



Geopolitics of Rohingya Refugee Crisis and Regional Security

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ABSTRACT

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Millions of Rohingya were forced to flee their home and became effectively stateless due to countless violations and vulnerabilities in Myanmar. Their future has become jeopardized with a profusion of uncertainties; however, like other displaced people, Rohingya also got media attention when disaster and conflicts forced them to flee. This study aims to explore and classify the determinant factors that push the Myanmar government to force the Rohingya to flee. It also explores the indicators that moulded the South and Southeast Asian geopolitics. The research intends to categorize the conditions that triggered the Rohingya crisis, while the regional geopolitics capture Rohingya as a proxy to intensify the regional proximity. The study found that Rohingya seek opportunities for rights while financial and institutional inability bewildering to respond to their needs and increase the proximity of evasive commitments for the next move by the national and regional government. It is also evident that the plight of these people is precarious and vulnerable, where the provision of legal protection is rare. The great powers of this area intentionally avoid the issue and indirectly influence the countries to increase the regional security tension by supporting armament. This issue dramatically influences the domestic and regional politics of South and Southeast Asian countries and redefines their mutual relationships with the great powers. The study provides a glimpse of the polarization and politicization of the Rohingya minority in the regional security and geopolitical context.

1. INTRODUCTION

The crisis of global refugees and displaced people in the twenty-first century is the greatest one. The world has never witnessed such human movement after WWII. The refugee issue is one of the major global concerns around the world. The number of refugees has significantly increased due to war, conflict, violence, and calamities in the last couple of decades. About 86 per cent of refugee and displaced people are hosted by developing countries, and developed countries are the leading destinations for these refuge and asylum seekers. The developing and developed world is in trouble with the refugee issue. It is becoming inevitable to understand the refugee crisis coupled with designing and implementing practical solutions. It needs immediate attention by the leaders and policymakers in terms of humanitarian and enabling support for their future livelihoods, regional and global security.

As a result, it is urgent to manage the risk of crises that are possibly more catastrophic because they are global. Indeed, perhaps the most notable feature of the refugee is the rise of crisis and risk communities, which now national risks and manage insecurity in their distinctive fashion [1]. This management fashion put refugee and displaced people under multiple vulnerabilities due to a shortage of funding for humanitarian support and global migration policy change. Refugees are more vulnerable because the crises are increasing in the countries that support humanitarian and migration aspects.

Considering the large community of refugees and displaced people who could contribute to the overall economy of a (host)

country or a third country through their employment due to many reasons, they are out of the typical purview economic opportunity in the many sovereign states. The size, magnitudes, and numbers of refugees morally enforce to focus and become one of the central fields of study in social and legal sciences. Besides, these people reflect the war, ferocity, and unevenness of society in the current world. So that, the refugee issue will remain under study as long as the crises remain. The landscape of refugee study navigates various branches of social, medical, and other biological science to strengthen the social life of refugees during their distress journey. The aspects of refugees are currently under study in politics, law, sociology, cultural geography, anthropology, history, public health, psychology, epidemiology, geopolitics, and so on [2-4].

According to the current report of UNHCR, the number of forcibly displaced people piled 79.5 million subsequently the oppression, war and conflict, violence, or human rights violations in several areas of the world, where only 26 million are refugees, only 4.2 million asylum seekers, and 45.7 internally displaced people [5]. Eighty per cent of the refugees hosted by neighbouring countries and 25.9 million refugees are under the direct mandate of UNHCR. Half of these refugees are children and under 18 [6]. The crisis of Rohingya is a confrontational concern that had pushed Bangladesh-Myanmar relations later 1970s. This crisis originated from widespread human rights violations in Rakhine Myanmar through military crackdown. As a result, Rohingya fled and faced indefinite uncertainties and vulnerabilities as deported and dropped into an identity crisis [7]. Refugees in camps, not allowed for "legal protections enshrined in international,

regional, and domestic laws.” Rohingya fled in neighbouring countries and rendering stateless took refugees while negotiations have failed to resolve the crisis for years and increased insecurity [8, 9].

So it is necessary to scrutinize the enduring crisis of the Rohingya issue. The root of the problem planted into the colonial period, which gained impetus later due to progressive marginalization as an exclusion from government office, refusal of residency, and ethnic minority capably rendered stateless. Primarily it is essential to explore the major demographic elements of the crisis from past periods, especially after the British colonial periods to the current time, through a histographical approach. Based on the historical and geopolitical factors influencing and infuriating the emergency, the study tries to identify the determinant factors that conclude in pursuit of a durable resolution and resettlement [7, 10, 11]. It can be functional to look into the Rohingya crisis from its genesis and geopolitical point of view that will help a lot to get into the issue from beneath for regional security [12]. It provides a coherent and clear image of the different stages made by the government to expel the Rohingya people from the Rakhine gradually.

