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RISING EXTREMISM IN BANGLADESH: A VOYAGE TOWARDS UNCERTAINTY

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A B S T R A C T

As posterior implications of 9/11 attack, like different corners of the globe, external terrorist networks and their ideologues planned to expand number of foreign networks through consolidation of scattered members and later on, radicalization of local groups. We found that regional non-state actors and ideological components, found in Bangladesh fuel these networks escalate. Since then, South Asian Country, Bangladesh most often suffers dimensional consequences and an uncertainty of being terror-hub of the territory, even being of weaker state-function. The paper shows how internal and external ingredients endorse extremist or terrorist upheaval in Bangladesh. Moreover, it explains the scope and the way how economic status—extreme poverty along with terror-financing radicalize unemployed youth; religious scriptures are misinterpreted in favor of subversive operations and visualize them a state of heavenly rewards aftermath of their earthy lives. The primary objectives of the work include a neutral research work. Since long decades, the issues tend to remain polarized and biased of ideo-political nature (bipolarized ideologies in politics) in the predominantly Muslim state of Bangladesh. The paper incorporates analyses of current government's exemplary model (2009 to present, 2014) combating Islamist extremism bringing about major successes, also sectarian critiques as well. This research paper also prescribes specific policy recommendations for any circumstance of probable terror infestations or any potential 'failed state' consequence resulting in any spillover effect in South Asia.

Keywords: Consequences, Economy, External actors, Internal causes, Policy analyses, Recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism directly damages structures (e.g. human habitats) but most importantly, it vandalizes economic, commercial and social infrastructure of a state. It directly kills and injures innocent civilians along with target groups to demonstrate sectarian dominance but most importantly, it multiplies traumatic consequences and hatreds to the victims and also establishes legacies for potential terrorists to forward.

Jihadi interpretation of religious scriptures and developing threatening underground networks serve their purposes to capture powers and leadership in the society and then state throne. They conscript cadres through motivating youths from both middle and higher classes of the society. Persistent deprivation (poverty, unemployment and non-participation), continued injustices and social indignity (e.g. exclusion) make them sensitive prey to the offers of the terrorist ringleaders and godfathers. Offers include both material gains and after-earth rewards to be awarded by god themselves.

This paper has proved a state of internal and external actors resulting in constant upheaval of extremism. In the earlier segment, it analyzed how a softer nation of Sufi Islam is transforming towards extremist turn having ideology of 'Jihadist Islam'. While finding causes, the paper found a socio-economic explanation of the rapid extremism. Then, it also proved how external actors equally patronize alongside weaker economic security. The final segment, it commended some proper measures which Bangladesh government gained noticeable successes. It provided a specific set of recommendations for upcoming days.

METHODOLOGY

The paper falls under qualitative analysis. It takes data from two related fields, (i) government, security forces, NGOssources and international—UN and USA research findings from respective websites and peer-reviewed

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journals, and (ii) citation from major national dailies—statistics, events and authentic articles etc from home and beyond. Thus it stands with the hypothetical stance. On the other hand, it also collects relevant information from primary sources originating from field researches, happened time to time. To achieve some tangible outputs of course, numeric evidences, quantitative data representations are incorporated in the forms generalized sentences. In addition to, inferences and findings are also used here, as emerged out of observed or correlated data calculations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islam dominates the individual and collective lives of Bangladeshis as a religion of the majority. But, Islamic ethics and practices remain thoroughly peaceful and coexisting as blended with the eastern culture tolerance. Long before the arrival of conquerors (e.g. Bakhtyar Khilji in 12th century).Sufis and Arab Muslim traders brought Islam into the region of softer Bengal, now West Bengal of India and Bangladesh. Philosophy of Sufism—'Love of god through love His creations' got blended with Vaishnavism, mysticism of Bouls and hence spread over the region, even to the indigenous practitioners as well. Religious minded Bangladeshis love their religion as part of culture and even they follow partial cultures and fests of diverse religion of the region. So they are not necessarily extremist, even though Islam as a religion of majority influence core of the politics in Bangladesh.

