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Rohingya Refugee and Resettlement Nexus in Bangladesh: Why it Become a Research Agenda?

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Abstract
Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are the identity-less parasites in global politics and lives in the densest refugee camps in world history. The financial and institutional support for refugees is challenged due to many unavoidable factors that the world is facing nowadays while the number of refugees and displaced people is increasing all over the world. The article observes the longitudinal and multidimensional factors that led Rohingya as a stateless in the political geography of the world. The study warrant of permanent solutions for the prevailing crises of Rohingya refugee that indicates extensive research on Rohingya. It is also revealed that interdisciplinary and multispectral research can help to identify the ways to help them for their distress voyage. The paper argues for the combination of an array of non-state, state, and other allied actors for the research on Rohingya for their peaceful and permanent settlement in and outside of their country.

Keywords: Rohingya, Refugee, Resettlement, Research, Bangladesh

> *"The peoples of the (new) states are simultaneously animated by two powerful, thoroughly interdependent, and often actually opposed motives- search for identity and demand for progress. These two motives are intimately related because citizenship in truly modern state has more and more become the most broadly negotiable claim to personal significance, and because what Mazzini called the demand to exist and have a name is to such a great extent fired by a humiliating sense of exclusion from the important centers of power in the world society (Geertz, 1963)."*

Myanmar is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic (Aung, 2016) and multi-religious country and diverse populace with 52.89 million (2016) people comprising Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, and other religions possessing largest land area in mainland Southeast Asia (Aung, 2016). In recent times, one can hardly find a government that has been so dreadful, so brutal and so barbarous in its refutation of basic human rights to a people that trace their

origin to the land for nearly a millennium. In addition, it was a place of anxiety for fifty years with prolongs the civil war and pre-democracy struggles under the military (Aung, 2016). The *Rohingya* Muslims are the victims living in the Arakan (now Rakhine) state. They have become the forgotten people of our time (Siddiqui, 2018). About 40 percent of the *Rakhine* population is Muslims who fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar when the ethnic cleansing started decades ago. Many scholars and writers from the different parts of the world were written about *Rohingya* problem as compassionately or as a challenge because they are facing an uncertain future with a lot of violations and vulnerabilities. But they failed to get attention from the international arena when many of them delineate the *Rohingya* problem as historical or political. Myanmar government allows citizenship for those whose ancestors live before 1823 and who are the enlisted 130 documented minor groups where *Rohingya* was not included. An efficient Machiavellian means to seize one's lands is to reject his/her property rights. When this illicit practice has done by the supreme authority nothing could be more awful. The very obvious instance of such a misdeed can be seen in the practices of the government of Myanmar (Siddiqui, 2018) as "*a semi-organized social movement with clear political goals*" (Klinken & Aung, 2017).

The *Rohingya* conveys the ethnoreligious identity of the Muslim minority geographically relates the people of as *Arakanse* Muslim who resided western part of Myanmar, now *Rakhaine* (also known *Arakan* state) (Ahsan Ullah, 2016, Leider, 2018), and claimed themselves as the part of Myanmar citizen however the government always declare them as illegal immigrants (Albert, 2018). However, there have been created many conflicting debates about the origin of *Rohingya*, but it is clear that in *Arakan*, they have resided a large number of Muslims for hundreds of years (Mohajan, 2018) and with this political infection *Rohingya* creates two strong blocs (Pro- and anti- *Rohingya*). *Arakan* was a sovereign kingdom before British colonization (Farzana, 2017) and *Rohingya* reconciled them in Myanmar at the 9th century as they lived there, even before the of Muslim came, at the end of the 8th century (Kei, 1991) and naturally mingled with Bengalis, Turks, Moguls and Persians which indicates the pluralistic demography from the genesis of *Rohingya* at Rakhaine state (Albert, 2018). On the other hand, anti-bloc claimed that these people were from Chittagonian Bengali who migrated during British colonial rule and favored by the British along with other minority groups over ethnic Burmans (Knuters, 2018, Tanenbaum, 2017) and fought against the Japanese during 2nd World War (Kei, 1991). In addition to that they didn't treat as the people of Myanmar by the government and called "*resident foreigner*" (Ahsan Ullah, 2016) which indirectly reject the national identity and political membership and become effectively stateless (Farzana, 2017) however they were in a realm of statelessness for over six generations (Milton and Rahman, et.al, 2017). "This is systematic discrimination: laws, policies, and practices, though designed and carried out by people, are ultimately part of or attributable to a system that ensures discrimination even in the absence of discriminatory individuals" (Benjamin Zawacki, Defining Myanmar's *Rohingya* Problems). However the British have given a promise that they will provide an independent state to them after world war-II but the promise was not kept by them and the *Rakhine* remain the part of Myanmar (Kei, 1991). According to Khin Maung Saw(1993), the term "*Rohingya*" was unfamiliar before the 1950s and Red Flag Communists invented the term. Aye Chan (2005) debates that a *Rohingya* MP from the Akyab North constituency invented the term. These people have been browbeaten and deliberately excluded from geographic identity for centuries (Ahsan Ullah, 2016) and failed to get attention, as they considered Myanmar's problem, from Bangladesh.