This study aims to identify the determinant factors from a geopolitical perspective that push the Myanmar government to force the Rohingya to flee. It also intends to explore the supplements that moulded the South and Southeast Asian geopolitics. The research focuses on and tries to answer the questions- under what conditions and which mechanism triggered Myanmar to force Rohingya to flee? Did regional geopolitics capture Rohingya as a proxy to intensify the regional proximity? How does the issue influence the domestic and regional politics of South and Southeast Asian countries? The study is ardent to speculate the imminent challenges and threats to security and Rohingya due to geopolitical aspects that endangered the Rohingya and made them refugees. It investigates the previous and existing scenario of the local and regional geopolitics. It also classifies the linkage among the different input variables in development funding, armament, grants and aid, regional disputes, and national security with their national interest and supremacy. The answer to these questions offered a glimpse of the politicization Rohingya minority in the regional geopolitical context.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS

Cultural diversity is one of the prominent characters in Myanmar from its genesis as the most significant land area in Southeast Asia. It is also a country of an ethnic and religious mixture of diverse groups and religions [13]. Besides, under military rule, this country was a centre of anxiety for prolonged ethnic conflict and a struggle for democracy [7]. It has an effect on the Rohingya Muslims and who were living in Arakan (now Rakhine) state. This minority group became the victims and *de-facto* stateless and forgotten people of our time [12] by the military atrocities in Rakhine for the ethnic cleansing that started decades ago. Nowadays, it is sporadic that a government becomes so awful, fierce, and brutal in denying fundamental human rights to the people who discovered themselves to the land for almost a millennium. Local and global media and scholars remarked on the Rohingya crisis. However, it failed to get immediate attention from the prime actors as they face an undefined impending

with many violations and vulnerabilities.

The ethnoreligious individuality of the Rohingya Muslim minority geographically connected with the Arakanese Muslims resided in the western part of Rakhine of Myanmar. They were claimed as a citizen of Myanmar, but the government continually announced them as illegal immigrants [7, 13, 14]. There is a political infection of the Rohingya people who lived more than a hundred years in Rakhine [15]. This political infection has two major blocks anti-Rohingya and Pro-Rohingya. The Rakhine, former Arakan, was a sovereign kingdom before the British invaded Southeast Asia [16]. It claimed that the Rohingya people reconciled in Myanmar in the 9th century. They started to mingle with the local people. By the end of the 8th century, they naturally intermingled with Bengalis, Turks, Moguls, and Persians, which designates the multicultural demography at Rakhine. Besides, the anti-bloc demanded that they were migrated by the British from Bangla and used against the other sectional groups over ethnic Burmans [17, 18], and fought against the Japanese during the 2nd World War. As a result, these Rohingya people were not treated as a citizen of Myanmar by the administration and were called “*resident foreigners*” [13]. This entitlement towards them indirectly rejects the national identity and political membership, making them effectively stateless [16]; however, they have been in a realm of statelessness for over six generations [19]. The very noticeable instance of the efficient use of Machiavellian means to grab one’s properties is to discard their property rights. The government of Myanmar practices such an offence [19] as “*a semi-organized social movement with clear political goals*” [20] nothing could be more terrible.

Rohingya people were oppressed and intentionally debarred from terrestrial identity for centuries [13]. “This is systematic discrimination of 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” [21] According to Saw, the “*Rohingya*” terminology was unfamiliar before the 1950s, and Red Flag Communists invented the term. At the same time, Aye Chan claimed *Rohingya* was created by a Member of Parliament from the Akyab North constituency [22].

The political landscape of Myanmar is based on the fragile architecture of the British colonial period. The British colonial power successfully captured the lands of different ethnic groups before they left British India in 1948 [23]. During their rule, the British used one ethnic group against others, and this sentiment was alive even after they left and resulted in ethnic conflict in Burma. Though the colonial British promised an independent and separate state for the Rohingya, they did not keep it after World War II, and it remained a part of Burma.

The alteration of political power was not peaceful in Myanmar while prevailing low faith of the administration on the rebellious minority and vice-versa owing to the games of the colonial power as they played amongst the different ethnic groups, including Burmans. As a result, it becomes crucial to recognize how and why the Rohingya alienation started [17]. History is an inseparable and intrinsic part of any society and country. The colonizing nations have always had a profound influence on the general ideology and particular policies that set up the country’s prevailing economic and political ideology [24]. After liberation, the state became a fragile democratic state before the military intervention. The military overthrew the elected government and seized power in 1962, and the country experienced army repression until the 2015

elections. In the 1960s military was considered, by the powerful dominating countries, as the agent of modernization [25] that comprised alterations in the value system with social-economic and political modifications. This value system was “prescriptive” and scrupulously assimilated to the religious scheme and appeals eventual authorizations for all violations [26].

In contrast, modernization movements influence religious and linguistic groups to become nonconforming and mandate a return to fundamentalism [27]. Though, secularization and transmutation of society from prescriptive to principle do not always ensure that religion will disappear. In such a case, a popular leader like Suu Kyi can undeniably pivot around heroic efforts to keep them aligned [28] and play her role as a “central figure” [29] to “...personify and integrate many conflicting needs” [30] during the crisis. But, an international human rights agent from United Nations (UN) expected with other internationals the scenario, under Aung San Suu Kyi, will be changed then the past, but “it is really not that much different from the past” [31].

