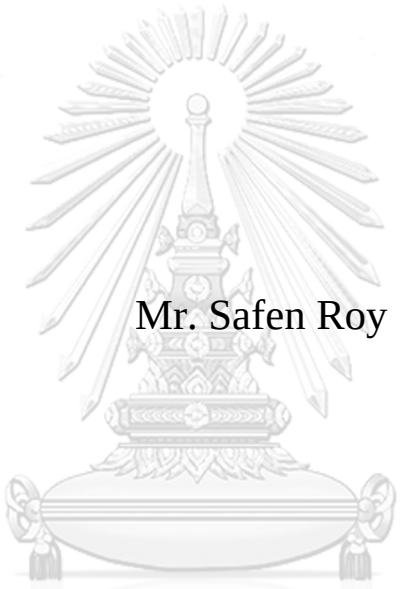
ROHINGYA REFUGEE ASSIMILATION IN BANGLADESH: A CASE STUDY OF COX'S BAZAR

Mr. Safen Roy



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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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ความคล้ายคลึงของผู้อพยพโรฮิงญาในบังคลาเทศ:กรณีศึกษาของค็อกซ์บาซาร์ (Cox's Bazar)

นายซาเฟน รอย



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วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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ลี้ภัยและการถูกบังคับย้ายถิ่นฐานเป็นโศกนาฏกรรมที่เกิดขึ้นอยู่เสมอในโลกปัจจุบัน แม้องค์กรระหว่างประเทศและองค์กรไม่แสวงหาผลกำไร (NGO) จะพยายามแก้ไขปัญหาวิกฤตผู้ลี้ภัยทั่วโลก แต่ก็ยังมีอุปสรรคที่ต้องฟันฝ่ารวมถึงทัศนคติเชิงลบต่อผู้ลี้ภัยของประเทศเจ้าบ้านเองด้วย ในสถานการณ์ส่วนใหญ่ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับประเทศกำลังพัฒนาจะพบว่าประเทศเจ้าบ้านมักเกิดปัญหาในการจัดการประชากรของตนเองรวมถึงการจัดการกับหลั่งไหลเข้ามาในประเทศของผู้ลี้ภัย วิทยานิพนธ์นี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อศึกษาการเพิ่มปริมาณของผู้ลี้ภัยชาวโรฮิงญาในบังกลาเทศ บังกลาเทศเป็นประเทศกำลังพัฒนาที่ต้องอาศัยความช่วยเหลือจากนานาชาติเพื่อรับมือกับการหลั่งไหลเข้ามาของชาวโรฮิงญาในปี พ.ศ. 2560

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้แสดงให้เห็นว่าการจะส่งตัวผู้ลี้ภัยชาวโรฮิงญาที่หลั่งไหลเข้ามาในบังคลาเทศให้กลับออกไปหลังจากผ่านไปนานถึงเกือบ 5 ปีนั้นเป็นไปได้ยาก ผู้ลี้ภัยส่วนใหญ่มีโอกาสปรับตัวเข้ากับสังคมของประเทศเจ้าบ้านผ่านการแต่งงาน การทำงาน และการเริ่มต้นทำธุรกิจ นอกจากนี้ ไม่ควรลืมว่าชาวโรฮิงญานั้นได้เข้ามาอยู่อาศัยในพื้นที่ดังกล่าวมานานหลายทศวรรษแล้ว พรมแดนระหว่างเมียนมาร์และบังคลาเทศมีความง่ายแก่การอพยพโยกย้าย นอกเหนือจากนี้วัฒนธรรมและลักษณะของชาวยะไข่และชาวค็อกซ์บาซาร์ยังมีความคล้ายคลึงกันอีกด้วย

เพื่อพิสูจน์ว่าการปรับตัวเข้ากับสังคมที่อาศัยอยู่มีความเป็นไปได้มากกว่าการส่งผู้ลี้ภัยกลับประเทศ วิทยานิพนธ์นี้จึงรวบรวมภูมิหลังทางประวัติศาสตร์มานำแสดงเพื่อช่วยให้เข้าใจถึงความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างชาวโรฮิงญาและบังกลาเทศในฐานะประเทศเจ้าบ้าน จากนั้น วิทยานิพนธ์นี้จะวิเคราะห์ถึงผลที่เกิดขึ้นจากวิกฤตในสถานการณ์ปัจจุบันในเขตค็อกซ์บาซาร์ โดยอาศัยหลักทฤษฎีและเอกสารการวิจัยที่ผ่านการตรวจสอบโดยผู้เชี่ยวชาญ

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Refugees and forced migration are recurrent tragedies in today's world. Despite the efforts of international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address the global refugee crisis, there are obstacles to overcome and a negative attitude toward refugees among host nations. In most situations involving developing countries, host towns struggle to manage their populations and the influx of refugees. This thesis aims to look at the Rohingya refugee surge in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a developing country reliant on international assistance to deal with the Rohingya influx in 2017.

With the influx of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, this paper demonstrates that the repatriation of Rohingya refugees after almost five years is no longer possible. Most refugees have a better chance of assimilating into the host society through marriage, work, and starting a business. Additionally, the Rohingya people have been arriving in the area for decades. The border between Myanmar and Bangladesh is easy to migrate to and fro and the cultures and characteristics of the people in Rakhine and Cox's Bazar are similar.

To establish that assimilation is more probable than the repatriation of the refugees, this paper gathers historical background to help understand the relationship between the Rohingyas and Bangladesh as the host nation. Then the paper tries to analyze the outcome of the crisis in the current scenario in the Cox's Bazar district with the help of theories and peer-reviewed research papers.

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The Rohingya refugee crisis has touched the lives of many Bangladeshi people. When I conducted interviews and talked to the refugees and local people in Cox's Bazar, it became apparent how different lives have evolved after the mass migration started. I wanted to highlight different perspectives and analyze the refugee crisis and its aftermath from a factual standpoint and not give into biasedness or sentiment.

I want to express my gratitude to my thesis advisor Dr Sunait Chutintaranond whose expertise in history and guidance has helped me write this paper. A special thanks to Dr Dulyapak Preecharush, whose feedback and suggestions have helped me to write with a direction. My gratitude extends to my thesis committee members and classes that helped to start this paper. My deepest appreciation goes to Miss Pimchanok Kutchon and the program officers at the Graduate school who have assisted me countless times.

Most importantly, my family, friends, and my partner's support and encouragement in academics and life. During my stay in Bangkok, I experienced many things which I hope I can count on throughout my life.

Safen Roy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1.1 Background

The government of Myanmar has subjected the Rohingya to decades of prejudice and brutality. As a result of the 1982 Citizenship Law, they are considered one of the most persecuted stateless people in the world. The Rohingya population of Bangladesh is estimated at almost 900,000 people who live in overcrowded camps. To escape military crimes against humanity and genocide, most of them have fled Myanmar. In Rakhine State, an estimated 600,000 people are subjected to persecution by the Myanmar government.

Initially, Cox's Bazar was a popular tourist site and a source of several popular tourist attractions. Rohingya settlements and small businesses catering to the activists and locals have now been established in this region. According to the UN Refugee Agency, collective expulsion led to the migration of 723,000 people. Dubbed by the media, the Rohingya refugee crisis is one of the world's gravest humanitarian disasters in recent times (Griffiths, 2016). In addition, as the number of migrants entering Bangladesh continues to rise, enormous strains are being placed on the country's economy.

This research tries to determine if the repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar is doable in light of the present circumstances. I have developed research questions and acquired historical context better to comprehend the connection between the Rohingyas and Bangladesh.

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1.1.2 Refugees

In the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees, a refugee is described as an individual who is beyond their state of citizenship or permanent home; has a well-founded concern of being targeted because of his other city, faith, country, participation in an ethnic group, or political viewpoint; and is incapable or unable to avail security offered by that government, or to travel there, due to the apparent fear of punishment. They are frequently considered to be victims of deadly conflict. As a result, refugees in this situation usually live under poor conditions in their host countries and rely heavily on humanitarian aid.

1.1.3 Problem Formulation

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were 82.4 million forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2020, with more than a quarter of them being refugees. Turkey, Colombia, Germany, Pakistan, and Uganda are the top five host countries where these displaced people are currently. Turkey's situation exemplifies the effects of proximity, with 92 percent of its refugees arriving from Syria, where a war and armed conflict has raged for more than ten years. (World Bank Group.) While the refugee crisis in Syria has been termed a protracted refugee situation, this paper tries to link and understand what the outcome of the refugee crisis in Bangladesh will have.

More than 48 million internally displaced people have fled their homes in search of safety elsewhere within their home nation. Approximately three out of every

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four refugees (15.7 million people) under the UNHCR's mandate are in protracted situations, which UNHCR defines as a situation in which 25,000 or more refugees of the same nationality have been in exile in a given asylum country for five years or more. (UNHCR.)

The UNHCR describes protracted refugee situations: "In which refugees find themselves in a long-term and intractable state of limbo, " Their lives may not be in danger, but after years in exile, their basic rights and essential economic, social, and psychological needs have not been met." Long-term refugees are frequently denied freedom of movement, access to land, and legal employment. In 2019, only 317,200 refugees returned home.

In April 2022, the number of refugees in the camps of Cox's Bazar was 936.561, and after the initial influx in 2017, the number of refugees kept growing. A solution to the refugee crisis is essential for the host country and the refugees. The UNHCR still has not termed the camps in Cox's Bazar as a protracted refugee situation, but after almost five years, it meets the criteria for being regarded as one.

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Because Rohingya refugees are believed to be the world's most enormous refugee population and one of the world's most persecuted ethnic minorities, this paper will look into one of the many ways this crisis may end or its more natural outcome being assimilation.

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1.2 Research Question

Based on the problem statement, a research question can be formulated as below: *What is the likely outcome for the Rohingya people's settlement in Bangladesh in light of unsuccessful repatriation schemes?*

1.2.1 Sub-Research Questions:

Recognizing that the effect of Rohingya refugees on Bangladesh is pervasive, sub-questions have been developed to help pin down the scope of the study.

- Who are the Rohingya?
- What role does Bangladesh play as a refugee welcoming community for Rohingya Muslims?
- What has been done to repatriate and relocate the Rohingya?
- How will the Rohingya community assimilate into Bangladesh?
- What are the challenges faced by Rohingya in assimilating into the host region?

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1.3 Objective of the thesis

a. To explore the events leading to the displacement of the Rohingya community

b. To analyze the impacts of the Rohingya refugees on the local people

c. To examine how are the refugees integrating into Bangladesh society

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1.4 Hypothesis

Repatriation of the Rohingya is no longer possible since most refugees are integrating into Bangladesh.

With the migration of the Rohingya population, there has been an impact on the host area. There is increased integration with the local people regarding marriage, business, trade, and jobs. However, the government of Bangladesh and other agencies have tried to control these acts of integration and looked toward the repatriation and relocation of the Rohingya refugees. The outcome for most refugees may not be repatriation but might be assimilating into the host country.

1.5 Methodology

The paper uses a qualitative approach to understand the likely outcome for the hypothesis that has been defined above. This paper depended on various authors' secondary data, collected, analyzed, and documented. The use of secondary data is attributed to multiple advantages because of plenty of information. The secondary sources prioritized included articles, journals, academic books, and official reports. Most of these sources were via search engines like Google Scholar and online databases such as UNHCR, Humanitarian responses, and the Bangladesh Government and Bangladeshi Bureau of Statistics.

Although secondary data is available, it is also associated with disadvantages. The Rohingya Refugee crisis has many vested communities, biased opinions, sentimentality linked to the problem, and looking at the crisis from a nonfactual

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standpoint. This paper tries to limit and observe my own bias in this case and understand the many layers in the research that have analyzed this crisis so far.

Lastly, this research will examine the integration of Rohingya refugees into the host population in Cox Bazar, Bangladesh, utilizing Massey and Denton's absorption movement theory of spatial assimilation.

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Chapter 2: Historical Background of Rohingya

Before analyzing the impacts of Rohingya refugees, it is vital to investigate the background and historical information on the issue. The Bangladesh people consider the Rohingyas as Myanmar nationals who underwent forceful displacement. On the other hand, in Myanmar, the Rohingyas are seen as illegal citizens because they are referred to as Bengalis. In light of the following history, this paper will aim to show how interconnected the whole region is.

There has been a movement of people from the Rakhine state to Chittagong and vice versa over centuries. Even though there have been borders created and destroyed over wars, dynasties, colonization, and the formations of countries, the fluid border meant that people from Rakhine were in Bangladesh for extended periods as well, as many Rohingya people were already assimilated into the host region.

This paper attempted to provide a historical overview of the Rohingya people and their forced expulsion in the first segment. After explaining Bangladesh's reaction to the Rohingya crisis, the paper outlined the involvement of the local host society, known as Cox's Bazar, in the crisis' aftermath.

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2.1.1 Who are the Rohingya?

The Rohingya people cannot be reduced to a single or small set of characteristics, which must be clarified. Several experts have referred them to the Rakhine ethnic, language, and minority Muslim group as an ethnocultural, linguistic, and minority Muslim population. However, they have not been acknowledged as citizens of Myanmar since 1982. (Ullah 2011).

The origin and exact roots of the Rohingya have been contested, and there are many views by scholars, historians, and governments. There are different versions by different entities. According to one scholar, in the 1950s, the word "Rohingya" was first used. He believes educated Bengalis in Arakan were the first to use it (Chan, 2005). However, according to another scholar Buchanan (1799), the Rohingya have lived in Arakan for a long time. According to Yin (2005), the term "Rohingya" was coined before the twentieth century. According to Rogers (2013), many Myanmar nationals believe that the Rohingya people arrived illegally from Bangladesh in the 19th century. According to Smith (2006), Muslims and Buddhists have coexisted for over a thousand years on both sides of the Naaf River near the Rakhine state. According to the government of Myanmar and Burmese history, the Rohingya are Bengali Sunni Muslims, an ethnic minority population mostly found in Rakhine State. The government of Myanmar maintains that the Rohingya people moved from Bengal to Myanmar's Rakhine State during and after the British colonial period (Bahar, 1981). Another view is that the Rakhine state has been home to the Rohingya since "time immemorial," as proclaimed by the Rohingya (Lee, 2021). According to the

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Rohingya scholars whom Lee has researched.it was the ancestors of the Rohingya introduced and expanded Islam throughout in southwestern Myanmar.

