

Possibilities of Local Integration of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh

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[Abstract: Approximately 1.2 million Rohingya are stranded in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, vulnerable and unsure of their destiny. Bangladesh confronts numerous issues in sheltering this vast number of Rohingyas. In terms of the UNHCRs suggested solution to the refugee issue, voluntary return, resettlement, and local integration are extremely difficult to implement in the case of Rohingyas. No authority can predict when voluntary repatriation will start, as Myanmar shows no interest in taking back the Rohingyas, and as per current Bangladesh government policy, no matter how difficult it is for them to accommodate the Rohingyas, they will not repatriate them forcefully. Further, the Rohingyas want to return to Myanmar, but only if the Myanmar government changes the discriminatory laws and accepts them as citizens. Likewise, resettling the Rohingyas in another country is also not possible, as the Bangladesh government considers this a pull factor, and also, the refugee selection criteria of third countries make the resettlement process more complex. Based on these circumstances, this study examines the possibilities of Rohingyas integrating locally in Bangladesh. It examines the perspectives of the Rohingya, the government of Bangladesh, and the host communities on local integration. The study demonstrates that the Rohingya, the GoB, and host communities oppose local integration, although some IGOs, such as the World Bank, support it. Furthermore, the study implies that economically integrating Rohingyas into camps can be a short-term solution as long as voluntary repatriation is undertaken. To investigate this further, a complete field study is required.]

1. Introduction

1.1 Research problem and relevance:

At the end of 2020, 82.4 million people were forcibly displaced across the globe as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, abuses of human rights, or other significant disturbances of the peace. Among these, 14 of these nations are classified as the least developed, and 86 percent of the refugees reside there. In addition, 73% of refugees reside in nations neighboring their countries of origin (UNHCR, 2021). UNHCR High Commissioner António Guterres stated, "Overall, it's still the developing world that is

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carrying the lion's share of responsibility for hosting refugees" (Williams & Hueck, 2011:14).

Bangladesh is one of the top ten refugee-hosted countries globally. Bangladesh shelters 1.2 million Rohingyas in their densely populated country (Relief Web, 2021). More than 68 percent (two-thirds) of refugees came from only five countries, and Myanmar is one of those countries responsible for forcibly displacing thousands of Rohingya people from their homes (UNHCR, 2021). From the beginning of the Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh has accommodated the Rohingyas generously and tried to repatriate them Rohingyas into Myanmar. However, the lack of good intention from the Myanmar government and the absence of taking adequate actions by the international actors is now stretching the crisis and making the life of the Rohingyas miserable. In addition to this, the military coup of February 1, 2021, in Myanmar made the future of the repatriation process more complicated.

The Rohingyas currently living in Cox's Bazar camps are adamant that they will not voluntarily return to Myanmar unless the Myanmar government changes its discriminatory legislation and ensures their protection (Wake & Yu, 2018:2; Martin et al., 2017:1). They mainly were discouraged from going back by the horrifying conditions that the remaining Rohingyas in the Rakhine state were subjected to, including movement restrictions, forced labor, and arbitrary arrest (Yarnell & Sullivan, 2019). Furthermore, Bangladesh has moved 22,976 of the 100,000 Rohingyas who were to be relocated to the island of Bhashan Char (UNHCR, 2022; Anik & Raju, 2019). On the other hand, the U.N. and numerous other international organizations strongly disapproved of the GoB's choice due to its history of cyclone vulnerability (Amnesty International, 2017; HRW, 2018; Adams, 2019).

Repatriating the Rohingyas to Myanmar is the utmost priority for the Government of Bangladesh. Although, due to many reasons, voluntary repatriation is not occurring. For the successful repatriation of the Rohingyas, four factors are principally involved:

1. The Rohingya people; who wanted to return to Myanmar, but with the assurance of safety and dignity.
2. The GoM; who failed to ensure the safe return of the Rohingyas in the Rakhine state and lacked good intentions for the repatriation process.
3. The GoB; who fulfilled all the criteria for successful repatriation and is ready to begin the repatriation process as early as possible.
4. International actors; mainly the USA, Russia, China, Japan and India, and organizations like the UN, EU, and ASEAN, who failed to convince Myanmar into the repatriation process.

Notably, the ratio of foreign aid for the Rohingya people is declining alarmingly. Only \$366 million has been committed or disbursed of the required amount of around \$1 billion this year (Jamshed, 2021). So now the question is, if the repatriation process does not initiate soon, what would be the new plan for Bangladesh for the Rohingyas?

1.2 Research objectives:

The research's rudimentary objective is to examine whether the local integration of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh is possible or not. Based on this aim, the research will contribute to the discussion of finding a durable solution for the Rohingya crisis and consider a new plan for Bangladesh if the repatriation process is delayed or fails.

1.3 Research methodology:

Since this study aims to examine the possibilities of local integration of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh and to understand the viewpoint of Rohingyas, GoB's and host communities in this regard, its primary research method must necessarily be qualitative. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research aims to study individuals or groups and how they understand a social or human issue. Further, to fulfill the research objectives, this study uses the method of secondary analysis for data collection. By using the secondary analysis method, a researcher can analyze the data collected by others and the official statistics of the government and other institutions. Also, this method allows to spend more time on the analysis and interpretation of data and provides an opportunity to work with high-quality data (Bryman, 2016: 311).

