

THE ROHINGYA GENOCIDE AND THE CONSEQUENT INFLUX OF REFUGEES INTO BANGLADESH AND FIND WAYS TO SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS



Sanjib Sardar *¹  

*¹ Research Scholar, Sri Satya Sai University of Technology and Medical Sciences, Madhya Pradesh, India



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v8.i10.2020.1882>

Article Type: Research Article

Article Citation: Sanjib Sardar. (2020). THE ROHINGYA GENOCIDE AND THE CONSEQUENT INFLUX OF REFUGEES INTO BANGLADESH AND FIND WAYS TO SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS. International Journal of Research -GRANTHAALAYAH, 8(10), 131-137. <https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v8.i10.2020.1882>

Received Date: 01 October 2020

Accepted Date: 27 October 2020

Keywords:

Rohingya
Genocide
Myanmar
Rakhine
Bangladesh
Refugee

ABSTRACT

Rohingya is the name of a persecuted and oppressed nation of the world. Ethnic genocide against the Rohingya is not a new issue, the planned attack by the Burmese army on the Rohingya dates back to the 1960s. As a result of a new level of attack on August 25, 2017, about seven to eight lakh Rohingya refugees have been forced to flee in Bangladesh. Rohingyas have also been subjected to genocide, rape, torture and attacks from a section of Buddhist society in Myanmar. The main purposes of this study are to find out the causes of Rohingya genocide and the consequent influx of refugees into Bangladesh. The present study is based on intensive analysis of secondary data. The sources of secondary data are books, journals etc. It focuses on the Rohingya citizenship issue in Myanmar, its root causes, the persecution of the Rohingya and their socio-economic conditions. Reviewing all aspects of the problem, several solutions have been mentioned in the present paper.

1. INTRODUCTION

Myanmar is a country in Southeast Asia, bounded by China, Laos and Thailand to the east; China and India to the North; Bangladesh, India and Bay of Bengal to the West; Malaysia and Bay of Bengal to the South. Democracy has only existed in Myanmar since 2011. Military Force have been made an arrangement with the opposition, under which a free election was permitted to be held on November 8, 2015. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi was promoted to the presidency of Myanmar after having spent 15 years years under house arrest.

Religion is an essential aspect of life in Myanmar and central to conceptions of personal identity. Most of the Burmese population identify as Buddhist (87.9%). There are also significant minorities of Christians (6.2%) and Muslims (4.3%). There are a small number of Hindus (0.5%), Tribal Religion (0.8%), Other Religion (0.2%) and No Religion (0.1%). The population of the western coastal province of Rakhine State is predominantly Buddhist while the Rohingya are predominantly Muslim. Tensions between Buddhist and Muslim communities have frequently led

to violence in Rakhine State, with nationalist Buddhists frequently used to target Rohingya. They have a distinct ethnicity with their own language and culture, but claim to have a long historical connection to Rakhine State.

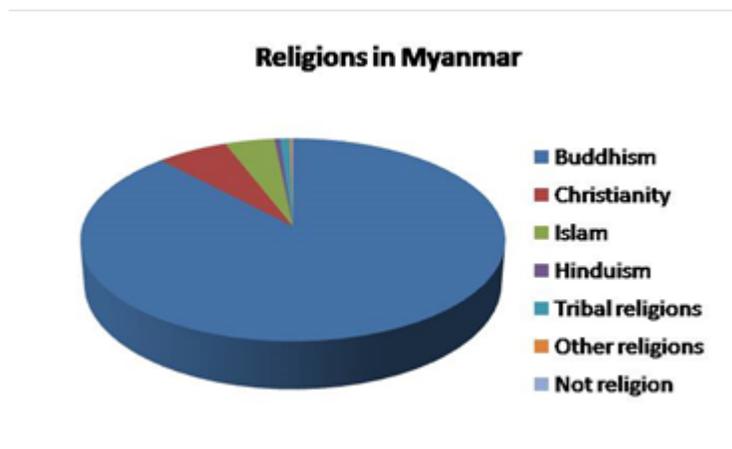


Figure 1: Religions in Myanmar

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present paper are

- 1) To find out the causes of the Rohingya genocide and consequent influx of refugees into Bangladesh
- 2) To find out the causes of citizenship crisis of rohingya in Myanmar
- 3) To understand the refugee crisis and analyzing the livelihood of Refugee
- 4) Finding a way to solve the problem of Rohingya citizenship crisis.

3. DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on intensive analysis of secondary data. The sources of secondary data are books, journals, magazines, different published and unpublished documents and web resources. The most widely used secondary sources of information are 'Human Rights Watch' 2017, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) 2017 and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2017 etc.

4. HISTORY OF CITIZENSHIP CRISIS

Rohingya are no longer recognized as citizens of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). The history of their citizenship was first described in 1799 by a Scottish surgeon named Francis Buchanan. According to him, in the then Arakan Empire (now Rakhine State) in Burma, a Muslim group called "Mohammedin" had long lived under the name "Rowinga". According to historians, as a result of the British colonization of Burma in 1826, many migrated from Bangladesh to Rakhine as agricultural laborers, who were later referred to as Rohingya. British colonialism ended in 1948 and Burma emerged as an independent state. The military rule in Burma began in 1962 and the Rohingya have been subjected to various forms of persecution ever since. For example, the Rohingya were not given the right to vote in the 1974 national elections. Then in February 1978, more than 2 lakhs Rohingya fled from Rakhine to Bangladesh due to the brutal attacks of the Burmese army; About 10,000 Rohingya died of diarrhea and malnutrition after entering Bangladesh in December of the same year. In 1982, the Rohingya were officially stripped of their citizenship in Burma and became a stateless group.



Figure 2: Location map of Rakhine state and Cox's Bazar Source: junior scholastic

5. PERSECUTION AND CRACKDOWN

Rohingya have been described as "amongst the world's least wanted" and also "one of the world's most persecuted minorities" by the United Nations. Multiple ethnic clashes between Buddhists and Muslims, about 140,000 Rohingya were forced to leave Rakhine. Many of them took refuge in temporary rehabilitation centres in Myanmar and many later fled from there, mainly due to the attacks by Buddhist terrorists. Millions of Rohingya fled by sea from Myanmar to neighbouring countries for fear of various forms of persecution and crackdown, resulting in at least a thousand Rohingya drowning in the sea. Since 2013, the Myanmar government has imposed sanctions on international aid and donor agencies related to the Rohingya, and in 2014 imposed a complete ban on the international NGO "Doctor without Borders". In March 2014, Buddhist extremists attacked several international aid organizations for aiding the Rohingya, and the Myanmar government also imposed sanctions on those organizations. In April of the same year, the Burmese military conducted a national census, but the Rohingya were ignored and about 300 international aid workers were deported from Myanmar. In 2015, more than 4 lakhs Rohingya fled by sea to neighbouring countries, and in the same year, the Burmese government set a time limit for Rohingya to have two children and banned childbirth. It also imposed bans on Rohingya from marrying people of other faiths. The Rohingya were also barred from voting in the November 2015 national elections, in which Aung San Suu Kyi, the current state adviser and leader of the National League for Democracy was elected.



Figure 3: Rohingya Refugee

Source: economictimes

[International Journal of Research -GRANTHAALAYAH](http://www.economictimes.com)

6. REFUGEE CRISIS

There were three lakh more Rohingyas in the Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, even before the recent attack in Rakhine brought about seven lakh Rohingyas. At present, the number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh alone stands at around one million and Kutupalong is now one of the largest refugee camps in the world. The estimated number of Rohingyas worldwide is now estimated at 1.6 million, including about 3 lakhs in Myanmar and 1 million in Bangladesh. They are also scattered in other parts of the world - such as an estimated two lakhs Rohingya refugees in Saudi Arabia, about 10,000 Rohingyas in the UAE, about three and a half lakhs in Pakistan, 40,000 in India, 5,000 in Thailand, more than one and a half lakh in Malayasia and about one thousand in Indonesia.

