

Advanced Practices on Preventing and Combating Extremism and Radicalism: Experiences of Uzbekistan and Foreign Countries

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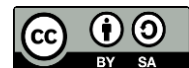
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Abstract. The article analyzes the experience of Uzbekistan and foreign countries in preventing and fighting against extremism and radicalism. This research uses a library method. In particular, the fact that the Islamic world was the first to face the problem of religious extremism and terrorism, the process of spreading radical ideas in Muslim countries at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, actions related to religious extremism and terrorism that occurred in the regions, and the implementation of measures to eliminate this problem by governments were studied. The scale of activity and aggression of radical religious groups and religious extremist forces is highlighted as a threat not only to national and regional security, but also to global peace and stability. The practice of social and religious rehabilitation of persons affected by destructive ideologies due to religious grounds has been studied. It is justified that the fight against religious extremism, radicalism and terrorism, that is, in the fight against radical religious extremist groups, it is equally necessary for all existing countries to study foreign experience, learn their lessons and implement them.

Keywords: religious extremism, terrorism, radicalization, deradicalization, religious rehabilitation, Islamic education, destructive ideas.



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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary realities demonstrate that sustainable social development and progress can only be ensured through consistent efforts to counter radicalism, violence, and extremism. As noted by scholars, "in the late twentieth century, groups operating under the guidance of religion, while exploiting the green banner of Islam, acted in such a manner that it became difficult to quickly recognize emerging waves of radicalization".

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, due to a combination of internal and external factors, processes of politicization and radicalization of Islam were observed in several countries. The problem of countering radicalism, violence, and extremism has thus become not only a pressing issue for Uzbekistan or Central Asia, but also one of the most urgent challenges facing the entire Muslim world.

Previous studies have examined the phenomenon of radicalization from various perspectives, including socio-political, ideological, and educational dimensions. Researchers in the field of Political Science emphasize that weak governance, social inequality, and identity crises often create fertile ground for extremist ideologies. Meanwhile, studies in Religious Studies highlight the misinterpretation of religious teachings as a key factor contributing to radical movements. In addition, scholars in Sociology point out that globalization and digital communication have accelerated the spread of extremist narratives, particularly among youth. Despite these extensive studies, there remains a need for a more integrated approach that combines educational, cultural, and policy-based strategies in preventing radicalization.

This article analyzes the experience of Uzbekistan and foreign countries in preventing and fighting against extremism and radicalism.

RESEARCH METHOD

Mazkur tadqiqot sifat (kvalitativ) tavsifiy yondashuv asosida olib borildi. Ushbu yondashuvning tanlanishi didaktik o'yinlarning pedagogik jarayondagi o'rni, ularning ta'lim samaradorligiga ta'siri hamda talabalar kompetensiyalarini rivojlantirishdagi ahamiyatini chuqur tahlil qilish zarurati bilan izohlanadi.

Tadqiqot turi sifatida aralash yondashuv elementlariga ega bo'lgan tajriba-sinov (eksperimental) tadqiqot qo'llanildi. Tadqiqot jarayonida pedagogika yo'nalishi talabalari ishtirok etib, ular orasida didaktik o'yinlardan foydalanilgan va an'anaviy usullar qo'llangan guruhlar o'rtasida taqqoslash amalga oshirildi.

Ma'lumotlar yig'ishda bir nechta usullardan foydalanildi. Jumladan, kuzatish, so'rovnomalar, intervyu hamda test sinovlari orqali talabalar faolligi, motivatsiyasi va o'zlashtirish darajasi o'rganildi. Shuningdek, o'quv jarayonida qo'llanilgan didaktik o'yinlarning samaradorligini aniqlash maqsadida dars jarayonlari muntazam ravishda monitoring qilindi.

Tadqiqotning nazariy asoslarini shakllantirishda Pedagogika, Ta'lim texnologiyalari va Ta'lim psixologiyasi sohalariga oid ilmiy manbalar tahlil qilindi. Bu esa didaktik o'yinlarning nazariy hamda amaliy jihatlarini kompleks yoritishga imkon berdi.

Olingan ma'lumotlar kontent tahlil va qiyosiy tahlil usullari yordamida qayta ishlanib, natijalar umumlashtirildi. Tahlil jarayonida talabalar motivatsiyasining o'zgarishi, dars jarayonidagi faollik darajasi hamda bilimlarni o'zlashtirish ko'rsatkichlari asosiy mezon sifatida belgilandi.

