

CHAPTER 6

TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM IN PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF ROHINGYA MUSLIMS

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ABSTRACT

The Rohingya are one of the most repressed communities of the world and live in Myanmar under miserable conditions. This study elaborates upon the impacts, issues, and activities of Rohingya Muslims living in Pakistan with reference to transnational Islam. Transitional Islam has arguably captured the attention of academic researchers in recent years, with many studies and reports available on the impacts, issues, and crises of transnationalism and transitional Islam. The crisis of the Rohingya people is undoubtedly a growing transnational challenge, as they are systematically discriminated against and compelled to leave Burma to find refuge in various countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Malaysia. They face many problems in Pakistan, such as being stateless because Pakistan considers them Bengali (i.e., a community originating from Bangladesh) while Bangladesh considers them as Burmese citizens. The Rohingya have faced decades of statelessness and targeted violence, as well as the brutal murder of innocent men, women, and children. Many reported cases are also found of women being raped and children being burnt during these tragedies by Burmese forces. These are violations of the United Nations charter on human rights in the age of globalization and civilization. This study aims to examine and highlight the current situation regarding the education, job opportunities, and healthcare services available to them in their host countries. The Rohingya seem to be in a very poor state and to be living a miserable life in most of the areas of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India. The dire need exists to provide them with citizenship and other human rights in the host countries. The Rohingya also need legal and constitutional protection in Pakistan and should be allowed to participate in national politics for the welfare and service of their community. This study has adopted the analytical and historical research methodologies using a qualitative approach.

Keywords: Transnational Islam, historic context, Rohingya Muslims, Pakistani perspective, Issues & Challenges, Way forward

1. Introduction

In modern times, Muslim and non-Muslim minorities face many crises in the so-called civilized and educated world. These crises can range from religious and political to social and economic issues. One of the most important issues and human tragedies is the crisis of the Rohingya people,¹ who have been compelled to leave Myanmar (formerly Burma until 1989). Burma is their homeland, but now they are searching for refuge in neighboring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India. The Rohingya people is commonly used as a term to refer to the community of Muslims concentrated in Rhakine (formerly Arakan) State, Myanmar, as well as other parts of the country and refugee camps in neighboring countries (Chan, 2023). They are also known as the Boat People in international media. According to (Smith, 2017) Views the 'boat people' crisis won't end until Burma stops persecuting the Rohingya', The Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar are an ethnic minority who originated from the Indian subcontinent after the spread of Islam in the 8th century. For several centuries, they have been living predominantly in Rhakine State and as Muslims for generations. The Rohingyas are not officially recognized as citizens by the government of Myanmar, and Myanmar's Buddhist majority has been accused of subjecting them to discrimination and violence for decades, especially after the discriminatory legislation of 1982 that was passed by the government of Burma, according to which the Rohingya people were no longer considered citizens of the state of Burma (Violence and Abuses in Burma, July 31, 2012). Consequently, the Rohingya Muslims sought refuge in neighboring countries. Pakistan has bene one of the most important hosts of the Rohingya Muslims, with limited resources to host refugees. More than 300,000 Rohingya refugees are found living in crowded camps in Karachi. The children are unable to register in government schools for education, nor are their parents eligible for work. They cannot avail themselves of any health care services offered by the government, nor are they allowed to take part in national politics. The deprivation of basic needs such as education and livelihood is a clear violation of human rights and goes against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948). After a careful and deeper look into this human crisis, elaborating upon the despondent state of Rohingya Muslims appears needed in order to take the appropriate measures, including the issuance of citizenship and legal and constitutional protections in Pakistan, as they should be allowed to participate in national politics for the betterment of their community. The current study will examine the issues, challenges, impacts, and activities of the Rohingya Muslims in the context of Pakistan. This study also will suggest possible way forward in light of national and international laws.

1 The Rohingya people are a stateless Indo-Aryan ethnic group who reside in Rakhine State, Myanmar. There were an estimated 1 million Rohingya living in Myanmar before the 2016–17 crisis. By December 2017, an estimated 625,000 refugees had crossed the border from Rakhine, Myanmar into Bangladesh since August 2017.

