



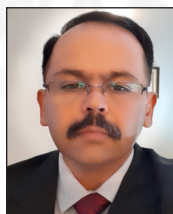
# ISSUE BRIEF

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## Counter Processes to Radicalisation

For some time now a new narrative is emerging from Kashmir to give the impression that there is a clear and definite transition from *Kashmiriyat* to *Pakistaniyat* that had happened in mid 1990s and to present day from *Pakistaniyat* to *Islamiyat*. Kashmir's separatist movement was pioneered by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) in the late 1980s and it declared itself secular as it aimed to unite the state of Jammu and Kashmir as it existed in 1947 (*Kashmiriyat*).<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, it was propelled forward in 1990 with the introduction of the Hizbul Mujahideen and other outfits that linked Kashmir's struggle to Pakistan (*Pakistaniyat*).<sup>2</sup> A number of organisations and as many sections of society who felt marginalised in the extant political reality joined the terrorist movement not because they favoured Pakistan, but because of the imposition



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### Key Points

- Narrative emerging from Kashmir is indicative of a clear and definite second transition—the first was from *Kashmiriyat* to *Pakistaniyat* that had happened in the mid 1990s to now from *Pakistaniyat* to *Islamiyat*.
- Kashmir is under the thrall of 'Salafism'. This radicalisation of society needs to be countered by a systems approach of counter processes and counter narratives.
- In the new socio-religious order, Salafi maulavis are instructing followers to interpret the Quran for themselves in a literalist manner.
- Ghazwa-e-Hind or a holy raid of India as a hadith has gained popularity as a vector for recruitment and funding in Kashmir.
- De-radicalisation is erroneously used as an all-encompassing technique, including counter-radicalisation (methods to control radicalisation) and anti-radicalisation (methods to deter and prevent radicalisation from occurring).
- The focus must be on that part of the populace who has not yet become involved in terrorism; the process of radicalisation itself may not have been completed or even begun in earnest.
- The prefix 'de' in 'de-radicalisation' implies it is a process that can only be applied to individuals or groups after radicalisation has occurred.
- 'Success' or 'failure' of any programme targeting radicalisation, the context is important, ignoring the context and focusing on the mechanics will compound the difficulty of judging its success.
- Prevent, Protect and Empower, must be the three Lines of Effort (LoE) of all processes aimed at countering radicalisation.

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of Sharia (*Islamiat*). The flags of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) appearing after Friday prayers at Jamia Masjid are becoming the norm of the day.<sup>3</sup> When experts qualify this, the assertion is of Kashmir under the thrall of 'Salafism', known in Kashmir through a section of Muslims who are identified as the Ahle Hadith.<sup>4</sup> This inherent radicalisation of Kashmiri society needs to be countered by a systems approach of counter processes and counter narratives.<sup>5</sup>

This paper aims to examine the context and condition under which each of the processes of the programme (de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation and anti-radicalisation) are applied, examining both the benefits and the challenges they present to the task of counter terrorism in the Kashmir Valley in particular and the country in general.

The Ahle Hadith movement is not new to Kashmir. It is believed that the number of mosques it runs has increased manifold and this is mainly accomplished with funding from Saudi Arabia and theological support from seminaries in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.<sup>6,7</sup> This Movement in Kashmir Valley is 120 years old. The first Ahle Hadith mosque was set up in Srinagar in 1897 by Anwar Shah Shopiani, who hailed from Shopian.<sup>8</sup> He was influenced by the Salafi movement in then-undivided Punjab. Such was the belief in the local traditions of Sufi Islam that the puritans remained on the remote fringes of Kashmir's religious and cultural life. However, things are beginning to change, there is no denying that Ahle Hadith's popularity

