable, Mullah Fazlullah, the current chief of TTP is known in the 2007 Swat uprising to appeal to women for joining/ helping the Jihad.
5. The master mind of Safoora-Goth (Karachi) incident of May 14, 2015, where gunmen killed 43 people inside a bus have been identified as former graduates of some very prestigious universities in Karachi. This incident was followed by arrests by security forces of students and faculty on charges of support to militant groups in some leading universities of Pakistan. See Malik Siraj Akbar, 'Pakistan's Educated Jihadis,' The World Post (May 21, 2015), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/malik-siraj-akbar/pakistans-educated-jihadis_b_7348992.html, accessed December 12, 2015.
6. See Ayesha Siddiqa, 'Red Hot Chilli Peppers Islam–Is the Youth in Elite Universities in Pakistan Radical?' (Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2011).

Figure 1- Diverging stacked bar chart (%)

Legend:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Categories (top to bottom):
- Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP is a terroris organization
- Government should ban all Jihadi outfits/organizations
- Taliban like organization can bring social justice and good governance in Pakistan
- Voilent resistance by militant groups inside a Muslim state is Jihad
- Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/Daeesh is establishing a ture Islamic Caliphate System
- Male Youth of Pakistan should join the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/Daeesh
- Female youth of Pakistan should join the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/Daeesh
- Women of Pakistan should play an active role in Jihadi Organizations
- Religion allows men, but disallows women to take active part in violent Jihad
- Culture / social norms prohibits women form participating in violent Jihad
- All Muslim Women must actively participate in Tableeghi Jammat and Dars activities

Axis: -80 -60 -40 -20 0 20 40 60 80 100

The divergent stacked bar chart (Figure 1) presents results of rating scales. The grey portion in the middle of the bar chart represents percentage of 'undecided' respondents. The bar's negative values indicate percentage of respondents disagreeing (peach) and strongly disagreeing (red). The bar's right side is presenting (+) positive, including agree (blue) and strongly agree (dark blue). There are two types of lines in data. The thin lines represent a percentage of 4 each, whereas the thick lines show a percentage of 20 each.
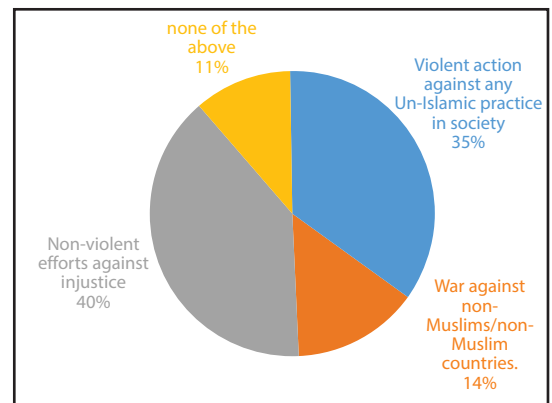
The data analysis (Figure 1) depict that a considerable portion of female students (36 percent) do not equate Jihad with violent resistance by militant groups inside a Muslim state. When read along with Figure 2, whereby 40 percent of the students understand Jihad to be 'non-violent efforts against injustice', this implies that for a majority of them, Jihad is not primarily taken as a concept of violent resistance (Jihad fil-qital). The understanding that violence may necessarily be associated with Jihad also stands ground with around a third of these students (Figure 1). The militant group, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan is perceived as a terrorist group by 50 percent of respondents (Figure 1), implying that their violent 'Jihad' by using the name of Islam does not hold legitimacy with a majority of students. Therefore, around 55 percent of the students (Figure 1) are also negative about its ability to bring good governance to Pakistan. This result is further substantiated by the finding in Figure 3, which shows that around 450 students perceive militant and terrorist groups, including the TTP, to be the greatest threat to Pakistan's security. The analysis further demonstrates that not all militant Islamist organizations are seen in the same negative light, as 29 percent of respondents are reluctant to see the state banning all Jihadi outfits, although 35 percent consent to it (Figure 1).

The survey also made an attempt to assess the popularity of the militant organization ISIS, among the educated female youth of KP. The organization is supposedly attracting thousands of European Muslim youth (including female) to its fold, which is seen in scores of Western female youth leaving their countries to join ISIS as 'Jihadist brides.'[7] This survey result demonstrates that 35 percent of respondents contest ISIS's message of establishing a true Islamic Caliphate, although around 50 percent are undecided (Figure 1). There is a stronger bias between male and female youth of Pakistan joining the ISIS, as for both cases, around 46 percent of the respondents were non-affirmative, thereby showing that ISIS is yet to gain popularity with KP's educated female youth (Figure 1).

The survey further attempted to know female student's perceptions on gender roles in Jihadi organizations and the influence of religion and culture as either prohibiting or allowing women to participate in Jihadi militant activities. For a majority at 40 percent, women participation in Jihadi activities is not desirable, but around 36 percent may like women to participate (Figure 1). A majority (39 percent) also contest the belief that women are
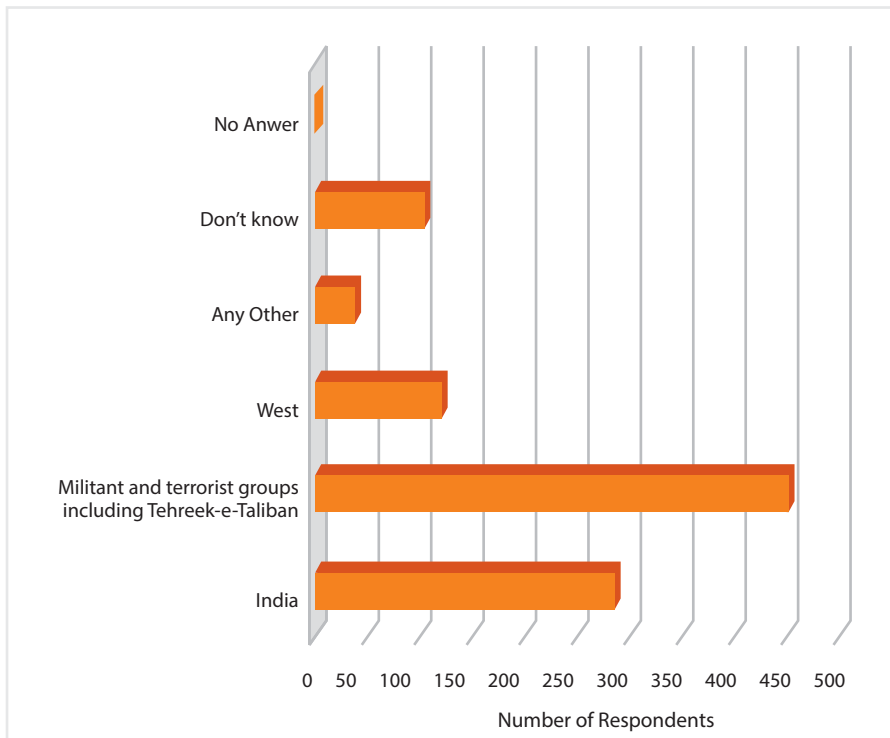
prevented by religion to participate in violent Jihad (Figure 1), meaning thereby that they see a religious sanction to gender participation in violent Jihad. Culture, however, is regarded as a greater barrier to such participation by 46 percent of respondents (Figure 1). Cultural practices, including those related to Purdah[8] which is strongly rooted in KP's Pakhtun traditions, is hence recognized by a majority of respondents as a bias against females joining violent Jihad. For a substantially clear majority of respondents (76 percent), the participation of women in Tableeghi Jamaat (proselytizing) and Dars (Islamic teaching classes) activities is highly desirable (Figure 1). Some Jihadi organizations in Pakistan are known to conduct Dars classes for women for gaining

Figure 2: What is Jihad?

- none of the above 11%
- Violent action against any Un-Islamic practice in society 35%
- War against non-Muslims/non-Muslim countries. 14%
- Non-violent efforts against injustice 40%

7.   See Dr. Katherine Brown, 'How IS message lures Western women,' BBC Middle East (April 8, 2015), http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32208217, accessed August 3, 2015; and Dominic Casciani, '43 British women and girls in Syria, say police,' BBC UK (July 14, 2015), http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-33523910, accessed August 4, 2015.

8.   Here Purdah is broadly defined as gender segregated roles for men and women.

Figure 3: What is the greatest threat to the security of Pakistan?
(Multiple choice question)

issues. Using the internet for digging out the right source of information and knowledge is also critical for students. Here, universities can play a vital role in developing critical thinking faculty among its students that allows them to gauge arguments and determine alternatives.

A perception common in mainstream literature is the involvement of madrassahs and religious seminaries in violent extremism in Pakistan. And therefore, there is an emphasis on re-vamping syllabus and teaching methods in madrassahs to suit modern education modalities. This is notwithstanding the fact that very few of madrassah students make it to the universities. Our research indicates that over 97 percent of the female students in KP's mainstream universities come from either private schools or government ones. The faculty to reason and challenge arguments needs to be inculcated in a child from their school years. This demands not only a change in the mainstream school syllabus, but also a transformation in the style of teaching. However, there is sensitivity attached to the debate on syllabus modification in mainstream schools. According to survey results, around 58 percent respondents showed disagreement over removing Jihad related material from the syllabus of schools. There is, therefore, a definite caution for the government in handling the issue of syllabus change and every effort must be made to address it in a non-controversial manner. What the state can do is to ensure that schools provide enough space for extra-curricular activities especially sports, debates, poetry and drama competitions for developing a positive outlook among students.

strategic purposes of 'extending Jihadi culture to private and intimate spaces.'[9]

There is a need for in-depth and systematic research on susceptibility and indulgence of youth, including females in violent radicalization and into areas of challenges to a sustained and positive disengagement of youth from extremist ideologies. There is a need to understand that for a considerable majority of female students in KP (82 percent), Islam is the primary identity of Pakistan.[10] This, combined with high levels of religiosity among these students,[11] reflects that the government needs to be very cautious in dealing with the sensitive issue of de-radicalizing the educated youth. The role of religious ulema (cleric) is indispensable here as they can counter the militant's narrative on Jihad by citing the very sources employed by militant discourse, i.e. Quran and Hadith (sacred Islamic text and source). The state, on its part, needs to create conditions for them to develop a counter narrative and say what they believe in without any fear. Similarly, all cultures have important pro-peace elements which need to be highlighted.
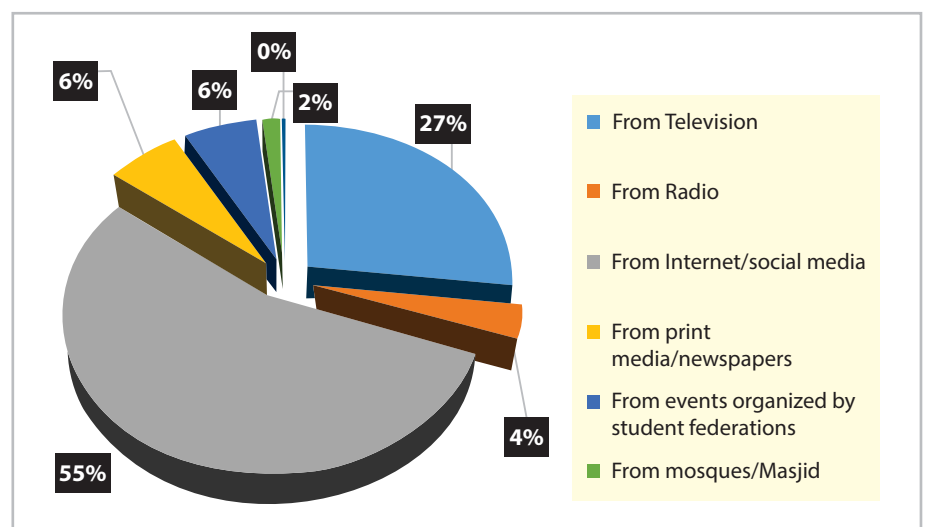
For disengaging educated youth from radical ideas, it is significant to note their overwhelming access to the internet and their dependence on social media as a source of information. According to our survey results, around 70 percent of female students had access to the internet. And for a majority of these (55 percent), social media and internet constituted the best source of information, followed by electronic media (see Figure 4). The policy makers in Pakistan need to utilize both these powerful tools for developing and disseminating a counter-narrative to the extremist ideology and for highlighting the peaceful elements of religion and culture. The role of media is very crucial, as media projection is highly influential in changing the perception of people towards sensitive

Figure 4: Which of the Following is the Best Source of Information?