The Rohingya are a Muslim religious ethnic group of the Myanmar state, a Buddhist-majority country. They have been driven from their homeland in Rhakine State and now they are working place to place for their rights, privileges and protection. Furthermore, they are considered the world's largest religious community to have been forced to leave their homeland in (Burma), Myanmar. Many studies and much research have been carried out by various scholars across the globe to point out their issues and problems in recent years. These projects focus on general problems and solutions. Nevertheless, their presence in neighboring countries, especially in Pakistan, along with the challenges they face in the host countries as a minority group need to be addressed. Apart from the core issue, it is known to be a humanitarian one, the problems related to their improvement and environment cannot be ignored. According to studies of (Soroos, 1990) and (Nagel, 1990), the refugee problem is both a transboundary and shared one, and both are applicable to the Rohingya crisis. A large volume of literature is found on refugees (Stein, 1981). In recent years in particular, much progress has been made on examining various aspects in this regard. (Bond, 1987). Some more recent studies (e.g., Ahmed, 2010; Mathieson & Scott, 2009; Parnini, 2013; Ragland, 1994) are notable for their focus on the Rohingya issues regarding human rights violations, statelessness, critical repatriation, and other related crises in the border areas. However, hardly any comprehensive studies on Rohingya are worth noting that have looked at the problem with a holistic approach by conceptualizing the non-traditional security crises created on the basis of racial differences and governance problems. Due to their helpless position and lack of political authority, the Rohingya people also face many crises in refugee countries. Some studies have focused on this, such as Blocher and Gulati (2016), Pittaway (2008), and Rahman (2010), who shed light on this issue in the context of Bangladesh. Regrouping the analyses is needed to uncover the root causes of and solutions to the Rohingya crisis. The crises affecting the Rohingya people have caused them to become victims of domestic governmental discriminatory policies stemming from insufficient governmental architecture. Some studies reported that since independence, Myanmar has been afflicted by several socio-economic and political setbacks including a number of armed conflicts and ethno-religious tensions (Alam, 2018). Myanmar's historical records show how freedom has remained a fable, particularly for the ethnic minorities. Although the majority of the conflicts have been on the question of autonomy, tensions also persist within the ethnic minorities (Tayler, 2009). That is why the significance of this study lies in researching the Rohingya issue with a focus on the Pakistani context as well as with reference to transnational Islam by exploring the significant role of international organizations and the Islamic community so as to fill the gap on how to rescue Rohingya from further loss of human life.

This study involves an effort to highlight some substantial issues and problems of the Rohingya Muslims in Pakistan through their historical background in Myanmar. Moreover, this study suggests some reasonable solutions for addressing this issue in Pakistan. This study has adopted analytical and historical research methodologies using a qualitative approach. Historical and current data in the form of books, encyclopedias, lexicons, research papers, and reports have been collected and analyzed using all possible means. Modern research tools such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and digital sources have also been used to gather data regarding the issue. In addition to the traditional and modern sources, the study has also benefitted from expert opinion and incorporated it into the study.

2. The Genesis of Buddhist and Muslim Communities in Myanmar

The arrival of Buddhism into Arakan started around the 8th century CE when Buddhists in India under the Hindu revivalist leader, Shankar Acharyiah,² were persecuted on a large scale. In Magadha, which is in India's southern Bihar region, Buddhists were so ruthlessly oppressed by chauvinist Hindus and the rival Mahayana sect of Buddhists³ that large numbers of Hinayana Buddhists were compelled to flee eastward, ultimately finding shelter in Arakan(Harvey, 1925). In the 10th century CE, Arakan was conquered by a historic Buddhist king, Anu Radha, while the separate identity of Muslims remained in the country. After Anu Radha, however, the relationship between Muslims and Buddhists had actually been unpleasant since the 13th century CE. Muslims ruled over Arakan, Rhakine , and Rohingya for nearly 500 years. Afterward, the relationship between Muslims and the Burma government became unsatisfactory and rough. In fact, the relationship can be said to have become worse to the extent of enmity and hostility as a result of some religious, tribal, and political reasons following the British conquest of Burma in 1824 (*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908). According to the British census of 1931, 27% of the population in Burma were Muslim. The educational trend in the Muslim population was very good, and most Muslims were employees of the British government in Burma. During the great economic crisis of 1930-1938 in Burma, the Muslim community was badly targeted and tortured by the Buddhist inhabitants of Burma. In 1942 during World War II, Japan attacked Burma, and several Muslim traders were compelled to migrate to India. After the war in 1945, the local Muslim politicians succeeded in establishing the political party known as the Muslim Congress of Arakan. Two Muslim leaders, namely Mr. Abdul Ghaffar and Mr. Sultan Ahmad, were even members of the British government in

2 Shankar Acharyiah was an Indian Vedic scholar and teacher whose works present a harmonizing reading of the sastras, with liberating knowledge of the self at its core, synthesizing the Advaita Vedanta teachings of his time.

3 The most common classification among scholars of Buddhism is threefold: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana.

Burma at that time, hailing from the Burma Muslim Congress (Al-Hajj MA, 1999).

