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Juvenile Crimes in Reference to Various Methods Adopted by Extremists Groups in India

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ABSTRACT

India is a developing country whose future depends completely upon the children and youth. Involvement of children in terrorist and violent activities may bring serious threat to the safety, security and development of the country. This report discusses the reasons why children are preferred to be recruited in the extremist's groups, why children themselves get recruited, and various methods of recruiting children that are used by the extremists. The article also provides for some preventive measures that can be useful in combating with the terrorist and violent extremist groups. Safety of the children is must and State should do everything possible to bring children on right path and pave way to their bright future. A child with education, manner and values will make India a developed and prosperous India and therefore for the betterment of the future of the country each child should have these qualities within and the first step in this is to educate children. When children get education, they know the difference between right and wrong and then they cannot get influenced by extremists and get involved in these illicit activities.

Keyword: *Victimization, Juvenile Crimes, Children, Terrorist.*

I. OVERVIEW

Children are prone to be used by terrorists and violent extremists groups to carry out their goals and mission with ease. Children are used as a powerful weapon by these extremists groups which lead to the victimization and exploitation of children. The Machel Report², on the impact of armed conflict on children, discussed on the extent and consequences of using and recruiting children by armed forces or armed groups. Children by being recruited by these extremist groups even today that is increasing more challenges for the States to prevent such recruitment. Such children who are recruited and used for terrorism purposes are threat to the national security and therefore effective measures are needed to be taken for the rehabilitation and reintegration measures. There comes a problem with these measures as

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² *Report on the impact of armed conflict on children exposes moral vacuum, Secretary-General's experts tell Third Committee*, UNITED NATIONS (Last Accessed on Apr. 30, 2021), <https://www.un.org/press/en/1996/19961108.gash3382.html>.

the children have been involved in terrorism activities that how amount of rehabilitation is needed for them to bring them back at right path.

Children at very young age do not know the difference between right and wrong and therefore they can easily be molded and manipulated by the extremist groups. These extremist groups use children to carry out their purposes of doing illegal activities inside a country. Terrorist groups use children for purposes like implanting bombs, carry arms and ammunitions secretly, or to become suicide bombs, etc. Violent groups use them as weapon in conducting violent activities by victimizing and exploiting them. To tackle and counter the extremists' group for exploiting and victimizing children, all the institutions and systems must come together and work in co- ordination with each other. The role of justice system is very crucial in reducing exploitation and victimization of children by extremist groups. It is essential to end impunity and ensure accountability of mechanism. Justice system promotes preventive measures to counter violence, victimization and exploitation of children.

II. WHY CHILDREN ARE RECRUITED?

The reasons for recruiting children by extremist groups are complex and multifaceted. It may vary depending upon the circumstances of an area. However, children and adults both getrecruited by these groups but children are targeted more by them as there are various advantages of recruiting children in the groups.

Following are the reasons of recruiting children:

(A) Publicity and propaganda

The extremist groups exploit children in order to attract attention and prove their ruthlessness to spread fear against them in the public. Children are the easiest and best option for the extremist groups to exploit and gain upper hand before government and law enforcing agencies. The extremist groups use children to carry out their purposes and put pressure on the government and crowd to carry out their propaganda.

(B) Demography

India is a densely populated country where the availability of children is high and it is easy for the extremist groups to abduct and recruit children for their purposes. In a country like India, where in rural areas there are numerous children in a single family, it is easy to abduct children and use them for their purposes. Demography plays a very important role in choosing the target of these extremist groups.

(C) Community Expectations

In India, there are certain places like Kashmir, people think that the terrorist groups and extremists are a defense against the government and therefore they encourage their children to join such groups and help them build a strong power against the government.

In places where people do not support the terrorist and violent activities, it becomes difficult for the extremist groups to recruit adults in the group and build a powerful base. Therefore, these groups recruit children in their team because it is easy to mold and manipulate children and makethem join the group. This way there will be more members in the team and the group can become strong and carry out their propaganda with ease.

(D) Economic Consideration and Effectiveness

Considering the needs of children compared to adults is less. They can survive on less food and paid lesser than adults therefore recruiting children are economical for the extremist groups. Considering the economical aspect, children are better option to be recruited as combatants in the groups as they can survive and work at a very less price and food as compared o the adults.

Earlier, the arms were heavy and long, therefore children were not able to use those arms effectively. So there was a need to recruit adults as combatants. But nowadays the arms are small and portable. Therefore, children can easily use such arms effectively, if trained properly. Children are therefore recruited as combatants or support roles because they are economical and can be effective after proper training.