The political landscape in Myanmar was founded through the British colonial period however there were many ethnic groups but finally they placed under the umbrella of British rule before the independence from Great Britain in 1948 (Kipgen, 2016). It is necessary to know why the alienation of *Rohingya* started (Knuters, 2018) however the transformation of power in Myanmar was non-peaceful in several times and the trust of authority towards the rebellious minority was low and vice versa due to the role of the British in the colonial period as they used different minor groups against ethnic Burmans. Every state has a historical background of its own and, has had an influence of colonizing nations, which combines both general ideology and particular policies to format general and economic ideology (Johnson, 1967). After independence, the country was a flimsy democratic state before the military coup that seized power from the elected government in 1962 and experienced military dictatorship until the 2015 elections (Farzan, 2017, Kipgen 2016).

Military at the 1960s considered, by the developed world, as the agent of modernization (Pye, 1961) that involves changes in the value system as well as economic, political, and social changes. This value system was

"prescriptive" and thoroughly integrated with the religious system and which invokes ultimate sanctions for every infraction (Becker, 1957). Counter-modernization movement's results–religious, linguistic groups rebel and demand a return to fundamentalism (Hoselitz, 1961). However, secularization is a process, transition from prescriptive to principle society, and does not mean that religion disappears. Where Suu Kyi, is definitely may also be a "*central figure*" (Seligman, 1950) and can "…*personify and integrate many conflicting needs*" (Emerson, 1960) and pivots around a heroic effort to keep them aligned (Geertz, 1963) in a crisis period. But, Yanghee Lee, in Myanmar, as human rights investigator from UN said she and many others in the global society hoped the condition under Aung San Suu Kyi "*would be vastly different from the past — but it is really not that much different from the past*". (The Guardian, 24 October 2018).

The relationship between militaries and civilian leaders varies, of course, according to the circumstances of historic development (Pye, 1961). As Finer (1962) stated that "*where public attachment to civilian institutions is strong, military intervention in politics will be weak…. Where public attachment to civilian institutions is weak or non-exist, military intervention in politics will find wide scope-both in manner and substances*". During the military rule, *Rohingya* got more severe than other minority groups (i.e., Karen, Shan,) who cooperated, and favored by, British during their colonial period against the Burmese minorities.

The jingoistic factions retained almost after one hundred years (Farzana, 2017) and established "*disciplined democracy*" by military dictator under the constitution to legalize their illegal rule due to terrifying of the vengeance from common people that they would lose their authority (Gravers and Ytzen, 2014) though they claimed their actions "*an attempt to restore the order in an increasingly chaotic political scene*" (Tylor, 2009, Cited in Farzana, 2017:48). In 1974 a new constitution was formed, under the Burma Socialist Program Party (BCPP), which make a hardship rule for citizenship. Several amendments of the constitution ensured institutional changes that comprise civil, political, and administrative aspects and took initiative to unite the nation through mash the rebel groups and securing Buddhism as the state religion. Under this course, "*Operation Nagamin*" was instigated to dissolve the political organizations of *Rohingya* (Frazana, 2017) as to "*take action against foreigners who have filtered into the country illegally*" (Smith 1999, in Farzana 2017) and proven their targeted negative sentiments against the *Rohingya* including other insurgent minor groups.