Flash-backing external legacies of terrorism in Bangladesh, US and its allies initiated proxy war—'Holy War' (or Jihad accordingly Arab Sheikhdoms who are supposed to be the caretaker of Islam) in Afghanistan against infidel and communist Soviet Russian aggression. Therefore, Muslims devotees across the globe (from Bangladesh to Egypt and from Bali to Casablanca) tried to grab the life-time opportunities to join Jihad, perform the religious duties and thus to save the Muslim territory and to gain the heaven thereafter. Soviet Russia didn't survive against the religiously motivated 'Mujahedeen' (Holy Warriors), rather left the Afghan territory in 1989. Many Jihadists returned to their normal lives in irrespective countries but, many didn't return rather stayed in war-torn Afghanistan which later on, experienced severe civil war and the remaining Jihadists transformed them into Taliban. The West betrayed them and mistakenly left the war-ravaged Afghanistan in the hands of extremists and thus the US and its allies equally gave birth to the Talibanization. Frankenstein's monster, Taliban went beyond the western concept of governance and operated number of terrorist operations (e.g. 9/11) in the world removing western influence over Islamic civilization in the name of 'Global Jihad'.

Like majority Muslim countries, Bangladeshi nationals joined the proxy war. Approximately 3400 Bangladeshis fought in the Afghan Jihad and around 300 never returned and supposed to be settled elsewhere in Middle Eastern countries. Some Afghan returnees formed HUJI in Pakistan to endorse the ongoing struggle in Kashmir and in April 30, 1992, Bangladesh branch—HUJI (B) was expanded with a motive to participate in open politics of Bangladesh later on, the Islamist organization, led by Mufti Abdul Hanna was accused of two-time failed endeavors to assassinate erstwhile Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. HUJI (B) leaders claim that 400 Afghan veterans work in the network (US Department of State, 2012). In 2005, it started scores of campaign to capture state power within 10 years. Marking its terrorist characteristics, HUJI (B) was banned after 9/11 attack. In the period of 1998-2005, another homegrown terrorist organizations—JMB (Jamaitul Mujahideen Bangladesh) and JMJB (Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh) developed beyond the appearances until they exploded 510 countrywide and simultaneous bombings on August 17, 2005. Demanding to establish Sariah Law challenging corrupted regime, JMB executed number of suicide bombings where only three suicide bombers killed at least 33 people in capital's outskirts.

It has also political explanations as well. Political Islam and religion in politics date back to pre-partition days where 'Two-Nation theory' just started to develop in Indian Sub-continent till the establishment of Pakistan in 1947, which is termed as the larger and first use of religion in national and regional politics (Ilahi, 2014).

MEANING AND DEFINITIONS OF TERRORISM

Defining terrorism: A range of religious, political actors and other ideological principles motivate individuals and groups to be extreme in stands running subversive operations against their targets. They start to target specific communities as distinct of ideologies and later on, they forward their targets to national infrastructure and intellectuals communities, nothing secular, even modern Islamism cannot be escaped from their clutches. Extremism is largely a capricious matter. During recent years, extremists are neither confined by international borders nor limited to a single ideology. Rapid

advancement of sophisticated technologies (e.g., internet, mainstream social media etc) gives divergent scopes to violent operations (Homeland Security (2011). Sometimes the term 'extremism' interchanges with 'radicalization' as fundamentalists radicalize them into extremists (Homeland Security, 2011).

No one definition of terrorism has gained universal acceptance (Kronenwetter, 2004). Though it originated from certain geographical territories, in following decades as it proves, it spreads out in different continents taking multiple dynamics added, so definitions seem to be certainly divergent of kinds.

Indian-born American journalist and author, Fareed Zakaria (2005) argues, "What derives terrorism however, is not easy means, but strong motives. Militant political Islam has brainwashed thousands of young Muslims around the world who believe it is their duty to fight against modem world (state system; democracy etc). The ideology of hatred has grown on the western supported 'moderate' regimes…miserably failed to deliver economic opportunity or political freedom to their people". This cause-analytical definition better suit Bangladesh context.

Another South Asian analyst, Subrahmanyam (2005) defines as "Terrorism is not an ideology. It is a method of employing political violence in pursuit of an ideology".

Here it places a number of universal definitions, which equally suit Bangladeshi context, or South Asian perspectives.

"The…use of forces or threats to demoralize, intimidate, and subjugate, esp., such use as a political weapon or policy" (Guralnik, 1980).

"The unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" (US Code of Federal Regulations).

Hymans (1974) said, "Terrorism refers to political philosophy, or on a practical level, deliberate manner of acting…Terrorism is coercive, designated to manipulate the will of its victims and its larger audience".

