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“Empowering Women to Counter Religious Radicalisation and Maintain Communal Harmony”

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Abstract

In recent months the world has seen a frightening rise in terror attacks. Most of these attacks have been ‘lone wolf’ ones, which require little resource, little technology, organizing and planning. That makes them more difficult to counter and prevent. Religious radicalization, including self-radicalization plays a pivotal role in such attacks.

Radicalism cannot and should not be countered only with intelligence, police and military means. According to UNESCO: “It is not enough to counter violent extremism – we need to prevent it, and this calls for forms of ‘soft power’, to prevent a threat driven by distorted interpretations of culture, hatred, and ignorance. No one is born a violent extremist – they are made and fueled. Disarming the process of radicalization must begin with human rights and the rule of law, with dialogue across all boundary lines, by empowering all young women and men, and by starting as early as possible, on the benches of schools.

As half of the population in society, women have a pivotal role to play in countering religious radicalism. Women, of course, can and do play diverse roles in relation to violent extremism. Women, therefore, can play a powerful role in preventing religious radicalism. As home makers women shape the mental horizons of their children and are in the best position to spot signs of radicalization serve as preventers of violent extremism: They can render precious help to law enforcement and security officials. However, till recently the role of women in countering religious radicalization and in countering violent extremism was not given the attention it deserved. In India the gender dimensions of countering religious radicalization continues to receive scant attention. Yet, India has also seen its share of religious radicalization and violent extremism that it spawns.

The lecture and discussion aims to deliberate and understand the important role that women play and the potential women have to counter religious radicalization.

Bio

Aditi Bhaduri is an independent journalist and political analyst, specializing on international affairs and foreign policy, with special focus on Central and West Asia. She has been writing for the Indian and international media and has recently anchored programs for the All India Radio. She has interviewed many eminent personalities – both Indian and foreign. She has contributed to numerous volumes on international affairs, peace, conflict, and gender. She often acts as a consultant to organizations on peace, conflict, foreign policy, gender. Her gender sensitive reporting has won her a number of awards. Currently she is working on a project to counter women’s online radicalization. She has an MA in International Relations from Kiev University and speaks, reads and writes fluent English, Russian, Hindi and Bengali. She divides her time between New Delhi and Kolkata.

Venue: CCMG Video Conference room

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