Considering the overall situation, it is possible to say that the Rohingya ethnic group lived in the Arakan Empire as early as the sixteenth century, from 1824 many people migrated from Bangladesh to Burma as farmers to cope with the then food crisis due to British colonization in Burma. According to the Myanmar Citizenship Act of 1982, a person's ancestor who was permanently residing in Burma before 1823 is only now granted citizenship, but those who began residing in Burma after 1823 are not granted Myanmar citizenship. This special law was adopted by the Burmese government in 1982 only to deliberately de-state the Rohingya people. This proves that the then Burma or the present Myanmar government was never in favour of uniting the Rohingya people with the general population of Myanmar. Following this, the planned massacre of the Rohingya Muslim community in Rakhine has been carried out under various circumstances and on false allegations since 1960. In February 2018, 'Human Rights Watch' reported that about fifty Rohingya villages had been burned to the ground by bulldozers. As a result, all human rights abuses against Myanmar's military are being destroyed. Not only is the Myanmar army involved in this barbaric massacre, but also local terrorists and extremist Buddhists have joined in the massacre. Evidence of this has been published in the Thomson & Reuters report - which led to the detention of two of their journalists by the Myanmar government. The United Nations has called the recent massacre of Myanmar's army a genocide and not only has the world recognized this barbarism as an exemplary act of planned and barbaric genocide against minority ethnic groups. There is nothing wrong with the Rohingya people, such as murder, rape, torture of children and women, arson in homes, shootings, landmines at the border, killing innocent and unarmed people from army helicopters. The Myanmar government, Buddhist extremist groups and the Myanmar army did not. Rohingyas have taken refuge in Bangladesh to get rid of their slaughter. Many have drowned while crossing the sea.



Figure 4: Rohingya Camps in Cox's Bazar

Source: dw.com

Reviewing the history, it is clear that the persecution of the Rohingya by the Myanmar government is not a new issue, but this persecution has been going on continuously for the last six decades. In Myanmar, the Rohingya are identified either as a Muslim minority or as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. Overcoming such extreme uncertainty and human rights disasters in Myanmar, the Rohingya often have to cross the Naf River from Rakhine and, in some cases, the Bay of Bengal, to reach Teknaf, Ukhiya Upazila in Cox's Bazar by a two-week trek. The Rohingya somehow escaped with their lives and gained the status of refugees in Bangladesh. The Rohingyas have become a stateless group as there is no possibility for them to get citizenship from Bangladesh!

Cox's Bazar is a special geographical district of Bangladesh - surrounded by sea on one side and hills on the other. Cox's Bazar is a district full of natural beauty, but in the rainy season Cox's Bazar district became a terrible condition. This is because during the monsoon season (June to September), Cox's Bazar receives about 4,000 mm of rainfall almost every year, and floods and landslides are a well-known natural disaster. However, it is better to call it a man-made disaster, as evidenced by the landslides that have been found in Cox's Bazar so far, the main reason being to cut man-made hills and build unplanned houses on the dangerous slopes of the mountains. Rohingya have set up their temporary tents, houses or camps in Cox's Bazar by cutting down hills and clearing forests. Even before the arrival of the Rohingya, there are examples of hotels, houses and localities being cut down in many parts of Cox's Bazar city, which have since been hit by landslides. There are also cyclones in the Bay of Bengal. As a result of such massive deforestation, there is a danger of a catastrophe in the coming monsoon.

7. LIVELIHOOD OF THE REFUGEES

Rohingya are living in a very inhuman life in these camps. Children are constantly being infected with various waterborne and other diseases, many are plagued by trauma. They have to live in a very crowded environment with a lack of clean drinking water, adequate toilets and other daily amenities. Although they no longer fear death at the hands of the Burmese army and Buddhist extremists, there are renewed fears of landslides, disease and uncertainty about the future. The government of Bangladesh has also recently decided to relocate about one lakh Rohingya to Bhasanchar in Noakhali district where they will be provided with various living facilities which will be a means of livelihood for them but Bhasanchar could be severely affected by cyclones, sea level rise and tidal surges; This could lead to more humanitarian catastrophe for the Rohingya. It is as if the Rohingya escaped from the hands of the Burmese army and passed a disaster, but the natural and temporary camps that came to Bangladesh are facing another new disaster due to various problems! In addition to burning down Rohingya villages in Rakhine, the Myanmar army fired indiscriminately at the Rohingya by helicopter, and Myanmar helicopters crossed the border into Bangladesh about 18 times which certainly amounts to violating the sovereignty of an independent state but the Bangladesh Army wisely refrains from fighting Myanmar.