The military's role concerning civilian government differs in regions rendering to the circumstances of historical development [25]. However, it typically depends on the relation to public attachment with the civilian institutions. At the same time, the strength of relationships goes down. The scope for the military to interfere in politics increases both in the manner and substance [32]. The Rohingya situation has grown more severe than other minority groups during military rule (i.e., Shan, Karen) who collaborated and preferred the British in their colonialization. The xenophobic factions earmarked nearly a hundred years later, while they founded “disciplined democracy” by army autocrat beneath the constitution to sanction the illicit law owed to frightening the retribution from mass people that they would misplace the legal rights and demanded the actions “an attempt to restore the order in an increasingly chaotic political scene” [16].

The Burma Socialist Program Party formulated a constitution where a massive institutional change was made and yielded hardship rules for citizenship. The constitution offered an initiative to unite the nation through the mesh of the rebellious groups and secured Buddhism as the State religion. The Myanmar government seized the right to citizenship by law. However, they have been given that by the civilian government with other minor groups before 1962, as the government's decision “Operation Nagamin” was initiated to liquefy the political activities of Rohingya and their organizations and actions against the strangers who voyaged illegally. A newly formulated restrictive residency procedure wired the marginalization of rebellious minority groups from citizenship [16]. As a result, Rohingya became *de-facto* stateless through “Citizenship Laws” in 1982 and declared “resident foreigners” with a wide-ranging list of withdrawals [13].

Rohingya were excluded and victimized in Myanmar when religion and nationalism became the state policy that did not concern social and economic integration but emphasized religious ideology. Xenophobia is promised by hostility towards others when it can be nations or ethnic groups or a propensity to implement a twofold moral standard in respect to them. It dyes their multi-facet outlook towards an advanced country they trade with and the countries that donates grants and aids. The mass atrocities of Myanmar militants on Rohingya in 2017 was predetermined political action which has been crystal clear by the speech of Senior military official

General Min Aung Hlaing and clarifies their ultimate choice against Rohingya where the emotion of the issue initially laid an account axiom that the action is an “unfinished business” stemming back from World War II. He likewise specified, “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” [33].

The Rohingya statelessness and refugee crisis became an international study issue. Substantial studies have been conducted by academicians, researchers, and practitioners worldwide concerning their situation and are universally documented as a humanitarian crisis by former scholars [34-36]. However, many underlying issues have been emphasized in hundreds of studies. In contrast, another crucial point has not been focused on studies and failed to focus on the previous studies- the underlying geopolitical issues concerning the Rohingya crisis.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEE AND SECURITY CRISIS

3.1 Geopolitical theories

The laws of geopolitics have had a profound impact on the rise and decline of any major power in world politics. With the speedy development of many emerging countries with China, the global power structure has been experiencing a profound reshuffle in the post-cold-war era. The peaceful development of these countries and the crisis around them need immediate support from the theories of geopolitics and others [37].

In the traditional theory of geopolitics, there is no such so-called everlasting truth. The present study is mainly founded on the critical theory of geopolitics. One of the major geopolitical intentions is to underline the political domination over the countries not just because of acquiring power over the citizen and material resources but also focused on the terrestrial settings where they exercise this power [38]. ‘Nearly all’ in nearly all international transactions involving some element of opposition, resistance, struggle, or conflict, the factors of location, space, and distance between the interacting parties have been significant variables. This significance is embodied in the maxim, “power is local”. This is to say, and political demands are projected through space from one location to another upon the earth's surface, [39] which was focused on the definition given by Kissinger. He defined ‘geopolitics as an approach that pays attention to the requirements of equilibrium’ [40]. According to Kissinger, ‘geopolitics a synonymy with global equilibrium and permanent national interests in the world balance of power’ [38]. As a result, according to Slaon and Gray [38], the geographical settings do not “determine the objectives or strategies of the foreign or internal policies of a particular state” [38], while the territorial configuration yields chances for policymakers and politicians.

Critical geopolitics is a fusion of political discussions, announcements, and performances, relatively than a word merely unfolding connection amid geography and politics [41]. It is not intended and dedicated to the expansion of theory in the relationship within space and politics; however, it emphasizes analyzing the geopolitical discussion, geographical information, and other events [42]. It is not the rejection of typical geopolitics but a supplement for

understanding and conceptualizing the 'politics' and 'geography'. Therefore, critical geopolitics may be perceived and being shaped as another form of geopolitics.

The scholars of critical geopolitics recognized geopolitics as an extensive traditional phenomenon, and its performance is not single but wide-ranging, while its value is not doctrinally impartial. The practice of geopolitics denotes the realization of the terrestrial and political logics, proliferation, and settings of the world's politics, primarily concentrating on re-thinking the national spatial architecture [43]. In addition the following conflicting issues and subjects considered for geo-strategy-ecological and resource politics, globalization and new state relations, regional conflict and new social movements [41].

The intellectuals critically reconstructed geopolitics by inspiring postmodernism, particularly by Michel Foucault's knowledge-power theory, thus resulting in the genesis of critical geopolitics [44]. As a result, critical geopolitics is designed to critically analyze and replicate the formation of traditional geopolitical theories and refurbish the "historicality, sociality, situationality and inclusive power – knowledge structure of classical geopolitical theories" [37]. Geopolitical theories are constructed by the direction that was determined through the multi-dimensional diffusion of domestic interests, national power, terrestrial conflicts amid states and their consequences in national power. While China distributed its national interests on a global scale, the terrestrial conflicts of the states are essentially focussed on those countries that are the Chinese neighbours. China has the land and the sea; as a result, it will be the starting point for the foundation and formation of their geo-strategy for their peaceful escalation in the future [37]. This attitude of China can devote to a fall in crisis for them for their regional mutual interest; however, China is not interested in a hegemonic fight with the USA or any major power during their peaceful geo-strategy, which is why it differs from the classical theories of geopolitics. The development interests of any country can force them to mould their national policy when it is strongly linked with other major powers' interests; in this case, their policy can create adverse effects on others, especially those who are neighbours.