- From Television
- From Radio
- From Internet/social media
- From print media/newspapers
- From events organized by student federations
- From mosques/Masjid

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9.   Lashkar-e-Taiba (now Jamat-ud-Dawa), for example holds regular Dars classes for educating women on their duty to serve the Muslim Ummah by allowing their boys to embrace martyrdom for the cause of Jihad in Kashmir. See Farhat Haq, 'Mothers of Lashkar-e-Taiba,' Political and Economic Weekly, Vol XLIV, No. 18 (May 2, 2009), 17.

10.   Around 99 percent of students identified Islam to be their religion and 94 percent belonged to the age group of 18-25.

11.   Our research shows that a clear majority performs 5 times a day prayer and reads the Quran daily.

Confronting Extremism Through Building an Effective Counter-Narrative: The Role of Political Parties and Law Enforcement Agencies in Pakistan

Dr. Hassan Abbas

Professor and Chair, Department of Regional and Analytical Studies National Defense University's College of International Security Affairs Washington DC, USA, Author, 'The Taliban Revival: Violence and Extremism on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier' (Yale University Press, 2015)

While Pakistan is using kinetic means to push back terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and Tehrik-i-Taliban in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), it is still struggling to find an antidote to religious extremism and bigotry that provides space for extremist thinking and consequent violence across the country. The ideas of pluralism, religious harmony and openness to diverse political views have slowly given way to narrow mindedness, sectarianism and intolerance. The democratic experience is equipping Pakistan to revive its balance in the socio-political domain, but it is a fact that the social space in the country today is highly contested between extremist and progressive elements of society.

The blame for these trends within the media and policy circles of Pakistan is often directed towards regional conflicts, political grievances, and socio-economic challenges leading to growing instability. While this is all true, what is often disregarded is the reality that extremist groups in Pakistan have developed and introduced their narrative across the society in a gradual and relatively imperceptible manner through media, religious education infrastructure, and penetration in state institutions. Authoritarianism and poor investment in education allowed such narratives to grow faster than usual. Muhammad Feyyaz of LUMS in his insightful paper focusing on the absence of a counterterrorism narrative in Pakistan, accurately argues that there is a virtual vacuum for the terrorist organizations to propagate their narrative at will. He further maintains that many youth embrace radicalism because such views are not challenged by an alternative discourse in the country.[1] An absence of investment in ideas to prevent extremism has allowed the extremist narrative to grow almost unchallenged for quite some time.[2] Those who attempt to stand up to extremism are touted as liberals and foreign agents, etc. in an effort to discredit their discourse. In a nutshell, the core factor at play here is the extremist narrative and hence the need to develop and support a strong and indigenous counter-narrative.

There is an increased realization in Pakistan concerning the importance of countering the narrative of violent extremism, however any meaningful effort in this direction requires three important steps: a) A clear understanding of what are the central features of the extremist narrative in the country and its sponsors; b) Developing an outline of the counter narrative, and finally and importantly, c) Which institutions can play a constructive role in challenging the narrative and how. This essay is primarily focused on the third step but the first two issues will also be discussed to explain what dynamics are at play and the most critical challenge of implementing the counter narrative strategy. The role of political parties and the law enforcement agencies will be evaluated and analyzed as potentially the two most influential and relevant institutions in this context.

Main Features of an Extremist Narrative

There is a wide variety of extremists in Pakistan with fluctuating agendas and objectives, ranging from spearheading a radical revolution in Pakistan, to converting it into an Islamic caliphate, to sanctioning Jihad against India to win over Kashmir, and supporting global radical movements. The Zia era (1979-88) played the most devastating role in pushing Pakistan in this direction. His protégés and products-both in the military and political arena-groomed and sponsored local extremist and militant groups that continue to play havoc in the country. Some of these extremist groups believe in taking up arms and adopting violent measures, whereas others focus on operating more surreptitiously by bullying progressive elements and expanding their influence through educational institutions, charity organizations and media outlets. The word "Islamic" is used here to connote the interpretation of Islam according to these extremist groups. Below are the 10 primary features of the core narrative of Pakistani Muslim Extremists to provide a glimpse into extremists' thinking patterns. Some of these may sound a bit simplistic and generalized but the purpose is to provide a context for thinking about the counter-narrative building challenge.

- Islam is under threat globally and Western states, especially the United States, are at war with Islam. The focus here is to create polarization through inculcating a sense of fear and existential threat.
- Muslims must aspire to change the global status quo and challenge all those opposed to an Islamic worldview through all means available but preferably through use of force and violence.

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1. Muhammad Feyyaz, "Why Pakistan Does Not Have a Counterterrorism Narrative," Journal of Strategic Security 8, no. 1 (2015): 63-78, available at: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol8/iss1/5

2. For a useful analysis about the extremism challenge, see Hedieh Mirahmadi, Waleed Ziad, Mehreen Farooq and Robert D. Lamb, Empowering Pakistan's Civil Society to Counter Global Violent Extremism, January 2015, Brookings Institution, available at: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2015/01/us-islamic-world-forum-publications/empowering-pakistans-civil-society-to-counter-violent-extremism-english.pdf

- Pakistan was established as an Islamic state and it must strictly adhere to Islamic principles as viewed and interpreted by these groups; Pakistan's constitution and laws must be fully revised towards this end.
- Democracy is contrary to an Islamic system of government.
- Pakistan's rulers and powerful institutions including military, are allies of the global anti-Islamic forces and must be resisted and targeted.
- Minority Muslim groups and non-Muslims living in Pakistan cannot enjoy full status as citizens of the country and they cannot be allowed to practice their religious beliefs in public. They cannot be allowed to project and propagate their views openly.
- Pakistan's art and cultural activities must be allowed within the bounds of Islamic values and the state should impose curbs on any western inspired or liberal oriented practices.
- It is legitimate to take law and order in one's hands for enforcing Islamic laws. In other words, vigilante action is permissible for such actions.
- Any challenge to Islamic laws and values in any form is deemed as blasphemous to be punished with death or severe penalty.
- Women should be restricted to the home and should follow an Islamic dress code in public.

Outline of an Effective Counter-Narrative

It is important to emphasize here that the counter-narrative is not only geared towards extremists but also towards those who are often dubbed as members of the "silent majority" or more accurately, silent spectators. They either have mixed opinions or lack the courage to take a public position. These "independents" are potentially more open to ideas directed at preventing violent extremism. The ideas are mostly couched in religious terminology, as unfortunately twisted and misinterpreted religious ideals are a significant and critical part of the extremist narrative. This approach is also deduced from the research showing that when extremists feel that their core values or identity are being threatened, "material incentives to encourage compromise backfire,"[3] and hence counter extremist narrative has to be framed in the same context as the one that extremists draw on. Arguably, that is a potent way to delegitimize extremists' narrative. In some instances, creating a doubt in the mind of the extremists about the authenticity of their flawed beliefs can do the trick. Here are the five central pillars of a counter-narrative for Pakistan:

- Pakistan was established for Muslims to pursue their economic, social and political goals as free citizens and for breaking the chains of marginalization on religious lines. The sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of Muslims in 1947 will go to waste if Pakistan cannot give equal rights and respect to its minorities. Muslims belonging to all major traditions and sects of Islam led Pakistan's freedom movement, and non Muslims living in Pakistan today made a conscious decision to stay in Pakistan and have played a constructive role during the formative years of Pakistan.
- Islam was brought to South Asia through the message of love, inclusivity and harmony taught by the great Sufi saints. None of Islam's luminaries called for imposing Islam on anyone through force, subjugation or creating fear. The teachings and works of these sufis, such as Bulleh Shah, Data Ganj Bakhsh, Bari Imam, Rahman Baba and Lal Shahbaz Qalanadar constitute the most powerful elements of a counter-narrative to extremism in Pakistan and broader South Asia. Their works must be included in the school curriculum in Pakistan.
- Democracy provides the most efficient and peaceful channel for making leaders accountable, consulting public opinion and establishing justice-the three central principles of governance in Islam. There is no other system that nourishes the idea of equality the way democracy does-another of the critical themes of Islamic teachings.
- Taking laws into ones hand has neither any sanction in Islam nor is it conducive to the functioning of any state or society. Vigilante action leads to chaos and anarchy that can destabilize societies quickly and severely with long-term consequences. In comparison, rule of law-based societies are at peace with themselves and they prosper in economic terms.
- Islam is acknowledged globally as one of the great religions of the world and it is also the fastest growing religion internationally. Islam's contributions to scientific learning and human civilization are too strong to be erased through any limited wars of the modern era. Any wars in which Muslims are involved cannot be deemed as Islamic wars per se. Muslims should be proud of their history and identity and must aspire to contribute to humanity in a constructive, peaceful, and educative way.

The Role of Political Parties and Law Enforcement in Countering the Extremist Narrative

The responsibility of building a counter-narrative does not lie on the shoulders of state institutions alone. At a broader level, extremism is a byproduct of societal developments and hence any effective response has to emerge from a grassroots level. Political parties have to think beyond reaching the power corridors; they have to take responsibility for properly imparting civic education to their members also. More so, Pakistan's major political parties have nationwide infrastructure to support counter-narratives generated at the local community level. It appears that the potential contribution of the country's mainstream political parties in influencing this arena is underestimated. Extremists have targeted Pakistan's major political parties, especially Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Awami National Party (ANP) and Muttihada Qaumi Movement (MQM), during election seasons and this clearly indicates the depth of the extremists' understanding of the challenge posed by political parties to their narrative. Political parties can contribute in developing as well as popularizing counter-narrative to extremist thought by, for instance:

- Being inclusive and opening up representation opportunities for the disenfranchised and especially young members of society-both men and women-who can communicate with the younger generation more effectively. By also recognizing that political and social alienation combined with state repression (mostly happening under military dictatorships) push marginalized groups to violence.
- Preparing leaders who have a clear understanding of extremists' worldview and training them to challenge bigotry in their constituencies through political outreach activities.[4]
- Training legislators about the nuances of law-making (for instance on how to induct FATA into mainstream Pakistan) and on how to discourage extremist tendencies through better and targeted laws.
- Shunning extremists in their ranks who build their political appeal by yielding to radical ideas.
- Enabling second and third tier political leaders to contribute towards democratic governance which helps mitigate the risk of violent extremism.
- Nurturing tolerance through their manifestos and broader political outreach, emphasizing the importance of reconciliation, dialogue and peaceful

3.   Hammad Sheikh, Jeremy Ginges, Alin Coman and Scott Atran, "Religion, group threat and Sacred Values," Judgment and Decision Making 7 (2), 110-118; available at: http://journal.sjdm.org/12/12305/jdm12305.pdf

4.   See, "Women Countering Violent Extremism in Pakistan", The Institute for Inclusive Security, https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/elevating-pakistani-voices/

settlement of disputes both internally and externally.

- Realizing that legitimacy of the counter-narrative message is linked with the legitimacy of the messenger and hence the charisma and credentials of political role models can have a great impact on society.[5]
- Empowering communities and strengthening their resilience against extremism.[6]

The role of a criminal justice system in general, and policing in particular, in crafting and implementing the counter-narrative is critical. Given over emphasis on kinetic means-both in Pakistan and globally-the centrality of police's role in the field of counter extremism and counterterrorism is often overlooked. Police incompetence and reputation of corruption also comes in the way of taking this institution as a serious contender for any constructive role in society. This will have to change if Pakistan is to develop as a functional and progressive state. It is so because extremism first introduces itself in the shape of hate speech, bullying and intimidation. Police forces, if properly resourced and trained, are the first line of defense in such instances. Extremists gain space and strength as the state fails to stop them at the outset of their nefarious actions. The state at the most basic level on the ground is represented by its law enforcement capacity. Hence, a police role can be instrumental in nipping the trouble in the bud.