Not only are the Rohingyas in Bangladesh in UN-sanctioned designated asylum camps, but the local people of various upazilas and villages in Cox's Bazar have given them shelter. According to many locals, the arrival of Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar has led to a rise in commodity prices, as well as a shortage of various necessities.

Local dissatisfaction is surpassing day by day. The recent situation of the Rohingya persecution has caused a stir around the world and as a result, many prominent leaders, religious gurus and social activists from around the world have already visited the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, expressed sympathy for them, praised them in Bangladesh and urged them to return to Myanmar. The Myanmar government has now expressed its desire to take back the Rohingyas in the face of various international pressures, but it is not yet certain whether they will take back these one million Rohingyas! Recently, a bilateral agreement was signed between Bangladesh and the Myanmar government to repatriate the Rohingya to Myanmar. But all international organizations have opposed the agreement, arguing that Rakhine villages are not yet suitable for the return of Rohingya and that they do not have adequate security. At the same time, the Rohingyas who came to Bangladesh also do not want to return into Rakhine for fear of not having adequate security and livelihood facilities. In other words, despite all the global pressure, considering all the circumstances, it has become almost impossible to bring the Rohingyas back to Rakhine in Myanmar in the very near future. On the other hand, the local public outcry in Cox's Bazar is growing, and the government of Bangladesh, as a poor and overcrowded state, is not able to foster the responsibilities of this large number of people alone. Thus, earning a living for about one million people every day is a costly process, and there are doubts as to how many months or how many more years this assistance will last.

8. WAY TO SOLUTION

By reviewing all these problems, several ways can be adopted as a solution:

- 1) Returning Rohingya refugees back to their ancestral villages with adequate security and dignity is the most complex task at the moment, but forcibly returning Rohingya is tantamount to knowingly pushing them to their deaths. In this situation, the Government of Bangladesh, with the assistance of the United Nations and in consultation with other friendly countries, needs to assist in the gradual return to Rakhine, Myanmar, to

ensure adequate security and the restoration of livelihood. In that case, the whole process needs to be completed while maintaining friendly relations with the Myanmar government.

- 2) In order to ensure that Rohingya returning from Bangladesh enjoy adequate security and livelihood opportunities in Rakhine and all citizens, there is a need for continuous monitoring and evaluation by various UN agencies and international allies.
- 3) If there are indeed any illegal Bangladeshis among the Rohingya refugees, they must be segregated through screening and made arrangements to make a living in Bangladesh, subject to the granting of citizenship in Bangladesh.
- 4) This brutally attack on the Rohingya Muslims should ensure that no extremist thoughts, such as racial hatred or retaliation, spread to any particular group or organization and that any kind of violence with the neighboring state does not result. The Rohingya issue must be taken seriously in the interest of regional and international security.
- 5) If a large number of Rohingya are relocated, special care must be taken to ensure that no human rights are violated and that they are protected from various natural disasters and have adequate livelihood arrangements. It is also important to ensure that they are evacuated safely before a disaster strikes.
- 6) In the interest of the safety after their return to Rakhine, state-of-the-art technology can be used to provide special security to each Rohingya family with UN permission, such as round-the-clock satellite imagery and the deployment of UN peacekeepers in Rakhine if necessary.
- 7) Since the problem cannot be resolved any time soon, the town planners, disaster managers and all concerned must work together to begin the process of deciding whether the Rohingya can be relocated to a safer place in the meantime.
- 8) In the near future, those involved in such barbaric attacks to Rohingya as murder, rape, genocide, looting, forcing them to flee the country and burning village after village will have to face adequate punishment in the International Court of Justice. As a result of such exemplary punishment, it is to be hoped that in the future no one else will refrain from carrying out genocide.