In the light of these different accounts, it becomes increasingly difficult to pinpoint the exact history of the Rohingya community. However, all of this is important as to understand the history of what has led to these conflicting details.

2.1.2 Language of the Rohingya

The Rohingya people mainly speak two languages, including the Burmese language, which is the national language of Myanmar, and their own Rohingya language. However, a survey conducted in the camps of Cox's Bazar in 2019 established that Rohingya is the language most refugees understand and prefer. It is believed that over 1 million people speak the Rohingya language. Due to the geographical proximity, the language is closely related to other South Asian languages, such as the Rakhine language. Also, because most Rohingya people are Muslim, their language has Arabic and Urdu influences. The Rohingya language has various dialects, particularly within the Rakhine State.

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However, the Rohingya people face a language dilemma in the camps because they cannot communicate appropriately with the local people and aid providers due to the language barrier. Their language has become a source of exclusion both in their home country Myanmar and their host nation Bangladesh. The Bangladesh government has outlawed Rohingya refugees from learning the local language since the authorities are not keen to allow long-term integration. To enhance their survival

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chances, Rohingya children are often forced to secretly learn three languages, including Bangla, Burmese, and native Rohingya (Kumar 2019).

2.2.1 The emergence of Islam and the glory days of the Mrauk U Kingdom

On some accounts, the Rohingya can be traced back to the Eighth Century AD, when their ancestors' community settlements were in the Kingdom of Arakan. The people in Arakan came to contact with Arab traders during the ninth to the fourteenth century and were introduced to Islam, and ties began to be made between the Arakan state and East Bengal. At the same time, in other parts of Myanmar, in 1057 AD, King Anawrahta unified the Burmese state and adopted Theravada Buddhism.

Maritime sailors claimed to be an early introduction to Arakan's Islam (Lee 2021). Unlike Arakan-delimited Burma's Buddhist kingdom, there were no such barriers between Arakan and Eastern Bengal in mountainous areas. The borders were fluid and facilitated the movement of people. This fluid border is a crucial aspect of this study as this paper will try to show how the migration of the Rohingya population into Bangladesh leads to assimilation. Because of this relative degree of freedom, people move spontaneously to this area for the spread of people with Indian heritage to Islamic spread. Arakan's significant Muslim political impact is regularly related to creating the Mrauk U Dynasty, regarded as the golden period of Arakan. At this time, Arakan's economy was thriving. It was known for being a significant rice exporter and trading hub. (Hogan 2018) Mrauk U, the capital, was formerly a major trading

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center for Portuguese, Dutch, Armenian, Arab, and Persian traders. The influence of Bengal on Buddhist architecture resulted in Muslim influences, and Mrauk U kings produced coins in both Arabic and Arakanese

According to stories from visitors as studied by Lee (2021), in the 15th and 16th centuries, the region of East Bengal surrounding Chittagong was already populated by sizable Muslim communities. Even by the time, the Arakans came to power in the region in 1459. After that, Chittagong was still considered a part of the Empire of Arakan for the following two centuries. The first Anglo-Burmese conflict broke out in 1824 due to this expansionist strategy on the borders of the British Empire (Raporu, 2000).

2.2.2 British Colonization and the role of the East India Company

Burma's involvement in the first of three Anglo-Burma conflicts began in 1824, four decades after Burma invaded Arakan. The defeat of the Burmese and British invasion of Arakan in 1826 began more than a century of colonial rule in Burma. Arakan was divided and governed by the British under British rule. As a result, Buddhists hated Rohingya Muslims and began referring to them as "Kalas" (foreigners).

As a result of Burma losing all three wars with Britain, the kingdom ceded substantial land areas to British authority. Following the British defeat in the third war, Burma came under British India, governed by Calcutta and Delhi. The last Burmese king, Thibaw Min, was exiled to India became the greatest humiliation for Burmese Buddhists. Burmese Buddhist rulers had a symbolic and influential role in the development of Buddhism as patrons of the religion. Thibaw Min and his

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household were removed from their home by a bullock cart, considered an insult to the religion. According to scholars, following the dissolution of the monarchy, a significant legitimacy vacuum was created, which was never adequately supplied by the British colonial authorities (Holmes, 2016).

Burma's military and political defeats hurt its nationalistic sentiment. The country's Buddhist majority resented the British and those who benefited from British rule. This hatred targeted the Rohingya and other Muslim groups in Myanmar who were seen in favor of the British. The widespread opinion increased the animosity that the British authority favored Indian-born citizens, especially Muslims with darker skin than the country's Buddhists. The British judged Burma as underpopulated and encouraged low-wage workers from India to come in and undercut local work rates in Burma. Thus, a large influx of Indian moneylenders arrived.

Due to loan defaults from many Bamar, the Indians became big landowners in colonial Burma, evicting native people from their ancestral lands even after the British left Burma. There was a widespread belief among the native Buddhist population that Indian, often Muslim, migrants flooded the country, giving them an economic advantage. These beliefs increase ethnic and religious tensions in modern Myanmar (Lee, 2021).

In the early decades, the East India Company (EIC) gave commercial advice to the British government. The EIC wanted to drastically increase the amount of arable land in Arakan to optimize its financial returns. To meet the administrative and economic needs of the region, the EIC supported the immigration of farm laborers, administrators, and other employees from Burma and the continent into the country because of their cheap labor. Thus, Burma's population rose substantially during the

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British colonial period, mainly due to migration. The government of Myanmar has used this note of increased migration of the British to deny that the Rohingya community has been in Myanmar since ancient times, stating that they had migrated to Myanmar from the Indian subcontinent. This is one of the causes of tension and conflict regarding their citizenship in Myanmar.

Also, in the British colonial period, the migrations caused tensions in Burma. Indians and those who looked similar were viewed as superior in the British colonial order to other ethnic groups, leading to enmity among the Rohingya and Rakhine Buddhist communities (Lee, 2021).

2.2.3 Citizenship denials and making the Rohingya stateless

In 1948, Burma was declared an independent country from British India. Ethnic groups believed to have lived in Burma before the conflict would be recognized and granted group citizenship privileges in Myanmar. Following Myanmar's independence, the Rohingya people in northeastern Rakhine wanted to establish an Islamic republic for themselves. The Rohingyas established an army in 1948 and approached President Jinnah of Pakistan of the newly founded East Pakistan to request that northern Arakan be incorporated into East Pakistan (Bangladesh)." (1996, Human Rights Watch) Many analysts believe that the Rohingyas' disloyalty contributed to the Bangladeshi and Burmese communities, creating the current problems. (Smith, 1993). This betrayal from a united Myanmar would cause the

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Rohingya community to be seen as aliens from their neighbors and add to the rising tensions in the Rakhine state.

From 1948, there was more and more conflict and attacks between the Buddhist communities and the Rohingya Muslims in the coming years. The Rohingya assaulted Buddhist communities in the Northern Rakhine region, causing significant violence and furthering hatred between the Rohingya and the Rakhine Buddhists. The Myanmar military began to exert authority over the insurgency in 1954, and the insurrection was briefly halted in 1961 by a series of ceasefire agreements (Yegar, 2002)

In 1954, Prime Minister U Nu awarded citizenship to the Rohingyas in Myanmar. A decade later, in 1964, the army administration enacted the National Security Act, which prohibited the Rohingya groups from citizenship in the country, making the Rohingya community stateless (San Lwin, 2012). More than 270,000 Rohingya people fled to Bangladesh from 1966 to 1980, when they were again refused citizenship due to crimes committed against them. On the other hand, the Rohingya insurgent organizations did not take a break from fighting throughout this period. They were engaged in clashes with the state in 1974, and the split between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya grew more due to these hostilities. In addition, conservative Buddhists and monks requested that the government expel the Rohingya from Myanmar, which the government refused to (Rieffel, 2017).

The Rohingyas were granted citizenship in 1982 under new citizenship legislation that allowed them to apply if they could speak in one of Myanmar's official languages and prove that their ancestors had resided in the country before its independence in 1948. However, the country's Rohingya dialect was not considered

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an established language. The Rohingyas claimed their forefathers had fled to Myanmar throughout the Arakan administration's and British occupation's reigns of power. As a result, the vast majority of Rohingya could not get citizenship. The succeeding administration disputed that the Rohingyas were one of the country's 135 ethnic groups, which was necessary to grant citizenship. As a result, the Rohingya minority was regarded to being as a stateless people.

Many atrocities were carried out against the Rohingya again in the coming decades (Anwary, 2018). In 1991, the Myanmar government gathered a group of military forces in the northern Rakhine state to defend the country. The Rohingyas were forced to work as confined laborers by the military. In 1992, 250,000 Rohingyas were forced to cross the border into Bangladesh due to the atrocities. Throughout the coming century, Rohingyas were subjected to unrelenting repression. As a result, the dispute between the Rohingya and the Rakhine people continued, and there were recurring conflicts in Sittway, the regional capital of Rakhine.

2.2.4 Continued exclusions, atrocities, and recurring mass migrations

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The President of Myanmar, Thein Sein, said in July 2012 that the Rohingyas were a threat to the unity of the Rakhine state and that they should be expelled, that Rohingyas might be placed in UNHCR camps or transported to another country if that country was willing to accept them. As a result, there was overwhelming popular opinion in Myanmar that the Rohingyas have no place in the country. The president's comments encouraged the use of violence against Rohingya Muslims. Several Rohingyas were executed in large groups in 2012 following rumors that Rohingya had been attacked and slain by a Rakhine Buddhist woman. According to the rumor, Rakhines and military and military personnel killed thousands of Rohingyas. The

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Rakhine people were ordered to evict Rohingyas from their houses by the government and the army, who then set fire to the crowd. 140,000 people were relocated as a result of the dispute. In 2013, atrocities against Rohingyas continued.

Until 2014, Rohingyas were allowed to identify as either Bengalis or Rohingyas, depending on their location. The use of "Rohingyas" was viewed as controversial by many people. In 2014 a year before the General elections of Myanmar, the government authorized Rohingyas to designate themselves as Rohingyas during the elections. Buddhist nationalists from around the country expressed their displeasure with the government's choice. Consequently, the government determined that Rohingyas might enlist as Bengalis.

The state of affairs did not change for the Rohingya even after the NLD came into power after a long period of Military governments. Aung San Suu Kyi served as State Counsellor (equivalent to Prime Minister) and Foreign Minister from 2016 until 2021. In these years, the former Nobel laureate may have displeased both the international and Rohingya communities with her alliance with the Buddhists.

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Suu Kyi avoided using the term "Rohingyas" in her public statements. The Nobel laureate did, however, establish a commission on Rakhine State, chaired by Kofi Anan, to find a solution to the conflict in the Rakhine state and hopefully put an end to the growing hostility of the people. At the same time, the increasing number of Rohingyas in Myanmar and the influx of Rohingya immigrants from Bangladesh made ultra-Buddhist nationalists predict that the country would transition from a Buddhist to a non-Buddhist state (McPherson, 2017).

Large-scale military atrocities against Rohingyas took place in the year 2015. A majority of Myanmar's parliament members voted in favor of a measure to reform

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the law that prevents White Cardholders, primarily Rohingya Muslims, from voting in elections or influencing the elected groups before the 2015 elections. The majority of Myanmar's citizens did not require a White Card to vote in the country's political choice (Myint, 2014)

2.2.5 The Rohingya crisis

The 135 ethnic minority groups of Myanmar were represented by various competing or overlapping organizations, ranging from civil society and political parties to armed ethnic groups. Thein Sein's administration collaborated with the United Nations Population Fund to carry out in early 2015 the first national census in more than three decades. It released all data except for information on ethnic identity. The data on ethnic identity, which was expected to be released in 2017, was seen as sensitive due to the contested nature of 135 officially recognized categories for ethnicity and the implications for negotiations with ethnic groups over demands for autonomy, particularly in the peace process (Anwary, 2018)

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After the Myanmar elections in 2015, Aung San Suu Kyi was the state counsellor when the long-simmering tensions in Rakhine boiled over in late 2016 with a series of attacks by suspected Muslim militants that led to harsh military reprisals. On October 9, at least 350 Rohingya militants armed with knives, sticks, and swords coordinated raids on several police posts along Rakhine's border with Bangladesh in initial attacks. An increase in violence and military operation in northern Rakhine resulted in the arrest and detention of more than 600 self-identified Rohingya males, village burning, the suspension of humanitarian assistance for at least 41 days, and

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claims of military atrocities exacerbated the situation. State officials alleged that overseas terrorist connections, possibly to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, were involved in the conflict in Rakhine. The officials kept alleging that Rohingya men in northern Rakhine vowed to create their state in the country and declare jihad (Bashar 2017). This further increased the divide between the Buddhists and the Rohingya.

On January 1, 2016, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) was established. Initially, ARSA was no match for Myanmar's security and military forces, but it made an effort to assist Rohingya residents. According to the information available at the time, ARSA did not have more than 500 soldiers. The government's attempt to reject Rohingya's permanent residency and the significant centralized management of the army in northern Rakhine were deemed to be violations of human rights by ARSA (Bashar 2017)

The final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, headed by Kofi Anan, was released on August 24, 2017. During this time, the ARSA would go on stage coordinated attacks on government outposts in and around Rakhine state the next night, August 25, 2017, killing 12 troops. This would lead to the exodus and the start of the Rohingya crisis.

The military, police, and Rakhine Buddhists had become more vicious in treating Rohingya civilians. According to the military, there were approximately ninety-three wars with "fanatic Bengalis" between August 25 and September 15, 2017. According to the army, the enthusiast Bengalis demanded to be regarded as Rohingyas to gain sympathy. The government forced Rohingyas to relocate to internally displaced persons (IDP) extermination camps on the fringes of Myanmar and Bangladesh.

