Pyramid of Deradicalization: Causes and Possible Solutions

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Abstract : Generally, radicalization happens when a person's thinking and behaviour become significantly different from how most of the members of their society and community view social issues and participate politically. Radicalization often leads to violent extremism that refers to the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. Studies on radicalization negate the common myths that someone must be in a group to be radicalised or anyone who experiences radical thoughts is a violent extremist. Moreover, it is erroneous to suggest that radicalisation is always linked to religion. Generally, the common motives of radicalization include ideological, issue-based, ethno-nationalist or separatist underpinning. Moreover, there are number of factors that further augments the chances of someone being radicalised and may choose the path of violent extremism and possibly terrorism. Since there are numbers of factors (and sometimes quite different) contributing in radicalization and violent extremism, it is highly unlikely to devise a single solution that could produce effective outcomes to deal with radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism. The pathway to deradicalization, like the pathway to radicalisation, is different for everyone. Considering the need of having customized deradicalization resolution, this study proposes a multi-tier framework, called 'pyramid of deradicalization' that first help identifying the stage at which an individual could be on the radicalization pathway and then propose a customize strategy to deal with the respective stage. The first tier (tier 1) addresses broader community and proposes a 'universal approach' aiming to offer community-based design and delivery of educational programs to raise awareness and provide general information on possible factors leading to radicalization and their remedies. The second tier focuses on the members of community who are more vulnerable and are disengaged from the rest of the community. This tier proposes a 'targeted approach' targeting the vulnerable members of the community through early intervention such as providing anonymous help lines where people feel confident and comfortable in seeking help without fearing the disclosure of their identity. The third tier aims to focus on people having clear evidence of moving toward extremism or getting radicalized. The people falls in this tier are believed to be supported through 'interventionist approach'. The interventionist approach advocates the community engagement and community-policing, introducing deradicalization programmes to the targeted individuals and looking after their physical and mental health issues. The fourth and the last tier suggests the strategies to deal with people who are actively breaking the law. 'Enforcement approach' suggests various approaches such as strong law enforcement, fairness and accuracy in reporting radicalization events, unbiased treatment by law based on gender, race, nationality or religion and strengthen the family connections.It is anticipated that the operationalization of the proposed framework ('pyramid of deradicalization') would help in categorising people considering their tendency to become radicalized and then offer an appropriate strategy to make them valuable and peaceful members of the community.