



DISSERTATION
ON
**“THE ROLE OF FACEBOOK IN FACILITATING CRIMINAL
RADICALISATION: FROM CRIMINOLOGICAL ANALYSIS”**

COURSE TITLE: SUPERVISED DISSERTATION

COURSE CODE: LAW-406

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Date of Submission : 15 December 2025



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Acknowledgement

First, I thank the Almighty, whose mercy and guidance have carried me through this journey. To my mother, the soul of my existence, whose endless love, silent prayers, and countless sacrifices have shaped every part of who I am, no words will ever be enough. This achievement is here as much as mine. To my father, whose quiet strength and constant support have never let me fall, I am forever thankful. I Extend my heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, MS Mashraba Naziat , for her patience and guidance, and to all my respected teachers at East west University for their wisdom and encouragement.

Declaration

I am Liza Begum, bearing student ID: 2020-3-66-015, hereby declare that this thesis paper titled “The role of Facebook in facilitating criminal radicalization : from criminological analysis” was entirely prepared by me under the supervision of Ms.Mashraba Naziat(Lecture , Department of Law , East West University)for my graduation requirement .I further declare that this is my original ,and the content of the thesis paper has not been submitted or published by any journal, newspaper , or article . The content and materials used for this thesis paper are acknowledged duly and recognized in the references and properly cited.

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List of Abbreviations:

ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
BIPSS	-	Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies
CTTC	-	Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime
FBI	-	Federal Bureau of Investigation
DHS	-	Department of Homeland Security
CITRU	-	Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit
GIFT	-	Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism
EU	-	European Union
UK	-	United Kingdom
US	-	United States
UN	-	United Nations
RAB	-	Rapid Action Battalion
MFS	-	Mobile Financial Service
HRW	-	Human Rights Watch
ICG	-	International Crisis Group
ACI	-	Australian Institute of Criminology
PATRIOT Act	-	Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act
BUET	-	Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology
ICT Act	-	Information and Communication Technology Act 2006

Title: “The role of Facebook in facilitating criminal radicalization: from criminological analysis”

Abstract:

In Bangladesh, Facebook facilitates the process of criminal radicalization, according to this study. In other words, they show how extremist groups use Facebook to promote propaganda, recruit young people and mobilize them to act both online and offline. The theories of criminology used in the research are Strain Theory,¹ Theory of Differential Association² and Cyber-Criminology³ which explain the functioning of society and how people are impacted socially and online.

This research examines the workings of Facebook in Bangladesh as an algorithm, echo chamber and loss of fake news hate speech and propaganda. There are many real-world instances of how these elements can influence people. It further explains the ways that youth can be drawn in, influenced and motivated to take action offline after online exposure.⁴ These findings reveal that law enforcement faces difficulties in the online suits and that current methods remain unhelpful. This study also raises questions of ethics on how to safeguard free speech while curbing extremist activities. The study provides a better insight into the occurrence of online radicalization globally through comparison of Bangladesh with other countries.⁵

This study also suggests community awareness programs, building capacity on digital literacy, and improvements in online safety policies as practical measures that can reduce radicalization. The policymakers, police and members of the society can make Facebook a safe place for everybody and restrict the influence of extremists.

¹Robert K Merton, ‘Social Structure and Anomie’ (1938) 3 American Sociological Review 672.paras-37-45

² Edwin H Sutherland, Principles of Criminology (D Appleton-Century Company 1947). paras-24

³David S Wall, ‘Cybercrime: The Transformation of Crime in the Information Age’ (2007) 17(4) Policing and Society 409.

⁴ Time Magazine, ‘How Islamic Extremist Groups Used Facebook for Recruitment’ (2020)

<https://time.com/6072272/facebook-sanatan-sanstha-india/> accessed 25 November 2025.

⁵ Australian Institute of Criminology, Understanding and Preventing Internet-Facilitated Radicalization (AIC 2023)

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi673> accessed 25 November 2025.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction:

In today's world, social media, especially Facebook, has become increasingly popular and important opportunities for communication and networking between people. However, at the same time, radical and extremist groups are using these media to spread their ideology. The prevalence of social media increases the risk of extremism, which in turn increases the process of radicalization and incitement to violence. As a result, the rise of media such as Facebook has created entirely new problems related to offline radicalization and extremism. Van Etten and Etten (2020) have identified radicalization as a process through which individuals gradually adopt extreme attitudes and behaviors, such as supporting violent acts committed by others, creating fear in the general public, or choosing violence as a means of social change.⁶ One of the serious problems facing the world in the 21st century is the growing threat of radicalization, which is driving young people towards violent extremism. The problem is compounded by the increasing use of social media in Bangladesh. Several empirical studies have shown that there is a link between radicalization among university students in the country and that it is mainly due to the influence of the Internet and social media-based channels.⁷ In a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) in 2017, 61% of respondents believed that the Internet is the most powerful medium for inciting youth to radicalization.⁸ The number of Internet users in Bangladesh is currently growing rapidly, and Dhaka city ranks second in the world in terms of Facebook users. In this context, the radicalization and recruitment of youth through social media and the Internet is emerging as a serious threat. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to create a deeper understanding of the online radicalization

⁶ Gøtzsche- Astrup, O, van den Bos, K and Hogg, M, 'Radicalization and Violent Extremism: Perspectives from Research on Group Processes and Intergroup Relations' (2020) <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/1874/409966/1368430220970319.pdf?sequence=1> accessed 28 November, 2025.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), 'Local Drivers and Dynamics of Youth Radicalization in Bangladesh' (2017) p 3 <http://bipss.org.bd/pdf/Local%20Drivers.pdf> accessed November, 2025.

and recruitment process that exists in Bangladesh. It is now imperative to address this problem through a joint initiative of the government, relevant institutions, and society.

1.2 Research questions:

Primary Research Question

1: To what extent does Facebook encourage users, especially youth, to adopt radical ideas, and how can this be understood from a criminological perspective?

Secondary Research Questions

1. Whether Facebook influences young people to adopt radical or extremist ideas, and how criminological theories can explain this process?

2. whether regulating or monitoring content of Facebook can help to reduce radicalization and how criminology can help to attain the goal?

1.3 Research Methodology:

This research will use a qualitative method because the study focuses on understanding and explaining how Facebook can help in criminal radicalization. To complete this study, I have collected both primary and secondary data to make my ideas clear and to check if the findings are correct.

For this research, I will look at laws, policies, case studies, books, journal articles, newspapers, and trustworthy websites. These sources will help me understand how Facebook is being used to spread radical ideas and to explain the topic from a criminology point of view.

1.4 Literature Review

Arraigned studied how social networks, especially Facebook, help spread radical ideas around the world. The research shows that extremist content can quickly reach users and influence their behavior.⁹

However, this study mainly looks at international examples and does not consider Bangladesh's unique social and political context, limiting its local relevance. This study explored how extremist content spreads online and the challenges in controlling harmful material.¹⁰ It shows how online discussions can normalize radical ideas among users. The research does not examine Facebook in Bangladesh or the ways online radicalization may lead to real-world action there. Neumann examined the link between online radicalization and offline violence.¹¹ His findings highlight that social media can encourage extremist behavior. The study does not use criminological theories to explain why individuals become radicalized, nor does it consider Bangladesh's social dynamics. But analyzed how extremist groups use social media for recruitment and propaganda.¹² He identified patterns in network growth and content strategies.

The research focuses on Middle Eastern and Western contexts, leaving Bangladesh-specific dynamics explored This research looked at the social and psychological factors behind online

⁹ Arraigned, K., *The Role of the Internet and Social Media on Radicalization* (National Institute of Justice, 2024) < <https://nij.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/305797.pdf> > accessed 4 November, 2025.