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In what is described as an "anti-terrorist" "clearing operation," military forces began incursions into Rohingya settlements and significantly increased their attacks on the Rohingya. The operation, in which Rakhine Buddhists assisted, swept through Rohingya villages, injuring, rapping, and killing thousands of Rohingyas, primarily civilians, burning Rohingya villages, and driving the majority of Rakhine state's Rohingya population (over 600,000) into neighboring Bangladesh in what became known as the "Rohingya Crisis. (Specia, 2017)

By October 2017, many Rohingya people had escaped to Bangladesh from Myanmar. Landmines were planted by the Myanmar public sector in the border region between Bangladesh and Myanmar, preventing internally displaced Rohingyas from returning to their homeland in Myanmar. (Anwary, 2018). Between October 2016 and January 2017, over 65,000 people fled Myanmar for Bangladesh, with another 23,000 internally displaced (Relief Web)

Various organizations condemned Myanmar's military onslaught on Rohingya Muslims. Amnesty International, other human rights organizations, and the United Nations called the military's crackdown on the Rohingya minority a crime against humanity, claiming that the army has turned people into "a systematic campaign of violence." Aung San Suu Kyi was criticized for her silence and lack of action on the matter, as well as for failing to prevent the military from abusing human rights (Griffiths, 2016)

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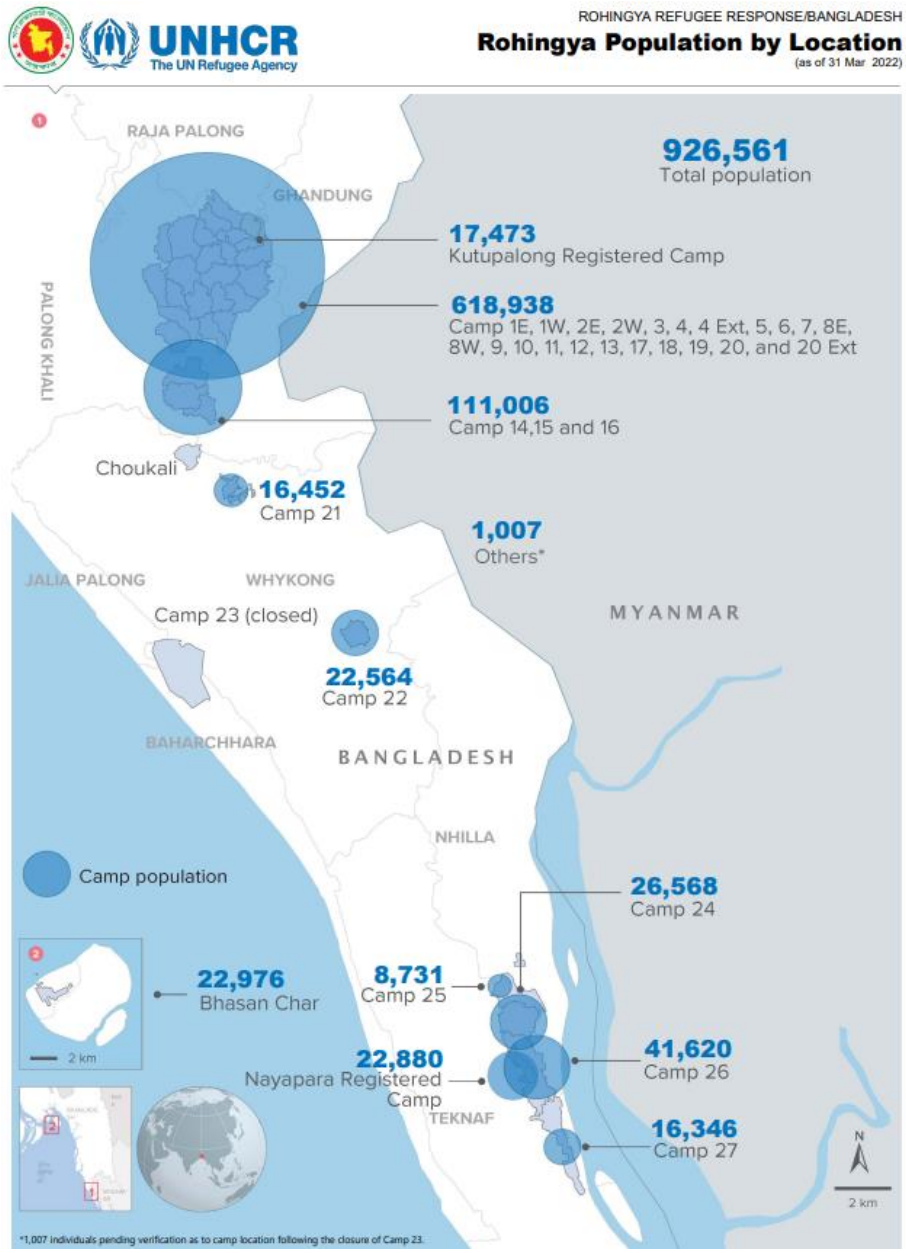


Figure 1:Cox's Bazar refugee settlements

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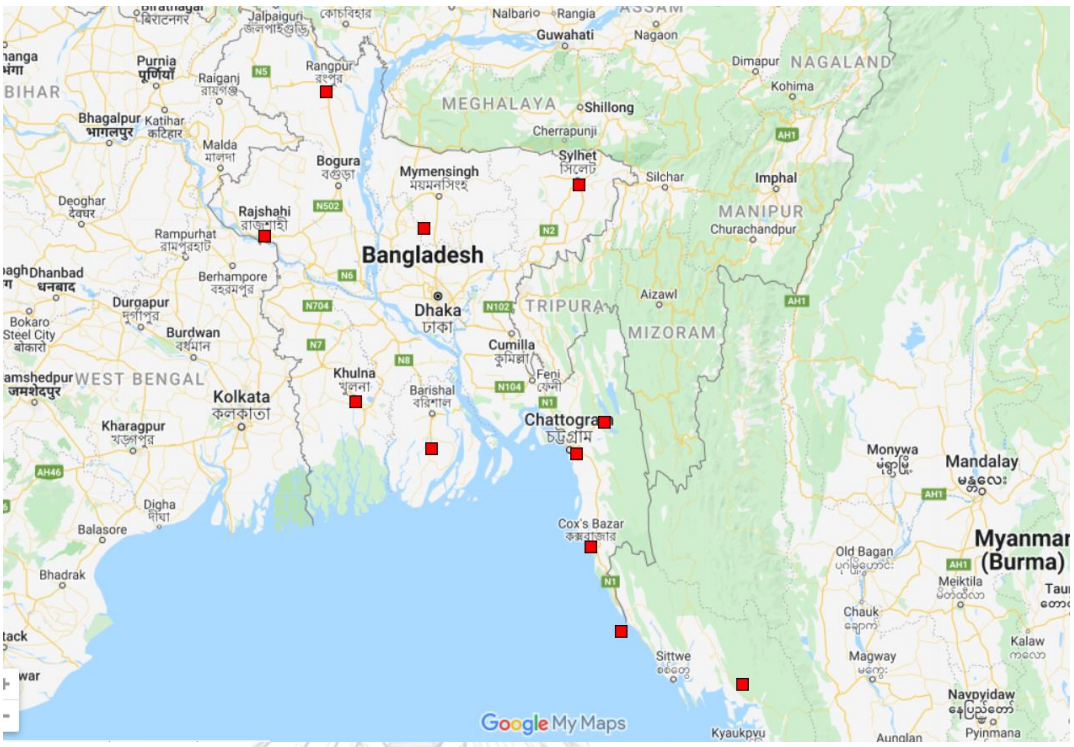


Figure 2:Map of Cox's Bazar and Rakhine
Retrieved from Google Maps[1]

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[1] https://www.google.com/maps/

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Figure 3: Picture of the Kutupalong Camp



Figure 4: Picture of the Kutupalong Camp, sanitation workers helping to clear trash.

Pictures were taken on November 2019 field visit

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Chapter 3: The refugee camps, stakeholders, and challenges

3.1 Overview of Cox's Bazar

Cox's Bazar is a district hosting a town, fishing harbors, and tourism attractions. The district is 150 kilometers south of Chittagong. The city has a population of 265,500 people. As discussed in Chapter 1, from the mid-ninth century until the Mughals captured the region in 1666 AD, the greater Chittagong region, encompassing Cox's Bazar, was controlled by Arakan monarchs. Immediately succeeding the Mughals, the Tipras and Arakanese governed the province, followed by the Portuguese and the British.

Cox's Bazar was annexed by East Pakistan in 1947, immediately after the British administration ended in the region. Commander Captain Fazlul Karim was the first chairperson of the Cox's Bazar Council following independence from the British. Karim was motivated to advertise Cox's Bazar as a travel destination after being inspired by visiting the shorelines of Bombay and Karachi. He was an early hotel innovator in helping to promote Cox's Bazar as a location for domestic and international tourism. As a result of Fazlul Karim's efforts, it became a famous international and domestic tourist destination over the following years and decades.

Cox's Bazar beach is regarded as the world's longest sea beach[2]. Cox's Bazar beach is known for its miles of golden sands, towering cliffs, surfing waves, unique

[2] For the purpose of this study and based on other popular reports Cox's Bazar is popularly known as the longest sea beach but according to a study Cox's Bazar may be the third longest beach in the world

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conch shells, and delicious cuisine. Several marine tourism destinations can be found along Bangladesh's coast. Due to its natural beauty, distinctive features, accessibility, and appropriate service facilities, Cox's Bazar is one of the country's most well-known marine tourism destinations, especially for domestic travelers. Tourist attractions include parasailing, scuba diving, luxury resorts, restaurants, and visiting nearby islands and waterfalls.

In 2015, almost 1.5 million tourists, with 95 percent locals, visited the area. The impact of Cox′s Bazar as a tourist hub and revenue is essential to Bangladesh's growth. According to the Financial Express, in 2021, an estimated 4.06 billion taka was designated as the fiscal year's revenue collection target. Every year, the tourist sector generates approximately1 a billion taka in revenue.

In a study by Al Mamun, Hasan et al. (2013), Cox's Bazar has 154 restaurants for visitors, each employing an average of 22 assistants. About 3388 people make up the total number of assistants. For tourists, Cox's Bazar has 220 hotels and guest homes, each employing an average of 20 employees, for a total of 4400 people. There are 54 tour operators and guide houses, with an average of 15 people employed by each, for a total of 810 people employed by tour operators.

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Many locals, including students, work as tourist guides, operate rubbish businesses, rent-a-car businesses, land businesses, open department stores, rent umbrellas on the sea drive miniature toy vehicles on the beach. For a living, many people engage in fishing and collecting seafood and sea products. In Cox's Bazar, around 10,000 individuals work in the tourism sector, and each supports a family of six people. Therefore, the tourism industry feeds around 60000 people (Saleh 2010). Tourism is now Cox's Bazar's primary source of revenue. According to general

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observation, tourism has significantly changed this area. So as a tourist hub Cox's Bazar is essential to the development of the surrounding region, the livelihood of people, and also impacting the overall growth of Bangladesh.

Following the massive exodus of Rohingya migrants from Myanmar in 2017, hundreds of thousands fled to Cox's Bazar District. There are two sizeable government-assisted refugee camps in Cox's Bazar: Nayapara and Kutupalong. Kutapalong is referred to as the mega camp and is considered the largest refugee camp in the world (*UN Report*, 2019). In addition to the two large camps, there are around 34 more, notably Tasnimarkhola, Anjumapara, Thangkhali, Kerontuli, and Balukhali.

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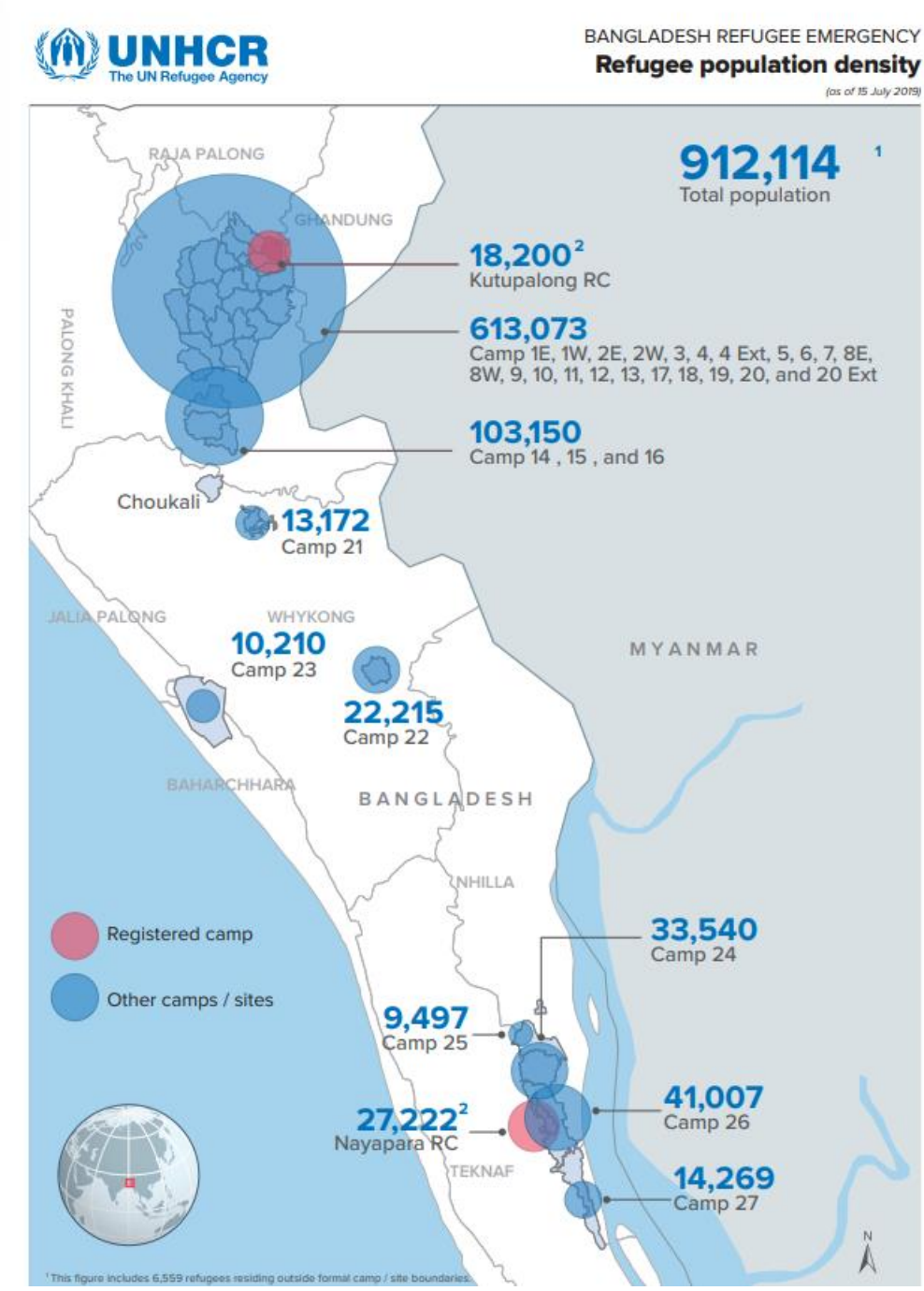


Figure 5: Map of Cox's Bazar and Refugee Population as of June 2019

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3.2 Bangladesh as the host country

As a densely populated country in South Asia, Bangladesh has a landmass of 147,570 square kilometers. As explained in Chapter 1, most Rohingyas have chosen to relocate to Bangladesh because of its closeness and shared religion. In the influxes of 1978 and 1992, a steady arrival of Rohingya refugees had entered Bangladesh. The majority were deported back, while many more tried to return to their home country. The government of Bangladesh had built twenty centers in 1992 to house Rohingya refugees. The administration intended to use the centers temporarily. However, the refugees in the shelters have refused to leave. Cox's Bazar camps of Kutupalong and Nayapara have housed more than 34,000 officially registered Rohingya people even before the mass exodus of 2017.

