

Youth on Extremism and Radicalization

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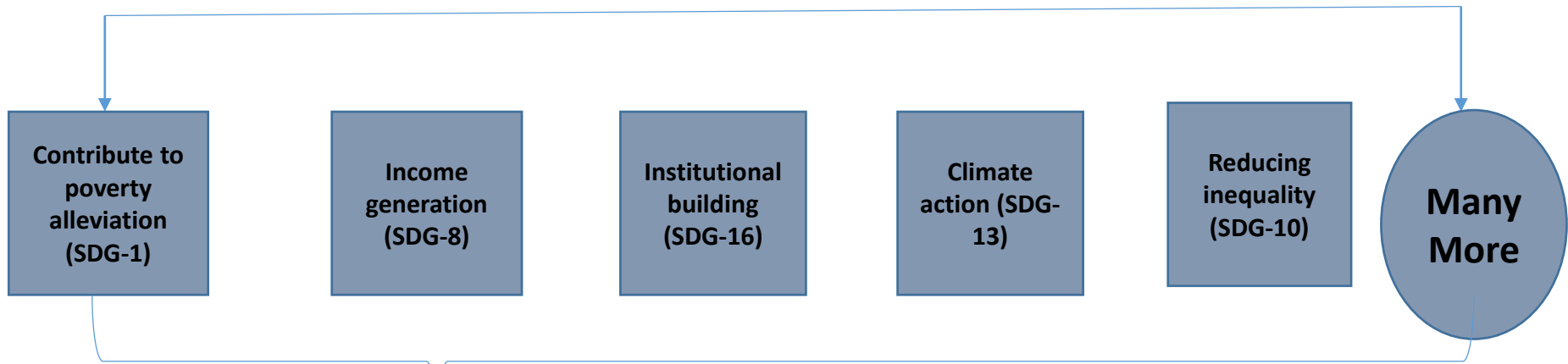


Manusher Jonno
Foundation



Areas of Youth Potentials...

- More than 33 per cent of its total population represents youth aged between 18-35 years.



Demographic dividend

But frustration among the youths for various reasons is running the risk of emerging violent extremism

General Context

- Bangladesh was ranked 31st out of 130 countries on the Global Terrorism Index 2019
- Youth unemployment rate is 8.1% while the national unemployment rate is 4.3%. (Labour Force Survey 2013)
- University Graduates have highest rate of unemployment (16.4%) and the female unemployment rate of the similar group is much higher (23.5%) (BBS 2015)
- Recent incidences of violent extremism also reveal the appalling situation where the involvement of youths was quite apparent
- Unemployed youths are at a greater risk of radicalization. (Bhatia, K., & Ghanem, H. 2017)
- 29.8 per cent young people are not involved in either education, employment or training-(The Daily Star)

History of Youth Extremism in Bangladesh- Push and Pull factors

- **70's decade: The influence of communist extremism/ terrorism, abolishing of class discrimination**
- **80's decade: Islamic fundamentalism and communist extremism/ terrorism**
- **90's decade: Expansion of Islamic fundamentalism and self- revelation of Harkat-ul-jihad, Jamatul Mujahidin Bangladesh, bomb attack in Udichi meeting**
- **2001 – 2010: Weapon using of Islamic fundamentalist, attack in Romna Batamul, attack in the meeting of communist party, attack to progressive writer and cultural activist- 2004, simultaneous 500 serious bomb attack in 63 districts, attack in government institute- 2005**
- **2011 – 2018: Relationship build up/development with global extremist/ terrorist, murder of bloggers, kidnap of accused person, Holy Artisan attack**

= Ideological narratives promoting violent extremist action

= limited sense of purpose

= Inequality and poverty

= Political violence

= Ill motivation from friends and relatives

= The ongoing Rohingya crisis

= Drug abuse

= Use of social media

Ongoing CSO interventions

- Sensitization of youth and relevant stakeholders on Peace, Harmony and Violent Extremism has developed
- Promotion of leadership and positive social engagement
- Campaign and media mobilization for promoting counter narratives
- Mobilize government functionaries to counter VE and Policy enactment
- Strengthen the youth-led forums, platforms, clubs and networks
- Promote youth ideas, arts, culture and sports that contribute in Social cohesion
- Support local NGOs, CBOs, clubs, religious institutions, private and youth organizations
- Form district-based youth platforms and a national networks on preventing youth extremism
- Conduct Research and Advocacy

What MJF done

- ***Torun Alo Project*** of MJF reached 18,000 youth in Cox's Bazar with 10 org including 6 CBO's
- ***SAMPRETI Project of MJF*** reached 53,614 tertiary level educated youths and their affiliates in 225 educational institutes of 6 districts through sensitizing the youth on PVE
- **MotherSchools Project** of MJF covered number of mothers on Parenting for Peace campaign and each of them are acting as a change agent in their community
- **13 partner NGOs** of MJF are implementing Youth and Social Cohesion Project in 5 city corporations and 9 districts covering 22 Upazilas where 88000 youth are targeted to be an active citizen

What are the challenges???

- **Communities are not ready to discuss extremism and radicalization issues**
- **The youth feel labelled as extremist**
- **Conservative mind-set and political influence in few geographic locations**
- **Education institutions hesitate to allow PVE related interventions**
- **Less interest to the youth group in involving active citizenship, leadership and volunteerism activities**

Gaps in Tackling Violent Extremism

- **Lack of understanding on Extremism**
- **Relationship gap within the family**
- **Feeling isolation and exclusion from the society**
- **Limited scope to participate in social platform, sports and extra-curricular options**
- **Lack of proper religious interpretation**
- **Frustration in unemployment**

Recommendations

- **A National Plan of Action needs to be developed on PVE.**
- **A national level platform should be formed with government agencies, donors, civil society organizations, think-tanks, academicians and youth representatives.**
- **Gateway monitoring should be strengthened in response to the continuous radical content through social media.**
- **In addressing violent extremism, the institutions relevant to preventing or countering should be more responsive**
- **Government should articulate the progress of SDG Goal-16 in its next VNR.**
- **The government should increase budgetary allocation for P/CVE.**

Thank you very much for your patient hearing