EXTREMISM IN BANGLADESH

Recent political impasse scopes number of Islamist or extremist parties to argument and propagate a vision of Islamic Sharia or Caliphate State as a viable alternative to existing democratic system which, they think, indulge mainstream political parties into corruption, mendacity and nepotism and taking the advantages of misadministration, collapsing justice system, economic crisis, deteriorated and politicized law and order situation, they (extremists leaders) represent themselves as true and capable leaders bringing about desired development, peace and stabilities. Thus failure of political leadership brings forth the religious extremists to regroup or consolidate showing down they should swear in power soon. Thus Islamist groups campaign them as savoir in their eyes where organized structure and party discipline multiply their objectivities and numbers so fast (Ilahi, 2014).

Bangladesh counts extreme threats, posed by various types of extremist sects since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Predominantly Muslim status of the country remains as raw materials for the extremist segments to mobilize the significant rest. Recent rise of social Islamist group, Hefazat-e-Islami and mainstreaming political party, Jamaat-e-Islami influence as passive force to the growing extremism. Over that, the sustaining secular regime (AL—Awami League) was re-elected its second term through controversial polls (January 05, 2014) which sympathizes general voters to favour Islamist-backed popular opposition, BNP—Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Hence Islamist parties get favor of mass supports as recent city corporations and sub-districts elections prove so.

DRIVERS OF EXTREMISM IN BANGLADESH

Scholars' views polarize in terms of regions, religions, political beliefs and so on. In Bangladesh perspective, security experts, intellectuals, civil societies and related practitioners express their diverse opinions regarding the issues because they are inclined with diverse political and religious views and are affiliated to major parties (e.g. leftist backed secular Awami League and rightist backed nationalist BNP). However, the driving factors in extremism can be divided into two broad categories: internal and external basically.

Internal Factors: There are following internal drivers for extremism in Bangladesh;

***Socio-economic status*:** Backward economic status always attributes tensions ranging to micro individual level to greater national lives. Continued poverty, relative deprivation, and their dire consequences of least living standard undoubtedly fuel certain level of the emergence of extremism in Bangladesh. It also includes other factors towards extremists' rise in the country such as—marginalization of the society and unequal distribution of resources between urban and rural

people.

Amidst deadly political violence back in 2013, country's economic growth sustains as much as 6% much below for the target of 7.2% for FY 2014 (Khatun, 2014). But, the growth is largely limited within urban areas, mostly two cities under uncontrolled private sectors. It widens the existing gap between the urban elites and overwhelming masses in terms of economy and also the youth inequalities (68%, age ranged from 18 to 21) in terms of education systems.

Government with endemic corruption enjoys less control over the distribution of wealth which leaves scopes of uncontrolled growth of Islamic seminaries—Makhtabs, Madrasas etc. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) cover wider social inequalities like women empowerment but, larger youth generations remain outside of their activism.

Thus terrorist gets a bigger pool available for smooth recruitment. In total, the population of Bangladesh is about 162.2 million, ranked eighth most populous country in the world (Perry, 2011).About 71.90% of the people live in rural areas as reported in 2010 (Trading Economics, 2012).About 31.5 % of the total population live miseries below the poverty line, where hem more than 17% (25 million) suffer extreme poverty of different degrees (Perry, 2011).

Madrasa education exists here since hundreds of years. Terrorist elements lie elsewhere as only Madrasa education system does not produce fanatic terrorists or suicide bombers rather personal and socio-economic trauma motivate them so. One out of three is found as madrasa students who are accused of terrorism. Even notorious terrorist, Banglabhai alias Siddiqul Islam was graduated in Bengali literature, later on taught as lecturer in Bengali.

Unemployment:The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, 2010)shows, among 5.67 crorelabor force (15-years plus), 2.6 million are unemployed in the country. In 2007, the figure was as little as 2.1 million (Byron, et al., 2012). Regarding increasingrate of unemployment, experts fear that rate of unemployment would soar to some 60 million by 2015.Unemploymentalso tends to increase more rapidly among youth aged ranging from 15 to 24years (UNDP & BBS, 2010). Bangladesh Planning Commission counted about 13.4% unemployment rate during 2005-2010 comparing those was about 8.0% in the years of 2000-02.Every year some 2.7 million young people become eligible for jobs whereas only about 0.7 million of them are getting employment (The Bangladesh Chronicle, 2012).The extreme poverty and unemployment challenges inspire people to engage in ranges of violent activities. In this case, these people can be easily motivated by extremist groups such as JMB, HuJI (B), Hijb-utTahrir etc. These militant organizations convinced and then conscripted impoverished and unemployed people, mostly youth to conduct violent protest and operations challenging the existing political system in the country.