3.2 Theories of refugee

Theoretical knowledge is essential to broaden the scope of understanding any concept, while theoretical frameworks help to investigate and explain the social system and social actions [45]. The theoretical approach is an attempt for conceptual interpretation on refugee phenomena and the recognition of the persistent configurations to advise the researchers who work on asylum and resettlement countries. The frameworks of Migration, Refugee, Post-Colonial used the underpinnings to emphasize the refugee crisis as an important compound social and political limitations that engrained with the individual experiences of refugees. Investigating besides relating theories with the refugee life and their context delivers multiple perspectives of their crisis. The final outcome of the investigation and combination of theories would be a unified model to understand the Rohingya crisis.

The immigrants' characteristics related to race, culture, and nationality affect the settlement, which becomes a principle of migration studies while Kunz [46, 47] laid the foundation as he believed an extensive study and presence of a useful theory of refugee movement is essentially required with its typology and conceptual categories.

An outstanding scholarship by Jolles [48] on German

expellees and refugees suggested numeral hypotheses, and in 1969, Kunz analyzed the migration of refugees from Hungary to Australia, familiarising the kinetic models first. The Kinetic Model of Refugee Theory offers several understandings on the displacement of refugees and their attitudes toward it. As Kunz claimed, the refugee's flight and settlement follow two-fold kinetic types- acute refugee movement and anticipatory refugee movement.

In direction to the classification and elucidation of refugees, Kunz [47] separated refugees into three different groups resulting from the refugees' attitudes towards their displacement. First, they are called *majority identified* refugees. Second, Kunz calls *events related* to refugees as they left home-grown due to vital or hidden unfairness against them. The third type the *self-alienated*. Today many refugees in Asia and Africa are inclined with the event-related refugee category of Kunz. Refugee people are continuously discriminated against and fallen under massive human rights violations as they are no longer important to their country and feel insecure within their motherland. Civil wars within ethnic minority and ethnic conflicts is one of the major sources of event-related refugee in the refugee world. This is a source for producing event-related refugees in Asia and Africa from Rwanda to Sudan and from Syria to Myanmar.

Bonacich described middlemen minorities who would be measured during danger all over the world [49]. It contains the sojourners who come from another country for a certain period to gather resources that will help them change their future fortune while returning. It is obvious many of them will not go back, but their cultural orientation and motive to gathering resources lead to separate them from the host society and concentrate on other livelihoods and businesses. This group of people fallen into trouble and increased the vulnerability in an eroding economic situation when the nationalist sentiment captured the whole society. There are several examples that exist all over the world of such as the occurrence of indigenous Chinese people excluded from Vietnam [50], the Asians were excluded from Uganda [50], and some other ethnic people persecuted and excluded that appropriate for this category while Rohingya refugees are nowadays included in the same category.

According to the kinetic model of Kunz [46], the flight of refugees is a limited, partial, and abstract one though it has manifold beneficial notions and categories. As these people leave their home with and without preparation that differs due to the pre-existing situation of a respective country when they wish to spend some time as an asylum and are willing to get hospitality as a settler in another country without any hankering to get citizenship. This model has been used by many researchers who conducted their research on Vietnamese refugees [51] when they mentioned that this model is not only correct but also an appropriate one. The key factor of Kunz's kinetic model was the idea of push. The anticipatory refugee can get very outset about the threat of any crisis that force them to depart, whereas acute refugee force to flee immediately due to civil war, political conflict, or violations. The acute refugee group fled not just because that the situation was scary but the atmosphere was also panic. As a result, this group of refugees gets less time to decide before their flight while they flee a huge number which Kunz termed as "*midway to nowhere*" which is perfectly applicable for Rohingya refugees.

Stein claimed that many parts of the world, including Europe, now became the place of new refugees who is ethnically and culturally other than the hosts; he is from a

country that is less-developed, whereas traditional refugees are one from analogous custom and ethnic group and they will be welcomed [52]. Stein finally concludes by the two most important points for research on refugees that are as follows: i. how the refugee research is approached; and ii. focus on issues that will help the refugees relieve suffering and help those trying to aid the refugees.

The post-colonial analysis of refugees may be connected with the various histories of oppression and aims at how to reconcile the diverse theories to political questions that can put pressure on the continuing struggle for cultural decolonization. In post-colonial theory, the scholar discussed the significance of colonization to classify the development of societal problems of current society [53, 54]. The policy of the colonial nation produced dependency for the colonized nations in social, economic, and political aspects that ultimately shaped the uprising. This turbulence eventually directed the people to leave their inborn states while several experienced traumatic events. In this case, post-colonial theory aids the humanitarian service sector to explore the donation of socio-political and anthropogenic construction to configure the refugees' understanding of trauma and propose an appropriate design to navigate this problem [55].

