

“Arar Deshot Arai Pardesi”: The Rohingya crisis from the perspective of the host community

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Abstract: The Rohingya people are a stateless ethnic group who reside in the Rakhine state of western Myanmar. In order to escape from the military junta in Myanmar, many Rohingyas have taken refuge in Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh, along with its local residents, has demonstrated humanitarianism by providing shelter to the Rohingyas. Despite the fact that six years have passed since the Rohingyas moved to Bangladesh in large numbers, there has been no visible progress in rehabilitating or repatriating them. This has caused a variety of problems for the local community. While there may be noticeable physical infrastructure development at the local level following the arrival of the Rohingya, closer inspection reveals that deforestation is taking place, and anxiety and insecurity at the local level are increasing day by day. Furthermore, due to the influx of Rohingyas, the local people are losing their culture and religious practices. They are even being forced to abandon their traditional occupations. For the locals, farming, fishing, and trekking in the mountains are, to some extent, no longer possible. As a result, the distance between the residents and the Rohingyas is gradually increasing, which is a cause for concern. Therefore, this research paper's primary objective is to shed light on the Rohingya crisis from the perspective of the host community, which has been directly impacted by the Rohingya influx. This article aims to provide an understanding of the issue from the perspective of the host community.

Keywords: Stateless ethnic group, Humanitarianism, Anxiety, Insecurity, Cultural loss, Refugee influx, Development agencies, Livelihood disruption, Security Health risks, Movement restriction, Sustainable resource management, Marginalization and exclusion.

Introduction

The Rohingya people, despite being historically referred to as Arakanese Indians, are actually a stateless Indo-Aryan community from Rakhine state in western Myanmar. The Burmese government's history of persecution of the Rohingya began in the late 1940s. Following this, the Burmese government denied the Rohingya citizenship according to the Burmese Citizenship Act of 1982 (Islam et al., 2022; Mahmood et al., 2017). In

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addition, the Rohingyas experienced military torture and suppression in 1978, 1991-1992, 2012, 2015, and in the last 2016-2017 (Kader and Choudhury, 2019; Chowdhury, 2021; Chowdhury and Abid, 2022; Ullah and Chattoraj, 2018, 2022). The Burmese government launched a massive Rohingya clearance operation in August 2017 in response to fighting between the Rohingya and the Burmese government that began in 2016. At least 6,700 Rohingya people were killed in the operation, and more than 700,000 Rohingya fled as refugees to neighbouring Bangladesh within a short period (Albert and Maizland, 2020; Hussam et al., 2022). When the Rohingya fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh to escape military operations, the Bangladeshi government and local community members provided them with humanitarian shelter in Cox's Bazar, particularly in the Ukhia and Teknaf regions. Amid various adversities, the people of the host community welcomed them, but in contemporary times, especially after 2018, conflicts between the Rohingyas and the locals on diverse issues are seen. Development agencies are now studying the reasons behind this growing intolerance, with a focus on the impact the refugees' presence has on the lives and livelihoods of the locals. It's a complex issue, and some believe that the conflict between expectations and achievements plays a role in the crisis.

There has indeed been a significant improvement in the living conditions of Rohingya refugees in the Teknaf and Ukhia camps in Cox's Bazar district over the past few years, thanks to the efforts of international, domestic government, and private NGOs and development organizations. Various infrastructural facilities such as health centres, learning centres, and women and children-friendly centres have been established within the refugee camps. However, it is disheartening to see that there has been no noticeable change in the lives of the ordinary people of Teknaf and Ukhia. They have had to sacrifice their culture and religious practices and even withdraw from their traditional occupations due to the presence of the Rohingyas. That has resulted in a growing distance between the residents and the refugees, with the former feeling increasingly alienated. It is important to understand the Rohingya crisis from the perspective of the host community, as they have been directly impacted by the refugee influx. This article aims to highlight the issue from their point of view and explore the challenges they face in the aftermath of the crisis. This article also sheds light on the growing intolerance between the two communities.

The purpose of this article is to examine how the arrival and resettlement of Rohingyas have been perceived by the host community members or local residents over time. The study will explore whether the presence of a large number of Rohingya refugees has had any negative impact on the daily life of the locals, based on their actual experiences. Additionally, the article will seek to understand the informants' opinions on potential solutions to the problem, with a focus on whether the measures taken for the refugees are impacting the host community members, particularly the ordinary people. By examining the issue from the perspective of the local residents, we hope to gain a better

understanding of the challenges and complexities of the Rohingya crisis and the impact it has had on the host community.

To structure our discussion around the core issues of the paper, we will follow a progression. Firstly, we will describe the ethnographic villages from which we collected data. Then, in the same section, we will give a brief overview of the methodology employed for collecting ethnographic data. In section three, we will present a concise conceptual discussion of the impact of refugees on host communities. This will provide a context within which the argument of the paper can be situated. Section four details the arrival and resettlement of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh through their own narratives. It sheds light on their challenges during the journey and upon arrival, as well as the support provided by local residents, aid organizations, and the Bangladeshi government. The section offers valuable insights into the refugee experience. Section five provides an insight into the Rohingya crisis from the point of view of the host community. This section sheds light on the challenges and issues faced by the locals due to the influx of refugees, providing a comprehensive understanding of the situation. Meanwhile, section six presents the concluding remarks, summarizing the key points discussed in the paper and providing recommendations for future action.