The role of police in developing a counter-narrative is also critical given its access to investigation and interrogation reports of extremists and terrorists. In my research, I have come across many instances where police officials are among the very first ones to pin point new extremism trends in society. They are also among the first responders who get a glimpse of the network building of criminals and militants. The early interrogation reports of militant suspects are a treasure trove for developing a counter-narrative to extremism and militancy. Perusing written and electronic materials that generate hatred and incite violence, as well as pursuing legal measures against such efforts is also a police task that is rarely undertaken. At present, Pakistan lacks the organizational mobility needed to make best use of the vast data that the state has access to. The state authorities are not even cognizant of this potential it appears. The idea of National Counterterrorism Authority (NACTA) was an effort in this direction but it has taken a very long time for it to be established, made functional and properly resourced. NACTA, if empowered, will also require major support from the military and intelligence apparatus to emerge as a central resource that can provide critical input to Islamabad to devise effective counterterrorism strategies and develop a powerful counter-narrative to extremism. Pakistan cannot afford to delay investment in its civilian law enforcement infrastructure for better policing as well as for it to perform the critical counter extremism role.

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5.   For a detailed discussion, see Qamar –ul Huda, "Using Citizen Messengers to Counteract Radicalism," in Laurie Fenstermacher, Editor, Countering Violent Extremism: Scientific Methods and Strategies, revised July 2015, 150, available at https://info.publicintelligence.net/ARL-CounteringViolentExtremism.pdf

6.   For details, see "Stop Violent Extremism: Madrid + 10," October 2015, available at http://www.clubmadrid.org/PD2015/PD2015booklet.pdf

Opinion

The Behavioural Determinants of Violent Extremism: The Useful Lessons we Learn from Behavioural Science
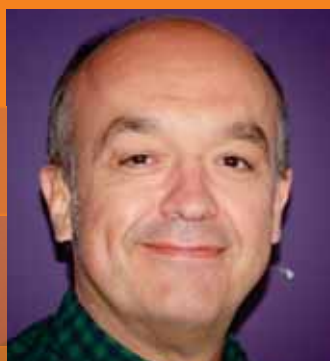
Enrique Fatas

Professor of Economics
University of East Anglia
United Kingdom

Lina Maria Restrepo Plaza

Associate Lecturer, School of Economics
Universidad del Valle, Colombia,
PhD student, School of Economics
University of East Anglia
United Kingdom

Umar Taj

Doctoral Researcher
Behavioural Science Group
Warwick Business School

How many paths lead to violent extremism? What are the determinants of radicalization? Are cultural factors more important than organizational or individual characteristics to understand the emergence and persistence of violent groups? Unfortunately, answers to these questions still offer us a partial and very fragmented understanding of violent extremism, with limited policy recommendations.

Different approaches to this multifaceted phenomenon shed partial light on its causes. Psychology strongly suggests that no simple individual profile captures well the complex combination of emotions (from anger to pride, rage, frustration, and despair) and social, economic, religious, or ethno-nationalistic motives behind violent extremism. Solid psychological evidence grounds the conclusion that even radical acts of violence (i.e. suicide missions) are not signs of psychopathological disorders, but the outcome of a combination of individual and environmental factors. While popular perception suggests that these individuals are mentally disturbed, poor and undereducated, survey data

analysis shows that the lack of education, and poverty, do not predict well who becomes a violent extremist.[1] It has been shown that at least 18 percent of suicide bombers that participated in attacks between 2000 and 2005 had or were pursuing higher education.

If the individual level of analysis is too intricate, organizational constraints may help to explain why some groups succeed in attracting adepts. The sociology of organizations suggests that an appropriate combination of social recognition, community services and dense networks of support and secrecy, may boost commitment with a cause and violent extremism. The empirical analysis of different groups and societies done by political scientists strongly suggests that psychological and organizational drivers are context specific.[2] Only a few of those exposed to the most intense environmental pressures eventually decide to actively participate in violent actions, and while ritual dinners may have been extremely successful in one particular organization (i.e. Black Tigers in Sri Lanka), funding independent social service

organizations may help to understand the success of religious groups attracting non-religious radicals (i.e. Al Qaeda). Sometimes, only the combination of social factors (social deprivation) and individual drivers (a particular educational background) explains some regularities (i.e. why individuals with an engineering education are three to four times more frequent among violent Islamists).[3]

How do we incorporate all these different elements coming from Psychology, Sociology and Political Science, into a unified approach? How do we extract from different methodologies, useful policy lessons? Behavioural Science offers an interesting framework by combining methods and lessons from different social sciences to jointly analyze the role of environmental factors (religion, education, poverty, social exclusion, group identity) and individual characteristics on the emergence of violent extremism. Behavioural science uses a variety of methods. Case-based studies are useful to understand on how violence shifts risk attitudes in the general public, by creating an atmosphere of vulnerability. By using

1. See, for instance, Benmelech, E. and Berrebi, C., 2007. Human capital and the productivity of suicide bombers. The Journal of Economic Perspectives, 21(3), pp.223-238.
2. See the excellent survey of Crenshaw, M. 2007. Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A Review Essay. Security Studies, 16, 1, pp. 133-162.
3. Gambetta, D. and Hertog, S., 2009. Why are there so many Engineers among Islamic Radicals?. European Journal of Sociology, 50(02), pp.201-230

surveys and interviews, it profiles extremists and validates some of the connections between societal (i.e. inequality) and organizational (i.e. network structure) constraints. Finally, behavioural scientists conduct controlled studies to identify incentives, emotions, social drivers and institutions that might lead to violent extremism in particular contexts.

Economists have significantly contributed to this interdisciplinary approach by providing a theoretical structure based in Behavioural Game Theory.[4] Theorists in Economics have developed models that capture key behavioural elements of the decisions of violent extremists. They have also characterized the decisions of policymakers and governments. By testing these models either in the field or in more controlled environments, behavioural scientists in general and behavioural economists in particular, have largely helped to improve our understanding of violent extremism.

How does this approach operate? Behavioural scientists design strategic environments (we call them 'games') in which individuals (we call them 'players') make decisions. Specific institutions set the limits of the interaction between different agents (either individuals considering to participate in a violent action or governments trying to prevent the emergence of violent actions). By modifying the framing, the rules and the incentives of these 'games', we are able to make predictions not only about players' behaviour, but about the likelihood of succeeding in putting forward an act of violence. True, these games are abstractions from the real world that only include key aspects of a particular situation. By keeping the interaction simple, we isolate all the noise from the environment. For each game that is implemented, we may easily identify the expected result if individuals participating in the decision were following a very particular logic based on a fully selfish, rational way of thinking, and the anticipation of any rational decision made by similar agents. By incorporating other elements present in the decision making process (i.e. group identity, emotions like anger, social norms), we integrate more realistic factors into our analytical schemes. By testing the predictions of these realistic models in behavioural studies, we are then able to adjust and improve our knowledge and give governments more realistic advice.

Behavioural experimentation has some advantages over other methods in the analysis of violent extremism. One of the advantages is that, since participants in behavioural studies are assigned to alternative scenarios or treatments in a completely random manner, any observed differences on behaviour can be linked to the differences between treatments. In other words, the direction of causality between treatment and outcome is determined by the assignment procedure. Note that this causal relationship is not so easy to determine in non-experimental data, and this is why behavioural studies have several advantages in studying violent extremism, and in informing policies aiming to reduce violence. Likewise, their mathematical cousins (the 'games'), experiments do not need to provide participants a realistic simulation of their decision environment. They are designed to isolate and examine separately critical aspects of particular situations. By doing so, we gain superior control over the data generating process that these studies afford. Additionally, in a randomized experiment, or randomized control or field trial, randomly allocated members of the target population make incentivized decisions. Being the consequences real, the decisions they make are consequential for them, reducing or eliminating some of the problems associated with studies in other fields.

The second advantage of randomized studies has to do with the data we obtain. The quality of data on violent extremism is especially difficult to control using other collection methods, because of the incentives of each side (extremists and governments) to misrepresent their information, and the consequences (such as being arrested, or security failures) to revealing information. By using behavioural methodologies, we avoid these problems, and also gain the ability to test the efficacy of different institutions to tackle national security issues.

This method can be used to design better policies. Counter-violence policies must be designed to affect the behaviour of people in the field. A better understanding of how and to what extent their behaviour deviates from the rational actor model is necessary for effective policy design. Interestingly, behavioural methods are effective to isolate the effect of psychological forces and organizational factors in all the decisions involved. Behavioural Science does not only bring a deeper understanding of others' behaviour-it also improves our decision-making by de-biasing our own behaviour, when facing traumatic exposure to extremely violent actions.

Our previous work includes a good example of this contribution. In a recently published study,[5] we analyze alternative policies fighting back violent extremism, including those which reduce its impact (generating a negative externality to other government bodies) and those investing resources that prevent extremism (creating a positive externality by reducing the overall violent threat). We specifically test the effectiveness of different institutions sharing the cost of prevention policies among the different actors (say, governments) involved. Our results strongly suggest that cost sharing generates a non-linear effect on the choice of preventive strategies and its overall effectiveness. Only when different agencies make a strong and binding initial commitment supporting a high level of cost sharing do we observe a significant improvement in policy coordination. Interestingly, intermediate levels of support do not generate any significant gain, in sharp contrast with the initial theoretical prediction.

How does this behavioural method help to gain a deeper understanding of societal factors driving violent extremism? In a different and recent work, we explore the implications of a meta-study run by Santifort-Jordan and Sandler.[6] In their meta-study, they identify how economic and political inequality trigger violent actions, both at the domestic and transactional level. In our behavioural study, we disentangle the social, economic and political factors behind extremism using a controlled behavioural study. Interestingly, we find that while economic inequality has limited effect in violence, political inequality massively increases the number of violent events, and skilled individuals tend to radicalize more only in the presence of political asymmetries. The effect of welfare policies on violence in this context is negligible. In line with the UN definition of terrorism ("the act of destroying or injuring civilian lives … in the attempt to effect some political goal"), and confirming Santifort-Jordan and Sandler's results, we identify how similarly skilled individuals, with the same individual characteristics may decide to participate or not to participate at all in violent acts depending on the existence of one specific environmental factor: political exclusion.

How do we land all this into Pakistan's

4.   Behavioral Game Theory analyzes the strategic interaction among individuals from a realistic perspective, incorporating elements from psychology (emotion), philosophy (moral obligation), sociology (peer effects), or neurology (cognitive limits) to its models.

5.   Kass, Malcolm, Enrique Fatas, Catherine Eckel, and Daniel Arce. "The UN in the lab"; Social Choice and Welfare 45, no. 3 (2015): 625-651.

6.   Santifort-Jordan C, Sandler T. "An empirical study of suicide terrorism: a global analysis"; Southern Economic Journal. 2014 Apr 1;80(4):981-1001.

reality? The existing milieu of societal, political and economic factors, which entrench the vulnerability of Pakistan's youth, provides an almost perfect platform for employing Behavioural Science methods. Efforts to combat violent extremism in Pakistan have been heavily community based, approaching the issue via educational programmes in schools and with 'radicalized' youth, as well as through the provision of alternate engagement, such as vocational training programmes. These approaches, though potentially beneficial to the enhancement of the quality of life and to developing individual potential; are not able to fully engender changes in attitudes and mentalities. In order to combat violent extremism mentalities, a deeper understanding of the root cause is more necessary and effective than the provision of a temporary solution. Behavioural science methodologies have not yet been introduced in the Pakistani context and have the capacity to effect results that have not yet been achieved.

Youth have been the most targeted group for recruitment by violent extremists; they are thought to be more easily conditioned and more easily recruited. Pakistan currently has one of the largest youth populations globally, making the country more susceptible to an upward trend in violent extremism, with instances of and recruits to extremist organizations. Popular notions that poverty and lack of education promote youth inclinations to intolerance and violent extremism may not be the only causative factors, however these issues and circumstances are not without consequence. Though poverty itself may not be a motivating factor to a life choice of violent extremism, the amalgamation of high incidences of poverty, lack of education, strong religious or social norms, or inadequate political inclusion systems may situate Pakistani youth in positions of vulnerability.

Vulnerability seen as lack of opportunity may be a more apt starting point for analyzing the psyche of the Pakistani youth and their proclivity to violent extremism recruitment. Through a Behavioural Science lens, the impact of these factors can be measured with a focus on understanding which deficiencies play more critical, incremental roles in violent extremism motivation. The view of vulnerability as lack of opportunity may be more operative in effecting more relevant results. Through this approach, already marginalized groups are not further marginalized, and a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the problem can be reached.

Behavioural Science can provide a medium for violent extremism prevention in Pakistan, which has been unexplored in the past. The benefits of using this framework are broad and far-reaching, bringing a fresh perspective and new solutions to a continuously mounting problem in Pakistan.