One important point is that a Buddhist monk, Munden,⁴ emerged as the leader and king of Buddhist religious politics in the British Burmese Government from 1853-1878. This era is normally known as a peaceful age for the modernity, science, and reconstruction of Buddhism in Burma. Afterward, the freedom movement started in Burma, and Muslim and Buddhist unitedly fought this freedom movement in 1947. In 1948, Burma succeeded in gaining complete independence from the British Empire. After the end of British rule on the subcontinent and the division of India and Pakistan, the Union of Burma was established with the permission of the British government in 1948. Arakan had the most Muslim inhabitants and was made part of Burma as Rhakine State in 1950 after an army coup under the supervision of a Burmese Army General. The Muslim majority populating the province of Arakan was now part of the Union of Burma, despite having been an independent state in the past. However, the civilian government was there, and all political, ethnic, and religious groups were partnered with Burma. Therefore, the era from 1948-1962 was mostly an era of communist politics; it did have a loose federal system with reasonable freedoms for all communities and faiths (Taylor, 2009). Another army coup in 1962 started a difficult era for the Rohingya Muslims. This war was triggered by the government of Burma with the help of extremist Buddhist monks, in which thousands of Muslims were killed, tortured, and expelled from Burma to neighboring countries, with thousands being compelled to live in refugee camps.

In 1962 after the second military coup, Burma was officially declared the Union of Burma. Tayler Robert's analysis, the 1962 Burmese coup d'état on March 2, 1962 marked the beginning of a one-party rule and the political dominance of the army in Burma that would span the course of 26 years. During the coup, the military replaced the civilian AFPFL-government headed by Prime Minister U Nu with the Union Revolutionary Council, Chaired by General Ne Win (Taylor, 2009). Afterwards, these politics converted into an extreme national sectarian religious policy against the Muslims of Arakan in 1962 marked the beginning point of the Rohingya Muslims' difficulties and persecution at the state level in Burma. In 1966, the Muslim population in Burma was 3 million. After the establishment of the Union of Burma and occupation of Arakan by the Burmese Army, the situation became bad for the Arakan Muslims in this country. Thousands of Muslims were killed, including women and children. Hundreds

4 The Buddhist monk Munden was the mad king of British Burma from 1853-1878. Some scholars consider him to be the founder of modern Buddhism. He supervised the Fifth Biudh Council in 1871 and 1878. In this age, the Bodh sacred literature, named the Paly cannon, was revised for its new compilation and the reconstruction of a new edition. This book is known as the world largest book of the stones and is still present in Burma. This age is also called the clash between Religion (Buddhism) and Science.

of Rohingya Muslim women were looted and raped by the Burmese Army, and millions of Rohingya Muslims were compelled to leave their homeland and take refuge in neighboring countries such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, India, and Pakistan. Over 300,000 Rohingya Muslims live in Pakistan nowadays. The majority of Rohingya Muslims live in Karachi, a cosmopolitan city of Pakistan. They have influenced the economic, political, social, and religious narrative of Pakistan since 1948. All of them made a perilous journey across Bangladesh and India before settling in Karachi. The majority of Rohingya Muslims living in Karachi have since obtained Pakistani citizenship. These Rohingya Muslims are facing many challenges in Pakistan. For example, some of them have no proper citizenship because Pakistan considers them Bengali, while Bangladesh considers them Burmese citizens.

Furthermore, the United Nation, international community, and Muslim states in particular being silent on such atrocities committed by the Burmese government is sadly a bitter reality. Only some Muslim states like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Iran have taken interest in these human crises. The Burmese government brutally kills innocent elders, women, and children. Many cases have also been reported of women being raped and children being burnt by Burmese forces during this tragedy. This is a violation of human rights and the UN charter in this age of globalization. Possessing minimum facilities, they live miserable lives seeking refuge in neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh.

3. The Historical Background of Rohingya Muslims

Muslims are not new in Myanmar. They have lived there for many centuries and possess a rich history of social, religious, cultural, and political contributions there. They had their own state and government in the Arakan State in Burma. Many studies and historical evidence reveal this fact. Islam had reached Burma since its early history. Islam had accessed Burma through Arab traders. When Islam reached Burma, the majority of people accepted Islam. Some historians have even indicated the arrival of the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in Burma to have occurred in the 7th century. According to a research study by Abu al Fazal ‘Ezati (2002, pp. 481-82):

The first Muslim to arrive at Myanmar was Syed Moḥammad al-Ḥanafīyyah, one of the sons of Caliph ‘Alī in A.D 680. He first reached north of Maungdaw in northern Rhakine with his followers and confronted the native Queen Kaya Pari. When he won a battle, the queen and her followers converted to Islam, and he married the queen. However, his arrival to Myanmar has no written evidence, the tombs of Syed Moḥammad al-Ḥanafīyyah and his wife still exist on the peaks of Mayu Hills, near the Maungdaw region.

Most of the local people accepted Islam due to the preaching and spiritual impact of these *Sadat*.⁵ After accepting Islam in Arakan in this way, the first Muslim state was established in the name of Arakan. Once the majority of the local ethnicities of Arakan (i.e., Rhakine) had embraced Islam, the first government of Rohingya Muslims was established by a Muslim ruler and religious scholar, Sheikh Abdullah⁶ in 825 CE. History also reveals that the Buddhists arrived at and settled in Arakan after the Muslims. According to a Western historian's (Harvey, 1925) investigation, Islam spread in this area with the arrival and efforts of Arab traders, Muslim fighters, preachers, saints, and conquerors. One such famous figure was Badar 'Ālam⁷ and some of which are still in existence. He spread Islam and made mosques and temples called Badar Muqam that can be found even nowadays in Rhakine .

