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## Essay

Topic: "The pen is mightier than the sword" - Can education permanently erode the roots of terrorism?

### Outline:

#### 1- Introduction

a) Hook

b) General statements

c) Thesis statement: Education

plays pivotal role in combating terrorism by countering ignorance, fostering peace, promoting critical thinking, countering radical ideal, and empowering masses with socio-economic opportunities, thereby creating a peaceful ground for permanently eroding the roots of terrorism.

#### 2. Education can Permanently erode the roots of Terrorism.

a) Counters ignorance, the root of extremism.

b) Promotes Critical thinking.

c) Fosters tolerance and Coexistence.

- d) Reduces poverty, a driver of terrorism.
- e) Empowers women against radicalization.
- f) Strengthens national identity.
- g) Provides vocational and employment opportunities.
- h) Promotes Peacebuilding.
- i) Strengthens democratic values.
- j) Combats online radicalization.
- k) Bridges sectarian and ethnic divide.
- l) Imparts awareness to distinguish between state and non-state actors.
- m) Nurtures global citizenship.

### 3. Conclusion

"Education is a nation's  
cheapest defence".

— Edmund Burke —

In today's interconnected world, terrorism and extremism pose serious threat to nations' national security and development. Military action can suppress violent forces for a short time,

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the root causes of these actions and violence can be only addressed by Education. Education is a powerful sword that can be used to combat radicalization and terrorism. Ignorance is the root cause of extremism and it can only be countered by peaceful education. Education fosters tolerance, reduces poverty, empowers women against radicalization and overall strengthens national identity and unity. It provides socio-economic opportunities to local citizens and strengthens democracy in a nation. Education plays pivotal role in combating terrorism as it counters ignorance, fosters peace, promotes critical thinking, counters radical ideologies and empowers masses with socio-economic

opportunities. Therefore, education creates peaceful, resilient society, and can permanently erode the roots of terrorism.

Education is mightier than military as it counters ignorance, the root of extremism. Ignorance provides fertile grounds for extremist ideologies to flourish.

Education imparts awareness among masses to identify and counter ignorance.

Educated people can identify radical thoughts and suppress them with their progressive views. The UNESCO report

shows that regions with higher literacy rate experience lower rate of extremist recruitments.

This proves that education can permanently erode the root cause of terrorism, ignorance.

Critical thinking is required to question propaganda and to combat extremism.

Education promotes critical thinking in individuals to erode terrorism totally. It empowers individuals to question terrorists' ideologies and to think rationally. Education creates civic sense in masses and they become able to negate radical ideas instead of blindly following them.

A Study by Brookings (2017) shows that societies with higher literacy levels resist radicalization more effectively.

It shows that education promotes rational thinking to combat propaganda and extremism.

Education inculcates progressive views, fosters tolerance and coexistence to combat hatred, <sup>one of</sup> the root cause of terrorism. Multicultural and inclusive curricula in education cultivate respect for diversity and pluralism. Post-genocide Rwanda introduced peace education in schools, which significantly reduced ethnic hostility. This example is a precedent and proves that education cultivates tolerance, peace, co-existence to counter terrorism.

Poverty is a major driver of terrorism. Education reduces abject poverty and minimizes unemployment, thereby counters terrorists' tactics of incentivising violence. Poverty and lack of opportunities push back youth towards

extremist groups promising financial incentives. Education offers such incentives to masses and make them law abiding citizens. The world Bank research shows that 1% rise in literacy can reduce poverty by upto 12%. Therefore, education is needed to alleviate poverty, the main driving force towards terrorism.

Education fosters women empowerment against radicalization and terrorism. Educated women have positive influence in family, society and country which discourage extremist tendencies. women have great influence in minds of their children and they play major role in promoting peaceful perceptions among youth if they are educated themselves.

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This argument is supported by saying of Napoleon Bonaparte where he said, "Give me an educated mother, and I shall promise you the birth of a civilized, educated nation." This quote and Malala Yousaf Zai's activism proves how girls education disrupts cycles of extremism.

In addition to all above factors, education also strengthens national identity and unity. A balanced curriculum is key to inculcate patriotism and unity among citizens and it combat sectarian divides. Schools, colleges and universities' environments are practical fields or grounds that foster love, peace and unity among youth. Educated people become patriot- and they are more concerned

about national identity and unity. It becomes impossible for terrorists to exploit such educated youth against their nation. Pakistan's revised curriculum 2020 emphasizes civic values to counter sectarian radicalization. Such steps in education strengthen patriotism, national identity and unity.