Secondary sources are used for data collection. The primary data sources are textbooks, journal articles, newspaper articles, and government and non-government organization reports.

1.4 Limitations:

Data collecting for this study required field trips to the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar. However, the competent authority, the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) of Bangladesh, refused permission to visit the camps for an unspecified reason. If the RRRC authority granted authorization, the research might contribute significantly more.

1.5 Structure of the paper:

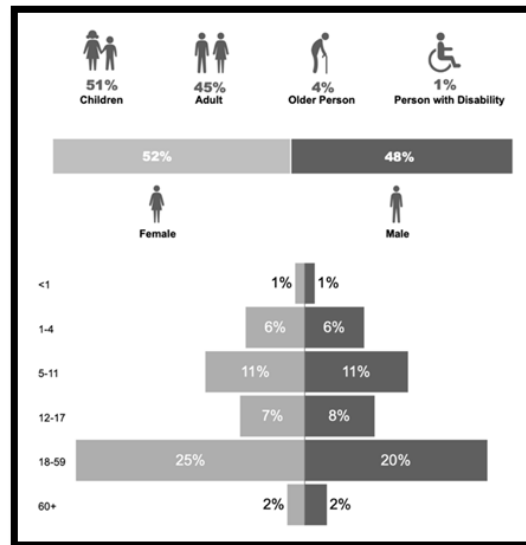
After this introductory chapter, second chapter represents an overview of the Rohingya population and their current legal status. The third chapter provides an overview of the focus areas throughout the paper. This will provide the reader with a sufficient foundational understanding of concepts and context for the research investigation.

In the fourth chapter, the findings of the research are presented descriptively. At first, it presents the hardships of voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and local integration of Rohingyas. Then it presents the stance of GoB, the host community, and the Rohingyas. At the end of the chapter it discusses about economic inclusion. The recommendations and conclusion are made in the fifth and sixth chapters of the paper. The references and the appendices then follow this.

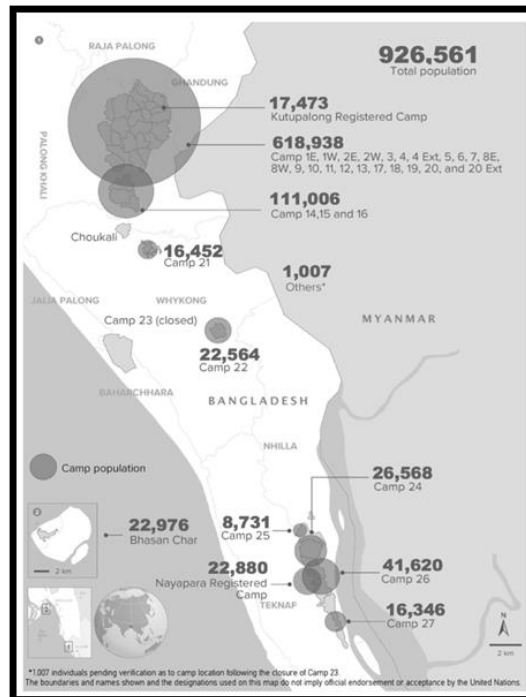
2 Background

2.1 Overview of the Rohingya population in Bangladesh:

The Rohingya population temporarily sought sanctuary in the world's largest refugee camps, which are presently located close to Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar. According to the UNHCR and OCHA, as of March 2022, around 926561 stateless Rohingya were living in 34 overcrowded camps in the upazilas of Ukhiya and Teknaf. (UNHCR, 2022; OCHA, 2022).

Figure 2.1: Demographic overview of Rohingya population in Bangladesh.

Source: UNHCR, 2022.

Figure 2.2: Rohingya population at the camps of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Source: UNHCR, 2022.

2.2 Legal status of the Rohingyas: Refugee or Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals?

The Rohingyas are called both Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals interchangeably. Even so, these two terms come up with two different legal definitions. Mostly the NGOs and INGOs called them Rohingya refugees; however, the host country, Bangladesh, decided to call them the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN). It is significant to note that Bangladesh has not ratified either the 1967 Protocol to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or the 1951 Convention itself. On issues relating to asylum and refugees, no national legislation has been passed. Despite this, the government on its own initiative acknowledged the Rohingya immigrants in 1991 and 1992 as refugees, and together with UNHCR, has been helping them ever since (UNHCR, 2007; Phiri, 2008). M. Shahidul Haque, Bangladesh's foreign secretary, said during a discussion session sponsored by the Human Rights Forum Bangladesh that the government has chosen to refer to the Rohingya as "forcibly displaced nationals from Myanmar" rather than "refugees" (The Daily Star 2017; Irani, 2017).

