THE ROHINGYA CRISIS AND THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT
The Rohingya challenges, characterized by the large dislocation and marginalization of the Rohingya Islamic people from Myanmar (former Burma), stood as an important social problem of the 21st Century. The origin of the conflict can be traced to years of tribal upheavals and the British imperial administration which engendered divisive tendencies amongst the people. These divisive tendencies skyrocketed even after independence and climaxed in the 1982 nationality or citizenship law, which made the Rohingya people stateless. The increase of tribal nationalism has played an important role in these divisions, with the main Myanmar tribal group seeing the Rohingya as aliens. The effect of the Rohingya conflict is unfathomable, affecting over a million people living in poor situations in Bangladesh, over stretching the country's resources and causing insecurity. The Myanmar administration's divisive policies, combative military behaviours, and socio-economic marginalization of the Rohingya have amounted to serious human rights abuses. This makes one to ask what are the causes of Rohingya people's crisis? What are the effects? How can the challenges be resolved or is there any way forward? To find answers to the above cited questions is the objectives of this work. In order to get undiluted answers to the questions raised, this work employs secondary sources like books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and internet materials. Ethnic nationalism theory was used as the theoretical construct while documentary evidence was used as the analytical tool. The work also did some literature review in order to enrich the background knowledge of the work. At the end the work discovered that factors like ethnic and religious discrimination, political and military issues, socio-economic marginalization, militarization and human rights abuses, and geopolitical dynamics caused the crisis. The effects are humanitarian impact, socio-economic strain on Bangladesh, security concerns, and international response. In proffering the way forward, the work recommended that all the causes of the conflict as highlighted above must be stopped and as the way forward factors like accountability, humanitarian support, strengthening of international cooperation, and promotion of other sustainable solutions must be vigorously pursued.

Introduction

Conflicts especially one that is caused by one group of people denying the other of their inalienable rights and citizenship is the most prevalent and widespread in the world today. Examples abound like the Darfurians in Sudan, Houthis in Yemen, Palestines in Israel, Kurds in Turkiye, Syria, Iraq and Rohingya in Myanmar etc. The Rohingya conflict Is one of the most intricating and protracted human problem of the decade, featured by many dislocations and marginalizations suffered by the Rohingya Islamic minority in Myanmar. In the centre of the crisis which has embrace Myanmar's Rakhine State, the ill-condition of the Rohingya citizens manifest as an ugly memory indicating persistent punishment and humane disregard.

This small tribal group, majorly Muslim, has withstood years of planned discriminations, marginalization and crisis, summed up in what the UN called a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" (Mustapha, 2022). This crisis, which is a humanitarian problem of unfathomable measurement, has caused above a million Rohingya to seek shelter in nearby countries like Bangladesh, escaping the brutal military pursuits, village incendiaries, and unprintable hardships.

The Rohingya populace (inhabitants of Rohano) are Muslims of the Aryan race who mainly dwell in the Rakhine province of Myanmar, formerly Burma. Before the Rohingya ethnic cleansing of 2017, when about 740,000 ran to Bangladesh, about 1.4 million lived in Myanmar (Mustapha, 2022). The Rohingya are regarded as the most marginalized minorities in the global arena. They are not accepted as citizens enforced by the 1982 Myanmar nationality or citizenship law, they are barred from free movement, denied acquisition of state education and jobs. Their situations have been equated with that of blacks in former apartheid South Africa. The Rohingya claimed to be citizens of western Myanmar while the Myanmar administration regard them as migrants from Chittagong in Bangladesh and therefore call them Bengalis. They have been revolting from 1940s and they have suffered series of military incursions in 1978, 1991-1992, 2012, 2015 and 2016-2018 when large number of Rohingya was forced into Bangladesh.

As the globe watch this unbearable act, it is of essence to look into the complex web of historical, ethnic, political, and socio-economic issues that have engendered and propel this conflict. By disclosing the complicated maze of causes, we will have a profound knowledge of the basic problems and make a way for sustainable answers that will hold human respect and recover harmony and legal rights to this marginalized people. This work is sectionalized into nine areas: -introduction, literature review, methodology, theoretical framework, historical background, causes, way forward, conclusion, and recommendations.