has grown in the past few years and that this is the consequence of changes taking place the world over with literalist interpretation of Islam finding traction in the Middle East. That began to change as the insurgency gathered force, a new section of society has taken the lead role in a political struggle that has been going on for over 27 years as the nexus has got sidelined and lost traction with the net-savvy youth who has found solace and reason on the internet—be it Zakir Naik's harangues or videos made viral by Caliphate's media wing.<sup>9</sup> In days gone by, religious instruction was invested in a hereditary Pir, a religious figure endowed with holiness, either by his lineage traced to the Prophet Muhammad or because of his interpretations of the religious text. In the new socio-religious order, Salafi maulavis are instructing followers to interpret the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet for themselves. This, in the view of many, is shaping new attitudes that challenge the traditional and is making the ground fertile for sectarian divisions. The Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen was one outfit that was the armed wing of Ahle Hadith and some smaller outfits like Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind were launched to provide helmsmanship to this vitriolic ideological alignment and radicalised youth.<sup>10,11</sup> Ghazwa-e-Hind or a holy raid of India as a hadith has gained popularity as a vector for recruitment and funding and is indicative of the radicalisation in Kashmir.<sup>12</sup> Another protagonist who has had a major role to play in the radicalisation of Kashmiri society and proliferate dominance of Sunni religious dogmas is Jamat-e-Islami.<sup>13</sup> This has been done

in large measure by a network of schools run by Falah-e-Aam Trust which provides the ideological fodder for violence.

The word “radicalisation” describes a process by which individuals (and even groups) develop, over time, a mindset that can—under the right circumstances and opportunities—increase the risk that he or she will engage in violent extremism or terrorism.<sup>14</sup> It is *sine qua non* that the word ‘de-radicalisation’ refers to measures used to undermine and reverse the completed radicalisation process, thereby reducing the potential risk to society from terrorism. However, confusion prevails as the term de-radicalisation is also erroneously used as all-encompassing, different-but-related methods and techniques aimed at reducing society’s risk from terrorism, including counter-radicalisation (the term used to describe methods to stop or control radicalisation as it is occurring) and anti-radicalisation (the term used to describe methods to deter and prevent radicalisation from occurring in the first place).

While radicalised youth has already transitioned to the black realm, the focus must be on that part of the target populace who has not yet become involved in terrorism, but also the process of radicalisation itself may not have been completed or even begun in earnest. Consequently, these individuals are neither in prison nor under detention and hence, are not subject to the direct and rigid control of the government. When they are held in detention, it is because they have already moved beyond the radicalisation process

and have become actively involved in terrorist activities. As a consequence of their arrest and detention, they may also be required to undergo some form of state/government de-radicalisation programme. Only this type of programme administered under these circumstances (for individuals incarcerated and detained due to their active involvement in terrorist activities) can be accurately described as ‘de-radicalisation’. The focus is on programmes aimed at individuals and groups inspired and motivated by violent jihadism based on the ideology proliferated by radical Islamists, with a particular focus on those whose agenda is not so much separatism but terror as a tool of jihad. They seek to achieve one aim, i.e. to carry out terrorist attacks in the country to weaken its secular and democratic fibre.

The net result of all this terminological complexity is the blurring of the lines between radicalisation, extremism, violent extremism and terrorism in terms of the behaviours, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) associated with each. Without clear boundaries between these terms, it becomes difficult to determine the most effective counter measures to apply in each circumstance. The lack of clarity and consistency that characterise how we define radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism also extends to the measures taken to counter them. Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) is now in regular use, but perhaps one of the most misapplied words in the lexicon of counter terrorism today must be that of ‘de-radicalisation’.<sup>15</sup> Bjorgo and Horgan encapsulate the challenge succinctly: “...we find



the lack of conceptual clarity in the emerging discourse on de-radicalisation striking. De-radicalisation often appears to be understood as an effort aimed at preventing radicalisation from taking place.”<sup>16</sup>