Ethnographic field

The discussion paper is based on the findings of a research report by the authors, which was funded by the University Grants Commission. The research area consisted of three villages in Rajapalong Union of Ukhia, which is a populous upazila under Cox's Bazar district. These three villages, namely Garu Bazar, Sikdar Bill, and Kutupalong were selected due to several factors. Firstly, they have been inhabited by local residents for a long time, and their identity as real locals is recognized by all. Additionally, these villages are quite ancient, and various business establishments, markets, shops, and offices have been built around them. The people of Garu Bazar are mainly engaged in agriculture and animal rearing, while Sikdar Bill's residents are primarily involved in paddy cultivation and fishing. Kutupalong is divided into two neighborhoods, one Muslim and the other Buddhist, with the Muslims primarily earning their livelihood by cutting wood and the Buddhists better known as traders. Currently, the largest Rohingya camp in South Asia has been established in Kutupalong, with a significant number of Middle Eastern expatriates living there, resulting in a good remittance flow. However, the presence of Rohingya refugees in these villages has had a multifaceted impact on the daily lives of local residents.

The paper aims to explore the impact of the refugee influx on the lifestyle of the local residents by examining the experiences and viewpoints of the informants in the three villages. Given the high population density and unique characteristics of these villages, the presence of the refugees has had a negative impact on the daily lives of the local

residents. This ethnographic fieldwork offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by the host community and the need for a comprehensive approach that takes their needs into account while addressing the Rohingya crisis.

The research employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques in data collection. Qualitative techniques, including interviews, case studies, field-specific mini focus group discussions, and observations, were used to capture the real conditions, experiences, thoughts, and daily practices of the informants. To address ethical concerns, pseudonyms were used for the names of the informants in the discussion paper. Furthermore, the words of the Rohingyas were translated into Bengali through a local interpreter. The researchers exercised extreme caution to avoid exaggerating or misinterpreting the information provided by the informants. As Bangladeshi researchers, there is a possibility of being biased in various matters. To mitigate this, we employed "reflexive" research to remain aware of and minimize any potential biases. Overall, the research was conducted with the utmost care and diligence to ensure that the findings accurately represent the perspectives and experiences of the informants.

Conceptual discussion of the impact of refugees on host communities

The presence of refugees can have a significant impact on the host communities in a variety of ways. Access to employment opportunities, labor wages, water supplies, land, forests, and their products may be affected. In addition, there may be an increase in food prices and housing costs (Black, 1994; World Bank, 2010). For instance, the arrival of Syrian refugees in Turkey has increased the cost of hospitality, food, and accommodation in the hosting region (Akgündüz, Berg, and Hassink, 2015; Tumen 2016). Whitaker (2002) has also shown in his research work that the arrival of refugees in local villages in western Tanzania affects the food security of both communities. He also demonstrates how refugees use an average of 65 percent more wood than locals, which damages local access to environmental resources.

The Syrian refugee crisis has impacted livelihoods, job opportunities, working conditions, housing, water management, education, and health in Lebanon. As the population and their basic needs have increased, the prices of daily necessities have gone up, and housing rents have increased by up to 44 percent (Beaujouan and Rasheed, 2020). Similarly, in Nakiwal, Uganda, refugees have evicted locals and collected firewood and crop residues from local land to use as a source of household energy (Ronald, 2020; Bjørkhaug, 2020).

Chambers (1986) notes that refugee-centered programs often focus solely on refugees, neglecting the impact of refugees on the host communities. Even in works that discuss the impact of refugees, the host country's government, economy, and services dominate the discussion, with little attention given to the implications for members of different

groups in the host community. Chamber added that the poorest in host communities are likely to suffer the most from the arrival of refugees. Similarly, Maystadt and Verwimp (2014) state that there is a lack of understanding of the impact of a sudden, large-scale forced influx of migrants on the host community's economy.

It's interesting to note that a 2019 publication by the United Nations and the IMO takes a unique approach to evaluating the impact of refugees on host communities. The report highlights both the positive and negative effects that refugees can have on their host communities, including changes in various sectors like food, housing, land, and transport. It also examines the formation of new services and organizations, shifts in the local labor market, changes in the local economy and society, and the introduction of humanitarianism. The report also acknowledges the demand for health care, education, and other services, as well as demographic changes and their impact on health, mortality, and morbidity. Finally, the publication considers issues like the impact on infrastructure and environmental change.

Jacobsen's (2002) research suggests that refugees may cause potential security, economic, and environmental issues for the host communities. Similarly, Kudrat-E-Khuda (2020) pointed out that the arrival of Rohingyas in Bangladesh has brought various challenges in terms of social, environmental, legal, and economic impacts. However, J.E. Taylor et al. (2016) emphasized that the influx of refugees can also lead to an increase in host community income and expenditure due to the rising demand, which can further contribute to the growth of the local economy.