How Pakistan's Education Radicalizes

Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy

Professor for Mathematics, Physics and Sociology
Forman Christian College, Lahore

Local newspapers have carried many stories of young religious killers from affluent middle-class families and sound education institutions, who have planned and executed murders, and have carried out gruesome massacres such as those at Safoora Goth and Parade Lane mosque. Islamic groups such as Daesh and Hizb-ut-Tahrir successfully attract the young fanatics.

Such examples should by now have crushed the notion attributing religious extremism to poverty or lack of education. And yet, like the proverbial ostrich, many keep insisting the solution to violent extremism is more schools and more education funding. They refuse to acknowledge that in fact, education feeds and fuels terrorism. But more education will enhance, not lessen, terrorism. Here's why.

When education is the carrier of liberal values, it is the natural enemy of extremism because it enriches and broadens the mind, enables one to entertain a thought without necessarily accepting it, and creates willingness to live in a society that is democratic, pluralistic, and diverse. Extremism, by definition, is a mindset where only a single truth is considered to be valid. It is the antithesis of liberalism.

But Pakistani education explicitly rejects liberal objectives. Some variation exists across rich and poor schools, between villages and cities, and across provinces. However the basic road-map is provided by the school curriculum, textbooks, teachers, and examinations. Stated in official education policies, explicated through the content of textbooks and questions posed in examinations, and emphasized by famous TV personalities, the narrative goes as follows:

- Students must be taught that Pakistan was created for Muslims in the name of Islam in accordance with the Two-Nation Theory. So while non-Muslims may continue to live within national borders, they must not expect equal treatment. Since all religions except Islam are false therefore, every student, whether or not Muslim, must know about Islamic principles and practices. But Muslim students need not know anything that is positive about other religions.
- A sense of siege and embattlement must be created. Hence students must be told that the enemies of Pakistan are constantly plotting and scheming to weaken it. The Federal Ministry of Education (1995) curriculum document for classes K-V demands that students be required to "acknowledge and identify forces that may be working against Pakistan", learn about "India's evil designs against Pakistan", and practice "making speeches on jihad and shahadat".
- Culture and ethno-lingual heritage must be downplayed. Admitting to Pakistan's diversity is considered impermissible since this supposedly weakens nation building. South Asian identity is also to be rejected. In March 2016, a recently published textbook that derides the Baloch as "uncivilized and barbaric"[1] came under criticism by Baloch members of the National Assembly. The issue was raised in the upper house of parliament and it was pointed out that the sociology book being taught to the 12th class in Punjab

described the Baloch as "uncivilized people engaged in murder and looting".
- Several officially prescribed Pakistan Studies books claim Pakistan was born not in 1947 but with the conquest of Sindh in 712 AD by Arab invader Muhammad bin Qasim.
- Reference to Islam is critical on every matter. Therefore democracy, personal and political freedoms, culture, lifestyles, the status of women and religious minorities can have validity only insofar as Islam permits. The first chapter of every science book is, by law, about the great achievements of Muslim scientists.
- When necessary, history can be freely rewritten. Facts can be changed as needed. And so Mr. Jinnah was represented as a deeply pious Muslim in Zia-era textbooks, the 1965 war as initiated by India and the secession of East Pakistan as a Hindu conspiracy. There is to be no introspection, no admission of fault, and therefore no learning from past mistakes.

History of Education

East Pakistan's secession in 1971 convinced Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that national integration required a national school curriculum. In 1974, parliament passed an act decreeing that all four provinces must henceforth follow the national curriculum. This remained in force until the 18th amendment to the Constitution was approved 35 years later.

The usefulness of Bhutto's step was soon recognized by General Zia-ul-Haq. Soon after he executed Bhutto in 1979, Zia set about using education to redefine Pakistan. In 1981, in a directive to the University Grants Commission, he ordered the re-conceptualization of Pakistani education and a rewriting of the history of Pakistan at all levels of education. This was a landmark event.

From then onwards, the struggle for Pakistan was no longer depicted as the victorious struggle for a Muslim homeland, but as the movement for an Islamic state

1. "Iftikhar A. Khan, "Describing Baloch as uncivilised in textbook irks Senators," DAWN March 12, 2016. Available at http://www.dawn.com/news/1245210

run according to Islamic law. Even if the heroes of the Pakistan movement-Jinnah, Iqbal, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan-were not actually orthodox Muslims, they were to be shown as such.

The Ministry of Education website today reflects Zia's priorities: "Education and training should enable the citizens of Pakistan to lead their lives according to the teachings of Islam as laid down in the Qur'an and Sunnah and to educate and train them as a true practicing Muslim."

These objectives ignore the existence of non-Muslim Pakistanis. They do not emphasize cultivating civic virtues and producing socially responsible, thoughtful and well-informed individuals. Nor do they ask for acceptance of Pakistan's diversity of languages and cultures. Crucial requirements for citizenship are unmentioned: knowing and respecting the law of the land, preserving the environment, basics of hygiene, paying one's fair share of taxes, assurance of social justice, etc.

Proponents argue that becoming a true practicing Muslim will automatically endow an individual student with every imaginable virtue. Hence, sermonizing and strict regimentation of the school environment is thought to be the key for producing moral and patriotic Pakistanis.

The education establishment defends the necessity of indoctrination through textbooks. Privately, those in charge argue that if children are told the truth, many will question the need and very existence of Pakistan. In 2003, a resolution moved in the Pakistan Philosophical Congress against propaganda and indoctrination in textbooks, was defeated because apparently the "philosophers" also recognized that telling the truth is dangerous.

Pakistan's various prime ministers have either pandered or agreed with this view. During 2002-2004, the Prime Minister declared that the "ideology of Pakistan" was "the most important thing that students need to learn". Religious scholars who plead for a moderate Islam, have expressed the need for introducing Islamic Studies after class V, as according to them, religious education without formal education from an early age tends to produce religious and sectarian extremists. But then there are always those who disagree as expressed by a renowned Pakistani Economist and Ex-Prime Minster that, "both religious and formal education are necessary from the

beginning. Religious education... helps character building," at the concluding ceremony of an education conference.

The Consequences
General Musharraf's U-turn after 9/11 put Pakistan on the defensive. Its education system came under the spotlight after the discovery that Pakistanis had been involved in several terrorist incidents in Europe. Under pressure, the government sought to back-pedal. But street protests by religious forces successfully prevented a change of course. Minister of Education at the time, nervously declared herself a fundamentalist on television and announced that verses on jihad in textbooks would be reinstated.[2]

By the 1990's the state sponsored militarism in Pakistan's schools, colleges, and universities had profoundly impacted young minds. Militant groups roamed freely on campuses, invited students for jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan, collected funds on Friday prayers, and declared a war without borders. After 9/11, they went underground. But this was only a stratagem.

Let's fast forward to 2016. Piety has exploded on every Pakistani university campus. Discussions on jinns (spirits), black magic and supernatural agencies draw huge crowds. Beards and burqas are everywhere, proselytizing groups operate freely, and religious-minded teachers freely preach their beliefs during class time. The pious are angry at the West for countless reasons, and equally angry at the liberal permissiveness on campuses which allows celebration of Valentine's Day and male-female couples to sit together. Sufficiently agitated ones pick up the gun.

Today, Pakistan is in a deep quandary. The army and government have fallen afoul of the very forces they helped create. The army has lost more soldiers and officers fighting Muslim terrorists than in all the wars it has fought with India. When over 120 school-going children of army officers were butchered in cold blood by the Taliban, scarcely a few hundred protesters gathered in Pakistani cities. But a sea of humanity, estimated at a hundred thousand, assembled at the recent funeral of the murderer of Punjab's ex-Governer.

For fear of backlash, Pakistan's rulers are unlikely to even try to remove the toxic content of education any time soon. Turning education over to the provinces has not helped. In fact, a newly added chapter in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa textbooks

glorifying Ghazi Ilm Din[3] indicates how difficult it will be. Pakistan's security establishment has so far contented itself by tossing aerial bombs upon terrorist targets in Waziristan and becoming slightly more watchful of madrassas. But unless it realizes the terrible dangers of an overdose of religion in mainstream non-madrassa education, Pakistan will become the next Iraq, Syria, or Afghanistan.

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2.   See Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Education Reform In Pakistan – Challenges and Prospects," (2006). Available at http://www.pc.gov.pk/vision2030/approach%20paper/t3/theme%203-Pervaiz%20Hudbouy-1.pdf

3.   Ghazi Ilm-ud-din (4 December 1908 – 31 October 1929) was a Muslim who murdered a book publisher named Mahashe Rajpal for publishing the book Rangila Rasul, which offended religious sentiments of Muslims.

Combating Violent Extremism

I. A. Rehman

Secretary General
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

The state of Pakistan is being challenged by violent extremists at two levels. At one level, armed groups are contesting the state's writ over parts of the tribal areas. With a view to increasing their pressure on the state, these elements are also carrying out attacks on security forces and civilian populations across the land and causing heavy losses in life and property. At the other level, these militant extremist groups are trying to subvert people's allegiance to the state by alleging that it does not conform to their version of Islamic injunctions.

The roots of religious extremism in Pakistan lie in its people's political experiences over the past three centuries. In developing responses to their subjugation by a colonial power, they developed two strategies to regain freedom and their right to shape their destiny. The traditionalist Muslim scholars called for a return to the fundamental tenets of their faith, unity and solidarity among the national Muslim entities for the establishment of a caliphate of God (and theocratic states as preparatory to that goal), and realization of the community's objectives through armed struggle.

The other strategy devised by what may be called modernists, sought freedom and dignity by acquiring scientific knowledge and adopting the legal and constitutional road to self-determination. This group did not deny the need to uphold people's faith, but saw no conflict between their belief and their aspirations for a democratic polity and a social order based on respect for liberal values and scientific scholarship. Indeed Muslim ideologues, such as Allama Iqbal and several others, asserted that pursuit of these goals amounted to a return to the pristine principles of Islam.

The struggle for Pakistan was led by the modernists and to them fell the honour of serving as the new state's founding fathers. But soon after their success in achieving Pakistan, they came under pressure from their traditionalist rivals for power who contended that Pakistan, in terms of its genesis, could only be managed in accordance with religious injunctions. The history of Pakistan is the story of an extended contest between the traditionalists and modernists.

For a long time, the traditionalists felt contented with the scheme to accommodate their point of view in the constitution. But the state elite made itself vulnerable to the traditionalists' pressure for concessions in the constitution, in laws and in practice because it could not meet the basic needs and aspirations of the people. However, the contest between the modernists and their challengers remained non-violent till the late 1970s, when extremist elements in Pakistan were presented with opportunities for using violent means to gain their end.

The traditionalist minority's involvement with the Afghan jihad and its access to big money and sophisticated weapons enabled it to start challenging the state with arms and they found in Pakistan's tribal areas, ideal conditions for the raising of armed militias.

A peculiar aspect of the extremists' challenge to the state is the absence of any coherent statement of their objectives. At first, the tribal leaders blamed the state of Pakistan for violating their traditional autonomy when it asked them not to host militant groups operating in Afghanistan and not to allow their lands to be used for such operations. Pakistan could not possibly accept the militants' demands as this would have amounted to compromising the state's sovereign rights.

At a later stage, the militant extremists started saying they were punishing Pakistan for siding with their enemies in Afghanistan and for not enforcing the rule of Shariah in Pakistan. This argument, too, could not be accepted by Pakistan for a small minority cannot decide what Pakistan's policy should be, nor could it be allowed to forcibly impose its fiat on the vastly larger number of the people who reject their hegemony.

The militant extremists' rejection of accommodation within the constitution of Pakistan and their attacks on defence installations, and finally on the Army Public School in Peshawar in 2014, in which over 150 students and staff members were massacred, left the government of Pakistan with no choice but to launch a full-scale offensive to clear the tribal areas of all violent groups. This campaign is now nearing completion.

Meanwhile, the extremists have been giving new interpretations to Islamic injunctions. One of the most radical shifts in the religious code introduced by them relates to jihad (holy war by Muslims). While under the classical Islamic law, a jihad can only be sanctioned by a state, but the extremists operating in Pakistan, like their counterparts in the Middle East, claim jihad can be undertaken by any group of non-state actors and even by individuals. Another new idea introduced by the extremists is that people who claim to be Muslims but do not qualify as Muslims by their conduct are liable to be beheaded and this punishment can be carried out by any 'good Muslim', that is, by any member of an extremist group.