This common way of defining de-radicalisation presents a logical paradox as the prefix ‘de’ in ‘de-radicalisation’ implies it is a process that can only be applied to individuals or groups after radicalisation has occurred. A great deal of effort and resources have been devoted to programmes in different countries like Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, Singapore and Canada<sup>17</sup>, both to stop or mitigate the growth of radicalisation as it is actively occurring and to prevent it from developing in the first place. To describe all of these programmes together under the umbrella of de-radicalisation is a misnomer and it can make tackling the problem even more complicated. Another limitation of using the term de-radicalisation is that it “gives the impression that there is an overarching single solution—in this case, most often assumed to be changed in beliefs and we see a change in behavior”<sup>18</sup> and as a consequence, “this linear approach does not allow for easy engagement with the problem at

hand.”<sup>19</sup> There is no one-size-fits-all approach (and referring to everything as ‘de-radicalisation’ does not create one).

Table 1 below shows that rather than describing all factors as aspects of de-radicalisation and therefore demonstrating the need for a de-radicalisation programme, it may be more apt to de-hyphenate between the three programmes, of which only one is de-radicalisation. Another type of programme is counter-radicalisation, where steps are taken to cease, attenuate or mitigate radicalisation while it is actively occurring as the present case may be in the Valley. The last programme is anti-radicalisation, whereby measures are institutionalised to prevent and deter radicalisation from finding traction and taking root in the first place. A wide variance is visible between each of Lines of Effort (LoE). The behaviour targeted can range from ‘terrorism’ at one end to ‘vulnerability to radicalisation’ at the other. Similarly, the target audience for de-radicalisation are individuals being held by the state as convicted terrorists, individuals awaiting trial or surrendered terrorists, while on the other end of the spectrum, are individuals who are part of the society but are radicalised

**Table 1: Processes and End States**

S. No.	Activity Targeted	Prevailing Environment	Desired End State	Process	Aim of Process
1.	Terrorist Acts	Sub-conventional Conflict	Cessation of Violence	De-radicalisation	Rehabilitation
2.	Violent Extremism	Enforced Peace	Prevention of Violence	Counter-radicalisation	Reintegration
3.	Radicalisation	Normality	Mitigation of Radicalisation	Anti-radicalisation	Deterrence

Source: Annotated by Author.

and have a propensity to resort to violence and also those who have committed no illegal acts but may be vulnerable to radicalisation. A further factor in emphasising that one size does not fit all is that the locus foci of each programme must necessarily be very different. Consequently, the objectives to be achieved in pursuit of these aims will also be different. The net result is that no programme with a single aim can encompass all of these requirements.

When considering the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of any type of programme targeting radicalisation, the wider context under which it has been implemented is important. Ignoring the context and focusing only on the mechanics of the programme will compound the difficulty of judging its success. The socio-political norms of the country and region are key contextual elements. For example, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Pakistan and Indonesia have pioneered ‘de-radicalisation programmes’ that aims to de-radicalise captured terrorists or insurgents.<sup>20</sup> As these programmes are all in Muslim countries, the philosophies, rationales and approaches used may be difficult to replicate in India. Morocco has taken perhaps the most comprehensive approach of all the Muslim countries, from actively reinforcing and promoting its own traditional Maliki form of Islamic law to producing a government-approved curriculum for imams to use.<sup>21</sup> It also takes active measures to promote Moroccan values in Moroccan communities living abroad. The King of Morocco plays a personal role in the lives of his subjects as the ‘Commander of the Faithful’ and

hence is able to shape opinions in Morocco in a way that would be difficult or impossible even for other Muslim countries to achieve.

The prevailing socio-economic and political situation within the society—whether it is predominantly stable and subject to the rule of law or whether it is suffering from widespread or intense civil conflict or insurgency—can also have an impact on which de-radicalisation measures are appropriate and necessary. Arguably, the more a country deviates from a predominantly peaceful state and into violent civil conflict as it is starting to happen in India, the less effective anti-radicalisation and counter-radicalisation programmes are likely to be and would have an adverse domino effect on the attempts to counter-radicalisation and anti-radicalisation being attempted in Jammu and Kashmir or in Ladakh.