In 1984 the military instigated a new restraining policy of citizenship that supports the exclusionist policy of insurgent minor groups from mainland citizenship (Farzana, 2017). However previously 135 minor groups were recognized under the law, before 1962, the civilian government recognized 144 ethnic groups including *Rohingya*. But *Rohingya* became *de-facto* stateless by excluding these minority groups through "*Citizenship Laws*" in 1982 when they were termed as "*resident foreigners*" with an extensive list of deprivations (i.e., work, education, medication, etc) (EU, 2017 and Ahsan Ullah, 2016). Before the 1990 election, Burma's economy declares as "Least Develop Country" in 1987 by UNDP but the people were shouting and claiming for democracy to accelerate to their stagnant economy into a dynamic one. Thousands were killed by an armed gunman and arrested. The imperative device to reduce the conflict between ethnicity and national integration is the nationalist party who can dominate the local political scene. The Ayung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) won a landslide victory at the 1990 free fair election but not handover the power to them while arrested in their house (Kipgen 2016). Suu Kyi released in 2010 and won a by-election in 2012 got 43 seat out of 44 after that in the 2015 general election she elected as state councilor promising a democratic future for Myanmar but may not able to hold the office due to legal obligation as she has foreign citizenship (McKirdy, 2016).

Rohingya Muslims are still excluded and victimized while religion and nationalism emerged as a notion of belonging in Myanmar (Farzana, 2017). However, their concern here is with the implications of nationalism for the ideology of religious policy (Buddhism) rather than the problems of social and economic integration. As nationalism engaged with hostility towards other nations or ethnic groups and a tendency to adopt a double standard of morality concerning them, that colors every aspect of attitudes of new nations toward the advanced countries with which they trade and from which they receive aid. Besides, *Rohingya* Muslims does not recognize as a citizen of Burma (Ahsan Ullah, 2016). Senior General Min Aung Hlaing made it clear that *Rohingya* origin lay at the heart of the matter when, on September 16, 2017, he posted to Facebook a statement saying that the

current military action against the *Rohingya* is "*unfinished business*" stemming back to the Second World War. He also stated, "They have demanded recognition as *Rohingya*, which has never been an ethnic group in Myanmar.

[The] Bengali issue is a national cause and we need to be united in establishing the truth" (Human Rights Watch, 2017). The *Rohingya* refugees and their statelessness have an international issue to study, and substantial research has been done by many scholars throughout the world concerning this (Ahsanullah, 2016, Albert, 2018, Amnesty International, 2017, Beyrer and Kamarulzaman,2017, Knuiters, 2018, Milton and Rahman *et. al*, 2017). It is also internationally recognized as a humanitarian crisis by earlier researchers in their writings (Kaveri, 2017, Kingston, 2015, Murphy, 2018, Hasan and Smith *et.al*. 2018) that suggest the intervention of international organization (OIC, UN, etc.) to concentrate on the crisis effectively (Milton and Rahman *et. al*, (2017). Multilateral initiatives for political solutions of *Rohingya* issues are emphasized by the neighboring countries especially ASEAN and global communities (Ahsan Ullah, 2016). Because policies can make any ethnic or minority groups into "*identity-less parasites*" but maltreated minority can preserve their identity through memories and culture (Knuters, 2018).

The latest beckon of aggression was termed as "*ethnic cleansing*" (OHCHR, 2017), however, triggered the massive *Rohingya* refugees' influx in Bangladesh and many of them are biometrically redistricted and given identity cards by the Immigration and Passport Department of Bangladesh (Oh, 2017) and providing-shelter, relief and medical service (Khatun and Kamruzzaman, 2018) who are totally amounted 918,936 (ISCB, 2018b). Bangladesh sang in different global human rights treaties that indirectly support the *Rohingya* refugees in humanitarian aspects however there is a limitation that they are not enforceable in a local court by domestic law for their misconduct which made questions in the issue of local security (Khatun and Kamruzzaman, 2018). However, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed to the repatriation of *Rohingya* between Bangladesh and Myanmar but this may not happen yet due to the reluctance of Myanmar.

The Government of Bangladesh, with different global organizations, has taken several schemes because of the crisis (diplomatic, bilateral, and humanitarian). The state counselor of Myanmar was committed repatriate 330 people daily but many other sources assert that they were not agreed to Bangladesh 10 points proposal (Miazee, 2017, and Khatun & Kamruzzaman, 2018). The Prime minster of Bangladesh was proposed for '*safe zones*' inside Myanmar for refugees to repatriate but it could be dangerous for them as Weir said from the Bosnia and Sri Lanka experience (Richard Weir, Human Rights Watch, 23 September 2017). The UN Security Council urges for stopping the communal violence in *Rakhine* and the EU extends the sanction up to April 2018 (EU, 2017). The Secretary General of the UN visited a refugee camp in Bangladesh and advised for more funds for refugees (UNHCR, 2018).