The Rohingyas fled the persecution of Myanmar and took shelter in Bangladesh in many phases. It can be traced from 1978, 1991, 1992, 2012, 2016, and 2017 which ultimately caused the influx of Rohingyas in Bangladesh (Habib et al., 2018; OCHA, 2020). Around 250,000 Rohingyas who were forced to leave their house and took shelter in Bangladesh in 1991 and 1992's violence were recognized as refugees on a *prima facie* basis by the GoB (UNHCR, 2007; Phiri 2008: 34). And according to the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner's Office of Bangladesh, a total of 223,599 Rohingyas were returned to Myanmar from 1992 to 2005 (Ahmed 2010, as referenced in Azad and Jasmin, 2013: 30). And the Rohingyas who fled into Bangladesh following the violence and conflict in 2012, 2016, and 2017 were not recognized as refugees but rather as Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals and currently live among local populations and have quasi-integrated into these communities, despite their 'illegal' status.

However, these self-settled Rohingya (FDMN) and Rohingya refugees are susceptible to extortion, harassment, and economic exploitation. Their potential contributions to development are also not taken into account because they are not included in local and national development agendas (UNHCR, 2007; Phiri, 2008; The Daily Star, 2017; Irani, 2017). Rohingya refugees continue to be denied the freedom to travel around, the right to employment, and the right to an education, which prevents them from having the opportunity to become independent and self-governing. Refugees are compelled to participate in unlawful, low-wage employment and covert activities. They have been limited to informal education sessions taught by volunteer refugees with few courses and grades, which denies them the chance to grow, learn, and improve themselves (Phiri, 2008: 34).

3. Conceptual framework

3.1 Refugees:

The term 'Refugees' indicates the people who are forced to leave their country of origin and are unable or unwilling to return to their country because of a severe threat to their lives (Nicholson and Kumin, 2017: 132). Refugees can be traced for as long as there have been political communities. Documentary evidence shows people fleeing 'city-states' in Ancient Greece or Rome searching for shelter. People do not flee from their homes without any reason. Events such as the creation of nation-states (often dated to 1648) and the Treaty of Westphalia, factors such as religious persecution,

revolution, state formation, and conflict forced people to leave home to survive (Collier and Betts, 2017: 36). Collier and Betts (2017: 36) expressed that Refugees should be allowed to escape and receive access to a secure place when they face serious harm in their home country until they can go home or be permanently reintegrated elsewhere.

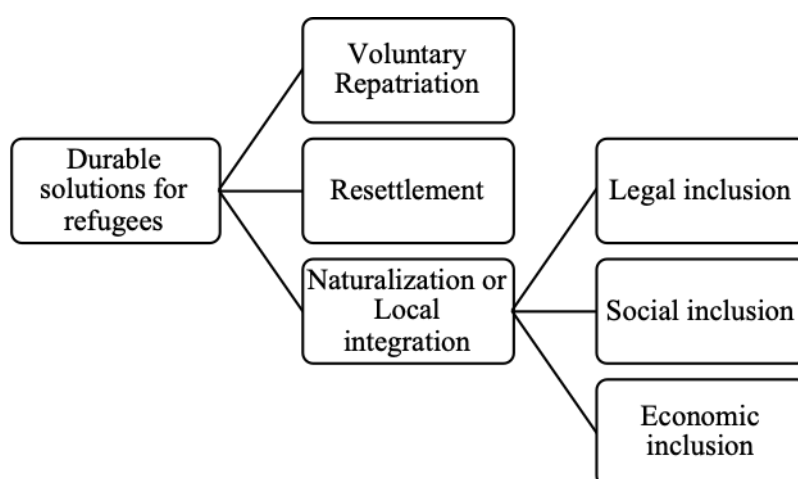
The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol contain the international legal definition of the term "refugee." As stated in the 1951 Convention, a person must have a well-founded fear of persecution if they return to their country of origin or usual home in order to qualify as a refugee. This fear must be based on one or more of the five grounds listed in Article 1A (2) of the 1951 Convention: race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Other rights are outlined in the 1951 Convention, which also emphasizes the responsibility of refugees to their host nation. This law states that a refugee should not be sent back to a nation with significant risks to their life or freedom. Refugees who are judged as reasonably posing a threat to national security or who have committed a serious crime and are viewed as a danger to the community are not eligible for this protection (UNHCR, 2011: 3; Nicholson and Kumin, 2017: 132).

3.2 Durable solutions for refugees:

The status of being a refugee is not permanent, nor should it be. Refugees left their homeland because of a condition that forced them into exile, and when the condition gets better, the refugee will either return voluntarily to his or her home country will have to find a durable solution within a new community either in the host country or in a third country (UNHCR, 2014).

Following a period of violence, persecution, and insecurity, there are three durable solutions that can help refugees rebuild their life (Williams & Hueck, 2011: 14).

Figure 2.3: Durable solutions for refugees.



Source: Compiled by the author based on Williams and Hueck's (2011: 14) work, *A Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees*.