As Rohingya refugees are currently housed in Bangladesh, no country in Asia has ratified either the 1951 Refugee Convention or its Protocol 1967, including Bangladesh. In addition, there is no particular Bangladeshi law or strategy in place to protect refugees. Refugees in Bangladesh are categorized as foreign nationals under the Foreigners Act of 1946. As previously stated, Bangladesh pursues other laws because it lacks a specific refugee protection law. A few examples of such legislation are the Foreigners Registration Act (1939), the Passport Act (1920), and the Citizenship Order (1972) of Bangladesh.

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3.3 Role of Bangladesh government from 2017

Bangladesh hosts 4.7 % of the globe's refugees, even though the country has less than 0.31 % of people worldwide. Refugees in Bangladesh currently account for over one-third of the country's total demographic, according to UNHCR. The overall

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refugee community is anticipated to be around 912,114, with adults accounting for approximately 42 percent and the elderly accounting for roughly 3 percent of the total population. According to the United Nations Children's Fund publication, children account for more than half of the population (UNDP, 2018). Bangladesh set an example of cooperation with the Myanmar refugees by providing them with food and shelter. This was seen when they sponsored millions of Rohingya refugees despite having little financial and resource resources.

Hosting the large influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh has been considered a political move for the ruling Awami League government[3]. The administration of Bangladesh is often regarded as supportive of admitting refugees to enter the nation. However, there are worries about the long-term consequences, particularly in the Cox's Bazar region.

When the influx started in 2017, the population of Bangladesh, including Cox's Bazar district, became the first to respond to the mass arrivals of the refugees across its borders. The mass population was welcoming. The administration of the Cox's Bazar in charge of the emergency operations assisted in providing food, shelter and land, and other logistics for the settlement of the Rohingyas. About 149 officers from the deputy commissioners' office had already settled about 2.5 million people, about 16 900 people per staff member. Additional refugees had to be managed by the same officers. This brought them to about 23,066 refugees per staff member, a good number increase of about 36.5 percent, according to a publication by the UNDP in 2018.

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[3] Chapter 4 Political Dynamics will detail why the Government of Bangladesh supported the refugees

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After the emergency period was almost over in late 2017, a public institution named Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC) was formed and entrusted with overseeing all the aspects related to the settlement and the management of the refugees. Its headquarters was in Cox's Bazar, and it collaborated with the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), which IOM and the UNHCR led. The function of RRRC, in collaboration with the UN agencies, was to deliver public services such as food security, nutrition, health, water, and sanitation in the camps and overall.

The Government of Bangladesh has tried to repatriate the Rohingya refugees back to Myanmar on several occasions since 2017. Still, most repatriation plans have failed or have reached a standstill[4]. On the ground in the hist region, there is a growing anti-refugee sentiment among the locals and aid workers. The locals feel that the refugees have overstayed their welcome.

As a result of this growing dislike towards the Rohingya refugees and humanitarian and assistance organizations, particularly among the disadvantaged local population in Cox's Bazar, the formerly strong solidarity for the refugees has begun to wane. This is especially true in the area of Cox's Bazar. Furthermore, there is now a widespread belief among the locals that humanitarian organizations are working in partnership with the authorities of Bangladesh. This distrust of the authorities, the aid workers, and the resources given to the refugees has fueled the frustration of the local population in Cox's Bazar.

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[4] In Chapter 3: Repatriation Program of the Rohingya Population will show a more detailed account of what the GOB has initiated in search of a solution to the Refugee crisis

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3.3.1 Short-term response

In the former crisis stage, most initiatives were based on the immediate crisis response. However, the complexity of the need to provide immediate shelter and food to many people required a joint effort. Therefore, the humanitarian communities under the lead of ISCG and strategic groups of UN agencies closely worked together with the government of Bangladesh to draw a joint response plan. This was meant to lay out visions for coordinated responses, address the immediate needs of the refugees, and mitigate the affected host communities. This involved numerous consultations with stakeholders in the strategic planning of the requirements to respond to their needs.

The government of Bangladesh has tried as much as possible to improve and refine its interventions by focusing on the long-term and midterm responses as a way of immediate repatriation of the refugees. Building on the natural disasters outlined in the Joint response plan (JRP). In collaboration with the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), the World Bank took a much greater perspective in preparing immediate impact needs and vulnerability assessments. This encompasses the interventions to introduce resilient communities in Cox's Bazar, which extended to two years after the early recovery. This report estimated that about 1.15 billion US Dollars are required to meet the needs of the displaced Rohingya, including the host communities, within this time.

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The local communities have always been at the forefront of providing essential food, health, and shelter requirements. Humanitarians who were health service providers responded in a coordinated manner with the assistance of the Worlds Health Organization (WHO). Later the public health response at the early

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emergency stages was translated into vaccination campaigns against cholera, diphtheria, measles, and many other diseases. However, due to the rapid influx of the Rohingya people, this collective response was still unable to keep pace with the increased demands. The refugees living conditions remained vulnerable as they lived in clustering in hurriedly constructed settlements that cringed to steeps, the rapidly deforested areas on the hillsides. Insufficient food, overcrowding, serious health problems, and poor sanitation were among the significant issues faced by the Rohingya.

Many factors play essential roles in Bangladesh's political settings and decisions to host the Rohingya population. These also include the religious and cultural identities whose purpose was to look into the community's ideas and respond to those in need. It was also realized that the shared Islamic faith between the Rohingya and the Bangladeshis, including the Muslim identity of many Bangladeshis and the majority of the Rohingyas, stimulated humanitarian assistance in many ways.

The Islamic concept of "Zakat" is an aspect of Islamic religion and the 'Sadaqa.' With 'Zakat' and Sadaqa: Voluntary charity also played a crucial role in the motivation of the private citizens to offer some emergency support. These concepts emphasized the subservient to give to those who are in need. In 2019 Prime Minister Hasina referred to humanitarianism in Islam to highlight the border policies and that Muslim Rohingya were being persecuted due to their faith. It compounded the sense of urgency among those who identified as Muslims to assist the Rohingya.

3.4 Structure of camp management

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The structure of management in Rohingya refugee camps is complex, considering that some of the camps are very large. For instance, the Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar area is home to more than 598,545 refugees (in 2020) and is the largest refugee camp globally. Despite the vast size of the camp, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), at the heart of management, has deployed the Site Management system to ensure operations run smoothly. The Site managers directly help in camp administration via support to the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission and government camp administrators. The government camp administrators are responsible for providing security, oversight, and supervision of activities.

The UNHCR has a local office dubbed the Field and Site Management Unit (FSMU), which oversees the management of 16 refugee camps in partnership with three site management partners. The FSMU, in conjunction with the partners, coordinates the provision of services to the refugees and ensures they are protected. For instance, from time to time, the UNHCR and other partners offer shelter kits or tents to refugees (Tashmin et al. 263). The UNHCR, with its partners, tries to ensure that facilities within the camps are well-maintained, including renovation and maintenance of essential infrastructures such as footbridges, access roads, drainage systems, and protection walls.

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3.5 Overall role and efficiency of different stakeholders managing Rohingya camps

Camp management at Rohingya refugee camps is crucial as it seeks to understand the refugee's needs while responding to them. The camp management

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involves various stakeholders, including NGOs, the local communities, and state actors. Consequently, these stakeholders play different vital roles in ensuring that the needs of the refugees are met. According to (Caitlin Wake 2018), before 2017, the camp management involved a small number of locals and an international organization that presented as a non-governmental organization. The NGOs and the local community members in Bangladesh worked with the Rohingya refugees to meet their needs, such as providing food and water to support the camp management.

In this case, there was an introduction of the increased number of civilians and the humanitarian and development organizations that served as catalysts in managing the Rohingya refugee camp. Additionally, (Caitlin Wake 2018) also observed that the increased number of responders, the civilians, and the international humanitarian organization served as catalysts in shifting power between the stakeholders involved in the camp management. This was attributed to the distinct roles played by the different stakeholders while working with refugees at the Rohingya camp. The shifting of power between the stakeholders and the exponential influx in the number of refugees in the camp also led to a crisis in the center, which necessitates the need to examine the different roles played by key stakeholders in the camp. As illustrated by the scholar, the crisis that developed in the camp meant that no one stakeholder had the ability and capacity to meet the increasing and dynamic needs of the refugees in the camp. For instance, it was observed that in 2018, there was a dire need for more than 16 million liters of water to cater to the increasing number of refugees in the camp by then.

By around February 2018, international organizations rose to about 130. The NGOs thus presented as the primary stakeholders to respond to the increasing needs

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of refugees at the Rohingya camp. Other stakeholders who responded to the crisis also included Government actors, 13 local organizations, 45 national organizations, 69 Additional international organizations such as the Red Cross, Red Crescent Movement, and 12 UN agencies also became significant stakeholders who acted to manage the rising crisis at the camp. Since then, the different stakeholders involved in managing the Rohingya refugee camp can be named refugees, the international organizations, local organizations, and Government/state actors, among other institutions, as further explained in this section. Thus, there is an increasing influence of different stakeholders in the camps.

3.5.1 Refugees

Refugees at Cox's Bazar are present as one of the stakeholders involved in managing the Rohingya refugee camp. As of 2022, it was estimated that about 926,561 refugees lived in Cox Bazar, and they organized themselves to explore different dimensions through which they could satisfy their needs. However, it was noted that refugees within the camp, who organized themselves to meet their needs, had limited capacity to do so in the long-term run. Government policies and regulations highly constrained the refugees' ability to meet their needs. Besides, the government policies restricted the movements formed by the refugees themselves to meet the rising needs. Similarly, it was also observed that the government policies and regulations limited the rights of the refugees and the ease of mobility in and out of the

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camps. Also, the government policies and regulations doesnot legally allow refugees to work in the country[5].

Refugees themselves developed the leader of camps or the Majhi system to represent the voices of the refugees. The system was limited to only female members, which highly meant the female refugees. The aim was to represent refugees and the individuals within the camps. (Verena Hölzl, 2019) However, because the system was only limited to some, the vast majority of refugees in the region were not represented, which caused many refugees to be unable to play their role and be left out of decision-making. Another challenge that has hindered the ability of refugees to play their leadership roles was the lack of representation at decision-making levels. For instance, it was observed that most stakeholders playing a critical role in managing the camp and providing services to refugees often ask the refugees about their opinion before implementing any initiative at the center.

Furthermore, it was noted that presently majority of the stakeholders consider arguments placed forth by refugees in the camp. Despite being asked for their opinion, the lack of adequate systems or organizations to represent the refugees has made the latter not expressed at the decision-making level. In essence, it was observed that refugees at Cox's Bazar are yet to be in the decision-making roles.

Research conducted at the Rohingya refugee camp found that most refugees in the center generally concur that the assistance they receive from the NGOs, the locals, and the government states was appropriate in solving their needs. However, the refugees indicated that the assistance they received was not timely through the survey. Similarly, they did not influence decision-making. Under some circumstances, the

[5] Discussed in 4.2 as Refugees are considered foreigner in Bangladeshi Law and therefore cannot work leagally.

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refugees also revealed the existence of stereotyping, discrimination, and a certain level of fear-based in the Rohingya camp. The stereotype and fear were related to the risk of radicalization, criminal acts, and the uneducated group of refugees. These challenges have impacted refugees' roles in managing the camp by themselves. Besides, the issues of stereotyping, fear of radicalization, and fear of criminal activities have left most refugees isolated, which has also impacted their ability to play a role in camp management. In this case, the locals, also presenting as stakeholders in managing the camp, have framed the refugees as a burden and risk rather than people who also can contribute to the camp management.

3.5.2 The locals of the host community

The host community, or the locals where the Rohingya camp is located, also presents as another stakeholder that supports the management of the Rohingya camp. The locals, in this case, are the people in Cox's Bazar district. Specifically, the locals presenting as the stakeholders include the population from the Ukhia and Teknaf districts, which host the largest population of refugees at Rohingya. Consequently, the population within these two districts is considered the most important stakeholder in managing the Rohingya refugee camp. In the past decades, the locals within these districts have responded to various refugee needs while supporting the center's refugees.

Before August 2017, the government of Bangladesh projected that the Rohingya population was about 303,070. However, the dynamics of the people within the region significantly changed following the high refugee influx in the area in the 2017 refugee influx. After the influx, the government estimated that the proportion of

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Rohingya in the total population was about one-third, especially in Teknaf. In Ukhia, the balance of Rohingya was about three-quarters of the total population. In a recent study by Xchange (2018), the demographic profile of Bangladeshis living in the two mentioned districts was examined for their views about the Rohingya. The study observed that the locals frequently interacted with Rohingya at least once a week.

