

Forced Migration and its Consequences: A Study of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar staying in Jammu & Kashmir

Mr. Pankaj

Research Scholar, Dept. of Sociology

Panjab University Chandigarh

E-mail charakpankaj55@gmail.com

Abstract

The Rohingya minority in Myanmar has endured the worst persecution for an extended period of time. The Rohingya minority in Myanmar has always faced the worst persecution. Following the forced migration of millions of Rohingya from Myanmar to other countries for safety, the Rohingya issue has garnered the attention of international organisations and governments. Approximately 40,000 Rohingya people are currently living in India as refugees and they also sought shelter in a number of nations, including Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand etc. Jammu and Kashmir has been the home to many of them, or 5,600.

Keywords: Persecution, Consequences, Shelter, Rohingya, Minority, Refugee.

Introduction

After more than 20 years of struggle, political stability and progress were then approaching Myanmar but the biggest obstacle Myanmar was facing in its nation-building process was integrating the nation's ethnic minorities into the mainstream (Chaturvedi, 2012). There are various reasons for forced migration of any community. Political or religious persecutions, as well as other coercive factors like partition, are the root causes of forced migration (Castles, 2003). As a result, many were forced to flee their home countries in search of safety abroad, leaving them without a state and turning them into refugees (Uddin, 2020). Due to its advantageous location and shared borders with China in the northeast, India in the northwest, and Bangladesh on the west, Laos and Thailand on the east, Myanmar has a population made up of a wide variety of ethnic groups (Chaturvedi, 2012). Because of this, people from many ethnic backgrounds have moved to the incredibly fertile area near the River Irrawaddy.

In Myanmar, there are over 135 distinct ethnic minorities and the Burmans, who are primarily concentrated in the country's inland plains, make up the majority of the population, accounting for close to 60% of the overall population that hold the majority

of significant positions in politics, education, economics, and other fields (Chaturvedi, 2012).

Who are Rohingya

Rohingya are muslims from Arakan state of Myanmar. According to Yegar, 'the Arakanese Muslims call themselves Rohingya or Roewengyah, which means the 'dear ones,' the compassionate ones or those who believe in the mutilation of words Rwa-haung-ga-kar, 'tiger' from the ancient village which means brave and was a name given to Muslim soldiers who settled in Buthidaung' (Bhonsale, 2015). The word "Rohingya" was originally derived from the former name "Rohang," which was used for the Rakhine State of Myanmar (Ullah, 2016). According to the Rohingya School of Historians, Muslims in northern Arakan identified as Rohingyas, and they were descended from Moorish, Turk, Arab, and Persian traders as well as Mughal and Bengali warriors (Bhonsale, 2015). Rohingya also claims that they are the original inhabitant of Myanmar and Burma Government deliberately denied citizenship rights to them. As a result they are living now with the status of refugees.

Forced Migration

"Migration that results from some sort of compulsion or threat to wellbeing or survival emerging in conditions ranging from violent conflict to severe economic hardship" (Bartram, Poros, & Monforte, 2014). In this study, forced migration of Rohingya from Myanmar to Jammu and Kashmir has been analyzed by the researcher to explore its consequences on Rohingya. Moore & Shellman (2004), opined that forced migrant is someone who has left their place of residence in favour of moving somewhere else, either inside or outside of their nation of origin, out of fear of persecution. On the other hand, a refugee is a person who is seeking human security and has left their own country out of fear of persecution, civil conflicts, ethnic conflict, or lack of protection (Koser Akcapar, 2017). Over time, the military solution that the Myanmar government has been pursuing for this issue has shown to be incredibly counterproductive. In actuality, it has made the situation worse over time. At the beginning of this year, the offensives become extraordinarily violent, killing thousands of civilians and sending an equivalent number of refugees fleeing to China and Thailand. (Chaturvedi, 2012).

Objectives of the study

To understand the forced migration of Rohingya (reasons

To understand the consequences of forced migration on Rohingya

Methodology

This paper is descriptive in nature. Purposive sampling and Snowball sampling techniques have been used for the collection of data. Both primary and secondary data have been used for the purpose of this study. The respondents for this paper were Rohingya people who are staying in Jammu city because many Rohingya have been staying there for the last 10 or 12 years. Secondary data sources have also been used in this paper, including books, Journal articles, papers, Government manuals and magazines related to the subject under study. Primary data has been collected with the help of a semi-structured interview schedule. SPSS software has also been used for the analysis of results and data. In this study, respondents are selected by using purposive sampling. Due to the fact that it denotes the deliberate selection of sample units that meet specific predetermined criteria, purposely, only those respondents have been selected who have been staying there for more than five years. Accordingly, a sample of 70 respondents who are the head of the family was chosen from Jammu city and interviewed. Moreover, the translator's help has also been sought as and when required to interview the respondents who did not know the local language.