3.2.1 Voluntary repatriation:

According to Williams and Hueck (2011: 14), "voluntary repatriation" refers to the process whereby refugees return to their home country in safety and with dignity and are once again eligible for national protection. It is the most desired solution of choice for the refugees and the host countries. In the case of a returnee, this entails the restoration of national protection as well as the capacity to maintain sustainable means of subsistence, gain access to necessities, and successfully reintegrate back into societies and home nations through the reintegration process. To avoid making returnees dependent on humanitarian aid and to ensure their early and sustainable reintegration, UNHCR should place its repatriation and reintegration work in post-conflict situations within a larger context of the transition from conflict to peace and work to build peace and bridge the gap between relief and development (UNHCR, 2004: 3).

The key elements of voluntary repatriation are recognized as physical, legal, material safety, and reconciliation in the UN Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities (2004: 4). Both the host nation and the refugee's place of origin have obligations to them. The UNHCR's (1996) Handbook of Voluntary Repatriation: International Protection outlines these obligations.

3.2.2 Resettlement:

Resettlement is the process by which a refugee is chosen and moved from a State where they have requested protection to a third State that has agreed to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status (Williams and Hueck, 2011: 15).

When local integration and repatriation, the two long-term remedies, are not practical options, refugees are typically resettled. When there is no other method to ensure the legal or physical security of the particular refugee, resettlement is primarily seen as a crucial and life-saving protection strategy. In order to be resettled, refugees must go through a few steps. Only a select few were fortunate enough to have completed their medical examination; the majority, however, had participated in the IOM-facilitated pre-departure cultural orientation program (Williams & Hueck, 2011: 21–22; Kiragu, Rosi & Morris, 2011: 21).

3.2.3 Local integration:

There is no single definition of local integration. Local integration was defined by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees as a procedure involving three major categories: economic, social, and legal integration, where a refugee meets specific minimum standards within the social, economic, and legal frameworks of the host country (dTS, 2014: 10–11).

Local integration typically refers to a strategy in which refugees take advantage of the host government's national protection by legally, economically, and socially integrating into the host country (Williams & Hueck, 2011: 15). Integration is seen by some as a very complicated process involving numerous nations, agencies, actors, and reasoning. Additionally, phrases like assimilation, adoption, adaptation, and accommodation are commonly used in place of integration (Sigona, 2005: 118).

3.2.3.1 Legal integration:

Legal integration is the process by which refugees acquire several benefits in the host nation. For instance, unrestricted movement, travel authorizations (such as a passport), residence permits, employment authorizations, and the ultimate citizenship or permanent residency status (Crisp, 2004: 1).

3.2.3.2 Social integration:

Social integration is best described as a process of adaptation and acceptance that enables the refugees to contribute to the social life of the host country (Crisp, 2004: 1). It enables the acquisition and acceptance of new cultural knowledge specific to the host country and aids in removing discrimination-related anxiety (Castles et al., 2002).

3.2.3.3 Economic integration:

Economic integration is a process that enables refugees to engage in the labor market, business, and other aspects of the host nation's economy (Castles & Miller, 2003). In relation to the host community, it aids refugees in establishing stable means of subsistence and living standards (Crisp, 2004:1).

4. Findings and discussions

4.1 Voluntary repatriation: Will Myanmar take back the Rohingyas?

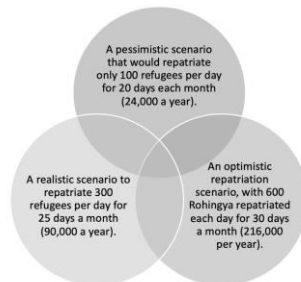
Voluntary repatriation is Bangladesh's utmost priority for the Rohingya people. This exact similar view is shared by most Rohingya individuals too. In the words of a Rohingya individual, "I can see my homeland when I gaze upon the distant hills from the top of a hill where I live in the refugee camp. I want to return to my home. Home is where I can breathe, and I can feel the smell of my country. You cannot call this a life; it's just surviving" (Siddiqi, 2022).

The repatriation process is much more dependent on the side of the GoM rather than the GoB. A repatriation agreement was first reached between Bangladesh and Myanmar in November 2017. Bangladesh gave Myanmar a list of 840,000 Rohingyas at that time for verification. However, only 42,000 people in Myanmar have been verified (Dhaka Tribune, 2021). In addition, the recent military coup of Myanmar in February 2021 makes this repatriation process more complex as the military itself was the perpetrator of the genocidal actions against the Rohingya in the first place.

The GoB has previously complained about Myanmar operating in 'bad faith' during negotiations, claiming that they never meant to return the Rohingya and merely met to keep up appearances (Dhaka Tribune, 2021). After observing the role of international actors (China, Russia, USA, UN security council), Ganguly and Adams (2019) expressed their opinion that "The Rohingya will not be returning to Myanmar anytime soon, so for the foreseeable future the camps in Bangladesh will be their only home."

Voluntary repatriation is not practically feasible soon because of the country of origin, Myanmar. This can be well understood by the possible scenarios illustrated by the UNDP report (See figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Three alternative repatriation scenarios.



Source: Compiled by the author on the basis of UNDP (2018:9).