In the 10th century CE, Arakan was conquered by a historic Buddhist king, Anu Radha, but the separate identity of Muslims remained in the land. The relationship between Muslims and Buddhists in fact later became unpleasant in the 13th century CE. Muslims ruled over Arakan and Rohingya for nearly 500 years. Afterward, the relationship between Muslims and the Burmese government became unsatisfactory and rough. In addition, the deteriorating conditions of the Muslim community in the region has become so bad, unlike anything ever seen before in the history of Buddhist–Muslim relations. The Rohingya Muslims' history of being persecuted in Myanmar continues to the present day. Regarding this worsening situation, Andrew Selth's investigation (Selth, 2003, p. 9) at the Strategic and Defense Studies Centre, Australian National University states:

Myanmar is a Buddhist majority country with a significant Muslim minority. While Muslims have served in the government since 1962, the situation changed with the 1962 Burmese Army coup. While a few continued to serve, most Muslims were excluded from positions in the government and army. The largest Muslim group in Myanmar are the Rohingya people; the Rohingya have been the most persecuted group under Myanmar's military regime.

In fact, the relationship can be said to have become worse due to some religious, tribal, and political reasons following the British conquest of Burma in 1824. According to the

5 *Sadat* is an Arabic term meaning noble. The people who belong to the family of the holy prophet (PBUH) are called the *Sadat*.

6 Sheikh 'Abdullah is one of the most important figures in Arakan Muslim history. Despite having less information about him, according to some historical sources he was the dynamic Arab preacher and first ruler of the local Arakan Muslims in Burma between 825-837 CE.

7 Badar Alam was a famous saint and scholar of Islam. He spread Islam in Burma in the 8th century. His followers called him Badri.

British census of 1931, the Muslim population in Burma was 27%. The educational trend among the Muslim population was very good, and most Muslims were employees of the British government in Burma. During the great economic crises of 1930-1938 in Burma, the Muslim community had been severely targeted and tortured by the Buddhist inhabitants of Burma. In 1942 during World War II, Japan attacked Burma. Several Muslim traders were killed, and a large number of Muslims were compelled to migrate to India. In 1945 after the war, the local Muslim politicians succeeded in establishing the political party known as the Muslim Congress of Arakan. Two Muslim leaders were members of the British government from the Burma Muslim Congress in Burma at the time. According to researcher Haruhiro Fukui (Fukui, 1985, p. 119):

The party was founded around the same time as the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), with which it became affiliated in December 1945. The party's first president, U Razak, became president of the AFPFL's Mandalay branch in 1946. After Razak's death, secretary-general U Khin Maung Lat succeeded him as party president. He became a member of the AFPFL Supreme Council and was appointed Minister of Justice in 1950, a post he held until 1958.

After the separation of India, the Muslim Congress demanded its affiliation with Pakistan, but the local parliament did not accept this.

In 1948, the Union of Burma was established by permission of the British government. Arakan State and its majority Muslim population joined Burma in 1948 after an army coup. Arakan now became part of the Union of Burma. But in the past, it had been an independent state. In ancient times, Arakan had been divided into two kingdoms, South Arakan (i.e., Sandoway) and north Arakan as Arakan proper. (Parashar & Alam, 2018, P. 98)

The two parts were combined in the last quarter of the 13th century, and Arakan remained like this until 1785 CE. A Buddhist monk, Munden, was the leader of the Buddhist religious politics in Burma against the British government.

The bitter reality is that, throughout history, the combination of military dictatorship and Buddhist national religious politics had created trouble for the Muslims of Burma, especially for Arakan and the Rohingya people. Even they had no citizenship rights according to the new laws and constitution of Burma. A Human Rights Watch report confirmed this with evidence in 2012. In 1982, the government had introduced regulations that denied citizenship to anyone who could not prove Burmese ancestry from before 1823. This disenfranchised many

Muslims in Myanmar, even though they had lived there for several generations. It's said that there is a history of persecution of Muslims in Myanmar that continues to the present day. (*Jesudas, 2015,p.194*).

Consequently, the Rohingya people became refugees in their own country where'd they been living for centuries. According to this legislation from 1982, more than a million Rohingya Muslims lost their identity in Burma. In addition, children born in Arakan after 1982 have been neither registered, provided with birth certificates, nor allowed to have more than two babies. These are certainly serious violations of fundamental human rights according to the UDHR⁸ and are happening in a more civilized world in the presence of several human rights commissions and many legal entities, both nationally and internationally. According to the UDHR commission, Articles 28 and 30 state: "A Fair and Free World; there must be proper order so we can all enjoy rights and freedoms in our own country and all over the world... In addition, no one can take away your human rights" (UDHR, 1948).