Gracia & Saah's (2010) research sheds light on how refugee flows can impact commodity prices in markets around refugee camps in Tanzania. The authors note that the immediate impact of such flows is often felt in the availability of food aid, while the second effect is seen in the fluctuations of commodity prices in the host country. Meanwhile, Tumen's (2016) work provides insight into how host countries can be affected economically by refugee flows. According to Tumen, there are three main economic outcomes: labor market outcomes (including formal and informal employment, unemployment, labor force utilization, and wages), the impact of commodity prices on consumers, and the rise in housing rent.

The issue of security concerns in host communities as a result of the influx of refugees is a topic that has been brought up by Kirui and Mwaruvie (2012). According to them, refugees and migrant communities can pose political and security risks to host governments, which can in turn become an important factor influencing the interaction between sending and receiving countries. While members of the host community appear to welcome the refugees, there is often a chilling relationship and mutual suspicion behind this welcome. This can lead to a mutual avoidance mentality, and ultimately, mistrust between the host community and the refugees.

It is interesting to note the findings of Berti (2015), who discovered that economic and political pressures can lead to social tensions in host countries. For instance, during the Syrian civil war, he found that the refugee population and local residents supported opposing sides, leading to a deterioration of normal cohesion. Additionally, Berti noted that refugee camps can become breeding grounds for organized criminal gangs that challenge the security of host communities. This scenario can also be observed in the context of Rohingya arrival in Bangladesh. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the fact that refugees are often exposed to humanitarian aid because they are seen as helpless can create anxiety among impoverished host community members. Jacobsen (2002) also found that an increase in the economic wealth of refugees can create resentment towards them among hosts.

It's important to recognize that the presence of a large number of refugees in a particular area can have a negative impact on the local environment. Research has shown that the influx of refugees can lead to natural resource degradation at the local level (Clark, 2008; Schwartz, Deligiannis, and Homer-Dixon, 2000; World Bank 2010; Barnett, House, and Common, 2003). For instance, the Nigerian refugees in the Minawao camp in northern Cameroon have contributed to local deforestation (Groupe URD, 2017). Similarly, the Tongogara Refugee Camp (TRC) in Zimbabwe has also experienced a similar situation (Johanne and Alex, 2017).

It is common for refugees to rely on the natural resources of host communities, such as water and forests, as a source of income. However, this can often lead to tensions with host community members who may not welcome the use of their natural resources. In some cases, refugees may even become more productive than the native population, which can exacerbate these tensions. In terms of environmental impact, Jacobsen (1997) suggests that the influx of refugees can accelerate the negative change process of forests, soil, and water. This is because refugees put additional pressure on these resources, resulting in the loss of cropland, destruction of forests, and degradation of water sources.

The crises faced by host community members in Lebanon (Jafar et al., 2020) and western Tanzania (Berry, 2008) are similar in nature and are caused by the influx of refugees. The increased demand for surface and groundwater due to the presence of large numbers of refugees has resulted in negative impacts on land and agricultural productivity at the local level. In Jordan, the influx of Syrian refugees has led to a 40 percent increase in water demand in the northern governorates, resulting in acute water shortages at the local level (Breulmann et al., 2021).

Interactions between refugees and host communities can have both positive and negative outcomes, depending on the context. While such interactions can lead to increased social cohesion, as noted by Betts et al. (2022), they can also give rise to conflicts. In the current situation in Bangladesh, it can be observed that the influx of Rohingya refugees

has given rise to disputes in many areas. These conflicts can stem from a range of factors, including competition for resources, cultural differences, and political tensions. It is crucial to address these conflicts and promote positive relationships between refugees and host communities to mitigate tensions and promote peaceful coexistence.

Rohingya arrival and resettlement

The Rohingya, a Muslim minority in Myanmar, are one of the world's most populous ethnic groups. However, they are a stateless Indo-Aryan ethnic group in the Rakhine state of western Myanmar and have been denied the possibility of acquiring nationality due to the 1982 law, according to Human Rights Watch. Despite having a history traced back to the 8th century, the Burmese government refuses to recognize them as their national ethnic group, and their freedom of movement, state education, and government jobs have been banned. The Rohingyas have been living in Myanmar for generations, but they have been considered Bangladeshi illegal immigrants by the country's Buddhists, leading to various conflicts. Myanmar security forces and extremist Buddhists have continued to suppress the Rohingya population, and women, men, and children have been repeatedly subjected to brutal torture and forced to leave their homeland (UNHCR 2018, 7-9). Rohingyas started coming to Bangladesh as refugees in 1970 AD, and they faced military persecution and repression in 1978, 1991-1992, 2012, 2015, and 2016-2017.

They crossed the 63-kilometer Naf river on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border and lived in Nayapara, Kutupalong, Balukhali, and Moricya shelter camps in Ukhia and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar district (Mahmood et al., 2017). However, in 2016 and 2017, when the number of Rohingya refugees increased to 11 lakh, they were no longer limited to the designated area and spread to the hill forests of Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts. They took shelter thereby making a triple hut. They were there for a couple of months; Later the government set up 34 camps in Ukhia and Teknaf under the supervision of RRRC and all were shifted there. For the sake of security, the government is managing the camps with an executive magistrate and law enforcement in each camp. According to a December 2017 estimate, 7,00,000 Rohingya sought refuge in Bangladesh to escape the genocide started by the Myanmar military on 25 August 2017. In addition, there were 3,00,000 Rohingyas in the refugee camps that came at different times during the last three decades. This time the Rohingyas were oppressed as usual and came to the green hills of Ukhia-Teknaf. However, there are now more than twice as many Rohingya settlements as the local population of Ukhia and Teknaf (Yasmin and Akter, 2019). In a very short period, various aspects of life of the people of this region including agricultural land, labor market and education have been affected due to the pressure of the Rohingyas. There has been a lot of uproar in the media of the country and abroad about the tragedy of the Rohingyas. However, the residents of the town where they have taken refuge have not been discussed much. And whatever is discussed, no measures have been taken to enforce it.