4.2 Resettlement: Will any third country accept the Rohingyas?

The resettlement process has been seen multiple times previously in the case of the Rohingya refugee crisis. The UNHCR launched the resettlement arrangement in part to persuade the GoB to allow for additional skill training and improved educational facilities. As a result, the GoB decided in 2006 to allow for skills training and an increase in the number of courses and grades offered in schools (Phiri, 2008). In the same year, with the initiative of UNHCR and GoB, twenty-three refugees were resettled in Canada (UNHCR 2007b). Afterward, according to the statistics of UNHCR, a total of 920 Rohingya refugees departed from Bangladesh to Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Kiragu, Rosi & Morris, 2011:21). The Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN), a U.K.-based NGO, asserted in their report, “Bangladesh should boost security in Rohingya camps, allow refugees to work and pursue education, and begin cooperation with the international community to resettle the stateless minority from Myanmar in a third country” (RFA, 2022). According to their survey, 63 percent of refugees would prefer to be deported to a third country if given a choice (RFA, 2022).

Notably, the selection criteria of refugees for these countries were based on easy integration for themselves, not for the refugees who need it most. However, in November 2010, the Bangladesh government suspended the resettlement process, and further, no resettlement process has been seen until now for the recent crisis, which started from the violence of 2012, 2016, and 2017 and especially from the violence of 2017, which is responsible for the mass exodus of 700000 people. According to the GoB, it would be a draw factor for subsequent waves of Myanmar migrants (Azad and Jasmin, 2013: 31-32).

Table 4.1: Resettlement of Myanmar refugees from Bangladesh, 2006 – 2010.

Year	Destination	Submissions	Departures
2006	Canada	28	13
Total		28	13
2007	Canada	204	75
	New Zealand	54	
	United Kingdom	121	
Total		379	75
2008	Australia	151	
	Canada	212	76
	Ireland	112	
	New Zealand	11	23
	Norway	12	4
	Sweden	19	19
	United Kingdom		34
	United States	32	
Total		549	156
2009	Australia	120	108
	Canada	3	122
	Ireland		82
	New Zealand	12	27
	United Kingdom	112	109
	United States	302	17
		549	465
2010	Australia	108	134
	Canada		17
	New Zealand		6
	United Kingdom	112	47
	United States	272	7
Total		492	211
Grand total		1997	920

Source: Kiragu, Rosi & Morris (2011).

4.3 Local integration: Will local integration be a viable option for Bangladesh?

Apart from Bangladesh, Rohingyas took shelter in 19 other countries. However, as of now, no other countries have granted citizenship to the Rohingyas (Shazzad, 2022). Whether local integration of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh is possible or not, it predominantly relies upon the decision of the concerning actors, the Rohingyas, the GoB, and the host communities' people.

4.3.1 GoB's stance on local integration:

The stance of GoB on the matter of local integration has been transparent from the beginning of the crisis. The current GoB policy about the Rohingya is to repatriate them to Myanmar, whose citizens these refugees are (UNDP 218:40). The GoB denied all the proposals related to local integration. Even the World Bank proposal, Refugee Policy Review Framework, which suggested integrating the Rohingyas. World Bank's country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, Mercy Tembon, expressed that the proposed Refugee Policy Review Framework is for aiding Bangladesh with \$590 million grant financing to address the necessities of Rohingyas until their safe and voluntary return to Myanmar and to reduce the refugees' harmful impact on the host communities. Although, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, AK Abdul Momen, rejected the World Bank's proposal and urged the World Bank and UN to ensure quick repatriation of the Rohingyas (Palma & Byron, 2021). He further added that the agencies make unreasonable requests like giving Rohingyas the right to buy land, employment opportunities, and proper schooling. To him, the intention of the NGOs and agencies in the Rohingya camps is to have the refugees remain in Bangladesh. Because if the Rohingyas remain, their employment will be extended (Hassan, 2021).

Notably, in the past, local integration as a policy has been denied by both the Awami League-led government and the other major political party Bangladesh National Party (BNP). Instead of local integration, both the political parties pushed for repatriation mostly in their policies. (Kiragu, Rosi and Morris, 2011: 9). From the viewpoint of GoB, local integration and resettlement might act as a pull factor for the new waves of refugees from Myanmar (Azad and Jasmin, 2013: 31-32). Local integration policy can motivate the military regime of Myanmar not only to continue delaying the repatriation process but also to encourage them to conduct its brutal operation again on the remaining Rohingyas in Myanmar and to make them stateless (Shazzad, 2022). The GoB is also worried about the involvement of the Rohingyas in drug smuggling and religious extremism (Mathieson, 2019).

4.3.2 Host community's stance on local integration:

The Rohingya refugee crisis has significantly impacted the lives of host communities, particularly those in Teknaf and Ukhiya Upazilas in Cox's Bazar and some sections of the Bandarban district, where the majority of refugees have settled. The influx imposed a significant burden on the host community, exacerbated by the fact that these areas of Bangladesh had already faced significant hardships due to relatively low socioeconomic development. Mainly, the host community faces severe impacts in these particular areas because of the influx. As stated in the study of UNDP (2018: 11), in Cox's Bazar, two-thirds of respondents considered that the crisis had directly impacted them. Furthermore, all Teknaf respondents and 80 percent of Ukhiya respondents said they had been personally affected by the crisis (UNDP, 2018: 17).

