


TECHNICAL SESSION 1: BASIC SERVICES, FOOD SECURITY AND SKILLS OF THE FDMNS



**Prof Salma Akhter,**  
*Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka*

One issue facing the Rohingya population in Bangladesh is determining the ethnic identity of those born in the country. This can be difficult for this young generation to understand their role and status in Bangladesh, especially if they have dual identities.

Another issue is the social cohesion between the host community and the Rohingya population. Both communities often feel vulnerable, insecure, and deprived, and may view each other as competitors.

Women from both communities also face gender-based violence, with some Rohingya women informed that their husbands pressurise them and want to have more children when women do not want to. Host community women mentioned their husbands abandoning them by marrying Rohingya women as Rohingya women get support from the development partners and host community women do not have income generating activities. It is important to address these issues in order to promote understanding and harmony

between the host community and the Rohingya population.

One of the challenges in addressing the education and employment needs of the Rohingya population in Bangladesh is determining the appropriate education system for them. It may also be difficult to prepare them for the job market and integrate them into Bangladesh's educational system. A sustainable approach may be taken to provide livelihood and skill development training to both the host community and the Rohingya community in order to make them employable.

While some development partners may be willing to allow refugees to move to their countries, it may be more prestigious for the Rohingya to become self-sufficient through employment rather than continuing to move from one country to another as refugees.



**Mohammed Mizanur Rahman,**  
*Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief*


The scarcity of qualified teachers from the community is a significant issue, even we

don't find a suitable number of competent teachers for the Burmese language. For the last few years NGOs have been recruiting one teacher from the host community to teach English and Science, and another from the Rohingya community to teach the Burmese language in every learning centre. However, the stipend offered to teachers from the host community is not bare minimum to engage them to work in the camps. As a result, the quality of teaching has been compromised- leading to a higher drop-out rate in the camps. While the Myanmar curriculum has been introduced, there has been a challenge of having a proper assessment system or certifications of education. Additionally, there is a need for more space and classrooms for learning centers, but because of the land scarcity and given the context of nature of the land we cannot go for further construction of the infrastructures.

In regards to law and order, all the Camp in Charges (CiCs) cannot stay in the camp premises at night, as there are no such arrangements yet. However, there are some police camps in the area. Plans are underway to expand the number of police camps.

The demographic status of the Rohingya is somehow ignored when we talk about


gender based violence or polygamy as the ratio of female is higher than the male and among the males, there are fewer eligible men because many of them were killed and imprisoned in Myanmar and many live abroad - in Malaysia or Saudi Arabia. Some unscrupulous individuals are taking advantage of this situation by taking multiple wives, which contributes to the increase in violence in the camp.



**Prof Taiabur Rahman,**  
*dean, School of Social Science and Humanities, IUB*

The Rohingya crisis is a global issue. We cannot look at it from only the points of view of the host or camp dwellers. We have to look at it from a comprehensive holistic perspective. We can call it a meta governance issue as there are so many actors involved – international, national, regional, host, local, non-government organisations, and private organisations. One major issue is the engagement of Myanmar. We can take care of systems that will create basic service provisions in the camp but the government needs to work with relevant stakeholders to send these people back to their home country.

TECHNICAL SESSION 2: CHANGING RESOURCE NEEDS AND ROLES OF RELEVANT ACTORS IN RESPONDING ROHINGYA CRISIS



**Dr Bokhtiar Ahmed,**  
*professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Rajshahi*

I personally witnessed the influx of Rohingya in the 1990s as a young member of the host community. At that time, there were few NGO professionals and hardly any local people working in crisis management operations. However, now there is an unprecedented number of people from the host community working for many NGOs.

Fortunately, Bangladesh had the necessary development sector expertise, with professionals experienced in emergency response and humanitarian efforts, to effectively handle the large influx of Rohingya in September 2017. As a result, Bangladesh was able to respond well to the situation despite facing other limitations.

in policy direction.

Our research has revealed that adolescent Rohingya boys in the camps are the most neglected group in terms of development interventions. This lack of support increases their risk of involvement in radical activities, which is harmful not only to the Rohingya community but also to the host community.

Therefore, it is important to develop leadership within the Rohingya community so that their voices can be heard and their perspectives considered. Currently, their voices are largely missing from discussions and decision-making processes.



**Dr ASM Amanullah,**  
*professor, Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka*

There is a lack of coordination in the health services in the Rohingya camps, as


increase in noncommunicable diseases in the Rohingya camps. Our dietary study in the camps found that there is nutrition and food security, but there is a lack of dietary diversity. Additionally, there is an unmet need for family planning services, mental health services, and trauma services, in addition to basic needs such as education.



**Mia Mohammad Mainul Kabir,**  
*director general (Myanmar), Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

NGOs and donor agencies, at times, acknowledge the lack of coordination among themselves in terms of their humanitarian operations in the camps. To address this, there needs to be effective coordination among all actors involved in the Rohingya response. This can be achieved by combining the government's direction and donor mechanisms to ensure transparency and proper coordination.

following the Myanmar curriculum.