Initially, the arrival of Rohingyas in Bangladesh was seen from a humanitarian point of view. However, the local people can no longer see the issue from a human point of view, as about 70% of the informants in the study had a negative view of the Rohingyas staying in Bangladesh for such a long period. One of the reasons for this negative view is the negative impact of the Rohingya's extended stay on the lives of the locals, as noted by Ansar and Khaled (2021). The Rohingya's presence has affected basic needs such as housing, food, and water supply, and has created issues such as increased crime, deforestation, transportation problems, and more. Additionally, the daily movement of foreigners in the locality of half a million local manpower has increased significantly due to the activities of national and international donor organizations. This has made the Rohingya problem and services a burden on the shoulders of the locals.

A group of informants has reported that approximately 149 local and foreign NGOs are working together to meet the basic needs of the Rohingyas, including providing housing. However, these organizations are not visibly improving the quality of life for the poor and needy people in the local area. The members of the host communities are suffering the most from the initial sheltering of the Rohingya, and their daily lives are under threat. The implementation of special programs only for the Rohingyas is, in a sense, neglecting the real situation of the locals, leading to mistrust and tension between the refugee Rohingya and the local population. Around 65% of the informants have observed no progress in sending the Rohingyas back to their own countries. Instead, they are being provided with comfortable living arrangements on Bhasan Char Island in Bangladesh. The informants have expressed concern about the impact of this on the local population, who are struggling to provide necessities for themselves and their families.

Some of the informants have reported feeling frustrated with the situation. In this regard, Rafiq (47) said, "We are struggling to survive in our own country, while the Rohingyas are being treated like royalty!"

Rahman (55) said, "It seems like the aunt is more important than the mother - our own people are starving while the Rohingyas are being feasted."

Anwar (45) said, "Camps are being set up for them, while we can barely provide two meals a day for ourselves."

Azam (44) expressed concern about the lack of progress in sending the Rohingyas home, saying "For a poor country like ours, this is a death knell."

Lokman (56) questioned whether the Rohingyas would even want to return home if they were allowed to stay in comfortable brick buildings.

The statements from the informants highlight the alarming situation for the locals, as the Rohingyas have been staying in Bangladesh for a long time and no effective measures have been taken to repatriate them to their country. Additionally, the provision of humanitarian facilities to the Rohingyas is viewed negatively by some as the locals who

have been directly and indirectly affected by the arrival of the Rohingya are not receiving any kind of humanitarian action. Therefore, it is crucial to address the Rohingya crisis from a humanitarian perspective and take into account the needs and concerns of those who are directly and indirectly affected by their arrival at the local level. It is important to consider the benefits of the host community members to prevent potential conflicts with the government and the people of the country. These findings underscore the need for addressing the negative impact of the Rohingya's extended stay on the lives of the locals and promoting positive relationships between refugees and host communities to mitigate tensions and promote peaceful coexistence.

The Rohingya crisis from the perspective of the host community

The Rohingya crisis has led to an influx of refugees seeking shelter in Bangladesh to escape Myanmar's military junta. The local people of Bangladesh have set a shining example of humanity by sheltering them. However, it has been more than six years since the Rohingya influx on a larger scale, and no progress has been made in rehabilitating or repatriating them. Meanwhile, local people are facing various problems due to the presence of Rohingyas. While various international organizations have extended their help to the Rohingya issue, the importance of social security for the host community at the local level is often not discussed (Chambers, 1986). A kind of 'refugee-centrism' can be observed in international refugee institutions, where the larger problems of local populations are seen as secondary. Moreover, Bangladesh has had to bear the burden of Rohingya refugees for a long time (Joehnk, 2017), leading to growing conflict and mistrust between the local population and the refugees.

Rohingya refugees are those who have fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh due to the violence and genocide perpetrated by the Myanmar military. Since August 25, 2017, around 655,000 to 700,000 Rohingya refugees have sought asylum in Bangladesh. Over the past three decades, more than 300,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh due to violent persecution by the Myanmar government (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014). The recent influx of Rohingyas to Cox's Bazar, particularly Ukhia and Teknaf, has had a significant impact on the population. Rohingyas account for 27% of the population of Ukhia (where the total population is 207,379) and 59% of the population of Teknaf where the total population is 264,389 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2014; UNDP & UN Women, 2017). In Cox's Bazar's Ukhia and Teknaf, the population of Rohingya is now three times that of the locals. More than 1.1 million Rohingya are currently living in 34 shelter camps in Ukhia and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar.