The propagation of a most aggressive and utterly intolerant creed by the extremists has led to gross violations of human rights in the country. The Shias, the largest minority Muslim sect in Pakistan, have been branded infidels and have been killed in large numbers, especially in Quetta, where the Hazara Shias have been continually targetted. In 2015 alone, Balochistan, the

second largest conflict zone after the tribal area, faced attacks from three kinds of militant organizations-quasi-religious militants, sectarian target-killers and nationalist militias. The province suffered 280 attacks by militants (all categories), more than any other province, in which 355 people were killed. Eleven persons were killed in an attack outside a Shia mosque in Bolan district. Ethically motivated violence took the lives of 51 non-Baloch workers in different parts of the province. Moreover, for the first time in the country's history, the Ismailis in the northern areas were recently threatened by extremists.

The attacks on religious minorities have also increased. No less than 80 people were killed when a congregation in a Peshawar church was attacked in 2013 and 15 people were killed in bomb attacks on two churches in Youhanabad, a Christian colony in Lahore, last year. The target killing of Ahmedis continues unabated, the Hindus are complaining of a spurt in cases of forced conversion of their girls, the Sikhs in a tribal agency were subjected to a poll tax by the militants, and the Kalash people were told to convert to Islam or face consequences.

The extremists are especially intolerant of women's basic rights. They have targeted girls' education centers and destroyed hundreds of schools. One of the survivors of their murderous attack, Malala Yusafzai, may have won the Nobel Prize, but the extremists' edict against her stands. The world-wide condemnation of their attacks on women has produced no sign of remorse of repentance in the extremists' ranks.

The excesses committed by the extremists in the conflict zones have spilled over into a larger territory and minority communities and sects and women have faced increased threats in all parts of the country. Besides, the measures taken to meet the terrorist threat have tended to undermine people's basic rights. Special laws enacted over the past few years have curtailed the citizens' legal entitlements, especially their right to due process of the law. The moratorium on death penalty was lifted in December 2014 and over 350 people have been executed to date, thus further brutalizing an already brutalized society.

The state of Pakistan has had to spend billions of rupees on the fight against extremism. After the failure of mediation efforts, the army was obliged to launch Zarb-i-Azb, the code word for a military offensive aimed at driving the extremists out of their dens in the tribal areas. The scale of the operation can be judged from the fact that during the 18-month long campaign, no less than 837 extremists' hideouts have been destroyed, and 3,400 terrorists and 488 officers and men of the security forces killed.

The diversion of resources to meet the threat from violent extremists is having a disastrous effect on the state's economy. Despite the offer of handsome incentives by the government, foreign investors are shy of coming to Pakistan because of security considerations. The country is also losing the benefits of exchanges with foreign states in the areas of culture, arts, literature and sports. Pakistan has been unable to grow out of the category of Low Human Development Countries where the only South Asian country in its company is Afghanistan.

An inevitable side effect of the extremists' threat to the state is the citizens' increased reliance on violence in day-to-day affairs. The space for negotiated settlement of differences between groups and individuals, even over petty issues, has shrunk, and resort to violence has become the first option with an increasingly large number of people. All this cannot but increase the cost of maintaining law and order and peace in society.

The fact that a huge majority of the country's population rejects the extremists' self-assumed task to destroy Pakistan's constitutional framework and rewrite the Muslims' faith according to their partisan wishes, is evident from the overwhelming public support that operation Zarb-i-Azb has received. One of the factors contributing to the people's approval of the military offensive is the fact that it was launched only after all attempts to persuade the extremists to accept accommodation within the constitution had been spurned.

However, there is a consensus in the country that while the violent extremists need to be dealt with by force, the threat from them will not disappear until they are defeated in the battle of minds as well. The state's awareness of this fact is evident from some of the objectives of the 20-point National Action Plan adopted for eradication of terrorism. These include points relating to the decision to take effective steps against religious persecution; registration and regulation of madressas (religious schools); ban on glorification of terrorism through the print and the electronic media; administrative and development reforms in FATA with focus on the return of Temporary Displaced Persons (TDPs); empowering the Balochistan government to achieve political reconciliation with all alienated groups; and a thorough revamping and reforming of the criminal justice system.

Obviously, the ground conceded to the extremists by lack of efficient administrative and justice systems can only be regained by raising the performance of state institutions in these areas of key concern to the people. Besides, religious

scholars must realize the threat to their faith posed by its unwarranted, unauthorized and reckless interpretation by self-appointed juris consults. The space grabbed by extremists in theological debates needs to be retrieved by highlighting the peaceful and liberal nature of Islam's cardinal precepts.

It may not be easy to persuade the diehard extremists to give up their dangerous, and eventually self-destructive undertaking, but the task of weaning the ordinary people, especially the youth, away from the path of violence should not be impossible. What is needed is a broad based programme to prevent young men from joining militant groups and reclaiming the militants who are amenable to reason.

Apart from radical changes in school textbooks, there is need for promoting the liberal values of Islam based on research across the world so that the theoretical premises of extremism can be challenged. The project to de-radicalize the former militants must go beyond the limited, and somewhat fruitless, experiments carried out so far. Guidance may be sought from similar programmes in Sri Lanka, China and Saudi Arabia. Finally, space must be created to absorb fast burgeoning ranks of religious scholars in the various fields of activity and thus ensure that violent militancy is not the only option available to them.

Terrorist Financing and Charity Giving: Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Initiatives of the Government of Pakistan

Usman Zafar

Research and Campaigns Manager
Pakistan Peace Collective
(A Communications Project of the
Federal Ministry of Information,
Broadcasting and National Heritage)

Terrorism and extremism is an extremely complex subject. Even to this day, states encounter an incredible degree of difficulty when attempting to define this menace. The reasons for this are numerous, ranging from the kind of activity which is to be declared a terrorist act, to defining the groups responsible, to the specific nature of violent extremism which is faced by any nation. Consequently, the response of the state has continuously changed as well, from drafting newer and more potent laws, to carrying out military operations both widespread and targeted, to developing political consensus on handling this threat. Pakistan is no stranger to this phenomenon, having dealt with violent extremism in one form or another for decades before 9/11.

Due to the constantly evolving dynamics of domestic militancy, policymaking on violent extremism in Pakistan has been an inherently complicated process, which requires inputs from practically every facet of the state machinery, and cannot simply be resigned to the personal assessments of a few.

A critical aspect that is the current focus of the state is the issue of how terrorist and extremist groups are funded. One of the key aspects of the National Action Plan was to clamp down on the issue of terrorist financing by "choking financing for terrorists and terrorist organizations". A number of steps have been taken in this regard, but one element that requires further attention is groups' misuse of charitable giving and people's generosity. Charitable giving has been identified as a critical source of income for terrorist and extremist activities. Terrorist and extremist groups prey on the religious sentiments of people and the religious obligation to make charitable donations. It is important to reiterate here that the public is not intentionally giving money to these groups, but rather inadvertently gives money to such groups despite good intentions owing to a lack of awareness about any possible links between terrorist financing and charity giving.

The Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage recognized this threat, and accordingly embarked on a number of activities to understand the attitudinal and behavioural aspects of charity giving in Pakistan, assess the key areas of intervention and develop an initiative that can address this issue to the public directly.

Research on Charity Giving
The first step in this activity was to investigate the attitudinal and behavioural aspects of charity giving in Pakistan. This was necessary because at present there has never been any comprehensive perceptual study that has attempted to assess why or how people give charity in Pakistan. Outside of a few studies with limited scope and ambitions, there has been very little research on this. This was particularly alarming because every year billions of rupees are generated, both by genuine and some dubious organizations, through charity and donations in Pakistan.

Accordingly, the Federal Ministry of Information and Broadcasting undertook a nationwide study to investigate these patterns. The purpose of this study was not to assess how much money goes to terrorist outfits but in fact, to assess any gaps in knowledge regarding the issue of terrorist financing, which could then be used by the Ministry to develop a knowledge awareness initiative on this issue.

The research methodology for this study was designed to represent national level data about public knowledge and perceptions towards violent acts of terrorism and extremism at the national level. The geographical scope of the study was framed to include major areas of both urban and rural population in all the provinces of the country, as well as Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Questionnaire-based interviews were conducted under strict supervision of experts for data collection purposes. The field work for the study was undertaken from May to June 2015. Through random sampling, 5500 individuals were interviewed for this purpose.

Practices of Charity Giving: Research Findings
81 percent of respondents stated that they give charity in one form or another, with majority of them giving monetary forms of donation (Figure 1 and Figure 2).
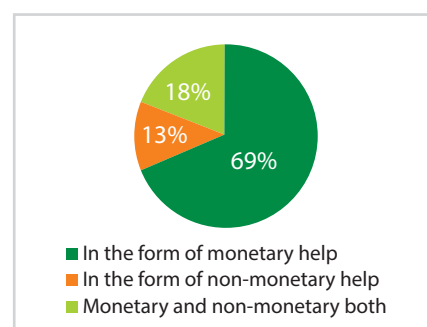
Figure 2: Donation/charity Form

- In the form of monetary help
- In the form of non-monetary help
- Monetary and non-monetary both

Figure 1: Do you personally give donation/charity?

- Yes No
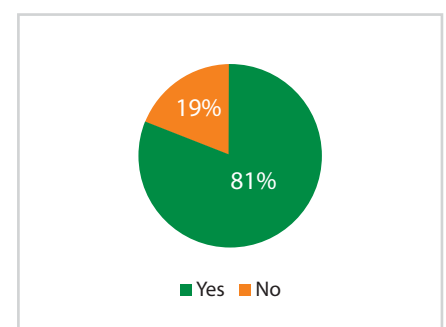
Figure 3: Donation/Charity heads (Multiple responses)

Category	Percentage
Sadqa	75%
Kherat	58%
Zakat	54%
Fitrana	53%
Chanda (Funds)	45%
Animal hide	27%
Attia (Donation)	10%
Who work for cause	6%
Ushr	6%
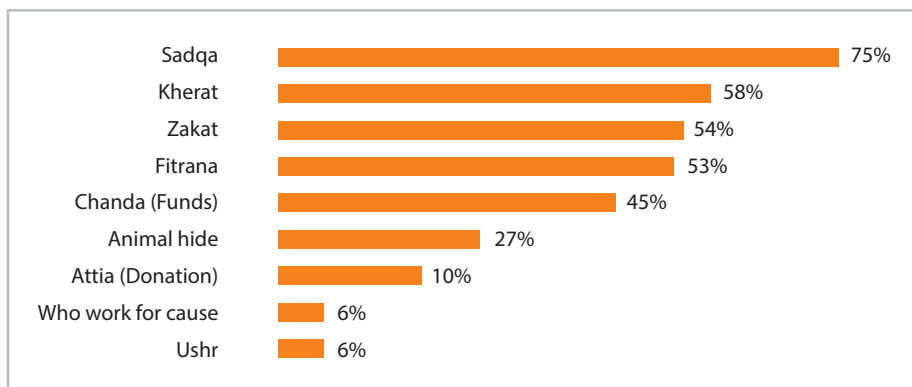
Given the strong religious character of Pakistanis, it was inevitable that religious aspects would play a strong role in determining the motivations behind donations. Charity through Zakat is one of the principle pillars of Islam and carries strict codes of fulfillment when obligated. The expression of religion in the form of charity was taken as an important indicator of not only as religious association, but also as the magnitude of devotion in performing the assigned duty.

In studying the indicators of charity giving practices of the respondent population, results found that nearly 72 percent of the sample gave charity in Ramdhan (holy month of fasting for Muslims), 47 percent on Eid (Muslim celebratory festival) and 53 percent gave it every month (Figure 4). Religious considerations also played an important role in the type of charity. 75 percent of the respondents gave charity in the form of Sadqa and 54 percent as Zakat (Figure 3).This is indicative of strong religious sentiments as the prevalent factor for giving charity. This also extends to the beneficiaries of charity, where mosques, known social welfare institutions and madrassas are seen amongst the most preferential.

Due to ingrained religious sentiments in charity giving, the frequency of donation and charity giving practices is recurrent and continuous. About 53 percent of people in their multiple responses stated that they gave charity at least once a month aside from donating on religious occasions (Figure 4).