National refugee policy, in many countries, is guided by international refugee laws, and the constitutive guidelines for refugees in many nations are primarily based on these international instruments. However, Bangladesh is not the signatory of any international instrument for refugee and asylum. On the other hand, due to the politicization of asylum, many countries of the world approved physical and bureaucratic restrictions for refugees to avert the access and protection that yields more crisis.

4. RESEARCH METHODS

The study was directed to the geopolitical and security aspects of the Rohingya refugees crisis. The refugee issue is common in international politics, migration studies, population science, public health, security studies, human rights, and other allied social and basic sciences. The present research was primarily based on secondary sources, where the author gathered data from different sources. The study follows a systematic approach to garner the relevant data [56]. The relevant data were collected using Web of Science, ProQuest, PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus and ResearchGate for peer-reviewed journals and grey literature. The keywords included the common terms related to the Rohingya crisis: Rohingya, Refugee, Myanmar, Southeast Asia, Geopolitics, Politics of South Asia, China, India, and Bangladesh. The study comprised scientific research articles, reports published by governmental and non-governmental organizations in the English language and excluded the redundant studies where the full text was unavailable. The identified records were exported into Mendeley™, where the duplicate articles were erased. Then, the titles and abstracts were screened for eligibility for inclusion in the article's full-text screening. All relevant articles were reviewed by titles and potential citations to assess the suitability of the study. The author assessed the full text of the relevant articles, reports and extracted the relevant data from all relevant research on the location of the research study, existence, and explanation of the keywords of interest.

This study's unit of textual analysis was the security of the

Rohingya refugee crisis. Further, the author included the security of south and Southeast Asia in this study along with Myanmar, India, China, and the USA as an external superpower whose supremacy exists everywhere in any context and perspective. The author deliberately selected these to gather relevant and authentic investigations on the existing crisis and prospects for durable and effective solutions for Rohingya refugees.

The author tried to collect information connected to the real-world experiences of south and southeast Asian politics from different secondary sources to identify the nature and extent of their proxies and motives to intensify the Rohingya crisis. Also, the author tried to explore the measures that had been taken for an existing crisis to promote humanitarian development for Rohingya refugees. Thus the author comprised them to obtain rich and extensive data and make my arguments nuanced and authentic. It also imposed to improve the validity of the data gleaned from different sources to reach the inferences. The literature for review was selected under the following criteria: study population was explicitly Rohingya and south and southeast Asia; only English and full-texted articles, reports were considered; the scientific research article was a primary study, a review, popular article, or reports of government and non-government organizations; those studies that used both the primary and secondary data for analysis; the result studies were a Rohingya refugee people related outcomes.

The study was designed to extend the array and scope to clarify the nature and extent of the available literature scrutinizing the features of the current crisis of Rohingya refugees from geopolitical and security perspectives. The study endeavours to spotlight the crucial cruxes for a durable and effective solution for the Rohingya refugee crisis and security in the future.

5. ROHINGYA CRISIS AND REFUGEE OUTCOME AS REGIONAL SECURITY TENSION

There are several forces that are working on the severity of the Rohingya becoming refuge; however, these are not individually accountable for the crisis but collectively produce several miseries for the Rohingya. It is not wise to drop the sight while the buried forces impact the Rohingya crisis and become a refugee. Their ethno-religious background, regional and international geopolitics, the international community, and regional big fish India, China are moulding the present and future Rohingya crisis that Bangladesh is currently facing. Apparently, it is the ethno-religious conflict which has been dyed by the vision of the Myanmar government, but the hidden forces are blurred in world media that only focus the humanitarian aspects and safety of their life without focusing on the root causes and avoiding the long-desired and cocktail geopolitical game of Myanmar and big-fish in this region where Bangladesh become a playground due to its steady economic growth and expansion of its national interest beyond the national boundary. However, these other dominant proxies are, in this area, trade routes, national security, gas pipelines, and their geostrategic reflexions.

5.1 Military desires on economic development under the shadow of religious extremism

The Rohingya people are experienced devastating violence and on and off military oppression across the century. The

military destroyed all the villages to the ground, burnt their houses, seized the land, and declared government property [57]. It will embolden the military to manage as the traces were burnt and become burnt land and not easy to trace where who were before persecuted by a military crackdown. This happened when the government made a treaty with the expansion of their economic zone by the direct investment of China in these regions.

The billions of investment in Rakhine Myanmar will have significant importance on economic development in the future as well as strengthen Chinese occupation in this region (Figure 1). As Sassen assumed, undoubtedly such massive developments will have an enormous shadow effect over a huge part of Rakhine, going well beyond the area of the port and the industrial zone' [57]. This is a complete geopolitical aspect under the shadow of economic solidarity by yielding and increasing tension in these regions that kneed neighbouring countries towards the big fish with ample opportunities to invade with the flag of mutual economic friendship and control over the region for their national interest. Religious extremism and ethnicity are the only facets of this displacement greater than several former evictions of the Rohingya.