The situation in Cox's Bazar has become a major crisis for the host community, with the influx of Rohingya refugees significantly altering the demographic landscape of the region. According to the United Nations, the number of refugees has reached over 1.18 million, with women and children being the majority. This has resulted in the local

citizens becoming a minority in their own land, causing a sense of marginalization and exclusion (Habib, 2021; Yasmin & Akter, 2019). There are concerns that the high fertility rate amongst Rohingya refugees, with over 30,000 babies born in camps every year, may exacerbate this situation further (Tayeb, 2021). This situation is alarming as it has led to the marginalization of natives in their own land, which is now considered a major crisis by the host community. The impact of this crisis has caused various problems for the locals.

It is important to note that agriculture and fishing are the main sources of livelihood for the inhabitants of the study area, with regular fishing and sailing being an integral part of their daily lives. In the past, Ukhia was a major trading center for timber, particularly teak, due to its dense forests. Additionally, several salt fields in the area that have provided a means of livelihood for the locals for generations. However, the influx of Rohingya refugees has had an impact on the local economy, with many refugees taking up shelter in agricultural lands. This has resulted in a significant decrease in the amount of land available for cultivation, with paddy cultivation now stopped in 70 hectares of land, according to the Department of Agricultural Extension. As a result, many who used to cultivate crops in these lands have become unemployed, which has further compounded the economic challenges faced by the host community.

Due to the presence of Rohingya refugees in the area, the local residents are facing difficulties in their traditional occupations such as fishing and woodcutting. The Ministry of Home Affairs has imposed a fishing ban on the Naf River, which runs through the coastal region shared by Bangladesh and Myanmar (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014), to prevent illegal activities such as Rohingya infiltration and drug trafficking. Consequently, the fishermen have become unemployed and lost their means of livelihood. Moreover, the demand for the work of the local people who used to cut forest wood and earn daily wages has decreased because of this kind of government restriction. According to the informants, the daily wage of a day laborer has dropped by roughly 50 per cent. Before the arrival of the Rohingya refugees in 2017, the daily wage of a day laborer in the area was around Tk 600; currently, it has been reduced to 250 to 300 taka. The oversupply of labor has been the main reason causing the decline in daily wages (Sohel and Siddiqui, 2019). This has resulted in unequal competition between the host community members and Rohingya refugees (Ansar and Khaled, 2021).

It is important to note that according to the rules, refugees are not allowed to engage in any work. However, many refugees are leaving the camps and engaging in various jobs, including salt fields, shrimp hatcheries, and farming work, for low wages. Additionally, refugees are opening various shops and markets in safe places associated with the 34 camps of Ukhia and Teknaf, where they are selling their surplus relief and food items at low prices. This has had a direct impact on the local market, with the local market

becoming unstable and in-store purchases of retailers decreasing. As Rohingya workers are also working for low wages in all the work inside the camp, local workers are also deprived of job opportunities, resulting in a more anarchic situation. This has resulted in many local poor people becoming jobless, further exacerbating the economic challenges faced by the host community.

The arrival of refugees leads to changes in local market systems, labor markets, economies, and resource management (Nyberg-Sorencen et al, 2002; Danter et al., 2000). This can also be observed in the case of Rohingya arrival in Bangladesh. The influx of refugees has affected food security, commodity prices, local jobs, labor wages, local businesses, and government budgets. One statistic shows that the annual income of local households, including laborers and service workers, has fallen by more than 30 percent (Ullah et al., 2021). Moreover, according to the Global Food Crisis Report 2019, international organizations are providing food and other assistance to the Rohingya. After coming to the camp, 91 percent of the Rohingya's food situation has improved. However, the ability of the local poor to buy food has decreased. Overall, 48 percent of the population does not have enough money to buy food; they are either borrowing or depleting their savings. Within six months of the arrival of the Rohingya in 2017, 100 hectares of cropland had been destroyed. Humanitarian agencies have seized approximately 76 hectares of arable land to build refugee settlements (UNDP, 2018b). As a result, residents, especially those living near the camps, cannot even cultivate agricultural land. One study claimed that about 20 percent of participants who previously earned from local forests were forced to change their livelihood opportunities (Ansar and Khaled, 2021).

The normal life of the host population is being disrupted due to the increase in the prices of daily necessities at the local level. The arrival of Rohingyas has led to a significant increase in the prices of all goods, which has become a major concern for the locals of the area. Not only has the price of goods increased, but the transportation costs have also gone up. Bus fares, as well as auto-rickshaw fares, have increased several times. According to the informants, the cost of public transport has more than doubled, leading to an increase in the prices of daily commodities. Additionally, house rents have more than doubled at the local level due to the presence of various aid agencies and their workers. Consequently, it has become difficult for those living in rented accommodation among the host communities to survive in the current conditions. Overpopulation in the area has resulted in heavy traffic congestion, which is a completely new problem for the people of this area. Battery-powered easybikes, autorickshaws, jeeps, minibuses, and trucks continue to operate, contributing to the traffic pressure on the road, which has increased many times than in the past.