The second set of contextual elements to be considered when examining programmes, are the local conditions under which the programmes operate. In case of the Kashmir Valley the pronounced presence of prior radicalisation of individuals, whether they are involved in terrorism or violent extremism or whether they are in transition from radicalisation to terrorism/violent extremism, is to be analysed and targeted under the three silos mentioned in Table 1. Each of these categories is different and therefore a different type of programme is required to be formulated for trying to deal with each one of them. Finally, the degree of freedom the individual has is also a key factor and can be

broken down into three main levels depending on—whether the subjects of the programme are incarcerated in some way, whether they are living freely but are likely to be detained if their behaviour continues on current trajectories, or whether they are living freely and openly in society.

In summary, the so-called de-radicalisation programmes can differ from each other not only in the aims, objectives and the methods they employ but also in the wider societal context under which they operate. This context must include the local conditions prevailing in the area where they are located and to discern the LoE between Kashmir and Jammu the type of behaviour being targeted, and the degree of control that the Indian Army, responsible for delivering the programme, is able to exert over the targeted individuals. Without taking these into full consideration, any attempt to evaluate the performance of a specific programme will be incomplete. Prevent, Protect and Empower must be the three LoEs of all processes aimed at countering radicalisation.

The main objective of ‘Prevent’ LoE must be to preclude the development of a new generation of radicalised terrorists in Kashmir. Extremist groups opposed to this type of state-sponsored counter activity, exploit the fears of common men, like ‘spying’ and ‘intelligence gathering’. Protect LoE must aim at protecting the youth from the influence of the Over Ground Workers (OGWs) and maulvis who are spewing vitriol from seminaries and madrasas by engaging

them into more lucrative and commercially viable ventures of education and vocational training. There is an intrinsic potential presented by individuals involved in terrorist activities and groups who have become ‘de-radicalised’. They can work with counter-radicalisation organisations to provide valuable information and insights that would otherwise be hard to come by. However, it highlights an ethical dilemma too. Once individuals have disengaged, should the goal be to assist them in leaving their terrorist organisations or networks or should it be to convince them to remain in constant touch for sourcing information, but on the contrary may create circumstances for triggering a relapse? ‘Empower’ LoE must aim at empowering the family and the other vectors of the society to develop a counter narrative to the ideological narrative which is aimed at channelising the youth to terrorism. Most specifically ‘Empower’ LoE of counter-radicalisation and anti-radicalisation, can sometimes play a role in ‘turning-off-the-tap’ of terrorist recruitment by reducing the flow of individuals likely to become committed enough to a terrorist cause, to take action on its behalf. At the beginning of the terrorist recruitment cycle, anti-radicalisation measures can be used to reduce the pool of those ‘vulnerable to extremist propaganda’, while counter-radicalisation measures are used to reduce the numbers of those ‘transitioning to terrorism’ before those willing to join terrorist groups succeeds in doing so. In addition, successful initial targeting of those who are potentially willing to join, if the opportunity arises, makes it riskier and more difficult for



terrorist groups or networks to ‘identify, groom and recruit individuals’.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that even when counter measures achieve their desired objectives, they still present challenges. They are resource intensive, positive results may only become apparent much later and when they do, then it may be difficult to accurately evaluate or quantify them. There is also a risk of recidivism, whereby, individuals who appear to be disengaged or even ‘de-radicalised’ becomes ‘re-engaged’ with radicalised or terrorist groups. Yet, despite the many challenges and potential pitfalls, the benefits that appropriate, well-designed and implemented programmes generate, warrants their inclusion within any comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy, albeit an inclusion that should be carefully considered, professionally managed and robustly overseen.