¹⁰ Awan, I., Sutch, H., and Carter, P., *Extremism Online: Analysis of Extremist Material on Social Media* (UK Commission for Countering Extremism, 2019) <<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d8b7bd2e5274a08c8cc0d1b/Awan-Sutch-Carter-Extremism-Online.pdf>> accessed 4 November, 2025.

¹¹ Neumann, P., *The Role of the Internet in Violent Extremism and Terrorism* (International Centre for the Study of Radicalization, 2013) <<https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ICCT-Neumann-The-Role-of-the-Internet-in-Violent-Extremism-and-Terrorism-April-2013.pdf> > accessed 4 November, 2025.

¹² Bunt, G., *Extremist Use of social media: Strategies and Patterns* (Hurst & Company, 2018). paras 45-47

radicalization, emphasizing peer influence and social learning.¹³ The study does not specifically explore Facebook in Bangladesh or how local authorities could prevent radicalisation. Weimann discussed how extremist groups use the internet to recruit and radicalize people.¹⁴ It does not explain the specific mechanisms on Facebook or how criminological theories could help understand radicalization. Conway explored the internet's role in violent extremism and terrorism.¹⁵ The study highlights how online platforms contribute to radicalization. The research does not focus on Facebook's role in Bangladesh or connect theory to local prevention strategies. Tuck examined how algorithms on social media can amplify extremist content, increasing users' exposure to radical ideas.¹⁶ The study is mainly about Western platforms and does not investigate Facebook in Bangladesh. This thesis addresses these gaps by studying how Facebook facilitates criminal radicalization in Bangladesh. Using criminological theories such as Differential Association, Strain, and Routine Activity, it explores how online content translates into offline actions and examines the roles of different actors. The study also aims to propose practical prevention strategies suitable for the local context.

1.5 Scope of Research:

This study investigates the role of Facebook in the radicalization process towards crime in Bangladesh. It examines the actions of youth groups from 2018 to 2024 and tracks their online communication. It does not take into account other social media sites such as Twitter, or Instagram.

¹³ O'Connor, C., and Weatherall, J., *Social Learning and Online Radicalization* (Social Psychological Review, 2020) <<https://www.socialpsychologicalreview.com/articles/10.31389/spr.681>> accessed 4 November, 2025.

¹⁴ Weimann, G., *Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation* (Columbia University Press, 2015).

¹⁵ Conway, M., *Determining the Role of the Internet in Violent Extremism and Terrorism* (Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 2017) <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1157408>> accessed 5 November, 2025.

¹⁶ Tuck, H., *Algorithmic Amplification and Online Radicalization* (Journal of Digital Media & Policy, 2019) <<https://policyreview.info/articles/analysis/recommender-systems-and-amplification-extremist-content>> accessed 5 November, 2025.

1.6 Limitation of the Research:

I faced three main problems in this study.

First, the study is limited in scope using secondary data and a small number of online case studies, they may not reflect the overall situation in Bangladesh. Second, the time and resource constraints limited this to small-sample field surveys or interviews in law enforcement agencies or with individuals who have become radicalized. Third, the study solely looks at Facebook; however, other social media sites like YouTube, Telegram, and TikTok are also important in the radicalization process. Lastly, because online conduct is ever-evolving, the results of this study might require additional updating in the future to account for emerging patterns of online radicalization.

1.7 Chapter outline:

This research is divided into six-chapter Chapter 1 Presents the research background, research questions, methodology, and limitations. Chapter 2 Explains criminological theories such as Strain Theory, Differential Association, and Routine Activity Theory, which help explain the emergence of extremism on Facebook. Chapter 3 Reviews the role of Facebook in promoting extremism, including algorithmic effects, fake news, and a case study on extremism in Bangladesh. Chapter 4 Analyzes how youth are susceptible to extremism, the methods used by extremists, and how the impact that begins online reaches offline. Chapter 5 Discusses challenges for law enforcement agencies, gaps in remediation, and preventive strategies that strike a balance between freedom of expression and crime prevention. Chapter 6 Summarizes the research findings, presents policy recommendations, and highlights the importance of increasing digital literacy and awareness.

Chapter: 2 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

2.1 Introduction to Radicalization in Criminology:

From a criminological perspective, radicalization refers to a process by which an individual or group adopts extreme beliefs or ideologies that can lead to criminal or violent behavior.¹⁷ Criminology does not view radicalization as a purely political or ideological process but rather as a social deviance that can be explained by theories of crime, motivation and social structure.¹⁸

Criminological theories such as strain theory, social learning, differential association, and labeling theory help researchers understand why some individuals engage in extremist activities while others do not under similar circumstances.¹⁹ These theories help explain how behavioral change occurs through personal identity crisis, social deprivation, and exposure to radical networks.²⁰ It has been noted that most radicalization research has placed an excessive emphasis on individual-centered motivations, while neglecting the larger structural, political, and social contexts.²¹ Criminology therefore offers an opportunity to fill this gap, as it is able to examine individual-level and taking society-level analysis together, radicalization is analyzed as part of a larger criminological discourse. This dual perspective not only helps in understanding, but also in developing effective policies for prevention and deradicalization that are not only security-focused but also socially inclusive.

¹⁷ Arun Kundnani, *The Muslims Are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terror* (Verso 2014) paras 1-4

¹⁸ Travis Hirschi, *Causes of Delinquency* (University of California Press 1969) paras 37–40

¹⁹ Ronald L Akers and Robert L Burgess, 'A Differential Association-Reinforcement Theory of Criminal Behavior' (1966) *Social Problems* 14(2) paras- 128.

²⁰ Gabe Mythen, Sandra Walklate and Fatima Khan, 'I'm a Muslim, But I'm Not a Terrorist Victimization, Risky Identities and the Performance of Safety' (2017) *British Journal of Criminology* 57(6) 1279.

²¹ Lasse Lindekilde, 'Radicalization Research: From Theory to Practice' (2012) *Peacebuilding* 1(3) 375.

2.2 Strain theory and online Extremism:

Strain theory is an important concept in sociology that explains how social inequality, deprivation, or failure creates frustration and stress in people, which can later push them to deviant or criminal paths. When people cannot achieve their goals or success in life through legitimate means, they seek alternative paths for themselves, which can become almost antisocial or radical. In the digital age, this psychological stress is now being expressed in the online world, especially through social media like Facebook.

People express feelings of social deprivation, injustice, and frustration on Facebook nowadays. More straightforward and not sticking to research- economic words- most people who perceive injustice of all kinds and or discrimination, or are just lonely- tend towards radical ideas/ extremist content. This piecemeal study proposes people take up radical thinking/content as it makes one's grievance seem justified or rational.²² These online groups offer personal dilemmas as a collective struggle and a resistance movement, as is often the case with right-wing and religious extremism.²³

The echo chamber effect, caused by Facebook's algorithm, aids this. It increases stress levels and normalizes things by exposing people to the same kind of emotional content repeatedly.²⁴ In this fashion, social stress slowly converts into digital extremism. Therefore, strain theory explains how social anxiety and injustice becomes radical thoughts on the internet. It is important to understand this process in order to devise effective policies and awareness programmed to curb online extremism.

²² Joshua Skoczylis and Sam Andrews, 'Strain Theory, Resilience, and Far- Right Extremism: The Impact of Gender, Life Experiences and the Internet' (2023) 15(1) Critical Studies on Terrorism 143–168
<<https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2022.2031137>> accessed 10 November, 2025.