The condition of other human rights and liberties have also gotten worse in Myanmar, such as the rights to education, to marriage and family, to free mobilization, to property, to freedom of expression and criticism, and to freedom of religion and thought. Myanmar's Muslims have no rights or liberties and face difficulties throughout their life. According to a Human Right Watch report on the Rohingya issue that Both the UN (United Nations) and the US (United States of America) Congress have noted that legal restrictions on freedom of movement for the Rohingya people severely affect basic rights to access livelihoods, food, water, sanitation, and education.(Human Rights Watch , October 8, 2020)

The democratic government of Myanmar under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi⁹ has done nothing on this issue except to defend the military and Buddhist monks' attacks on the Rohingya people. Many reports have declared this to be a clear genocide on the basis of religious sectarianism in the modern era. According to the Human Rights Commission report (HRC, 2018), In August 2018, the United Nations recognized Rohingya persecution as genocide and ethnic cleansing and called for the arrest and prosecution of Myanmar's top generals responsible for crimes against humanity. Even according to the Al-Jazira report it also observed

8 The UDHR is a historic document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its 183rd session on December 10, 1948 as Resolution 217 in Paris, France. All countries of the world are members to it and no one legally can violate these rights.

9 Aung San Suu Kyi was born on June 19, 1945. She is a Burmese politician, diplomat, author, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate (1991). She is the leader of the National League for Democracy and the first and incumbent State Counsellor, a position akin to a prime minister. She is also the first woman to serve as Minister for Foreign Affairs, for the President's Office, for Electric Power and Energy, and for Education in Myanmar. Now her party is the ruling party of Myanmar.

that the government of Aung San Suu Kyi is committing crime to cover up crimes against Rohingya and failed to offer them protection. (AlJazeera , November 15, 2019)

Meanwhile, some reports and papers are found on the reforms during the Civil Government Era from 2015-2020. In 2015, the then government brought changes to the laws related to religion and race, implicitly keeping the Rohingya people in mind. Hereafter, the laws were made more stringent, preventing them from violating human rights (Miles, 2015). The democratic Government is assumed that it have been a weak and puppet government and the actual power has been remain with the Myanmar Army and to Buddhist extremists. Therefore, the result of this leaning was to take no action against religious extremist leaders in Myanmar.

4. Transnationalism, Transnational Islam and Rohingya Muslims

At present, the transitional Islam have become one of the most illustrious studies and terms in the academic sphere. Numerous concepts, meanings, and approaches are found related to transnationalism based on the sociological perspective. Some scholars have connected it to migrations that may have religious, economic, ethnic, or social bases. As a Western scholar, Vector Roudometof argued:

The term transnationalism was originally connected to immigration cohorts, but today the concept has been expanded to include a whole array of activities across borders. The term transnationalism broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of modern nation-states. (Vector, 2005, p. 115)

Most of the scholars consider transnationalism as a cross border activity that occurs due to many social, economic, and religious reasons. Transnationalism is a social phenomenon and scholarly research agenda grown out of the heightened interconnectivity between people and the receding economic and social significance of boundaries among nation states (Steven, 2001, P. 576). Although transnationalism as a practice is very old, it has been recently highlighted as a concept and theory. It was first introduced by American writer Randolph Burne in the early 20th century in the context of Jewish migrations to America. Transnationalism as an ideology, theory, and experience has produced a good deal of literature in the humanities and social sciences. As an experience, transnationalism denotes the growing practical combination of processes that involve the cross-border or transborder relations of individuals, groups, and firms and mobilizations that occur beyond state borders. In other words, transnationalism refers to individuals, groups, institutions, and states that intermingle with each other in a different international arena where socially and dogmatically distinctive aspects of national societies are connected to developing multilevel and global events. Another perspective views

transnationalism as a chunk of the procedure of capital globalization. Therefore, a scholar considers transnationalism to be the transborder activities of groups, individuals, and races. According to Moore (2015, P. 397), the concept of transnationalism refers to:

Multiple links and interactions, linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-states. Although much of the more recent literature has focused on popular protest as a form of transnational activism, some research has also drawn attention to clandestine and criminal networks, as well as foreign fighters, as examples of a wider form of transnationalism.

Many studies and reports are found to have examined the impacts, issues, and crises of transnationalism and transitional Islam. From the perspective of transnationalism, Islam as a religion is one of the most popular religions in modern time, and the academic sphere sees various reasons for transnationalism in Islam. One of the fundamental reasons and causes of Islamic transnationalism is the consequence of terrorism and racial discrimination against Muslims. In the modern era, the Rohingya Muslim crisis is one example of these reasons. The following paragraphs of the study will try to describe the historical and political background of the Rohingya Muslims.