Local informants have reported that birth registration has been halted in Teknaf and Ukhia since the arrival of Rohingyas. Now, residents have to travel to Cox's Bazar to register, whereas previously they could easily do so online from their own area. Additionally, locals are facing difficulties in obtaining passports. The informants also mentioned that Rohingyas are reportedly obtaining Bangladeshi National IDs (NID) within a week for an extra fee of 14 thousand rupees. This has raised concerns that Rohingyas could spread across the country with NIDs. Furthermore, it has become challenging for local Bangladeshi citizens to apply for passports at the regional passport office in Cox's Bazar. There are also fears that refugees may be obtaining Bangladeshi passports by hiding their true identities (Babu, 2020; Rahaman, 2019). Due to the linguistic and physical similarities between Rohingyas and Bangladeshis, it is believed that refugees could easily apply for Bangladeshi passports by posing as locals. This situation has led to tensions between the local and refugee communities, with locals blaming the refugees for disrupting essential government services.

Local people often travel within the country for work and are frequently required to show their national identity cards to confirm their nationality. The physical appearance, language, and ethnic characteristics of the Rohingya often lead law enforcement agencies to request national identity cards from them to confirm their nationality. NGOs and INGO staff typically use their own transportation with their organization's logo, allowing them to move without much difficulty as their vehicles are not checked. However, local residents have complained about movement restrictions in their area, stating that they are the most affected. Local elderly individuals, in particular, find it difficult as many of them are not accustomed to carrying identity cards or legal documents. They often do not think of obtaining these documents unless required. The informants expressed frustration about the lack of freedom of movement due to the Rohingyas, as locals now have to wear signboards around their necks and prove their citizenship when moving locally. One informant mentioned feeling like a foreigner when walking on the road and being identified as Rohingya. Some informants drew parallels with the time when they were subjugated under the rule of the Pakistani ruler but found it unacceptable to face similar restrictions in their native, supposedly free country. This has led to growing frustration and resentment among the local population, who feel that their rights and freedoms are being curtailed in their own country.

The health risks for host communities have become a major concern. Upon arrival, refugees are living in very unsanitary conditions and often in isolation due to insufficient space in the refugee camps. A minimum hygienic environment could not be ensured for them (Bahadur and Tanner, 2018). This lack of hygiene poses a risk for outbreaks of human-borne diseases. There have been no health checks conducted on the incoming Rohingyas, and there are reports that many of them are carrying tuberculosis, skin diseases, and HIV. This poses a danger of transmitting diseases to the local population.

The healthcare available in the Rohingya camps is inadequate for the large population, leading them to seek care in local hospitals, and causing overcrowding and long wait times for locals to receive necessary health services. Local citizens are now experiencing long wait times for emergency services also. Additionally, they have expressed concerns that doctors at healthcare centers are dedicating excessive time to refugees. Citizens have also reported that national and international health organizations have been prioritizing refugees for treatment from the beginning (Anas, 2020).

Since 2017, there has been a significant decrease in student attendance at schools and colleges in the area. Consequently, the results of the SSC and HSC examinations at Ukhiya School College have plummeted. Initially, when refugees arrived, the military used schools and their premises as temporary camps, preventing students from attending school (Babu, 2020). However, a new issue has emerged. Due to the availability of well-paying job opportunities in various service organizations, students are increasingly drawn to these jobs instead of focusing on academics. This declining interest in education among the next generation is a cause for concern for the local community. Even local teachers are leaving to work for NGOs and INGOs in pursuit of better income (Grossenbacher, 2020), leading to a crisis in the local education program.

The tension between locals and Rohingyas has escalated, with conflicts becoming a daily occurrence. Locals blame the Rohingyas for fueling drug addiction in the community. They also claim that local culture and religious practices have been disrupted, citing instances of women and young girls engaging in activities that were previously uncommon among locals. Additionally, the influx of Rohingyas has led to family conflicts and breakdowns within Bengali families. There are reports of Rohingya women marrying locals for financial gain, contributing to an increase in polygamy among locals. Many believe that the Rohingyas are engaging in these activities to gain citizenship in the country more easily.

The hilly regions of Bangladesh have a unique land tenure system. Here, the most underprivileged members of society can lease plain forest lands, which are government private lands, from the government at an almost nominal cost. However, the government can also reclaim Khas land whenever it deems necessary. The sudden arrival of a large number of Rohingyas necessitated the establishment of warehouses, offices, and relief stores by local and foreign NGOs. To meet this need, the government suddenly took over the leased lands. Many of the previous landowners now face sudden losses. Informants mentioned that the government now prefers to lease land to NGOs, as they are willing to pay higher rents. This has created a conflict between NGOs and locals due to the arrival of a large number of Rohingyas.

The influx of Rohingyas has caused significant environmental damage at the local level. According to sources from Cox's Bazar District Forest Department, shelters for the

Rohingyas have been constructed on approximately three thousand acres of Kutupalong, Thaingkhali, and surrounding hills in the Ukhia range. This has led to energy shortages for the local population and extensive environmental damage. Thousands of acres of mountains have been deforested, transforming the once-visible environment into a complete desert (Abrar, 2018). The irreparable damage to the mountains and forests is a major concern. Environmental organizations report that forests worth Tk 1,865 crore have been destroyed in Ukhia and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar due to Rohingya settlement, posing a threat to the local environment, forests, and biodiversity. Additionally, 6,163 acres of forest have been destroyed, and the Rohingya settlement has damaged the habitat and range of Asian elephants (Gunderson and Pritchard, 2002).