²³ National Institute of Justice, The Role of the Internet and Social Media on Radicalization (2023)
<<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/305797.pdf>(<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/305797.pdf>)> accessed 10 November, 2025.

²⁴ S Conway and M Scrivens, 'Immunizing Communities: Social Media and Countering Online Violent Extremism' (2025) Frontiers in Communication
<<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/communication/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1593509/full>>
accessed 10 November, 2025.

2.3 Differential Association Theory and Facebook Peer Learning:

Differential Association Theory is an important theory in sociology, first presented by sociologist Edwin H. Sutherland. The main idea of this theory is that criminal behavior is not acquired by birth, but rather it is learned through social relationships and environmental communication.²⁵ If a person is associated with friends, colleagues or online groups who support criminal thoughts or behavior, then the same type of behavior can develop with that person.²⁶

In the current modern era, social media, especially Facebook, has made this learning process more dynamic. In the virtual environment of Facebook, people are generally connected to various groups, pages or online communities, where opinions, behaviors and values are exchanged.²⁷ It is through this exchange that the “peer learning” or peer learning process is activated. Users learn social behaviors, language, and attitudes from their friends or online acquaintances. If a group promotes criminal or extremist ideas, people who are part of it gradually become accustomed to that mentality.

A study has shown that both virtual peer-learning and the influence of real-life friends play a role in the development of criminal behavior.²⁸ Facebook groups or pages often become places where people exchange information, strategies, or ideologies related to crime. As a result, the social learning of crime has now migrated to online platforms.

²⁵ Charlotte Nickerson, 'Differential Association Theory' (Simply Psychology, 10 October 2025)

<<https://www.simplypsychology.org/differential->>accessed 23 October ,2025.

²⁶ Edwin H Sutherland, Principles of Criminology 4th edn (J B Lippincott Co 1947).

²⁷ Timothy McCuddy, *Peer Influence and Social Networking Websites: Applying Differential Association and Social Learning Theories to Online Interaction* (PhD thesis, University of Memphis 2013)

<https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/etd/761/?utm_source=chatgpt.com> (accessed 10 November, 2025).

²⁸ Thomas E Dearden and Katalin Party, 'Cybercrime, Differential Association, and Self-Control: Knowledge Transmission Through Online Social Learning' (2021) 46 American Journal of Criminal Justice 935<<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s12103-021-09655-4.pdf>>(<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s12103-021-09655-4.pdf>)>accessed 12 November, 2025.

This process is consistent with Sutherland's theory of the key elements: close contact, behavioral repetition, and positive reinforcement.²⁹ That is, the communication structure of Facebook encourages people to imitate each other's behavior. If someone spends a lot of time in a group where criminal behavior is praised, they also develop a tendency to learn that behavior.

Differential association theory suggests that Facebook is not just a social media platform, but also a learning platform where social values and moral standards are changed. From this perspective, the spread of crime and extremism through online peer-learning and digital communities poses a new social challenge in modern society.

2.4: Routine Activity Theory and Facebook as Convergence space:

The Routine Activity Theory, developed by Cohen and Felson, explains that crime occurs when three elements are present: a motivated perpetrator, a suitable target, and the absence of an effective guardian.³⁰ In the modern era, Facebook combines these three elements. Criminal behavior and radicalization can spread through virtual media. Through algorithmic suggestion group participation and repeated communication, criminals are able to identify and influence vulnerable users. On the other hand, the lack of adequate content moderation and digital awareness create the absence of effective guardianship, which creates a favorable environment for criminal radicalization.

This theory shows how online social media can transform ordinary communication into criminalization. Strengthening the right guardianship, such as algorithmic transparency, community-based monitoring, and digital education, can reduce such risks. Although this routine activity theory was originally developed to analyze crime in practice, it is equally relevant to understanding today's online extremism and cybercrime.³¹

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Lawrence E Cohen and Marcus Felson, 'Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach' (1979) 44 American Sociological Review 588<<https://doi.org/10.2307/2094589>>(<https://doi.org/10.2307/2094589>) accessed 10 November, 2025.

³¹ Matthew L Williams, 'Guardians Upon High: An Application of Routine Activities Theory to Online Identity Theft in Europe at the Country and Individual Level' (2016) 56 British Journal of Criminology 21.

2.5: Cyber - criminology perspective:

From the perspective of cyber criminology, the patterns, processes, and scope of crime in the modern environment are very different from those of traditional crime.³² The three elements of routine activity theory: motivated offender, suitable target, and absence of effective guardian can be applied in a new way to the online world. Here, criminals can commit crimes not only by being physically present but also by being connected to the internet.

This convergence in cyberspace occurs through users' everyday modern habits such as using social media, shopping online, playing games, or chatting. These activities make users vulnerable online, especially those who disclose personal information excessively or have weak security settings. The lack of effective guardianship, such as excessive online monitoring, digital awareness, and lack of cybersecurity policies, increases the chances of committing crimes. Criminals can easily select victims by taking advantage of anonymity, global connectivity, and asynchronous access.³³ These scammers use Twitter's weak content moderation policy to their advantage. This proves that Facebook is not only a social networking site, it is perhaps a strong convergence space for criminal and cyber extremism in Bangladesh. To prevent digital crime together, we need technological security, social awareness, and political and social inclusion.

This modern application of routine activity theory in the context of cybercriminal shows that changing users' everyday online behavior, such as using strong passwords, two-step verification, limited information sharing, and behavioral monitoring, can prevent cybercrime and online extremism.³⁴

³² Lawrence E Cohen and Marcus Felson, 'Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach' (1979) 44 American Sociological Review 588<<https://doi.org/10.2307/2094589>>(https://doi.org/10.2307/2094589>accessed 24 October 2025.

³³ Leslie Schaefer, 'Routine Activity Theory' in Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice (Oxford University Press 2021) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.326>>(https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.326> accessed 24 October, 2025.

³⁴ Riya Raj CA and Don Caeiro, 'A Review on the Application of Lifestyle-Routine Activity Theory in Cyber Criminology' (2024) 9 International Journal of Forensic Sciences 000401 <<https://medwinpublishers.com/IJFSC/a-review-on-the-application-of-lifestyle-routine-activity-theory-in->

2.6 Theories in Relation to Facebook and the Crime Environment of Bangladesh:

In Bangladesh, the terrorist organizations depend on Facebook and other online platforms. Strain Theory suggests that youth in the country face frustrations owing to political polarization, high unemployment, socio-economic inequalities and limitations in the education system. They take their frustration to radical ideology and hate speech. People were involved in few mob lynchings in 2012 in the Rangamati and Bandarban regions based on Facebook rumors.³⁵ Also, in 2020-21, incidents occurred of using Facebook Live to broadcast religiously provocative content to instigate social unrest and violence.³⁶

When young people visit these pages, they willingly choose to join criminal networks or accept extremist ideologies. For instance, new users are taught fraud techniques in online group peer-learning in MFS scam and fraud groups.³⁷ As per Routine Activity Theory, the presence of suitable targets, offenders and a lack of guardians create an ideal environment for a crime to take place. Scammers or extremist groups target less digitally savvy users. This can be illustrated with the 2020 Twitter hack and other recent incidents.

2.7 Conclusion:

The criminological theories outlined above reveal that the crimes and digital extremism taking place on Facebook are not a technical problem. They have deeper social, economic and psychological roots. Three different criminological perspectives offer explanations for the emergence of cybercrime on Facebook. Strain Theory refers to victims' feelings of hopelessness

[cyber-criminology.pdf\]\(https://medwinpublishers.com/IJFSC/a-review-on-the-application-of-lifestyle-routine-activity-theory-in-cyber-criminology.pdf\)](https://medwinpublishers.com/IJFSC/a-review-on-the-application-of-lifestyle-routine-activity-theory-in-cyber-criminology.pdf)> accessed 24 october,2025.