5. The Activities and Impacts of the Rohingya in Pakistan

Due to these violations of fundamental human rights, the Muslim population in Myanmar has been affected awfully. Even the population rates have changed, with the majority having become the minority and the minority the majority. In 1966, Burma had a Muslim of 3 million. After the establishment of the Union of Burma and occupation of Arakan by the Burmese Army, the situation of Arakan Muslims became really bad there, with the ratio of emigrated people being higher than in other countries. According to research on the Rohingya issue, “After Africa and the Middle East, Asia is leading in producing refugees. Southeast Asia (SEA) is one of the highest refugees generating region in this region and Myanmar is the largest contributor” (Ragland, 1994, p. 307).

The emigrated and refugee populations of Rohingya Muslims is currently greater than the rest of the population in Myanmar. Thousands of Muslims, including women and children, have been killed. Hundreds of Rohingya Muslim women have been looted and raped by the Burmese Army, and millions of Rohingya Muslims have been compelled to seek refuge in Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, India, and Pakistan. Once Sheikh Ḥasīnah Wājīd said in the UN General Assembly 73rd Session in 2018 (UN, 2018) that 1.1 million Rohingya Muslims are living in Bangladesh refugee camps. When studying the popu-

lation in and migration of Rohingya Muslims to Pakistan, the numbers are surprisingly higher than for any another Muslim or non-Muslim country. According to *Reuter's* (September 10, 2017) report on Rohingya Muslims migrants in Pakistan.

Millions of Rohingya Muslims are living in Pakistan, and they have been influencing Pakistani economic, political, social, and religious narrative since 1948. According to various Pakistani government sources and the Arakan Historical Society, some 300,000 Rohingya refugees are residing in Pakistan. All of them have made a perilous journey across Bangladesh and India and have settled in Karachi.

An additionally striking point is that more Rohingya people are living in Pakistan than in any other country, even than in Bangladesh or Thailand. According to many authentic reports, approximately 30,000 Rohingya people have migrated to and are now living in Pakistan. Kanwar Shāhid (June 11, 2015) said, "It is important to mention that Pakistan has been one of the countries hosting the most Rohingya refugees, along with Bangladesh. Those are refugees from an earlier exodus, in the 1970s and 1980s." Most of the Rohingya population live in the port city of Karachi in important colonies such as Arakan Abad, the Burma Colony, and Burma town. According to the UNCHR Pakistan is ranked as one of the largest country of hosting migrants in all over of the world (UNCHR, 2022). With reference to Rohingya immigrants Pakistan has more than 5, 50,000 people in his state as migrants since 1948, which is considered 3rd most populated are of Rohingya Refugees. (CNN, September 11, 2017). The newspaper *Dawn* (September 17, 2017) reported the Rohingya Muslim in Karachi to have now obtained Pakistani citizenship. A report on human trafficking stated that Burmese people make up 14% of Karachi's undocumented immigrants. The large-scale Rohingya migration to Karachi made it one of the largest Rohingya population centers in the world after Myanmar. These being some speculative studies and media coverage show the dire need to exist for an authentic study on the actual records of Burmese migrants living in Pakistan, whose Rohingya Muslim community can be divided into three major categories.

Category 1 involves the students of different Islamic religious education centers (*madrasahs*). Most of the Rohingya community students study in such Karachi *madrasahs* as *Jam'iah Banuriyyah*, *Jam'iah Faruqiyyah*, or *Jam'iah 'al-Rashid*. However, some children study in the local schools of the community that the local district government of Karachi has established in these areas. According to UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, (December 13, 2017) :

Until age of 11 Areeba a Rohingya migrant girl was unable to enroll in any school, not because there were not any schools nearby, but because what they had to offer was

not what her family wanted and they remained fearful of her 'undocumented' status as a migrant. Instead, she was enrolled in a nearby madrassa to learn the Quran, something all Muslims must do, especially girls prior to being married off early, as per family customs.

Category 2 involves laborers who do different jobs and mental work in Karachi. A number of Rohingya people living in Karachi are low-cost laborers, with the majority of the Burma Colony in Karachi working at the Korangi industrial area. According to the *Dawn* (September 17, 2017) newspaper report on Rohingya Muslim in Karachi:

The Burmese Colony is located on the edge of the Korangi industrial area, perhaps the mega-city's largest industrial zone. Apart from products, Korangi and the adjoining Landhi area produce the largest number of low-wage workers living in small settlements off the main road running across the two zones. The Burmese Colony, like the others, is organized along ethnic lines.

Category 3 involves the business community. Some of the Rohingya Muslims have succeeded in establishing their businesses and shops in Karachi and other cities of Pakistan. Although their businesses are not large scale, they do have some shops in Arkanabad and the Burmese Colony and some shops in Saddar in Karachi. Furthermore, some Rohingya people are engaged in imports and exports. They import plastic, cosmetic items, cloth, shoes, and also some crockery items import from China. Moreover, a good number of people are in the fish business in Karachi, due to being a low-cost business as well as a family business with regard to their hometown in Myanmar.

