

Chapter 4

Mapping Successful Countering Violent Extremism Strategies for Implementation in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Bangladesh, already troubled by the malady of violent extremism (VE), has become particularly vulnerable to radicalization via the internet, with one of the world's largest adolescent populations adopting the internet and social media. Countering VE (CVE) practitioners frequently assert that extremists are increasingly relying on technological innovations to recruit naive youths to their cause, which they believe is a trend that is accelerating. This research examines existing programs throughout the world in the area of disruptive technologies that have had some impact in the areas of preventing and combating VE (P/CVE). Secondary research and expert interviews were used in conjunction with each other to develop the technique. The report outlines successful efforts in technology-based initiatives that have been implemented in Bangladesh as a result of the knowledge gathered in the process. After that, proposals for CVE deployment techniques have been suggested, which might possibly be adopted or coordinated by USAID and other funders and practitioners in the field of P/CVE.

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INTRODUCTION

The terror attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City in 2001 served as the world's most frightening demonstration of the possibility of violent extremism (VE), and the world has not forgotten yet. Several attacks in various countries worldwide have increased the threat's potency in the intervening years. VE is now widely regarded as one of the most severe threats to peaceful coexistence, both nationally and worldwide (Thiessen, 2019). Suicide bombings and firearm shootings in Paris and Brussels in 2015 and the Bastille Day massacre in Munich in 2016 intensified the opposition (Marshall, 2017). The concept of "Countering violent extremism (CVE)" was formalized as an official political vocabulary in 2015. More and more groups realized that VE is a systematic and well-planned approach, rather than a random association with individual individuals extremists, rather than a random association with random individual extremists. It is commonly accepted that CVE is a key element of a protracted counter-terrorism plan.

Bangladesh is not immune to the terrible dangers of VE and radicalization, which exist worldwide. The country was devastated by extremist violence by militant groups such as the Jamayat-ul-Mujahedin Bangladesh (JMB), Hizbut Tahrir, and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs) associated to al Qaeda in the Indian subcontinent from 1999 to 2005, according to the United Nations (AQIS). This increase in domestic terrorism had aroused significant concern, particularly when the JMB carried out a series of 63 coordinated bomb strikes across Bangladesh in 2005, which sparked widespread concern in the country. The current phase of VE in Bangladesh began in 2013, with the serial murders of modernist writers, liberal academics, LGBT activists, and religious or other minorities serving as a signal of the movement's birth and spread. The most well-known incident, the infamous "Holey Artisan Bakery assault," occurred in 2016 and received international attention since it resulted in the deaths of 22 individuals in a high-end bakery in the Bangladeshi capital (BIPSS, 2017; Idris, 2018).

Extremists have recently begun to resort to the Internet to weaponise a popular mass media tool. These individuals are propagating extremist propaganda, enticing in those who are susceptible to their messages, enlisting participants to enter extremist groups and missions, and ultimately planning and carrying out terror acts in many areas of the world, including the United States (Soni, 2017). The use of the Internet and social media by extremists who have become radicalized online has been uncovered in nations such as the United States, Spain, Russia, and the United Kingdom, among others, and they are encouraging violent acts against them (Singh, 2018). Sri Lankan terrorists used the Power of social media to organize and conduct their Easter suicide bombing assault in 2019. (Srini-vasan, 201).

Although the number of people who use the internet and social media is increasing on a daily basis, the militarization of the media and the internet by extremist organizations looks to be a big concern, according to recent reports. According to the Global Digital 2019 Report, there are around 4.39 billion Internet users and 3.48 billion social media users on the world at any given time in modern times (Kemp, 2019). Due to their recognition of the potential benefits of these mass-communication networks, extremist groups are utilizing them to instill and disseminate their agenda and ideologies to people worldwide, regardless of their country of origin or background, as well as any other differences. In response to these circumstances, governments, non-governmental organizations, information technology businesses, and other stakeholders throughout the world are increasingly concentrating their CVE efforts online. Authorities are also applying pressure to social media platforms to step up their efforts to combat the spread of VE online (Singh, 2018).

Having around 90 million Internet users (according to the Dhaka Tribune (2018) and approximately 30 million social media users, Bangladesh is vulnerable to radicalization on the internet, as is the rest of

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