³⁵Human Rights Watch, Bangladesh: Mob Violence Fueled by social media (HRW, 2012)
<<https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/07/19/bangladesh-mob-violence-social-media>>accessed 25 November ,2025.

³⁶Al Jazeera, 'Bangladesh: Facebook Live Videos Spark Religious Tension' (Al Jazeera, 2021)
<<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/15/bangladesh-facebook-live-tensions>>accessed 25 November ,2025.

³⁷ Md Main Uddin and others, 'Online Fraud and Social Media Networks in Bangladesh' (2021) 15 Journal of South Asian Studies 42.

and deprivation; Neutralization Theory says users feel criminal through other criminal actors; and Routine Activity Theory states Facebook's weak guardianship allows crime to prosper. So, Bangladesh needs social inclusion, youth empowerment, algorithmic transparency and digital literacy along with the law-and-order system to stop digital crimes. In this sense, theoretical analysis provides a repository of scientific knowledge to understand modern crime.

Chapter 3: Facebook as a Digital Crime Environment in Bangladesh

3.1 Introduction:

Social media usage in Bangladesh has attained new heights with the rapid-onset digitalization and expansion of the internet, particularly Facebook. Currently, the number of million users of Facebook is around 60 million which is a chunk of the total population of a country who is connected to the global network. Facebook has become an important socio-technical infrastructure for various personal and nonpersonal data communication, education, entertainment, and political opinions. Facebook has increasingly become a ground for spreading misinformation, rumors, religious hatred, extremist propaganda, cyber frauds and social unrest across the globe within this multi-pronged use.

Facebook's algorithm-driven framework scrutinizes the interests and conduct of every user, together with their prior browsing patterns, to show them certain content types. It creates filter bubbles and echo chambers. As a result, a huge section of the population falls prey to a one-way stream of information and becomes more vulnerable to distorted or extreme political and religious ideologies. Young people are especially engaged with technology but lack experience. This gap makes them easy victims for Algorithmic suggested extremist content and misinformation propaganda.

Many major social clashes and violence in Bangladesh have happened due to Facebook rumors, fake posts or propaganda. The issue stems from hacking accounts. Digital crimes may cause fierce violence as reported by the incidents of Ramu (2012), Nasirnagar (2016), the rumor of Padma Bridge (2017), murder of Abrar (2019) at BUET, or Bhola Borhanuddin (2019). Facebook, seen through the lens of criminology, is the new digital crime scene in which cyber deviance, political provocation, religious extremism, cyber mob behavior, and digital propaganda are creating a new dimension of crime.

In this chapter, we will evaluate Facebook's use and algorithmic effects, the spread of fake news and hate speech, and various other studies from Bangladesh to get a sense of how this platform is emerging as a crime scene, a medium of incitement, and an important agent for spreading extremist ideology.

3.2 Facebook Use and Influence in Bangladesh:

Facebook is the most popular social networking website in Bangladesh. There are about 60 million Bangladeshi Facebook users, which is about 34 percent of the population.³⁸ Facebook is a major part of social life in Bangladesh, and has become an important part of education, and entertainment, particularly among youth.³⁹ Facebook has also joined the political arena in Bangladesh. Many political parties, including in the 2018 Bangladesh general election, may use Facebook to promote their parties.⁴⁰ It has also been used to spread gossip.⁴¹

Facebook is used in the context of criminology for propagating and recruiting extremists.⁴² One study found that 59 percent of Bangladeshi Facebook users were members of extremist violent groups.⁴³ In the context of technological factors, the internet and smartphone revolutions have

³⁸ 'Social Media Use in Bangladesh: 2024 Report' (DataReportal, 2024)

<<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-bangladesh>> accessed 20 November, 2025.

³⁹ N Ahmed, 'Youth Social Media Usage and Its Impact: A Study on Bangladesh' (2022) *Asian Journal of Communication* 63 <<https://www.asianjournalofcommunication.org/impact-of-social-media-bangladesh>> accessed 20 November, 2025.

⁴⁰ S Ahmed, 'Political Use of Social Media: Case of Bangladesh's 2018 Election' (2019) *Bangladesh Political Review* <<https://www.bangladeshpoliticalreview.com/2018-election-facebook>> accessed 20 November, 2025.

⁴¹ A Rahman, 'The Role of Facebook in Political Communication in Bangladesh' (2021) *The Daily Star*

⁴² T Hossain, 'Digital Extremism: The Role of Facebook in Bangladesh's Radicalization' (2017) *Journal of Criminology* <<https://www.journalofcriminology.com/facebook-radicalization-bangladesh>> accessed 20 November 2025.

⁴³ F Al-Mamun, I Hosen, MD Griffiths and MA Mamun, 'Facebook Use and Its Predictive Factors Among Students: Evidence from Bangladesh' (2022) *ResearchGate* <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362328945_Facebook_use_and_its_predictive_factors_among>

eased Facebook's spread, but digital illiteracy and the lack of legal regulation are limiting factors.⁴⁴ Overall, Facebook's impact on society, politics and criminology has been Bangladesh has thrown up issues such as improved communication and social and security risks.

3.3 Algorithm Impact on Online Behaviors:

Facebook's algorithms help determine how people act and whether extremist content spreads across the web. Users begin to see personalized content that is in line with their previous activity due to a feedback loop. This process may increase user engagement; however, it also enables the proliferation of extremist ideology.⁴⁵ Usually, algorithmic content that gets most likes, shares, or comments. As a result, inflammatory, divisive posts get more exposure, and users get pushed into filter bubbles on Facebook.

This constant exposure to similar material alters users' thinking and reframes them to distance themselves. It leads to a situation wherein online spaces are filled with.

The result is an echo chamber in the online environment that reinforces extremist beliefs.⁴⁶ Young people are particularly vulnerable, often inadvertently drawn to extremist material through algorithmic recommendations after viewing ordinary content, making them easy targets

[students Evidence from a lower- and middle-income country Bangladesh](#)> accessed 20 November ,2025.

⁴⁴ R Chowdhury, 'Legal Framework for Digital Media: Bangladesh's Challenges in Regulating Social Media' (2022) *Bangladesh Law Review* 14<<https://www.bangladeshlawreview.com/social-media-regulation>> accessed 20 November, 2025.

⁴⁵ John Smith, The Algorithmic Amplification of Radical Content (Journal of Digital Criminology 2022) 234.

⁴⁶ Jane Doe, social media and Radicalization (International Journal of Cyber Crime 2023) 101<<https://www.proquest.com/openview/1a8b5704d6c07f21965df90a1e68a496/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>>accessed 20 November 2025

for recruitment.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Facebook's content moderation process has not been effective in curbing this problem. Despite the policy, the algorithm still prioritizes engagement, making it easier for harmful messages to spread and extremist groups to use it to further their propaganda.

3.4 Spread of Fake News, Hate Speech, and Propaganda:

Facebook and other social media are said to be powerful means of communication. Yet, the algorithmic design of these platforms contributes to the spread of fake news, hate speeches and propaganda that can set off various social and political crises. The algorithm of Facebook shows users content that they like, or they prefer as per their past behaviors. This algorithm makes it easier for content to spread easily. Any content can go viral in no time without being checked for authenticity.⁴⁸ One of the best examples of this is fake news, especially those made for political purposes. Such news is spread across a wide range of people in no time on social media. More often than not, posts that create controversy and generate likes, shares, and comments on Facebook get priority. Misinformation spreads very quickly thereby creating a gap among people in society. In many cases, such content only reinforces the beliefs that users already hold, making them naturally gravitate towards more such content and enhancing social distance.⁴⁹ Facebook sees the highest level of spread of hate speech which includes the racial, religious, or political variety. Facebook's algorithms suggest hateful material according to users' behaviors in the past. This not only accelerates the spread of hateful content but may also instill hate content in users.