The area from Ukhia in Cox's Bazar to Teknaf is now filled with 1.1 million Rohingya huts made of black polythene and triply on both sides of the road. As far as the eye can see, the green forests of the hill-forest area have disappeared (Khatun, 2017). These huts have been constructed by cutting down the hills. According to an informant, "I used to collect honey from this forest and sometimes brought wood. Now these are just stories, as not even a single tree can be found. The Rohingyas are even uprooting the roots of the trees."

The Rohingya people rely on land and common resources for their livelihood, which has put pressure on the environment and led to environmental issues (Jacobsen, 2002). It has been calculated by the forest department that the Rohingyas have cut down four and a half thousand acres of mountains. Environmental experts and environmentalists are concerned because these mountains are estimated to be 15-20 million years old. With the cutting of the mountains, water will now seep into them when it rains, leading to potential long-term losses for the local community. Local environmentalists estimate that the Rohingya slum area covers about 10,000 acres when including the area around the mountain. They fear that this extensive mountain cutting will cause severe environmental damage in the area and are worried about the possibility of a major landslide occurring at any time.

After the arrival of the Rohingyas in 2017, more than 5,700 deep tube wells were installed in the camp (UNDP, 2018a). The excessive use of groundwater by both locals and refugees has led to a five to nine meter drop in the water table (UNDP, 2018a). Additionally, the camp's drainage and solid waste disposal facilities are inadequate. Since the refugees arrived, around 10,000 tonnes of surplus solid waste have been generated each month (UNDP, 2018c), leading to air pollution and contamination of surface water (ISCG et al., 2019). Consequently, there are frequent conflicts between locals and refugees over the access to and use of fresh water.

The arrival of Rohingyas has led to a severe deterioration of internal law and order. Law enforcement sources report that Rohingyas who fled from Myanmar after August 25,

2017, sought refuge in Bangladesh, leading to dominance struggles, disputes over the distribution of relief goods, past enmity, involvement in Yaba business, kidnapping, murder, and rape due to internal conflicts. This poses a significant threat to internal security (Prasse-Freeman, 2017).

The involvement of the Rohingya community in the drug trade poses the biggest threat to Bangladesh (Brewster, 2019). Reports indicate that 90 percent of the deadly drug yaba entering Bangladesh originates from Myanmar, and there are allegations that many Rohingyas have brought yaba with them while fleeing (Jacobsen, 2002). Informants have reported an increase in drug availability at the local level since the arrival of the Rohingya, leading to a rise in drug addiction, especially among the youth. This has resulted in various societal inconsistencies and a deterioration of law and order at the local level. Additionally, Rohingyas are allegedly involved in drug trafficking, illegal arms trafficking, and are linked to an increase in theft, robbery, extortion, and other criminal activities (Parnini et al., 2013). As a result, many local families are relocating to divisional towns due to concerns about the future of their children.

Apart from being reckless, Rohingyas are getting involved in various crimes. Residents, businessmen, journalists, and members of law and order forces have been victims of Rohingya attacks. Unequal competition for limited resources is a regular feature among Rohingya inside the camps. Many Rohingyas are living a subhuman life inside the camp. As a result, many Rohingyas indulge themselves in illegal activities in the hope of improving their quality of life without thinking about any consequences (Hammar, 2014). As a result, the local people are suffering from Rohingya fear. Locals fear that they will be subjected to more difficult situations in the future. Earlier, the Rohingyas used to roam around in search of various necessities including food. Now they don't have to run anywhere for food and household necessities. NGOs are delivering all the essentials to their homes. As there is no work and family to fall back on, the Rohingyas are involving themselves in various misdeeds. They made the Rohingya camp the Yaba state. Rape, murder, and assault became their routine. Due to them, the locals are now helpless. Locals are under security risk and fear. Moreover, incidents of abuse of domestic and foreign development workers by Rohingyas have now become almost routine.

The arrival of Rohingyas in Bangladesh has had a significant impact on the lives of local people and the country as a whole. Many people believe that Bangladesh is facing financial pressure due to the presence of Rohingyas. The government has had to allocate resources from different forces, including the police, army, and BGB, to address the needs of the Rohingya refugees, leading to increased state expenditure. This has put a strain on the national budget, and the money could have been used for other purposes if the Rohingya issue didn't exist. Additionally, the Rohingya problem has strained relations

with India and intensified Bangladesh's hostile relationship with Myanmar, which is detrimental to Bangladesh.

The Rohingya refugees have sought shelter in Bangladesh mainly for humanitarian reasons. However, their increasing numbers in Cox's Bazar district, especially in Ukhia, have brought about many risks. If this crisis is not resolved soon, various challenges will continue to emerge, including health hazards, deforestation, socio-economic and political issues, economic risks, drug proliferation, decline in the tourism industry, security threats, imbalance in the education system and environment, prolonged traffic congestion, competition among NGOs and INGOs at the expense of the education and well-being of the younger generation, and a significant increase in housing prices. These problems are also causing a sense of permanent loss in the host community (Martin, 2005).