Following are some of the reasons why host community people are not happy with the Rohingya influx:

Impact on prices: Local shopkeepers reported depressed prices of products because refugees sell large quantities of relief items out of the camps that they received as in-kind assistance from donors (UNDP, 2018:4). It can be seen in the Pictures (4.3.2) where refugees were captured selling bulk of milk powders to the tourists that they received from donor agencies.

Pictures 4.3.2: Rohingyas selling milk powder outside the camps.



Source: Pictures taken by the author (2021).

Impact on wages: To make ends meet, Rohingyas work as day laborers for lesser wages. As a result, earnings for agricultural and other unskilled laborers in the host communities of Teknaf and Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar and Naikhongchhari in Bandarban fell unexpectedly. According to a UNDP survey, 70% of respondents in Teknaf and 50% in Ukhiya identified decreased salaries as the primary way in which the host community had been impacted by the Rohingya refugees (UNDP, 2018: 4).

Impacts on land and agricultural production: In Teknaf and Ukhiya, at least 100 hectares of cropland were damaged by refugee movements between August 2017 and March 2018. Also, 76 hectares of arable land were also occupied by refugee settlements and humanitarian agencies. Groundwater is also lowering in these areas due to installing 5731 (estimated) tube wells to supply water to refugees (ISCG, 2018 as cited in UNDP, 2018: 6).

Impacts on fishing and related activities: According to BBS (2018), one in three people in Teknaf works as fishermen, and for security reasons, fishing has been banned on the Naf river since August 2017. The GoB's decision directly impacted the livelihoods of 30000 to 35000 fishers and their families. Many fishermen have been compelled to work as wage laborers in order to survive, but the influx of refugee workers has also resulted in fewer job opportunities and lower daily salaries. According to Bangladeshi government authorities and FGD (Focus Group Discussion) participants in Teknaf, the Naf River base fishing communities are anticipated to be among the populations most affected by the surge (Cited in UNDP, 2018: 6).

Impacts on the environment: Cox's Bazar Forest Department notified that environmental degradation is among the most destructive consequences of the Rohingya influx. Around 4,818 acres of forest of Bangladesh reserves worth US\$55 million have

been destroyed due to the influx. Also, around 750,000 kg of timber, vegetation, and roots are collected as cooking fuel every day in the Rohingya camps. Also, many local people who make a living from forest resources have lost their way of livelihood. (UNDP, 2018: 7).

Impact on safety and security: Since the influx of the Rohingyas, many criminal activities such as kidnappings, thefts, and robberies have increased a lot. Nowadays, local people feel outnumbered in their own communities. In the beginning, host communities are sympathetic to the Rohingya's plight. However, the study presented by UNDP (2018: 11) demonstrates that 70 percent of Teknaf and 50 percent of Ukhiya's respondents are worried about security issues. Rohingyas often got involved in clashes with host community people and law enforcement authorities regarding numerous issues such as violence at food distribution centers. The refugees' outrageous and violent acts aggravated tensions among the host community (ACAPS and NPM, 2018, cited in UNDP 2018: 11).

Apart from these reasons, the influx of the Rohingyas also affects public service, governance, solid waste management and water, sanitation and hygiene, housing, roads, business infrastructure, health services, and education services (UNDP, 2018:7-8). These perceptions of the host communities negatively impact the idea of local integration of the Rohingyas. Also, a large number of host communities feel neglected by the humanitarian organization because of the refugees. They thought their troubles were not prioritized because all service was being provided to the refugees (ACAPS and NPM, 2018, cited in UNDP, 2018: 11).

4.3.3 Rohingyas stance on local integration:

Regarding the resolution of the Rohingya crisis, all that can be seen is what Myanmar, Bangladesh, and international actors want for them. A very little concern can be seen about what the Rohingyas want for themselves. Kadir Ahmed, a 24-year-old Rohingya, expressed his opinion like this, "Bangladesh is not my country. I want to go back to our land. If the Myanmar government had not killed and tortured us, we would not have left" (HRW, 2018).

The Rohingya people's opinion is mainly put forward by the INGOs and NGOs. After interviewing many Rohingyas at the camps, Kate Allen, director of Amnesty International UK, shared what Rohingyas want: Rohingyas want to return to their own country with safety and dignity; they want to be recognized as Myanmar citizens (Allen, 2018).

In response to the World Bank report, ARSPH (Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights), a camp-based organization in Cox's Bazar dedicated to the rights and justice of the Rohingya people, stated that the Rohingya did not want Bangladeshi citizenship and preferred to return to their homeland. As a result, integrating them locally against their consent would imply denying them of fundamental and human rights (The Daily Star, 2021).

4.4 Economic inclusion— as a way out:

The familiar political discourses about Refugees are that they are often viewed as an economic burden for the host countries; however, research provides enough evidence that they are not (UNHCR, 2020). The host country can adopt economic inclusion policy for the refugees to reduce the extra economic burden. Economic inclusion is broadly acknowledged as a useful way of enhancing refugees' independence, strengthening local communities' economic health, and reviving dignity for the forcibly displaced people

who have lost most (and perhaps all) of their possessions and livelihoods (UNHCR, 2020:3).