Similarly, the study also noted that about 70% of the locals had supported a Rohingya by providing food, water, or clothing, among other amenities. The study also reiterated that the locals were among the first responders to the refugees when they arrived. They offered shelter, clothing, food, and other services that supported the refugees on their first arrival. Therefore, it can be deduced that the locals played a crucial role in providing basic needs to the Rohingya refugee. Besides, they were the first responders to the immediate needs of the refugees.

However, in the past few years, it has been observed that the welcoming the locals provided at first arrival is currently waning. While some of the local communities are empathetic to the refugees while the refugees also feel about integrating with the locals, other individuals or communities within the districts are still concerned with other issues which affect the role played by the locals in managing and supporting the refugees. For instance, some communities and individuals are still concerned about the risks of radicalization and crime brought by the Rohingya refugees. While the locals also played a role in providing education to the refugees, the concern still lies in whether the refugees should attend the local schools as the menace of radicalization may arise.

While the locals play a key role in social support and responding to the immediate needs of the refugees, it was observed that Cox's Bazar had experienced a

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relatively high poverty level for many decades. Similarly, they are more vulnerable to crises such as floods, cyclones, and landslides. Additionally, it has been recorded that Cox's Bazar has faced high vulnerability to forced displacement of the Rohingya. Despite the local and international responders stressing the resilient strategies for the residents, they also recognize that the high influx of refugees at Cox's Bazar presents a heavy burden to the locals, which further hinders them from responding to the refugee needs or playing a key role in the management of the refugee camp. Key challenges have been cited concerning the high influx of refugees. For instance, the rising number of refugees within the region posits the challenge of resource scarcity, environmental degradation, security concerns, and inflation of food prices[6].

For instance, an analysis by Wake and Bryant (2018) indicated that many locals are looking at the Rohingya refugees as the source of all the problems faced within the community. On the other hand, it is regarded that some locals have even benefited from the high influx of refugees at Rohingya.

The rising concern and potential conflict between the locals and the refugees remain a significant problem for the government and the NGOs. They support the management of the Rohingya refugee camp. In this case, it is important to explore approaches through which the issues can be solved to encourage peaceful coexistence between the refugees and the locals.

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3.5.3 State actors

[6] Further discussion of Local setiment and effects of the large influx of refugees in 5.4.1

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The state actors are those involved in the various organs of the government that respond to the refugee needs. These organs also present as stakeholders that support the management of the Rohingya refugee camps. The various organs involved in managing Rohingya refugees include the army, Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB), and the government, considered influential stakeholders. These actors significantly contribute to the current refugee response capacity. Some critical roles the state actors play include decision-making (both urgent and challenging), land boundaries, provision and enabling access to resources and responding to refugee needs. The roles played by the state actors are often encouraged and motivated by the fast mobilization of resources, including human resources. Similarly, they collaborate with international organizations to ensure that the roles played are adequately achieved.

The mobilization often takes effect from the representatives of the central government, which include the local administrative and District Coordinator office. This office supports the coordination of activities at the local level. The local councils include the local ministries such as the ministry of health, the Rohingya Relief and Repatriation Commission, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, and the NGO Affairs Bureau (the bureau is responsible for permitting NGOs to operate within the country). The state actors also involve various individuals who have been elected and have direct involvement in the management of Rohingya refugees.

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As a state actor, the army border guards have played significant roles in managing the Rohingya refugees and camps since the beginning. They have the key responsibility of camp management, including distribution of reliefs, data collection, and control of the reliefs provided to the refugees. The army has been seen as responders who have been able to stabilize the camp. This situation was once seen as

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chaotic, especially when there was a high influx of refugees at Rohingya. To respond to the situation at Cox's Bazar, the state, as mentioned above, has been observed to develop a robust leadership approach that has enabled them to respond to the situation.

The control measures taken by the government in managing the Rohingya refugees are also evident through the close oversight undertaken by the government to ensure smooth operations at the camps. For instance, the government has taken a close oversight of the refugees' responses, including the NGOs' responses to the refugees. In this case, the government is keen on overseeing the types and number of NGOs that have access to the camps and the type of work they undertake when responding to the refugees' needs.

3.5.4 Local and international humanitarian actors

The NGOs in Bangladesh have played a crucial role in the response; for instance, their existence alongside the religious institutions also engaged in the relief work and became entwined with various regional political landscapes. In this case, a response referred to Bangladesh as a country of NGOs because of the number and visibility in Bangladesh. However, many of them lacked experience in handling the refugees and brought relevant experiences in working with the local communities on matters of socio-economic issues. The local organizations have, in other words, established coalitions and networks that have always helped them to establish common positions and also increase their visibilities.

3.6 Problems in the camps

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Most Rohingya refugees reside in 34 highly crowded camps, including the most prominent single site, the Kutupalong-Balukhali expansion Site. The refugees lack access to education, food, water, and other services and the recurrence of fires in the camps. The refugees also became vulnerable to natural disasters and some infectious diseases. The Kutupalong, the 'Mega' camp and the largest refugee camp built in Cox's Bazar hills, contains a large portion of the Rohingya refugee population. The forests had to be cleared to make room for the refugees' bamboo shelters; however, the camp was a source of safety for the refugees.

The camps were built quickly during the crisis and lacks modern structures; therefore, the facilities were far from perfect. Some of the significant problems in Kutupalong during the crisis are as follows.



Figure 6: List of problems faced by refugees in the camps of Cox's Bazar

3.6.1 Spread of diseases

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With the large number of people living in densely populated areas without modern infrastructure, spreading diseases was very easy. Diphtheria became one of the most common diseases that was potentially lethal. Children were particularly in danger of contracting this disease. However, since 2017 the Worlds Health Organization has vaccinated over 800,000 children living within and around the camps. Most illnesses were related to poor hygiene and harsh living conditions in Cox's Bazar. Acute watery diarrhea and respiratory infections accounted for more than half of the diseases. Unsafe camp conditions and skin infections are also common problems in the camps.

3.6.2 Dangerous terrains

The southern part of Bangladesh is prone to extreme weather conditions such as cyclones and hurricanes because of its proximity to the Bay of Bengal. Cyclones significantly influence Bangladesh's population; in the past ten years, cyclones have impacted more than a million people when they make landfall in the area. According to the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre in New Delhi, 89 cyclones landed on the Bangladesh coast between 1891 and 2015.

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Many cyclones have hit the Bay of Bengal in the past, inflicting massive disruptions, damages, and a staggering number of deaths. Cyclones are one of Bangladesh's most significant risks, wreaking havoc on lives and livelihoods in the country's coastal areas. During the pre-monsoon months of April-May and the post-monsoon months of October-November, the population is mainly exposed to storms linked with tidal surges. The refugees who arrived at the site faced hazardous and hilly terrains with insufficient drainage and insufficient access roads. Even though

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they avoided settling on flat areas that could easily be flooded and built their makeshift bamboo shelters on the steep hillsides and slopes. As the camps continue to grow, there is a high risk of land sliding that could burry or wash away the weak bamboo huts. The refugees used bags filled with soil as their shelter floors to retain the shelter's walls against landslides.

3.6.3 Hunger in the camps

Another concern in this crisis was hunger. Many Rohingya have always endured a life of poverty, living in a stateless condition and more often displaced. This situation worsened when they were forced to leave everything they could not carry while fleeing to Bangladesh. All those years of extreme poverty and forced migration or frequent displacement brought malnutrition in the refugees, with the most vulnerable children. Some of them have stunted growth, while others are malnourished.

According to a 2021 report by the World Food Programme, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, 86 percent of Rohingya refugees would be severely susceptible to poverty and hunger by the end of 2020, up from 70% in 2019. The vulnerability has also increased in the local community, with 51% of residents classified as moderately or highly vulnerable, up from 41% the previous year.

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3.6.4 Access to clean and safe water

The major challenging problem compared to food and medicine was water. The provision of clean and drinkable water was a fundamental issue. In collaboration

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with doctors, UNICEF has tried to improve water conditions by constructing wells. More than 200 access points for clean drinking water were constructed in 2017. When the monsoon season arrived, the conditions in Kutupalong worsened more than ever before. Heavy rains were experienced, and the newly deforested areas were unstable. However, those living in the dangerous zones were relocated to safer places.

3.6.5 Trauma and hardship faced by children

The children here have suffered trauma, and with little access to child-friendly facilities and safe conditions, they were likely to face serious risks such as trafficking, early marriages, etc. However, after a long duration of marginalization, they have no hope for the rights and freedom they deserve. There was no education for them for the future, and they were ill to cope with the survival of the daily challenges of the environment. During and after the influx, there are the following problems that refugee children face,

- Children face high risks such as psychosocial distress, early marriages, abuse, and child labor alongside trafficking.
- Refugee children comprise more girls than boys; therefore, there was a high school dropout rate in the host community and few trained teachers.
- The available schools had no potential for health monitoring and screening alongside the untrained teachers.

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Figure 7: Picture of a group of Rohingya refugee children in front of their classroom

3.6.6 Resource distribution

According to the United Nations, Rohingya refugees are not usually worried about family planning. According to specific non-governmental organizations (NGOs) findings, the Rohingya have minimal awareness of the family planning process. As a result, the refugee camp's population continues to grow daily. If the Rohingya population continues to grow at its current rate, there will be further pressure in the future. Increased pressure appears to be exerted on food, work, health, and other fundamental requirements. The most concerning aspect is that no authorized person is responsible for keeping track of the birth rate in the refugee camp.

3.6.7 Fire in the camps

Sadly, the refugees face many problems in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp complex, key among them the issue of frequent fires. As of March 2022, at least six

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fires had been recorded on various dates at the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh. In 2022 alone, two separate fire incidents have been recorded at the camps. The most recent fire broke out on March 8, 2022, in Camp 5 of the refugee complex. Reports indicate that the fire consumed hundreds of makeshift shelters, forcing many to flee for safety. It is estimated that the fire destroyed over 1,200 shelters. The fire spread through the shelters quickly because they are constructed using tarpaulin and bamboo. A young boy was killed in the incident, and more than 5,000 people were left homeless.

In early 2021, a massive fire engulfed another camp section, killing more than 15 people. The fire also destroyed over 10,000 shelters and left hundreds of thousands of people homeless. The situation was worsened by the wire fencing around the camp, which trapped many of the people who were running for safety. The 2021 fire was so devastating and traumatizing that the refugees decided to form night patrols to protect their people from another deadly fire.

This shows that fires at the camps constantly threaten the safety of the refugees. The poor road network within the camp often makes it difficult for firefighters to reach the affected areas in time. Following the many incidences of fires, there have been calls to offer the refugees fire-resistant materials to construct houses and remove the barbed wire fencing around the camps to allow people to quickly escape to safety in the event of a fire outbreak (Ratcliffe, 2022)

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Chapter 4: Regional Politics and policies for the refugees

4.1 Regional politics

Most Bangladeshi people initially supported the government's move to allow the refugees to enter and stay in Bangladesh. Many citizens had also organized themselves into groups to collect donations for refugees. Some politicians became popular from such a receptive public attitude, particularly those from the Awami League. It is argued that the party's popularity was strengthened by the government's good handling of the refugee crisis.

Beyond local politics, the refugee crisis has also affected regional politics. In particular, the issue has had far-reaching ramifications on Bangladesh-Myanmar relations and Bangladesh-India relations. For Bangladesh-Myanmar relations, the issue of refugees has been a source of tension between the two countries. The countries have especially debated how the Rohingya issue should be handled. At the early stages of the crisis, the United Nations mitigated a deal for the repatriation of Rohingyas. Still, in subsequent years most have chosen to remain in Bangladesh for fear of being persecuted if they return to Myanmar. In the past, the two countries have made promises to mend ties and resolve the refugee crisis. Still, with the ongoing mass exodus of Rohingya from Myanmar to Bangladesh, those promises have been dashed.

On the other hand, the diplomatic relation between the two countries has remained steady. Bangladesh and Myanmar retained trade relations intact, and for

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years after the Rohingya crisis started, Bangladesh relied on Myanmar for exports and imports. (Hasan, 2021)

The Rohingya crisis has also affected Bangladesh-India relations-following allegations by Bangladesh that India is seeking to benefit from the crisis. India's role has not helped resolve the problem. Since the crisis started, the Indian government has been siding with Myanmar on concerns about the possibility of refugees ending up in their country. India has been working closely with Myanmar to prevent refugees from traveling within its borders and fight insurgents in India's northeastern state.

To some degree, the Rohingya issue has also affected relations between Myanmar and China. Just like India, China has a lot of economic and geopolitical interests in Myanmar. For example, Myanmar offers China access to the Indian Ocean. In return, China is financing the Kyauk Port, the starting point of an oil & gas pipeline and access road from Bangladesh through Myanmar to China's Yunnan province. China also has an agreement with Myanmar to construct a trading estate in Rakhine. These ambitious projects by China rely on good relations between the two countries. To foster ties, China has been an ardent supporter of the Myanmar government and how it handles the refugee crisis (Idris, 2017). According to some scholars, China is taking advantage of the crisis to strengthen its ties with Myanmar.

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4.2 Repatriation programs of the Rohingya population

A repatriation plan to return the Rohingya to Myanmar from the overcrowded camps in Bangladesh was announced in the November of 2017. Still, the repatriation due to occur in January 2018 was delayed. We also need to remember that many Rohingyas are not only in Bangladesh but in various countries like Malaysia and are

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also considered stateless (Caitlin Wake 2016). The Rohingya people have been leaving Myanmar for persecution in many countries. In this case, for Bangladesh, Rohingyas' repatriation plans and implementation will impact the lives of millions of refugees. Since the military coup in Myanmar that occurred on February 1, 2021, the repatriation of the Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh and back to Myanmar has become complex.

Myanmar and Bangladesh held talks in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, from November 15 to November 23, 2017, and signed an agreement later. They did not agree on a concrete repatriation process or completion date, nor did they make the agreement public. According to local press reports, this agreement is based on a repatriation treaty signed in 1992. Bangladesh requested that repatriation be completed within one year and that UN organizations be involved in the process. Myanmar asked that repatriation begins within two months of the signing, but Bangladesh's requests were rejected. Both countries began compiling a list of Rohingya people who had crossed the border by the agreement. Repatriation of refugees did not begin on January 23, 2018, as planned, due to incomplete work on the Bangladeshi side (Naonori Kusakabe 2018). So there has been more and more back and forth between the governments regarding the repatriation, which becomes more complex as they need to deal with various logistics and bureaucracy. Then there is the state of affairs in the respective countries.