Mazkur metodologiya orqali didaktik o'yinlarning ta'lim jarayonidagi samaradorligi, ularning pedagogik kompetensiyalarni rivojlantirishdagi o'rni hamda o'qitish texnologiyalarini takomillashtirishdagi ahamiyati ilmiy asosda yoritib berildi.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The core ideas of British radicalism were shaped under the influence of utilitarian theorists such as I. Bentham and J. S. Mill. In the research of Russian scholar S. Samoilov, radicalism is described not as an ideology, but rather as a model of behavior.

Scholar Y. Yakhyoev differentiates radicalism into two main directions: a constructive form oriented toward progressive revolutionary development, and a destructive form promoting conservative disruption. The author emphasizes that both directions ultimately aim at dismantling the existing system of governance and the foundational structures of society.

In countering violent radicalism, different states have developed distinct approaches and accumulated practical experience. Below, these national practices and models are subjected to comparative analysis.

One of the states actively engaged in countering radicalization is Saudi Arabia. Located on the Arabian Peninsula, this country—despite being the center of Islam and characterized by a relatively conservative social structure—has accumulated substantial experience in preventing and combating radicalization, which makes it a subject of particular academic interest.

In recent years, amid the growing attempts by radical forces to disseminate their ideas more widely via the Internet and to increase the number of their supporters through online platforms, the Saudi government has intensified preventive measures aimed at countering radicalization within society, particularly among youth. With the support of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Islamic scholars and religious authorities engage directly with individuals exposed to radical ideas. Before entering into debates or online dialogues, these scholars rely on prior experience gained through interactions with individuals serving prison sentences for radical views. In this context, internet users are invited to clarify and justify their interpretations of Qur'anic texts, allowing scholars to provide theological explanations and corrections [2].

Such written exchanges are subsequently published on online platforms and used as educational material to inform a broader audience about the non-violent nature of Islam and its core principles. Although individuals of different age groups may be affected by radicalization processes, adolescents and young people are generally considered the most vulnerable group due to their search for identity, sense of belonging, and susceptibility to violent extremism and terrorist radicalization ideologies.

In implementing these preventive practices, Saudi Arabia also draws upon the experience of several Western European countries. These approaches include the systematic study of radicalization processes and, based on this analysis, the active engagement of at-risk youth in extracurricular activities such as sports, tourism, secular education, space sciences, and volunteer initiatives. Examples include visits to elderly care facilities, cleaning mosques and public spaces, organizing competitions, providing labor and educational assistance, and supporting parents. A significant portion of these activities is carried out in cooperation with youth organizations.

In parallel, the Media Advisory Committee under the Ministry of Interior of Saudi Arabia produces and distributes numerous educational materials and brochures for schools and mosques. The committee's primary mission is to strengthen educational and awareness-raising activities among young people. Through mass media and other information channels, the main cause of youth susceptibility to extremist influence is identified as an incorrect or superficial understanding of Islam.

At the same time, the government has strengthened political and legal measures against radicalization. Many radical individuals are subjected to criminal prosecution, and in extreme cases, capital punishment may be imposed as a last-resort measure for grave offenses. However, it has become widely acknowledged within the country that the most effective means of countering radicalization lies in ideological confrontation rather than coercive measures alone.

As part of ideological countermeasures, interviews with former radicals who have renounced their previous beliefs, documentation of crimes committed by militants in Syria and other countries, and exposure of immoral practices such as alcohol and drug abuse associated with extremist groups are regularly broadcast.

These efforts are considered effective tools in countering violent extremism and are implemented on a sustained basis [3].

Another country with extensive experience in combating violent extremism and a steadily advancing technological capacity is the Republic of Turkey, which possesses a long and complex history of countering radical movements. Contemporary Turkey is frequently cited as a vivid example of effective practices in countering radicalization.

For nearly two decades, Turkey has been governed by the Justice and Development Party (AKP), whose ideological foundation combines moderate Islamic values with the concept of “conservative democracy.” Despite this, the country has demonstrated a considerable capacity to effectively counter radicalization and violence. One of the key reasons for this resilience lies in the balanced relationship that has evolved between Islam and secularism within Turkish society.

The coexistence of diverse political views, as well as the historical process of reconciliation between religious and secular principles, has spanned nearly a century in Turkey. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, the state was transformed into a fully secular society through a resolute struggle against extremist forces. However, the international processes associated with the Islamic revival of the 1980s also influenced Turkey [4].