Despite such an enormous amount generated through personal philanthropy, the level of scrutiny performed by a substantial number of respondents on the expenditure of given charity is minimal. Only 48 percent of the respondents stated that they were fully aware where their charity is going. 26 percent of respondents said their knowledge of where their money goes is limited, while another 26 percent said they did not possess any idea at all (Figure 5). This is particularly troublesome, as in recent years several instances have been noted where dubious charity

organizations are set up by militant groups to fund terrorist activities in Pakistan.

Further probing revealed that only two percent of the respondents were aware that charity money might be used by terrorist groups to further their causes. Such a pattern justifies a need for the government to sensitize the public on the issue of possible terrorist financing through charity. This is important because there is a very likely probability that a large amount of monetary donations potentially might be taken by extremist groups to fund their activities. Though undetermined, this was still a serious enough concern for the government to take subsequent action on the issue.

Haq, Haqdaar Tak (HHT): PVE Initiative Against Terrorist Financing
The research study played an important role in identifying that there was a major knowledge gap on the issue of terrorist financing with regards to charity. Accordingly, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting decided to tackle this issue and decided that there was a need for a mass awareness media campaign that could educate and sensitize the public on how terrorists can misuse charity, as well as promote public vigilance against these activities.

In this regard, the Ministry of Information

and Broadcasting embarked on a nationwide campaign entitled 'Haq, Haqdaar Tak' (Right to the Deserving'). The campaign was created with three primary objectives:

- Raise public awareness of the risks of funding dubious charity organizations that may be financing militant groups.
- Promote public vigilance while giving charity to ensure that charity does not go into the wrong hands.
- Encourage donations to respectable, recognized and credible charity organizations.

The campaign was supported through a variety of media platforms. A whiteboard animation, followed by short documentaries, which aired on a number of public and private television channels as public service messages. The campaign was also supported through social and online media with a dedicated website (http://haqdaar.gov.pk) and a Facebook page (http://facebook.com/haqdaar). The campaign was also taken to the grassroots level through comprehensive district level engagements aimed at youth and the business community in a number of cities across the country.

Haq, Haqdaar Tak: Post Exposure Impact Assessment
A quantitative research study was used to assess the impact of the campaign. According to the findings, 31 percent of Pakistanis were exposed to the campaign in one form or another. These participants were then probed further on their attitudes and perceptions to terrorist financing and charity giving to assess whether the campaign had made any difference in their outlook on the subject.

The study revealed that among participants who were exposed to the campaign, 33 percent of them became aware of the possibility of terrorist financing through charity giving, which is

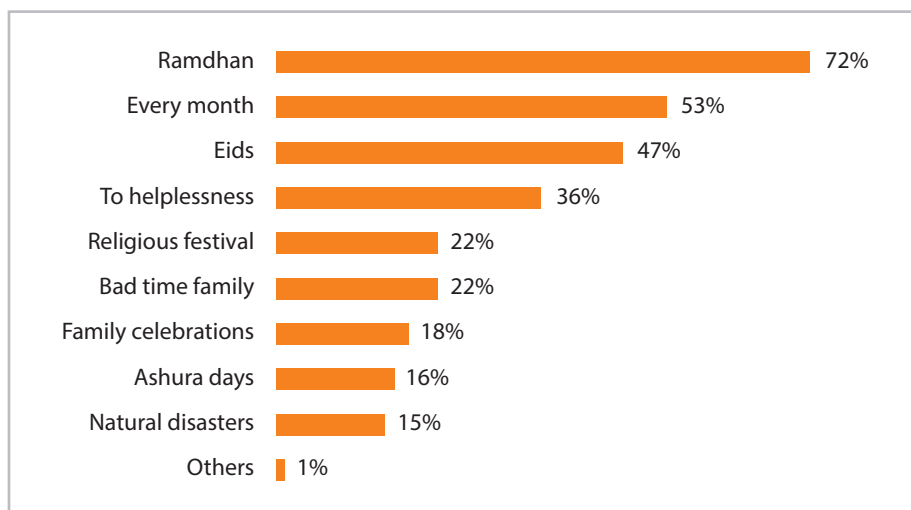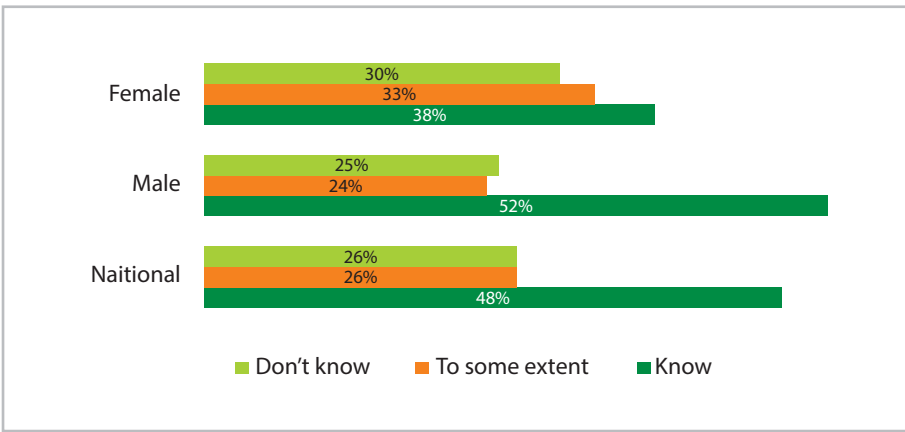**Figure 4: Occasions for donation/charity (Multiple responses)**

Occasion	Percentage
Ramdhan	72%
Every month	53%
Eids	47%
To helplessness	36%
Religious festival	22%
Bad time family	22%
Family celebrations	18%
Ashura days	16%
Natural disasters	15%
Others	1%

Figure 5: Awareness on how donations are spent by charity organizations

Female: Don't know 30%, To some extent 33%, Know 38%
Male: Don't know 25%, To some extent 24%, Know 52%
Naitional: Don't know 26%, To some extent 26%, Know 48%

■ Don't know   ■ To some extent   ■ Know

far higher than the national average. The study also showed that participants had a great degree of acceptance for the campaign and its messages, finding it very likeable and credible (Figure 6).
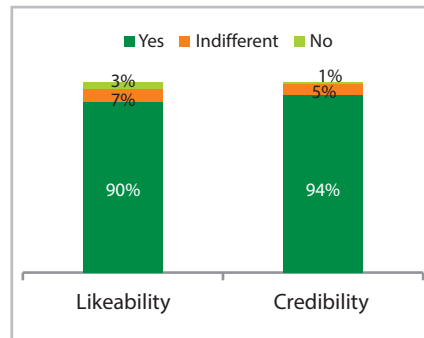
The results also showed an overwhelming increase in participants' understanding of this issue, with increased commitment towards vigilance. 76 percent of participants stated that the campaign had made them rethink their views on how to give charity. The vast majority of the exposed participants credited the campaign for increasing their awareness levels (Figure 7).

The overall campaign results have been extremely positive in terms of audience reception. As a result, the Ministry is re-launching the campaign this year as well, aiming for the month of Ramadhan in 2016, which is when the majority of Pakistanis donate money to those in need. This level of continuity is integral for the overall sustainability and impact of the campaign.

Conclusion

Preventing terrorism is not just about military action. It is about addressing the very mindset that breeds hateful ideologies and infiltrates impressionable minds. Hence, violent extremism needs to be

Figure 6: Liking and credibility of campaign message (HHT exposed participants only)

■ Yes   ■ Indifferent   ■ No

Likeability: Yes 90%, Indifferent 7%, No 3%
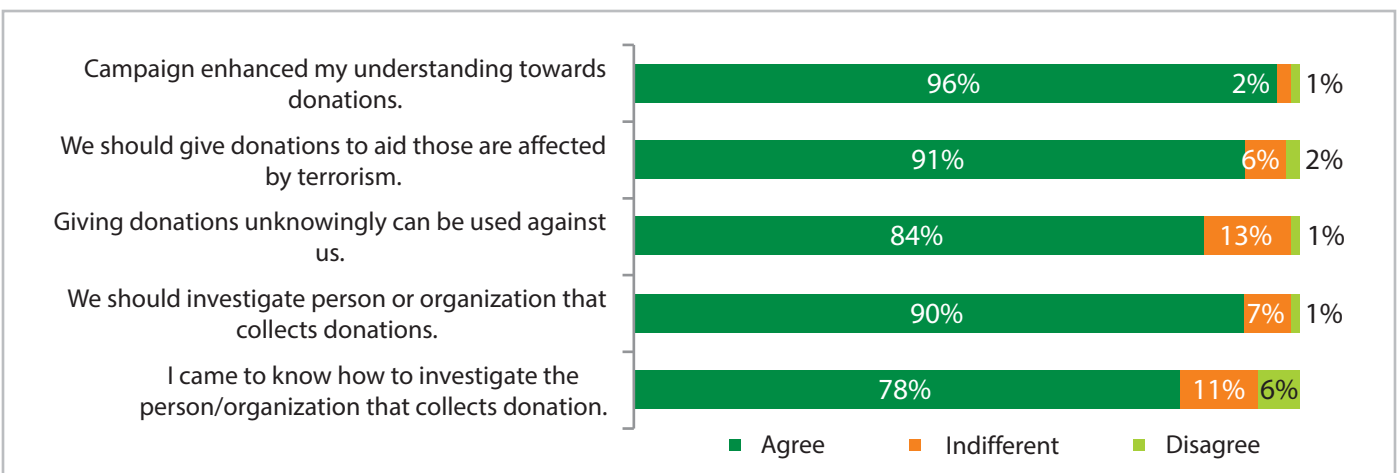Credibility: Yes 94%, Indifferent 5%, No 1%

countered not just by bullets, but by words as well. The importance of communication cannot be underestimated in this field. The Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage has taken a pioneering

step by carrying out the first major PVE Communications campaign in Pakistan, and the first nationwide effort to tackle the menace of terrorist financing.

Religious inclinations have a critical role to play in our decision making on charity giving. It is extremely unfortunate that a large majority of credible charity organizations, particularly those of religious nature, and their enormous contributions to social welfare are being undermined by such efforts. The government is taking a series of steps in this regard and recognizing curbing terrorist financing as a key facet of the National Action Plan. However, it is just as imperative for the government to educate the public on the issue of terrorist financing. Campaigns such as 'Haq, Haqdaar Tak' are just the first step in this enormous task. The campaign does validate the need for such initiatives as an important bridge between the government and the public on battling terrorism and extremism.

It is integral that such efforts are not seen or carried out in isolation. Further research needs to be conducted to assess key gaps and vulnerabilities in the public's understanding and response to terrorism and extremism. This research need not be done by the Government alone, but also by research institutes, think tanks and civil society organizations. Utilizing this research, the state, and particularly the government of Pakistan, can confidently step up its role and gain the trust of the public in developing partnerships through interactive communication channels to utilize public support that is clearly aligned against violent extremism, its orchestrators and its supporters.

Figure 7: Perception of campaign messages (HHT exposed participants only)

Campaign enhanced my understanding towards donations.: Agree 96%, Indifferent 2%, Disagree 1%
We should give donations to aid those are affected by terrorism.: Agree 91%, Indifferent 6%, Disagree 2%
Giving donations unknowingly can be used against us.: Agree 84%, Indifferent 13%, Disagree 1%
We should investigate person or organization that collects donations.: Agree 90%, Indifferent 7%, Disagree 1%
I came to know how to investigate the person/organization that collects donation.: Agree 78%, Indifferent 11%, Disagree 6%

■ Agree   ■ Indifferent   ■ Disagree

Justice Ali Nawaz Chowhan

Chairman
National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR)

What are the key drivers of violent extremism in Pakistan?

Pakistan's creation began with violence during the partition whereby history is witness to the several people who lost their lives and rights in the midst of the transition, and human rights were violated in heavy doses. Following this, several leaders came and took the helm of the country in their own hands, further infusing their own ideologies into the system whilst forgetting the ideology of Pakistan that was originally built on Quaid's principles. An example of this distortion was in 1977, when Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto took over and tried to bring in the customary laws of Saudi Arabia which would never be in harmony with the innate culture in Pakistan. This clash of interpretation of ideologies time and again, was what set the stage for violent extremism in the country.

Based on your national/international experience and expertise, what should be done to address the issues of violent extremism in Pakistan? Are there currently any legal practices/policies in place in Pakistan regarding violent extremism? If yes, are there any examples/instances of their effectiveness?