5.2 The ultimate focus of giant investor China

The Chinese investment in Myanmar primarily focused on natural resources and resource extraction. Chinese investment covered several parts of Myanmar for mining, making dams, and collecting timber. About thirty-three per cent of their investment is in the forest area where they usually extract and collect timber that results in barren land in a vast forest area. In addition, China has financed USD 2.45 billion meaningfully on the Rakhine state for developing a pipeline to Yunnan province of China from Rakhine while this strategic seaport in Rakhine allow China to easy access to the Indian Ocean as well as the Middle East and minimize their time and cost for crude oil from the Middle East for their energy security for long-term economic benefits. While this Chinese investment is a new one but the ultimate interests of the Chinese government to invest in Myanmar cannot be avoided by the

current government of Myanmar.

The enormous rise of corporate acquisitions for resource mining, collecting timber, water, and agricultural purpose has risen globally in the past two decades. The Myanmar government has been grabbing land from smallholders since the 1990s, which has continued for decades. The allocation of lands for the large projects increased 170 per cent from 2010 to 2013. The laws for managing the lands had changed in 2012 to favour the corporation in their acquisition when the investment in Myanmar from China was the highest one.

5.3 Disputes on the Bay of Bengal between Myanmar and Bangladesh

The seas and ocean are becoming crucial for the blue economy for the nation to resource extraction to energize their development speed and make it sustainable when the population and pollution are increasing simultaneously. The nations' growing interest in blue resources warrants them to access on seas than before. The long-standing disputes on the Bay of Bengal between Bangladesh and Myanmar and India become topical in the 2010s. However, one of the greatest achievements of Bangladesh is the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes with neighbouring countries in a period of fewer than five years. This was the first case in the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) that got remarkable importance by the international court to settle the disputes. The negotiations on this dispute initiated in 1974 with India and Myanmar when both countries claimed their boundary drawn by the equidistance method, which resulted in cut-off for Bangladesh's significant portion of the sea due to its concavity in its coastline [58].

The dispute underway mounting in 2008 when Myanmar crossed the boundary and started oil exploration in the Bay of Bengal. The newly elected Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina decided to minimize the disputes by negotiations based on the incident. Myanmar and India consent for a limited share for Bangladesh and access within a very lesser of the Bay of Bengal. After that, the Bangladesh government took a daring decision to submit the dispute to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

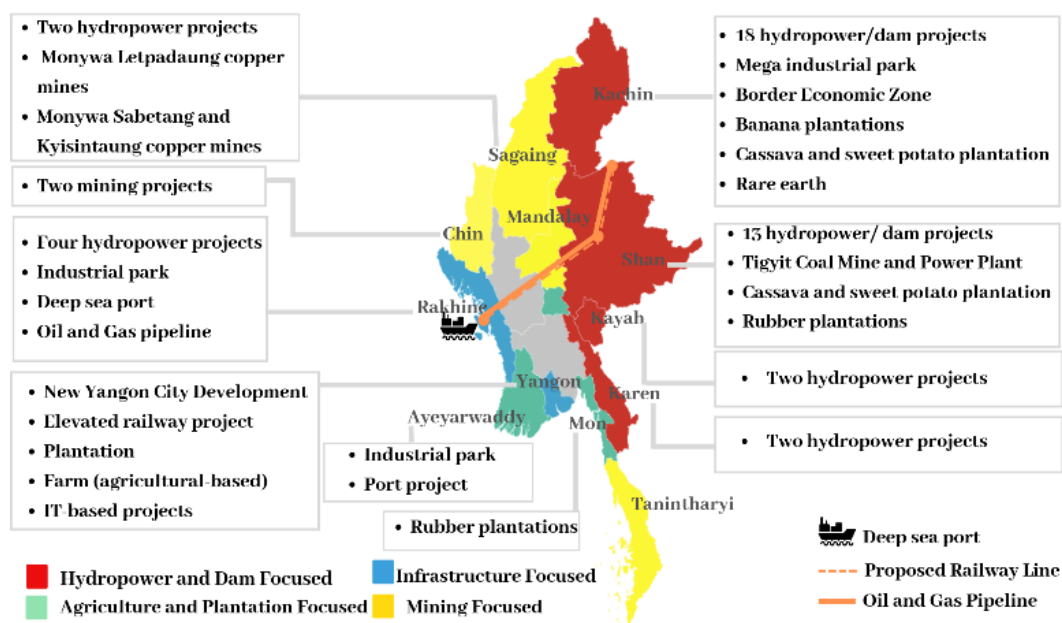


Figure 1. Chinese investment projects in Myanmar [59]

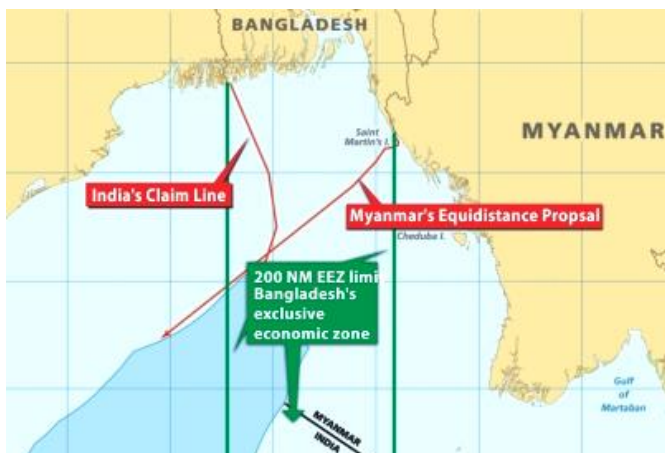


Figure 2. Maritime disputes among Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar [60]

While UNCLOS permits the arguments to resolve through the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), both countries approved to come up with the disputes to ITLOS. The decision of the ITLOS tribunal was the historic one while it is viewed as a ‘win’ for Bangladesh and awarded 112,000 square kilometres of sea, comprising an entire “exclusive economic zone.”