Poor Governance aspect: Bangladesh ranked 118th in Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), slipped 10 positions (108th in 2011-12). (Global Competitiveness Report 2012-12: GCI).The ill factors related to governance and public institutions deteriorate from worse to worst (Global Competitiveness Report 2012-12: GCI).Bangladesh scores13th most corruption-wrecked country (Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2012). It also ranked the same position in 2011's corruption index.Bangladesh is ranked as 29th failed state scoring 92.2, and stayed 'in danger' position (*Foreign Policy*, 2012).

Dysfunctional Political System:Political violence (e.g., strike, blockade, violent clash, long-march etc). A recent study shows that daily political shutdown costs of Bangladesh are BDT 15 billion or US$ 200 million (Rashid, 2013). In addition, hundreds of party activists and general people have been died in political violence in the past couple of years.

Confrontational Politics:Since return of democracy after 1990, confrontational politics give spaces towards the rise of militant Islamism in Bangladesh when the parties are locked in confrontation. Unfolding political bickering between both alliances undermines heard-earned successes in counter-terrorism achievements. It gives them a scope to propagate that democracy; corrupted regimes and inadequate bureaucracy fail to solve national crises. And thus, they sell their idea to the poor masses envisioning Islamic state and Caliphate system of governance which they perceive, can resolve the day-to-day national seatbacks. Parties confronting each other create a security vacuum as law enforcers have to engage in to deal with political violence and then terrorists find fragile security circumstances.

In recent couple of years, Bangladesh witnesses changing trends of militancy from rural areas to more urban zones with the rise of sophisticated networks like Hizbut-Tahrir (HT). Shared hatreds of democracy and a

common desire to establish Sariahlaw brings the entire terrorist networks altogether. Infiltrating into state apparatus, HT started to recruit members from country's high-ranked universities behind the standstill of bipolar confrontations and ongoing blame games, as existed between parties (Bashar I., 2012)

Dysfunctional Parliament: In the parliament of Bangladesh, there are always seen a tendency that the ruling alliance does not feel interests to arrange discussions on different significant national issues. In the 8th parliament, only three general discussions (e.g. rise of militancy, law and order situation and serial bomb blasts etc) were approved amidst submitting several hundreds of notices from opposition lawmakers and veteran parliamentarian. During the parliament period, treasury bench hadn't summoned any special session on any issue of national importance in its last four years.

On August 17, 2005, Jamaytul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) (around 12.00 am) exploded around 500 bombs at 30 locations in 63 out of 64 districts. Even after such series bomb blasts, erstwhile parliament did not allow the political parties and professional bodies to hold any special parliamentary session. During the regular session, later on, ruling alliance' lawmakers did not even dare to raise questions to the home affairs minister on the militant' blasts. On-going culture of mono-party parliament discourages its parliamentarians to raise any significant issues before the House (ShakhawatLiton).

Religious politics amongst mainstream political parties: After reestablishing democracy in 1991, Bangladeshi political parties, mainly Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Bangladesh Awami league (AL) endorse 'PoliticalIslam' for the sake of 'Regime Politics' (or vote politics). In 1996, secular AL came to power having coalition with Political Islamist, Jamaat-e-Islam(JI). Similarly, in 2001, BNP returned into power by forming coalition with the same Islamist party. Later in the years, both parties included more Islamic parties in their respective alliances. As a result, religious extremists were brought up under the direct and indirect incumbent of major political parties.

Exploitation of Religious Sentiment: In Bangladesh, approximately 90% people are Muslim. So any activity alleged of abusing Islam is strongly protested here, most significantly where mass people participate in these nationwide demonstrations. For example, few years back, a cartoonist (Arifur Rahman) of the Daily Prothom Al published a cartoon insulting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Wikileaks, 2007). The task was publicly criticized. At that time, some Islamist parties posed nationwide demonstration against the newspaper and demanded supreme punishment to all involved in the task. Similarly, very recently, a new Islamist community, Hefazat-e-Islam emerged in response to the anti-Islamic activities of infidel bloggers of Shahbag Square (Prajanma Chattar) who gathered as hundreds of thousands demanding death penalty to war criminals but, Hefazat (as according to them) protested bloggers' anti-Islamic campaigns having no political ambitions. This way Hefazat-e-Islam gained wider public support through using the activities of anti-Islamic bloggers.