There are specific ways in which economic inclusion can help the refugees and the host country, such as:

Rebuilding lives: Along with protection, equality, access, and sustainability, UNHCR put economic inclusion at its core principles. After escaping war or persecution, getting an opportunity to work and earn a living is one of the most helpful ways for the refugees to rebuild lives with pride and peace. With the opportunity of safe work, they can fulfill their families' basic needs, keep their pride, enhance their self-reliance and resilience capability, and contribute to society simultaneously (UNHCR, 2020).

Safe employment: Refugees at the camps are often involved in illicit activities due to a lack of safe employment. Safe employment gives refugees the chance to fulfill their necessities without involving in any illicit activities such as looking for work in the grey and black economies or sending their children to work. Safe employment opportunities also protect them from criminal organizations' exploitation and reduce the chances of searching for work elsewhere (UNHCR, 2020).

Economic growth: Many studies reveal that refugees in the host country can boost the country's economy, even in low to middle-income countries. In the Kakuma camp of Kenya, 180,000 refugees were taking shelter from countries like Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda. Like the Rohingyas, these refugees were also forcibly displaced from their homes. However, in a study in Kenya, the World Bank Group found that these refugees contributed to an economy worth US\$56 million a year, which ultimately encourages more private-sectors to invest (UNHCR, 2020).

Skills: With having access to labor markets, refugees can support their host communities with their previous experiences and skills. Refugees who are allowed to go to school and get the opportunity of technical and vocational training are better prepared for their futures, whether in their host communities, after resettlement to a third country, or when they return home (UNHCR, 2020).

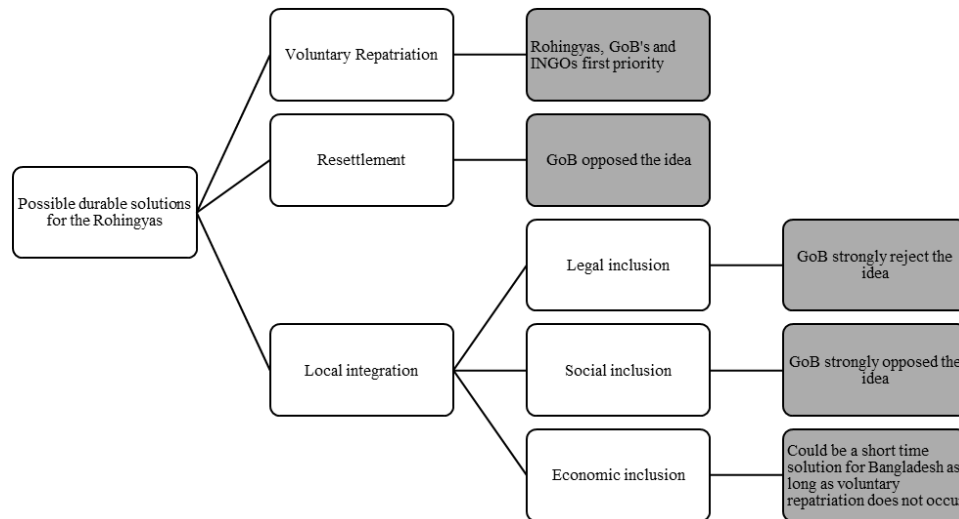
Gender equality: Employment and entrepreneurship have a role in gender equality and protection. Women with earning facilities and a physical workplace to go to are better protected against gender-based violence. They are more independent and can better provide for and protect their families. Female refugees who work also do not have to depend on an income from their children working on the streets, which ultimately gives the children an opportunity to attend school instead (UNHCR, 2020).

5 Recommendations

Voluntary repatriation is the most preferred solution for the Rohingyas, Bangladesh, and INGOs, as shown in Figure 5. At the same time, this is the most durable and appropriate solution. However, the voluntary repatriation process is obstructed due to the lack of cooperation from the side of the GoM and the less effective role of international actors. Further, resettlement in another country is also not possible at this moment because of the selection criteria of third countries and GoB's policy on that matter. Likewise, local integration is not possible because the host country Bangladesh totally rejects the idea. Mainly, the concept of local integration, which entails legal, social, and economic inclusion, has been proposed by international agencies, including the World Bank. Nevertheless, GoB can think about the Rohingyas' economic inclusion inside the camps

as a short-term solution to cope with the extra-economic load until voluntary repatriation does commence.

Figure 5: Possible durable solutions for the Rohingyas in Bangladesh.



Source: Prepared by the author (2022).

Economic inclusion has many other favorable impacts for the Rohingyas and as well as for Bangladesh, such as:

- GoB will be able to reduce some of its economic burdens, and Rohingyas will be able to support themselves better.
- The Rohingya crisis poses a security threat to Bangladesh and its neighbors. Economic inclusion can help to prevent that. It will help to engage the Rohingyas in work activities, so they can avoid illicit activities, as the host communities complained.
- Economic inclusion will help Rohingyas increase their working skills so they can support themselves when they get the chance to return to Myanmar.
- Economic inclusion can stop Rohingyas from criminal activities such as drug trafficking and human trafficking. Many groups can take advantage of the Rohingyas and provoke them to commit crimes as they live vulnerably.
- Economic inclusion can prevent Rohingyas from joining radicalized groups like ARSA. As law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh reported, ARSA is active in many camps and trying to recruit young Rohingyas.