Nevertheless, due to the broad promotion of secularism, science, and modernity, as well as the emphasis on strengthening national identity—often framed around the notion of the “great Turkish nation”—particularly among youth, Turkey has retained its ability to effectively counter religious extremism. Although disagreements persist between proponents of religious and secular systems, Turkey’s own modernization projects, liberal social practices, democratic governance, and the development of civil institutions constitute the core of its contemporary political processes.

Another dimension of violence in Turkey manifests in the sphere of interethnic relations. In particular, the struggle of segments of the Kurdish population for independence has periodically led to escalations of violence driven by nationalism and separatist ideologies. Although the Turkish state has often relied on military measures to address these challenges, significant ideological efforts have also been directed toward maintaining balance and stability in interethnic relations.

Today, the criteria and boundaries of a secular society remain among the most pressing issues in Turkey. At the same time, Turkish society has developed a strong form of social immunity against violence in all its manifestations. This resilience is largely attributable to the continuous modernization of the education system, the relatively high level of public awareness and literacy, ongoing integration processes with Europe, and the coexistence and cooperation of diverse ethnic groups and religious confessions within the country.

Another state significantly affected by extremism and violence is Pakistan. As one of the most populous Muslim-majority countries in the world, Pakistan has in recent decades suffered extensively from Islamic extremism and radicalization. Having gained independence from Britain in the mid-twentieth century and subsequently experienced a tragic partition with India, Pakistan has endured numerous hardships throughout its history [5].

Despite these challenges, Pakistan possesses substantial potential for democratic development. Today, it is a country that continues to resist violence, maintains effective

cooperation with Western states, and, most importantly, preserves the foundations of modern governance.

One of the distinctive factors contributing to Pakistan's resilience lies in its Constitution. Drafted at a time when Islamist influence was relatively limited, the Constitution reflects the intellectual contributions of prominent figures who had lived in Europe and personally witnessed global progress and achievements. This factor alone has provided a significant legal foundation for countering violence and extremism in the country.

At the same time, it is essential to acknowledge the crucial role played by anti-radical forces, political leaders, parties, and civil society organizations in resisting radicalization within Pakistan.

Today, it should be acknowledged that the country is pursuing an uncompromising policy against Islamic radical forces and, in this regard, relies on the experiences of many other states. Particular emphasis is placed on supporting modern education as a key instrument for overcoming interethnic tensions—primarily between Punjabis and Pashtuns—which remain a significant source of instability. At the same time, the country continues to suffer extensively from another dimension of violence, namely sectarian conflicts between Sunni and Shi'a communities. Persistent confrontations—often taking violent and bloody forms, including bombings in places of worship, mutual hostility, and the involvement of radicalized youth in dangerous activities—pose serious threats to national stability. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that the gradual consolidation of democratic values has enabled the state to counter these challenges with a certain degree of effectiveness.

Pakistan has chosen a path of uncompromising struggle against violence and extremism, increasingly intensifying educational and ideological efforts while simultaneously promoting the role of women in the country's socio-political and economic life as a means of countering radicalism. It is noteworthy that Pakistan has previously had a female Prime Minister, and even today women occupy a number of key positions within the state. Through their active participation, significant blows have been dealt to radical views prevalent in society. Moreover, a substantial number of young people pursue education abroad—particularly in developed Western countries—and upon completing their studies return to Pakistan. These individuals increasingly opt not for radicalism but for a path of intellectual and educational development, assume positions within state institutions, and actively promote secularism and technological progress as essential factors of national advancement. This approach is widely recognized as an important and effective dimension of Pakistan's strategy to combat violent extremism.

Another major Muslim country that has suffered considerably from violent extremism is Indonesia, which today has become a frequent target of radical groups. The complexity of the situation is обусловлена by the country's demographic scale—over 250 million people, the majority of whom profess Islam—as well as by the influence of numerous extremist forces that promote radicalization. In order to prevent the radicalization of Islam, the Indonesian government, special services, security structures, the modern Muslim education system, and major Islamic mass organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama are engaged in coordinated and effective efforts. Extensive outreach and awareness campaigns are conducted, emphasizing Islam's traditions of enlightenment, education, and respect for knowledge.

On the one hand, the country's elite actively counters radicalization by promoting historical and cultural traditions as a means of strengthening national resilience. On the other hand, the entire state apparatus—including the armed forces—becomes directly

involved whenever radicalization is assessed as posing a potential threat to national and societal security, ensuring that any such activities are decisively curtailed. As emphasized above, prominent and authoritative Muslim communities as well as religious-educational organizations are actively engaged in counter-radicalization processes. Through their participation, systematic methods and practical mechanisms for combating radicalism have been developed and implemented. In particular, influential imams and Islamic scholars play a significant role in expanding informational and scholarly activities aimed at preventing radicalization[12].