Data analysis

The investigator used a semi-structured interview schedule in the field to gather primary data for this study, recording respondents' responses. Translators have also been used during interviews with respondents who were not fluent in Hindi or English, the native tongue. Softwares such as SPSS and Microsoft Office Word/Excel, the gathered data were tabulated and coded before analysis.

Results and Discussion

Forced migration of Rohingya

When an estimated 3,000–4,000 Rohingya were discovered protesting in May 2012 and demanding legal protection and aid, as well as the UNHCR documentation that would have given them refugee cards, made this community visible. The Rohingya have been

arriving in India gradually since the late 1970s. For a few years, they were unknown (Chaudhury & Samaddar, 2015). The inability to handle Myanmar's extreme diversity has led to ethnic conflicts, some of which date back to before the country's independence and are therefore the longest civil wars in history. In order to facilitate their integration into Myanmar's mainstream, ethnic minorities primarily want increased autonomy as well as acceptance of their cultural and religious identities (Chaturvedi, 2012). The push factors that drove the Rohingya to abandon Myanmar and seek refuge in other nations, particularly in Jammu City, have been used to study the causes of their forced migration. The elements in a culture that push people to migrate are known as push factors. Push factors, to put it simply, are those elements that exist in a people's place of origin and cause them to leave (Lee's, 1966). In the study of forced migration, it is essential to discuss the push factors that forced people to leave their area of origin. Therefore, the researcher attempted to explore the respondents about the push factors that made them leave their country of origin. It was not easy to explain the reasons for the forced migration or exodus of Rohingya because there were so many integrated factors which triggered them to leave their homeland and take shelter in neighbouring countries (Mithun, 2018). A few prominent reasons mentioned by the respondents are tabulated in table below.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of push factors that forced them to migrate

Reasons or causes	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Persecution and to save life	4	5.8
Citizenship loss	5	7.1
Human Rights violation	3	4.2
All of the above	58	82.9
Total	70	100.0

While analysing the data it is found that there are various reasons that forced respondents to leave their place of origin. 82.9 percent of the respondents revealed that they left their

homes to save their lives from the atrocities, persecution and genocide launched by Myanmar's army against the whole community of Rohingya in Arakan. They further told that citizenship was denied to them and they were like foreigners in their own country with the status of statelessness, human rights violation like their houses were burnt, and people getting killed, are the reasons that forced them to flee from their homes. Only 5.8 percent of the respondents said that they left Arakan to save their lives from persecution, and only 7.1 percent of them said that citizenship loss forced them to migrate, and 4.2 percent also revealed that human rights violations led them to move to other countries. They left Myanmar in order to save their lives, save their family members and their religion. Therefore, all this process is like ethnic cleansing by which a particular community was marginalized, excluded and persecuted, resulting in a mass exodus of Rohingya community from Myanmar to other countries. Therefore, major push factors for the forced migration of Rohingya were denial of citizenship, violence and persecution, and human rights violations.

The armed uprising in 1948 by the Burma Communist Party, a few members of the People's Volunteer Organisation, a paramilitary group made up of World War II veterans, and soldiers from two battalions of the army marked the beginning of the conflict. (Chaturvedi, 2012).

Furthermore, this movement has its roots in prolonged historical events that occurred shortly after Burma gained its independence in 1948. At that time, several groups of Muslims launched an armed uprising against the government and called for the creation of an independent Muslim state inside Burma (Mohajan, 2018). The government of Burma responded harshly and put an end to the uprising, but this insurrection created a level of mistrust that still remains today between the government and Muslims (Uddin, 2020). Therefore, Burma Government in response to the uprising removed the Muslims from various posts or jobs; put restrictions on their movement from one place to another and also their land and property were expropriated (Uddin, 2020).

Consequences

Myanmar also began social, economic, and political reforms; for instance, the country's shift towards democracy sparked the implementation of the most recent constitution in

2008 following a referendum's ratification (Bhatia, Sakhuja, & Ranjan, 2014). Regarding the Rohingya crisis, Myanmar has attempted to address this issue in its own unique manner and has taken some actions. A number of national and international inquiry committees have been established in response to international pressure and sanctions, economic dire warnings, and the removal of access to foreign markets such as the European Union (EU) (Kyaw, 2019). The Rakhine Inquiry Commission was the most important, and from 2016 to 2017, the Kofi Annan Foundation and the Myanmar government jointly turned the Annan Commission into an advisory body (Simpson & Farrelly 2020; Kyaw, 2019). The Government also made the Advisory Board for the Committee in order to implement the Recommendations on Rakhine State (2017–2018), IIFFMM 2017-18 (Independent Fact-Finding Mission On Myanmar) and ICOE 2018 (Independent Commission of Enquiry) were also formed (Kyaw, 2019).