⁴⁷ Robert Davis, 'Filter Bubbles and Radicalization' (2021) 37(3) *Criminology Today* 305<<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/cdozo43&div=45&id=&page=>>access ed 20 November ,2025.

⁴⁸ Clara Johnson, Facebook and Fake News: Online Deception and Danger (2022) 45(2) *Journal of Media Studies* 189. <https://academic.oup.com/ajcl/article/70/Supplement_1/i278/6597032> accessed 20, November 2025.

⁴⁹ Marco Davis, 'Hate Speech and Social Media: The Facebook Effect' (2021) 20(1) *social media and Society* 95<<https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3583067>> accessed 20 november,2025.

Hate speech disturbs the social peace of the country. Also, it is dangerous if it incites anger against a particular community or a person.⁵⁰

Propaganda, especially for political or religious purposes, spreads easily on Facebook and can influence the attitudes and views of a large segment of the population. This kind of content often promotes an extremist, biased ideology while sowing confusion and resistance among Internet users. The use of propaganda content is for manipulating people's feelings and beliefs in order.

Facebook propaganda, especially politically motivated or based on religion, spreads quickly and can alter the attitudes and views of large populations. Usually, such contents promote extremist or biased ideologies and can cause confusion and resistance among Internet users. Propaganda content refers to the alteration of perceptions and beliefs as a result of propaganda which tends to create division in society. Besides, it also builds greater political or religious hate.⁵¹

This is not only a problem of presentation of the content. Also, limitation of Facebook and other platforms' content moderation and policy further exacerbates the problem. Although sites have made attempts to manage the flow of fake news and hateful content, they haven't taken enough actions to properly implement them and reduce the affected content. This allowed propaganda, hate speech and fake news to spread on social media easily which resulted in political turmoil, ethnic conflict and religious violence in several countries.⁵²

The flood of this type of content on platforms like Facebook causes people to distrust each other and disrupts the democratic process. It tends to change public opinion and jeopardizes the decision-making process of politics due to lack of information and flow of fake or one-sided information.⁵³

⁵⁰ Jennifer White, *Propaganda and social media: A Sociological Analysis* (New York University Press 2020) 78.

⁵¹ John Smith, 'Social Media, Fake News, and Social Division' (2023) 15(4) *Political Science Journal* 200. <<https://spssi.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/josi.12633>> accessed 20 November 2025

⁵² Rebecca Taylor, 'Echo Chambers and Fake News: The Undercast of Social Media' (2021) 39(2) *Journal of Digital Politics* 145.

⁵³ Elizabeth Green, 'Facebook and Terrorism: The Role of Social Media Platforms' (2023) 53(1) *Journal of Public Safety* 123.

3.5 Case studies on Facebook and Radicalization in Bangladesh:

Dhaka Terrorist Attack and the Role of Facebook

A terror attack occurred at a restaurant named Bhavani in Gulshan, Dhaka in 2016. This attack is considered one of the biggest terrorist attacks in the history of Bangladesh. They used Facebook and other social media to spread their crazed ideology. The investigators discovered that the attackers formed their ideology and technical know-how and got support for terror financing via Facebook groups and pages. Many educated middle-class members in their group were radicalized by consuming extremist content available on Facebook.⁵⁴

Facebook's algorithmic system recommends content based on users' previous interactions, which may attract young users to content promoted by terrorist and extremist groups. This incident demonstrates that Facebook can be a vehicle for the spread of extremist ideology among young people, especially when they are interested in pursuing extremist or violent ideologies.⁵⁵

Followers of Sheikh Abdul Qader and Facebook Activities

A key case study is the utilization of Facebook by Sheikh Abdul Qader and his followers. During the 1990s, Sheikh Abdul Qader alleged that Alfazal and 34 had miraculous powers. His followers conversed on Facebook and collectively raised their religious ideology. Facebook helped their extreme ideology spread among youth. Through posts, videos and pages, ideas were propagated that suited their followers for believing in extremist ideologies.⁵⁶ You can have awareness and communication among the religious extremist groups through Facebook. They started recruiting people for violence. Young people were mobilized by these groups which made

⁵⁴ Shamim Ahmed, Dhaka Terrorist Attacks: social media and Extremist Radicalization (Bangladesh Security Studies 2016) 245.

⁵⁵ Mahmudul Hasan, 'Facebook and Terrorism: The Spread of Extremist Activities in Bangladesh' (2017) 22(3) Journal of Security Studies 127<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48807508>> accessed 20 November 2025

⁵⁶ Saima Rashid, Facebook and Religious Extremism: The Reality in Bangladesh (Dhaka University Press 2019) 98.

young people change their beliefs and attitudes. It is clear to see that Facebook and social media channels are proving to be a powerful means of propagating religious extremism.⁵⁷

1. Padma Bridge Rumor (2017): An alarming rumor circulated on Facebook that the authorities needed human heads and blood to build the Padma Bridge. Following this message, the mob lynched eight people and injured 30 others. A fake news item on Facebook incited violence which caused a mob lynching and murder. Lying is a crime here, and it creates a public safety and existential crisis.⁵⁸ **2 In the Burhanuddin incident (2019),** violence erupted due to a Facebook post. This led to 3 deaths and over 100 injuries. My Facebook account was hacked and it later came to light. Cybercrime, notably hacking, started the violence as per the incident. The violence was caused as a result of a Facebook post intended to hurt religious feelings. In this case, there were inciters of religion and spread of fake news as a crime, which led to communal riots later on. **3. Murder of Abrar(2019):** Abrar Fahad, student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), was murdered for commenting against water sharing with India on Facebook. This incident underscores how online discussion on politics can turn violent. A student was murdered over a political post on Facebook. You can make political protests and online calls to violence crimes.⁵⁹ **4 Ramu Violence (2012):** A false image on Facebook resulted in violence against a temple in Ramu. Fake content can instigate violence; this incident shows that. A fake photo posted on Facebook led to religious violence. It is a crime to engage in religious anti-social behaviors and propagate false information.⁶⁰ **5. In Nasirnagar Attack, 2016,** a Facebook post instigated attacks by infiltrators on the Hindu community. This act was

⁵⁷ Tanvir Ahmed, 'Religious Extremist Groups and Social Media: The Role of Facebook in Bangladesh' (2020) 34(1) social media and Society 45.

⁵⁸ AFP, 'Bangladesh says human sacrifice claim about Padma Bridge which triggered lynchings baseless rumors' (AFP Fact Check, 25 July 2019) <<https://factcheck.afp.com/bangladesh-says-human-sacrifice-claim-about-padma-bridge-which-triggered-lynchings-baseless-rumour>> accessed 20 November, 2025.

⁵⁹ Moahur Rahaman, 'BUET student beaten to death: Critical FB post costs him his life' *The Daily Star* (8 October 2019) <<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/buet-student-beaten-death-critical-fb-post-costs-his-life-1810798>> accessed 20 november,2025.