External Factors: There are following external drivers for extremism in Bangladesh;

Common Islamic Causes: There are various common Islamic causes such as Palestine-Israel protracted conflict, Kashmir crisis, Chechnyan insurgency etc. These crises are deeply related to Islamic nationalism. In Bangladesh, Islamic extremist organizations use these issues or legacies to legitimize their activities concerning mass people. They recruit members through injecting violent Islamic values on the basis on what they term it as 'crisis in Muslim'. Muslim world identifies the western block as pig-like that lost their minimum ethics and humanity as crusaders and Zionists control them against Muslims across the world (Pipes, et al, 1993). Many Muslims including Bangladesh believe Western alliance (Cristian oppressors) crusades in Middle East, suppresses Islamic nations there in terms of finance, commerce and politics. Thus, it breeds hostilities and hatreds emerging transnational terrorist activities (Crabtree, 2001).

Ideological Division andClash of Civilization:Ideological division of civilizations also influences the Bangladeshi people on larger scale. For instance, anti-Islamic cartoon and movie produced in Western world, strongly incites violent activities of Islamist extremist groups. For example, a US movie titled 'The Innocence of Islam' produced in 2013 persuaded various extremist groups (both social and Islamist) and general Bangladeshis as incited by Politico-religious groups to demonstrate violent protest rallies against the Western world (*The Guardian*, 2012).Underground network, Hizb-urTahrir (HT), for instance, distributed anti-U.S leaflets to the people in public. Some other parties also conducted rally, mass-meeting, human chain etc.

throughout the country.

External Network:International networks significantly provide necessary logistics and mechanism to grow and spread extremist groups in the targeted country. Thus, terrorism appears as transnational or international threat what AbuzaZackery, professor of Political Science at Simmons College in Boston, explains religious militancy rises in Bangladesh through the strong links with Al-Qaeda (Eliza). In Bangladesh, some extremist organizations maintain strong affiliation with their central networks. For instance, JMB and HUJI (B) have strong connection with Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Policy Research Group, 2009). The members of these organizations are alleged of taking both financial support and training logistics from Taliban and later on, these trainees practice and run subversive operations. Even though, it seems quite difficult to prove if there is any deliberate foreign transportation of arms and ammunitions to the hands of Bangladesh extremist networks, but it is strongly proved that the raw materials to manufacture Improvised Explosives Devices (IED) are found as Indian origin. India has biggest legal export houses to provide manufacturing explosives to the world. These commercial houses sometimes fall vulnerable to illegal smuggling quarters where closest neighbor, Bangladeshi extremist groups avail such explosives so secretly. Non-state actors, either 'Indian Mafia' or 'Indian militant Islamist groups' export these smuggled explosives and weaponry to their Bangladeshi counterparts (*The Indian Express*, 2014).

FORMS OF EXTREMISM IN BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, two types of extremist organizations are predominant based on ideological linkage; Islamist and leftist. Islamist groups exist throughout the country while leftists are active in some particular locations and at present, they have mostly merged themselves to mainstreaming political parties and started to indoctrinate leftists' ideologies to major parties. Awami League (AL) contains a dogmatic leftist leaning syndicate at its core policy level. On the other hand, right wing and religion-based political parties exist in Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led 20-party alliance. Unlike leftist parties, Islamist extremist groups exist as their style of underground operations outside mainstream politics and moderate religious parties sustain their differences in 20-party alliance.

Islamic Extremist: From time immemorial, as stated earlier in the literature review, riverine Bengalis contain peaceful philosophy in their way of living. Therefore, Islamist extremism appears in Bangladesh as a very recent phenomenon. As repeated, the origin of the Islamist militancy can be traced back to the late 1980s when some Bangladeshis went to Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet Union. These afghan veterans returned to Bangladesh with necessary training in using arms and making bomb and with the ideological motivation for Jihadism. With a view to furthering their motives, they constructed Madrasas (Islamic seminaries) and spread their ideologies among large number of citizens. Currently, there are as many as 70 Islamist organizations in the country. Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Report 2011, Planning Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh). Among them six are reported as more active in pursuing their agenda. These include: (i) Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJIB); (ii) JamaatulMujahideen Bangladesh (JMB); (iii)Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB); (iv) Hizb-ur-Tahrir; (v) Allar Dal; and (vi) HizbutTowhid.

Leftist Extremist: After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, particularly, in-between the regimes, from 1971 to 1975, many ultra-left parties grew up in Bangladesh. They followed moist ideologies (Chinese line of people's war), which spread from the villages into towns and were marked by lightning strikes, bomb attacks, destroying constructions, targeted assassinations and seizures of public building and so many subversive and anti-state operations. Among many factions, the most powerful and well-armed leftist organization in recent time are: (i) PurbaBanglar Communist Parties (PBCP); (ii) Red Flag; (iii) GonoMuktiFouz (GMF); (iv) Biplobi Communist Party (BCP); (v) Sarbahara Party; (vi) Janajuddho; (vii) GonoBahini; and (viii) MuktiBahini.

