



Policy Solution for Radicalisation

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This editorial is based on the article **India needs a policy solution for the problem of radicalisation** which was published in The Indian Express on 28/10/2021. It talks about the issues of radicalisation and the way forward.

The recent arrest of multiple suspects in the ISI terror module case shows that the threat of radicalisation in India is pervasive and increasing exponentially. Recently, a ISIS module was busted by the **National Investigation Agency**. The module was found to have a pan-India presence, stretching across Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala. The investigations have gone on to reveal that online radicalisation played an important role in the recruitment of members as well as the preparation and/or execution of extremist activities by the members.

In a speech before the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation(SCO)**, the Indian Prime Minister identified radicalisation as the greatest threat to the security and safety of all member countries. It was asked from the member countries to heed the challenges and build effective responses. Such responses can broadly be classified under the following heads — deradicalisation, counter-radicalisation, anti-radicalisation and disengagement. In line with this vision, India must lead by example and develop responses systematically with due regard to constitutional values.

Factors Behind Radicalisation

- **Individual socio-psychological factors**, which include grievances and emotions such as alienation and exclusion, anger and frustration and a strong sense of injustice.
- **Socio-economic factors**, which include social exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination (real or perceived), limited education or employment etc.
- **Political factors**, which include weak and non-participatory political systems lacking good governance and regard for civil society.
- **Social media**, which provides connectivity, virtual participation and an echo-chamber for like-minded extremist views, accelerates the process of radicalisation.

- **Religious factors** like the use of religion by **Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (IS)** to spread its influence all over the world is an example.

Forms of Radicalism in India

- **Politico-Religious Radicalism:** It is associated with a political interpretation of religion and the defence, by violent means, of a religious identity perceived to be under attack.
Use of Religion by ISIS to spread its influence all over the world is an example.
- **Right-Wing Radicalism:** It is a form of radicalization associated with fascism, racialism/racism, supremacism and ultranationalism.
- **Left Wing Radicalism:** This form of radicalization focuses primarily on anti-capitalist demands and calls for the transformation of political systems considered responsible for producing social inequalities, and that may ultimately employ violent means to further its cause.

Some Steps Taken in India

- **Institutional:** The Ministry of Home Affairs had set up the **Counter-Terrorism and Counter Radicalisation division** in November 2017.
The focus of the division is largely on the implementation and administration of counter-terror laws and monitoring of fundamentalist organisations such as the Students Islamic Movement of India, Popular Front of India, Jamaat-e-Islami and Sanatan Sanstha.
- **Legislative Actions:** Some acts such as **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA)**, **NIA Act, 2008** deals with the associated issues.
Moreover, strengthening the provisions in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 to combat terror financing (for radicalisation purpose also) by criminalizing the production or smuggling or circulation of high quality counterfeit Indian currency as a terrorist act and enlarge the scope of proceeds of terrorism to include any property intended to be used for terrorism.

Way Forward

- **Definition of Radicalisation:** Definition will allow the state to develop programmes and strategies to effectively combat such radical ideas, thereby addressing the problem of radically motivated violence.
The definition of radicalisation would also help provide clarity as regards the purpose of implementation of the Action Plan.

- **Deradicalisation Strategies at War-footing:** The Indian state should develop and enforce de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation and anti-radicalisation strategies at a pan-India and pan-ideology level on a war footing.
 - Such attempts must be informed by the fact that the battle against radicalisation begins in the minds and hearts much before it manifests in terms of violence.
 - Any programme aimed at deterring or reversing radicalisation must focus on the ideological commitment that enables the violence, rather than the violence or the justification of violence itself.
- **Checking Cross-Border Flow of Propaganda:** Efforts must be made to first stem the flow of propaganda from across the Indian borders.
- **A uniform statutory or policy framework** to deal with radicalisation, de-radicalisation and its associated strategies should be developed.
- **Rehabilitation Measures:** Arrested and convicted individuals must not only be prosecuted and punished as a measure of deterrence or retribution but their reformation and rehabilitation must also be prioritised.
- The **promotion of the syncretic nature of religions** in India should be promoted through the development of counter-narratives, promotion of constitutional values and virtues, promotion of sports and other activities in schools and other educational institutions aimed at mainstreaming the youth.

Conclusion

At the same time, it must be understood that radicalisation by itself is not bad and gains a positive or negative characteristic based upon its context. A mere deviation from conventional thinking must not be penalised.

Radicalisation becomes problematic only where it has the propensity to lead to violence. The challenge lies in preventing such radicalisation. Developing a nuanced understanding of the process of radicalisation as well as its characteristics can help guide the Action Plan in effectively meeting such challenges.

Drishti Mains Question

‘Increasing radicalisation is a major threat to internal security of India.’ In the light of the statement discuss the measures that can be taken with regard to constitutional values.