Education is best tool... to provide vocational and employment opportunities to youth. Youth with skills and employment are less vulnerable to extremist recruitments. While socio-economic disparity and lack of opportunities make them more prone to extremists. Education imparts civic sense in masses and become

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the source of their employment. In this way citizens become loyal to state and the writ of state can be ensured against terrorism. For instance in Afghanistan, vocational training programmes decreased the number of unemployed youth joining insurgent groups. Therefore, education is best tool to provide socio-economic opportunities to citizen and in this way it addresses socio-economic disparities which cause terrorism.

Education inculcates, fosters and promote peace building. School can act as peace zones that teach children how to resolve conflicts with peace and non-violent means.

Schools foster love, peace, harmony and discipline among children. Educated people become peace lovers and human right activists that combat terrorism. Education enables people to think critically and employ peaceful means to resolve conflict and they believe in peace.

Such perceptions play crucial role in combating extremists' ideologies of employing violence to gain their targets. For example UNICEF's "Peace Education Programme" in African conflict zones reduced child recruitment into militias. Such initiatives in education strengthen peace and harmony.

Education and awareness are pillars to strengthen democracy in any country.

when there are strong democratic values in a state, it becomes hard for terrorist to install their attacks and ideas. Research in Europe shows that civic education reduces extremist voting behaviour. Strong democratic values ensured by education ensure strong law enforcement in the state. Terrorism never holds its ground in countries with high literacy rate and strong democracy.

Education combats online radicalization and alleviate a main tool of terrorism. Digital literacy enables youth to identify and reject extremist online propaganda. In this age of technology, terrorist seek the shelter of

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online sources to start and promote hatred and their propagand. Through different posts, tweets and videos, they try to exploit young minds and use them against their state. Recently, ITP Tahreke-Taliban Pakistan is very active in online radicalization. For instance European union counter terrorism strategy highlights cyber education as a key tool against online extremism. This precedent is set and shows that education plays pivotal role in combating online radicalization.

Education is a key source to bridge sectarian and ethnic divide among citizens of any country. Schools act as practical

fields to practise love, peace, harmony and pluralism. Educational institutes teach pluralism that prevent divisions among people.

Such divisions create the societies more vulnerable to extremism because extremists

exploit sectarian and

ethnic divisions. **Northern**

**Ireland's integrated schools**

helped reduce sectarian

violence after decades of

conflict. <sup>Therefore,</sup> Education bridges ethnic and sectarian divisions

among masses and erode

the means that terrorist use.

Educated people are able to identify and distinguish between state and non-state actors. Literate masses who are also literate in digital, cyber warfare can easily identify and

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reject the non-state actors present in the country and such violent actors are funded by enemy countries and great powers for their rivalries. Education provides ground to identify and negate proxy wars. In conflict-prone areas like FATA, Balochistan, or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, higher education levels correlate with less susceptibility to recruitment by non-state actors. Educated populations are less likely to fall for anti-state propaganda.

Education combats terrorism in various ways. It nurtures global citizenship in population. Global awareness reduces extremist tendencies as it connects youth to shared human values and rights. Education imparts

humanity among population.  
Educated people see the  
world with lens of  
humanity and globalization.  
This global awareness makes  
them less prone to  
extremism. UNESCO's Global  
Citizenship Education (GCED)  
fosters empathy and intercultural  
understanding worldwide.  
So, education plays key  
role in combating terrorism  
and it does so by  
various ways.

Education is not  
merely the transfer of  
knowledge. It is a shield  
against hatred and a  
weapon against extremist. It  
promotes tolerance, counters  
ignorance, fosters critical  
thinking to counter radical  
ideas and provides

Various socio-economic opportunities to individuals. Education imparts strong democratic values which undermines the roots of terrorism. It also fosters peace, harmony and bridges sectarian gap among population. Education is best sword to use for permanently eroding the roots of terrorism.

English writer Edward

Bulwer-Lytton rightly said, "The pen is mightier than the sword." Education has power to change anything as Nelson Mandela

quoted, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."