15 Leftist-linked fatalities were recorded in 2012.In 2011, there were 24 leftist-linkedfatalities, all of militants; and 50 killings, including 46 militants, three Security Forces (SFs) and one civilian in 2010 (South Asia Terrorism Portal, Bangladesh Assessment, 2013).

Recent profiles of extremist groups:Beneath the recent violent political activism (bombing, killing, arson and vandalism) of mainstream religion-based parties alongside prime opposition, other Islamist forces, classified as banned militant groups, take the advantages of political deadlock by controversial national election in early 2014.

- *Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT):* So far found, most

militant Islamist group is Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) based on the way the group motivates larger youth community. On August 18, 2013, ABT head, Mufti JasimuddinRahmani was arrested for his alleged connection of propagating Jihadism into Muslim youths to carry out brutal operations to establish an Islamic state.

As infiltrated of Jihadist ideology, ABT's IT expert, RajibKarim was sentenced a term of 30-year imprisonment on terror charges in UK in 2011. In the same year, another indoctrinated 22-year old Bangladeshi youth, Nafis, who presently enjoy 30 years of imprisonment in the US for his accused plotting to bomb the US Federal Reserve Bank in New York. Moreover, ABT discipline also include 5 North South University (NSU) students who killed self-prefaced 'infidel' blogger, Rajib on February 15, 2013, and a BUET student Mesbahuddin was also allegedly hacked to death on April, 9 of the year. In the absence of ABT head, ex-major Ziaul (a fugitive since 2011 for his failed attempts of coup) run the secret network today. Besides, the organization has international networks. Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) sustains its strong linkage with its counterpart in Pakistan and Al-Qaeda in Yemen (Ilahi, 2014). ABT's updated website till today renders lectures, video clips and sermons urging Muslim youths towards all-out Jihad, to kill people who are against Sharia law, destroy state-structure to establish Islamic state in Bangladesh. The website contains materials and documents showing tips about how to make bomb using available materials around, post sympathetic commentary or speeches on Shaheed Jihadists home and abroad, contains Al-Qaeda materials and URL links. Website hits, page views of blog and social media visitors (likes, comments and shares) count growing number on every day going on.

- *HizbutTahrir (HT):*HT, another banned Islamist organization also increase rapidly through its diverse tactics of occasional campaign and smart online activism. Its blocked website resumes again with more persuasive materials uploaded for tender youth folk. As law enforcers and intelligent networks monitoring HT activities, the organization goes covert with occasional demonstrations in public. But, it continues its operations through online campaigning, posters handing, leaflets distributions, and occasional quick rallies challenging today's secularism and very foundation of democracy and structure of the country. It alleges two major alliance—Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) making the country slave to the big power conspiracy, Indo-US-Israeli alliance. HT also urges the military actors to dethrone Khaleda-Hasina's prolonged leadership and help to establish a government run by true Muslims.

  Unlike many Islamist extremist groups who recruits half-educated, unemployed youth from lower middle class of rural areas, HT seems to be very strategic in terms of recruiting its cadres from educated urban youths and higher-educated professionals of economically affluent families who study mainly in English medium schools and standard private universities. Many of these youth grow up in an environment of detachment from Bangladeshi history and traditions and the sense of rich cultural diversity. Taking the scopes, HT portrays a revisionist and disfigured culture before these tender and empty youths. Their number may be minor but, they result in significant impacts on the society.
- *Hefazat-e-Islam:*Most recently, a sociopolitical extremist group appeared in the scene in 2013 with a swift emergence since its formation in 2011. This Quomi Madrasa-based Islamist group was formed against government's two policies—(i) entitling women's equal rights in inheritance law and (ii) curricular reformation of Quomi madrasa syllabus.

  Number of bloggers and pro-liberation war youth communities, tens of thousands in number gathered in capital's Shahbagh Square protesting mainly a court verdict of lifetime imprisonment to KadderMolla, who was accused of war crimes committed back in 1971. Different rightist-backed newspaper covered news as they found anti-Islamist components in the months' long seat-in demonstration of bloggers. Hefazat spread these issues to general people through newspaper like 'Daily Amar Desh' etc.