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Again after the initial attempt, another two attempts at repatriation were unsuccessful. 2,260 Rohingya were identified for repatriation in November 2018. They refused to return to Myanmar without assuring their safety. Hence the attempt failed.

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Almost a year later, in August 2019, 3,450 Rohingya were cleared for repatriation from a list of 55,000. However, the repatriation process was again met with skepticism by Rohingya leaders. They claimed they were unaware of official repatriation plans and requested that safety, security, and citizenship be declared preconditions for return. The Rohingya population has been facing persecution for decades and is hesitant to return for fear of ill-treatment or even worse. Then there is also a sense that they might have better chances of assimilating into the society.

Later, Bangladesh authorities proposed a village-based repatriation approach at a tripartite virtual meeting mediated by China in January 2021 so that persons returning home would feel safe. On the other hand, Myanmar authorities said it would prefer to begin by repatriating 42,000 Rohingya refugees who had been verified from a list of 830,000 Rohingyas living in camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar.

The Myanmar military attempted a coup in February 2021. The repatriation procedure was halted as a result. A tripartite working group meeting between Bangladesh, China, and Myanmar, slated for February 4, 2022, never took place (Mostofa 2022). Since then, the reparation talks have been at a standstill as the Myanmar political crisis has ensured that repatriation of Rohingya is not their top priority.

The Rohingya refugee repatriation to Myanmar has to be facilitated while ensuring the voluntary nature of the returns and promoting the interim solution for those refugees who are remaining and are unable or unwilling to return. For the latter case, the refugees may think that Rakhine is unsafe and that it is better to build a life in Bangladesh and not return. Many locals will object to assimilation, but at the same time, it might also be the most natural outcome.

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The challenge the Rohingya refugees also face for repatriation is that the government of Myanmar has remained hesitant to provide the necessary circumstances to entice the refugees to return. At the same time, Bangladesh and its international partners typically appear to lack the power to press Myanmar to solve the concerns such as nationality and the protection of the Rohingya. The countries and organizations can also go into dialogue with the Myanmar administration, but the government of Myanmar has to take care of the crisis in Rakhine.

Also, many Bangladesh authorities have admitted that the immediate or long-term refugees will unlikely return since the country's strategy towards the Rohingya has concentrated chiefly on the near-term homecoming. On the other hand, official policies have accepted that Bangladesh will host refugees in the future. The Bangladesh administration has yet to disclose policies relating precisely what the outcome for the refugees will be.

4.3 Relocation of Rohingya people to Bashan Char Island from the camps

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Since this influx resulted in overpopulation in the Cox's Bazar camps, Bangladeshi authorities have considered relocating the refugees to the island Bhasan Char. Bhasan Char which translates to "floating island," first appeared in 2006, around 30 kilometers from the mainland, and is still fragile and prone to erosion (Bremner, 2020). As a result of the monsoon rains, approximately half of the island is immersed underwater. Given the presence of pirates in the surrounding area, it may be dangerous and challenging to get close to the island without the support of the Bangladeshi Navy.

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According to government officials, the temporary relocation of the Rohingyas to Bhasan Char is an attempt to give them adequate space, facilities, and livelihood opportunities, which are lacking in Cox's Bazar, and put lesser pressure on the ever-growing camps. As of February 2022, there are 19,000 Rohingya refugees on the island. After rescuing a stranded boat attempting to sail to Malaysia from Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh began hosting Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char in May 2020. While the island was initially intended to serve as a quarantine facility to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the camps, refugees have been held there since then.

According to Hasan from Pressenza, the government of Bangladesh has invested around 3,900 crores, Bangladeshi Taka, in the Bhasan Char project, which is being implemented by all UN refugee management guidelines. The project occupies a 40-square-kilometer plot of land with a total area of around 13,000 acres. A total of 12 dwellings are housed in each shed. There are 16 rooms in each shed. There are two beds in each room, each with two levels. Each member of a family of four will be assigned a room. About 100,000 refugees can be housed in semi-permanent shelters, which can be enlarged to accommodate 400,000.

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According to UN guidelines, each person in the international refugee system must have at least 36 square feet of space. Moreover, the report states there will be day houses have been built for the Rohingyas to live a modern and better life, in addition to dormitories, schools, mosques, hospitals, playgrounds, wide roads, lighthouses, solar systems, food storage warehouses, towers of three mobile phone operators, sewerage systems, super shops, saloons, and day houses. This will help the displaced refugees to live comfortably, and in many cases, there have been reports of refugees making almost 30,000 takas within the island (Molla, 2021). Also, with

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government help, cattle and buffalo breeding, poultry farming, fish farming, pigeon rearing, fruit farming, dairy farming, handicrafts, and sewing machines are available to support the livelihood and economic activities of the Rohingyas.

The island as a relocation facility has been seen as controversial because it is prone to cyclones and natural disasters and claims that refugees themselves do not want to be relocated there. The UNHCR and human rights organizations were concerned that the island's capacity for evacuation in the case of storms or other natural disasters is restricted. Many Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char claim to be living in "prison-like" conditions, with limited access to healthcare, education, work, and safety (Hanh Nguyen & Themba Lewis, n.d.).

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4.4 Feasibility of repatriation

Voluntary repatriation of the Refugees to Myanmar is only proving more complex, and simultaneously, the camps and refugee population are growing. Voluntary repatriation is based on Article 33 of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, which requires that "no contracting state shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened."

Based on this, it becomes difficult to see if there will be, in fact, repatriation of the refugees shortly because of the failed attempts in the past years, growing political turmoil in Myanmar, the hesitance of the government to recognize the Rohingya as citizens and the conflicts that arise between the Rohingya Muslims and the Rakhine Buddhists[7].

Also, note that the number of refugees in the world is very high due to conflicts all around the world. In the past, there have been successful repatriation of refugees, but with a growing number of refugees, the scenario has changed, and more protracted refugee situations have become more common. Large-scale repatriation efforts did not begin until the 1960s and 1970s. Refugee returns were motivated in such circumstances by extremely visible and profound changes in the countries of origin. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' involvement in these

[7] In Chapter 1 the gwroing conflicts between the Rohingya Muslims, the Buddists and the intervention of the Burmese Military. With the formation of ARSA the future of the Rakhine state becomes more conflicted.

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repatriations was purely logistical. There was no doubt about the safety and voluntariness of such returns.

However, now in the case of the Rohingya refugees, their safety in the Rakhine state is questionable. The UNHCR has a more prominent role, not limited to logistics. The safety and voluntariness of Rohingya refugees have come into question every time the Government of Bangladesh has proposed repatriating several refugees to Myanmar.

As explained by Crisp (2016), at present, the UNHCR has also looked into more direct measures such as

- Promoting repatriation to countries that the organization deemed to be ready for refugee returns;
- Creating Tripartite Commissions with countries of origin and asylum to initiate and accelerate repatriation movements;
- Withdrawing food assistance, education, and other services from refugee populations that were expected to repatriate;
- Establishing repatriation targets and measuring operational success in terms of the speed and scale of return;
- Invoking the cessation clauses of the 1951 Refugee Convention to make repatriation obligatory;

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- Cooperating with host states that engaged in forced repatriation movements; and • developing the notions of “safe” and “imposed” return, which did not require the consent of refugees.[8]

Nevertheless, repatriation of such a large number of refugees will be problematic and impossible because of more conflict between the refugees and those forcing obligatory repatriation. Also, on humanitarian grounds, the UNHCR may face backlash if it withdraws assistance.

In addition to what the UNHCR has been able to do, there is also a need to consider the Refugees themselves in the decision-making process. While it is believed that many refugees do not want to return to the Rakhine state because of the conflict, some families are growing in number in the camps. As second-generation refugees are born in the camps, they will also face their parents' dilemmas. Scholars point out that there may be other solutions other than repatriation and are more feasible.

“In situations where refugees have established close social, economic, and personal links with their host states and communities, application of the cessation clauses should not automatically assume that repatriation will occur. Instead, former refugees in these situations should be granted alternative residency status (e.g., as a resident alien) even if full naturalization is unavailable to them.” (Crisp & Long, 2016)

The Bangladesh government is hesitant to provide such access and statuses to the refugees. The government and locals are more worried that the refugee and the aid

[8] This list was used by Crisp and Long in 2016 to study Safe and Voluntary Refugee Repatriation. The list was complied from an analysis of UNHCR repatriation operations between 1984 and 2002

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workers do not want repatriation, so they may stay longer and use the refugee crisis as a means for employment and money.

Thus, with failed attempts in the past to repatriate the refugees to Myanmar and the unstable situation of the country from 2021, the hesitance of the Rohingya refugees to return voluntarily, as well as the difficulty of the UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh to send refugees back- it becomes increasingly clear that unless all the requirements are met for the voluntary repatriation will not be possible and thus infeasible for the large-scale repatriation.



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Chapter 5: Assimilation analysis and challenges

5.1 Introduction to Assimilation theory

In this chapter, the focus will be on how the Rohingya are settling into the host community of Bangladesh—starting with what assimilation theory is and how Rohingya refugees are integrating into the host region regarding marriage, education, and work. Then the chapter will finish with challenges that the Rohingya refugees may face with social integration.

Chapter 1 discussed how the people in this region, centring on Cox′s Bazar, were similar. At present, Bangladesh and Myanmar have many disparities in ethnicity, religion, language, culture, and lifestyles. The main difference between these two countries is that Bangladesh has a Muslim majority, whereas Myanmar has a Buddhist majority (Ibrahim, 20). Since 1978, the Rohingya community of Myanmar has been escaping cultural genocide and has been living in Bangladesh unlawfully. A large number of them have successfully integrated into the host society. This research examines the integration of Rohingya refugees into the host population in Cox Bazar, Bangladesh, utilizing Massey and Denton's absorption movement theory of spatial assimilation.

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5.2 Assimilation migration theory for the case of Refugees

Assimilation, also referred to as absorption or amalgamation, is the procedure by which immigrant and host communities' features become increasingly similar. The process by which a minority merges socially, culturally, and politically into a larger, dominant civilization and community is known as assimilation. Immigrants and ethnic communities establishing in a new territory are frequently referred to as absorption. Immigrants and newcomers learn new habits and perspectives due to their interactions with a new community and bring some of their cultural qualities with them. Assimilation generally entails a steady but significant transformation. Once newcomers to a community assimilate completely, they become unrecognizable from local members. For many purposes, including political importance or apparent benefit, any entity (including a nation, immigrant community, or tribe) might decide to embrace a new culture. A group might be obliged or driven to do so due to imperialism, invasion, migration, or significant population fluctuations.

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According to spatial assimilation, as studied by Massey and Denton in 1985, immigrant populations prefer to relocate out of ethnic strongholds in cities and into more financially affluent neighborhoods when their socioeconomic status improves. The time and commitment required for an entity to integrate with another person or group differ and are influenced by various variables. As their social standing increases, spatially isolated ethnicities are becoming integrated into the host community and, over time, would be able to travel unhindered within the host society, displaying spatial assimilation. The spatial assimilation theory describes a shift by a

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single immigrant or immigrant group away from an ideologically separated group into a neighbourhood inhabited by the majority population. Scholars have contended that as an immigrant or ethnic group becomes more acquainted with the ethnic majority's cultural norms, language, faith, and other characteristics (adjustment) and enhances in financial standing (social mobility), they would then recede from their initial isolated community towards a more spatially dispersed region among some of the majority population

As this paper will use the theory of assimilation, it is essential to note that the word assimilation has had many negative connotations when the subject matter is refugees. Furthermore, many suggest integration is a better-suited term for the phenomenon, while others also point out that research in Europe and US differ when using these terms (Schneider and Crul 2010).

In the paper, the scholars point out that the word "assimilation" connotes a referent that immigrants and their descendants may resemble the hosts in the future. This referent in the American debate has typically been referred to as "the mainstream,". Studying "successful assimilation" has therefore primarily meant assessing the degree of incorporation into paradigms of economic and social "success." The scholars point out that in a technical sense, assimilation is a vague term. The case for the European perspective is different from the US and frequently misses the idea of the "mainstream"—into which immigrants are expected to assimilate.

The word "integration" refers to structural facets of social integration, particularly academic success and labour market accessibility. More actively crafted policies are aimed at ethnic minority groups to combat inequalities, continuing the

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tradition of the more robust welfare states in Western Europe. Therefore, evaluating the structural representation of immigrants and their children in educational fields and employment statistics is a near-automatic component of measuring "integration."

So as we advance, this paper will not give priority to the technical definitions of the words assimilate or integration but will look at how the Rohingya refugees are assimilating into the host society.

5.3 Analysis of the Assimilation of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh

When all aspects are considered, language, religion, work, education, and marriage are the most critical components that aid Rohingya integration into Cox's Bazar society. In the almost five years since the influx of refugees, numerous aspects have led to their assimilation and integration into the host region. These are the most prominent aspects that have been the key to the refugees' integration. It is important to note that many refugees will likely try to build a life in the host country if they see it is more economically viable and there are chances of a better life there. The Rohingya population faces persecution in the Rakhine state, and it is difficult for them to have a peaceful coexistence with Rakhine Buddhists. The assimilation or integration of refugees can happen but is not limited to the following ways.