6 Conclusion

Bangladesh has a population of 165 million people and is overcrowded. Its overall geographical area is 147570 square kilometers, ranking it the 92nd in the world. It is comprehensible that Bangladesh is hesitant to accommodate 1.2 million Rohingyas, which is more than Bhutan's whole population, on its limited land. Aside from that, Bangladesh has several challenges, including unemployment, poverty, and various other issues. Bangladesh does not have the financial capacity to provide basic requirements and

life-saving assistance to the Rohingyas without the cooperation of international donors (Shazzad, 2022). As a result, Bangladesh must resolve this situation as soon as possible.

After observing the whole circumstances, it can be well predicted that all three ways of a durable solution for the refugees (as shown in figure 5); the voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and local integration process are hard to achieve in the case of the Rohingya crisis. Also, it is challenging for any country to provide shelter and food for a long duration. It adds an extra economic burden for any country. However, it is also imperative for Bangladesh to seek a solution for the Rohingyas. In these circumstances, until the voluntary repatriation process starts, for a short period, GoB can consider embracing the idea of economic inclusion to deal with the crisis. However, further field-based research is needed to examine the possibilities of economic inclusion in the camps.

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[সার-সংক্ষেপ : আনুমানিক 1.2 মিলিয়ন রোহিঙ্গা এখন বাংলাদেশের কক্সবাজারের শিবিরে বসবাস করছে, অরক্ষিতভাবে এবং তাদের ভাগ্য না জেনে। এই বিপুল সংখ্যক রোহিঙ্গাদের আশ্রয় দেওয়ার ক্ষেত্রে বাংলাদেশ অনেক চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন। ইউএনএইচসিআর দ্বারা প্রস্তাবিত শরণার্থী সংকটের সমাধানের বিষয়ে, স্বেচ্ছায় প্রত্যাবাসন, পুনর্বাসন এবং স্থানীয় একীকরণ অর্জন করা খুবই কঠিন রোহিঙ্গাদের ক্ষেত্রে। কোন কর্তৃপক্ষই ভবিষ্যদ্বাণী করতে পারে না কখন স্বেচ্ছায় প্রত্যাবাসন শুরু হবে, কারণ মিয়ানমার রোহিঙ্গাদের ফিরিয়ে নিতে কোনো আগ্রহ দেখায় না এবং বর্তমান বাংলাদেশ সরকারের নীতি অনুযায়ী, রোহিঙ্গাদের স্থান দেওয়া তাদের পক্ষে যতই কঠিন হোক না কেন, তারা জোর করে তাদের প্রত্যাবাসন করবে না। অধিকন্তু, রোহিঙ্গারা মিয়ানমারে ফিরে যেতে চায়, তবে শুধুমাত্র যদি মিয়ানমার সরকার বৈষম্যমূলক আইন পরিবর্তন করে এবং তাদের নাগরিক হিসেবে গ্রহণ করে। একইভাবে, রোহিঙ্গাদের অন্য দেশে পুনর্বাসন করাও সম্ভব নয় কারণ বাংলাদেশ সরকার এটিকে একটি পুল ফ্যাক্টর হিসাবে বিবেচনা করে এবং এছাড়াও, তৃতীয় দেশের শরণার্থী নির্বাচনের মানদণ্ড পুনর্বাসন প্রক্রিয়াটিকে আরও জটিল করে তোলে। এই প্রেক্ষাপটের উপর ভিত্তি করে, এই গবেষণায় বাংলাদেশে রোহিঙ্গাদের স্থানীয় একীভূত হওয়ার সম্ভাবনা পরীক্ষা করা হয়েছে। এটি স্থানীয় একীকরণ সম্পর্কে রোহিঙ্গা জনগণ, বাংলাদেশ সরকার এবং স্বাগতিক সম্প্রদায়ের মতামত অনুসন্ধান করে। গবেষণাটি প্রকাশ করে যে রোহিঙ্গা, জিওবি এবং হোস্ট সম্প্রদায়গুলি স্থানীয় একীকরণের সাথে একমত নয়, যদিও বিশ্বব্যাংকের মতো কিছু আইজিও এই ধারণার পক্ষে। অধিকন্তু, সমীক্ষায় পরামর্শ দেওয়া হয়েছে যে শিবিরের অভ্যন্তরে রোহিঙ্গাদের অর্থনৈতিক অন্তর্ভুক্তি স্বল্প সময়ের সমাধান হতে পারে যতক্ষণ না স্বেচ্ছায় প্রত্যাবাসন শুরু হয়। তবুও, এটি পরীক্ষা করার জন্য আরও বিশদ ক্ষেত্র অধ্যয়ন প্রয়োজন।]