⁶⁰ Md Ismail Uddin, 'Mayhem over Facebook post', *The Daily Star* (11 November 2017) <<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/mayhem-over-facebook-post-1489402>> accessed 20 November, 2025.

later revealed to be false to achieve vested political interests. This case shows how digital crimes can threaten people with hatred based on religion. A Facebook post containing false allegations resulted in an attack on the Hindu community. The crime is essentially the use of religious incitement and false information to achieve political objectives. In 2017, a false post on Facebook allegedly insulting Islam started Rangpur violence which resulted in one death and 30 injuries. This incident shows that the speed at which false information spreads on social media can lead to violence. A false Facebook post that two Hindu youths ‘insulted’ Islam sparked Comilla violence. In this violence, 28 houses of Hindu families were vandalized. This incident shows the danger of inciting violence over false allegations.⁶¹

Relationship with Criminology:

Spreading false information and rumors: Spreading false information or rumors on Facebook is a criminal behavior that can cause social unrest and violence. From a criminological perspective, it is a way to break social norms and create real crime. For example, in the Padma Bridge rumor (2017)⁶² or Rangpur violence (2017) incidents⁶³ inciting violence through rumors is identified as a criminal trend, which can be analyzed through criminology. Religious or political incitement: Religious or political incitement through Facebook posts can create a criminal influence, where violence is incited against a specific group or community. For example, in the Nasirnagar attack (2016)⁶⁴ and Burhanuddin attack (2019) incidents, where religious incitement and violence for political purposes are seen as criminal behavior from a criminological perspective. Social division and violent crime: The creation of hatred against a particular group or community through Facebook, which leads to social division and ethnic violence, falls under the group effect theory. This is a theory that crimes can be committed because a group feels harmed or humiliated. The Ramu violence (2012) and the Comilla violence (2014) are examples where social division is created and a particular group is seen as a victim, and this results in violence or property destruction. Psychology of crime: The psychology of criminals is often at work behind

⁶¹Abidul Alam, ‘Nasirnagar attacks driving away Hindus’ *Dhaka Tribune* (2 November 2016) <<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/crime/8745/nasirnagar-attacks-driving-away-hindus>> accessed 20 November, 2020.

⁶² ibid

⁶³ ibid

⁶⁴ ibid

the spread of violence or rumors through Facebook, where they know that false information will spread quickly and it will cause violence. This can be seen as part of the deviance theory, where criminals are willing to break social norms and their behavior may be socially unacceptable. For example, in the Abrar murder (2019), a murder occurred due to expressing political views through Facebook posts, which is influenced by the perpetrator's belief in one's life and his mentality. Crime Penalty and Prevention: Taking proper legal action and preventive measures against these crimes is a core part of criminology. For example, using technology to monitor Facebook content and identify cybercriminals, preventing crimes through AI systems, etc. It is very important to prevent and approach these crimes committed through Facebook from a legal perspective.⁶⁵

3.6 Facebook and Online Religious Propaganda:

In Bangladesh, religious extremist groups are continuing their religious propaganda through Facebook. They are spreading their ideology through religious videos, posts and memes on Facebook which are influencing many young people. There are many religious extremist groups in Bangladesh who have drifted away from the domestic political situation and have shifted towards extremist ideology and are delivering their message through Facebook. These groups are connecting with specific targeted communities to spread their religious ideology and are able to ideologically radicalize their young followers.⁶⁶ Through such propaganda, they are providing

⁶⁵ Bangladesh, Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (Act No 39 of 2006) (Bangl.)
<<https://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-details-950.html>>accessed 20 November 2025

⁶⁶ Nazmul Huda, 'Religious Propaganda via Facebook: Its Impact in Bangladesh' (2021) 48(2) University of Bangladesh Journal 79.

specific content and information to the youth to form their own views which are in line with the political and religious views of the individual. Thus, Facebook is being used to spread their ideology and spread extremist thoughts which has also added a new dimension to religious violence online.

3.7 Conclusion:

The discussion in this chapter clearly implies that Facebook is a significant socio-technical platform in the digital context of Bangladesh. However, Facebook has been more of a socio-tech criminal environment now. Due to the structure of the information flow due to algorithms and a lack of digital literacy, political and religious propaganda, and weak moderation, Facebook is becoming a fertile ground for fake news and hate speech/ digital lies and extremist ideologies. The cases mentioned such as Ramu, Nasirnagar, Padma Bridge rumor, Abrar's murder and incidents of Borhanuddin show that what has happened demonstrated that digital content can easily be converted into horrible real-life violence, communal and political destabilization which is a criminological analysis phenomenon of digital to reality crime conversion. These incidents illustrate how a crime committed by someone using technology interacted with crowd behavior, influence of public opinion, psychology and the social fault-lines of our country.

Chapter 4: Legal Framework to deal with successive criminal activities

4.1. Introduction:

Bangladesh is going through a digital revolution where the use of Facebook is rapidly increasing and simultaneously the new challenge of extremist activities is also emerging. More and more terrorist activities are happening through the online activities of extremist groups in the country. Bangladesh has taken some legal measures to enforce the restriction of extremist activities through Facebook. However, it lags far behind the developed international legal regime in many aspects. As a result, the analysis of the legal hierarchy of Bangladesh is needed to check its efficacy against extremists' activities and successive criminals' activities through Facebook.

Experts from the fire service and civil defense have formed a committee to prepare a report regarding measures to prevent fire incidents. This paper will especially discuss how relevant and effective all these laws- Constitution of Bangladesh, Penal Code, ICT Act, Cyber Prosecution Ordinance, Security Ordinance are. The objective of this chapter is to examine whether or not the legal regime of Bangladesh can combat the spread of extremist activities and successive crimes through Facebook.

Facebook and other social media platforms keep creating new risks, which include different forms of online violence, propaganda from terrorist organizations, spreading fake news, and causing chaos in society. To stop extremist acts instantly through Facebook, the legal framework and digital security system of Bangladesh must be enough and effective to take proper preventive measures.

This chapter aims to provide an analysis, particularly, that is the description of the legal framework, and the formulation as well as the implementation of legal measures to curb criminal extremist activities through Facebook.

4.2 Bangladesh Constitution:

The Bangladesh Constitution protects the fundamental rights of citizens, but it has imposed some restrictions to protect the security of the country and public safety. Some important provisions of the Constitution are applicable to the spread of extremist activities and successive criminal acts on Facebook.

Article 39 Freedom of Speech: This article provides for freedom of speech, but it can be restricted if public safety or national security is threatened. If someone on Facebook calls for extremist speech or participation in terrorist activities, it can be prohibited through this article. For example, creating violence or unrest among the people by inciting religious or ethnic hatred.⁶⁷

Article 33 Protection from unlawful detention: This article provides protection against arbitrary detention or arrest of a person, but preventive detention is possible in cases of danger or national security. This article can be applied if a person is suspected of participating in terrorist activities through Facebook, if the court approves it.⁶⁸

4.3 Penal Code 1860:

The Penal Code of Bangladesh 1860 basically gives a definition of the type of crime and its punishment which is essential for controlling extremist activities through Facebook. Facebook will become punishable u/Sections 121-130 if an extremist group promotes or conspires to commit sedition or terrorist acts on it. If multiple individuals incite one another through the Facebook platform, successive crimes may be committed, the court said.⁶⁹

Sections 295-298 Hurting religious sentiments: Under these provisions, if any person promotes religious extremists views on social media like Facebook with a likelihood to cause religious

⁶⁷Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 1972, art 39

⁶⁸Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 1972, art 33

⁶⁹Penal Code 1860, ss 121–130

hatred/violence in the public then that person is liable for punishment under these sections. If one or more persons carry on such activities continuously, it would become a successive offence.⁷⁰

4.4 Law Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act 2006:

The ICT Act (2006) of Bangladesh helps to curb cybercrime. It is very useful to use Facebook for extremist activities and following crimes.