Unfortunately, we are stuck in something medieval which is halting all progression. Human rights here are equated with fascism and vulgarity. This clash of ideologies has to be straightened: The laws set in the constitution should also be brought in the main area of constitution to make them justiciable and the implementation of the objective resolution needs to be structured.

A common curriculum needs to be established for all, including madrassas (centers of religious education). The neglect on the part of the government to harness the potential of the youth, who are currently being led astray into extremism, needs to be accounted for and corrected. The civil society, along with the international community, is doing a wonderful job in developing and sustaining human rights in Pakistan.

What role do you envisage for the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) to play in preventing violent extremism?

Through advocacy and our dispute resolution process, the Commission aims to bring in the concept of 'Ibha' i.e. bring in modern laws which are not in clash with Islam, and 'Istihsan' i.e. juristic preference in Islamic law over other possibilities. Though section nine of the NCHR Act gives a lot of power to go ahead with these steps, it will still take some time for the NCHR to streamline

the process and ensure that the ideals for which Pakistan was created are re-established.

Are there any good practices/examples from other countries or within Pakistan for addressing issues of violent extremism?

The Social Service Law of Germany is very useful. It inculcates in young school growing children the etiquettes of treating others. Training from such an elementary level conditions an individual for life, to act in a manner that does not cause harm. The roots have to be straightened out if a change is to be intended.

Laila Bokhari

State Secretary at the PM's office in Oslo (currently on maternity leave)
Worked on the Norwegian Government's Action Plan against radicalization and violent extremism

Could you please tell us about the Norwegian Government's counter-radicalization strategy and how it is being implemented?

In the last few years many European countries have been attempting to devise comprehensive national strategies to counter radicalization. Several countries have suffered brutal violent extremist attacks, while many such incidents have been prevented by law-enforcement and intelligence services. Despite government efforts, we still seem to be experiencing growth in the numbers of radicalized youth. In Norway, we are keenly aware that radicalization eschews different religious and cultural identities, as we have suffered from right-wing extremists, as well as radical Islamists.

In 2014, Norway renewed and launched its second Action Plan against Violent Extremism and Radicalization that provides a comprehensive framework for including and engaging with all groups in our society. We know that radicalization can emerge from different ideological directions, therefore, it is important for us to strengthen our values and structures where every citizen is free to express themselves and to participate in national deliberations. When we started the process for creating the Action Plan, the Prime Minister and various Ministries invited and worked with first-line practitioners and civil society actors from across the spectrum to make sure that everyone was on board with our strategy. The Action Plan outlines thirty different policies, from counter-terrorism, to hate speech and regulating school activities etc. The Action Plan integrates hard and soft strategies to prevent and deter the rise of violent extremism. Since its launch, I have, among other things, had a particular interest in the implementation of these targets at the local level in communities across Norway. These communities have contributed and cooperated significantly in making the Action Plan a living, organic document that represents the voices of the people.

Is this a bottom-up approach? And how do you assess the impact of the Action Plan?

In my opinion, the feedback at the local, national and international level has been that the creation and implementation of this Action Plan has been simultaneously, a bottom-up and a top-down approach. This implies that leadership is critical to ensuring the success of preventing violent extremism. This requires leaders across different sectors of the state, as well as local citizens, like teachers, to understand and integrate these priorities in their actions and behaviors. This is also an inclusive and broad approach that involves everyone in our society. It requires leaders to prioritize and to put this issue on the policy agenda, and reflected in the budget.

It is challenging to measure the impact of this work, as quantifying the number of people who have not been radicalized is a nearly impossible task. However, we see the impact through ensuring that the Action Plan directives are properly understood right down to the average citizen. Similarly, the strategy is also being continuously monitored and evaluated, and several components have been modified to improve the impact. Our Action Plan goes beyond radical Islamism, and covers right-wing extremism, and stakeholders working towards overcoming these challenges.

Given your experience and background, could you maybe indicate some best practices or lessons from the Norwegian experience that could be relevant to addressing the issue of violent extremism in Pakistan?

It is very difficult to compare one country to another to infer conclusions, as each has a different historical, cultural, and political experience and setting. The magnitude and severity of the challenge posed by violent extremism in Pakistan is significantly greater in scope. Having said that, I think the first step ought to be the development of an effective Action Plan that includes the voices and aspirations of everyone, from the ordinary citizen at the grassroots level to the Prime Minister. Inclusivity and participation is very important in this process. We have worked closely with local governments and communities, which have developed effective indigenous models to deal with extremism that can be replicated elsewhere. We organized a European conference last year, where local mayors shared their experience of working closely with the police, local religious leaders, and youth clubs etc. to identify, counter and prevent extremist tendencies.

Generating a positive narrative around the approach to violent extremism is also important. The national narrative and dialogue ought to revolve around determining the kind of society citizens want to build. This is where values such as diversity, tolerance, and multiculturalism can add a positive hue to the effort against violent extremism. I think the lesson to be drawn here is two-fold. First, is the effective cross-stakeholder coordination between Ministers, civil society groups, practitioners in the education sector, local religious leaders etc. Second, it is important to remain inclusive when going through the process to ensure that the strategy is flexible, effective and sustainable. Once priorities are identified, it is important to remain consistent, interact with local communities and show fidelity to the policies.

Interview

Norway has a large, successful and important Pakistani diaspora. How do you see the role of Pakistani Norwegians in the work you are undertaking in Norway, as well as efforts here in Pakistan?

I think there is a role to play for Norwegian Pakistanis, but it cannot be pushed upon these citizens. This diaspora is contributing to the efforts against extremism by being positive and successful role models for all Norwegians. This helps in countering negative messaging around Pakistanis, and also provides effective examples for emulation for young people. And while no one can be forced to take on responsibilities back home, I think Norwegian Pakistanis can contribute to social development back home by participating in the development of health and education projects, as an example. After all, Pakistan is an important component of their identity (for some, not all) and many retain linkages with home communities. Rich and positive engagement is beneficial for the evolution of communities in both countries.

What would you say are the key drivers of violent extremism in Pakistan?

I think that the people of Pakistan understand their society and its particular settings perfectly well, and I believe they are fully capable of defeating the menace of terrorism and violent extremism. The drivers could be anything from economic to political grievances, alienation and identity issues. I think factors such as hate speech can be critical. The way we talk about each other, for example minorities, has an impact on our attitudes, sense of responsibility, and social bonds. I would emphasize that effective leadership across different segments of the society, and honesty in all efforts undertaken can help in the endeavours against violent extremism. Education and job creation is essential–giving youth a hope for the future. What is taught is also important, i.e. what kind of society are we working towards, how do we look upon our fellow citizens, our neighbours etc. Transparent, committed and engaged leadership is essential, as well as an admittance that one has a problem that needs to be dealt with.

You have mentioned that local cities and communities in Norway have developed effective organic models to deter extremism. Could you give us an example of what kinds of institutions or practices have been created and implemented?

Some of these local communities have created platforms for open, inclusive meetings and dialogues. These platforms can range from the mayor's office, local authorities offices, youth clubs, local cultural houses etc. The aim in creating these open spaces is that different actors can meet to vent their frustrations, and ensure that their grievances are heard. These interactions also allow participants to understand each other's responsibilities and rights. For example, police officers regularly meet and interact with local community members, which increases trust, deepens personal relations and strengthens individual and community bonds. This networking also allows to detect radical and extremist individuals early for authorities to undertake preventive steps. In addition, these open platforms also allow experts from other countries and cultures to come in and share their experiences with grassroot communities.

Raza Ahmed Rumi

Writer, International Development Practitioner, Journalist
Scholar in residence, Ithaca College, New York
Visiting faculty, New York University
Consulting Editor, The Friday Times

What are the key drivers of violent extremism in Pakistan?

Pakistan's extremism problem has metamorphosed over the years. Mainly, it is linked to policies in the past, especially during the 1980s and 1990s, and the use of jihad as a tool of foreign policy whereby militias were trained for Afghanistan and Indian held Kashmir. Unfortunately, the international community, especially the West and Saudi Arabia, also contributed to this. However, national interest should have been kept in view and such dangerous paths avoided.

Concurrently, the spread of madrassas (religious seminaries), now estimated to be about 40,000, have also contributed in creating public discourses that justify violence in the name of religion. During the 1980s, the Pakistani government also modified schools' curriculum and made it religious, including the addition of the subject of jihad as a focus of instruction, evidence of which appeared in circulars and instructions issued by Ministry of Education in the 1980s and 90s. But the issues of poverty and the lack of public services such as access to school systems, also play a huge role. Poverty enables the recruitment of uneducated youth in the extremist business and a lack of education makes the madrassa an attractive facility. It should be noted that the total enrolment in madrassas remains at a very low number-around five percent-but some of them, not all, absorb and practice radicalism.

What should be done to address the drivers of violent extremism?

Pakistan's demographic shifts require the need for millions of jobs every year. Therefore, there is no alternative but to create economic opportunities for the large number of youth entering the job market. But this is just one aspect. The ideological onslaught through curricula, seminaries, mosques and media discourses need to change. We have to move to, a) Registration and regulation of madrassas, b) Major reform in curricula, c) Certification of mosque Imams and, d) Prosecution of hate speech against minority groups within Muslims and of course, non-Muslims. This, in summary, means that the National Action Plan of 2014 needs to be implemented in letter and spirit and not in a selective manner. Another larger and long term issue is that of citizenship. We continue to administer areas of Balochistan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and some parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) through colonial laws which are repressive and deny basic rights to people. These regions need to be included in the mainstream and a sense of justice needs to be given. Finally, the reform of the criminal justice system is required, especially the judicial system that is clogged with backlog, archaic procedures and expensive legal processes that deny access to a vast majority. These conditions have to be addressed sooner than later.

Are there any examples / good practices from other countries or within Pakistan for addressing issues of violent extremism?

There is no standard model of good practice here. Examples range from Sri Lanka's major battle against extremists, to the more recent efforts in Tunisia where reforms have been introduced. In Sri Lanka, there have been many excesses during the fight, and from Tunisia, young men are still joining the ISIS. Pakistan has to create its own model. Most Muslim majority countries are coping with challenges of violent extremism. There is conflict everywhere. In some societies, heavy handed secularist interventions have backfired, such as in Turkey, Egypt, and Indonesia and to some extent, Bangladesh as well. However, in Tunisia, political stability has acted as a pushback against extremism. Pakistan has its own history and ethos of tolerance. This was a region where different religions co-existed for centuries in relative peace. We need to focus on that side and simultaneously ensure that we are agents of peace in the region. This would need normalizing relations with India, improving ties with Iran and facilitating peace process in Afghanistan. A workable model from across the world is that state should act as a neutral arbiter and not have a religious identity. That's a lesson from the recent century.

Interview

Senator Sherry Rehman

Vice President of the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP)
Chair of the Jinnah Institute
Pakistan's Ex-Ambassador to the United States
Ex-Federal Minister of Information

What are the key drivers of violent extremism in Pakistan?

A strong, religious right, with its outsize footprint in community and social service, has kept progressive forces on the backfoot and in retreat, for a long time in Pakistan. Clearly, we need to have a larger conversation on the entitlement and space that the religious right has been allowed.

As we see today, this has led to a high degree of intolerance, which is a significant, albeit not the only, driver of violent extremism in Pakistan today. The other significant driver has been a radicalized, exclusionist narrative that has fostered unchecked for too long. This 'us and them' narrative has had a deeply corrosive effect on our society, dividing us along deep religious, sectarian, and ethnic lines.

Radicalization itself has multiple drivers, ranging from unrestrained dissemination of extremist ideologies to psychological disorders and socio-economic deprivation. Historically, extremist groups here engage in violence and intimidation to suppress counter narratives and opposition, and economic incentives and welfare assistance to indoctrinate potential recruits with radical ideologies. Political grievances are also part of the extremist groups' toolkit.

Is countering violent extremism a priority of Pakistan's overall policy framework? What policy, legal or administrative changes are required in this regard?

The National Action Plan (NAP) was one of the breakthrough moments in Pakistan not just for countering terrorism in Pakistan but also for bringing coherence to countering violent extremism measures. Sadly, progress on the NAP has been less than desired, including on madrassas (Islamic centres of learning) registration and reform. On one hand, a number of NGOs have come under sharp scrutiny of the Ministry of Interior; on the other, regulating madrassas and seminaries remains out of the government's reach.