Bangladesh credited ninety-five per cent of the areas in the Bay of Bengal that they claimed and almost eighty per cent from the disputed portion of the site (Figure 2 and 3). Now Bangladesh can go close to shore areas for resource exploration as this area is rich in oil and gas. The country will benefit in the future through resource extraction for steady development. It can be a strategic shock for the Myanmar government. Though there is no direct linkage between the Rohingya crisis and sea disputes, this is an immediate shock for Bangladesh when a highly populated country receives about one million refugees from such a country. It also influences Bangladesh's domestic and foreign policy in respect to neighbouring countries while Rohingya refugees lost their homes, citizenship with belongings and become parasites.



Figure 3. Territory Bangladesh Myanmar in Bay of Bengal (https://amti.csis.org/territory_myanmar_bangladesh/)

5.4 Extend the tension through support in weaponization

Though the political situation among the nations in South and Southeast Asia is more or less peaceful, weaponization is a continuous process for the safety and security of the national sovereignty of any nation. In the 21st century, every nation of the world got importance in many respects while the south and Southeast Asian countries got highly focused due to India and China. China's economic expansion worldwide is rebuilding the development of discourses and geopolitical essentials for remaking the world order.

While India is coming up with its steady economy and weaponization with more sophisticated armaments, both Bangladesh and Myanmar have had a good connection with India and Myanmar with respect to business and economics, while these countries become part of the game when unrest situations arise between the big giant countries. This happened several times when Bangladesh brought two mean-class submarines from China for maritime security (Figure 4). India got angry and provided their old Kilo-class submarine to Myanmar to balance the regional power game.

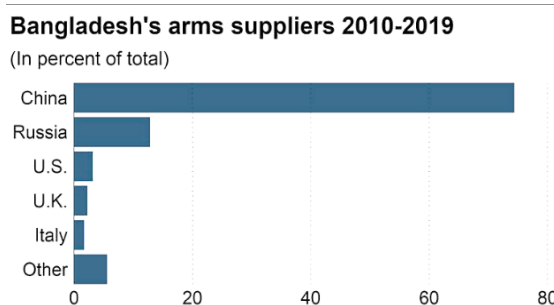


Figure 4. Major arms suppliers of Bangladesh [61]

5.5 Domestic political issues on regional geopolitics

The economic and strategic relationship among the nations in South and Southeast Asia (China, India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar) always indicates a strong bonding between them for mutual interests. In China's case, it would always like to lead in global markets with their products; however, many new and emerging countries will join to compete with them in the future. To manage this challenge, in advance, China is going to establish one belt one road that will provide long-run dividends to minimize the production cost by easy and economical transportation for raw materials and finished goods. Through their investment policies, the backwards and forward linkage will be strengthened in many developing countries. Several countries will fail to mitigate these challenges due to globalization and strategic bilateral and multilateral cooperation with China, where Bangladesh and Myanmar are the prime example in this region in light of the Rohingya crisis. In the case of Bangladesh and Myanmar's relations, the role of major powers is redefined due to their national interest and domestic foreign policy. However, both countries have had a solid strategic and economic connection when the fellow countries strive to move forward as left behind. As a result, this new definition of relationships among the nations always overtakes the Rohingya issue and is deliberately omitted in the regional and international forums by them. These people's fate worsens while their home and host country's economy is growing, but their crisis has been increasing for several years. Who knows how and when their

issue will be given priority. Undoubtedly, Bangladesh is failing to focus this crucial issue beyond the other national interest in the regional and global debate, which can be detrimental in the future, parallelly both for the Rohingya and Bangladesh.

6. DISCUSSION

The Myanmar government is always reactive towards the Muslims after independence from the colonial power. However, this attitude was not piled in a day in their minds; many factions and conflicts took a long time. The colonial ruler and their divide and rule policy were applied in British India, where they established their colony. However, it is a debating issue when Muslims started their lives in Rakhine and took them there while it was a sovereign kingdom before the British invaded. The British left and divided British India into several independent countries. Their loose political will founded a fragile democratic culture when the international bipolar world influenced these regions' political ideologies. In addition, military coups in many countries of Asia and Africa overthrew their government and backed the superpowers as an agent of modernization in the 1960s. At this time in Myanmar experienced a civil war among the different ethnic groups. As a doctrine of necessity, the military took the government office to reestablish their democracy in Myanmar.

On the other hand, Rohingya Muslim people lived a life of deprivation and exclusion in a single aspect of human life when military rule started; however, it was absent when the British left them with united Burma. This crisis influenced the extremist group, which remained a cause of security tension after persecution in the host country [62]. Though they were committed to providing an independent country and they didn't because this area was crucial for the British during their colonization from a geopolitical point of view. The control of this area was vital to save and secure in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. The maritime channel was crucial to transfer the extracted and exploited resources from British India and avoid the attacks of the enemies from the east as geography is the mother of strategy and a dynamic one due to its combination with the process of decision making and geographic settings to the policymakers. At the same time, it depends on the shifting level of transportation and weapon technology [38].