  Taking advantage of public sentiments, Hefazat in May 05, 2013, emerged with 13-point demand in an assemblage of nearly half a million of gatherings, mainly Madrasa students and sympathizers in capital's Shapla square, Motijheel, which is nation's

commercial capital. Among the demands, it includes adopting blasphemy law with the provision of death penalty, Scrapping women rights laws, implementing proposed education policy, declaring Ahmadiya community as non-Muslims, restricting upon Cristian missionaries, dismantling scripture in public places and so on (Ilahi, 2014).

Inter-city vehicles linking towards Dhaka were ordered stop moving bringing Hefazat attendees for law and order security but, the demonstrators started joining on foot from backward and farthest corner of the country. City dwellers remained indoor. With the passage of time, the sit-in demonstration grew up to violence and the uncontrolled situation forced the government to reestablish law and order to be prevailed over the entire city through dispatching Hefazat's sit-in.

Swift and comprehensive rise of Hefazat revaluate considerations of political elites who think impoverished and neglected student of Islamic seminary cannot for bigger political upheaval which Hefazat proved otherwise.

TERROR FINANCING

Financial sources of terrorists have been identified as follows;

Illegal Business and Terrorism: like elsewhere in the world, extremist and militant organizations in Bangladesh, arrange funds from various sources. Some reports claim that major funding for leftist organizations come from two sources; (i) the illegal trade of products like— small arms, narcotics and foreign currencies and (ii) terrorist activities such as— extortion, robbery, and kidnapping. The country's close proximity with India has also made it an ideal transit for smuggling of fake currencies and other contraband items. The terror-criminal networks operating from Bangladesh have a considerable stake in this operation.

Hundi/hawala: According to the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister engineer KhandakerMosharrafHossain, the amount of remittance sent by expatriates through Hundi system stood at 49% (The NatunBarta, 2013). Avoiding bank transaction and legal documentation, the international terrorist quarters transmit currencies through Hundi/hawala.

Funding from Bangladeshi Diaspora: Of a large number of Bangladeshis living abroad, mostly in UK, a small section among them help these fanatical groups with money and support. It is suspected that part of the foreign remittances from the Bangladeshi workers living in Gulf and other countries could be part of the terrorist financial pipeline. JMB was reported to have around 3000 active sympathizers across the globe who donated part of their earnings to the militant cause. An Indian money launderer monthly made a black transaction worthy of 50, 000 BDT (Bhattacharjee, 2010).

International financing: International Islamic NGOs which are banned as linked to terror financing, are still supposed to be running functions in Bangladesh. Former Finance Minister SaifurRahman stated that number of bank accounts is set under comprehensive investigation. These South Asian (Pakistan etc) and Middle-eastern (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Libya etc) NGOs include Al Harmain Islamic Foundation (AHIF), Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS), and Benevolence Society are strongly alleged basing their links directly with extremist groups in the country. Moreover, they legalize the donation (as received to finance the impoverished families) for their organizational usage in the name of god (Sharma, 2012).

In 2006, two RIHS officials (a Sudanese and a Yemeni) were deported to respective countries as they channelized over USD 700,000 to local and foreign terrorists organizations. After proving this terror-financing linkage, RIHS was forced to close all of its operations in the country. Even, RIHS account in Pakistan was sealed suspecting its Al-Qaeda financing. Another Islamic NGO AHIF activities were banned under much US pressure alleging for 9/11 Al-Qaeda funding (Sharma, 2012).

Expatriate Bangladeshi community, settled in Middle East, Europe, and USA regularly funds (mostly through traditional hundi transaction) militant organizations in Bangladesh, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM ShahidulHaque. JMB chief SaidurRahman provided statement that International Islamic Front (IIF) of Bin Laden regularly offered financial aid to JMB and HUJI-B (pro Al-Qaeda outfits in Bangladesh) as part of IIF's global financial policy. During countrywide bomb blast in 2005, IIF provided huge amount to carry out such anti-state bombings. Moreover, JMB also received (may still continue) regular finance from 20 local and international organizations some include—World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) based in Saudi Arabia and Rabeta-Al-Alam-Al-Islami (RAI), Islamic Federation of Islamic Organizations and Islamic World Committee based in Kuwait,

Charitable Society based in Qatar, Muslim Aid based in UK. Even in 2008, two Pakistani militant leader—Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim and Sajed-ur-Rahman channeled US$ 42 million to Bangladesh through Hawala process (Sharma, 2012).