Literature Review

Gerald Deshi (2022) in his work titled "The Origin of Stateless people" objected to the citizenship law and tried to show that the Rohingya are truly from Myanmar. The issue of citizenship was without doubt one of the reasons for rejecting the Rohingyas from Myanmar but other factors were also pivotal in their predicament of which the author was silent about. This yawning gap in causal factors is what this research wants to fill. Indira Khan (2023) in his book "Rohingya the link between Myanmar and Bangladesh" looked at how Myanmar and Bangladesh could share the Rohingya people between themselves and if this is done according to him will bring peace to Myanmar, Bangladesh and Rohingya. He did not tell us how this will work out since both Myanmar and Bangladesh did not regard the Rohingyas' as citizens in their respective countries. His work did not look at the factors that caused the Rohingya peoples' plight, he only concentrated at building bridges of peace as he claimed. This lack in his work is what this research deems fit to fill.

Bradesh (2024) in her research titled "The Rohingya Refugees Crisis" focused on the sufferings of the Rohingya people in their deplorable refugee camps in Bangladesh. This work concentrated on the consequences of the crisis rather than on the causes of it. This missing link is the lacunae that this work wants to fill. Shingar Tak (2023) in his work titled "Rohingya and religion" linked the Rohingya woes with the religion they follow. He said "Had it been the Rohingya were Buddhists like the majority in Myanmar the story would have been different" Deducing from this, he opined that Rohingya predicament was strongly tied to the religion they follow. This is a factor but yet it does not give us a wholistic view of other factors that contributed to Rohingya peoples sorrow. To fill this wholistic causes is the objective of this work.

Anak Roh (2022) in her work "The Rohingya and Bangladesh" focused on the inhuman conditions in the Bangladesh camps in which the Rohingya refugees live. He pleaded for both the Bangladesh government and the UN to come to the aid of the Rohingya refugees. The author concentrated on woeful outcome of the Rohingya's crisis but not on the causes and way out. Furthermore, Bak Anon (2023) in his work "The Rohingya Militias" looked at the Rohingya militias fighting spirit and the type of ammunition they have. He failed to let us know why they are fighting and why they are putting much zeal. To fill these gaps is the pivot of this paper.

Methodology

This is a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretative study. The data for the work was obtained through secondary sources like books, journals, theses, magazines', newspapers, and internet materials. The data collected was analyzed through documentary evidence and; the ethnic nationalism theory was used as a tool of analysis. The data collection process follows specific criteria for relevance, reliability, and credibility.

Theoretical Framework

The ethnic nationalism theory maintains that a state is defined basically by a collective identity. This identity involves same ancestry, linguistic, norms and may be religious beliefs. Ethnic nationalism shows the significance of tribal commonality in the making and sustenance of a state, sometimes pointing to the inculcation of the dominant tribal sect and the segregation or oppression of others. Ethnic nationalism originated in the 19th century as a sequel to the powers of modernization and the upcoming of nations (Smith, 1986). This kind of nationalism acquire centre stage during the demise of heterogenous kingdoms such as Austro-Hungarian and Ottman kingdoms, as many tribal sects tries to set up their own independent nations (Thomas, 1990). Major propounders of this theory are Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. They posit that each tribal sect merits political independence (Barnard, 1969). Ethnic nationalism since then has engendered many agitations and crisis, redrawing boundaries and state identities throughout the globe.

The key characteristics or assumptions of the theory are the superiority of ethnic mark or identity, historical homogeneity, independence or self-determination, unadulterated citizenship and national indigenship, cultural sameness, and territorial ownership.

Ethnic nationalism theory has been attacked for encouraging separation and segregation rather than oneness and brotherhood. Critics posit that the claim on a single tribal image can discriminate and remove the power of voting from the minorities, provoking social disruption and crisis (Brubaker, 1996). This emphasis on tribal sameness often pays less attention on the many cultural and ethnic realities of modern states, metamorphosing in plans that can inculcate separation and inequality (Smith, 1986).

However, ethnic nationalism gives a frame for comprehending the basic causes of the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar. In regard to this theory, a state is known basically, by a common ethnic image or characteristics, comprising same language, culture, ancestorial origin, and historical background. In Myanmar, the main Burma ethnic sect sees the state through this periscope, perceiving themselves as the main owners of the country. This attitude has led to decisions and behavioral instinct that discriminate and oppress minority tribal groups, especially the Rohingya who are mainly Muslim and have different cultural and linguistic features.