9. CONCLUSION

The genocide of the Muslim Rohingya in Rakhine is a product of a complex and historical context. This phenomenon is not the result of a single individual or a single process, but involves hundreds of years of history, ethnic conflict, colonial influence, socio-economic and religious values. Restoring state and human dignity to the Rohingya is a very complex and arduous process. Just as the problem did not arise in one day, its solution is not possible in one day. It is not right to expect that the brutal oppression and injustice inflicted on the Rohingya will soon be brought to justice. Even allegations of genocide against Myanmar's military are yet to be heard at the International Court of Justice. Human rights are being violated in various international politics and reckoning and Rohingya are being deprived of justice for the planned crimes committed against them. In this context, all the conscious states of the world, the United Nations, the concerned human rights organizations and the authorities must come together to move forward in this crisis with a planned long-term objective.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author have declared that no competing interests exist.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

None.

REFERENCES

- [1] A "UN official convinced of Myanmar Rohingya 'genocide'" CNN on 11 April 2018.
- [2] A "UN Security Council: End disgraceful inaction on Myanmar's Rohingya crisis". Amnesty International on 11 April, 2018.
- [3] Beech, Hannah (25 September 2017). "What Happened to Myanmar's Human-Rights Icon?". *The New Yorker* on 14 November, 2017.
- [4] Department of Population Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population MYANMAR (July 2016). *The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Report, Volume 2-C*, pp. 12-15
- [5] Human Rights Watch. (2017). *Burma:40 Rohingya Villages Burned Since October*.
- [6] IRIN – the inside story on emergencies. (2018). *Mapped: How monsoon rains could submerge Rohingya refugee camps*.
- [7] Mahmood, S. S., Wroe, E., Fuller, A., & Leaning, J. (2017). The Rohingya people of Myanmar: health, human rights, and identity. *The Lancet*, 389, 1841-1850.
- [8] "Myanmar's Directives Not Enough to Protect Rohingya". Human Rights Watch on 9 April, 2020.
- [9] "Myanmar found guilty of genocide". *The Daily Star*. 23 September, 2017. Archived from the original on 29 September 2017.
- [10] "Myanmar rejects allegations of human rights abuses against Rohingya". Reuters. 6 August 2017
- [11] "Myanmar Rohingya crisis: Deal to allow return of Muslim refugees". BBC 23 November, 2017. Archived from the original on 25 November 2017. Retrieved 26 November 2017.
- [12] "Myanmar: Security Forces Target Rohingya During Vicious Rakhine Scorched-Earth Campaign". Amnesty International, 19 December 2016. Archived from the original on 2 February, 2017.
- [13] "Myanmar to take action after Rakhine assault video goes viral". ABC News. 3 January, 2017.
- [14] "Report of OHCHR mission to Bangladesh – Interviews with Rohingyas-fleeing from Myanmar since 9 October 2016". OHCHR on 14 April, 2018.
- [15] Rick Gladstone (16 November 2017). "Rohingya Were Raped Systematically by Myanmar's Military". *The New York Times* on 3 February, 2018.
- [16] "Rohingya genocide is still going on", says top UN investigator". *The Guardian*. ISSN 0261-30772 on 21 May, 2019.
- [17] "Rohingya Refugee Crisis". United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 21 September 2017.
- [18] Serajul Quadir (12 November 2017). "U.N. official says will raise sexual violence against Rohingya with ICC" Reuters on 3 February, 2018.
- [19] "'Shoot first, ask questions later': Violence intensifies in Rakhine State" CNN on 20, December 2016.
- [20] The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2017).
- [21] (Press release). Amnesty International. 11 December 2017.
- [22] "UN calls on Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi to halt 'ethnic cleansing' of Rohingya Muslims", *The Independent*. on 11, December 2016.
- [23] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2017). "This is our home". *Stateless minorities and their search for citizenship*.
- [24] "UN Security Council: End disgraceful inaction on Myanmar's Rohingya crisis"