COUNTER-TERRORISM MEASURES

Government commitment in combating terrorism: National and regional leaders have shown failure to address the underlying basic causes—embedded in iniquitous socio-economic and geopolitical settings. However, Bangladesh has succeeded some steps addressing growing trends of terrorism, especially the present government, sworn in power in 2009 which initiated some tough measures to prove that Bangladesh will not be used as safe haven for national and transnational terrorists.

The government immediately formed a 17-member 'National Committee on Militancy Resistance and Prevention' under Ministry of Home Affairs in early 2009 (Center for research and Information, 2014). In order to tackle extremism, the committee among other, is mobilizing public opinion public opinion against such activities. Immediately the government banned some leading terrorist parties that include Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HUJI-B), Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT), Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB),and Shahadat-e-Al Hikma. The government vows to ban further Islamist groups as listed by the UN Security Council Committee. Moreover, the current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina set an eight-member 'National Committee for Intelligence Coordination under her supervision (Center for research and Information, 2014).

Legislative measurement against terrorism: In 2009, marking milestone in fighting terrorism, the government adopted 'Anti-Terrorism Act 2009 in line with UN action Plan on Counter-Terrorism Strategies and other resolutions. As amended in 2013, the courts were entitled to take audio files, video clips and still photographs uploaded in social media as evidences. Judging the intensity of terrorist activities, the court may sentence capital punishment and financial penalties for subversive operations (Center for research and Information, 2014).

Countering terror financing: Terrorism financing at home and abroad threats the total security architecture in the country, sometimes it turns more significant for it regional implications.

In 2012, the government enacted the Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012 as first provision in its kind. The central bank, The Bangladesh Bank has been vested upon to form effective measures to check terror financing, which has already initiated a circular to all private and public banks informing the procedures stopping money laundering in terrorism sectors.

In 2013, Bangladesh like other 131 member states secured its membership in Egmont group, a global organization dedicated to combating financial crimes and money laundering in terrorism. Bangladesh also sustains its membership in 41-member organization of 'Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering'. Recognizing Bangladesh's successes in combating terrorism financing in 2014's February, the Financial Action task Force omitted Bangladesh's name from their 'Grey List' (The 2005 CIA World Factbook, 2008).

Comprehensive Social Measures: The government in 2010 formed anti-militancy National Reduction Policy which put much emphasis on existing madrasa curriculum, a typical religious school accused of producing militant students as taught fundamentalist literature and misrepresented scriptures.

The Ministry of Education includes anti extremism chapters in academic text books, even organizing awareness building programs in some particular schools and colleges around the country.

The present secular government initiates an integrated approach including civil society, NGOs and Media community forwarding the anti-terrorism campaigns.

Regional and International Collaboration: In order to ensure enquiries and trial of criminal activities, Bangladesh has adopted the 'Mutual Legal Assistance Act-2012' enabling inter-country cooperation. In addition to, this law enables legal authority to forfeit terrorist's properties and their associated accessories, if foreign countries and anti-terrorist organizations inform evidences of proof Embassy of Bangladesh Washington DC., 2014).

In 2013, India and Bangladesh signed a bilateral extradition treaty breaking down regional terrorists' network in the South Asia. The countries also agreed to implement Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) concerning cross border subversive activities and terrorist acts (*The New Indian Express*, 2011).

In 2013's October, Bangladesh and USA together signed an agreement accelerating counter-terrorism activities in terms of capacity building, information sharing and

comprehensive exchanges in-between enforcement agencies.

CONCLUSION

Extremism transcends religion and region. It threats the globe now. After 9/11, the threats grow more dimensions that are vigorous. Fundamentalism and then extremism grip the South Asia where predominantly Muslim country, Bangladesh suffers dire consequences.

Previously stated, endemic poverty and international funding grow terrorism rapidly. Moreover, in the country, regimes time to time, prefer political Islam for the vote-politics. Here is the advantage that extremists gain to mobilize themselves through mainstream politics. Government whatever any side, should cautiously address the challenges concentrating two things:(i) the government must involve general people and cultural entities in campaigning against extremism and, (ii) government should not adopt any rules and regulations that violate religious rights and should not patronize any quarter who never represent the majority rather, the patronization hurts the feelings of overwhelming mass. Hence, the secular government initiatives may tend to suppress terrorist's rise. As extremism emerges as transnational phenomena, Bangladesh certainly needs to engage shared regional and international cooperation. Law and Intelligent networks should update growing extremist list and should adopt multiple policies analyzing their dynamics.

Economy seems to be blood flow for every organization. Whilst having no visible funding, terrorist groups largely depend upon secret local and international networks, therefore, government immediately needs to bring all the secret transactions under strict monitoring.

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