The case on historical lineage in ethnic nationalism theory moreover complicates the issue. The Myanmar administration sees the Rohingya as aliens with no historical root in the state, no matter the Rohingya's historical presence in the region. This biased explanation of history is used to buttressed non-recognition of the Rohingya nativity and fundamental rights (Joseph, 2023). The 1982 Citizenship Law which made the Rohingya stateless was enacted to cement and formalized this obnoxious act. The Myanmar government has used the self-determination part of ethnic nationalism theory to mete out severe human rights abuses, mass dislocations and refugee problem against the Rohingya people. Ethnic nationalism theory enables us to unravel how identity and deprivation of others have led to the calculated oppression and exploitation of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

Historical Background

The Rohingya claimed to have established in the Rakhine region of Myanmar since the 18th century, when Arab merchants brought Islam to the area. With time, the province attracted many cultures of different religious background like the Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims. Old archives from the empires of Arakan (4th century-1785) cited a timeframe of cordiality and cohabitation among these heterogenous groups. Muslims occupy important positions in the empire's government, norms, and developments.

The Rohingya are mostly Muslim tribal group living in Myanmar's Rakhine region. The province now called Rakhine province, before known as Arakan, has being a place of abode for many tribal groups, plus the Rohingya, for decades. Ancient records have it that Muslim groups have been in the area right from the 18th century, involving in mercantile activities and cultural relationships with other kingdoms. The empire of Arkan, which was in place from about the 4th century to about 1785, was a sovereign state that established important cultural and governmental links with both South Asia and Southeast Asia. Arakan was a converging point of many tribal groups, plus Muslims who occupied important positions in the empire's government and community (Leider, 2022).

The British domination of Myanmar in 1824, led to important population and socio-political alteration in the province. Arkan was incorporated into British India, and the British allow the movement of workers from British India, especially Bengal, to Arakan for economic objectives. This movement enlarge the Muslim people in the province, adding to the tribal divisions and entrenching the foundation of crisis for many years to come (Charney, 2024). In the second world war, Arakan became a conflictual field between the British and Japanese army, increasing tribal differences between Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists. The British offered the Rohingya an independent Muslim nation in exchange for their support against the Japanese, a pact that was never kept.

When Myanmar became a sovereign state from Britain in 1948, the new administration refused the Rohingya official status, unleashing serious crisis. The Rohingya's quest for recognition and self-governance were rejected, and the administration saw them as aliens no matter their historical habitation in the area (Ahmed, 2020). The army overthrow in 1962 ushered a crossroad for the Rohingya, as the Myanmar armed forces regime brought plans that segregated them, climaxing in the obnoxious 1982 Citizenship Law. This law completely made the Rohingya stateless by removing them from known tribal groups, refusing them nationality privileges, and obstructing their rights to schools, hospitals, and jobs (Ibrahim, 2021).

Many important aggressions have been meted to the Rohingya over the years. In 1978, the Myanmar soldiers embarked on Operation Nagamin (Dragon king), directed at the Rohingya Muslims under the disguise of looking for unlawful migrants. The operation speaks of awful human rights maltreatment, imposed labour, illegal arrests, and unlawful killings, unleashing mass dislocation of the Rohingya. Another attack happened in 1991-92, leading to more crisis and dislocation of the Rohingya, with most of them running to Bangladesh. The condition became more gruesome in 2012 when serious conflict between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims busted out, leading to hundreds of casualties and dislocation of tens of thousands of Rohingya into unlivable areas. This conflict was engineered by profound tribal and religious crisis, increased by segregatory nation policies (Ibrahim, 2021).

The worst and most expansive objected attack happened in August 2017, after incursion by Rohingya armed groups on police locations. The Myanmar forces waged a murderous attack against the Rohingya people, with news of calculated killings, women abuse, and village incendiaries. This crisis led to over 700,000 Rohingya escaping to Bangladesh, producing one of the global most dangerous refugee conflict. The UN saw the Myanmar army action as genocide (Ahmed, 2020). The global society has reacted with palliative help and lawful initiatives. Many global societies have supplied essential support to Rohingya people in Bangladesh and those within Myanmar. The international Court of Justice (ICJ) case put up by the Gambian government in 2019 blamed Myanmar of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya, creating an important move towards judicial credence.