When analyzing the activities of the Rohingya people in Pakistan, especially in the cosmopolitan city of Karachi, no extraordinary work or accomplishments are found from them. The majority are poor people living in low-cost sheds who are compelled to work for low wages. They have no leader or representative to fight for their rights or to resolve their issues and problems. As a *Dawn* columnist, Ahmad Yusuf (September 17, 2017) said the following about their dreams that 'We need a leader from within who can inspire the community,' replied Iftikhār, 'But in the meantime, we have decided to enter all political parties for representation. The more we penetrate the mainstream, the louder our voice will be.'

6. The Major Problems of the Rohingya in Pakistan and Their Solutions

When studying the issues and problems of the Rohingya Muslims in Pakistan in detail, most of the population of Rohingya Muslims are seen to live in Karachi, followed by Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, and Gilgit-Baltistan. Karachi and Islamabad have towns called Bur-

mese Colony. Of the majority of Rohingya Muslims who have been living in Karachi since 1948, some have now succeeded in obtaining Pakistani citizenship, and others live as relatives of these people. According to the CNN report (Sophia, September, 11, 2017):

Unfortunately, here too, these Rohingya people have had difficulties renewing or obtaining Pakistani identification cards, without which it is impossible to have access to healthcare, education for the young generation, and employment; and they are said to be harassed by police, especially those living in the Arakan Abad slum in Karachi.

The following subsections of the study will describe the issues and problems of the Rohingya community and then attempt to suggest the possible solutions to these problems.

6.1. Issue of Identity

Identity crisis is one of the most crucial issues of the Rohingya People in Karachi, Pakistan. Although some have obtained their identity cards, most have not despite having lived in Karachi since 1980. As a result, they are harassed by the Karachi police. *Dawn* journalist Z̄īā' ur Rīḥān (February 23, 2015) reported the following on the Rohingya crises:

Harassment at the hands of Karachi police has become a routine matter for our community, as we do not have Pakistani national identity cards despite having lived in the country for the past 35 years," says Hassan, a Burmese Muslim known as a Rohingya, who was born in Karachi. Hassan is one of thousands of young Rohingyas whose parents fled persecution in Burma over the past 35 years to Karachi.

The solution of this issue is that government of Pakistan should immediately register all Rohingya and Burmese¹⁰ people in accordance with UDHR (UN, 1948) rules and recommendations. Pakistan may also issue identity cards and provide citizenship or residence permits on a temporary basis in accordance with international law on short- and long-term policies. Afterward, this can be updated to a permanent status on the basis of their conduct and character. In this way they can participate in the market and be eligible for jobs, business, and work involving other fundamental rights and services. Taking steps for legislation regarding migrants, refugees and foreigners in Pakistan is very important for resolving this issue. Pakistan is one of the countries that lack enough legislation about refugees and migrants. Another important thing is that no country can expel them according to international law. Therefore, legislation regarding their status and rights becomes more important in this situation. According to the UN human rights protocol about refugees and migrant, "People seeking asylum must not be

10 In Pakistan, especially in Karachi, the Rohingya people are called Burmese (*Burmize*) in the native Urdu language.

expelled or forced to return to situations where they are not safe. The principle of non-refoulement¹¹ is a firmly established prohibition in international law” (UN Protocols, 1951).

6.2. Issues of Health and Education

Problems with health care and education are also major issues for the Rohingya community all over the world as well as in Pakistan. They have no permission to get an education or health care from public institutions due to security reasons, but they do have some schools and dispensaries in their colonies like Arakan Abad and the Burmese Colony. They have no proper health care or schooling facilities in Karachi. According to a GEO TV (November 30, 2018) report that in the slums of Karachi, lack of proper documentation prevents Rohingya migrants from enrolling their children in schools and deprives them of public healthcare and employment opportunities. The basic reason for Rohingya Muslims’ lack of education and health care issues in Karachi is due to the lack of a national identity card and legislation. According to many international and regional laws, migrants and refugees are eligible for education and health care. According to the UN Office of High Commission on Human Rights (OHCHR, 2016):¹²

The International covenant on economic, social, and cultural rights guarantees irregular migrants the right to health. In addition, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families stipulates that each child of a migrant worker shall have the basic right of access to education on the basis of equality with nationals of the State concerned.

6.3. Business-, Work-, and Job-Related Issues

The right to protect life is an undeniably internationally recognized right for every person, and protecting this right is necessary for business, study, and work. The right to have access to work and a job has the most importance for refugees. Unfortunately, most countries are hesitant to give them access to work and the labor market. The same is the case for the Rohingya people in most of the host countries, including Pakistan. Most of the Rohingya people in Pakistan have no proper facilities and opportunities of these issues. According to *Dawn* (Ahmad, September, 2017), ‘It’s a curse living here,’ says 25 years old Mohammad, ‘People reject our job applications and all doors of opportunity are always shut in our faces when people find out that we are from the Burmese Colony.’