Rakhine sited in a crucial area from a geopolitical point of view and security as well when the British invaded. During the colonization in India, the British Navy was the strongest one, which benefited them and indicated to focus on Arakan (now Rakhine). They invaded there for their long-term security and benefits. This area is connected with land-river-sea and sea-river-land, that's why it got importance to the colonial rulers. They use this area for resource exportation to their home and another part of the world. Besides, Rakhine was significant to them as it could create a gatekeeper when anyone would like to enter British India from the east. As a result, this part of Myanmar produced many benefits for them, and they didn't get interested in settling the chaos in this part. However, after World War II, the game-changing policy also avoided the disputed issue that suffered millions of people.

In eighteen and nineteenth century the British used the geopolitical strategy to secure their land, economic and national resources over the colonized countries of the world;

however, in the latter part of the 20th, the USA emerged as a superpower and won the right to navigate the geopolitics over the newly independent nations. Unfortunately, the life of the Rohingya people in Myanmar always saved the rulers it was the British or their national government, but their life remained unchanged as they were used to fulfilling others' desires. These communities are not the result of any single incidence in the direction of extremist behaviour. At the same time, it is the byproduct of long-term deprivation from the rights and opportunities of being a part of a sovereign country. The issue emphasized by Clifford Geertz in the 1960s where he mentioned "*citizenship in a 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 centres of power in the world society*" [28] however their significance remains unchanged even after 61 years.

Nowadays major power of east- China is interested in its peaceful expansion of international economic power that requires a huge investment in infrastructural development which produces tensions about the security of resources and national sovereignty. Due to insecurity tension, geopolitics is reemphasized in this region by the Chinese government, where Rakhine is the best choice due to its' geographical location and persistent volatility with the Myanmar government that helped and empowered the Myanmar government to push Rohingya to flee as their presence is not necessary to secure the land and resources which was essential to the British in the past.

As colonial rulers always a have a profound impact on colonized nations economic and general political ideology where Muslims of Rakhine became excluded due to their role during colonization lately in World War II, where the majority part of Myanmar supported the evil axes, but the role of Arakanese Muslim was different which had been evident by the declaration of senior military officials of Myanmar when ethnic cleansing started in Rakhine. So we can say that the geographical location of the Rakhine state was crucial, which still remains, where the interest becomes switched from one power to another, which is now China. This explanation is not directly argument while the interest of both countries was dyed for national and economic security in the light of mutual economic benefits. However, the Myanmar government apparently became successful in uprooting the Rohingya Muslims, which was their ultimate interest. From the geopolitical point of view, the action against Rohingya was the result of a series of plans, activities, and investment, where the Chinese role was the prime one to rebuilding the state in a manner and helped Myanmar to abolish the sign of Rohingya people that once they lived and were a part this country. The author is not arguing that the Chinese government forces Myanmar to start action against the ethnic Muslim community, but due to their national interest, their role has been reshaped the regional political conditions and pushed the issue underneath that resulting in unimaginable sufferings for the millions of Rohingya. As a result, it can be said that Rakhine is always crucial in a geographical and geopolitical perspective to enter the mainland south and Southeast Asia, which get importance by the colonial and neo-colonial countries now and then which ultimately defined the fate of the people who usually reside over there. Besides, the deprivation of rights and exodus of Rohingya create security tension both for the countries and Rohingya as well [63].

7. CONCLUSION

International law is increasingly challenged as a practice matter for the refugees' protection and the rights of the refugees because the international law of refugees and policies in a country that deals with refugees is not always exhaustive to each other. The arena of global geopolitics has always been obsessed by the superpowers for supremacy in a manner that generally builds a facade of collaboration with neighbours for their interests. The Rohingya refugee was passing a terrific vulnerability since the deprivation started in Myanmar by the government, which got momentum when they were forced to move. This issue was remained unsettled; however, it is almost forty-two years gone when the Rohingya first fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar. The ambiguous role of regional superpowers is lingering the sufferings, fate, and future of the vast Rohingya community. The major powers of these regions sensitize the issue when they mainly focus on their national interest without considering the others' internal security and prosperity when the notion of security shifted from traditional issues to new challenges [64, 65]. This situation undoubtedly increased the security tensions in this region that also created a big market for dealings of military weapons and resulted in huge transactions. Again, it can be invested in these countries and do not invest more from their pocket to serve their national interest.

Since the beginning, the study has described the crisis from a geopolitical and security perspective. It also examined how and in which way the Rohingya people were excluded from mainland politics by the state. It also described bilateral relationships between the countries from the very beginning. We tried to look into the issue from the government-to-government to address it for practical solutions by the involvement of state actors at the regional level. It also looked for the proposal need for governmental initiatives through intensive bilateral and multilateral negotiations. To address the crisis of Rohingya refugees, a holistic approach is essential through the combination of developmental and humanitarian factors and actors, which must be initiated and sanctioned by the states; however, it is not expected that the security tension and geopolitics will disappear.

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