The IIFFMM report contained the most significant and critical conclusions, stating that the military's clearance operation was intentionally genocidal (Simpson & Farrelly, 2020; Kyaw, 2019). All of these committees filed their results by December 2019. Additionally, the charge resulted in two criminal actions. The first was initiated on November 14, 2019, and is ongoing before the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate atrocities against the Rohingya. However, Myanmar denied the allegations (Simpson & Farrelly, 2020).

However, in response to The Gambia's complaint at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, Myanmar requested temporary measures to halt the Rohingya, claiming that they were being subjected to genocide, most likely at the request of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (Kyaw, 2019). Furthermore, Aung San Suu Kyi personally headed the Myanmar delegation in the same proceedings as State Counselor to defend the country from the charges of genocide (Kyaw, 2019). However, she denied any misconduct by the Tatmadaw (the Myanmar military) prior to or during its alleged clearance operation, while on the other hand, she did accept that the Tatmadaw may have committed significant crimes in the process of "cleaning" the region (Simpson & Farrelly, 2020; Kyaw, 2020).

The ongoing tragedy affecting the Muslim Rohingya people of western Myanmar has also been found to have no definitive end, despite the fact that there are two significant international legal proceedings pending at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Simpson & Farrelly, 2020). The current Burmese administration, which mixes democratic, ethno-nationalist, military, and conservative interests, has consistently worked to downplay how serious the problem is (Kyaw, 2020). Both this way of thinking and the tense but politically significant partnership between Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) and Myanmar's military have contributed significantly to a culture of impunity among national decision-makers (Simpson & Farrelly, 2020). Thus, it is clear that though Rohingya are trying their best to seek justice yet no one knows how long it will take and when the Rohingya crisis will come to an end.

Conclusion

It is apparent that the Rohingya were forced to flee their native country due to a crisis resulting from several atrocities they had experienced in Myanmar. Their systematic and discriminatory treatment by the Burmese government, their denial of citizenship, acts of violence, abuses of human rights, denial of basic rights, and other problems were the main causes of their forced migration from their country of origin. When taken as a whole, these elements made their survival in Myanmar extremely challenging. Because Rohingya were forced to leave their place of origin and due to some of the main pull factors that attracted them towards Jammu city as their place of destination are safety, security, democracy, freedom, religious similarity and unity in diversity, better livelihood options etc. Apart from this, the Rohingya community is also taking the help of the International Court of Justice to solve the Rohingya issue and for their safe, secure and dignified repatriation to Myanmar.

Bibliography

Abdelkader, E. (2014). Myanmar's Democracy struggle: The impact of communal violence upon Rohingya women and youth . *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal*,

- Vol. 23, No. 3 , 511–542. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/wilj/vol23/iss3/4>.
- Ahuja, R. (2001). *Research Methods*. New Delhi: Rawat Publication.
- Barany, Z. (2019). *The Rohingya Predicament.: Why Myanmar's Army Gets Away with Ethnic Cleansing*. Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI).
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19683>
- Bartram, D., Poros, M. V., & Monforte, P. (2014). *Key Concepts in Migration*. New delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt. Ltd.
- Bhatia, A. (2021). The discursive construction of legitimacy in the abrogation of Indian Constitution's Article 370. *Journal of Pragmatics, Volume 183*, 132-141.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2021.07.009>.
- Bhonsale, M. S. (2015). Evolution of the Arakan 'problem' in Burma. *Indian History Congress* , 631-636.
- Castles, S. (2003). Towards a Sociology of Forced Migration and Social Transformation. *Sociology, Vol. 37, No. 1* , 13-34.
- Chaturvedi, M. (2012). *Myanmar's Ethnic Divide: The Parallel Struggle*. Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies. HYPERLINK
"http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09338"
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09338>
- Chaudhury, S. B., & Samaddar, R. (2015). *Rohingyas: The emergence of a stateless community*. Kolkatta: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group.
- Koser Akcapar, S. (2017). South Asian Refugees in India. *Society and Culture in South Asia* , 123-131.
- Kyaw, N. N. (2020). Myanmar in 2019. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 235-254. Stable URL:
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26938893>.
- Lee, E. S. (1966). A theory of migration. *Demography, Vol 3, No. 1* , 47-57.
- Mithun, M. B. (2018). Ethnic conflict and violence in Myanmar. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* , 467-63.

- Mohajan, H. K. (2018). History of Rakhine State and the origin of the Rohingya Muslims. *IKAT: The Indonesian Journal of Southeast Asian Studies Volume 2, Issue 1*, 19-46. <https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/88186/>.
- Moore, W. H., & Shellman, S. M. (2004). Fear of persecution: Forced migration, 1952-1995. *The journal of Conflict Resolution*, , 723-745.
- Simpson, A., & Farrelly, N. (2020). The Rohingya crisis and questions of accountability. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 74:5, 486494. DOI: 10.1080/10357718.2020.1813251.
- Uddin, N. (2020). *The Rohingya An Ethnography of 'Subhuman' Life*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

CGCTA