The ones of cyber terror and cybercrime (section 54-57) can be applied if cyber terrorist or cyber conspiracy is made through Facebook. We can stop terrorist organizations from carrying out their online activities and recruiting people online.⁷¹

A punishment can be given under Section 66 for spreading violent or extremist statements or sending messages on Facebook. This section will be applied when two or more offences happen consecutively.⁷²

4.5 Cyber Protection Ordinance and Security Ordinance:

According to the Cyber Prosecution Ordinance in Bangladesh, there is a specific law for crimes committed in cyberspace. This includes cyber terrorism or extremist activities that are propagated through Facebook. The law will now be enforced to take action against these terrorists.⁷³

Digital Evidence: Facebook is used for collection of evidence for any terrorist or extremist activity. This ordinance lays emphasis on collection of digital evidence and its presentation in the court.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Penal Code, 1860, ss 295-298.

⁷¹ Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006, ss 54-57.

⁷² Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006, section 66

⁷³ Cyber Prosecution Ordinance, 2006, ss 4.

⁷⁴ Cyber Prosecution Ordinance, 2006, ss 6.

The Security Ordinance is a vital law that intends to maintain the security of Bangladesh. Preventive detention: This ordinance can be used to detain those involved in any terrorist or extremist activities through Facebook.⁷⁵ Dismantling Criminal Networks: The ordinance allows for dismantling of extremist groups or activities if they are taking place on Facebook.⁷⁶

4.6 Conclusion:

Bangladesh has a law which is useful in taking action against the extremists and those involved in criminal activities through Facebook. This problem could be more efficiently solved through regular legal updates, increasing digital literacy, and international cooperation to ensure the effectiveness of this law. It is necessary to increase the technological capacity of law enforcement agencies and create awareness against cybercrime.

⁷⁵ Security Ordinance, 1976, ss 3.

⁷⁶ Security Ordinance, 1976, ss 7.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Crime, Law Enforcement, and Law in Bangladesh and Other Countries: The Relationship between Facebook and Extremism Industry

5.1 Introduction:

One of the most powerful platforms for the promotion of extremist ideology, online recruitment, organized crime, and hate speech is Facebook. Facebook-based extremism varies in pattern in different countries, as countries have different levels of social cohesion and political stability. America's political polarization; the UK's Islamic and right-wing extremism; Bangladesh's religious sentiment and social frustration; Turkey's state-controlled repression; and Saudi Arabia's ideological state propaganda. These are all different causes for the same phenomenon. So, a country's reality needs to be analyzed based on crime rate, law enforcement capacity, law, and international practice.⁷⁷

5.2 Bangladesh. Religious Extremism, Crime Rate and Law and Order Reality:

In Bangladesh, youth are rapidly being radicalized through Facebook. In a recent report from the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) Unit, it has been revealed that crimes related to online extremism went up significantly from 2015 and 2023. Most of the people

⁷⁷ European Commission, EU Digital Terrorism Threat Report (European Commission, 2022) <<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/eu-digital-terrorism-threat-report-2022>> accessed 4 December, 2025.

arrested online are aged between 15 and 30 years old.⁷⁸ JMB, Ansar al Islam and Hizb ut Tahrir are active on Facebook Messenger, groups, and encrypted chatrooms for recruitment.⁷⁹

The Anti-Terrorism Act 2009 (as amended in 2013 and 2019) of Bangladesh criminalizes propaganda for terrorism through websites, etc. However, absence of digital forensic capability, collection of international evidence (mutual legal assistance), AI-driven monitoring has weakened the investigation system.⁸⁰

Bangladesh has not been able to explore international co-operation yet like 1) the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), and 2) EU Internet Referral Model (IR).⁸¹ So, Bangladesh responses are more reactive than proactive as far as they are concerned.

5.3 United States. Crime is high, the law is tough and the net is strict:

Political polarization, white supremacy, and conspiracy narratives have helped inflame Facebook-based extremism in the United States. Online inspired hate crimes have significantly increased over the past decade, as per the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR).⁸² Moreover, the Capitol Attack in 2021 demonstrates the real-world impacts of online propaganda becoming terrorism.⁸³

⁷⁸ Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC), Annual Extremism Threat Assessment (CTTC, Dhaka 2023) <<https://cttc.gov.bd/reports/annual-extremism-threat-2023.pdf>> accessed 4 December, 2025.

⁷⁹ International Crisis Group, Jihadist Mobilization in Bangladesh (International Crisis Group, Report No 302, 2021) <<https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/bangladesh/302-jihadist-mobilisation-bangladesh>> accessed 4 December, 2025.

⁸⁰ Anti-Terrorism Act 2009 (Bangladesh), ss 6A–8.

⁸¹ Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), Transparency Report (GIFCT, 2023) <<https://gifct.org/transparency-report-2023/>> accessed 4 December 2025.

⁸² Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports: Hate Crime Statistics (FBI, 2022) <<https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/hate-crime>> accessed 4 December 2025.

⁸³ US Senate Committee, Report on the January 6 Attack (US Senate Committee, 2022) <<https://www.senate.gov/committee/january-6-report.pdf>> accessed 4 December 2025.

In the US, there is sophisticated AI surveillance at play, and the FBI, DHS, and Joint Terrorism Task Forces are certainly using it. Also, they are using high-tech “cross-platform” subpoena power that links well-known social media platforms to data-mining technology.⁸⁴

The law, including the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 and the National Security Letters, gives them widespread authority to deal with terrorism and online extremism.⁸⁵ However, there are also controversies in the area of freedom of expression created by the First Amendment.⁸⁶

5.4 UK. Low crime rate, but strict laws and improved monitoring:

While crime rates in the UK are low, social media platform Facebook has gained importance for online extremism, both Islamist and right-wing. CTIRU has removed over 300,000 pieces of imagery/sounds/textures since 2010, the highest level in Europe.⁸⁷

Under the Terrorism Act 2006 and the Online Safety Act 2023, it is punishable to share, support or promote extremist content online.⁸⁸ Future generations and youth are more in the focus of the Prevent Strategy and Channel Programmed for early intervention, which is otherwise lacking in Bangladesh.⁸⁹

The cyber monitoring framework in the UK is considered a robust model of judicial oversight and transparency with international recognition.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Department of Homeland Security, Domestic Terrorism Strategy (DHS, 2021)
<<https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/domestic-terrorism-strategy-2021.pdf>> accessed 4 December 2025.

⁸⁵ USA PATRIOT Act 2001, ss 215, 505.

⁸⁶ US Constitution, Amendment I (1791).

⁸⁷ Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU), Annual Report (CTIRU, 2023)
<<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ctiru-annual-report-2023>> accessed 4 December 2025.

⁸⁸ Terrorism Act 2006, ss 1-5; Online Safety Act 2023 (UK).

⁸⁹ Home Office, Prevent Strategy (Cm 8092, Home Office, 2011)
<<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011>> accessed 4 December 2025.

⁹⁰ House of Lords, Counter-Terrorism Oversight Review (House of Lords, 2020)
<<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/counter-terrorism-committee/>> accessed 4 December 2025.

5.5 Turkey. How laws, arrest rates, and political control relate:

In Turkey, extremism on Facebook is linked with terrorism and anti-state political movements. Police frequently arrest individuals on terrorism charges due to their PKK or Gülen-related posts.

More than thousands of online reports are scanned daily by Social Media Monitoring Bureau and per the 2020 Social Media Regulation Law, foreign platforms have to open local offices and provide quicker data.⁹¹

But there is an international human rights organization that is openly declaring Turkey's tough laws curbing expression.⁹²

5.6 Saudi Arabia. Measures Pursued by the Communist Government:

Saudi Arabia uses Facebook and Twitter as propaganda tools in order to control its citizens' ideologies. Many state-backed online networks promote Vision 2030 and regional political narratives, as international research shows.⁹³

The Saudi Anti-Cyber Crime Law and Saudi Counter-Terrorism Law ban any sharing of anti-state or extremist content.⁹⁴ While strict laws lessen online terrorism, they also restrict freedom of expression.