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) with its Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) and international organizations are supporting *Rohingya* in humanitarian aspects. A USD 434 million fund estimated for six months to humanitarian support for *Rohingya* living in Bangladesh at Geneva organized by UN, IOM, UNHCR, OCHA, and co-hosted by Kuwait and EU (OCHA, 2017c). A Joint Response Plan (JRP) adapted to meet up the coming needs along with existing support and considering the future possible threats of future challenges. A total USD 950 million is required as support under the JRP to meet the urgent needs of more than 880,000 Rohingya refugees and over 330,000 Bangladeshis in communities affected by the crisis (Khatun & Kamruzzaman, 2018).

Conflict remains the main driver of humanitarian needs, while natural disasters continue to cause many people to need emergency aid. Overall, more than 134 million people across the world need humanitarian assistance and protection – and more funding than ever before (Human Rights Watch, 2019). According to the report of the Financial Tracking system about 135.3 million people need humanitarian support while in 2009 the fund required USD 9 billion for assistance but received the only USD 7 billion. When we are talking about the year 2018 the fun required USD 25.2 billion and received only USD 14.6 billion (OCHA, 2018) and this gap widens gradually and creating risk and anxiety to the leaders of the world in the coming future.

The *Rohingya* refugees in Bangladesh need basic facilities (i.e., food, shelter, education, medical, sanitary, economic facilities, etc) that create extra pressure on GoB while the host country is losing economic, social, and environmental resources. In the year 2017 August to December *Rohingya* Refugees deforested 2.4 thousand hectors (Yousuf, 2017) which are continuing. The report on the *Rohingya* crisis published by the CPD Bangladesh estimated the cost for FY 2019 USD 1211 million for these crises which is amounted to 2.47% of the national budget, 0.47% of GDP, and 3.44% of the total revenue of Bangladesh on FY 2018. In addition to that, if the repatriation starts it per MoU between GoB and Myanmar will take 30 Years, as a 1.5% reproduction rate, the hosting cost will be USD 22,429 billion (Khatun & Kamruzzaman, 2018).

The politics of *Rohingya* Muslim resettlement is pertinent to study as the oppression towards *Rohingya* was brutal and turns into genocide and this brutality amount to a vulgar violation of their human rights (Knuters, 2018) in Myanmar. As the Myanmar governments have estranged *Rohingya* through nationalistic and religious policies so the study is needed to uncover the politics of *Rohingya* Muslims to become refugees and this will be used to discover the way how to resettle of *Rohingya* Muslims. This *Rohingya* issue constitutes in many respects an ideal "*laboratory*" for analyzing militarism, religious extremism, and exclusion of *Rohingya* from Myanmar and the politics of resettlement. In this "*laboratory*" certain independent variables, according to Putnam are held constants- "*colonial background, nature of the struggle for independence, religious background, and cultural authority patterns*"

The unprecedented exodus of *Rohingya* refugees from Myanmar into southeastern Bangladesh is now a huge burden for them in both socio-political and economical aspect where socio-cultural heterogeneity plays a vital role in their social interaction and diversity that crate anxiety in urban areas where the south Asian nation is already afflicted by overpopulation and poverty. The role of an ethnic group in providing food and shelter to the unemployed, marriage, and burial expenses, assistance in locating a job has been widely noted. Bangladesh's government is not yet in a position to offer an effective network of such services, because of a lack of resources and personnel. Yet these services would not be provided, widespread social unrest could be expected. *Rohingya* refugees create extra pressure for them and the issue often sparks off conflict is the 'perception' that the one group is gaining at the expense of another, in the governing process. The spatiality of politics research is actively located in social life because it comprises and concretizes the social action and relationship. The purpose of the study is to direct the research to investigate in this *Rohingya* refugees "*laboratory*" some of the more important speculations about the sources of resettlements in the coming future.

To resettle the Rohingya refugee permanently, within and outside of their country, a deep understanding and conceptualization are essential to identify the leading causes of *Rohingya* displacement. The studies may show how state and non-state actors are contributing to resettle the *Rohingya* refugees and how these are interlinked with each other by explaining how changing the role of non-state actors influence the process, welfare, and food security of *Rohingya* refugees. Moreover, to explain such impacts taking into consideration imperfections in the process of resettlement of refugees. The research might help design better resettlement mechanisms through which *Rohingya* refugees can be given an efficient opportunity in allocating resources and also Bangladesh can be benefitted from the resettlement mechanism.

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