11 The principle of non-refoulement is a fundamental principle of international law that forbids a country receiving asylum seekers from returning them to a country in which they would be in likely danger of persecution based on “race, religion, nationality, or member of a particular social group or political opinion.”

12 The mandate of the OHCHR is to ensure universal enjoyment of all human rights, to remove obstacles to their effective implementation, and to enhance coordination and cooperation of human rights-related activities throughout the United Nations system.

The International Convention on Refugees and many other international studies recommend giving them access to the workplace, job, and labor market etc. According to Roger Zeter's investigation and research: Remarkably little consistency exists in legal provisions on refugees' right to work, either among the signatory states of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol (e.g., the United Kingdom, Germany), or among non-signatory states such as Pakistan, Lebanon, and Jordan. These countries are among the top refugee-hosting countries. Researchers think governments, labor and trade unions, national and international donors' agencies should play a dynamic role in accommodating the Rohingya refugees in Pakistan. Otherwise, their issue will become more severe and create more trouble and difficulties for their survival (Zeter, 2016).

These are several important issues and problems of the Rohingya community in Pakistan. The scope of this study does not allow all these issues and problems to be covered comprehensively. Studies and research projects need to be carried out to discuss the relevant challenges separately as well as comprehensively. For example, the problems pertaining to economics, politics, religion, health care, and education should be studied through all the necessary details.

Despite the need to do much more than what is being done to resolve these issues, Pakistan is undoubtedly doing its best according to its capacity. Pakistan's current economic and political situation is obviously not very good due to some external and internal factors. According to the young lawyer 'Usmān 'Alī:

In Pakistan's case, the situation is slightly different. Though we genuinely care for the Rohingya cause, it is almost impossible for us to take them in. This is because we are already hosting the second largest refugee population in the world, with over a million Afghan refugees. Furthermore, a protest was organized in Karachi where hundreds raised their voices against the brutal genocide of Rohingya Muslims (Virak, September 11, 2017).

Various studies including this one have perceived the Muslim world to not be doing sufficient work to accommodate refugees, especially in the case of Rohingya Muslims. In the case of Myanmar, the issue is more severe because they are seen as boat people who have no importance to any country. But they are part of the Muslim Ummah, and we should try our best to accommodate them in terms of economics, politics, society, and religion. The people of Pakistan from all spheres of life should raise their voice to solve their problems within their country and internationally. This study's conclusion would be better by views of Mr. Shams,

finally, there is a phenomenon of hypocrisy within the Muslim world, based on ignoring the treatment of religious, ethnic minorities in Muslim majority countries like Pakistan, about how the Government of Myanmar represses its Muslim population (Shams, 2017).

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has drawn the following results and recommendations. The Rohingya people are the most neglected ethno-religious community in the modern world due to their religious, social, and ethnic backgrounds. Their case is not just one of forced migration but also of genocide and planned killing at the hands of Burmese forces and Buddhist terrorists under the silent approval of their so called democratic government.

Rohingya people are the local and native community of Myanmar (formerly Burma) with a Muslim identity. It had been their own state and government in the name of Arakan until 1826 when the British Empire conquered Burma. Muslims took an active part in causing British forces to leave Burma and played a dynamic political role under the British Empire since 1948. Muslims have had their own political identity under the umbrella of the Muslim Congress of Burma.

After the 1962 military coup in Burma and Arakan, the Muslims' situation became much worse. The military government tried its best to eliminate the Muslim identity and symbols in Burma and Arakan with the active help of Buddhist monks. In 1982 after the notorious citizenship legislation, Burma began calling itself Myanmar, and the Muslims lost their identity in their own homeland. According to this law, the Rohingya community were not accepted as citizens of the Myanmar state.

Due to the denial of citizenship, they have had no social, religious, political, or economic rights or services in Myanmar. Most have been compelled to seek refuge after the terrible persecution from Myanmar forces and Buddhist monks. Most of the Rohingya people have sought refuge in Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Pakistan's Rohingya population is more than 5 million, most of whom live in the cosmopolitan city of Karachi in one of three major towns: Arakan Abad, the Burmese Colony, and Islam Pura.

Most of the Rohingya people in Pakistan are laborers, fishermen, and madrasah students, with some shop keepers. The Rohingya people in Pakistan face some issues and problems, the most important of which are identity card issues, no proper right to access the labor market or workplaces, and an insufficient right to education and health care facilities.

As evidenced in this study, the problems faced by Rohingya people particularly in Pakistan should be solved, and they should be registered according to UDHR regulations. Revising the

legislation on refugees and migrants is also recommended so that it caters to their basic needs, including access to the labor market and the right to health care and education in public institutions. Moreover, international agencies for donations, NGOs and migrant organizations should also play a significant role in trying to resolve their issues with help of UNO and the government of Pakistan.

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