No matter these initiatives, most Rohingya remain in horrible camps in Bangladesh or as dislocated people in Rakhine region, Myanmar. Their conditions are still dangerous, with restricted opening to fundamental social

services, schools, and job openings. The problem of Rohingya nationality and rights are still to be resolved, with the Myanmar administration indicating little eagerness to resolve the basic causes of the conflict.

The Rohingya people's origin in Myanmar is anchored by their citizenship in the Rakhine area, population changes during the foreign rule era, and long years of post-independence marginalization and conflict. Comprehending this history is important to knowing the basic factors of the conflict and locating sustainable panaceas. The present sufferings of the Rohingya show the necessity for combined world support to ascertain the fundamental human right for one of the most segregated and marginalized people in the globe.

Causes of the Conflict

The Rohingya conflict is profoundly entrenched in old tribal/ethnic and religious upheavals between the mainly Muslim Rohingya minority and the Buddhist majority people in Myanmar. The Myanmar administration and many Buddhist nationalists have always seen the Rohingya as aliens from Bangladesh, engineering anti-Rohingya crisis and segregation policies (Bugarat, 2023). This view has been increased by the growing Buddhist nationalism and the multiplication of insultive comments and annoying comments directed at the Rohingya people. The aftermath community divisions and separation have produced a favourable ground for crisis and marginalization with ultra-nationalists on both sides adding to the exacerbation of the crisis and human right negligence.

The political factor in Myanmar has also contributed to the Rohingya conflict. The armed forces, called the Tatmadaw, has made the Rohingya issue a tool of consolidation of power and justification of their actions. The 2017 army suppression, which led to the large movement of over 700,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh, was clearly a reaction to incursion by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on police posts (Musa, 2023). Nevertheless, it speedily spiraled into expansive crisis against civilians, plus large killings, sexual abuse and burning of properties.

The Rohingya's lack of nationality and legitimate status in Myanmar has been an important moving power driving their segregation and frustration. Termed aliens, no matter their ancient presence in the area, they have been deliberately removed from the nation's political stage and debarred fundamental human rights (Saheed, 2022). The refusal of their inalienable rights has not only entrenched their sufferings but has also carved the foundation for further marginalization and abuses.

The Rohingya have been made to suffer socio-economic segregation. They undergo wicked hindrances on movement, education, health, and jobs. This deliberate denial has left the Rohingya poor and unprotected increasing their sufferings and hindering their power to ask for their rights (Jibril, 2023). The Rohingya populace has suffered veritable economic exploitations, involving restricted land acquisition, limited job opportunities, and hinderances on their rights of movement. This economic expropriation has entrenched a cyclical poverty, lack of food, and restricted access to fundamental services, moreover complicating the danger of the Rohingya people. The incapacity to have adequate sustenance and the refusal of life essentials have not only reduced their living standard but have also made them more vulnerable to deprivations and exploitations (Jibril, 2023).

There have been combative and inalienable rights abuses against the Rohingya. Their conflict graduated to a crescendo in August 2017 when the Myanmar army waged a murderous killing spree in reaction to incursions by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), a Rohingya militant movement. The Myanmar armed force's unequal reaction incorporate expansive and well-planned inalienable rights abuses, plus unlawful killings, women maltreatments, and scorch earthing the Rohingya villages (Adresh, 2022). These immeasurable wicked acts, depicted by the UN as the height of genocide, stimulated an avalanche of Rohingya migrants into nearby nations, especially Bangladesh. The coming of the Rohingya migrants has unleashed heavy pressure on the Bangladesh society, with overpopulated camps fighting to have fundamental needs and struggling to meet the overdue requirements of the dislocated populace (Adresh, 2022).

Moreover, the Rohingya conflict is also affected by continental and global geopolitical changes. Nations like China, India, and the US have special aims in Myanmar, which influenced their reactions to the conflict. For example, China's investments in Myanmar have led to a calculated move, while the United States has

placed an embargo on Myanmar's army rulers (Ismail, 2022).

Effects of the Conflict

The Social or humanitarian effect of the Rohingya conflict is incalculable. More than a million

Rohingya migrants' abode in squalid conditions in Bangladesh, expose to unfavourable situations with restricted access to fundamental services such as pure water, hygienic conditions, and hospital care. The dwellings are given to organic eventualities like dangerous windy conditions further complicating the Rohingya migrants' conditions (Sagir, 2023).