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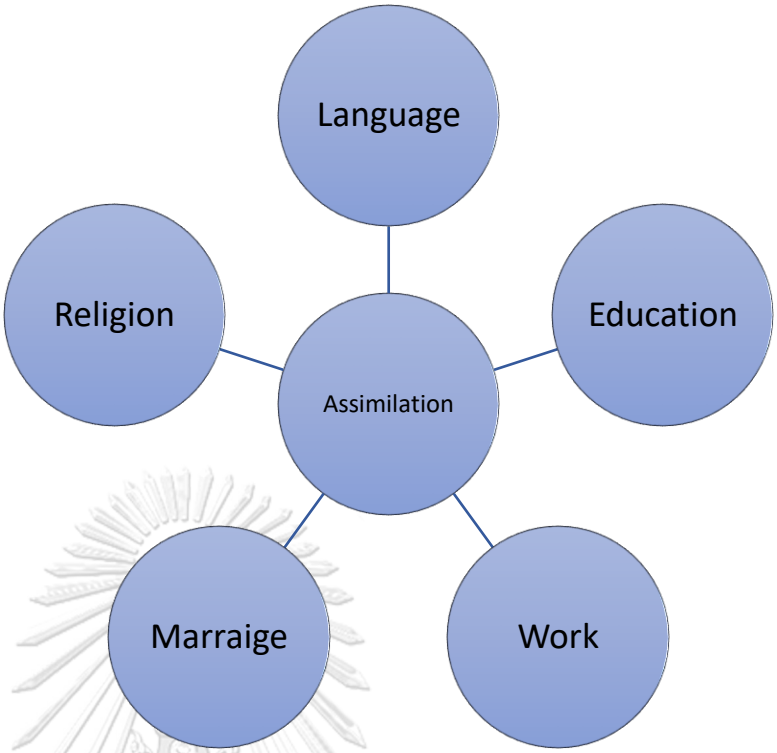


Figure 8: List of aspects that aid Rohingya refugees in assimilating into the host region

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5.3.1 Language

Language is the most critical aspect in assimilating Rohingyas. The vernaculars of the Rohingya and the host country are very similar. People from the Rohingya community have been known to easily grasp the Chittagong dialect and use this to their benefit to living in the country. Overwhelmed by the number of languages in Cox's Bazar, it is difficult for them to adjust to languages outside the country. In another locality, they will be labelled as Rohingya. As a result, Cox's Bazar region is a suitable place for integrating the refugees. Because of their language edge, they could swiftly find informal or low-paying jobs in the neighbouring communities. Many Rohingya people have taken up informal jobs as private religious teachers

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(Hujur) in the host society, teaching children in their homes. In the area, they are referred to as Barmaiya Hujur.

Schools form the most critical site for which language is used as an approach to assimilating the Rohingya refugees. For instance, children are taught in English and Burmese but speak Rohingya at home (Kumar, 2019). According to Kumar, although the language is used to assimilate the Rohingya immigrants, children are torn between a mixture of more than two languages. Besides, language has established a political battleground, creating a form of segregation for Rohingya individuals on the border between Myanmar and Bangladesh (Kumar, 2019).

The Bangladeshi government also bans the Rohingya from learning their local dialect because it establishes some form of resistance to the integration. However, some Rohingya parents always want their children to know about Burmese because they still have hope that they will return to their country Myanmar once again. According to Kumar, some parents express concerns about Bangla being a dominant language; it might alienate their children from Burmese and Rakhine when they return home (Kumar, 2019). However, knowing Bangla is very critical at the moment to avoid marginalization in Bangladesh.

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Besides, mastering the Burmese language offers Rohingya children an opportunity to be reintegrated into Myanmar's education system. Although there are profound assimilation aspects in Bangladesh, the government attempts to hinder or bar assimilation in many ways. For instance, it prohibits a formal schooling system for Rohingya children.

A study conducted in the refugee camps demonstrated that most refugees prefer the Rohingya language to Bangla. However, Rohingya does not contain a

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universally established and accepted script, which is why Bangla is the most preferred language for written communication. In addition, after the local language of Cox’s Bazar (Chittagonian) and Rohingya, verbal Bangla is more comprehended than English and Burmese- because Rohingya and Bangla are verbally closer (Kumar, 2019).

5.3.2 Religion

Compassion and alliance form a defining aspect of the assimilation of the Muslim Rohingya refugees. The Rohingya, Myanmar's most oppressed Muslim ethnic group, are escaping ethnic extermination in the Buddhist-majority nation. They allege they are persecuted in their own country because they are Muslims. This causes compassion amongst Bangladeshi Muslims for the Rohingya people who are being oppressed. The Rohingya people are Sunni Muslims, as most Muslims in Bangladesh contribute to understanding and relationships with the Cox’s Bazar host society. A few Rohingya religious teachers (Hujur) also educate the hosting society on religious precepts. As a result of certain religious compassion and fundamental religious understanding, the Rohingya community has been absorbed into Cox’s Bazar host community. They begin as low-paid employees, perhaps in exchange for a portion of food, and progress into becoming prominent community members. This form of social engagement aids their integration into the host society.

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5.3.3 Marriage

Marriage is a crucial phrase that has a significant social influence. According to many individuals, marriage between locals and Rohingyas is widespread in Bangladesh. However, only a tiny percentage of weddings follow the state's procedures. It is worth noting that several official papers, most notably the bride and groom's birth certificates, are expected for marriage certification. The concern is how the state's system for such unique weddings works.

Locals, mostly men, make the first move in these circumstances to obtain a birth certificate for their future bride before the wedding of a Rohingya woman. These birth certificates are usually obtained through a lengthy procedure that begins with bribing public officials and then moving on to the competent individuals in the different organizations. This problem arises in most marriages between Rohingya women and local males. Lastly, marriage establishes a blood relationship, allowing them to blend in with the locals.

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Rohingya refugees still practice child marriage due to the lack of well-established regulations concerning the minimum marriage age, leading to a rise in child marriage. There is an informality of marriage practices brought about by the missing regulations in the camp of rule. In camps, due to the non-appearance of the lawful process of the materials used in a wedding, people have been committed to informal practices. Girls are considered suitable for marriage once they have attained the required age.

Also, there is consequential reliance that Islam instructs weddings for girls once they have reached the age of puberty. The responsibility of Rohingya women is

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to give birth to children, and they are not supposed to control the birth of children born as it is treated as a sin. Children were seen as a blessing from God, who brought security to the community. Thus the use of family planning methods is not allowed as it is seen as immoral behavior. According to the Rohingya, family planning may result in infertility and even death, and only the elders are responsible for giving directives regarding the use of family planning for women and girls.

5.3.4 Education

While schooling is a basic human necessity, it has been discovered that the Rohingya kids in the recognized and unregulated camps founded before the 1990s receive only elementary school from the Cox's Bazar authorities. Since 1997 children who lived in the refugee camps have received formal education. However, the Bangladesh government restricted their entrance to the kindergarten and primary levels. Later the government established a secondary school for children in the Rohingya refugee camp.

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Free Education is offered on all bases, and children get free academic equipment such as pencils, writing papers, and books. The refugee children who learn in both Bengali and Rohingya are offered education within the camps by teachers. Free Education makes it easy for students in the 21 primary and two secondary schools to study since they do not have to worry about the cost of their schooling. To give a picture of the camps, the government and the NGOs have built 11 more schools in Nayapara camp, where over 5000 students receive an education.

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Several residents assisted Rohingya youngsters in achieving secondary and further schooling for the cause of humanity. A local educator, for example, takes money from Rohingya to assist them in enrolling in Bangladeshi schools. It is important to note that approximately 3.5 percent of the local population has agreed to be using their identity as the father of Rohingya children when applying for school enrollment (The Daily Star, 1).

However, many Rohingya students learn in Bangladeshi higher education institutions, primarily in private institutes. Even local responses confirmed that roughly 60 Rohingya academics graduated from a reputable Bangladeshi university and are all attempting to find work as Bangladeshi citizens. It was also discovered that locals endeavour to guarantee that the family of married Rohingya spouses have access to advanced schooling. From the Teknaf Upazila, such instances have been found. The following are the main entry points for recognizing them as Bangladeshi citizens and permitting them to engage in local politics while maintaining a high social standing.

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5.3.5 Work

Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are not allowed to work legally. This makes it difficult for them to find jobs in government offices. This makes them venture into different types of jobs to make ends meet. Work for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh is in short supply, but the challenge is more significant for female refugees. There is a limited opportunity for work, and the works are often preserved for men. Projects like community-Based Risk Mitigation and Rehabilitation for disaster Risk reduction

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Through Food Assets (FFA) have helped most refugees get money from work to improve infrastructure and make it safer for residents (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Under the official radar, some refugees who fled from Myanmar work in fishing boats, where they help push fishing boats into and out of the sea. In these jobs, refugees earn income and occasionally share the fish they catch. Others earn income by crushing ice blocks to preserve fish, sew nets or fix boats. Most Rohingya women dry fish in yards to make a living. Others labor over long see sorting, oysters, and strong clusters. Most Rohingya people have official refugee status and are legally allowed to work and run businesses outside the camp. Most of the Rohingya people run wholesale and retail companies, manufacturing businesses, accommodation businesses, and food services (O'Brien & Hoffstaedter, 2020). The Rohingya who are employed in people's industries are paid fewer wages.

The government of Bangladesh allocated land and constructed makeshift refugee camps (Sakamoto et al., 2021). As a result, the government established restrictions that prohibited most from moving in and out of the camps. Only about 50,000 Rohingya immigrants had been granted refugee status allowing them to conduct or work inside and outside the camps. Those who have not attained the position are not permitted to move out of the centers (Filipski et al. 2020).

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However, the government allows and promotes numerous economic activities within the camps. Rohingya refugees have an opportunity to conduct many economic activities in the camps. There are diverse businesses inside, including services, trade, manufacturing, and numerous others. The races in the centers impact the types of companies run within the camps. For instance, Bangladeshis are more prone to run businesses such as transportation because they are less restricted from entering and

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leaving the camps. On the other hand, Rohingya run businesses such as wholesale, food services, accommodation, and retail companies (Filipski et al., 2020)

5.4 Challenges of Social Integration

Since the influx of refugees in Cox's Bazar has increased, social integration has been complex due to local perceptions of refugees (Yasmin & Akther, 2020). For example, refugees were prohibited from attending school in their host communities. They were also stereotyped as criminals and threats to radical groups in the region. The social integration of Rohingya refugees into the local community was hampered. Following investigations by news agencies, it was discovered that Rohingya refugees did not have the same rights as locals. They were, for example, denied the right to engage in economic activities because they lacked citizenship rights. This may also be linked to the law prohibiting citizens from marrying Rohingyas. Riley's study (2020) found that Rohingya refugees experienced a high level of systematic human rights violations.

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The influx of Rohingya refugees has pushed up the cost of local goods. Foods with a high level of consumer demand will see a price increase. Food needs are far greater than the supply, so food prices in local markets have increased significantly. This hurts the host communities' lower-income residents. They cannot keep up with rising food prices because they cannot afford it.

Under some circumstances, it has been observed that criminal organizations have benefited from the high influx of refugees within the region since they take

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advantage of and exploit the refugee presence in the region. In some cases, many have benefited from the refugee's presence while playing their crucial role in managing the camp. In the past decades, the situation of the locals has been discussed in an array of debates and relation to the interaction with the refugees. Some discussions have related the locals with the refugees regarding rights and legitimacy. Under some circumstances, it has been noted that even the poorest individual within the host community cannot be compared to the refugees since they have legitimate freedom that the refugees do not enjoy.

One justification was that Bangladesh citizens have the right to work and become employed. On the other hand, though having the ability and interest to work, the refugees were not allowed since they did not have the legitimate rights to work in the country. Therefore, a direct comparison between the locals and the refugees cannot be made since the latter is still struggling to meet their needs. On the other hand, there have been claims that the Rohingya refugees benefit from Foreign Aid and other readily available resources. According to Wake and Bryant (2018), discussions related to the host communities in responding to the needs of the refugees have occurred less than expected. Furthermore, the fight for resources between the host communities and the refugees has placed the government in challenging situations on how to respond to the needs of the locals while also responding to those of the Rohingya refugees.

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5.4.1 Local sentiment towards Rohingya.

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The people of Cox’s Bazar or the locals have a changing view of the refugees. When they first came to Bangladesh, the locals welcomed them, and many instances of this can be found. The sentiment of the local people of Cox’s is apparent in the following interview.

According to a report from the Kutopalong camps by Baldwin and Marshall 2018

The first Rohingya refugees who arrived on Jorina Katun's farmland in Bangladesh last year were worn out and traumatized after fleeing violence in neighboring Myanmar. They wept and begged to stay, and Katun, moved by their plight, said yes." I really regret that," she said. "They said they would stay for only a month. They're still here and more are coming." Katun now has 25 Rohingya families living on a patch of land where she used to grow rice and vegetables. (Baldwin and Marshall 2018)

With time the sentiment of the locals has changed. In now almost five years, the state of limbo of the Rohingya refugees has had significant effects on the local community in terms of demography, jobs, business, prices of goods, etc. In many cases, such as the one mentioned above, it is easy to see how much change has come to many families in the Cox’s Bazar area.

Also, interviews by other scholars have come to the same conclusion about the impact of the forced migration of the Rohingya refugees. As Wake and Bryant (2018) demonstrate in an interview, they feel refugees impose a burden on the indigenous people. Wake and Bryant also discovered throughout the interview that locals

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stereotype refugees, despite discrimination still being on the rise. The stereotype is associated with criminal activity and the possibility of radicalization, as locals perceive migrants as radicals capable of establishing criminal groups in the region.

5.4.2 Concerns regarding organized crime by Rohingya Refugees

With the influx of a large number of refugees, there is a chance that some refugees will turn to criminal activities, for there is a lack of jobs and a constant fight for resources. In addition, there also may be people within the refugee camps or Myanmar and Bangladesh who take advantage of the refugees to turn profits for their criminal organizations. Some refugees may also turn to criminal activities as they see it as easy money. Also, fractions within the camps have ties with different organized crime organizations and even terror groups. Some of the criminal activities brought up in recent years and documented by new agencies are drug smuggling, weapon smuggling, and links to terror groups.

5.4.2.1 Drug Smuggling

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Yaba first gained popularity in Thailand, where it was referred to as Ya Ma, biker's coffee, and kamikaze. Myanmar is the world's most significant manufacturer of methamphetamine, with the majority of yaba discovered in Thailand usually is produced in Burma, mainly in the Golden Triangle and northeastern Shan State, which shares borders with Thailand, Laos, and China.

In recent years the consumption of Yaba in Bangladesh has soared. According to police and government sources, stateless Rohingya refugees, who are challenging to track, are the favorite mules of human traffickers (Fatah 2012)

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In the months after the Rohingya migration, there have been several allegations of law enforcement officers conducting drug seizures. Over a kilogram of crystal meth and over 40,000 pieces of Yaba were taken from their hands in April 2022, according to The Daily Star.