There exists an estimated 8,249 unregistered madrassas (registered neither with the ITMP, nor with the government) hosting approximately 300,000 students. Not only is their religious affiliation, source of funding and location largely unknown, but the absence of government checks and monitoring leaves the students entirely under the control of the madrassa administration. Though the government circles claim to have arrested around 2000 (figures vary) hate speakers, most of them were arrested under a 1965 law regulating the use of loudspeakers–not for hate speech. Curbing hate speech is another sticking point.

Regulating matters like privacy, means of expression, and what can be expressed publicly is a complex matter. In fact, as the rather hasty approval of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Bill indicated, the social cost of vigilance may far outweigh the benefits that the implementation of the bill (in its currently contested form) may accrue in identifying and tracking hate speech. However, Pakistan is not the only country facing this challenge.

What should be done to address the drivers of violent extremism?

Develop a cohesive strategy for countering violent extremism, under the framework of an invigorated National Counterterrorism Authority, in coordination with the ministries of interior, information, and IT. But for this to happen, the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) has to be empowered. Ironically, at a senate meeting in January, a resolution to increase NACTA's budget was resisted by the federal government, on the grounds of requiring more explanation regarding the funds' appropriation. Given NACTA's performance against the objectives under which it was formed and instructions regarding how it ought to function, a budgetary increase has been long due, along with a host of other measures to improve its institutional capacity. It must be reiterated that NACTA was tasked with supervising the implementation of the NAP, a role in which its effectiveness has already raised many questions. Its empowerment was also crucial for bringing counter extremism measures within the ambit of ongoing operations. The authority, however, remains largely understaffed, and has been unable to ensure action on critical plans, including the combined deterrence plan and comprehensive response plans envisaged under the National Internal Security Policy (NISP). Moreover, meetings sanctioned under the NACTA Act have repeatedly failed to take place.

Second, it is imperative to build strategic and political deterrence against extremism at a time when there is a national resolve to degrade such forces. Regrettably, as the outrage over the women's protection bill has demonstrated, extremist tendencies continue to find space and hold hostage the political narrative.

There has to be a clear understanding in Pakistan that the battle against extremist violence will remain incomplete without credible course correction of the narrative and ideologies that fuel it. This will require sustaining (and further building) momentum against extremism at both political and strategic levels, no matter what the perceived exigencies of not doing so may be.

Are there any examples / good practices from other countries or within Pakistan for addressing issues of violent extremism?

It is clearly important to fill the social service delivery vacuum. There are models in the education sector, for example. The Citizens Foundation, with a vast network of schools that provide quality education in underprivileged areas, has given many parents a choice other than sending their kids to local madrassas.

Curricula reform is essential to create a sense of pluralism and tolerance at a very young age. The Sindh government, for example, has altered the school curriculum and added Jinnah's secularism speech as part of the syllabus. The rule of law is another example. Of course, at all levels, democracy and security will also have to be aligned as broad strategic goals to foster, with civilian capacity and responses not leaving a vacuum at the federal level.

Youth Voices

Mustafa Shahbaz

Management Consultant – Carnelian

What would you say is the state of intolerance and violent tendencies in Pakistani youth today?

Majority of the youth is not inclined towards violent tendencies. However, the more deeper you travel into the interiors of the provinces, the more the increase in violent tendencies. Moreover, external influences such as media, social perceptions, cultural practices and historical narrative of an area, all shape the youth's perception. The key is to keep the youth engaged through healthy community activities so their time and energies are utilized to the best potential.

In your experience, how can our youth play a role in countering the different types of violent narratives in Pakistan? What are the opportunities and potential for peacebuilding and tolerance amongst Pakistani youth?

First and foremost, Pakistan needs an atmosphere of peace. A lack of peace in the region automatically discourages investment and creates a dearth of employment opportunities. Step two would be to establish Pakistan as an investor friendly area that would provide productive employment opportunities to the youth. The youth has the ability to create ripples, as delineated by the PTI dharna (demonstration) last year, whose driving force were the youth. The youth possesses the vigour, all it requires are outlets, opportunities and investors.

What role do you think state authorities and civil society actors can play in encouraging young men and women in combating different modes of violent extremism and adopting more peaceful ways of communication/expression?

State authorities need to start taking more responsibility and avoid being involved in such acts. Like the aphorism goes, 'lead by example'-this is exactly what the state authorities need to practice. Second, supporting platforms need to be set up for the youth to express themselves, a task that both civil society and youth can play a part in achieving.

Sidra Salfi

Youth Activist and Founder
The Youth of FATA project (YoF)

What would you say is the state of intolerance and violent tendencies in Pakistani youth today?

I think it is opportunity based-if you look at Pakistan, we find more youth with violent tendencies in the up North and FATA region. This is because they have a lack of employment opportunities there and hence are automatically attracted to the ones that are available i.e. being part of militant groups. The younger the youth, the more susceptible they are to being swayed by militant ideologies.

In your experience, how can our youth play a role in countering the different types of violent and extremist narratives in Pakistan? What are the opportunities and potential for peacebuilding and tolerance amongst Pakistani youth?

Interaction and communication are key. The more educated youth in urban areas and big cities should reach out to the less educated, poverty-stricken youth in the FATA areas. The youth in those remote areas need some peers to look up to. After all, one's company plays a huge influence in one's thought process. Instead of big movements, the youth need to establish one on one interaction. Give it some time. Nurture the relationships. Volunteer on personal grooming trips to those areas for the youth. Focus on spending quality time with youth in those areas.

What role do you think state authorities and civil society actors can play in encouraging young men and women in combating different modes of violent extremism and adopting more peaceful ways of communication/expression?

Financial support is, I think, a big facet. The government should run a drive, at the end of which a group of passionate youth should be chosen to move to the violent induced areas in Pakistan, in order to interact with the youth there. They should be backed up with financial, emotional and psychological support.

Syed Ali Abbas Zaidi

Founder, Pakistan Youth Alliance, Khudi Pakistan and HIVE [karachi]
Development professional and CVE expert

What would you say is the state of intolerance and violent tendencies in Pakistani youth today?

The struggle against intolerance and violence is a multi-layered process. It is impossible to ascertain a state of such tendencies in any society. After the brutal attack in APS Peshawar in December 2014, the Government of Pakistan announced a National Action Plan (NAP) to crack down on terrorism in the country. Though the efficacy of NAP was mostly propagated in terms of military operations, terrorists killed or hanged and madrassas shut down, the wider domain of challenging the extremist narrative has not seen meaningful progress. Therefore, youth who subscribe to a particular world-view hold the same tendencies to use violence and religion for political ends.

War against ideologically motivated terrorism is a war of narratives as much as a military operation. While conflicts are not necessarily resolved in narratives alone, the direction towards a resolution helps creating closure, which helps setting precedents in group dynamics and directs collective evolution of a society towards desired goals. Recent survey by PEW revealed that in Pakistan, a majority (62 percent) offered no definite opinion of ISIS which may depict that most Pakistanis are still confused about extremism and terrorism stemming from it.

There are many push and pull factors that make youth vulnerable to extremism: international politics, ideology of Islamism and Jihad, unemployment, lack of spaces for rational dialogue, suppression of distinct cultural expressions, curricula, national narrative and its foundations, role of state in patronizing extremist movements and so forth. Despite popular belief, it is not only the madrassa students who are susceptible to violent extremism-recent cases have shown youth from financially stable backgrounds and even those who went through the so-called Western educational model, have joined extremist movements. We have to understand the acts of violence and the ideas of extremism are not only religious but also political, social and sometimes cultural in nature.

In your experience, how can our youth play a role in countering the different types of violent and extremist narratives in Pakistan? What are the opportunities and potential for peacebuilding and tolerance amongst Pakistani youth?

Like extremist movements rely on youth support as its fodder, any movement to counter extremism depends on youth as its mainstay. The civil society of Pakistan has struggled to counter extremism since 9/11. Unfortunately, many civil society initiatives made the same mistakes and did not involve youth in decision-making processes. One of factors that propel extremism is this very frustration and grievance that youth have against the state and society. Extremist ideas are essentially a rebellion against such norms. Youth can join diverse established initiatives that are sensitive to their generational understanding and even initiate its own. Any effort to reclaim and rebuild the democratic, plural, peaceful and tolerant social fabric of Pakistan is an effort to counter-violent extremism. First step is to understand the problem. Next step is to weigh the extremist narratives in terms of fundamental human rights, contemplate on solutions and shed any notion of absolutes. The third step is to assume an activist role in countering extremism and mitigating its risk-factors.

Pakistan did not end up like Afghanistan, Iraq or Syria because its youth, though vulnerable to extremism, did not join the extremist movements' en masse, and there lies the potential and opportunity. With growing access to information technology, a new world has opened up which was previously not known to elder generations. Youth can now debate in an unprecedented fashion, they can innovate, ideate and create solutions in a way that was not possible before. I am very positive about the future of Pakistan and it is because I have experienced, in the last eight years of working in over 40 districts of the country, the way youth are tackling extremism, patriarchy, systematic and structural discrimination.

What role do you think state authorities and civil society actors can play in encouraging young men and women in combating different modes of violent extremism and adopting more peaceful ways of communication/expression?

This is something that needs real work. Why did the Government not bother to take youth input when NAP was being drafted? Why are student unions still banned? Why are youth considered to be followers and not leaders? Why is there this disconnect between youth, civil society and government? As aforementioned, the crux of the problem is that youth are not being given decision making roles in the society. The generation gap has increased. Youth that are disenfranchised will always hold radical ideas. Civil society are not the only the corporate NGOs that are in tune with a certain world-view that their donor propels. Civil society includes youth groups, youth movements and youth platforms. These platforms need to be made an integral part of the society-state relationship. Its opinions must be respected and paid heed to. Instead of creating new platforms that are not sustainable, existing initiatives that address the problems of youth disenfranchisement and extremism should be promoted. This a message for state authorities and civil society actors: times have changed, youth will not simply join initiatives that you think are right. Listen to youth, give them space to make decisions, do not only encourage youth voices but make them a part of the initiatives in a more substantial manner for they are the only buffer we have between a peaceful and a war-torn Pakistan.

Youth Voices

Umair Jaliawala

Director and CEO
School of Leadership (SOL), Karachi

What would you say is the state of intolerance and violent tendencies in Pakistani youth today?

It is without a doubt that the state of intolerance and violent tendencies is high amongst the Pakistani youth, perhaps the highest we have witnessed in history. These tendencies have been bred by power struggles of our religious and political institutions resulting in identity crisis, dogmatism and rigidity. I believe that the primary cause of any society to become violent is the lack of 'real education' i.e. the ability to explore, analyze and evaluate contrasting ideas. The educational system of our country is geared at connecting the youth in finding jobs and not grooming them into becoming better individuals. Any adolescent in Pakistan is susceptible to violent extremist narratives due to a lack of ideological basis in place, which is why they lack grounding and therefore sway from one point of view to another. Hence, the youth which lacks opportunities is most vulnerable, and opportunities refers to better education, means to earn a decent and ethical lifestyle, and to be engaged in constructive activities.

In your experience, how can our youth play a role in countering the different types of violent and extremist narratives in Pakistan? What are the opportunities and potential for peacebuilding and tolerance amongst Pakistani youth?

A large number of Pakistan's youth population are leading citizenship and peacebuilding movements in their respective communities as role-models, youth groups and through youth-led organizations. This has created several career opportunities for the youth in the social sector. Our youth has already been leading in many domains and can further be strengthened through raising awareness, grass-root advocacy and community action projects circulating around diversity, tolerance and peace-building. The much needed ecosystem is already there with various donors providing support and local CSOs/NGOs engaging youth volunteers. More importantly, the youth themselves must serve as change makers of the society and demonstrate the celebration of diversity, willingness to dialogue and the ability to work together for a prosperous future.

What role do you think state authorities and civil society actors can play in encouraging young men and women in combating different modes of violent extremism and adopting more peaceful ways of communication/expression?

The youth is extremely willing to learn and contribute. Both civil society and the government should try and engage the youth in all such initiatives, leveraging their energy and ideas and making them equal partners in peacebuilding activities. The youth can be connected through technology, thereby leading campaigns to win this war of narratives, indifference and intolerance to create a society which has a pluralistic ideology-one which cares at a deeper level and celebrates differences.

DEVELOPMENT ADVOCATE
PAKISTAN