The prolonged stay of Rohingyas in Bangladesh has resulted in locals facing difficulties in accessing basic services and limited resources, creating a sense of dissatisfaction among them (Biswas et al., 2021). The path of inter-communal conflict is widening due to the length of their stay, and public sentiment towards the Rohingyas is slowly waning due to the impact on local livelihoods (Ansar and Khaled, 2021). Factors such as economic instability, political uncertainty, and unequal access to humanitarian aid are shifting the place of mutual solidarity to mutual conflict. Unequal access to humanitarian aid can exacerbate intergroup conflict, and therefore, must be addressed (Anderson, 1999). Additionally, environmental impacts and unequal competition over natural resources can have a socioeconomic impact, hindering the peace and cohesion of a society, and leading to the deterioration of relations between host communities and refugees (Berry, 2008).

The informants had different opinions on how to address the problems caused by the arrival of the Rohingya. Many of them believed that Bangladesh needs appropriate laws and regulations to manage the extraction, control, and depletion of natural resources, and to promote sustainable use of nature. They felt that the absence of such laws and regulations would create problems for both local citizens and refugees. Furthermore, they suggested that donor agencies should support both Rohingya and locals equally. Some mentioned that unequal distribution of aid and relief goods could lead to regional conflicts, so donor agencies should be more careful in selecting beneficiaries and avoiding overlaps. They also emphasized the need to strengthen monitoring systems to reduce corrupt distribution. It was pointed out that some of the poorer hosts of humanitarian aid, particularly those living close to the refugee camps, are benefiting from it, while those farther away remain neglected (Khaled, 2021). Therefore, there is a need to identify the truly needy and poor people and ensure that they receive the necessary grants and assistance. It's important to remember that not all host communities are

homogenous. Therefore, they demanded to bring the real people under the help by using the right approach in taking action. However, many people expressed the opinion that this problem cannot be tackled only with relief materials. Many stressed the importance of extending a helping hand while also taking into account the problems of the local population. They talk about the need to listen to locals and take their point of view seriously. Most common people think that the only solution is to send the Rohingya back to their country. Otherwise, the severity of the problem will increase and thereby cause irreparable damage to Bangladesh. Some of the informants believe that there is no way out except through diplomatic negotiations with superpowers like China and Russia. Otherwise, the problem caused by the Rohingya's location in Bangladesh will become more pronounced in the future. Some say international organizations need to be more proactive in this regard. Moreover, considering the importance of the matter, many believe that the United Nations can play an effective role.

The above discussion highlights the severity of the Rohingya crisis and the impact it has had on the local population. While Bangladesh initially welcomed and provided shelter to the Rohingyas, the prolonged stay of refugees has created various challenges for the host community. As a result, many locals are now demanding that the Rohingyas be sent back to their home country as soon as possible, as they are seen as a threat to their normal livelihoods. This underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive and sustainable solution to address the Rohingya crisis and ensure peaceful co-existence between refugees and the host community.

Conclusion

A steady increase in the number of refugees in a country paves the way for intense discontent at the local level in that country (Jacobsen, 2001). The number of Rohingyas in Bangladesh is almost three times the number of locals, contributing to a dangerous situation at the local level. According to a 2018 survey by UNDP, the areas most affected by the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh are Teknaf and Ukhia. The Rohingya people have a similar appearance to the local population, making it difficult to distinguish between them (Ansar and Khaled, 2021). Due to the Rohingyas' similarity with the local population, it has become increasingly difficult to differentiate between them in certain situations. As a result, the administration is implementing various measures at the local level to restrict their unrestricted movement, including the requirement to carry a national identity card at all times. This has become a real problem for the locals, who find it ironic that they have to constantly prove their nationality in their own country. No one wants to feel like a foreigner in their own land. Everyone deserves the right to live and move freely in their own country. The situation with the Rohingya poses a threat to the free movement and livelihood of locals. Rohingya workers can work in almost all jobs within the Rohingya camps and are even disguising themselves as wage laborers at the local level. Additionally, some international organizations and NGOs are providing work

opportunities for the Rohingyas and regular relief assistance. Unfortunately, there has been no effective action by the government, international organizations, and NGOs to improve the livelihood of those who are directly or indirectly affected by the arrival of Rohingyas. These individuals receive no relief assistance, and their workplaces have been destroyed in certain areas. As a result, it's understandable for some locals to feel angry towards the Rohingyas. Due to the large number of Rohingyas moving into the area, significant changes are being observed in the local infrastructure and social system. This has resulted in increased travel costs and time, which has led to an increase in the price of daily necessities. As a result, the middle class is now falling into poverty, and the poor are becoming even poorer. It is crucial to deeply understand the issues of mutual tension between the residents and the Rohingyas. Since the Rohingyas cannot be easily repatriated, ensuring peaceful coexistence is now of utmost importance. This can only be achieved through positive interaction between the two communities and the creation of a sense of social cohesion among them. It is essential to adopt a realistic and sustainable approach that recognizes the local social and cultural context to foster positive interaction between the host community and the Rohingya. In this regard, the government, the United Nations, and international organizations should take a more proactive role. The arrival of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh is not a unique situation in the world. Many countries have experienced a large influx of refugees and have dealt with it in their ways. Bangladesh can learn from the experiences of other nations and work towards finding an immediate and effective solution. The government, international organizations, and NGOs should collaborate and take timely and appropriate measures to address the issue. The severity of the problem should be taken into consideration while formulating a comprehensive approach to handle such situations.

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