## Notes

1. Available at [https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist\\_outfits/jammu\\_&\\_kashmir\\_liberation\\_front.htm](https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/jammu_&_kashmir_liberation_front.htm), accessed on March 6, 2020.
2. Available at [https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist\\_outfits/hizbul\\_mujahideen.htm](https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/hizbul_mujahideen.htm) accessed on March 6, 2020.
3. Available at <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/india/politics-the-bogey-of-islamic-state-in-kashmir-3981691.html>, accessed March 7, 2020.
4. It is a religious movement that emerged in northern India in the mid-nineteenth century from the teachings of Syed Nazeer Husain and Siddiq Hasan Khan. They regard the Quran, sunnah, and hadith as the sole sources of religious authority and oppose everything introduced in Islam after the earliest times. In particular, they reject *taqlid* (following legal precedent) and favour *ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning) based on the scriptures.
5. Bashir Asad and K Files, *The Conspiracy of Silence*, New Delhi: Vitasta Publishing Pvt Ltd, 2019, p. xxiii.
6. Available at <https://www.indiatoday.in/mail-today/story/jammu-and-kashmir-wahabi-controlled-mosques-ahle-hadith-sufi-shrines-militancy-madarsas-980513-2017-06-02>, accessed on March 6, 2020.
7. Rajesh Kadian, *The Kashmir Tangle: Issues and Options*, London, Routledge, June 12, 2019, p. 23.
8. Available at <https://peoplepill.com/people/mohammad-anwar-shopiani/>, accessed on March 12, 2020.
9. Available at <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/zakir-naik-kashmir-palestine-modi-rss-bjp-1598514-2019-09-12>, accessed on March 10, 2020.
10. Available at <https://www.satp.org/terrorist-profile/india-jammukashmir/ansar-ghazwat-ul-hind> accessed on March 10, 2020.
11. Available at [https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist\\_outfits/Tehreek\\_ul\\_Mujahideen.htm](https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/Tehreek_ul_Mujahideen.htm), accessed on March 10, 2020.
12. Rasheed Kidwai, ‘The Complex Narratives of Ghazwa-e-Hind’, available at <https://www.orfonline.org/research/complex-narratives-ghazwa-e-hind-56257>, accessed on March 10, 2020.
13. Bashir Asad and K Files, Op. Cit (5), p. 84.
14. SAFIRE – Scientific Approach to Finding Indicators of and Responses to Radicalisation: Results and Findings of the FP7 Project, 2013, available at <http://www.safireproject-results.eu>, accessed on 06 Mar 2020.
15. The United Nations Security Council increasingly emphasises the need for a comprehensive approach to countering the spread of terrorism and violent extremism. One aspect of such an approach

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has come to be known as Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). In its Resolution 2178 (2014), on stemming the Flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs), the Council underscores that CVE is an 'essential element' in addressing the threat to international peace and security posed by FTFs. The Council encourages Member States to engage with relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts.

16. T. Bjorgo and J. Horgan, (eds.), *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 3.
17. Lorenzo Vidino, *Countering Radicalization in America Lessons from Europe*, p. 3, [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/SR262%20-%20Countering\\_Radicalization\\_in\\_America.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/SR262%20-%20Countering_Radicalization_in_America.pdf) accessed on 20 May 2020.
18. J. Horgan and M. Taylor, 'Disengagement, De-radicalisation and the Arc of Terrorism: Future Directions for Research', in R. Coolsaet (ed.), *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge*, 2011, p. 176.
19. Ibid.
20. R. Barret and L. Bokhari, 'Deradicalisation and Rehabilitation Programmes Targeting Religious Terrorists and Extremists in the Muslim World: An Overview' in T. Bjorgo and J. Horgan (eds.), *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, London and New York: Routledge, 2009, pp. 170-80.
21. E. Thompson and W. McCants, 'Partners Against Terror: Opportunities and Challenges for US-Moroccan Counterterrorism Coordination', 2013, available at <http://www.cna.org/sites/default/files/research/PartnersAgainstTerrorism2.pdf>, accessed on February 24, 2020.

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