

Militants' Background: 56pc come from general schools

Finds police HQ survey; 22pc from madrasas, rest from English medium or uneducated



Staff Correspondent

Fifty-six percent of those involved in militant activities have “general education” background, according to a survey by the police headquarters. “We conducted the survey on 250 people, arrested between 2015 and 2017 for their involvement in militancy, and found that most of them have come from general schools,” said Md Moniruzzaman, additional deputy inspector general (intelligence) of police’s Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU).

The initiative, taken recently, revealed that 22 percent of those surveyed had madrasa background, said the additional DIG, also the supervisor of the study.

Moniruzzaman disclosed the findings at a seminar titled “Preventing Terrorism and Extremism Through Community Engagement” at the capital’s Brac University auditorium yesterday. The ATU organised the programme in collaboration with the Community Development for Peace and Brac University.

Among the 250 arrestees, the remaining 22 percent are either uneducated or were students of English-medium schools, he said.

Talking to The Daily Star, the police official said 80 percent of those with religious extremism and terrorism links were radicalised online through various social media platforms, while the rest 20 percent were influenced by their accomplices.

“Besides, the arrestees had different social backgrounds. They did not belong to any particular social group,” he said.

To fight the menace of militancy, Moniruzzaman suggested all-out efforts from families and educational institutions. “If we don’t take immediate steps, we will find ourselves in big trouble,” he said.

He also said the ATU had taken initiatives to arrange youth campaigns and other awareness programmes in schools and colleges and hold meetings with religious leaders for the delivery of sermons against all kinds of violent activities.

“It is a continuous process,” he said.

ATU DIG Didar Ahmed gave the welcome speech at the seminar attended by around 100 students of different schools, colleges, madrasas and universities.

Speaking there, Prof Fuad Hassan Mallick of Brac School of Design described terrorism as a man-made disaster.

Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit, said the media should avoid any language that glorifies terrorists. It should rather focus on the ordeal of the terror-attack victims and their families.

Around 13.45 percent of the country’s people read daily newspapers, 12.4 percent listen to radio, 84 percent watch television and 18 percent people use social media, he said, citing a research.

He also said militants tried to spread three video clips and 90,000 other contents online every day to draw media attention. So the media should be more watchful in this regard, he said.

Mohammad Abul Kashem, additional inspector general of the ATU, said they would try their best to form a militancy-free country with support and cooperation of all.

Earl R Miller, US ambassador to Bangladesh; Penny Morton, acting high commissioner of the Australian High Commission; and Kanbar Hossein Bor, acting high commissioner of the British High Commission, among others, spoke at the seminar.

Stay updated on the go with The Daily Star Android & iOS News App. [Click here to download it for your device.](#)