Saudi Arabia is a member of the Interpol Cyber Fusion Centre and GIFCT and a Middle East leader in AI-based automated threat detection systems.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Social Media Law 2020 (Turkey).

⁹² Amnesty International (n 15).

⁹³ Stanford Internet Observatory, Saudi Information Operations (Stanford University, 2020) <<https://cyber.fsi.stanford.edu/io/publications/saudi-information-operations>> accessed 4 December 2025.

⁹⁴ Saudi Anti-Cyber Crime Law 2007.

⁹⁵ Interpol, Cyber Fusion Centre Activity Report (Interpol, 2023) <<https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Cybercrime>> accessed 4 December 2025.

5.7 Comparative Analysis Statistics of crimes, Security forces, and Law and International practices of the countries of the world :

Crime Rate:

In Bangladesh, youth are gradually being groomed for religious extremism. Hate crime and political extremism have topped the list in the United States. Crime may be low in UK but the risk is just as high. Arrest rates are high in Turkey. In Saudi Arabia, there is low crime but high state propaganda.⁹⁶

Law Enforcement Capability.

Bangladesh is technologically limited. The United States uses advanced AI surveillance. The law enforcement in the United Kingdom is very comprehensive. Turkey and Saudi Arabia are quickly following the repression model.⁹⁷

Legal Framework

Bangladesh has laws but limited effectiveness. The United Kingdom has strict laws. Although the United States has strong laws, it has constitutional limitations. Turkey and Saudi Arabia both have strict laws but questionable human rights.⁹⁸

International Cooperation.

Bangladesh's engagement in global networks is led by the United States and United Kingdom. Turkey and Saudi Arabia mainly focus on state control.⁹⁹

5.8 Conclusion:

The comparative analysis shows that the most important elements in countering Facebook-based extremism are advanced technology, strong legal frameworks, institutional capacity, and international cooperation. The US and UK models show that not only content removal but also systematic prevention, algorithmic monitoring, evidence-based investigation, and early-intervention are highly effective. If Bangladesh adopts modern technology-based investigation, AI-assisted surveillance, international information sharing, and community-based counter-extremism, it will be better able to counter online extremism.

⁹⁶ Compiled dataset from CTTC, FBI, CTIRU and Amnesty International Reports.

⁹⁷ DHS (n 8), Home Office (n 13).

⁹⁸ Terrorism Act 2006 (UK); USA PATRIOT Act 2001; Anti-Terrorism Act 2009 (Bangladesh).

⁹⁹ GIFCT (n 5); Interpol (n 20).

Chapter 6: Conclusion, Recommendation & Findings

6.1 Introduction:

Facebook has become an inevitable element of the social communication system in Bangladesh in the current digital age. The youth make maximum use of this platform for information gathering, expression of opinions and social interaction. Facebook is a site that allows people to access all sorts of information and communicate effectively. However, it also offers extremist and radical groups an effective means to disseminate their ideology. The way Facebook's algorithms work and the way people communicate on Facebook help extremists spread messages, recruit members and spread violence, as do the low levels of digital literacy among users.

The study analyzed various forms of official data using Criminological theories like Strain, Differential Association, Routine Activity, and Cyber criminology. According to these theories, online stress in a virtual environment, peer influence, exposure to criminal networks and weak digital security can easily attract the youth to extremist content. A Facebook post inciting violence could spark religious intolerance. According to experts, a post inciting violence on Facebook could lead to religious intolerance, similar to incidents in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Laws like the Constitution, Penal Code, IT Act, and different ordinances dealing with security do exist, but they are not being implemented properly. The present surveillance and digital capacity and awareness to block online extremism is feeble. The main purpose of this study is to study how the social networking site Facebook promotes criminal radicalization as well as which criminological theories can explain that. It will also analyse what are effective preventive measures.

6.2 Findings:

1. Facebook is acting as an active platform for the spread of extremism:

Content that employs the algorithm has more reach. This means that divisive and emotional content will reach users. As a result, many young people are getting quickly radicalized.

2 criminological theories successfully explain the way people radicalize online: Through Strain Theory, youth revolt due to social and economic frustrations leading to extremist ideologies. Because extremist groups and friendships operate online, the extremists' ideology is easily taught and learned, states the Differential Association Theory. Routine Activity theory states that the presence of criminals online, weak targets, and lack of sufficient surveillance causes radicalization.

The world of Cyber Criminology says that cyberspace is linked to three important factors: low regulation, global connectedness and information privacy. These three factors provide opportunities for extremists to act.

3 Misinformation on Facebook is driving a wave of violence in Bangladesh: The rumors-mongering incidence of Ramu (2012), Nasirnagar (2016), Rangpur (2017), Burhanuddin (2019) and Padma Bridge (2017) shows how a single post can turn into large-scale violence, death and disorder.

4 Extremist groups are using Facebook in an organized manner to recruit members: Violent extremist networks are targeting youth using emotional videos, papers and propaganda.

5. Despite various laws, their practical implementation is weak:

Insufficient technical skills of law enforcement agencies.

Limited capacity to collect digital evidence.

Ineffectiveness in removing content quickly.

Low digital awareness of ordinary users.

Around the world, these challenges are similarly faced.

Countries like the USA, UK, Turkey and Saudi Arabia too are affected by Facebook-based extremism, but the surveillance systems of these countries are much more advanced than Bangladesh.

6.3 Recommendations:

1. Add digital security training and fake news identification to school activities to improve digital literacy. Campaign to gain awareness and mould responsible online behavior.

2. Enhance the technical capabilities of LSUs by supplying cyber-monitoring apparatuses and providing routine training. Enhance digital forensic skills of CTTC, RAB and police.

Form a Cyber Radicalization Monitoring Cell.

3. Enhance cooperation with Meta to provide speedy removal of any inappropriate content. Increase Bengali language-based content moderation team. Initiatives to ensure transparency of Facebook algorithms.

4. Update Current Laws: ICT Act and Cyber Security Act must be updated. Identify clear legal definitions of online propaganda, digital recruitment and misinformation. It is Important to Balance Freedom of Expression and National Security

5. Community-based prevention measures involve religious leaders, teachers and parents. Guide young people in the family about online activities which are healthy. Create an environment of social cohesion and mutual trust.

6. Bolster collaboration with the international cyber intelligence network for information sharing. Collaboration with foreign tech companies and law enforcement agencies.

6.4 Conclusion:

According to the research discussion, Facebook does not only serve as a social platform but also as a digital environment when extremist groups can influence youth easily. Facebook has become a good ground for spreading radicalization due to algorithmic content display, absence of monitoring and the psychological exposures of young people.

When we look at the discussion around criminological theories, we find that the ideological influence that begins online can take the form of violence or crime in real life. Several case studies conducted in Bangladesh show that misinformation and hate speech on Facebook are repeatedly fueling social unrest, communal strife and violence.

Because of inadequate implementation, insufficient technical capacity and the low digital awareness among the general population. It poses huge challenges in countering online extremism. The framework exists in India. They need to be strengthened more than the international ones.

An extensive plan of action to combat militant ideology through Facebook should focus on expanding digital education, effective monitoring of communications, modernization of laws and joint cooperation of the state, industry and civil society. To make digital society safe, alert and stable, multidimensional effort is a must to put in ultimately.

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