(E) Control

Children are more trustworthy than adults because they can do anything for the ones whom they love and respect. They can easily be controlled physically and mentally by the leaders of the groups as compared to adults and they are loyal and ready to do whatever the leader instructs them to do. Children are very young and therefore they can easily be manipulated and made to follow certain beliefs and behaviors that are difficult to be done in adults. Therefore, children are an “investment in the future generation” for the extremist groups as these children in future after getting young can carry out the group and lead in future to build a strong and powerful group. Those groups that want to carry out their propaganda and work in long-run recruit more children who can in future help and lead the group and make in run long.

(F) Tactical Advantages

Children do not have much idea of what risk they will be facing while doing any activity for carrying out the group's purposes. Therefore, they have less anxiety because of which they do not come in suspicion by the security and carry out their purposes with ease. Children are also likely to follow the orders properly and do whatever is asked them to do. Children especially girls are very useful for such groups. They recruit them to work as spies, messengers to deliver messages, carry materials and undertake suicide attacks.

III. HOW CHILDREN GET RECRUITED?

Recruiting children in violent or terrorist extremist groups is dependent upon various factors. Initially methods used by armed groups in employing child soldiers were used by these extremist groups. Later innovative and refined techniques were used in recruiting children in the team. The majorly used technique was "forced recruitment" where children were abducted and forced to join the group. There was also "voluntary" recruitment of those young ones who were willing to join the extremist groups. Although, it is not possible that children recruitment is truly voluntary because there always is a coercive force due to which children put themselves into danger and join these groups. Few of these coercive force or factors can be: Survival, poverty, marginalization, discrimination, or insecurity.

Certain methods of recruitment of children are:

(A) Force Recruitment

The extremist groups prefer recruiting children through force. There are many ways of recruiting children through force such as: kidnapping, abduction, coercion by giving threats, or purchasing children from traffickers. Those children who are poor and do not have parents or guardians or live on streets are more prone to be recruited by these extremist groups.

(B) Recruitment through Support of Community

Sometimes and in some areas people of that community perceive these extremist groups as their saviors and defense from the government. They support and encourage their children to join and help the groups to become strong and powerful enough to stand powerfully against the government. In this situation the family members and community leaders encourage their children to join these groups.

(C) Economic Employment

The extremist groups may sometimes offer food, payment, accommodation, etc. to recruit more members in the group. Those who have nothing and in order to survive join these groups.

Poor children and those who do not get parental affection and love join these groups where they are praised for their loyalty and given token of appreciation for their work.

(D) Transnational Recruitment

Such recruitment takes place in cases of transnational terrorism and violence where children from foreign countries are made to cross borders and join these groups. In some cases children themselves volunteer to join from foreign country and cross borders with their parents, relatives or someone who help and support them. Children are forcefully abducted or kidnapped and made to cross borders to join the extremist groups. Some groups use different recruiting methods that are to be applied in different situations.

(E) Territorial Control

Strong or big extremist groups have territorial control over certain areas which they use as a forum where they encourage, train and teach children necessary abilities that would be needed after joining the group. Schools are preferably used by these groups to train these children so that they could be very helpful for these groups in future.

(F) Propaganda

The violent or terrorist groups use strategies like propagating the advantages of joining their groups or by triggering empathy of people. They portray that joining these groups would give them power, prestige, status, arms, and everything they would ever need to gain an upper hand in the society. It is shown as an opportunity for those who are unemployed and who urge for power. Children specially uneducated ones get fascinated and volunteer themselves to join the groups. The extremist groups also use the strategy of victimhood where they show the crimes of the enemy and trigger people with anger and revenge. They also use empathy as weapon and develop rage and revenge on people who were injured or close to the ones who were killed. Children are nowadays appealed through cartoons, computer games, etc. through which children would get attracted and join these groups. Even these groups glorify terrorist acts and suicidal attacks in order to encourage children to do such activities.

(G) Online Recruitment

Recruiting children online is a new strategy used by these groups because nowadays children are more active online on different social media. Advertising specific websites that gives information about the existence of certain groups to certain specified audience is a technique used by these groups to target specific people or section. Majorly these groups use two ways of online recruitment: grooming and target advertising. Grooming is a technique where the

target's interest are known and communicated in such a way that the individual builds up trust for the perpetrator and then the individual is inclined towards the knowledge of such group and made to join the group. Another technique is target advertising where the online behavior of internet users is tracked in order to discover those who are interested and useful to be recruited in the group.

IV. REASONS FOR CHILDREN TO GET INVOLVED IN THE EXTREMIST GROUPS

Children and young people get fascinated easily and therefore they get involved in the groups in order to get employment, power, prestige, etc. Following can be the reasons why children get involved in these groups:

(A) To get an Identity, Support, and be Fearless

Children often want to get popularity and identity at a very young age without doing much. Therefore they see these groups as the best and most convenient way for achieving these. Also there are many children who are feel alienated from the society due to their beliefs, religion, or because of the place they live in. Therefore, joining such groups make them fearless and get support from the other members of these groups.