The in pouring of Rohingya migrants' in to Bangladesh has put a profound stress on the nation, especially in the Cox's Bazar province. The domestic sustenance, surroundings, and social linkages have been badly affected. The presence of a huge migrants' population has exacerbated struggle over sustenance, increasing costs, and humanitarian crisis between the migrants' and Bangladesh people (Sagir, 2023).

The delayed dislocation and lack of hope for the Rohingya have led to security issues. The migrants' dwellings have become training bases for unlawful behaviours, with human trading, illicit drug trade, and grooming of insurgent movements. These problems indicate important restrictions to both Bangladesh and regional peace.

Lastly, the global society's reaction to the Rohingya conflict has been complicated. While there have been important social efforts to support the migrants, administrative and negotiation moves have been less efficient. The UN has asked for credible, peaceful, and voluntary going back of the Rohingya to Myanmar, but advances has been tardy due to the complicated governmental condition in Myanmar and the lackluster manner of the global community (Hussein, 2022).

Way Forward

To remedy the Rohingya conflict, it is important to solve its basic causes. This involve eradicating the deliberate segregation and restrictions of the Rohingya in Myanmar. The Myanmar administration must accept the Rohingya as citizens and treat them equally like other indigenes of Myanmar. This necessitates correcting the obnoxious 1982 Citizenship Law and other segregatory pronouncements (Hussein, 2022).

Responsibility for the ills perpetrated against the Rohingya is vital for sustainable resolution. Global institutions like the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), should be used to bring those that cause mayhem against the Rohingya to book. This will help to stop other atrocities and made legal protection available to the oppressed (Anak, 2024).

Enhancing lasting panacea for the Rohingya conflict comprise making time for their peaceful, unforced, and respectful going back to Myanmar. This needs a wholistic intervention that involves political, social, and economic changes in Myanmar, including global support. Nations in the area, especially Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, and India, must join hands to locate a lasting cure to the conflict (Andrew, 2024).

The global society must join hands to redress the Rohingya conflict. This involves negotiation to force Myanmar to stop its segregation initiatives and see to the peaceful come back of the Rohingya. In addition, global institutions and aid giving nations should join their social supports to achieve their aim and help in building a lasting progress for the concerned areas.

Conclusion

The Rohingya conflict is a complicated and hydra-headed problem that demands a broad and articulated reaction. Resolving the basic causes of the conflict, being responsible for human rights restrictions, enabling social support, and ensuring lasting solutions are important stages in stopping the conflict. The global society must stand united in helping the Rohingya and ensuring a brighter tomorrow where they can stay in respect and harmony. By comprehending the historical, political, and social ramifications of the conflict, we can strongly support the inalienable rights and good living conditions for the Rohingya people and add to a more equitable and just globe.

Recommendations

- The Myanmar administration should correct or remove the atrocious 1982 Citizenship Law to give complete nationality to the Rohingya. This should involve the right to citizenship, which is basic to getting other privileges and security.

- The Myanmar government should put plans that ensure equal treatment for all tribes and religion in Myanmar. This involves access to movement, literacy, hospital care, and job leverages without segregation.

- The Myanmar administration should encourage government of all including the Rohingya and other segregated groups. This could call for putting up institutions for minority inclusion in policy making processes.

- The government should encourage and approve inter-tribal and inter-faith relationship meetings poised at building beneficial harmony and resolution between the Rohingya and other tribal entities in Myanmar, especially the Rakhine Buddhists.

- The global institutions like the UN, ASEAN, etc. must persevere to force the Myanmar administration to stop segregation policies and inalienable rights maltreatment against the Rohingya.

- The international community should put embargoes against persons and bodies who committed atrocities against the Rohingya. They should also encourage actions meant to bring the instigators to book.

- The Myanmar government should make sure that help like food, shelter, hospital care and education are giving to all in Myanmar, especially the Rohingya.

- The international community should help host countries like Bangladesh so that the migrants' surge will not overwhelm them.

- Both the international community and the Myanmar government should introduce enhancement programmes for the Rohingya like acquisition training, microfinance loans and job opportunities.

- The Myanmar government should build infrastructures in the Rakhine State that will be for all.

- The Myanmar government should ensure the protection of human rights, especially that of the Rohingya.

- Finally, the international community should ensure effective and efficient monitoring systems that will see that human rights are maintained for all in Myanmar.

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