At the same time, universities of Islam and other religious and secular educational institutions play an active role in countering radicalization. Educational and cultural initiatives undertaken by the country's cultural and scientific elite not only serve to enlighten the Muslim population but also promote political and civic culture. These initiatives consistently emphasize to the Muslim community that the achievements of Western states and societies are primarily rooted in scientific and educational progress, and such messages are widely disseminated.

In the national policy framework, key components include drawing lessons from history, fostering national and secular capacities, ensuring social cohesion, exposing the destructive nature of radicalism, and promoting educational campaigns against violence. These elements form the socio-ideological foundation of the country's counter-radicalization strategy.

Modern Indonesia is recognized as a state that has developed an effective and practical mechanism to prevent the radicalization of Islam within its population. This mechanism primarily includes modern education, specific directions in Islamic upbringing, respect for teachers, fostering national identity and cultural pride, and related approaches.

Another state with its own voice, authority, and unique trajectory of development in the Islamic world is Malaysia. Culturally, nationally, and regionally close to Indonesia, Malaysia is also one of the countries most affected by violent extremism and radicalization. The country has implemented three general programs, each of which requires effective countermeasures against radicalization and violence:

Comprehensive programs aimed at transforming the ideology and behavior of identified extremists and dismantling terrorist structures. Although these programs are complex and costly, their success is assured.

Targeted programs focused on working individually with people, offering them guidance to change their ideology and behavior.

Pragmatic programs whose main goal is behavioral change among terrorists or radicals; despite the complexity, they have a high probability of producing measurable results.

In Malaysia, special programs designed to influence extremists are long-term, lasting at least three years, and involve strict disciplinary measures against those who resist or refuse to comply. Some aspects of these practices, methods, and technologies have been adapted from Indonesia, Singapore, and China. In particular, these programs emphasize religious, educational, and psychological interventions, as well as active engagement with the social environment of extremists. For example, financial assistance is provided to the families of extremists to mitigate hardship and influence behavior. Free education and vocational training are offered to former extremists.

It is particularly noteworthy that former prisoners who have renounced extremist and radical ideologies are recruited as volunteers for preventive programs and are offered certain social incentives. Counter-radicalization measures for imprisoned extremists are implemented on two levels: individual and communal. These interventions

consist of three main components: religious-educational, psychological, and medical activities aimed at helping former prisoners reintegrate into society after serving their sentences.

Through these measures, the concept of creating “New Citizens” for society emerges, representing a holistic approach to fostering civic-mindedness, resilience to extremism, and constructive social engagement.

CONCLUSION

Based on a thorough study and analysis of the experiences of various countries, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen Uzbekistan’s capacity to combat violent extremism, prevent radicalization, and limit the spread of such negative phenomena in society:

Identification of Risk Factors: Determine the conditions and circumstances that contribute to extremist activities or provide fertile ground for radicalization in society.

Promotion of Secular Values Among Youth: Increase the volume of scientific and moral-ethical research that reinforces secular and civic-minded attitudes among young people, and implement the conclusions of such research in practical programs.

Engagement of Religious Authorities: Actively involve respected religious figures and scholars in preventive measures against extremism and radicalization.

Strengthening National Pride: Foster a sense of national pride and identity among youth to enhance societal immunity against violence, extremism, and radical ideologies.

Media and Social Networks: Develop effective methods and mechanisms to disseminate concise, impactful information through mass media and social networks regarding the consequences and causes of radicalization.

Educational Interventions: Implement educational programs targeting groups identified as having radical tendencies or extremist behaviors, including exposure to classical and contemporary global literature to deepen understanding, with mandatory engagement where necessary.

Clarifying Misconceptions About Islam: Produce scientific and educational materials demonstrating that radicalism and violent extremism do not represent the true essence of Islam, but instead perpetuate ignorance, social stagnation, and hinder development. Disseminate these materials through various media to reach targeted audiences.

International Cooperation: Establish platforms for experience-sharing with countries that have achieved significant success in combating radicalism and violent extremism, and involve their specialists in specific targeted programs and activities.

These recommendations aim to create a holistic approach, combining educational, cultural, psychological, and policy-based measures to prevent radicalization, mitigate extremist threats, and strengthen social cohesion in Uzbekistan.

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