(B) Status, Security, and Safety

Getting involved with a extremist group would develop a feeling of strength in the young ones who think that by joining such groups they would be able to protect their family and community. Involving with a group would keep them safe from the other opposite group is what the young ones perceive and even they are threatened to face the consequences for not joining a group. So to be safe and secure, they join a group where they will get safety and security.

(C) To get away from poverty

Those children who are poor and are unable to earn bread and survive, they get themselves recruited in a group that provides them food, money and shelter.

(D) To take revenge, fight back and resolve injustice

At some places, these groups are considered to be good and helpful for the local residents. Therefore the young ones join the groups to stand against government and administration that does injustice to people. Also, people who are gravely injured or hurt due to injustice or unfair practices of state or police, develop a feeling of rage, anger and want of revenge. They join these groups to fight against administration or people who commit unfair practices and take revenge.

V. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

In a country like India where the population is so high and literacy rate is low, children are vulnerable to be recruited by the extremist groups where they are exploited and victimized. Such children need help and support from the government to get themselves out from the trap of these groups. There can be following ways to tackle the problem:

(A) Educating children

India is a country where the literacy rate is low and children especially of rural areas do not get enough education to be empowered and employed. Education is a very powerful weapon to fight against practices of extremists involved in recruiting children. It is a fundamental right to education for children of 14 years under Article 21A³ of the Indian Constitution. There have been taken many initiatives to educate the rural area children yet there is a lot to work upon the system that works upon educating these children. UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP)⁴ is a Category One Research Institute of UNESCO which is established in New Delhi is an institute that works on the prevention of violent extremism through education. It focuses on the youth and provides them valuable skills that would help them fight against such social evils in the society.

(B) Providing safety especially to the girls

Girls are more vulnerable to these extremists and they get even more exploited and victimized. The traffickers who kidnap and sell girls to these extremists to carry out their purposes. The best way is to prevent child trafficking which help these extremists in recruiting children in their team.

India is a founding member of the Global Counter-terrorism Forum (GCTF). It participates in GCTF and United Nations Counter-terrorism Forums to promote multilateral efforts to counter terrorism. India also works with neighboring countries such as Bangladesh to prevent illegal activities on border.

(C) Awareness sessions in the community

It is very important to make the local residents understand the danger in getting recruited under these campaigns. Parents and children both should be acknowledged with the fact that these groups are not safe and will be dangerous for everyone.

³ INDIA CONST. art 21A.

⁴ Mahatma Gandhi Institute of education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP), UNITED NATIONS (Last Accessed on Apr. 30, 2021), <https://in.one.un.org/who-we-are/mgiep-unesco/>.

(D) Fair system

Those who get themselves recruited in the extremist groups due to get revenge and stand against the government and police because they have done injustice to them, the only solution is that there should be a fair system that works for the betterment and good of the society keeping in mind the goodness of all and without hurting anyone. A fair system would lead to bring justice in the society and no one would build a thought of going against the system.

(E) Exposing the real intentions of the extremist groups

The extremist groups recruit children by giving them fancy opportunities and offers. When these extremist groups will get exposed that they will only use, exploit, and victimize children, then no one would willingly join these groups.

(F) Good investigation

To stop and eliminate the extremist groups there is a need to investigate the leader and know the place from where these groups work. Catching the real culprits and bringing them behind the bars will be one of the most effective ways of preventing child recruitment.

VI. CONCLUSION

Children especially girls are prone to be recruited by the extremist groups as children prove to be very helpful and of great advantages for the extremists. Extremists exploit and victimize children by gaining their trust and making them follow all their orders. Children are loyal and therefore they follow and work exactly the same as they are asked to do. Meanwhile they risk their own life and sometimes they unknowingly cause huge damage to the society and the system. Children are used to carry out those purposes that adults could not because children do not get under suspicion by the securities. Therefore, children could easily perform those tasks that are difficult by the adults due to strong security forces.

Children are the future of the country and therefore they need to be protected and prevented from getting involved under extremist activities. For this there is a need for joint co-operation of administration, judiciary and legislation. All these three pillars have to work efficiently to eradicate such groups and prevent children from getting involved into it.

India has not joined the US-led Global Coalition that attempts to defeat and combat ISIS on a global scale.⁵ India should join the coalition as the ISIS and other terrorist groups pose threat to the global security. India amended its domestic AML/CTF legislation to comply with the

⁵ India: *Extremism and Terrorism*, COUNTER EXTREMISM PROJECT (Last Accessed on Apr. 30, 2021), <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/india>.

international regulations but the fact that children still are getting recruited in these groups is a topic of concern that should be eliminated as soon as possible.

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