**Dr Imtiaz Ahmed,**  
*professor of International Relations, University of Dhaka*

It is important to include the Rohingyas in discussions about strategies that affect them. The Center for Genocide Studies has collected extensive data on violence over the past decade and has also mapped violence in Rohingya camps. Contrary to what some may believe, these camps are actually safer than cities like New York or Chicago. In fact, the rate of gun violence in the United States is around 40,000 per year, while violence in Rohingya camps is significantly lower. This is due in part to the strong social resilience of the Rohingyas in these camps.



**Dr Helal Mohiuddin,**  
*professor, Department of Political Science and Sociology, North South University*

In this discussion, the RRRC mentioned that the upcoming strategic plan for the Rohingya response is being designed based on the demographic shift of the Rohingya population. However, I believe it would be wise to base the strategic plan on the long-term management of the emerging protection situation, considering government policies, diplomatic relations, and other factors. The plan should address issues such as localization, overlapping, repetition, inconsistency, and duplicity

demonstrated by various studies of these camps. It is important to disseminate important research findings to donors and development partner communities for a better understanding and future planning.

Bangladesh has not ratified the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol, and there is a question of how to mobilize resources in the camps to generate employment and take local resource mobilization initiatives if the Rohingyas are not considered refugees and international donors use the term "refugee." Bangladesh should accede to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol.

It is also important to consider the

This year, there is a 300 million US Dollar deficit. As long as refugees and stateless people are here, UN agencies have responsibilities. The United States alone funded arms for the Ukraine war worth 20 billion dollars in one year, yet we are worrying about a deficit of 300 million. The annual transaction of Yaba drugs is between 30 and 60 billion US dollars, and the Myanmar military has a business interest in the Yaba trade. However, the rest of the world remains silent on this issue.

We must be realistic and consider whether we can implement a Marshall plan, in which the Myanmar state sees it as advantageous to address the needs of the Rohingyas, who they view as Arakani Muslims.

CLOSING SESSION



**SK Md Moniruzzaman,**  
*director general (Additional Secretary), NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office*

We have established earning opportunities for the Rohingyas in Bhasan Char, such as farming. However, we need to create even more opportunities for them. The government plans to relocate more Rohingyas to Bhasan Char to ease the overcrowding in the Cox's Bazar area.

Despite limited resources, our representatives continually assess the needs of the Rohingyas and prioritize support accordingly to ensure that relief efforts are not wasted. It is important to carefully consider the potential impact and sustainability of any new projects for the Rohingyas.



PHOTO: BRAC



**Gwyn Lewis,**  
*UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh*

The ultimate solution to the Rohingya crisis lies with the government of Myanmar. The political efforts of the UN to create a conducive environment for addressing the political issues at hand continues to be of utmost importance. The Security Council and General Assembly have increased their engagement in this issue since 2017, but action continues to be needed.

The repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar must be voluntary, safe, and sustainable. The Rohingyas have faced persecution for decades, and when they do return home, they will need a safe place to live and necessary services must be in place. In the meantime, education and skill development is essential for the Rohingya community to have the knowledge and experience to be self-reliant when they return home.

The international community's support to the response has been critical in ensuring that Bangladesh does not bear the burden of supporting the Rohingyas alone. This support needs to continue, but to be effective

and efficient in addressing this crisis, we also need to think long-term. Together we should consider how we can continue to provide essential services such as health and education. It will be important to engage with international financial institutions or different donors to secure long-term funding and multi-year programming.

Providing the Rohingya with livelihood opportunities is also another avenue to be explored that will also mean less reliance on assistance. Giving people choices and allowing them to able to support themselves will mean

the response is more sustainable until the Rohingya are able to return safely and with dignity to their homes.



**Shabbir Ahmad Chowdhury,**  
*secretary (West), Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Over the past five years, we have exhausted our diplomatic efforts to address this crisis. We have engaged bilaterally with many countries around the world, but the only viable solution is the safe

and voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya to Myanmar. While the problem was created by Myanmar, we have unfortunately been paying the price for it. The solution must be found by the Myanmar government.

Alternative measures such as developing the skills of the Rohingya with the goal of increasing their employment in Bangladesh may lead to increased unemployment or underemployment of Bangladeshi citizens, causing tension and competition among the host community. These approaches should not be pursued as they do not align with the

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The changing needs and priorities of the Rohingyas should be assessed through a participatory process to project the upcoming resource needs and make a realistic plan to address this crisis.

➤ Increase the involvement of local actors in the Rohingya response effort. The funding agencies should allocate resources and take initiative to build capacity of local actors, including NGOs, to
- manage the crisis in a cost-effective manner.

➤ Tie the funding for humanitarian assistance to a multi-annual framework.

➤ Promote understanding and harmony between the host community and the Rohingya population.

➤ Effective coordination among all actors involved in the Rohingya response is needed.

➤ Bangladesh should accede to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol.
- A comprehensive strategy is needed to facilitate the safe, dignified repatriation of the Rohingyas.

➤ The evolving nature of the Rohingya crisis necessitates a strategic shift in the way that some innovative interventions on livelihoods, food security, education, and skill development should be taken.

➤ Address environmental issues comprehensively in the response to the Rohingya crisis.

DISCUSSANTS

(In order of appearance)

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