5.4.2.2 Weapons Smuggling

Bangladesh has had a significant problem with the illegal arms trade for years. However, the presence of Rohingya camps in the area seems to have aggravated the issue. The Rohingya refugees are barred from getting public services, obtaining citizenship, and even gaining employment. Left with no other means to make money, coupled with the devastating living conditions, refugees are compelled to join crime. Many are easy targets of organized syndicates that use them to smuggle illicit arms into Bangladesh in exchange for money. To this end, investigations have revealed that refugees play a role in smuggling small arms into Bangladesh. Recently, some Rohingya refugees have been found to possess illegal weapons, which shows that they are part of the smuggling chain.

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The Cox's Bazar region where the camps are situated offers an ideal route for arms smugglers who want the weapons to reach other countries such as Nepal and India. Different routes, such as through Myanmar, are difficult to traverse due to the mountainous terrain. Groups such as the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), seeking to secede from India, benefit from the arms smuggled through the Rohingya refugee camps (Idris 3). Some smuggled weapons also end up in the camps or are purchased locally in the Cox's Bazar region. The local extremist groups, criminal gangs, and Islamist terrorist organizations are some of the arms buyers. A few people

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equally buy the weapons for personal protection due to the region's high crime rate. Taken together, this makes smuggling firearms a lucrative business, especially for the Rohingya refugees who have no alternative source of income to support their families. With the Rohingya crisis far from being over, smuggling weapons through refugee camps will likely continue into the foreseeable future (Gutberlet Par.4).

5.4.2.3 Links to Terrorism

Concerns have also been raised over many Rohingya refugees linked to terrorism. In this context, terrorism has a broad meaning, including acts of violence, crime, and involvement in extremist ideologies. News outlets have reported criminal groups in camps that use guns and bullets. The groups use the weapons to carry out terrorist activities such as extortion, gang war, and narcotics trade. A case in point was the fight in one of the camps in 2021. In the conflict, seven people died, while at least ten were seriously injured. The incident was triggered by the murder of, Muhibullah, a leader of one of the Rohingya factions in the camp. Besides the violence, Bangladesh government officials say other crimes regularly occur in the camps. In this regard, Rohingya refugees are said to be committing severe offenses such as abduction, demand for ransom, and rape (Majeed par.6). The crime rate in the camps seems to be increasing significantly over the years. As the number of weapons increases, so do the number of crimes, gangs, and incidences of violence (Rashid par.6).

Rohingya refugees have also been directly linked to terrorism activities following recent reports that some Rohingya women joined the Arakan Rohingya

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Salvation Army (ARSA). The group is believed to have issued weapons to Rohingya women and has been training them on how to use them. The women are set to start collecting taxes or yaba on behalf of the ARSA and take part in gold smuggling, drug-human trafficking, and extortion to raise money for the Rohingya Welfare Fund. Some ARSA members, including women, have been posting pictures of themselves holding firearms, a typical characteristic of terrorists.

Despite crackdowns by the Bangladesh authorities, the ARSA and other militant groups such as Jamaat-e-Islami continue to recruit more members and fundraise large sums of money to finance their terrorist activities. The refugee camps are a good source of Islamic militants, considering that the refugees are stateless. To fight for their interests, many are likely to become militants. Indeed, past studies have shown that because of Myanmar and Bangladesh's exclusion coupled with the constant threat of persecution, the Rohingyas are likely to join extremist groups, which guarantees them some form of safety. Pundits warn that as the refugee crisis escalates, Bangladesh will increasingly become a fertile ground for recruiting militants (Idris 5).

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Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) has become infamous in recent years because of its influence in Cox’s Bazar. Many scholars will also debate that the current refugee crisis is said to have been triggered by the actions of ARSA in 201. Immediately after the UN published its recommendations regarding the Rakhine State in 2017, the ARSA started a series of attacks.[9]

[9] See Chapter 1 for details

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As discussed in Chapter 1 - ARSA first came to the limelight in late 2016 when the group also carried out a series of attacks on border police posts in northern Rakhine. At the time, the government responded with a brutal military crackdown. However, this did not stop the ARSA from carrying out other attacks, including regular IED attacks on military convoys. Reports further indicate that from 2019 to date, the ARSA has been involved in about 20 attacks on Myanmar security forces. The ARSA and other groups in the north of Myanmar have been fighting for the autonomy of the Rakhine State (Lee 2021). Therefore, the Rohingyas can be directly linked to the ARSA separatist group or movement, which is why the group has continued to thrive across the border.

The influence of ARSA evens on the camps has come into the limelight. The organization makes over 15,000 stores pay them every week. The camps have around 500 madrasas. The Ulama Council, an ARSA associate entity, is in charge of most madrasas. (Molla, 2021)

In an interview with The Daily Star Bangladesh, late Mohib Ullah's brother, Habib Ullah, said, "In the camps, ARSA operators are involved in a wide range of crimes. At night, they seize complete control of the encampment. The Rohingyas are aware of their identities, but they are afraid to reveal them in public.

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It becomes apparent why locals will have mixed sentiments towards refugees. The sentiments of locals of Cox's Bazar could be categorized as such: some refugees may be absorbed or assimilated into the local region. At the same time, some see them as the presence as sparking the formation of radical organizations or increasing criminal activity. Furthermore, some locals see the refugees as people who might be

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used for criminal purposes. Furthermore, the last group believes repatriation may be possible, and the guests might return.

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Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.2 Conclusion

In recent years the Government of Bangladesh has seen the repatriation of the Rohingya Refugees as the solution to the crisis. Even though the other option: integration into the Bangladeshi society, is not seen as a popular option for the people of Bangladesh's perspective, it may be the most organic one.

The Rohingya community and the refugees in Bangladesh have not only faced persecution in Myanmar but also a conflicted history or narrative for their origins. It is difficult to say whether Rohingya communities did live in Arakan even before the colonial period or if the version by the Burmese government: that Rohingya people are Bengali or Indians that were brought to facilitate the need for labor during that time; is the correct one. This conflicted history does play a detrimental role for the Rohingya community. In addition, the fractions of the community which wished for a state other than within Myanmar in 1948 would be an additional cause for enmity between the Burmese people and Rakhine Buddhists.

After the formation of Myanmar in 1948, the civilian and subsequent military governments had different policies for the minorities and the Rohingya community. With the civilian government, there were more chances of citizenship. Still, the later military government did not see the sacrifice of popularity from the majority Buddhist country to help a minority Muslim community as a viable option. In the years that followed, from the 20th century to 2012, when the President of Myanmar would say

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the Rohingya should be put into UNHCR camps or other countries to even Aung San Suu Kyi's office, there was not much resolution to the problem, but only escalation.

When the Rohingya crisis started, State-counselor Suu Kyi supported the military action taken against Rohingya and did not ever term the people "Rohingya." The basis on which State Counsellor Suu Kyi and many others point out that the cause of the Rohingya crisis is the insurgent groups in Rakhine. In addition, the conflict between the Rakhine Buddhists, the military the long enmity with the Rohingya population, we need to consider whether Rakhine would be a safe place for Rohingya Muslims and if Myanmar will facilitate large repatriations of refugees from Bangladesh.

One of the significant aspects of the feasibility of repatriation is brought up by many scholars that the refugees themselves are not consulted during the drafting of the repatriation plans, and how many refugees genuinely want to return to Myanmar, which will not recognize their right to citizenship and land and peaceful existence. Myanmar has shown little effort at changing policy to accommodate the Rohingya more inclusively. For instance, the official administrator of the villages where most of the atrocities occurred in Rakhine said that " no one wants the terrorists to come back." Those affected villages are currently being prepared to welcome other ethnic groups from different parts of Myanmar to repopulate them. This shows that the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh face problems in Rakhine even if they can be repatriated.

Moreover, today the repatriation plan has no provision to rebuild the destroyed villages for the Rohingya, no mechanism to restore legal status via documents or proof of identity, and little evidence that the Rohingyas' safety would be assured. It is

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infeasible because it does not outline precise changes to the law or address the cultural forces that shape the legal, economic, and social status of the Rohingya. It is unsustainable because it will not alleviate the social barriers to coexistence that are currently in place.

The plan for relocation of the Rohingya refugees to Bashan Char can be seen as a project for the refugees to be integrated or even make a livelihood in a place other than the overcrowded camps of Cox's Bazar. As discussed in 4.3, many Rohingya refugees in Bashan Char Island earn through agriculture, farming, and selling products to their community. This would be not easy to do or accomplish in the crowded camps of Cox's Bazar. The island also facilities a better standard of living than the make-shift huts in overcrowded camps. As the infrastructure on the island starts to develop more, there are much more chances for the refugees to find work, jobs, or even set up businesses. Even though the island is seen as temporary housing for refugees, the relocation of refugees into the island can pave the way for developing schemes to understand how to help the refugees as well as the local people and not put pressure on the developing economy of Bangladesh.

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Another crucial aspect of the relocation to Bashan char island is the safety within the island. As discussed in 5.4.2, there are links to insurgent groups within the camps of Cox's Bazar. With the presence of the Bangladeshi armed forces, it will be difficult for criminal or insurgent groups to set up bases on the island, facilitating a much more peaceful coexistence with the Bangladeshi people. In addition, the overcrowded camps have also seen fires break out in recent years, and the island will prove to be much safer; even if there are accidental fires, the development of fire brigades within the island will be much more efficient. It has been difficult for

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firefighters and volunteer workers to put out fires in the camps because of the lack of roads and water facilities.

Cox's Bazar area will have to facilitate both Rohingya refugees and tourism. For this, there is a need to go over the policies of different state organs and businesses that operate in that region.

At the time of writing this paper in 2022, 5 years since the Rohingya influx, there have been numerous talks of repatriation, relocation even integration. In the first four years since the influx, there also has been the birth of 108,037 Rohingya children (Erin Taylor & Claire Garmirian, 2020). As second-generation refugees are born within the camps, more policies should be devised to facilitate the refugees' living but not ignore the local people of Cox's Bazar.

If spatial assimilation occurs, it will not happen overnight but over a long period. In the coming years, there will be more marriages between locals and the Rohingya community; more children may be allowed to study in Bangladeshi schools, and the Rohingya people will do more work and set up businesses. There is a need to recognize that many refugees will likely settle in Bangladesh, so there is a need to understand how to help both the Rohingya community and the local Cox's Bazar people, notwithstanding the development of Bangladesh.

Thus, this paper would like to conclude on the evidence and theories that assimilation and integration into Bangladeshi society through business, marriage, education, and work will likely be the outcome of the Rohingya refugee crisis.

6.2 Recommendations

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The Cox's Bazar area has played an immense role in Bangladesh's tourism sector, as discussed in 3.1.1. To increase both international and domestic tourism, the government of Bangladesh must develop policies that enhance the tourism sector in Cox's Bazar and, simultaneously, see that the refugee camps are not lacking in adequate resources. This delicate balance is crucial to avoid hostility between locals and the refugees. Such policies would also indirectly help in the assimilation and integration of many refugees.

The strategy for the Bangladeshi authorities has been repatriating the Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. To repatriate about 921,000 documented Rohingya refugees living in the camps of Cox's Bazar to Rakhine state with the help of the Myanmar government, as well as the willingness of the refugees, will be no small feat. Therefore, other measures to facilitate the living conditions of the refugees and the local people who host them must be taken into account. The difficulty faced by the refugees has been discussed in detail, and the paper has touched on the problems of the overcrowded camps and the local people. The government and other state actors must consider policies to help the refugees and the local people of Cox's Bazar.

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Also, as discussed in 5.4.1, there is an anti-refugee sentiment from the local people of Cox's Bazar, which can also be seen as a problem for the Bangladeshi government. With the rise in prices of goods and services, the increase in population, and adjusting to the refugee crisis. At the same time, the number of refugees keeps rising, further increasing the battle for resources. From this understanding, the government needs to take a clear decision and develop approaches through which the needs of the locals can be met while also responding to the needs of the refugees. Moreover, the locals should be empowered, primarily through policies and regulations

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that would enable them to employ refugees with the ability and interest to work while also sharing the available resources between the locals and the refugees.

This can be achieved through engagement in targeted activities that see the integration of the refugees with the locals or developing programs that can support mainstreaming the refugees into the local activities. One of the most critical roles the locals play as one of stakeholders is to provide social and emotional support to the Rohingya refugees. Consequently, this can only be achieved through a peaceful coexistence that allows the Rohingya refugees to integrate and interact with the locals. However, when such peaceful coexistence is diminished, it would be difficult for the locals to provide the social and emotional support required.

Another aspect that needs to be considered for peaceful coexistence is the Refugee laws in Bangladesh. With the absence of such laws and Bangladesh not being a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention or its protocols. With the influx and the extended stay of the Rohingya refugees, it is an appropriate time for a law to be in place for the refugee so that policies can be tailored to the problems. It is worth noting that even though Bangladesh has not ratified the 1951 Refugee convention, there is ample evidence that many courts do respect the convention. In many cases, Rohingya refugees were not forced back to Myanmar for fear of persecution (Hossain 2021).

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For the better life of Rohingya in the camps of Cox’s Bazar, the UN with its bodies, the government of Bangladesh, and foreign aid have immensely helped the crisis. The situation still is very volatile because of the presence of insurgent groups, armed conflict, diseases, and lack of proper housing in the camps. In light of these

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problems is the idea that if Rohingya are repatriated to Myanmar, all of the issues will disappear, but this might not be the outcome for most refugees.

Therefore, to come with better living conditions for the refugees, there must be the following:

- Appropriate housing
- Proper sanitation facilities
- Appropriate clinics and hospitals
- Better roads and infrastructure
- Educational facilities
- Sources of income for refugees

To solve the refugee crisis, there is no one solution; these general recommendations are helpful to the Rohingya refugees who are living in overcrowded camps and can help better their life. In turn, there is a higher probability of children becoming educated and refugees finding jobs and not resorting to criminal activities or violence. As this paper finishes on the note that assimilation for the refugee will have challenges. Still, over generations, assimilation might be the likely outcome for the refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

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