

The confluence of Societal Dogmas and Extremist (Religious) Ideologies: A Case Study of Male Youth Involved in Violent Extremism in Sargodha and Jhang, Punjab

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Abstract : South-Asian societies elicit a male-dominant hierarchy, socio-economically and politico-religiously. The aim of the study was to examine the contribution of gender to violent extremism in order to devise means for its control in Pakistan. A qualitative case study based on interviews was conducted of de-radicalized former militants who were affiliated to militant organizations such as Sipah Sahaba Pakistan, Lashkare Jhangvi, Lashkare Taibah, and Jaishe Mohammad, and who resided in Sargodha and Jhang, cities of the Punjab. The study exuded three main findings: first, gender alone was insufficient to motivate a male youth to resort to violent extremism; second, gender segregation made a male youth more vulnerable to an extremist ideology; and third, male gender was more prone to the influence of an extremist misguided religious ideology that pandered to male chauvinistic (societal dogmas constructing a male identity) needs and offered a male youth an opportunity to reinforce male dominance in society. The conclusion drawn was that the confluence of societal dogmas and extremist (religious) ideologies offered the major resistance against preventing violent extremism and, without dealing with both of them simultaneously, the tendency in male youth to resorting to violent extremism could not be dissipated.

Keywords : violent extremism, countering violent extremism, preventing violent extremism, youth

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